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April 26, 2016  
Rincon Project No. 11-98490

Travis Fuentes  
Ambient Communities, LLC  
979 Osos Street, Suite E  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
Via email: [tfuentes@ambientcommunities.com](mailto:tfuentes@ambientcommunities.com)

**Subject: Arborist Letter Report for the Imel Property of the Orcutt Area Specific Plan, San Luis Obispo, California**

Dear Mr. Fuentes:

Rincon Consultants, Inc. (Rincon) is pleased to submit this Arborist Letter Report for the Imel Property of the Orcutt Area Specific Plan in the City of San Luis Obispo, California. The proposed project includes two other properties in addition to the Imel property: Righetti Ranch and Jones property. However, impacts to trees on the Righetti Ranch and Jones properties are not assessed in this report.

The City of San Luis Obispo (City) requested this report to evaluate tree removal on the Imel Property with a specific focus on trees within riparian habitat as part their Completeness Review #1 of the Orcutt Area Specific Plan Project, dated February 3, 2016. The purpose of this report is to assess project related impacts to trees on the Imel Property during implementation of the proposed project and provide recommendations for minimization and mitigation where applicable.

#### **PROJECT LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION**

The Righetti Ranch, Jones, and Imel properties are located in west-central San Luis Obispo County approximately 15 miles due west of the Pacific Ocean. The Imel property is located at 3777 Orcutt Road in the City of San Luis Obispo. The Jones property is located adjacent to the north, and Righetti Ranch is located on Orcutt Road between Calle Crotalo and Tank Farm Road. The parcels are depicted on the *San Luis Obispo, California* United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle within Meridian Mount Diablo, Sections 1 and 6, Township 31 South and Ranges 12 and 13 East.

The proposed project would combine residential development, open space, recreation areas, and other public facilities. Residential development would include a total of 384 residences including a variety of residential densities, ranging from Low Density Residential to High Density Residential. The proposed project would also include approximately 10,000



square feet of commercial area. Righetti Hill will be dedicated to the City to be preserved as open space with public access to provide a scenic backdrop for this development and the other Orcutt Area neighborhoods. Preservation of Righetti Hill will also protect the existing plant and wildlife habitat and creeks within the area. A conservation easement has been granted to the City, which limits future development of the parcel east of Righetti Hill. The area within the creek jurisdictional setbacks will be dedicated to the City to be preserved as open space.

To accommodate the proposed project, the City is requiring transportation improvements to Orcutt Road, including the construction of a center turn lane, bike lane, and concrete sidewalk. Orcutt Road will need to be widened to accommodate these improvements and will require the extension and/or improvement to eight culverts along the road.

On the Imel Property, the proposed project would combine residential development and open space on 5.4 acres. The proposed residential development would occupy approximately 49 percent of the total project area and open space would be approximately 34 percent. Residential development would include low density residential. There would be approximately 18 dwelling units. Two infrastructure improvements are proposed on this property to provide access for residents.

## **METHODOLOGY**

A field inventory and health assessment survey was conducted by Rincon International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist Stephanie Lopez and Associate Biologist Kyle Weichert on March 31, 2016. During the survey, all trees located on the Imel Property were evaluated either on an individual tree basis or as a component of a grove and given an identification number. Individual trees were evaluated in groves when many individuals of the same species were tightly clustered and formed a continuous canopy. For each tree or grove, the following information was gathered: scientific and common name, evaluation of the physical structure, diameter at breast height<sup>1</sup> (dbh), estimation of tree height and canopy spread, and an assessment of overall health. A summary of this information is compiled in the attached tree inventory table. Each tree or grove was photo documented and the geographic location was confirmed using a Trimble® Geo 7 Series Global Positioning System (GPS).

## **RESULTS AND PROPOSED IMPACTS**

Rincon documented 54 trees and 7 groves on the Imel Property. In general, trees on the Imel Property are concentrated along Crotalo Creek and Tanglewood Creek (also referred to as Unnamed Creek), two ephemeral creeks that run east to west across the Imel Property. The trees are generally ornamentals associated with the existing residence, however, some native and non-native trees are associated with the creeks and some trees are scattered throughout the remainder of the Imel Property. The attached tree inventory table gives

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<sup>1</sup> Measured at four and one-half feet above natural grade using an English unit diameter tape.



details of each tree or grove evaluated on the Imel Property. The majority of ornamental trees on the Imel Property are proposed for removal but are not discussed in detail in this report. Trees proposed for removal are depicted on the attached Imel Property Tract 3095 Vesting Tentative Map (Cannon 2016).

Crotalo Creek runs along the southern edge of Imel Property. The tree canopy along the creek is fairly dense and consists primarily of California walnut (*Juglans californica*), willow (*Salix* spp.), and coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) with several other riparian species scattered throughout. In general, the trees in this area are in fair health, but individually vary from good to poor health. Many trees have signs of rot at the base of their trunks or show evidence of past trimming. Proposed impacts to trees in Crotalo Creek are limited to trimming of a coast live oak (No. 532) and a California sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*; No. 539). The coast live oak has a dbh of 14 inches and leans strongly outside of the creek where much of its canopy rests on the ground. This tree is in poor overall condition and with the canopy resting on the ground it is especially vulnerable to pests. The proposed trimming includes removing limbs that extend from the creek into the project footprint. The sycamore is a large tree with five trunks ranging from 10 to 53 inches dbh, and a canopy 55 feet tall and 60 feet wide. The tree is in fair overall health, but the main trunk has visible fungus infestation. One of the five trunks extends away from the main tree axis and into the project footprint. This trunk is proposed for trimming. If trimming is conducted to ISA standards and with recommendations made below, the tree can be trimmed without causing mortality and retained on site.

Tanglewood creek runs across the center portion of the Imel Property. In the downstream portion of Tanglewood Creek, a cluster of non-native Chilean pepper trees (*Schinus polygamus*; part of grove No. 547) and a single California sycamore (No. 548) are proposed for removal. The Chilean pepper trees are located within and along the creek channel and are generally small; ranging from approximately 6-10 inches dbh and up to 15 feet tall. They are in fair overall condition with relatively full canopies. The sycamore is situated within the channel of the creek. It is a large sprawling tree with a dbh of 61 inches and several major branches that flair out of the main trunk. The canopy reaches approximately 60 feet high and approximately 70 feet across. The tree is senescent (aged and becoming overly mature) and in overall poor condition. The trunk is in poor health with visible rot damage from the ground to approximately 15 feet and a colony of ants was infesting the base at the time of the assessment survey. The limbs are also in poor health and show signs of overextension. The canopy is in poor health as well, with signs of systemic disease as evidenced by substantial leaf burn throughout the canopy. Additionally, the foliage was generally much sparser than other sycamores on the Imel Property and surrounding properties. The proposed project footprint crosses Tanglewood Creek immediately upstream of the sycamore. As such, one of the overextended limbs will need to be removed and a large portion of the tree's root zone will be disturbed.

A portion of the upper reach of Tanglewood Creek is dominated by a large grove of blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*; No. 560). This grove consists of over 50 trees of various sizes and ages with a canopy approximately 220 feet wide and 100 feet tall. The overall condition of the grove is poor with several dead individuals along the periphery and many more fallen



within the grove. The trees generally contain dead branches and excessive sloughing bark. The majority of the trees in the grove are proposed for removal with the exception trees that are located within the creek channel.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Project development would result in the removal of 19 trees and the majority of individual trees within 4 groves on the Imel Property. Of these, one California sycamore and six non-native Chilean pepper trees are within riparian habitat and are considered under the jurisdiction of the Regional Water Quality Control Board and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Additionally, a coast live oak and an additional California sycamore located within riparian habitat are proposed for trimming where limbs extend over the project footprint. Impacts to individual trees within riparian habitat are proposed to be mitigated through the enhancement of riparian habitat on the neighboring Righetti Ranch portion of the project at a ratio of 2:1. To minimize the chance of mortality of trees proposed to be trimmed, we recommend that all trimming of native trees be conducted in accordance with ISA standards under the direction and supervision of an ISA Certified Arborist. Protective fencing that will not be moveable until construction activities are fully completed should be installed around the tree protection zone (TPZ) of the native trees prior to and within 15 feet of grading. The TPZ is the area where critical roots and canopy are present. The TPZ should be established by an ISA Certified Arborist. Project design attempted to minimize the impacts to riparian trees and the proposed final layout meets the minimum City requirements to reduce the extent of impacts to surrounding project areas and jurisdictional areas of regulatory agencies.

Typically, ISA recommends that activities affecting roots or crown of a tree impact no more than 20 to 25 percent of the root zone or crown of the tree (ISA 2010). Severing a single major root can affect 15 to 25 percent of the branches and can cause severe crown dieback (ISA 2010). When construction activities impact 40 to 50 percent of the root zone of a tree, the tree typically dies (USDA Forest Service, 2003; CDF 1989a; 1989b). Specifically for the California sycamore (No. 548) in Tanglewood Creek, impacts to structural roots may pose stability hazards, and given the maturity and poor health of the potentially impacted tree, the likelihood that structural roots would be impacted, the large size of the affected tree, and its proximity to structures and other utilities that could be damaged in the event of tree failure, we agree with the proposed removal of the tree.

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Thank you for the opportunity to support your environmental analysis needs for this important project. Please contact us if you have any questions.



Sincerely,  
**RINCON CONSULTANTS, INC.**

Kyle Weichert, MS  
Associate Biologist  
Arborist

Stephanie Lopez  
Senior Biologist/ISA Certified

Karen Holmes  
Project Manager/Senior Regulatory Specialist

Colby J. Boggs, MS  
Principal/Senior Ecologist

*Attachments: Tree Photographs  
Tree Inventory Table  
Imel Property Tract 3095 – Vesting Tentative Map (Sheet C3)*



## REFERENCES

- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF). 1989a. Tree Notes Protecting Trees from Construction Impacts.
- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF). 1989b. Tree Notes: Tree Roots; Major Considerations for the Developer.
- California Native Plant Society. 2016. Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants. Online Edition, v8-02. Available at [www.rareplants.cnps.org](http://www.rareplants.cnps.org).
- Cannon. 2016. Imel Property Tract 3095 – Vesting Tentative Map, Sheet C3. February 29.
- City of San Luis Obispo, California. 2010. City of San Luis Obispo Tree Ordinance – Ordinance No. 1544.
- Google. 2015. Google Earth Pro. Available at: <http://earth.google.com/>
- International Society of Arboriculture. 2008. Best Management Practices. Managing Trees during Construction.
- International Society of Arboriculture. 2010. Arborists' Certification Study Guide.
- U.S.D.A. Forest Service. 2003. Urban Tree Risk Management: A Community Guide to Program Design and Implementation.



## Tree Photographs



Photo 1. View east of California sycamore (No. 539) proposed for trimming.



Photo 2. View southeast of California sycamore (No. 548) proposed for removal.



Photo 3. Close-up view of California sycamore (No. 548) showing poor health of branches and canopy including sparse foliage and leaf burn.



Photo 4. Close-up of trunk of California sycamore (No. 548) showing poor health and evidence of substantial rot.





Photo 5. View north of the blue gum grove (No. 560) along Tanglewood Creek. The majority of this grove is proposed for removal.



**Tree Inventory Table for Orcutt Area Specific Plan, Imel Property**

Tree ID No.	Species	Approx. Height (feet)	Canopy width (feet)	DBH 1 (inches)	DBH 2 (inches)	DBH 3+ (inches)	Trunk Health	Branch Health	Canopy Health	Overall Health	Notes
501	Coast live oak ( <i>Quercus agrifolia</i> )	10	6	5	--	--	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair	Epicormic growth
502	Coast live oak ( <i>Quercus agrifolia</i> )	20	10	5	--	--	Good	Good	Good	Good	
503	Red willow <i>Salix laevigata</i>	15	25	9	11	9, 6	Dead	Dead	Dead	Dead	
504	Coast live oak ( <i>Quercus agrifolia</i> )	15	10	6	--	--	Good	Good	Good	Good	
505	California walnut ( <i>Juglans californica</i> )	25	25	15	--	--	Good	Fair	Good	Good	Broken limb at base, evidence of rot at root flair
506	California walnut ( <i>Juglans californica</i> )	20	15	5	--	--	Poor	Good	Good	Fair	
507	Coast live oak ( <i>Quercus agrifolia</i> )	25	25	11	9	11	Good	Good	Good	Good	
508	Red willow ( <i>Salix laevigata</i> )	25	20	11	8	--	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Downed limb
509	California bay ( <i>Umbellularia californica</i> )	20	15	11	--	--	Good	Fair	Good	Good	
510	California bay ( <i>Umbellularia californica</i> )	20	15	10	8	--	Good	Fair	Good	Good	
511	Tamarisk ( <i>Tamarix</i> sp.)	15	25	9	9	7, 6, 7	Fair	Poor	Poor	Poor	
512*	Blue gum ( <i>Eucalyptus globulus</i> )	35	35	20	--	--	Good	Good	Good	Good	
513*	Chilean pepper ( <i>Schinus polygamus</i> )	20	30	13	13	--	Fair	Good	Fair	Fair	Evidence of past trimming
514*	Pine (ornamental) ( <i>Pinus</i> sp.)	15	10	5	--	--	Fair	Good	Good	Good	
515*	Blue gum ( <i>Eucalyptus globulus</i> )	25	20	4	4	3, 1	Good	Good	Good	Good	Lower limbs resting on ground



Tree ID No.	Species	Approx. Height (feet)	Canopy width (feet)	DBH 1 (inches)	DBH 2 (inches)	DBH 3+ (inches)	Trunk Health	Branch Health	Canopy Health	Overall Health	Notes
516*	Mulberry ( <i>Morus alba</i> )	20	20	6	8	8	Poor	Fair	Fair	Fair	Split branch; evidence of past trimming
517*	Blue gum ( <i>Eucalyptus globulus</i> )	30	20	12	12	--	Poor	Fair	Good	Fair	Rot and broken limb at base
518*	Blue gum ( <i>Eucalyptus globulus</i> )	25	15	8	9	--	Poor	Fair	Good	Fair	Rot at base; evidence of past trimming
519*	Chinaberry ( <i>Melia azedarach</i> )	30	50	11	8	--	Poor	Fair	Fair	Fair	Split trunk; rot at base; evidence of past trimming
520*	Elm sp. ( <i>Ulmus</i> sp.)	30	30	15	--	--	Poor	Good	Good	Fair	Sapsucker holes; split trunk at base
521*	Mulberry ( <i>Morus alba</i> )	30	25	10	6	--	Poor	Fair	Poor	Fair	Both trunks split; evidence of rot
522	Chilean pepper ( <i>Schinus molle</i> )	15	15	12	--	--	Fair	Good	Good	Fair	Phototropic lean
523	Peruvian pepper ( <i>Schinus molle</i> )	15	15	4	1	--	Poor	Good	Fair	Fair	Gnarled base
524	California walnut ( <i>Juglans californica</i> )	30	45	35	--	--	Poor	Fair	Fair	Fair	Rot at base; 8 stems, dbh recorded at base
525	Coast live oak ( <i>Quercus agrifolia</i> )	25	10	5	--	--	Good	Good	Good	Good	
526	Coast live oak ( <i>Quercus agrifolia</i> )	25	10	3	--	--	Good	Good	Good	Good	
527	Coast live oak ( <i>Quercus agrifolia</i> )	15	20	6	4	9, 3	Poor	Fair	Good	Fair	Rot at base
528	Arroyo willow ( <i>Salix lasiolepis</i> )	20	20	20	--	--	Poor	Poor	Fair	Fair	Rot and dead limbs at base
529	Arroyo willow ( <i>Salix lasiolepis</i> )	25	25	24	--	--	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Dead limbs at base; broken limbs
530	Arroyo willow ( <i>Salix lasiolepis</i> )	15	15	14	--	--	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Phototropic lean; rot at base



Tree ID No.	Species	Approx. Height (feet)	Canopy width (feet)	DBH 1 (inches)	DBH 2 (inches)	DBH 3+ (inches)	Trunk Health	Branch Health	Canopy Health	Overall Health	Notes
531	California walnut ( <i>Juglans californica</i> )	15	15	5	--	--	Good	Good	Good	Good	Suckers at base
532**	Coast live oak ( <i>Quercus agrifolia</i> )	15	45	14	--	--	Poor	Poor	Fair	Poor	Canopy resting on ground
533	Arroyo willow ( <i>Salix lasiolepis</i> )	20	25	2	--	--	Poor	Fair	Fair	Fair	
534	California walnut grove ( <i>Juglans californica</i> )	20	60	--	--	--	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	17 trees; 10 with dbh of 4 inches or greater, 7 with dbh less than four inches
535*	California walnut ( <i>Juglans californica</i> )	10	10	6	--	--	Poor	Fair	Fair	Poor	Suckers; trimmed excessively, dead branches
536	Peruvian pepper ( <i>Schinus molle</i> )	20	35	7	3	11, 5, 16	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	
537	Red willow ( <i>Salix laevigata</i> )	30	20	10	8	12	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	Decay visible on trunk; sparse foliage
538	California walnut grove ( <i>Juglans californica</i> )	25	23	--	--	--	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	9 trees total; 3 of with dbh 4 inches or greater, 6 with dbh of less than 4 inches
539**	California sycamore ( <i>Platanus racemosa</i> )	55	60	53	11	10, 14, 16, 16	Main trunk poor, others fair	Good	Good	Fair	Main trunk with major fungus at base, other 5 with fair to good health
540	Chilean pepper ( <i>Schinus polygamus</i> )	25	20	14	--	--	Good	Fair	Fair	Fair	
541	Arroyo willow grove ( <i>Salix lasiolepis</i> )	20	55	--	--	--	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	3 multi-stem trees, dbh 2-10; dead bases, over mature tree reprints
542	Tamarisk ( <i>Tamarix sp.</i> )	15	20	10	--	--	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Downed, laying on ground
543*	Blue gum ( <i>Eucalyptus globulus</i> )	55	35	50	--	--	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair	



Tree ID No.	Species	Approx. Height (feet)	Canopy width (feet)	DBH 1 (inches)	DBH 2 (inches)	DBH 3+ (inches)	Trunk Health	Branch Health	Canopy Health	Overall Health	Notes
544*	Chilean pepper ( <i>Schinus polygamus</i> )	20	20	9	--	--	Good	Fair	Good	Good	
545	Almond ( <i>Prunus dulcis</i> )	10	15	6	--	--	Good	Good	Good	Good	
546	California walnut grove ( <i>Juglans californica</i> )	25	70				Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	6 trees with dbh 4-25 inches
547*	Chilean pepper grove ( <i>Schinus polygamus</i> )	35	170	--	--	--	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	Main Chilean pepper grove; 10 clusters of trees, each 3-15 trunks; dbh range 4-65 inches; cluster growth habit
548*	California sycamore ( <i>Platanus racemosa</i> )	60	75	61	--	--	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Rot up main trunk to about 15 feet; leaf burn; likely diseased, ants all over base; limbs over extended
549*	Peruvian pepper ( <i>Schinus molle</i> )	15	20	25	--	--	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	Burrow under trunk; ants all over trunk; evidence of trimming
550*	Peruvian pepper grove ( <i>Schinus molle</i> )	15	20	--	--	--	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	4 trees with dbh 4-22
551*	Blue gum grove ( <i>Eucalyptus globulus</i> )	75	110	--	--	--	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	Typical grove; remnant removed trunks, bases
552	Coast live oak ( <i>Quercus agrifolia</i> )	20	25	11	--	--	Good	Good	Good	Good	Burrow under trunk; fence post within inches
553	Red willow grove ( <i>Salix laevigata</i> )	25	45	--	--	--	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	Multi-willow grove; dbh 1-6 inches
554	Peruvian pepper grove ( <i>Schinus molle</i> )	20	82	--	--	--	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair	6 trees with dbh 3-20 inches
555	Red willow ( <i>Salix laevigata</i> )	30	40	14	14	14, 16	Poor	Fair	Poor	Poor	Senescent



Tree ID No.	Species	Approx. Height (feet)	Canopy width (feet)	DBH 1 (inches)	DBH 2 (inches)	DBH 3+ (inches)	Trunk Health	Branch Health	Canopy Health	Overall Health	Notes
556	Peruvian pepper ( <i>Schinus molle</i> )	20	20	12	--	--	Poor	Good	Good	Fair	Trunk growth into fence; evidence of trimming
557	Chilean pepper ( <i>Schinus polygamus</i> )	20	15	10	--	--	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair	Limbs growing through fence; burls at base
558*	Chilean pepper ( <i>Schinus polygamus</i> )	20	30	11	8	4, 4, 8	Good	Good	Good	Good	
559*	English oak ( <i>Quercus ruber</i> )	35	40	18	--	--	Good	Good	Good	Good	Sapsucker holes
560*	Blue gum grove ( <i>Eucalyptus globulus</i> )	100	220	--	--	--	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Typical blue gum grove; many downed trees
561*	New Zealand ngaio, A.K.A. lollypop tree ( <i>Myoporum laetum</i> )	20	25	15	6	10, 12, 12	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	One dead limb; diseased at base; foliage very sparse

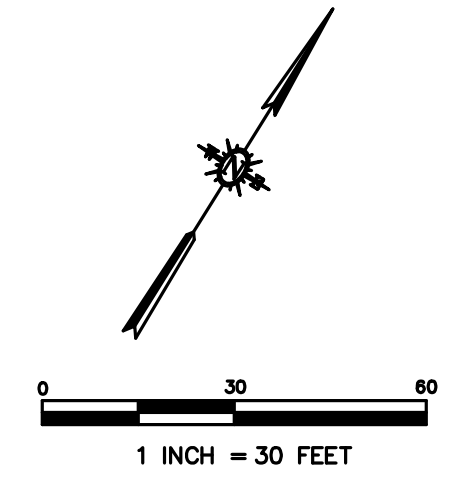
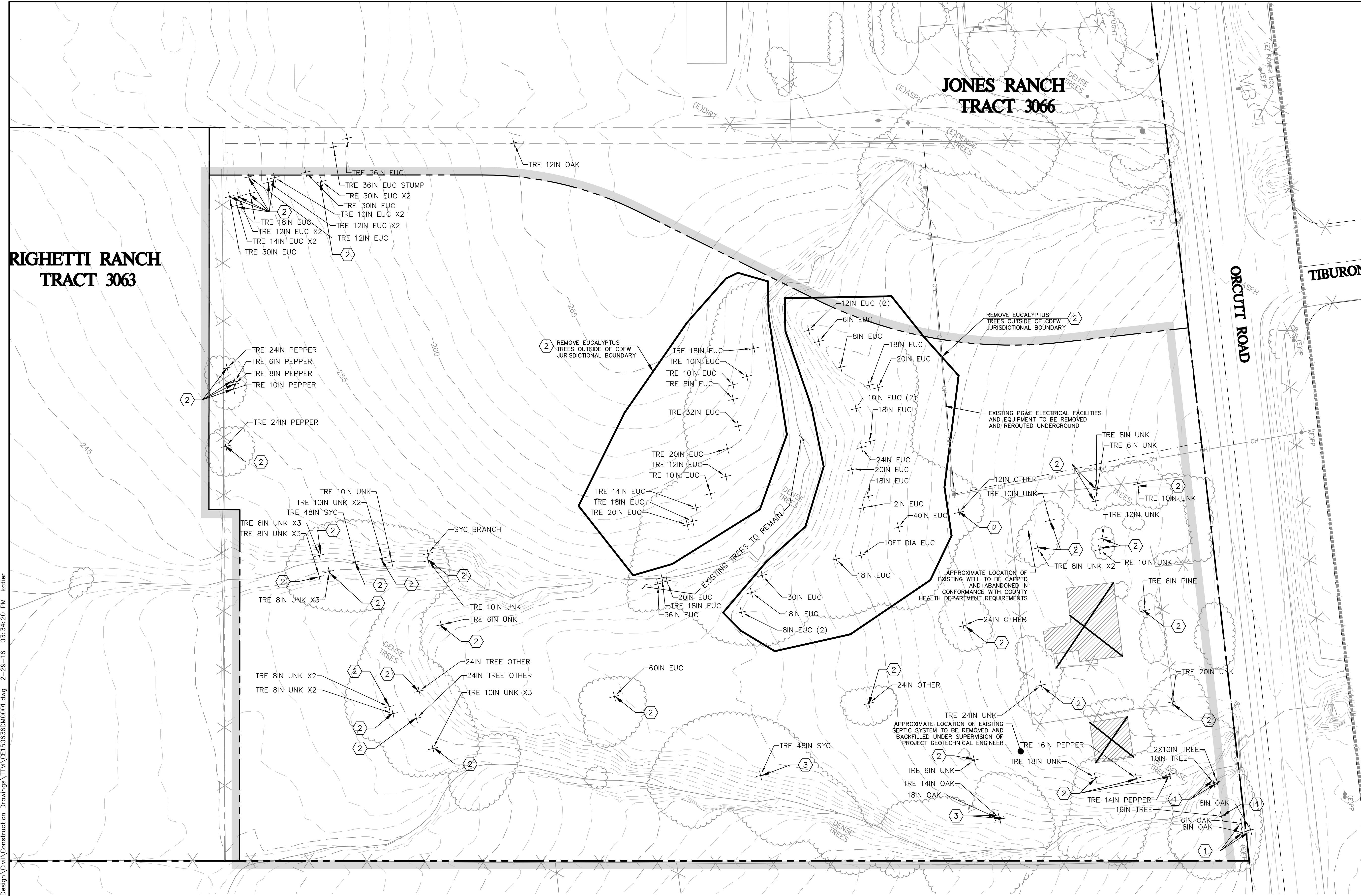
\* = Trees proposed for removal

\*\* = Trees to be pruned as necessary

**RIGHETTI RANCH  
TRACT 3063**

**JONES RANCH  
TRACT 3066**

- NOTES:**
1. SEPTIC LOCATION APPROXIMATED BASED ON LOCATION OF PLUMBING IN EXISTING HOUSE.
  2. WELL LOCATION APPROXIMATED BASED ON FIELD OBSERVATION OF WELL HOUSE.



- LEGEND**
- TRE XIN UNK EXISTING TREE WITH TRUNK DIAMETER NOTED IN INCHES
  - ① EXISTING TREE TO REMAIN
  - ② EXISTING TREE TO BE REMOVED
  - ③ EXISTING TREE TO BE PRUNED AS NEEDED
  - X EXISTING BUILDING TO BE REMOVED

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<b>IMEL PROPERTY TRACT 3095 - VESTING TENTATIVE MAP DEMOLITION PLAN CITY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA</b>		
DRAWN BY <b>WGC</b>	DATE <b>02/29/2016</b>	CA JOB NO. <b>150636</b>
CHECKED BY	SCALE <b>1" = 30'</b>	SHEET <b>C3 OF 12</b>