

MAY 21 2024

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
Santa Rosa, CA

Lynn Denley-Bussard
5232 Monte Verde Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95409
707-696-4616

May 20, 2024

Mr. Mike Janusek
Project Planner
City of Santa Rosa

Re: Calistoga Cottages
408 Calistoga Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95409

Dear Mr. Janusek,

The current owners of 408 Calistoga Road purchased their property “as is” with all its inherent flaws, limitations, and encumbrances.

As shown in Slide 1, these three adjoining parcels—408 Calistoga Road, 5220 Monte Verde Drive, and 5232 Monte Verde Drive were once part of a single parcel whose area is defined by County Assessor’s Parcel Map 153-43.

On Slide 2, Valley Oak trees 3 & 4 on the southeastern corner of 5220 Monte Verde Drive have been rooted in and actively using the soil of 408 Calistoga Road for 80 to 100 years. They have well-established implied and prescriptive easements on this parcel.

Valley Oak trees 1 & 2 on the eastern property line with 5232 Monte Verde Drive have been rooted in and using the soil at 408 Calistoga Road for over forty years. They have well-established prescriptive easements on this parcel.

Originally, these three adjoining parcels were all Rural Residential (RR). Currently, 5220 Monte Verde Drive, and 5232 Monte Verde Drive are still zoned Rural Residential. Therefore, these four Valley Oak trees (1-4) still retain their status as heritage trees protected by City Ordinance 17-24.050 (D). The City does not allow any concrete or asphalt paving, no artificial irrigation, no change in grade, no compaction of soil, and no irrigation within the root zone of these heritage trees.

While the City defines the “root zone” as the drip line plus 10 feet, the reality is that a tree’s root zone is much larger. In *Understanding Roots* written by Robert Kourik, scientific research has determined that the root mass of a tree usually grows at least as wide as the tree is tall. This triangular shape shown in Slide 3 is what keeps the tree balanced and upright. Since these four Valley Oak trees (1-4) are currently 20 to 45 feet tall, their root mass extends into 408 Calistoga Road by 20 to 45 feet. Slides 4 and 5 show

how massive these trees are when compared to Sequoia School and the existing home, located at 408 Calistoga Road.

In Slides 6 and 7, the proposed subdivision map shows concrete pads over the existing root zone of Valley Oaks 1-4. This is inherently dangerous. Ordinance 17-24.050 isn't just for the safety of these trees. It's for the safety of the families who live near them. You've probably seen sidewalks that have been lifted, cracked, and crumbled by tree roots. If you don't give a Valley Oak enough room to grow it will go under, around, and occasionally through a concrete foundation as it grows to full maturity.

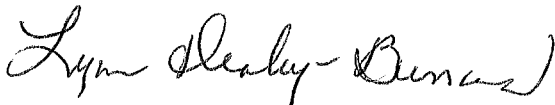
Although 408 Calistoga Road is within the City limits that doesn't change the inherent fire danger. Slide 8 shows it within a state-defined "Ember Zone". During the Glass Fire, my husband stood on our roof all night while it rained embers like snow. If he hadn't watered down those burning four-inch pieces of wood, we might have lost our home. The state advises that any new homes built in an "Ember Zone" have at least 30 feet of defensible space. Slide 9 shows that our neighborhood is surrounded on three sides by City-defined Very High Fire Severity zones. Defensible space is essential for fire safety in this section of Rincon Valley.

The City has been put "on notice" that this proposed subdivision has significant fire and tree dangers associated with it. If the City does not take steps to mitigate these dangers, it will be "deep pocket" on these issues forever.

In order to avoid any future problems, we suggest that the subdivision be modified as shown in Slide 10 to allow for only two additional parcels at 408 Calistoga Road. If the turnaround is moved to the southern property line, there will be no paving over the root-zone of Valley Oak trees 3 & 4. The new plan would also ensure that both new homes are at least 30 feet away from a major tree, which would bring the subdivision into alignment with state fire safety guidelines and would keep any tree roots from attacking foundation walls.

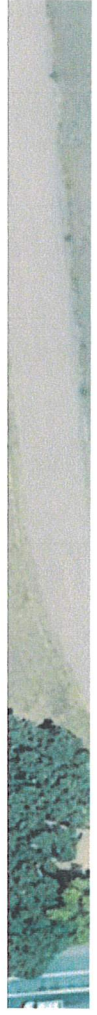
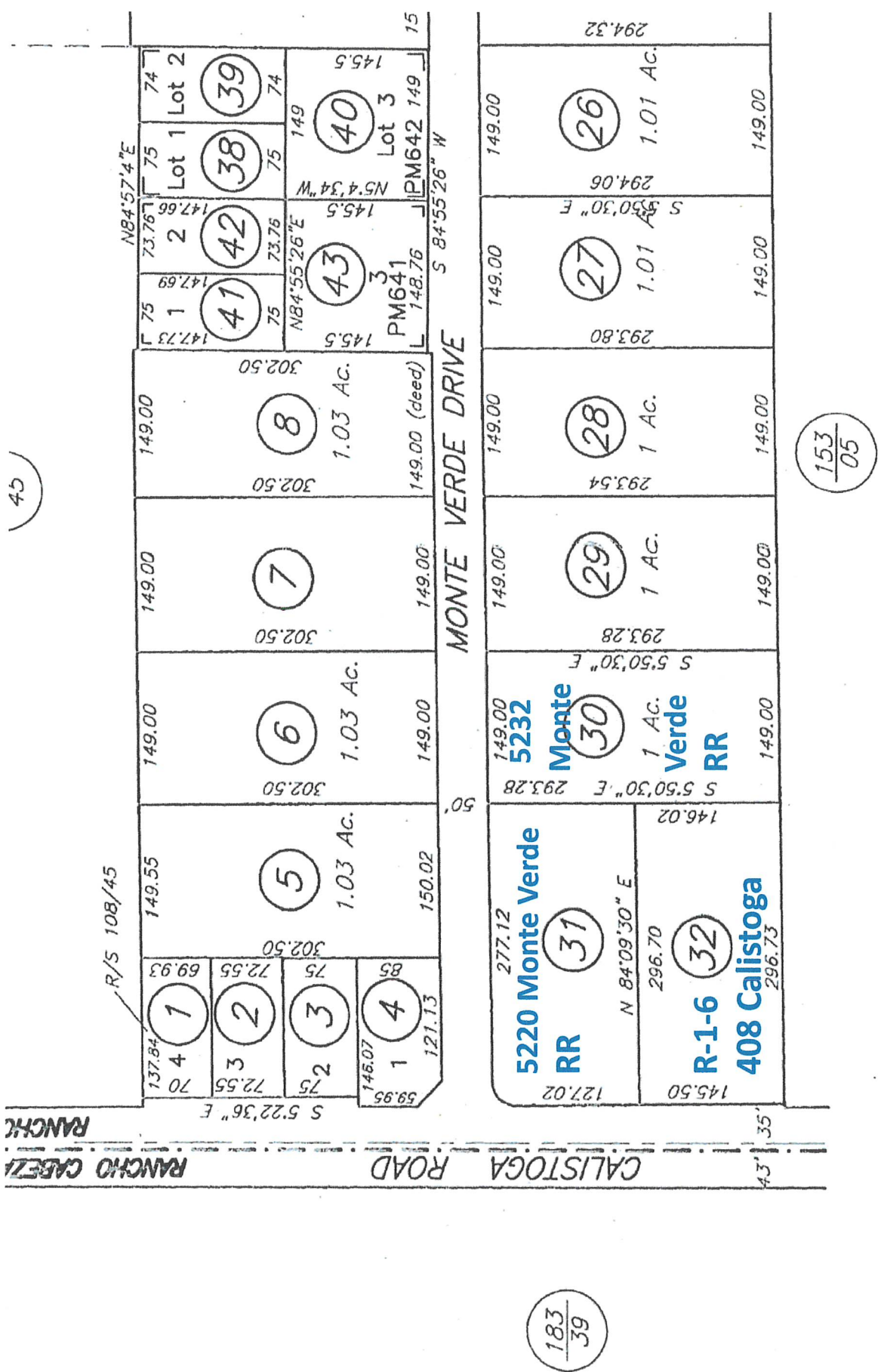
In this way, the Developer can build two new homes; the City can protect itself from any potential lawsuits; and these heritage Valley Oak trees will continue to thrive.

Best Regards,

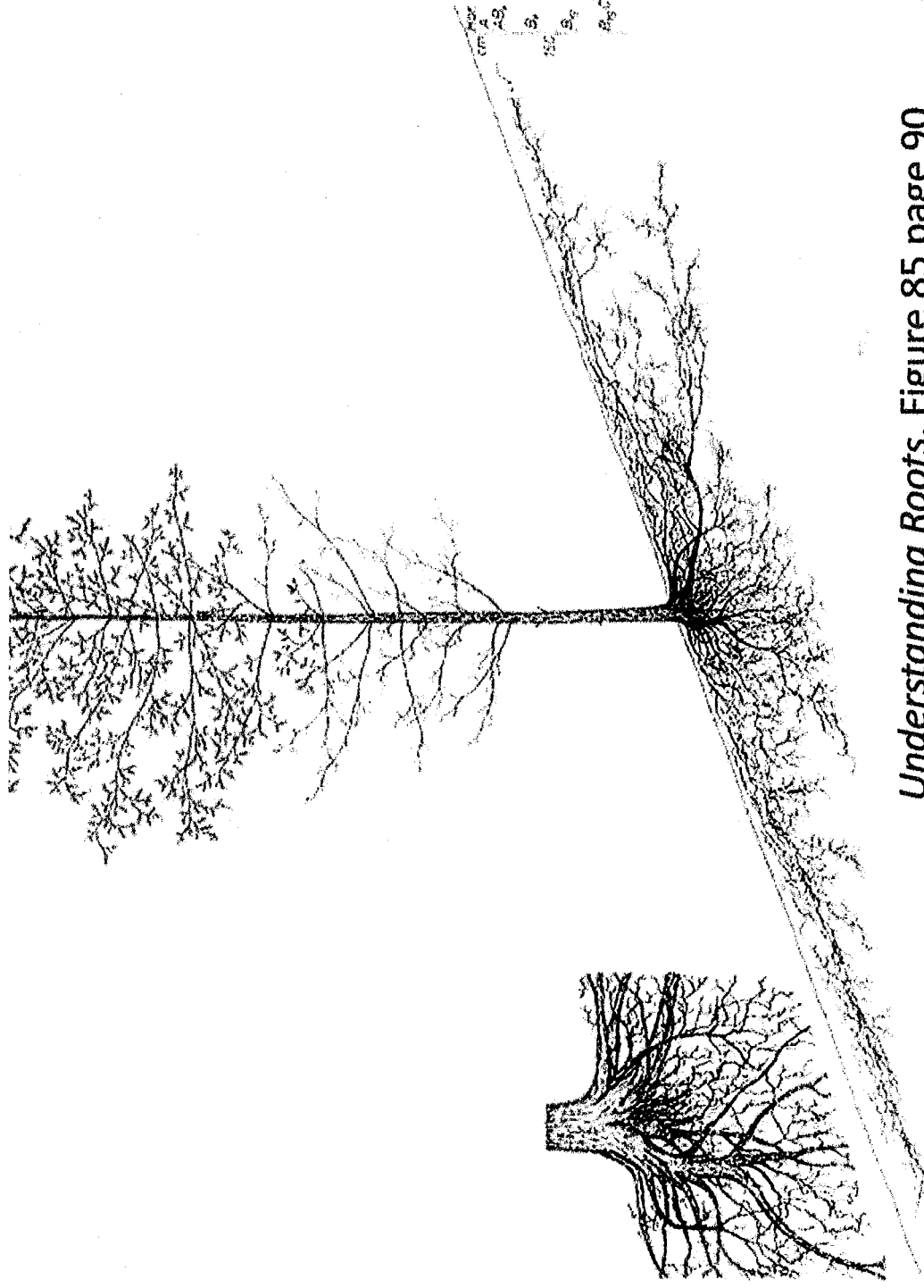
A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lynn Denley-Bussard".

Lynn Denley-Bussard

Slide 1 - Assessor's Parcel Map 153-43

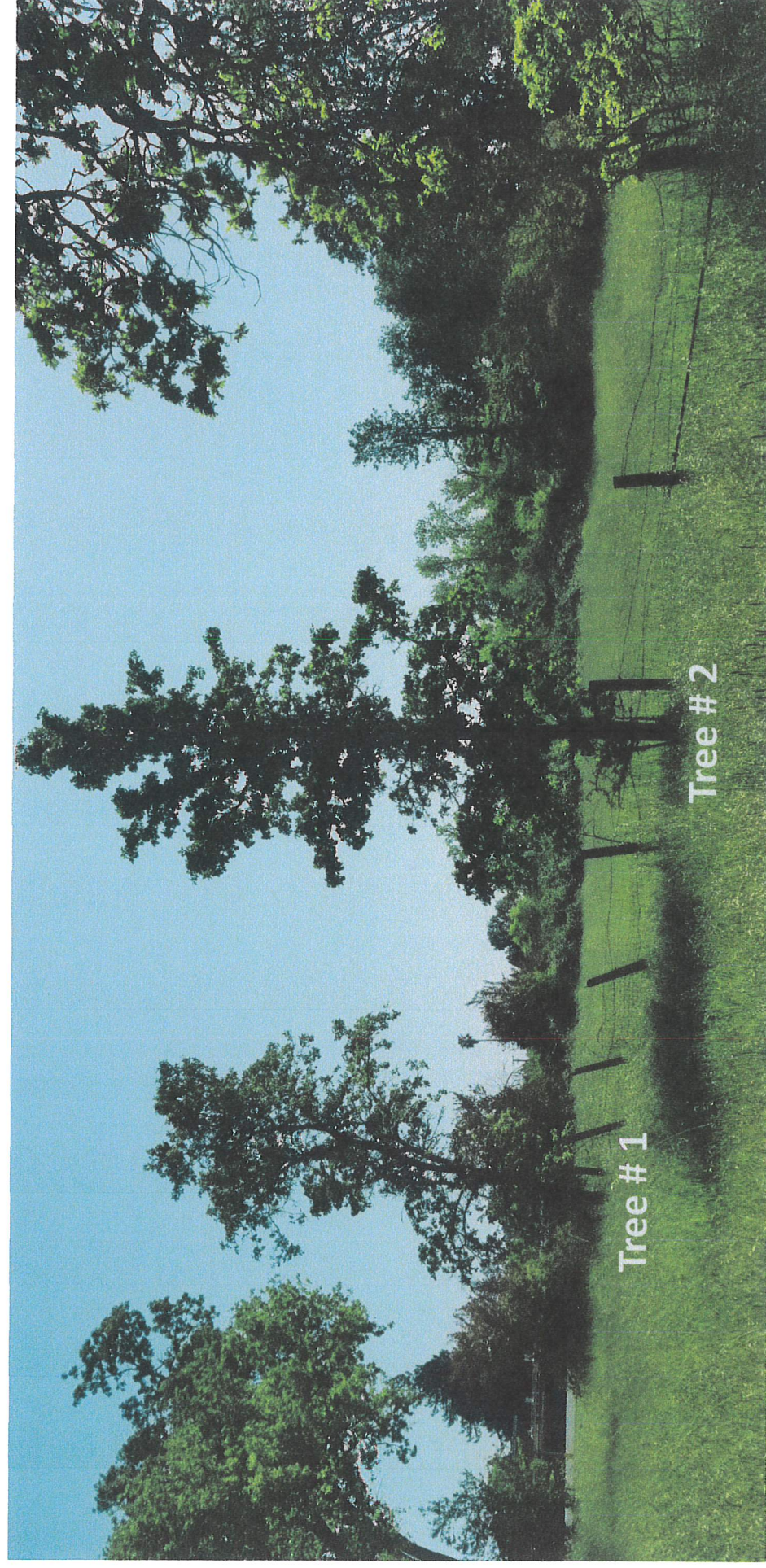


Slide 3 - Root Zone = Tree Height

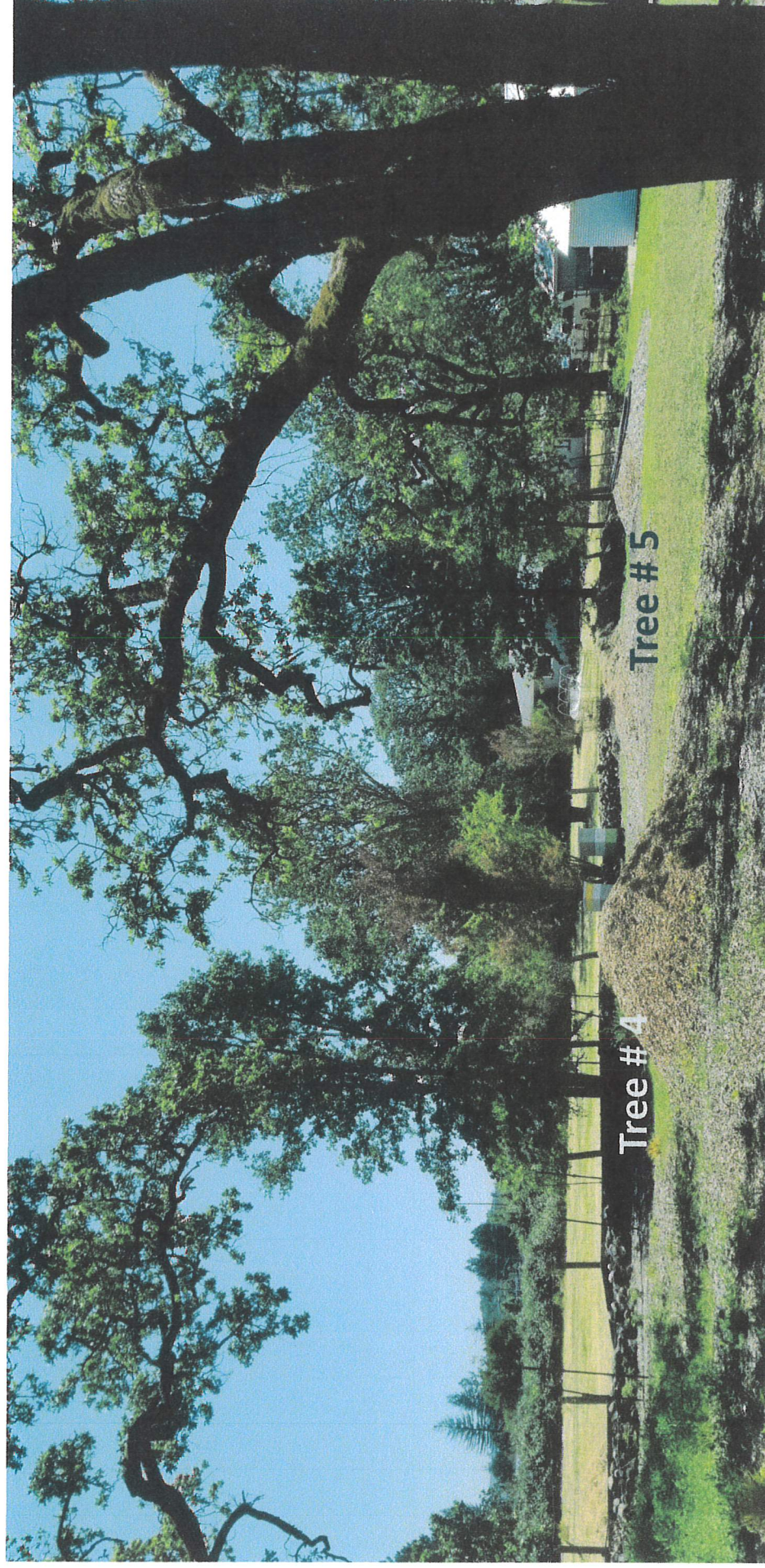


Understanding Roots, Figure 85 page 90
by Robert Kourik

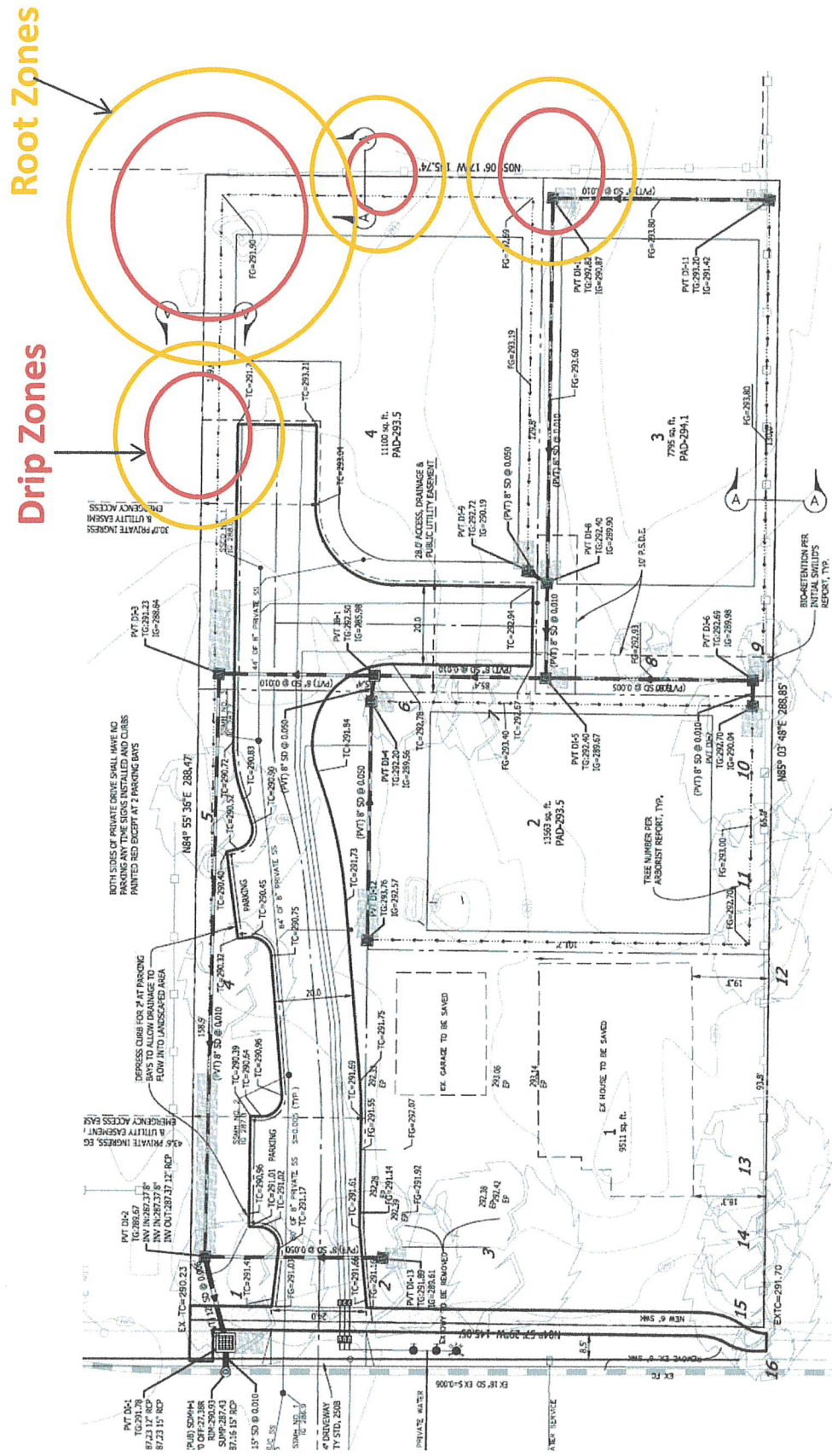
Slide 4 – Trees 1 and 2 height comparison with Sequoia School



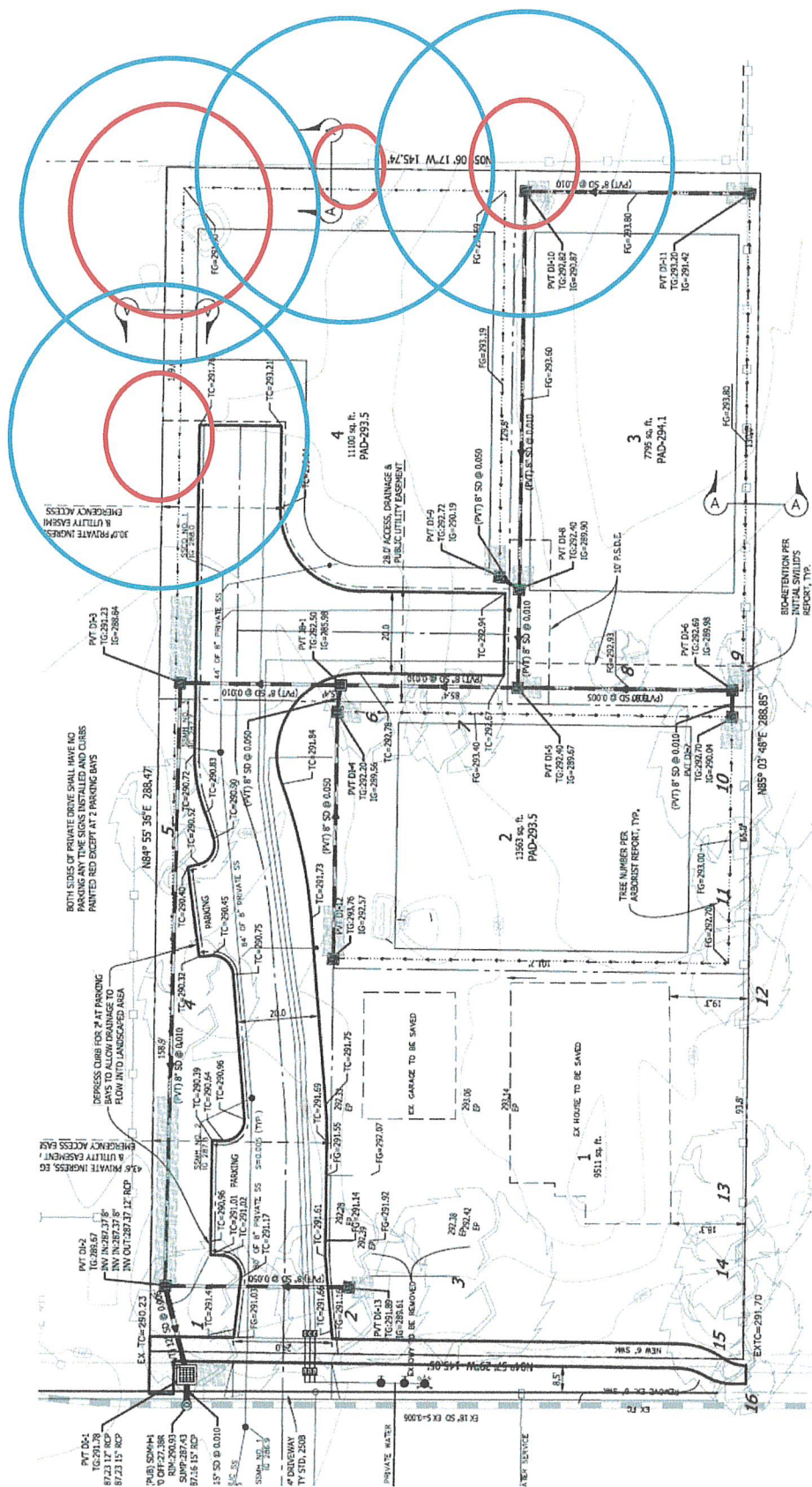
Slide 5 - Tree 4 height comparison with existing home at 408 Calistoga Road



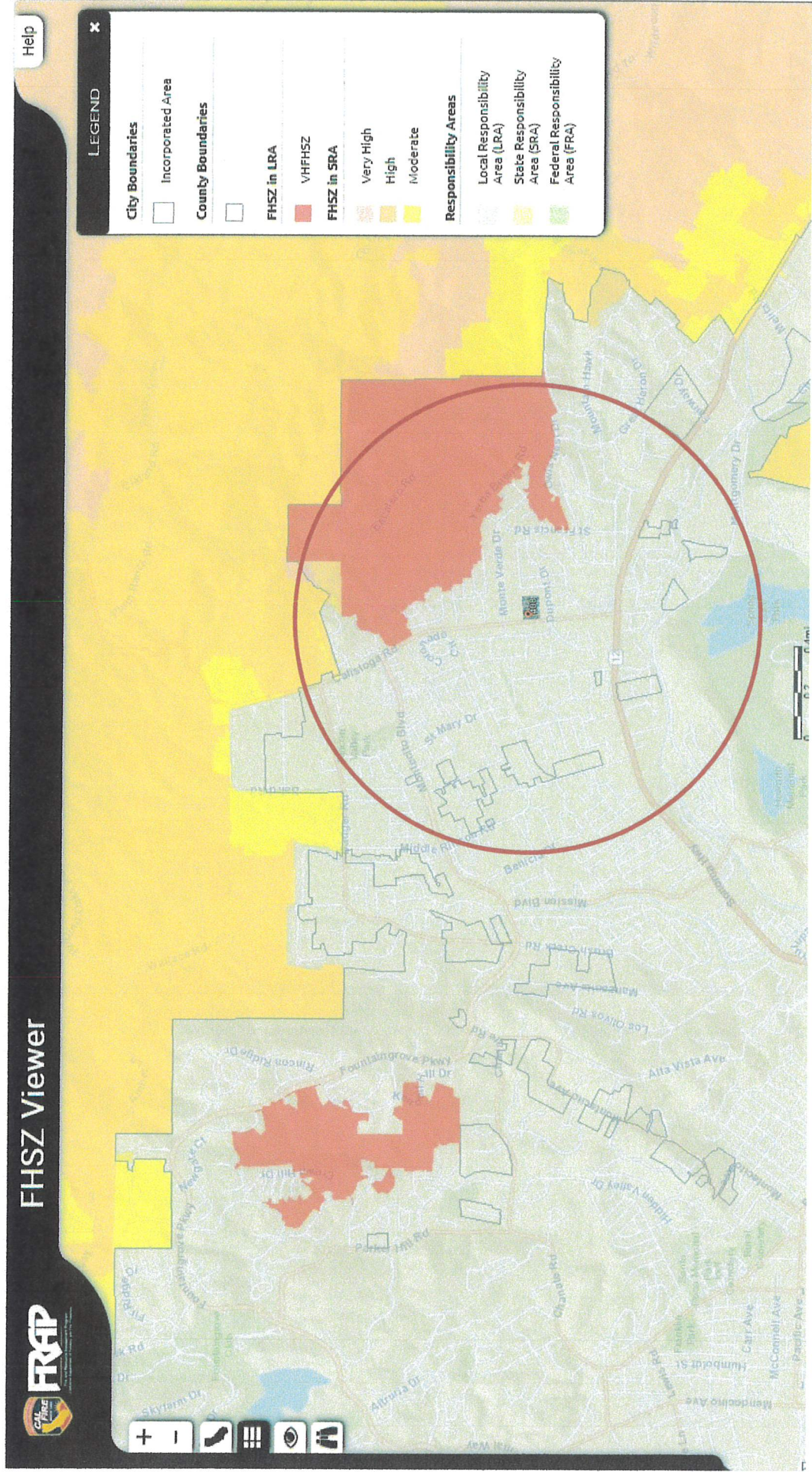
Slide 6 - Current Drip and Root Zones



Slide 7 - Valley Oaks at Maturity



Slide 8 - 408 Calistoga Road is within a California State High-Fire “Ember Zone”



Slide 9 - Santa Rosa Fire Department Very High Fire Safety Zone (VHFSZ) Map

