

## MEMORANDUM

July 28, 2023

11898

To: Jaclyn Rackerby – Planner for the City of Calabasas  
From: Noah Stamm – City of Calabasas Contract Arborist

**Subject:** *Peer-Review Memo Letter for submitted Oak Tree Report for 24325 Mulholland Hwy, Calabasas, California*

### 1 Introduction

This memorandum provides the results of a third-party peer review of the submitted Oak Tree Report (dated June 5, 2023) and associated Oak Tree Location Map completed by Consulting Arborist Rebecca Latta. The Oak Tree Report was prepared at the request of the property owner (applicant) to survey the property at 24325 Mulholland Highway, Calabasas, California for a project that proposes to build a deck and retaining wall at the outer edge of the tree's canopies near where the existing deck is located. The architect proposes to use a footing design that minimizes the impacts around the root system of coast live oak tree (*Quercus agrifolia*) no. 14. The proposed deck/landscape improvements require expanding the improvements into the tree protection zone (TPZ) of two (2) heritage coast live oak trees located in the rear yard area of the property. The trunk of coast live oak tree no. 14 is located approximately 20 feet downslope from the proposed decking area and the crown of the tree extends up to the existing pool wall. For coast live oak tree no. 15, the trunk is located approximately 40 feet down slope at the crown extends within approximately 30 feet of the pool area. As part of the submitted oak tree report, 20 additional coast live oak trees and scrub oak trees were found throughout and within the adjacent right of way along the eastern side of the property. There are a total of 22 coast live oak and scrub oak trees (including tree nos. 14 and 15), with 19 trees located on-site and three (3) trees along the right of way facing Mulholland Highway. There are remnants of a small coastal sage scrub/coast live oak woodland to the north of the property which contains approximately 12 to 15 co-dependent trees.

Of the 22 oak trees that were surveyed as part of the submitted Oak Tree Report and included on the Oak Tree Map, there are six (6) coast live oak trees within the vicinity of the of the proposed landscape improvement activities (coast live oak tree nos. 14 through 19) and have the potential to have their Tree Protection Zones (TPZs) encroached upon by construction related activities; the 16 remaining oak trees are located along the eastern property boundary and thus will not be impacted by the construction related activities. As mentioned above, the project proposes to construct a deck and retaining wall along the western edge of the existing pool area near where the existing deck is located. Because coast live oak tree nos. 14 and 15 are considered heritage trees, the construction related activities extend within their TPZs, however, only the north/northeastern portion of the TPZ of Tree no. 14 will be impacted. The new retaining wall is proposed to have a pier footing design that will minimize impacts to the tree's root system and would be carefully installed away from any potential larger diameter roots. Tree no. 14 is located approximately 20 feet downslope and to the southwest of the existing pool and concrete pool deck area, so impacts to the tree's root system are likely to be minimal, approximately 5-10%. Based on the

locations of the other nearby coast live oak trees (tree nos. 15 through 19), no other impacts are anticipated to oak trees on or adjacent to 24325 Mulholland Hwy.

Dudek conducted a visual Level 2 Basic Tree Assessment from the ground on July 7, 2023, to visually inspect and evaluate the health, structure and locations of the oak trees identified within the Oak Tree Report; neither the applicant or a City Planner were present during the assessment. A Level 2 Basic Tree Risk Assessment consists of an ISA Certified Arborist walking completely around the trunk of a tree and look for defects in all visible areas of the tree from the ground, including surrounding areas. Typically, the assessment could include using a rubber mallet to sound the tree or a probe that can be used to evaluate open cavities. The purpose of the Oak Tree Report and the site inspection is to address the focused tree survey of 22 protected oak trees on or adjacent to the property, specifically tree nos. 14 through 19 which are growing within the vicinity of the proposed landscape construction improvements. Dudek completed the site inspection to verify the validity of the recommendations regarding the coast live oak trees that are included within the Oak Tree Report for the proposed project related activities and therefore, will minimally be impacted or encroached on by the landscape improvement activities in the front and rear yard areas. As mentioned above, the TPZ's of heritage tree nos. 14 and 15 are the only two trees that will be encroached upon. The TPZ is an area surrounding a tree and includes all area within the dripline of the tree, plus five feet beyond the dripline. This area cannot be less than 15 feet from the trunk of the tree. For Heritage oak trees, the area is increased to a minimum distance of 50 feet from the trunk. The TPZs of the remaining oak trees are far enough away from the construction related activities, and thus will not be impacted. All trees on-site coast live oak trees adjacent to the construction related activities will be protected by a five-foot fence that will be installed about the TPZs of the trees.

The purpose of this arborist peer review is to ensure applicant compliance with the City of Calabasas Oak Tree Ordinance (Chapter 17.32.010 of the City's Municipal Code) and the City of Calabasas Oak Tree Preservation and Protection Guidelines (April, 1993).

## 2 Discussion and recommendations

Dudek's arborist found the submitted Oak Tree Report and associated Oak Tree Map to be generally accurate to the observed site conditions and was found to be complete. Tree no. 14 is a two-stem heritage coast live oak tree with trunk diameters of 21 inches and 17 inches diameter at standard height (DSH) is approximately 45 feet tall, and has an approximately 45-foot canopy spread at its widest point. The tree exhibited fair health with a poor-to-fair structure; the tree exhibited signs of an approximately 9-inch diameter failure scar on the east side of the tree's trunk and an approximately one-foot in diameter cavity at the base of the tree's trunk. A "heritage" tree, according to the City of Calabasas Oak Tree Preservation and Protection Guidelines, is a tree that has a trunk or combined trunk diameter larger than 24-inches in diameter at standard height (DSH - 4 ½-feet above natural grade). The co-dominant trunks exhibited u-shaped joints. There were no other signs of insects or disease noted at the time of the Level 2 Assessment. Tree no. 15 is a single-stem heritage coast live oak tree with a trunk diameter of 27 inches, DSH is approximately 50 feet tall, and has an approximately 45-foot canopy spread at its widest point. The tree exhibited poor-to-fair health with a fair structure; the tree exhibited a thinning crown with green leaves, poor vigor, and deadwood throughout. Furthermore, there was evidence of beetle damage noted within the upper crown of the tree at the time of the Level 2 Assessment. Tree nos. 16 through 18 exhibited fair-to-good health with fair structures. Tree no. 16 exhibited a bleeding canker wound at the base of the tree's trunk. The canopies of the tree's were well

balanced with green foliage throughout and minimal deadwood throughout. Further, no signs of insects or disease were observed at the time of the Level 2 Assessment of the three coast live oak trees. Coast live oak tree no. 19 was a young sapling in the northwest corner of the property. Representative photographs of the coast live oak trees are shown in *Attachment 1 – Representative Site Photographs*.

Dudek is in agreement with the validity of the findings and information included in the Oak Tree Report and associated Oak Tree Map, which identifies the adjacent oak tree within the limits of disturbance, provides a description of the oak tree (including health and locations), as well as recommendations for tree protection and preservation and mitigation measures that should be implemented to prevent construction related damage to the trees that will remain. Because the construction of the pool deck will occur adjacent to the canopies of tree nos. 14 and 15 and will encroach into the TPZ's of the two coast live oak trees, all work performed within the TPZ of this oak trees should be performed within the presence of a qualified oak tree consultant and all work should be performed with the use of hand tools only; it should be noted that the Oak Tree Report notes that before the pier footings are installed, an exploratory pre-excavation assessment will occur around the roots of trees with either an airspade or by hand to determine the size of potential roots that will be impacted and appropriate placement of the pier footings. To protect the trees during construction, all on-site trees will include tree protective fencing around the trunk/TPZs of the trees. An ISA Certified Arborist shall be retained to supervise and monitor the condition of the existing protected oak tree throughout the proposed landscape improvement activities. Furthermore, the Oak Tree Report recommends that a protective layer of bark chip mulch and natural leaf litter be placed around the base of tree nos. 1, 14, 15, 16, and 17 and that the health and structure of tree no. 15 be monitored every several months due to the thinning crown and signs of damage from a wood boring beetle.

### 3 Conclusion

Based on the information provided in the submitted Oak Tree Report by the Project's certified consulting arborist, Dudek is in agreement that the Oak Tree Report was prepared in accordance with the City of Calabasas Oak Tree Ordinance (Chapter 17.32.010 of the City's Municipal Code) and the City of Calabasas Oak Tree Preservation and Protection Guidelines. Therefore, the request is warranted to grant approval of the Oak Tree Report and associated Oak Tree Location Map.

In Dudek's opinion, the proposed landscape construction related improvement activities, including the proposed construction of a new deck and a retaining wall within the TPZs of coast live oak tree nos. 14 and 15, near where the existing deck is located, will likely only impact small roots of coast live oak tree no. 14, resulting in minimal if any, and not likely to cause any future damage or long-term adverse impacts to the coast live oak tree. No pruning within the canopies of the trees will be required and no other impacts are anticipated to the other oak tree on or adjacent to the 24325 Mulholland Hwy. property. Tree protective fencing will be installed around the trunks/TPZs of the trees and additional tree protection measures will be used to reduce soil and root problems going forward.

As mentioned earlier, Dudek's arborist only performed a Level 2 visual inspection of the protected coast live oak trees; we did not perform a Level 3 assessment of the trees to determine the structural stability of the tree and/or location of each of the tree's roots. This report provides conclusions and recommendations based on an examination of the trees and surrounding site by an ISA Certified Arborist. Arborists are tree specialists who use their education, knowledge, training, and experience to examine trees, recommend measures to enhance the

beauty and health of trees, and attempt to reduce the risk of living near trees. Arborists cannot detect every condition that could possibly lead to the failure of a tree. Trees are living organisms that fail in ways not fully understood. Conditions are often hidden within trees and below ground. Arborists cannot guarantee that a tree will be healthy or safe under all circumstances, or for a specified period of time. There are no guarantees that a tree's condition will not change over a short or long period due to weather or cultural or environmental conditions. Trees can be managed but not controlled. To live near trees is to accept some degree of risk.

If you have any questions or require any additional information, please call me at 760.642.8379.

Sincerely,



Noah Stamm, Calabasas Contract Arborist  
ISA-Certified Arborist WE - 11995A  
ISA TRAQ Qualified

Att: Attachment 1, Representative Site Photographs

## Attachment 1 – Healthy Oak Tree Report for 24325 Mulholland Hwy Representative Site Photographs



1. Overview photograph of heritage coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) tree located in the rear yard of 24325 Mulholland Hwy, downslope and west of the pool and proposed project area. Photograph taken facing southwest. Note the tree has a tree tag no. 14 on the trunk of the tree.



2. Overview photograph of heritage coast live oak tree no. 14 located in the rear yard of 24325 Mulholland Hwy, downslope and west of the pool and proposed project area. Photograph taken facing north. Note the location of tree no. 15 located approximately 20 feet south/southwest of tree no. 14 (red arrow).

## Attachment 1 – Healthy Oak Tree Report for 24325 Mulholland Hwy Representative Site Photographs



3. Overview photograph of heritage coast live oak tree no. 14 located in the rear yard of 24325 Mulholland Hwy, downslope and west of the pool and proposed project area. Photograph taken facing south.



4. Overview photograph of the base of heritage coast live oak tree no. 14 located in the rear yard of 24325 Mulholland Hwy, downslope and west of the pool and proposed project area. Photograph taken facing south.

## Attachment 1 – Healthy Oak Tree Report for 24325 Mulholland Hwy Representative Site Photographs



5. Overview photograph of the base of heritage coast live oak tree no. 14. Photograph taken facing north looking at co-dominant stems and an approximately 1-foot-wide cavity on the south side of the tree's trunk.



6. Photograph of a cavity at the base of heritage coast live oak tree no. 14. Photograph taken facing northeast.

## Attachment 1 – Healthy Oak Tree Report for 24325 Mulholland Hwy Representative Site Photographs



7. Overview photograph of heritage coast live oak tree no. 15 located in the rear yard of 24325 Mulholland Hwy, downslope and southwest of the pool and proposed project area. Photograph taken facing north.



8. Photograph of the base of heritage coast live oak tree no. 15 located in the rear yard of 24325 Mulholland Hwy, downslope and southwest of the pool and proposed project area. Photograph taken facing west. Note the thinning crown.

*Photographs were taken on July 7, 2023*



## Attachment 1 – Healthy Oak Tree Report for 24325 Mulholland Hwy Representative Site Photographs



9. Photograph of the base of heritage coast live oak tree no. 15 located in the rear yard of 24325 Mulholland Hwy, downslope and southwest of the pool and proposed project area. Photograph taken facing south/southeast. Note the thinning crown and the location of tree no. 16 southeast of the tree.



10. Overview photograph of coast live oak tree no. 16 located in the rear yard of 24325 Mulholland Hwy, at the top of the slope and south of the pool and proposed project area. Photograph taken facing southeast.

*Photographs were taken on July 7, 2023*

## Attachment 1 – Healthy Oak Tree Report for 24325 Mulholland Hwy Representative Site Photographs



11. Overview photograph of coast live oak tree no. 16 located in the rear yard of 24325 Mulholland Hwy, at the top of the slope and south of the pool and proposed project area. Photograph taken facing northwest. Note the locations of tree nos. 14 and 15 in relation to tree no. 16 and the pool area.



12. Photograph of the base of coast live oak tree no. 16. Photograph taken facing southeast.

*Photographs were taken on July 7, 2023*

## Attachment 1 – Healthy Oak Tree Report for 24325 Mulholland Hwy Representative Site Photographs

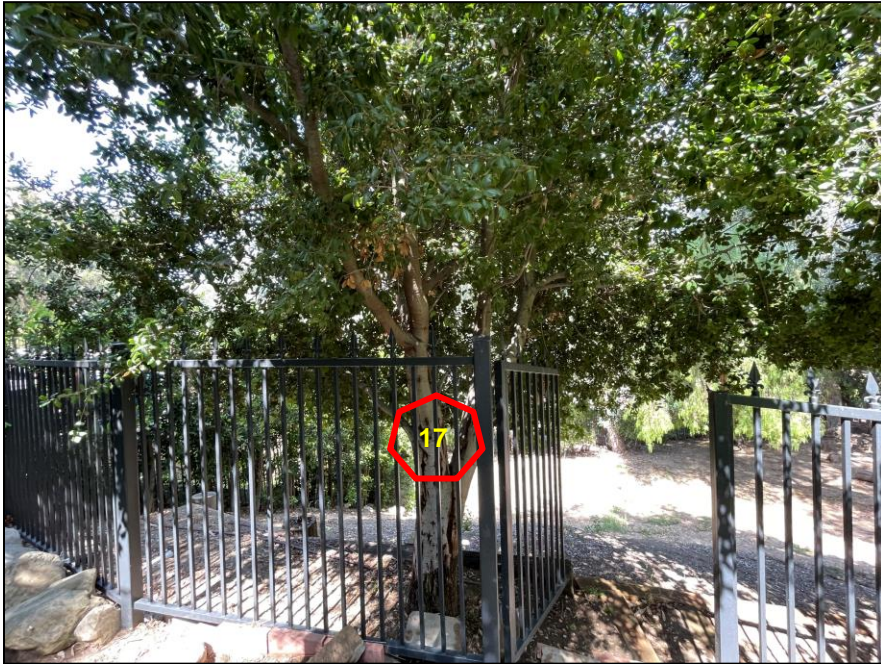


13. Overview photograph of coast live oak tree nos. 17 and 18 located in the southwest corner of the rear yard at 24325 Mulholland Hwy. Photograph taken facing south/southwest. Note these trees are a significant distance away from the proposed work and will not be impacted.



14. Overview photograph of coast live oak tree nos. 17 and 18 located in the southwest corner of the rear yard at 24325 Mulholland Hwy. Photograph taken facing southeast. Note these trees are a significant distance away from the proposed work and will not be impacted.

## Attachment 1 – Healthy Oak Tree Report for 24325 Mulholland Hwy Representative Site Photographs



15. Photograph of the base of coast live oak tree no. 17.  
Photograph taken facing west.



16. Photograph of the base of coast live oak tree no. 18.  
Photograph taken facing west.

## Attachment 1 – Healthy Oak Tree Report for 24325 Mulholland Hwy Representative Site Photographs



17. Overview photograph of coast live oak tree no. 19 located in the northwest corner of the rear yard at 24325 Mulholland Hwy, west of the pool area. Photograph taken facing north.