

January 30, 2018

**City of Menifee**

Ryan Fowler – Senior Planner  
 29714 Haun Road  
 Menifee, CA 92586

Re: Rockport Ranch Development Project, Menifee

Dear Mr. Fowler,

I was contacted regarding the Rockport Ranch Development project in Menifee, CA. I was asked to inspect the trees located on this 79.68-acre parcel located at the corner of Old Newport Rd. and Briggs Rd. and to submit an assessment report as to their status in relation to the City's Heritage Tree Ordinance. I conducted my survey of the site on Monday, January 29, 2018.

Prior to conducting the survey, I reviewed the City of Menifee ordinance that pertains to trees (starting at 9.86.020) with special emphasis on "Heritage Trees". Trees are described as "**Heritage trees such as those with certain characteristics (age, size, species, location, historical influence, aesthetic quality or ecological value) receive special attention and preservation efforts**". Typically, heritage trees are mature native oaks and other mature native species, or trees associated with a local historical site and/or event. As I inspected the trees, I kept a focus on the spirit of this ordinance in tree preservation.

The following is a list of trees on the property and their quantities:

● Red Gum Eucalyptus ( <i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i> )	3
● Ash Colored Eucalyptus ( <i>Eucalyptus cinerea</i> )	1
● Canary Island Pine ( <i>Pinus Canariensis</i> )	2
● Afghan Pine ( <i>Pinus eldarica</i> )	2
● American Sweetgum ( <i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i> )	10
● Queen Palm ( <i>Syagrus romanzoffianum</i> )	28
● Mexican Fan Palm ( <i>Washingtonia robusta</i> )	3
● Fern Pine ( <i>Podocarpus gracilior</i> )	1
● <u>Bottle Tree (<i>Brachychiton populneus</i>)</u>	<u>1</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>

**Site Assessment** – I estimate the age of the oldest trees on this site to be around 30-40 years based on my visual assessment as well as aerial photos I reviewed in the Cultural Resources Assessment Report by Laguna Mountain Environmental, dated December 2017. The Photos were dated 1967, 1978, and 1996 respectively. Most of the trees are located along Old Newport Rd. and their locations are rather random with no individual tree located in a position of prominence or significance. All of the trees were cultivated trees, meaning they were imported and transplanted to the site for landscaping around the time of construction of the residential homes, with the exception of 2 Eucalyptus trees located at the southern portion of the property which sprouted sometime between 1978 and 1996.

**Heritage Tree Status Assessment –**

- **Age/size** – Based on historical aerial photos from the Cultural Resources Assessment report prepared by Laguna Mountain Environmental for the project, the site was completely graded from 1967 to somewhere in the mid-1980's. The estimated age of the mature trees is between 30-40 years old, which I would not characterize as old enough to qualify as a heritage tree characteristic.
- **Species** – The trees found on-site are non-native, cultivated trees. Heritage trees typically are species such as native oaks or other native trees. Therefore, the trees existing on the property do not qualify in this category.
- **Location** – No tree on the property is located within a significant grove or near a historical point of interest. The trees on the north end of the property are located as landscaping trees for the residential homes. The 2 Eucalyptus at the southern end of the property are volunteer trees. Therefore, the trees would not qualify under the location criteria.
- **Historical Influence** – The site has no historical structures or influence. As noted above, the trees are either cultivated or volunteer, which does not qualify under this category.
- **Aesthetic Quality** – The trees present value for landscaping, however they are not part of a significant old grove forest which raises the aesthetic quality. The 2 Eucalyptus trees at the southern property line have no aesthetic quality due to their location and isolation.
- **Ecological Value** – As the trees are non-native species there is relatively little ecological value. Therefore, the trees do not qualify under this category.

As noted above, all the trees located on the site are mature, non-native, cultivated trees, planted as landscaping except for the 2 volunteer Eucalyptus trees located at the southern end of the property. Although the trees found on-site are mature, they are non-native species less than 50 years old, which is the typical threshold for cultural significance. Due to the lack of historical significance of the property, and the species found on-site, there appears to be few characteristics which would qualify the trees for Heritage Tree status. Based on the criteria described in the City of Menifee tree ordinance, I would not rate any of the existing trees as "Heritage Trees".

ARBORIST CONSULTING SERVICES



Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Launder', written in a cursive style.

Tom Launder *ISA Certified Arborist WE5157*