

# Appendix F

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Arborist Letter Report

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January 10, 2020

Project #: CUC-01

Binh Nguyen  
City of Union City  
34009 Alvarado-Niles Road  
Union City, CA 95487

**Subject: Tree Survey for the 1998 Whipple Road New Gas Station and Convenience Store Project, Union City, CA**

Dear Mr. Nguyen:

This letter documents the results of a tree survey conducted for the proposed 7-Eleven site located at 1998 Whipple Road in the City of Union City, California (APN 475-165-90). HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc. (HELIX) was tasked with conducting an arborist survey of trees in the site as well as providing an assessment of project impacts to trees and recommendations for avoidance or mitigation as appropriate.

## THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Chapter 12.16.170 of the Union City Municipal Code (tree conservation ordinance) defines a tree for purposes of regulating tree removal as any of the following: any tree having a circumference of at least 35 inches, or 70 inches aggregate circumference for multi-trunk trees, where such trees are growing on a residential property; any tree having any trunk with circumference of at least 12 inches when removal relates to any transaction for which zoning approval or subdivision approval is required; any tree that existed at the time of a zoning approval or subdivision approval and was a specific subject of such approval; any tree that was required to be planted by the terms of a zoning approval or subdivision approval; any tree having any trunk with circumference of at least 12 inches and located on a vacant lot or undeveloped property; any tree having any trunk with circumference of at least 12 inches and located on commercial, office, or industrial developed property. Circumference is measured at 3 feet above grade. It is unlawful for any person to trim or remove a tree covered by the tree conservation ordinance without a permit issued under the provisions of the ordinance. The deciding official or the deciding body may impose as a condition of the permit that one or more replacement trees be planted on public or private property; the applicant may be required to pay the cost of obtaining and planting the replacement trees.

APN 475-165-90 is zoned CN (Neighborhood Commercial District) and is considered a vacant lot or undeveloped property. Although the site does not currently contain any structures, it was the location

of a gas station from the early 1970's until 1992 and was subject to soil and groundwater remedial actions in 2000. The site is currently in a disturbed condition, covered with hardscape and ruderal herbaceous vegetation. Removal of any tree having at least one trunk of 12 inches or greater circumference and located on a vacant lot or undeveloped property is regulated under the tree conservation ordinance; therefore, the CEQA threshold of significance for project impacts from tree removal for this analysis is considered to be removal of any tree with at least one trunk of 12 inches or greater circumference.

## METHODS

HELIX's International Society of Arboriculture certified arborist, George Aldridge (WE-11778A), surveyed the site on December 20, 2019 and was assisted by HELIX's biologist, Halie Goeman. The following data were collected for all trees on the site: species, circumference, dripline radius, estimated height, health, structure, and overall condition. Overall condition was rated on a five-point scale of 0 (dead), 1 (severe decline), 2 (declining), 3 (fair), 4 (good), or 5 (excellent). The location of each tree was recorded on a paper map. Trees were identified in the field with permanent numbered tags.

## RESULTS

A total of five (5) trees were identified in the site (Figure 1), all of which are non-native ornamental species (Table 1). All five trees reached the size threshold for protection under the tree conservation ordinance by having at least one trunk of at least 12 inches circumference; however, all but one (1) tree had 3-6 trunks of 12 inches circumference and numerous other smaller trunks. All trees were in Fair to Poor condition. Photos of the site are provided in Attachment 1.

**Table 1**  
**TREE DATA FOR 1998 WHIPPLE ROAD**

Tree	Species	Circ. (inches)	Dripline (feet)	Height (feet)	Health	Structure	Condition (0-5)
494	Chinese hackberry ( <i>Celtis sinensis</i> )	133 <sup>1</sup>	17	25	G	F <sup>2</sup>	3
495	Siberian elm ( <i>Ulmus pumila</i> )	39	16	25	G	p <sup>3</sup>	3
496	Evergreen pear ( <i>Pyrus kawakamii</i> )	51 <sup>1</sup>	15	15	F <sup>4</sup>	p <sup>5</sup>	2
497	Evergreen pear ( <i>Pyrus kawakamii</i> )	56 <sup>1</sup>	15	15	F <sup>4</sup>	p <sup>5</sup>	2
498	Evergreen pear ( <i>Pyrus kawakamii</i> )	54 <sup>1</sup>	15	15	F <sup>4</sup>	p <sup>5</sup>	2

<sup>1</sup>Sum of all stems ≥12 inches circumference.

<sup>2</sup>Many co-dominant leaders; crossing limbs; growing into power lines.

<sup>3</sup>Topped; growing into power lines.

<sup>4</sup>Stunted, curled leaves in upper canopy; splits in bark.

<sup>5</sup>Unnatural bends in trunks; excessive codominant trunks; crossing limbs and trunks.

## DISCUSSION

All five (5) trees in the site have uncorrectable structural issues. Tree 494 is a Chinese hackberry with six (6) codominant trunks, several of which are crossing and growing into each other; in addition, the tree is growing into overhead power lines. Tree 495 is a Siberian elm with a single main trunk that was topped at approximately 15 feet (likely in order to provide clearance from overhead power lines), which has resulted in formation of two (2) codominant leaders with a poor attachment; subsequently, the tree has

grown into the overhead power lines. Trees 496, 497, and 498 are evergreen pears that have developed a dense, shrubby architecture with numerous stems ranging from 18 inches circumference down to a few inches. Most of the larger stems exhibit sharp bends or nearly horizontal growth, and many stems are crossing and/or fusing into other stems. In addition, all these trees show signs of declining health such as splitting bark and curled, stunted leaves in the upper canopy. Given the poor structure and/or health of the trees, all five (5) trees should be removed.

## IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

The proposed project would result in removal of five (5) trees regulated under the tree conservation ordinance. All these trees are unsuitable for preservation due to structural defects and/or location under overhead power lines (2 trees), as well as declining health in three (3) of the trees. Without a tree removal permit, removal of trees growing on a vacant or undeveloped lot and having at least one (1) trunk of at least 12 inches circumference would be a significant impact under the City's tree conservation ordinance. Obtaining a tree removal permit and planting replacement trees (if required as a condition of the permit) would mitigate for impacts from tree removal.

The landscape plan for the proposed project includes 27 ornamental trees in two species: 8 pink trumpet trees (*Tabebuia impetiginosa* [=Handroanthus impetiginosus]) and 19 Australian willows (*Geijera parviflora*). Both of these species exceed the size of the existing trees on the site at maturity. The 27 trees proposed as part of the project would provide replacement for the trees removed by the project at a ratio of 5.4:1 and thus fully mitigate project impacts from tree removal.

## CONCLUSION

The site at 1998 Whipple Road includes five (5) trees protected by the Union City tree conservation ordinance. Two of these trees were rated in fair condition and three in declining condition and all are recommended for removal because of uncorrectable structural issues. Please feel free to contact me with any questions regarding this letter report.

Sincerely,



George Aldridge  
ISA-Certified Arborist (WE-11778A)

### Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Representative Site Photos  
Figure 1 – Tree Map



**Photo 1:** Chinese hackberry tree with numerous crossing trunks (Tree #494).  
Photo dated 12/20/2019.



**Photo 2:** Siberian elm tree with a topped main trunk (Tree #495). Photo dated  
12/20/2019.



**Photo 3:** View of the site from the northeast corner, showing all the trees in the site. Photo dated 12/20/2019.

Legend

- Tree with Dripline
- - - City Boundary
- ▣ Project Boundary - 0.61 Acre



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Source: Aerial (Google Earth 3/2018)

