



1343 Bishop Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
Tel: 805 234 8760 Email: rodney@heritagetreeconsulting.com

## Oak Tree Impact Report

**Project Location:** 420 Creston Road, Paso Robles,

**Report Prepared By:** Rodney D. Thurman

**Professional Certifications:**

- International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Board Certified Master Arborist #PN2684BUM – Expires 6/1/2025
- ISA Urban Forest Professional – Expires 6/1/2026
- ISA Utility Specialist – Expires 6/1/2026
- ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualification – Expires 12/31/2026

**City of Paso Robles Business License:** #16811 Exp. June 30, 2025

**Proof of Liability Insurance:** Century Surety Company- Policy #CCP1261355



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March 17, 2025

**To:** Stevens Wilson – Montage Development Inc., 23945 Calabasas Road Suite 207, Calabasas, CA 91302

**From:** Rodney Thurman – Heritage Tree Arboricultural Consulting

**Re:** Oak Tree Impact Report in regard to proposed residential development at 420 Creston Road.

Mr. Wilson,

In response to your request, I have assessed the condition, stability and potential for retention of ten (10) native oak trees located at 420 Creston Road in Paso Robles, California. Additionally, I have included a brief overview of non-native trees on site.

## **Summary:**

I assessed the health and stability of ten (10) native oak trees 6 inches in diameter and larger that were growing on the property where you are proposing to construct a new housing development. Three (3) native oak trees numbered 1-3 were in fair condition and structurally sound. Seven (7) other native oaks were generally in poor or very poor condition and did not warrant retention. The proposed footprint of the project will significantly impact all of the trees including Trees 1-3. The proposed construction impacts will not allow the retention of any of the native oaks on site.

Tree replacements are required for all native oak trees removed that are six (6) inch diameter and larger. All native tree removals must be approved by city council. In total, I recommended that 10 native oak trees be removed due to construction impacts and/or poor health. The combined total diameters of the trees proposed for removal were 176 inches. According to the oak tree protection ordinance, a 25% replacement of total diameter inches removed is required. Twenty-five percent of 176 is 44 inches. Therefore twenty-nine (29) native oaks at a size of 1.5 inch caliper would be required for mitigation replacement, on site, if all trees recommended for removal are approved by the city.

There were also numerous non-native trees on site. According to the City of Paso Robles tree ordinance, there is no restriction on removing non-native trees.



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## Introduction:

The property is located on the south side of Creston Road between Capitol Hill Drive and Ferro Lane. You have proposed to build multiple residences on this site. Associated paved access roads and parking areas are also proposed. The terrain is relatively flat on the northern half of the property. The southern half of the property slopes off significantly to a seasonal drainage below. See Appendix A – Photographs - Photo 1.

There were ten (10) valley oak trees (*Quercus lobata*) on the site that measured greater than 6 inches in *diameter at standard height (DSH)*. There were also approximately 33 non-native trees on site.

## Observations:

I conducted health and condition assessments for each native oak tree on the property with a DSH of six (6) inches and greater. I numbered each tree with a rectangular metal tag and attached it to the base of the trunk. Photos of the trees are provided in Appendix A - Photographs. Locations of each tree listed are in Appendix B - Site Map.

A chart for quick reference regarding the assessment is included in Chart 1 - Oak Tree Inventory on page 3.

To determine the condition class rating for each tree, I listed six (6) subcategories of condition with values of 1-5. One was the lowest rating and five was the highest rating. From the combined total of the six (6) categories, a condition class was assigned according to Chart 2 on page 4. A condition class rating quantification breakdown is listed in Chart 3 on page 4.



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**Chart 1 - Individual Oak Tree Inventory**

Tree #	Species	Diameter	Location	Condition	Impact %	Comments
1	Valley Oak (Quercus lobata)	13	front of lot at street	fair	100	Utility pruned but structurally stable.
2	Valley Oak (Quercus lobata)	13	front of lot at street	fair	100	Utility pruned but structurally stable.
3	Valley Oak (Quercus lobata)	13	front of lot at street	fair	100	Utility pruned but structurally stable.
4	Valley Oak (Quercus lobata)	18	front of lot at driveway	very poor	100	Trunk defect due to wired girdling it. Severely drought stressed.
5	Valley Oak (Quercus lobata)	13	front of lot at west fenceline	poor	100	Severe drought stress
6	Valley Oak (Quercus lobata)	44	mid lot at west fenceline	very poor	100	Fire damage. 3 of 4 stems badly burned on north side. South stem and scaffold branch burned and not alive. Live canopy 50%. Decay present in 3 of 4 burned stems. Large stems of tree likely to fail due to decaying stems. Presents hazard post development.
7	Valley Oak (Quercus lobata)	19	mid lot at east prop line	poor	100	Two-stemmed tree with included bark. Moderate drought stress
8	Valley Oak (Quercus lobata)	16	mid lot at east prop line	poor	100	Two-stemmed tree with included bark. Moderate drought stress
9	Valley Oak (Quercus lobata)	17	mid lot at east prop line	very poor	100	Two-stemmed tree with included bark. Severe drought stress.
10	Valley Oak (Quercus lobata)	10	mid lot at east prop line	very poor	100	Three-stemmed tree with included bark. Moderate drought stress.

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**Chart 2 - Condition Class Rating**

Condition Class Rating								
Tree #	Trunk Condition	Growth Rate	Structure	Insects and Disease	Crown Development	Life Expectancy	Rating	Condition Class
1	4	3	2	4	1	3	17	Fair
2	4	3	2	4	1	3	17	Fair
3	4	3	2	4	1	3	17	Fair
4	1	1	1	3	1	1	8	Very poor
5	4	1	2	3	1	1	12	Poor
6	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	Very poor
7	1	2	1	3	3	1	11	Poor
8	2	1	1	3	2	1	10	Poor
9	2	1	1	3	1	1	9	Very Poor
10	2	1	1	3	2	1	9	Very Poor

**Chart 3 - Condition Class Valuation**

Condition Class Valuation		
Condition Class	Percent	Rating
Excellent	81-100%	24-30
Good	61-80%	19-23
Fair	41-60%	14-18
Poor	21-40%	10-13
Very Poor	0-20%	0-9

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## Discussion:

### Analysis of Tree Health

**Trees 1-3** were given a condition rating of fair. All of the trees had been utility pruned for power line clearance. Although not specimen trees, they were viable. See Appendix A - Photographs - Photo 2

**Tree 4** was given a condition rating of poor. It was growing along the west edge of the western driveway that enters the property. The tree had grown into the wire fence and the wire was causing damage to the trunk and compromising its structure. Additionally, the tree was moderately drought stressed and had heavy soil compaction from driveway use in its *\*critical root zone or CRZ*. No damage to the structural roots was apparent. The main issue contributing to the low rating was the wire fence embedded into the trunk. The embedded wire had compromised the wood structure and was also an entry point for decay. Long term, the stem will become more unstable and prone to failure. See Appendix A - Photographs - Photos 3 & 4.

**Tree 5** was given a condition rating of poor. The tree was growing on western property line, approximately 50 yards south of the street. It had severe drought stress which was indicated by twig die-back in the *\*canopy* and decline of small diameter branches. See Appendix A - Photographs - Photo 5.

**Tree 6** was given a condition rating of very poor. Fire had damaged 3 of 4 stems and they were severely burned on the north side. The scaffold branch growing off the south stem was completely burned with no signs of life. The remaining viable canopy was approximately 50%. Decay was present in 3 of 4 burned stems. Large stems of the tree were likely to fail due to decay. The tree will present risk to people and property post development if it is retained. See Appendix A - Photographs - Photos 6 & 7.

**Tree 7** was given a condition rating of poor. The tree was located along the eastern property line at the mid-point of the parcel. It had moderate drought stress which was indicated by twig die-back in the canopy. This tree also had a multi-stem trunk with *\*included bark* that will make it more prone to failure in the future. See Appendix A - Photographs - Photos 8 & 9.

**Tree 8** was given a condition rating of poor. The tree was also located along the eastern property line at the mid-point of the parcel. It had moderate drought stress which was indicated by twig die-back in the canopy. This tree also had a multi-stem trunk with included bark that will make it more prone to failure in the future. See Appendix A – Photographs - Photos 10 & 11.

**Tree 9** was given a condition rating of very poor. The tree was also located along the eastern property line at the mid-point of the parcel. It had severe drought stress which was indicated by twig die back and decline of small diameter branches. This tree also had a multi-stem trunk with included bark that will make it more prone to failure in the future. See Appendix A – Photographs - Photos 10, 12 & 13.

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**Tree 10** was given a condition rating of very poor. The tree was also located along the eastern property line at the mid-point of the parcel. It had severe drought stress which was indicated by twig die back and decline of small diameter branches. This tree also had a multi-stem trunk with included bark that will make it more prone to failure in the future. See Appendix A – Photographs - Photos 14 & 15.

## Consideration of trees in relation to development plans:

Many of the native oak trees on the site were in poor to very poor condition, displaying structural defects and stress caused by drought and in one case a tree had been badly burned. When I assessed the trees for long term retention in relation to the proposed new homes, few were worthy of keeping. When the site development plans were overlaid, the impacts were so great that none of the native oak trees on site would survive.

**Trees 1-3** were in fair condition and located next to the existing sidewalk at Creston Road. The entrance into the development is planned for this area. The impacts from the entry construction will be 100%. Based on current plans, I do not recommend these trees for retention.

**Tree 4** had severely declined due to drought. Although it was a larger tree, because of the damage to the trunk caused by the embedded fence, its structure had been compromised which makes it more prone to whole stem failure. Additionally, a building and parking area are proposed in this location. I do not recommend this tree for retention.

**Tree 5** had also declined due to drought. Because of its poor vigor I anticipate it will decline further. Additionally, construction impacts from grading and paving the parking area will severely impact the roots of the tree and contribute further to its decline. Grading may also cause the tree to become unstable. If this tree were of higher quality, I would recommend creating a tree island to protect and retain it. In its current condition, I don't anticipate it being long lived, therefore I do not recommend retention. ***This tree is located on the property line and you must gain permission from the adjacent owner before it can be approved for removal by the city.***

**Tree 6** suffered significant damage during a 2020 fire. Its structure and health has been compromised. It is not safe to retain this tree in a housing development. Current plans indicate a building is planned for this location. I do not recommend this tree for retention.

**Tree 7** was in poor condition overall. In regard to health the tree rated as fair, however the tree was a two-stem with included bark which makes it prone to failure and lowered its rating for structure. Additionally, the tree is located within the footprint of a proposed building. If this tree were of higher structural quality, I would recommend redesign to protect and retain it, but as it stands, I do not recommend retention of the tree based on its poor structure.

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**Trees 8 & 9** were rated poor and very poor. They had declining health from years of drought stress and their structures were compromised due to included bark between their co-dominant stems which makes them prone to failure. Additionally, the trees are located within the proposed footprint of a building. If these trees were of higher structural quality, I would recommend redesign to protect and retain them, but as it stands, I do not recommend retention based on their poor structure and low vigor.

**Tree 10** was rated very poor. It had declining health due to drought and its structure was compromised due to included bark between its co-dominant stems. Included bark makes the tree prone to failure. Additionally, the tree is located within the proposed footprint of a building. If this tree were of higher structural quality, I would recommend redesign to protect and retain it, but as it stands, I do not recommend retention based on its poor structure and low vigor.

**Non-Native Trees** - There were approximately thirty-three (33) non-native trees on site which included: Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*), Almond (*Prunus dulcis*), Siberian elm (*Ulmus pumila*), Ailanthus (*Ailanthus altissima*), black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), and California pepper (*Schinus molle*). See Appendix A - Photographs- Photos 13 - 16 for examples. According to the City of Robles Paso tree ordinance, there is no restriction on removing non - native trees. For the most part, these trees occurred along the eastern border of the property. Many were drought stressed and in severe decline.

The pines along the eastern border were young and vigorous; however, their potential for red turpentine beetle (*Dendroctonus valens*) infestation is high. Aleppo pines also grow to 60 or more feet tall and are prone to large branch failure. Furthermore, pines are highly flammable. If left in place, the branches of these trees would encroach on buildings, pose failure, and fire hazards.

## Oak Tree Replacements:

The City of Paso Robles requires replacements for any native oak that is removed which is over 6 inches in diameter. This requirement is at the discretion of the Director of Public Works. The following is excerpted from the city's Oak Tree Ordinance 835 N.S.:

Replacement oaks being equivalent to twenty-five percent of the diameter of the removed tree(s). (For example, the replacement requirement for removal of two trees of fifteen-inch DBH (thirty total diameter inches), would be seven and one-half inches (thirty inches removed multiplied by twenty-five hundredths replacement factor). This requirement could be satisfied by planting five, one and one-half inch caliper trees, or three, two-and one-half inch caliper trees or any other combination totaling seven and one-half inches). A minimum of two, twenty-four inch box, one and one-half inch minimum trunk caliper measurement trees shall be required for each oak tree removed.

Replacement trees shall be located on the same property as where the tree is approved for removal or, subject to approval of the director, arrangements can be made to locate the replacement trees on public property. Planting standards for replacement trees shall be consistent with City Standard Details and Specification L-4 except that deep root barriers shall not be required if the trees are not adjacent to sidewalk areas. Oak tree preservation and maintenance measures shall be consistent with the provisions of this chapter.

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The combined total for diameters of the trees proposed for removal is 176 inches. Twenty-five percent of that total diameter is 44 inches. Therefore, twenty-nine (29) native oaks measuring 1.5 inch caliper would be required for mitigation replacement on site, if all trees recommended for removal are approved by the city. Replacement trees shall be native California oaks endemic to the Paso Robles area. The species proposed for removal is valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) therefore it is the preferred species to plant back on site. Exceptions can be made by the City regarding the native oak species, but must be approved prior to planting.

Because valley oaks have a large mature size and require unrestricted root-space, planting the trees in a grove in the open-space adjacent to the existing wooded area at the south end of the parcel would be ideal. See Appendix A – Photographs - Photo 20. The trees shall be planted 30 feet on center.

Automatic irrigation shall be provided at approximately 10 gallons per tree on a weekly basis, May through October for the first 5 years after planting in order to establish the trees.

I have also provided an International Society of Arboriculture tree planting diagram in Appendix C. It is consistent with the City's Standards and Specifications Section 8 - Appendix L. Note that tree stakes shall remain on trees no more than 2 years. Wire fencing may need to be installed around the trees to prevent deer from entering the mitigation area.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations:**

Trees 1-3 were in fair condition and viable, however proposed new curb, gutter and sidewalk improvements including the main driveway entry to the property will not allow the retention of these trees.

Trees 4,5,7,8,9 and 10 had poor health and structure or were growing within or adjacent to proposed building footprints. None were of high enough quality to be retained and therefore did not warrant the adjustment of building plans.

Tree replacements are required for all approved oak trees removals that are six (6) inch diameter and larger. Twenty-nine (29) native oaks at a size of 1.5 - inch caliper would be required for replacement if all trees recommended for removal are approved. Planting the trees in a grove adjacent to the existing wooded area at the south end of the parcel would be ideal.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rodney D. Thurman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Rodney D. Thurman  
ISA Certified Arborist PN-2684BUM  
ISA Tree Risk Assessor Qualification

**Appendices:** Photographs, Site Map, Tree Planting Specifications, Glossary of Terms



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## Appendix A- Photographs



**Photo 1** - Panorama view looking south into lot from Creston Road.

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**Photo 2** - View of Trees 1-3 along Creston Road. New driveway entry planned for area.

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Photo 3 - View south of Tree 4 from Creston Road.

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**Photo 4** - View south of Tree 4 trunk growing into fence. Trunk is not structurally sound.

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**Photo 5** - View southwest of Tree 5 - Note drought stress indicated by dead branches and sparse canopy. Tree is outside property line.

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**Photo 6** - View south of tree 6 – A mature valley oak that was badly burned in a June 2020 fire. The tree is alive but in very poor condition. It is not safe to retain in a housing project.

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**Photo 7** - View of Tree 6 trunk on north side – 4 of 4 primary stems were badly burned and starting to decay. The tree is not safe to retain in a housing project.

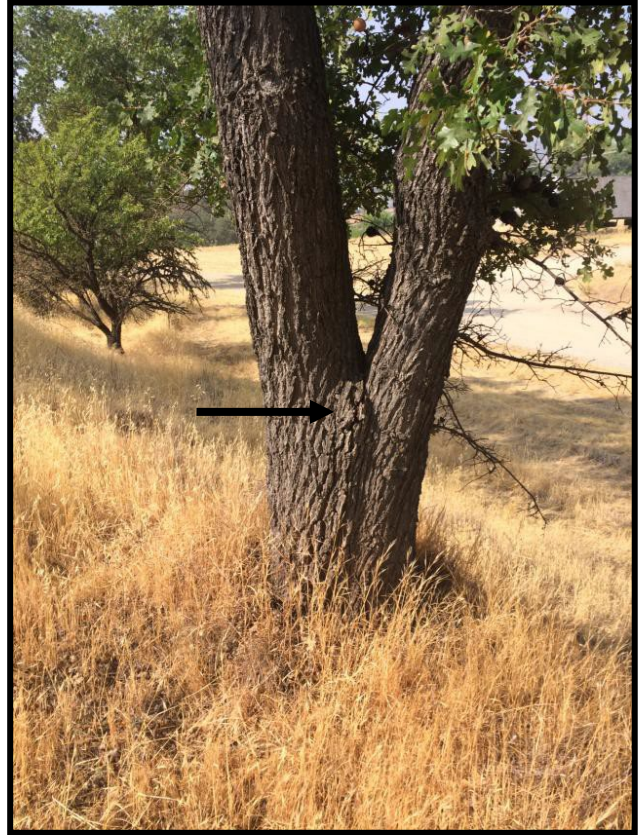
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**Photo 8** - View south of Tree 7



**Photo 9** - Tree 7 with included bark indicated by arrow.

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**Photo 10** - View of Trees 8 & 9 - Note dead branches indicating drought stress.

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Photo 11 - Trunk of Tree 8 with included bark.



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**Photo 12** - View of Tree 9 - Note drought stress indicated by dead branches and sparse canopy.



**Photo 13** - Trunk of Tree 9 with included bark .

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**Photo 14** - View of Tree 10 - Multi-stem tree with included bark.



**Photo 15** - Trunk of Tree 10.

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**Photos 16 -19 Below** - Examples of non-native trees on site



**Photo 16** - Pines



**Photo 17** - Almonds



**Photo 18** - Elm



**Photo 19** - California Pepper

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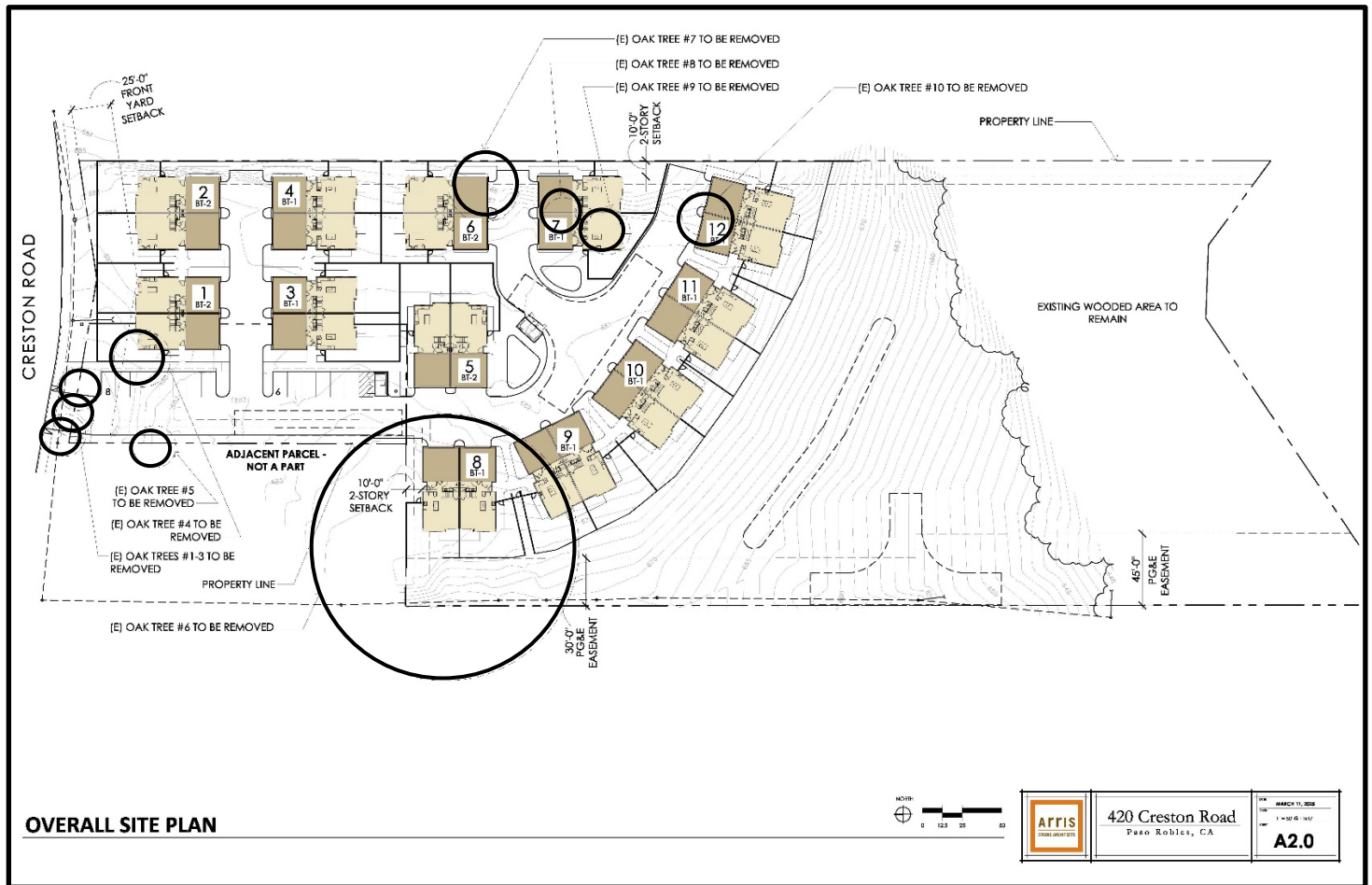


**Photo 20** - View of open-space above existing oak woodland at the south end of the parcel.



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Appendix B - Site Map



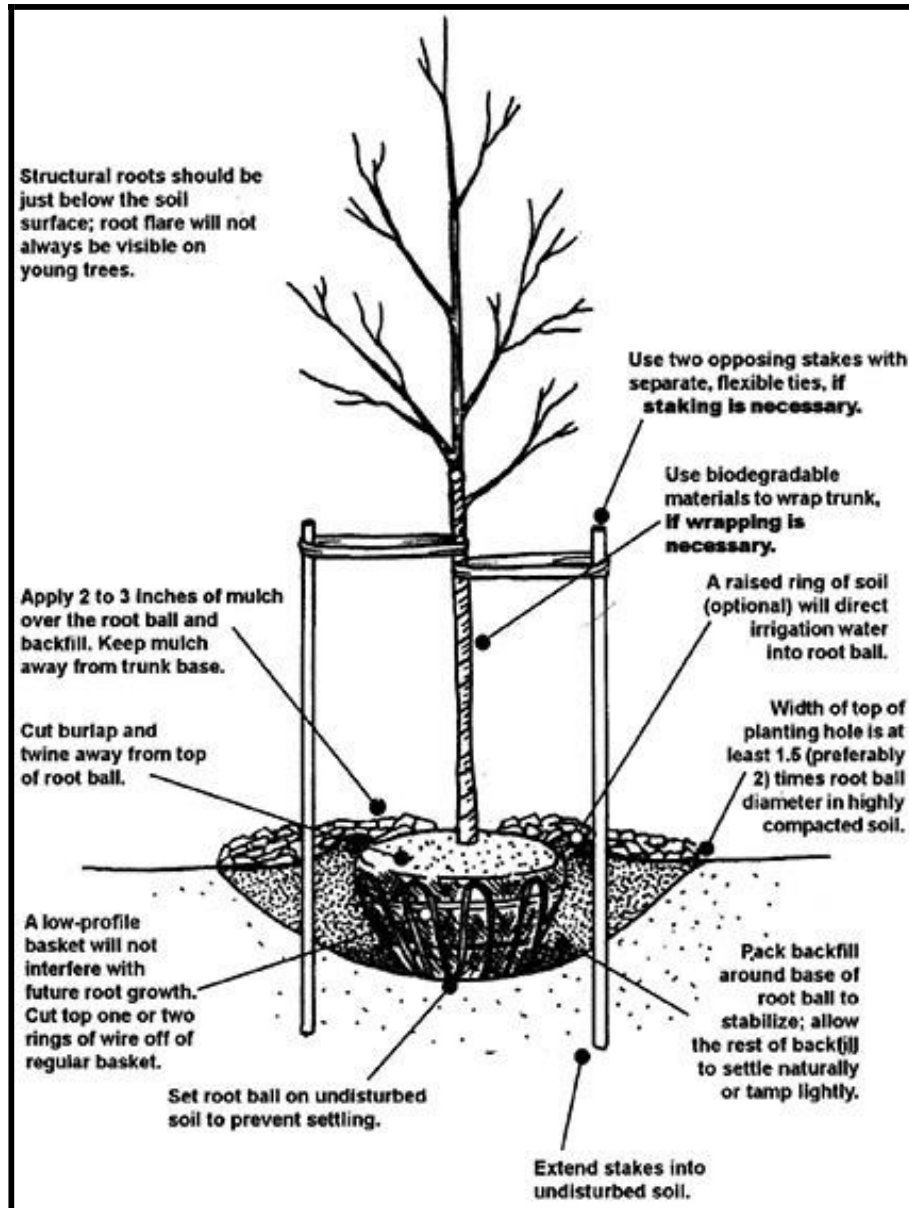
Black circles indicate tree locations. Tree numbers are called out on map. See page A2.0 of plan set for full scale version.

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### Appendix C - Tree Planting Diagram



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## Appendix D- Glossary of Terms

- **Canopy**- Collective branches and foliage of a tree or group of tree's crowns. Aggregate or collective tree crowns.
- **Critical Root Zone or CRZ**- The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) defines Critical Root Zone (CRZ) as an area equal to 1-foot radius from the base of the tree's trunk for each 1 inch of the tree's diameter at 4.5 feet above grade (referred to as Diameter at Standard Height or DSH).
- **Diameter at Standard Height or DSH**- Diameter of trunk measured at 4.5 feet above ground level.
- **Drip-line**- Area beneath the tree delineated by the outer edge of the tree canopy.
- **Included Bark**- Bark that becomes embedded in a crotch (union) between branch and trunk or between co-dominant stems. Causes a weak structure.