

ARBORIST LETTER REPORT



Owner/Applicant:

March 21, 2025

Bill Chiocchi
1175 Valley Quail Circle
San Jose, CA 95120

Registered Professional Forester (RPF)/ISA Certified Arborist:

Cassady Bill Vaughan
6010 Highway 9, Suite #6
Felton, CA 95018

Project Location and Maps:

The Project is located on the USGS Los Gatos Quadrangle, projecting as a portion of Section 5, T 9S, R 1W, MDB&M. *See Figure 1: Location Map.*

The Project is located on Santa Clara County APN # 558-41-033, a 12.75-acre property located immediately east of Highway 17 in the Lexington Hills area. *See Figure 2: APN Map.*

Purpose:

This letter is being written in response to a request from Santa Clara County Associate Planner, David Horowitz, requiring the Applicant provide a letter from an ISA Certified Arborist describing impacts associated with the removal of 6 oak trees (4 coast live oaks and 2 black oaks) from the subject parcel as well a recommendation for replanting.

Oak Woodland Impacts:

The 6 oak trees that were removed were all under 20" in diameter and located along the margin of the property's oak woodland type. I estimate that removals account for less than ½ of 1% of the total oak population on the subject parcel. The parcel totals 12.75 acres and is covered predominantly by oak woodland, with lesser amounts of California bay, coast redwood, chaparral, and grassland. By any reasonable standard, the oak trees that were removed do constitute a significant impact to the property's oak woodlands. In contrast, the oak woodland type on this property has likely seen a marked increase in coverage in the absence of fire and a decline in ranch/agricultural activities that began in the late 1800s. I attached Google Earth image from 2024 (*Figure 3*) and an aerial photograph from 1948 (*Figure 4*), both featuring a small red polygon where the oak tree removals took place. While there has been a notable increase in development within the more open grassland areas visible in 1948 aerial image, there is also a notable increase in the oak woodland vegetation type. In short, it is

my professional opinion, both as a Registered Professional Forester and a Certified Arborist, that the 6 oak tree removals did not have a significant impact on the property's oak woodland type. Further, compliance with the recommendation below is intended to replace those that were taken out.

Recommendation:

The 6 oak trees in question were mapped and cataloged in an Arborist Report I prepared for the Applicant on August 3, 2017 (*Exhibit A*). I prepared a follow-up Report Addendum to the 2017 on April 13, 2021 (*Exhibit B*), noting that the 6 trees had been removed, but that the findings from the initial 2017 Arborist Report remained, i.e., replace the 6 oaks that had been removed on a 1:1 basis with 5-gallon stock. The replacement oak species will replicate those that were removed (4 coast live oaks and 2 black oaks), which should be source from local seed stock. The soils on the site are clearly capable of supporting oak trees of both species, and in my opinion well-tended planted oaks should have no issue adapting and thriving in this location. However, the planting recommendations in my 2017 Report (*Exhibit A*) should continue to be followed. Figure 5, attached hereto, includes recommended planting sites which were chosen based on soil conditions, aspect, growing space, and the desire to eventually provide screening from the neighboring residence to the east. The replanting locations are shown on the property survey map to aide in locating the planting areas since it is well-removed (intentionally so) from your building site.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Cassidy Bill Vaughan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Cassidy" and last name "Vaughan" clearly legible.

Cassady Bill Vaughan
Registered Professional Forester #2685
ISA Certified Arborist # WE-10039A TRAQ

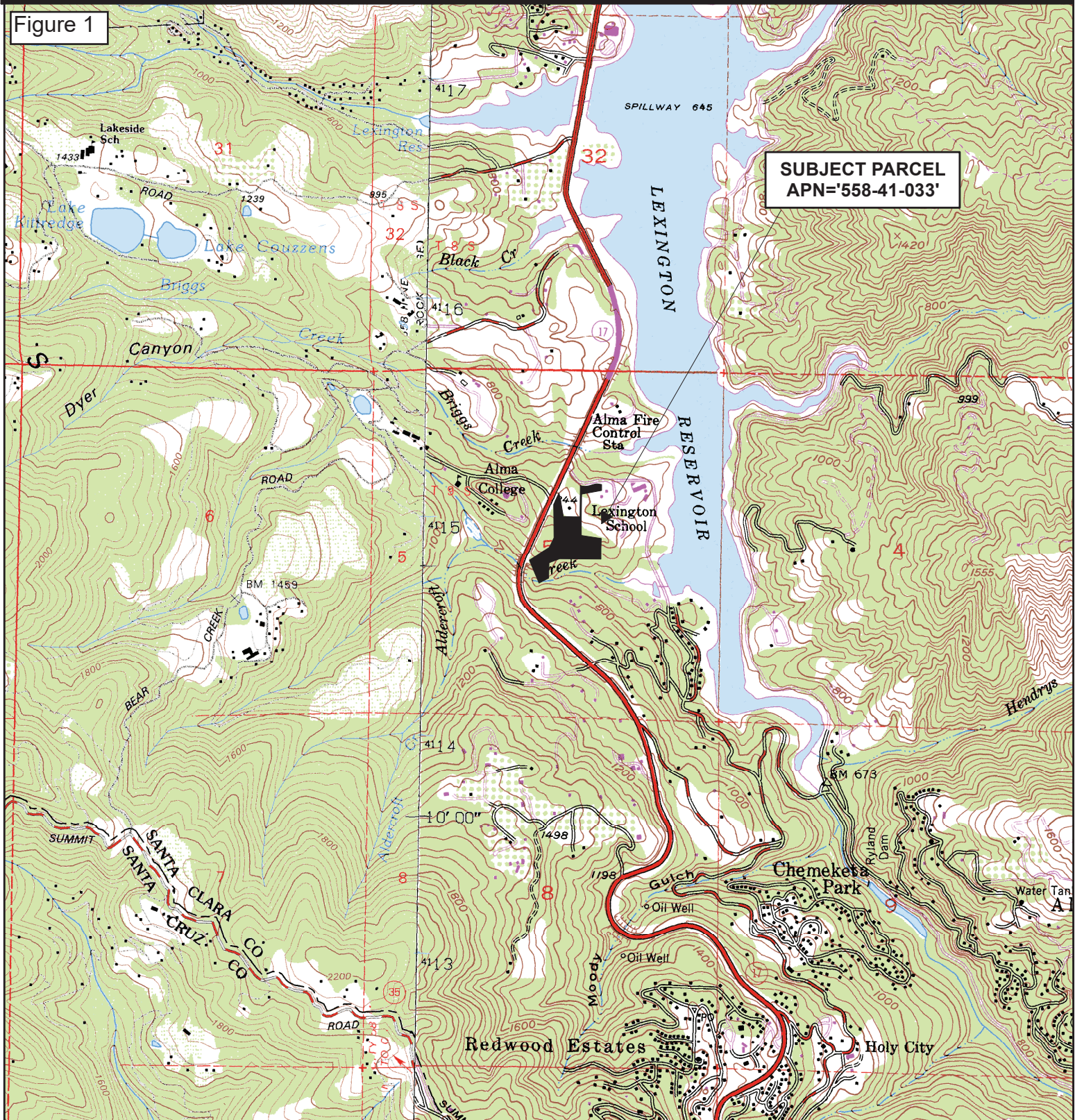
LOCATION MAP

CHIOCCHI

LOCATED WITHIN PORTION OF SECTION 5, T 9S, R 1W,
MDB&M. USGS LOS GATOS QUAD MAP. SANTA CLARA COUNTY.

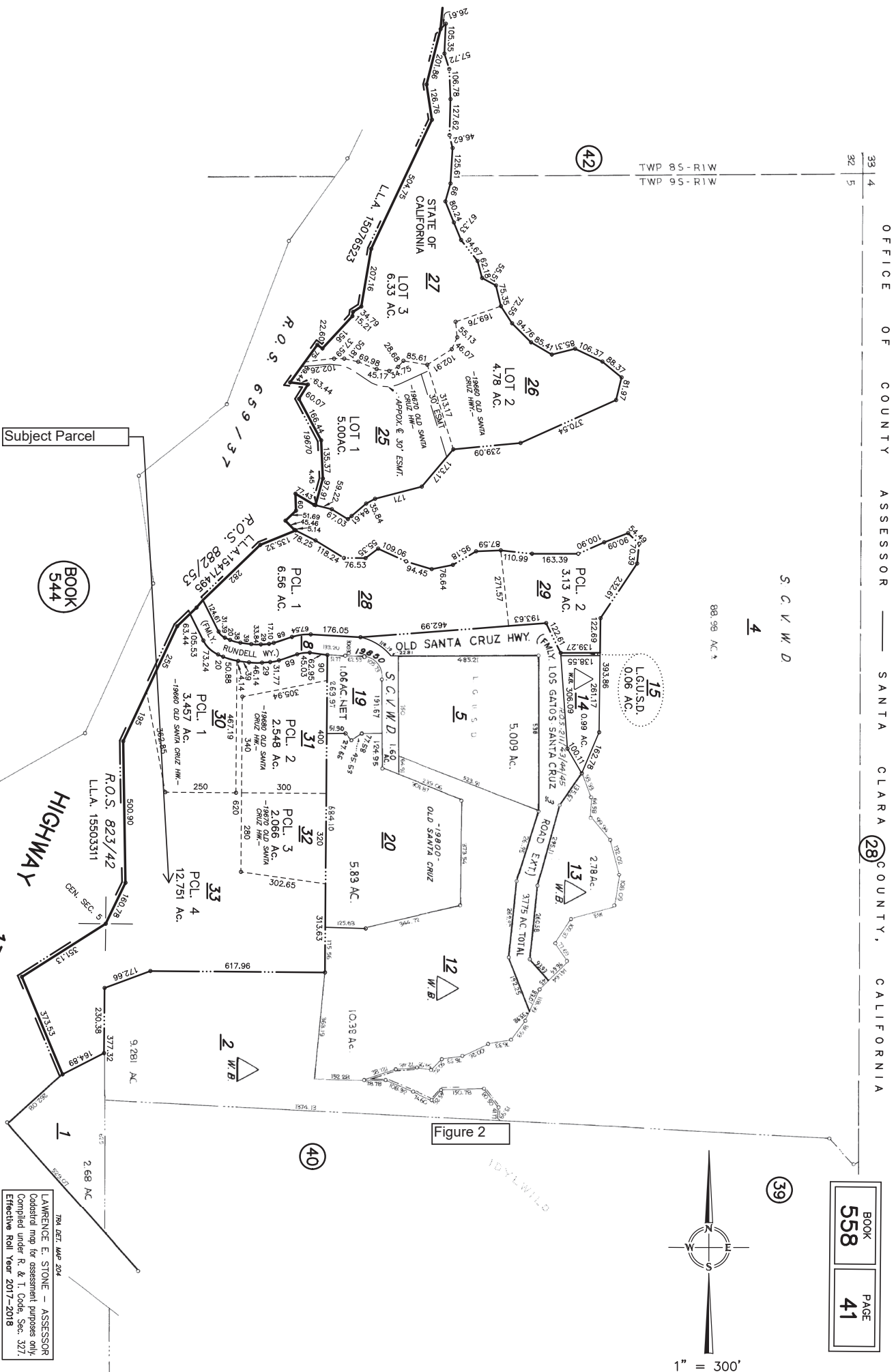


Figure 1



0 1,000 2,000 4,000
Feet

Figure 2



Chiocci Property

Google Earth Aerial Imagery 2024

Legend

 Lexington Elementary School

Briggs Creek

Alma College Rd

Old Santa Cruz Highway

Lexington Elementary S

Figure 2

Figure 3



900 ft

Figure 4



ARBORIST REPORT UPDATE



August 3, 2017

Owner/Applicant:

Bill Chiocchi
1175 Valley Quail Circle
San Jose, CA 95120

Registered Professional Forester (RPF)/Certified Arborist:

Vaughan Forestry
Cassady Bill Vaughan
6010 Highway 9, Suite #6
Felton, CA 95018

Project Location and Maps:

- The project is located on the USGS Los Gatos Quadrangle, projecting as a portion of Section 5, T 9S, R 1W, MDB&M. See Figure 1: Location Map.
- The project is located on Santa Clara County APN # 558-41-033, a 12.7-acre property located immediately east of Highway 17 in the Lexington Hills area. See Figure 2: APN Map.
- The attached Tree Site Map (Figure 3) identifies 6 oak trees greater than 5" dbh (#1 -# 6) to be removed (5 for the house and 1 for the entry road), and 5 trees near the new house which the owner wishes to retain (#7 - #11).
- The attached Photographic Record (Figure 4) identifies the 5 oak trees to be removed for the house site (#1 - #5), and two of oaks (#7 & #8) near the house which the owner wishes to retain.

Project Description: The project involves construction of a single-family home, as well a new entry road which provides access to the site from Old Santa Cruz Highway, a parking area, a hammerhead emergency access turnaround, septic installation, water tanks and lines, and landscape design features. The owner recognizes the value that oak trees add to the site, and wishes to retain as many trees as feasible given slope constraints and site development considerations. Site design was adjusted where feasible to preserve as many trees as possible during and after construction.

Santa Clara County Guide to Evaluating Oak Woodland Impacts: Based on my site review, the project is sited within what is considered "Oak Woodland" based on the predominance of oak trees and extent of the oak canopy. In addition, the majority of the property is identified as oak woodland on County Planning Office's GIS database (Figure 5). However, the project as proposed was designed to

minimize oak removals to the extent feasible, and in all only 6 relatively small oaks are to be removed. The project is situated on a 12.7-acre property, and the proposed development is expected to impact less than 5,000 square feet of oak canopy (<1/8th of an acre). In addition to the fact that the parcel's size and zoning allows for cutting of oaks on an annual basis without the benefit of permit, the project will not result in removal of more than ½ acre of oak canopy and is therefore below the threshold of significance.

Tree Data: The project anticipates removal of 6 oak trees (#1 - #6) shown on the attached Tree Site Map, and preservation of 5 oaks (#7 - #11) near the house site which are to be retain/protected, and ultimately incorporated into the landscape design around the house. Table 1 below corresponds to the tree numbering system described above, and includes species, diameter, canopy size, and overall health.

TABLE 1: TREE REMOVAL TABLE				
Tree ID#	Species	Diameter	Canopy Size	Health (1 = poor, 5 = excellent)
#1	coast live oak	9"	200 sq. ft.	3
#2	coast live oak	13"	400 sq. ft.	3
#3 (118*)	coast live oak	19"	400 sq. ft.	4
#4 (117*)	coast live oak	16"	600 sq. ft.	4
#5 (106*)	black oak	15" & 17"	1000 sq. ft.	4
#6 (49*)	black oak	16"	800 sq. ft.	4

* Numbers in parenthesis correspond to the 2007 Arborist Report prepared by Deborah Ellis

Tree Removal and Tree Protection:

Each tree has been marked in the field with the Tree ID# listed above in Table 1. Figures 3 and 4 identify their corresponding location. While the owner wishes to retain several trees in close proximity to the proposed house, additional tree removals to may be necessary to accommodate specific excavation needs, fire clearance, and/or standard setbacks. Any such removals will require amendment to this document.

All trees 6" dbh and larger were reviewed in the field where construction activities will occur within the canopy dripline, or where specific protection measures are considered necessary to protect them during construction. Tree impacts range from physical removal to root zone damage in proximity to proposed cuts and fills. Five retained trees (#7 - #11) are also identified in Figure 4. These trees shall be afforded a tree protection zone (TPZ), calculated as 4X the trunk diameter of the retained tree. The radius of the TPZ is therefore proportionate to the diameter of retained tree, e.g. a 24" dbh tree receives a minimum 8' radius buffer in all directions from the trunk. Where it is clearly unnecessary to be within the dripline of a retained tree, the TPZ shall be extended to the dripline to decrease the potential for impacts. Protective barriers, specific encroachments into the TPZ, replanting requirements, additional mitigation measures, etc. are discussed below.

Tree Replacement:

Strict adherence to the definition of “significant impact” included in the “County’s Guide to Evaluating Oka Woodland Impacts” suggests the proposed project does not meet the threshold of significance because it does not involve removal of more than ½ acre of oak woodland canopy. As such, mitigation measures to offset significant impacts to oak woodlands is not required. However, the owner has volunteered to replant the oaks on a 1:1 basis. Replacement tree locations (6 total) shall be identified in the field with the project arborist. Replacement should be a minimum of 5-gallon sized oaks growing from local stock and spaced at a minimum of 10 feet from adjoining trees. While 15-gallon and boxed trees are often recommended, smaller size trees (5-gallon) have proven better at adapting to new sites. Smaller trees require far less water for the first several years and tend to occupy new rooting zones more effectively, often outgrowing larger planted stock. Planting areas should be cleared of competing vegetation within at least three feet of the planted trees. Periodic watering during dry months may be necessary during the first three years after planting but the soil should be allowed to go dry at least briefly between waterings to discourage root fungi and rot. Oak should also be fitted with cages to protect against deer browse. Tree replacement requirements should be met promptly after the close of construction, ideally after finish grading is complete.

General Tree Care During Construction:

To protect trees during construction activities, the following measures shall be implemented:

- 1) Around each tree or group of trees to be preserved next to construction areas, a tree protection zone (TPZ) consisting of orange snow netting or high visibility plastic fencing supported by t-posts (+/- 10’ centers) shall be erected at a distance of 4X the trunk diameter of the protected tree(s). These protective islands shall be maintained throughout the course of construction or until final erosion control measures are installed. Selective pruning will be required in some instances where fire access or equipment clearance requirements involve removal of overhead branches. Such activities will be explicitly discussed and reviewed in the field with the General Contractor when protective fencing is installed.
- 2) No storage of equipment or construction materials or parking vehicles is permitted within the TPZ.
- 3) No soil may be removed from within the TPZ of any tree and no fill of additional soil can exceed two inches (2”) within the driplines of trees, unless it is part of approved construction reviewed by the project Arborist. Because existing trees are sensitive to the addition of fill, excavated material must either be removed from the site, incorporated as engineered fill beneath driveway, parking areas or structures, or retained away from oak trunks (a minimum of one-foot clearance) and as much rooting area as possible.
- 4) Bark injury to any tree from equipment or materials is not acceptable and is prevented by respecting the protective fencing described above.
- 5) No significant tree as defined by County code may be removed or trimmed unless authorized under this Report (including amendments), or County regulation. Tree crowns that lean into the construction area should be pruned prior to commencement of excavation and construction to

minimize potential for inadvertent damage. Protective pruning shall be completed by a qualified tree contractor, in accordance with current arboricultural standards and practices (ISA Tree Pruning Guidelines) prior to commencement of operations to balance canopy, provide necessary clearances, remove dead wood, and promote the health of the tree.

- 6) Roots exposed by excavation must be pruned and re-covered as quickly as possible to promote callusing, closure and healthy re-growth. Such roots should be cut cleanly with a saw or pruners and covered with mulch and watered as soon as possible.
- 7) All tree work shall be monitored by the project Arborist and completed by qualified tree service.
- 8) Not surprisingly, trees closest to areas of excavation are at the greatest risk of damage from construction activities. Although coast live oaks can be fairly tolerant of root loss due to excavation, excavation in a straight line closer than four trunk diameters from a tree base tends to put a tree at risk. In such cases, excavation should be done by hand once the first roots are encountered so that roots can be exposed and preserved as much as feasible.

Conclusion:

This Report is intended to be a background document for the purposes of environmental analysis and development of a tree protection/replanting program. The projections of tree removal are pre-project estimates only, and are not intended to be used for regulatory purposes or to establish a limit on the number of trees permitted to be removed for actual implementation of the project. As with most projects, as-built designs are often necessary, and it is the Applicants responsibility to notify the Arborist of any significant design deviations so that required mitigations and protection measures can be implemented in consultation with the County prior to grading.

Submitted by:



Cassady Bill Vaughan,
ISA Certified Arborist # WE-10039A
Registered Professional Forester #2685

8/3/17

Date

Applicant's Agreement to Provisions of the FMP:

Bill Chiocchi

Date

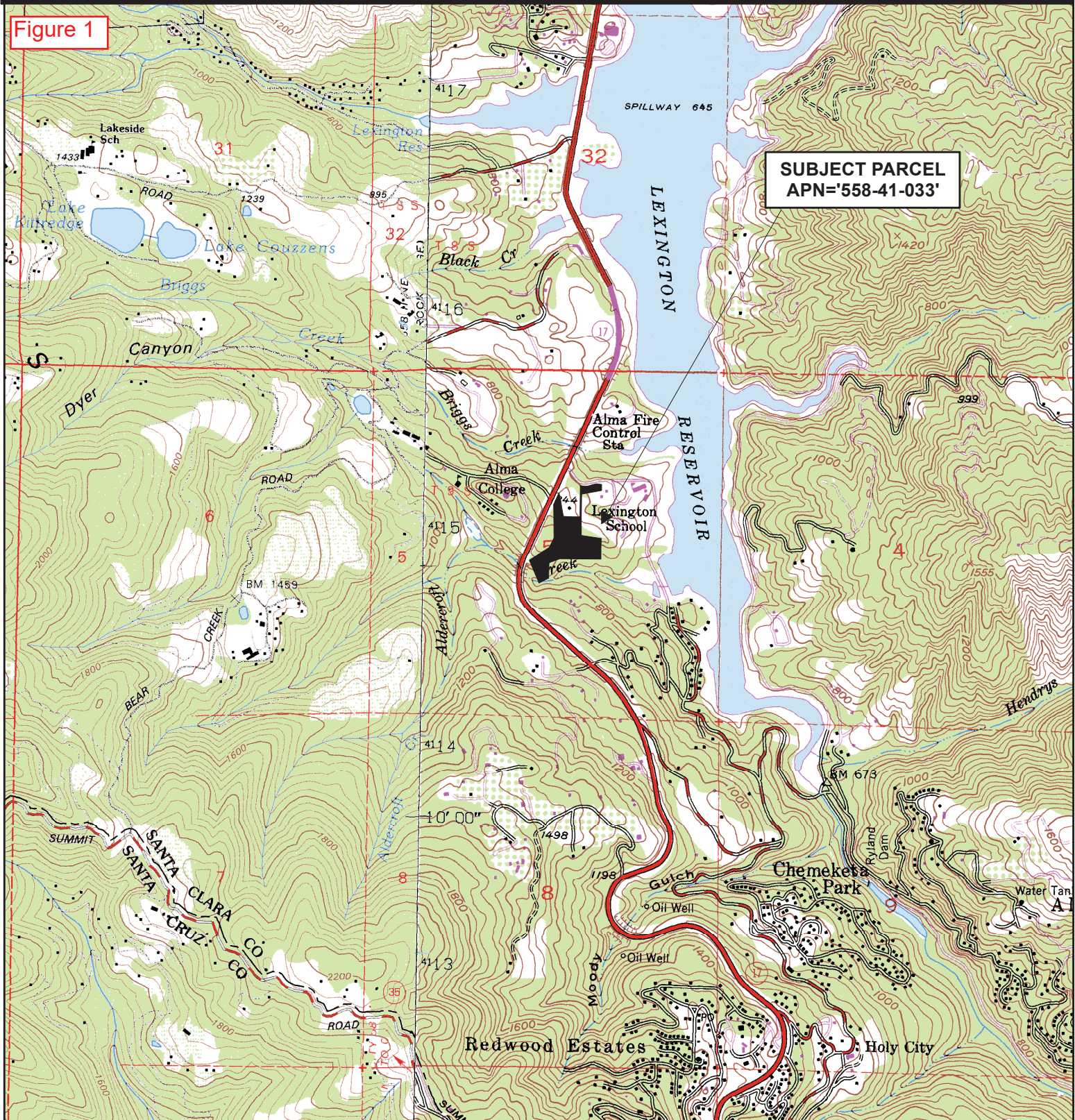
LOCATION MAP

CHIOCCHI

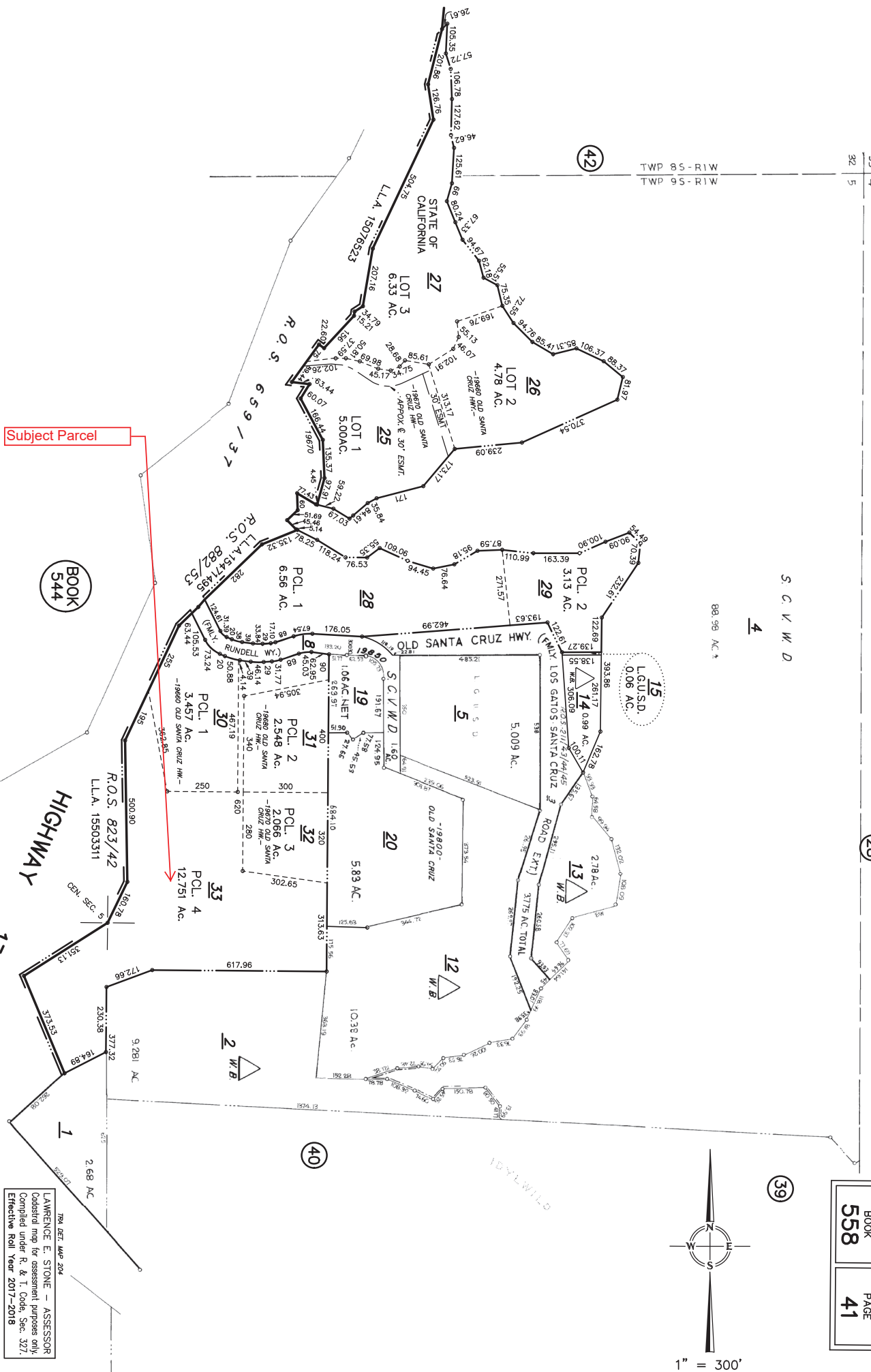
LOCATED WITHIN PORTION OF SECTION 5, T 9S, R 1W,
MDB&M. USGS LOS GATOS QUAD MAP. SANTA CLARA COUNTY.



Figure 1



0 1,000 2,000 4,000
Feet



COUNTY FILE NO.: N/A

2

303 Potrero St., Suite 42-202, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
831-425-3901 www.rlengineering.com



DRIVEWAY IMPROVEMENTS FOR
BILL CHIOCCI
LOCATED BEHIND PROPERTY AT
19850 OLD SANTA CRUZ HIGHWAY
LOS GATOS, CA
558-410-33

GRADING & DRAINAGE PLAN

Figure 4: Photographic Record of House Site Trees



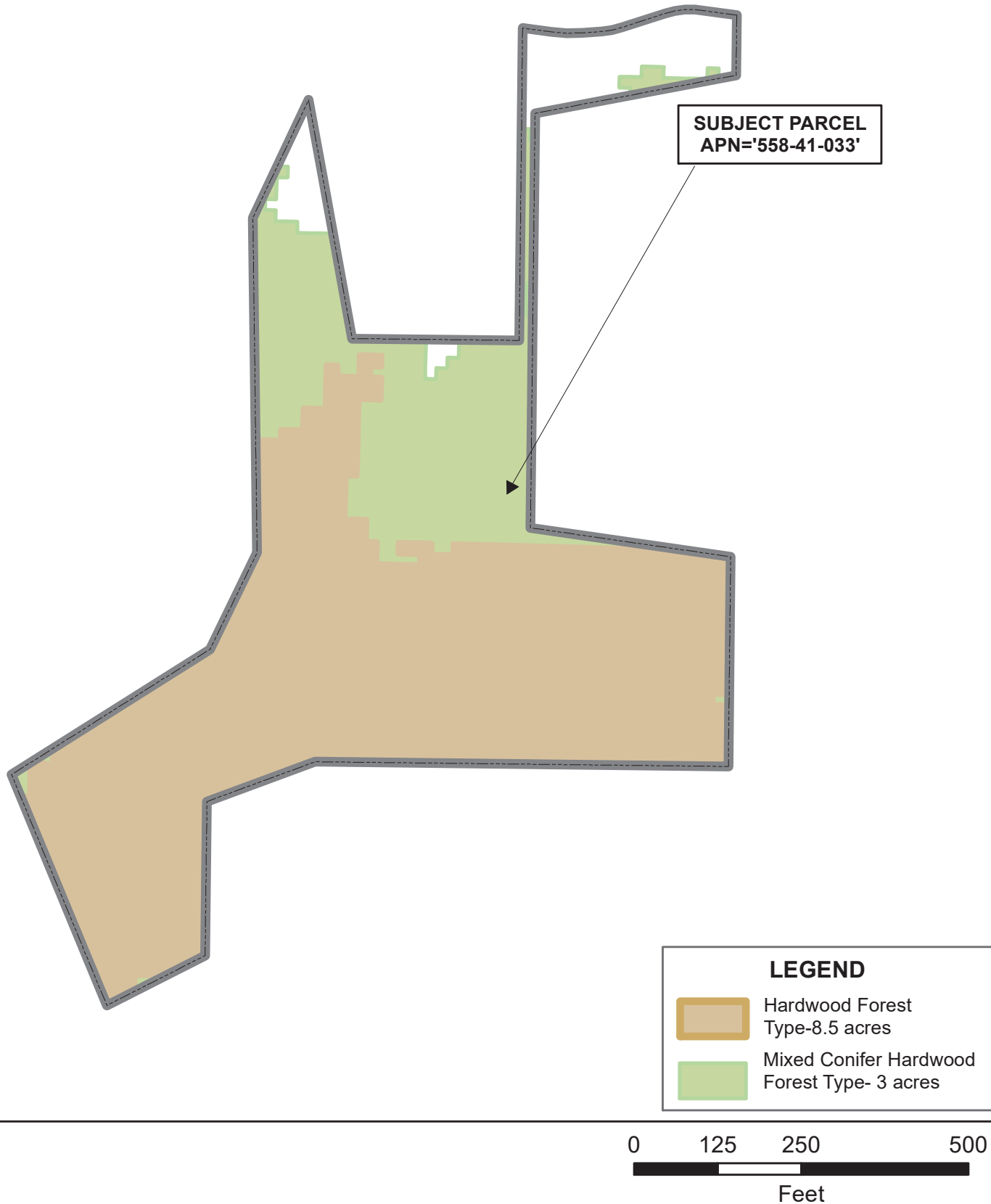
Forest Type Map

CHIOCCHI

LOCATED WITHIN PORTION OF SECTION 5, T 9S, R 1W,
MDB&M. USGS LOS GATOS QUAD MAP. SANTA CLARA COUNTY.



Figure 5



VAUGHAN FORESTRY



April 13, 2021

Bill Chiocchi
1175 Valley Quail Circle
San Jose, CA 95120

Re: APN # 558-41-033 Arborist Report Addendum Letter

Mr. Chiocchi,

On August 3, 2017 I submitted an "Arborist Update Report" for the subject parcel. The 2017 Report is attached as *Exhibit A*. I revisited the site with you on Thursday, March 11, 2021 to document changes that have occurred in the last 4 years as you prepare to re-submit your building permit for this parcel.

Trees #1 - #6 shown on the attached 2017 Site Map were removed. Tree removal for personal use is a "matter of right" on HS-zoned parcels greater than 3 acres so long as the removals: 1) represent <10% of the trees greater than 12" dbh, 2) generate <10 cords/year, and 3) involve < ½-acre of tree cover. I can say without hesitation that removal of trees #1 - #6 does/did not exceed limitations 1-3 just described. The above is per Santa Clara County Code Section C16-6 - Tree removal in the Hillside (HS) zoning district (Ord. No. NS-1203.107, § 1, 2-11-97; Ord. No. NS-1200.302, § 6, 12-18-01). These 6 trees are removed from the attached Site Plan (*Figure 1*). Tree #11, a 28" coast live oak, succumbed to what is most likely Sudden Oak Death caused by *Phytophthora ramorum*. Tree #11 has also been removed from the Site Plan.

At this point, the proposed project does not require any tree removal. This was confirmed by you, the owner/applicant. All other provisions of my August 17, 2017 Report remain in full effect. Should, during the course of construction, tree removal become a necessity, please contact me so we can amend the record to reflect the removal(s) and address tree replacement obligations.

Let me know if you or the Planner assigned to the Project have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

Cassady Bill Vaughan