

April 15, 2025

Willian Alvarado  
14209 Vanowen Street #208  
Van Nuys, CA 91405

PROJECT NO. PRJ2024-000982  
RPPL2024003171

Vacant Lot on Pochantas Drive, Val Verde, CA (APN: 3270-004-018)

Dear Mr. Alvarado:

Hearing Officer Natoli, by her action of **April 15, 2025**, has approved the above-referenced project. Enclosed are the Hearing Officer's Findings and Conditions of Approval. Please carefully review each condition. This approval is not effective until the appeal period has ended and the required documents and applicable fees are submitted to LA County Planning (see enclosed Affidavit of Acceptance Instructions).

**Appeals:**

The applicant or any other interested persons may appeal the Hearing Officer's decision. The appeal period for this project will end at 5:00 p.m. on April 29, 2025. Appeals must be submitted to [appeal@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:appeal@planning.lacounty.gov) before the end of the appeal period.

Upon completion of the appeal period, the notarized Affidavit of Acceptance and any applicable fees must be submitted to the planner assigned to your case. Please make an appointment to ensure that processing will be completed in a timely manner. Failure to submit these documents and applicable fees within 60 days will result in a referral to Zoning Enforcement for further action.

In addition, any applicable California Environmental Quality Act fees for the Department of Fish and Wildlife shall be paid, and a Notice of Determination, if applicable must be filed with the County Clerk according to the instructions with the enclosed Affidavit of Acceptance. A Notice

of Exemption, if applicable, may also be filed according to the instructions in the enclosed Affidavit of Acceptance.

For questions or for additional information, please contact Chris La Farge, Regional Planner of the North County Development Services Section at (213) 974-6411, or [clafarge@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:clafarge@planning.lacounty.gov).

Sincerely,

AMY J. BODEK, AICP  
Director of Regional Planning

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Samuel Dea". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Samuel Dea, Supervising Regional Planner  
North County Development Services Section

SD:CLF

Enclosures: Findings, Conditions of Approval, Affidavit of Acceptance (Permittee's Completion), Notice of Determination (1 original, 1 copy)

c: PW (Building and Safety)  
Zoning Enforcement

APPROVALLETTER\_HO-RPPL2024003171

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING**  
**FINDINGS OF THE HEARING OFFICER**  
**AND ORDER**  
**PROJECT NO. PRJ2024-000982**  
**OAK TREE PERMIT NO. RPPL2024003171**

**RECITALS**

1. **HEARING DATE(S).** The Los Angeles County (“County”) Hearing Officer conducted a duly noticed public hearing in the matter of Oak Tree Permit (“OTP”) No. **RPPL2024003171** on April 15, 2025.
2. **HEARING PROCEEDINGS.** A duly noticed public hearing on the Project was held on April 15, 2025 before the Hearing Officer. Staff gave a presentation of the Project and the permittee, Mr. Willian Alvarado (“permittee”) spoke in support of the Project. The Hearing Officer asked two questions of staff. The first question was for an explanation in Item 11 of the Findings regarding a statement that the Project will not require the removal or changing the understory. Staff provided an explanation to the Hearing Officer.

The Hearing Officer’s second question was for an explanation of another statement in the Findings regarding the impacted trees. Staff provided an explanation to that question. The Hearing Officer also modified the conditions to reduce the size of the replacement trees and increase the monitoring period and the permittee accepted the changes to the conditions. There being no other speakers on this item, the Hearing Officer found that the Project is categorically exempt under CEQA, approved the OTP, and closed the public hearing.

3. **ENTITLEMENT(S) REQUESTED.** The permittee, Willian Alvarado, requests the OTP to authorize proposed encroachments into the protected zones of three (3) oak trees (including one heritage oak) associated with the construction of a new single-family residence (“Project”) on a vacant parcel, APN 3270-004-018, located on Pocahantas Drive in the unincorporated community of Val Verde (“Project Site”) in the R-1 (Single-Family Residence) zone pursuant to Los Angeles County Code (“County Code”) Sections 22.18.030 (Land Use Regulations for Residential Zones) and 22.174.030 (Oak Tree Permits, Applicability).
4. **ENTITLEMENT(S) REQUIRED.** An OTP is required to authorize the encroachments into the protected zones of three oak trees for construction activities pursuant to County Code Section 22.174.030 (Oak Tree Permit, Applicability).

5. **RELATED ENTITLEMENT.** Site Plan Review (“SPR”) No. RPPL2024001451 (“related SPR”) is a related entitlement to authorize the construction of a new single-family residence (“SFR”) totaling 2,126 square feet, pursuant to County Code Section 22.18.030 (Land Use Regulations for Residential Zones). The approval of the SPR is dependent on the approval of this OTP.
6. **PREVIOUS ENTITLEMENT(S).** Certificate of Compliance No. RPPL2024000510, recorded on February 22, 2024, certified that the subject property conforms with the Subdivision Map Act and the County Subdivision Ordinance.
7. **LAND USE DESIGNATION.** The Project Site is located within the H5 (Residential 5 – Five Dwelling Units per Acre) land use category of the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan (“Area Plan”) Land Use Policy Map, a component of the General Plan.
8. **ZONING.** The Project Site is located in the Newhall Zoned District and is currently zoned R-1. Pursuant to County Code Section 22.18.030 (Land Use Regulations for Residential Zones), an SPR is required for the underlying SFR and associated work.
9. **SURROUNDING LAND USES AND ZONING**

LOCATION	AREA PLAN LAND USE POLICY	ZONING	EXISTING USES
NORTH	H5 (Residential 5), RL2 (Rural Land 2 – One Dwelling Unit per Two Acres),	R-1, A-2-2 (Heavy Agricultural – Two Acre Minimum Required Lot Area)	Vacant, SFRs
EAST	H5, H2 (Residential 2 – Two Dwelling Units per Acre)	R-1	Vacant, SFRs
SOUTH	H5	R-1	Vacant, SFRs
WEST	H5	R-1	Vacant, SFRs

10. **PROJECT AND SITE PLAN DESCRIPTION.**

A. Existing Site Conditions

The Project Site is 10,000 square feet (“SF”) in size and consists of one legal lot. The Project Site is rectangular in shape with a small flat area in the front with steep topography in the middle and rear and it is currently vacant. Approximately 8,100 square feet of the lot’s 10,000 SF is in a Hillside Management Area. The Project Site also includes three oak trees and disturbed vegetation throughout.

Two oaks on the property have overlapping canopies. The County Biologist visited the Project Site on January 28, 2025, and determined the oak trees constitute a moderately degraded oak woodland.

B. Site Access

The Project Site is accessible via Pocahantas Drive to the north, a 26-foot-wide public street. Primary access to the Project Site will be via a 16-foot-wide driveway with an entrance/exit on Pocahantas Drive. There is no secondary access to the Project Site.

C. Site Plan

The site plan depicts a proposed 2,126-square-foot SFR with an attached 440-square-foot garage on the northern portion of the Project Site, APN 3270-004-018. Three oak trees, Oak Trees No. 1, 2 and OP3 (heritage), are located adjacent to or near the SFR. Oak Trees No. 1 and 2 are located on the Project Site along the northeasterly property line and Oak Tree No. OP3 is located on the parcel to the west, APN 3270-004-017, but its canopy overhangs onto the Project Site. The protected zones of all three oak trees are encroached upon by the proposed SFR.

D. Parking

While the request is for an OTP, an SFR is required to provide two covered parking spaces if located on a lot less than one acre in size. A two-car garage is proposed for the SFR and will be confirmed through review of the related SPR.

11. **CEQA DETERMINATION.**

Prior to the Hearing Officer's public hearing, County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning ("LA County Planning") staff ("staff") determined that the Project qualified for a Class 3 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) and a Class 4 (Minor Alterations to Land) categorical exemptions from the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code section 21000, et seq.) ("CEQA"), the State CEQA Guidelines, and the Environmental Document Reporting Procedures and Guidelines for the County. The Project is categorically exempt because the oak tree encroachments are related to minor alterations in the condition of private land and vegetation that do not involve the removal of healthy mature, scenic trees. No oak trees will be removed as part of this project.

The existing oak trees constitute a moderately degraded oak woodland and considering its present condition, the proposed development would not result in a significant impact given that the Project will not require the removal or changing of pristine, healthy understory with abundant greenery and healthy shrubs. Only a small fraction of the existing, degraded oak woodland will be lost. Per section 15304, Class 4 is intended for small-scale grading, new landscaping, and minor trenching, among other activities. The

requested encroachments are considered minor impacts that would not result in further loss of an ecosystem. Furthermore, the County Forester and Fire Warden (“Forester”) has reviewed the Project for the requested encroachments. The Project’s conditions have been determined by the Forester to be sufficient to recover any losses to trees and woodland values. The impacts from the encroachments do not justify an exception to the Categorical Exemption since the woodland is already degraded. A condition has been added to the OTP that should any oak fails due to the impacts of construction, it be replaced by the planting of new oaks on site.

The proposed construction of a single-family residence would not substantially alter the general topography of the Project Site as the proposed grading is minor and will not cause substantial change to the site condition. Additionally, the County Forester has reviewed the Project and recommended standard conditions such as proper temporary fencing around the protected zone during construction and the use of hand tools or hand-held power tools within the protected zone. By incorporating these recommended conditions, the impacts on the oak trees and woodlands will be minimized.

No exceptions to the categorical exemptions apply to the Project per section 15300.2 of the California Code of Regulations. The Project Site is not located within or near a historical resource, a hazardous waste site, scenic highway, or an environmentally sensitive area. The surrounding area consists of residential neighborhoods and vacant lands. The subject property and its surrounding area are developed with roadways, driveways, SFRs, utility poles, and other infrastructure. There is no significant effect due to unusual circumstances and no cumulative impacts are anticipated. Therefore, staff recommend that the Hearing Officer determine that the Project is categorically exempt from CEQA.

12. **PUBLIC COMMENTS.** Staff has not received any comments at the time of report preparation.
13. **AGENCY RECOMMENDATIONS.** County Fire Department Forestry Division: Recommended approval in a letter dated July 24, 2024 with conditions.
14. **LEGAL NOTIFICATION.** Pursuant to Section 22.174.040.E (Application with a Public Hearing, Oak Tree Permits) of the County Code, the community was properly notified of the public hearing by mail and newspaper (The Santa Clarita Valley Signal.) Additionally, the Project was noticed and case materials were available on LA County Planning's website. On December 10, 2024, a total of 105 Notices of Public Hearing were mailed to all property owners as identified on the County Assessor's record within a 1,000-foot radius from the Project Site, as well as 26 notices to those on the courtesy mailing list for the Newhall Zoned District and to any additional interested parties.

**GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY FINDINGS**

15. **LAND USE POLICY.** While the Project is for three oak encroachments, the Hearing Officer finds that the related development of the SFR is consistent with the goals and policies of the Area Plan because the H5 designation is intended for SFRs.
16. **GOALS AND POLICIES.** The Hearing Officer finds that the Project is consistent with the following policies of the General Plan.

- *Land Use Element Policy LU 3.1: Encourage the protection and conservation of areas with natural resources, and SEAs.*

The request is for an OTP to allow the new SFR to encroach on the protected zones of three oak trees, including one heritage oak. The proposed SFR will be located near the front of the lot thereby avoiding steep slopes in the rear and minimizing grading. The oak trees will remain, and grading and development within the hillside area will be minimized due to the encroachments. The Project Site is not within an environmentally sensitive area.

- *Land Use Element Policy 4.LU:1: Encourage infill development in urban and suburban areas on vacant, underutilized, and/or brownfield sites.*

Val Verde is an established community with public water, publicly maintained streets and trash collection. While the Project is for three oak encroachments, including one heritage oak, the related development of the proposed SFR will provide needed housing in the Val Verde community on a vacant lot within an existing residential neighborhood that has access to public infrastructure.

The Hearing Officer finds that the Project is consistent with the following objective and policy of the Area Plan.

- *Objective CO-3.2: Identify and protect areas which have exceptional biological resource value due to a specific type of vegetation, habitat, ecosystem or location.*

Related SFR development is confined within a small area of the Project Site as the building footprint of the new SFR is 1,232 square feet. The Project will maintain all existing oak trees on site and maintain most of the existing topographic features. The site is in an oak woodland that is already degraded and the encroachments will not create a significant impact.

- Policy CO-3.2.2: Ensure that development is located and designed to protect oak and other significant indigenous woodlands. (Guiding Principle #9)

The Project has been designed to minimize impacts to oak trees, oak woodlands, and the hillside. No oak trees will be removed, and implementation of the OTP conditions will help protect the oaks that will be encroached by the proposed SFR.

### **ZONING CODE CONSISTENCY FINDINGS**

17. **PERMITTED USE IN ZONE.** While the Project request is for three oak encroachments, including one heritage oak, the Hearing Officer finds that the related SFR development is consistent with the R-1 zoning classification, as a SFR is permitted in such zone with a site plan review pursuant to County Code Section 22.18.030 (Land Use Regulations for Residential Zones). The related SFR development will be reviewed for conformity with Title 22 by the related site plan review.
18. **REQUIRED YARDS.** While the Project request is for three oak encroachments, including one heritage oak, the Hearing Officer finds that the related SFR development is consistent with the standards identified in County Code Section 22.18.040 (Development Standards for Residential Zones). The R-1 zone requires a 20-foot front yard setback, five-foot interior side yard setback and 15-foot rear yard setback. The County Department of Public Works is requiring a street dedication of seven (7) feet per their letter to Mr. Diaz dated April 25, 2024. Therefore, the combined front yard setback is 27 feet. The proposed SFR meets these requirements which will be confirmed before approval under the related SPR.
19. **HEIGHT.** While the Project is for three oak encroachments, including one heritage oak, the Hearing Officer finds that the related development of the SFR is consistent with the standards identified in County Code Section 22.18.040 (Development Standards for Residential Zones). Every SFR shall not exceed 35 feet above grade. The proposed SFR at the Project Site is under 35 feet in height with a maximum height of 30 feet and 10 inches above grade. This will be confirmed before approval under the related SPR.
20. **PARKING.** While the Project is for three oak encroachments, including one heritage oak, the Hearing Officer finds that the Project is consistent with the standard identified in County Code Section 22.112.070 (Required Parking Spaces) for SFRs. For an SFR, two covered standard spaces are required. A two-car garage is provided for the proposed SFR. This will be confirmed before approval under the related SPR.
21. **HILLSIDE MANAGEMENT AREA.** While the Project is for three oak encroachments, including one heritage oak, the Hearing Officer finds that the Project is exempt from the requirement for a Conditional Use Permit (“CUP”) for development within a Hillside Management Area (“HMA”). The majority of the Project Site is classified as HMA, and the proposed SFR is partially within the HMA. However, pursuant to County Code Section 22

.104.030.A (Permit Required in HMA) because the Project proposes under 15,000 cubic yards of grading and is on a single parcel and there is no development proposed on contiguous parcels by the Permittee, the Project is exempt from the need for a CUP. The amount of proposed grading on the Project Site is 200 cubic yards (100 cubic yards of cut and 100 cubic yards of fill). This will be confirmed before approval under the related SPR.

22. **COMMUNITY STANDARDS DISTRICT (“CSD”).** While the Project is for three oak encroachments, including one heritage oak, the Hearing Officer finds that the Project is consistent with the applicable standards identified in County Code Chapter 22.312 (Castaic Area CSD). Because the Project includes development within an HMA, County Code Section 22.312.060.E (Hillsides in CSD) is applicable. The Project will conform to the standards listed in this section. No development is proposed near a Significant Ridgeline. This will be confirmed before approval under the related SPR.
23. **RURAL OUTDOOR LIGHTING DISTRICT.** While the Project is for three oak encroachments, including one heritage oak, the Hearing Officer finds that the Project is consistent with the applicable standards identified in County Code Chapter 22.80 (Rural Outdoor Lighting District). The Project Site is located within a Rural Outdoor Lighting District and is subject to the development standards for residential uses in County Code Section 22.80.050 (Rural Outdoor Lighting District General Development Standards), including a maximum height of 20 feet for any outdoor lighting fixtures, a limit of 400 lumens for any fixture above 15 feet in height, full shielding of outdoor lighting fixtures, and no unacceptable light trespass. Conformance with these standards will be confirmed with the related SPR.

#### **OAK TREE PERMIT FINDINGS**

24. **The Hearing Officer finds that the proposed construction or proposed use will be accomplished without endangering the health of the remaining trees subject to Title 22 regulations, if any, on the subject property.** The oak tree report dated September 27, 2022, identifies three ordinance-sized Coast Live Oak trees (including one heritage oak) on the Project Site and an adjacent parcel. The protected zones of all three trees will be encroached upon by the proposed construction of the SFR. According to the oak tree report, Tree No. 1 has a large cavity in the main trunk and decaying organisms in this cavity have significantly degraded the structural integrity of the tree. The combined effects of pruning and soil disturbance within the root zone of Oak Tree No. 1 could significantly harm its health. With the implementation of the County Forester’s and the arborist’s recommendations, Tree No. 1 will be protected in place and preserved during construction. With the implementation of the County Forester’s and the oak tree report’s arborist’s recommendations, the other two oak trees including one heritage oak will be protected in place and preserved during construction without compromising their health. In the event that one or more oak trees dies as a result of the encroachments, the planting

of mitigation trees will be required. Any mitigation trees would need to be properly maintained and monitored.

25. **The Hearing Officer finds that the removal or relocation of the oak trees proposed will not result in soil erosion through the diversion or increased flow of surface waters which cannot be satisfactorily mitigated.** No oak tree is proposed to be removed. Two of the three oak trees, including one heritage oak tree, are anticipated to survive the ground disturbance associated with the construction of the SFR by adherence to the conditions of the OTP. Oak No. 1 which has suffered drought stress and a large cavity in its trunk has a possible likelihood of failure, and its health could be significantly harmed by the effects of pruning and soil disturbance.
26. **The Hearing Officer finds that in addition to the above facts, at least one of the following findings apply: a. That the removal or relocation of the oak trees proposed is necessary as continued existence at present locations frustrates the planned improvement or proposed use of the subject property to such an extent that: i. Alternative development plans cannot achieve the same permitted density or that the cost of such alternative would be prohibitive, or ii. Placement of such oak trees precludes the reasonable and efficient use of such property for a use otherwise authorized; b. That the oak trees proposed for removal or relocation interferes with utility services or streets and highways, either within or outside of the subject property, and no reasonable alternative to such interference exists other than removal of the trees; or c. That the condition of the oak trees proposed for removal with reference to seriously debilitating disease or danger of falling is such that it cannot be remedied through reasonable preservation procedures and practices.** The three oak trees, including one heritage oak tree, will be encroached upon by the related proposed construction of the SFR but no oak tree is proposed to be removed. The proposed location of the SFR is the most suitable location on the Project Site for development due to the steep slopes over most of the Project Site and the SFR's location in the relatively flatter portion of the Project Site. Relocating the SFR outside of the oak tree protected zones would result in significantly more grading, and even if that were done, grading for the driveway may still require encroachments to the same oak trees. The proposed SFR location minimizes the amount of grading needed and overall Project impacts while preserving the oak trees. The location of the oak trees on the Project Site makes development infeasible unless oak tree encroachments are allowed. The development of an SFR can be accomplished without removing any oak trees with the protection provided by the OTP conditions.
27. **The Hearing Officer finds the removal of the oak trees proposed will not be contrary to or be in substantial conflict with the intent and purpose of the Oak Tree Permit procedure.** The requested encroachments are consistent with the intent and purpose of the OTP procedure to allow the related construction of the SFR. These oak trees will continue to be monitored by the LA County Forrester to ensure their survival when

construction is completed. The OTP conditions will help support the health of the trees. In the event any of the oak trees does not survive, the permittee will be required to plant and maintain replacement oak trees at a ratio of 2:1 (10:1 for heritage trees) on the property.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS**

28. The Hearing Officer finds that the Project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines section 15304 (Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures and Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land). The Project is exempt because the oak tree encroachments are related to construction of a SFR and minor alterations in the condition of private land and vegetation that do not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. No trees will be removed as part of this project.

The proposed construction of the SFR would not substantially alter the general topography of the area. While the Project Site contains several oak trees forming a moderately degraded oak woodland, the impacts from encroachments are not a significant impact and therefore are not an exception to the Categorical Exemption.

The proposed construction may compromise the health of one existing tree, Oak No. 1. Additionally, the County Forester has reviewed the Project and recommended standard conditions such as proper temporary fencing around the protected zone during construction and the use of hand tools or hand-held power tools within the protected zone and replacement trees the impacted oaks. By incorporating these recommended conditions, the impacts on the oak trees will be minimized.

No exceptions to the categorical exemptions apply to the Project per Section 15300.2 of the California Code of Regulations. The Project Site is not located within or near a historical resource, a hazardous waste site, scenic highway, or an environmentally sensitive area. The surrounding area consists of residential development and vacant land. The subject property is not developed and its surrounding area is partially developed with residences, roadways, driveways, buildings, utility poles, and other infrastructure and partially vacant. There is no significant effect due to unusual circumstances and no cumulative impacts are anticipated.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE FINDINGS**

29. **LOCATION OF DOCUMENTS.** The location of the documents and other materials constituting the record of proceedings upon which the Hearing Officer's decision is based in this matter is at LA County Planning, 13th Floor, Hall of Records, 320 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, California 90012. The custodian of such documents and materials shall be the Section Head of the North County Development Services Section, LA County Planning.

**BASED ON THE FOREGOING, THE HEARING OFFICER CONCLUDES THAT:**

- A. The proposed construction and use could impact the health of one of the three oak trees. The proposed construction and use will be accomplished without endangering the health of the other two oak trees, including Tree OP3 which is a heritage oak, subject to County Code Title 22 (Planning and Zoning) regulations, if any, on and adjacent to the Project Site. The conditions of approval will ensure impacts to the oaks will be minimized to the extent possible.
- B. There is no removal or relocation of oak trees; the proposed encroachments of the oak trees will not result in soil erosion through the diversion or increased flow of surface waters, which cannot be satisfactorily mitigated.
- C. The encroachments of the oak trees is necessary as non-encroachment of the trees at present locations frustrates the planned improvement or proposed use of the subject property to such an extent that: i) alternative development plans cannot achieve the same permitted density or that the cost of such alternative would be prohibitive, or ii) placement of such oak trees precludes the reasonable and efficient use of such property for a use otherwise authorized.
- D. The Hearing Officer finds the proposed encroachments of the oak trees will not be contrary to or be in substantial conflict with the intent and purpose of the Oak Tree Permit procedure.

**THEREFORE, THE HEARING OFFICER:**

- 1. Finds that the Project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines sections 15303 (Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) and 15304 (Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land); and
- 2. Approves **OAK TREE PERMIT NO. RPPL2024003171**, subject to the attached conditions.

**ACTION DATE: April 15, 2025**

SZD:CF

March 5, 2025

c: Zoning Enforcement, Building and Safety

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING**  
**CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**  
**PROJECT NO. PRJ2024-000982-(5)**  
**OAK TREE PERMIT NO. RPPL2024003171**

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The project is to authorize encroachments into the protected zones of three oak trees, identified as Tree Nos. 1, 2 and OP3 (heritage), on a vacant property located on Pocahantas Drive in the unincorporated community of Val Verde subject to the following conditions of approval:

**GENERAL CONDITIONS**

1. Unless otherwise apparent from the context, the term "Permittee" shall include the applicant, owner of the property, and any other person, corporation, or other entity making use of this grant.
2. This grant shall not be effective for any purpose until the Permittee, and the owner of the subject property if other than the Permittee, have filed at the office of the Los Angeles County ("County") Department of Regional Planning ("LA County Planning") their affidavit stating that they are aware of and agree to accept all of the conditions of this grant, and until all required monies have been paid pursuant to Condition No. 8. Notwithstanding the foregoing, this Condition No. 2 and Conditions No. 3, 4 and 7 shall be effective pursuant to Section 22.222.230 of the County Code.
3. The Permittee shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the County, its agents, officers, and employees from any claim, action, or proceeding against the County or its agents, officers, or employees to attack, set aside, void, or annul this permit approval, which action is brought within the applicable time period of Government Code section 65009 or any other applicable limitations period. The County shall promptly notify the Permittee of any claim, action, or proceeding and the County shall reasonably cooperate in the defense. If the County fails to promptly notify the Permittee of any claim, action, or proceeding, or if the County fails to cooperate reasonably in the defense, the Permittee shall not thereafter be responsible to defend, indemnify, or hold harmless the County.
4. In the event that any claim, action, or proceeding as described above is filed against the County, the Permittee shall within ten days of the filing make an initial deposit with LA County Planning in the amount of up to \$5,000.00, from which actual costs and expenses shall be billed and deducted for the purpose of defraying the costs or expenses involved in

LA County Planning's cooperation in the defense, including but not limited to, depositions, testimony, and other assistance provided to Permittee or Permittee's counsel.

If during the litigation process, actual costs or expenses incurred reach 80 percent of the amount on deposit, the Permittee shall deposit additional funds sufficient to bring the balance up to the amount of \$5,000.00. There is no limit to the number of supplemental deposits that may be required prior to completion of the litigation.

At the sole discretion of the Permittee, the amount of an initial or any supplemental deposit may exceed the minimum amounts defined herein. Additionally, the cost for collection and duplication of records and other related documents shall be paid by the Permittee according to County Code Section 2.170.010.

5. If any material provision of this grant is held or declared to be invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the permit shall be void and the privileges granted hereunder shall lapse.
6. Upon any transfer or lease of the property during the term of this grant, the Permittee, or the owner of the subject property if other than the Permittee, shall promptly provide a copy of the grant and its conditions to the transferee or lessee of the subject property.
7. This grant shall expire unless used within two (2) years from the date of final approval of the grant. A single one-year time extension may be requested in writing and with the payment of the applicable fee prior to such expiration date.
8. The subject property shall be maintained and operated in full compliance with the conditions of this grant and any law, statute, ordinance, or other regulation applicable to any development or activity on the subject property. Failure of the Permittee to cease any development or activity not in full compliance shall be a violation of these conditions. No provision of any easement of or any other encumbrance on the property shall exempt the Permittee and/or property owner from compliance with these conditions and applicable regulations. Inspections shall be made to ensure compliance with the conditions of this grant as well as to ensure that any development undertaken on the subject property is in accordance with the approved site plan on file. The Permittee shall deposit with the County the sum **\$912.00**, which shall be placed in a performance fund and be used exclusively to reimburse LA County Planning for all expenses incurred while inspecting the premises to determine the Permittee's compliance with the conditions of this grant. The fund provides for **two (2)** inspections. Inspections may be unannounced and may be conducted utilizing any available technologies, including, but not limited to, unmanned aircraft systems (UAS).

If additional inspections are required to ensure compliance with the conditions of this grant, or if any inspection discloses that the subject property is being used in violation of any one of the conditions of this grant, the Permittee shall be financially responsible and shall

reimburse LA County Planning for all additional enforcement efforts necessary to bring the subject property into compliance. The amount charged for additional inspections shall be \$456.00 per inspection, or the current recovery cost established by LA County Planning at the time any additional inspections are required, whichever is greater.

9. Notice is hereby given that any person violating a provision of this grant is guilty of a misdemeanor. Notice is further given that the Regional Planning Commission ("Commission") or a Hearing Officer may, after conducting a public hearing, revoke or modify this grant, if the Commission or Hearing Officer finds that these conditions have been violated or that this grant has been exercised so as to be detrimental to the public's health or safety or so as to be a nuisance, or as otherwise authorized pursuant to Chapter 22.238 of the County Code.
10. All development pursuant to this grant must be kept in full compliance with the County Fire Code to the satisfaction of the County Fire Department ("County Fire").
11. All development pursuant to this grant shall conform with the requirements of the County Department of Public Works to the satisfaction of said department.
12. All development pursuant to this grant shall comply with the requirements of Title 22 of the County Code and of the specific zoning of the subject property, unless specifically modified by this grant, as set forth in these conditions, including the approved Exhibit "A," or a revised Exhibit "A" approved by the Director of LA County Planning ("Director").

**PERMIT-SPECIFIC CONDITIONS – OAK TREE PERMIT**

13. The grant shall authorize encroachments into the protected zones of three oak trees, all three (3) of which are to be encroached by the proposed construction activities, associated with the construction of a new single-family residence. One (1) of the three trees (identified as OP3 in the applicant's Oak Tree Report) is a heritage oak tree.
14. In the event that any of the trees dies as a result of the encroachments, the Permittee shall provide mitigation trees of the oak genus at a rate of two to one (2:1) for any non-heritage trees and rate of ten to one (10:1) for any heritage tree. The location of the replacement trees shall be recorded with a GPS and plotted on an "As-built" plan along with their decimal degree coordinates, to be submitted to LA County Planning. Replacement trees shall be planted within the subject property to the satisfaction of the Director. The As-built plan shall serve as a reference so that replacement trees may be easily located during the condition-compliance inspection. Alternatively, contributing to the Oak Forest Special Fund to the satisfaction of County Fire is an alternative if on-site planting is not possible.

15. The Permittee shall comply with all conditions and requirements contained in the County Fire Forester and Fire Warden, Forestry Division ("Forester"), letter dated July 24, 2024 (attached hereto), to the satisfaction of said Division, except as otherwise required by said Division and these conditions.
  
16. Forester's recommended conditions 11, 13, 14 and 17 are modified as follows:
  - a. Each mitigation tree shall be at least one gallon in size, rather than 15 gallons;
  - b. In addition, an acorn from a source local to Val Verde shall be planted within the irrigated zone of each mitigation tree;
  - c. The maintenance period shall be seven years, rather than two years; and
  - d. The monitoring period shall be seven years, rather than two years.

Attachments:

- Exhibit D-1 Forester Letter dated July 24, 2024  
Exhibit D-2 Oak Trees: Care and Maintenance Guide



# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT

1320 NORTH EASTERN AVENUE  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90063-3294  
(323) 881-2401  
www.fire.lacounty.gov

*"Proud Protectors of Life, Property, and the Environment"*

ANTHONY C. MARRONE  
FIRE CHIEF  
FORESTER & FIRE WARDEN

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FIFTH DISTRICT

July 24, 2024

Christopher La Farge, Planner  
Department of Regional Planning  
Zoning Permits Section  
320 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Christopher La Farge:

### **OAK TREE PERMIT NUMBER RPPL2024003171 30500 POCAHANTAS DRIVE, CASTAIC**

We have reviewed the "Request for Oak Tree Permit #RPPL2024003171." The project is located at 30500 Pochantas Drive in the unincorporated area of Castaic. The Oak Tree Report is accurate and complete as to the location, size, condition and species of the Oak trees on the site. The term "Oak Tree Report" refers to the document on file by James Komen, the consulting arborist, dated September 27, 2022.

**We recommend the following as conditions of approval:**

### **OAK TREE PERMIT REQUIREMENTS:**

1. This grant shall not be effective until the permittee and the owner of the property involved (if other than the permittee), have filed at the office of the Department of Regional Planning their affidavit stating that they are aware of and agree to accept all conditions of this grant. Unless otherwise apparent from the context, the term "permittee" shall include the applicant and any other person, corporation or other entity making use of this grant.
2. The permittee shall, prior to commencement of the use authorized by this grant, pay the fees invoiced through EPIC-LA to the County of Los Angeles Fire Department. Such fees shall be used to compensate the County Forester per inspection and to cover expenses

#### SERVING THE UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY AND THE CITIES OF:

AGOURA HILLS	CARSON	EL MONTE	INGLEWOOD	LAWNDALE	PICO RIVERA	SIGNAL HILL
ARTESIA	CERRITOS	GARDENA	IRWINDALE	LOMITA	POMONA	SOUTH EL MONTE
AZUSA	CLAREMONT	GLENDORA	LA CANADA-FLINTRIDGE	LYNWOOD	RANCHO PALOS VERDES	SOUTH GATE
BALDWIN PARK	COMMERCE	HAWAIIAN GARDENS	LA HABRA	MALIBU	ROLLING HILLS	TEMPLE CITY
BELL	COVINA	HAWTHORNE	LA MIRADA	MAYWOOD	ROLLING HILLS ESTATES	VERNON
BELL GARDENS	CUDAHY	HERMOSA BEACH	LA PUENTE	NORWALK	ROSEMEAD	WALNUT
BELLFLOWER	DIAMOND BAR	HIDDEN HILLS	LAKEWOOD	PALMDALE	SAN DIMAS	WEST HOLLYWOOD
BRADBURY	DUARTE	HUNTINGTON PARK	LANCASTER	PALOS VERDES ESTATES	SANTA CLARITA	WESTLAKE VILLAGE
CALABASAS		INDUSTRY		PARAMOUNT		WHITTIER

incurred while inspecting the project to determine the permittee's compliance with the conditions of approval. These fees provide for one (1) initial inspection prior to the commencement of construction and two (2) subsequent inspections until the conditions of approval have been met. The Director of Regional Planning and the County Forester shall retain the right to make regular and unannounced site inspections.

3. Before commencing work authorized or required by this grant, the consulting arborist shall submit a letter to the Director of Regional Planning and the County of Los Angeles Fire Department's Forestry Division stating that he or she has been retained by the permittee to perform or supervise the work, and that he or she agrees to report to the Director of Regional Planning and the County Forester, any failure to fully comply with the conditions of the grant. The arborist shall also submit a written report on permit compliance upon completion of the work required by this grant. The report shall include a diagram showing the exact number and location of all mitigation trees planted as well as planting dates.
4. The permittee shall arrange for the consulting arborist or a similarly qualified person to maintain all remaining Oak trees on the subject property that are within the zone of impact as determined by the County Forester for the life of the Oak Tree Permit or the Conditional Use Permit.
5. The permittee shall install temporary chainlink fencing, not less than four (4) feet in height, to secure the protected zone of all remaining Oak trees on site as necessary. The fencing shall be installed prior to grading or tree removal, and shall not be removed without approval of the County Forester. The term "protected zone" refers to the area extending five (5) feet beyond the dripline of the Oak tree (before pruning), or fifteen (15) feet from the trunk, whichever is greater.
6. Copies of the Oak Tree Report, Oak tree map, mitigation planting plan and conditions of approval shall be kept on the project site and available for review. All individuals associated with the project as it relates to the Oak resource shall be familiar with the Oak Tree Report, Oak tree map, mitigation planting plan and conditions of approval.

**PERMITTED OAK TREE ENCROACHMENT:**

7. This grant allows encroachment within the protected zone of three (3) trees of the Oak genus identified as Trees Number 1, 2 an OP3 (heritage) on the applicant's site plan and Oak Tree Report. Trenching, excavation, or clearance of vegetation within the protected zone of an Oak tree shall be accomplished by the use of hand tools or small hand-held power tools. Any major roots encountered shall be conserved and treated as recommended by the consulting arborist.
8. In addition to the work expressly allowed by this permit, remedial pruning intended to ensure the continued health of a protected Oak tree or to improve its appearance or structure may be performed. Such pruning shall include the removal of deadwood and stubs and medium pruning of branches two-inches in diameter or less in accordance with the guidelines published by the National Arborist Association. In no case shall more than 20% of the tree canopy of any one tree be removed.

9. Except as otherwise expressly authorized by this grant, the remaining Oak trees shall be maintained in accordance with the principles set forth in the publication, "Oak Trees: Care and Maintenance," prepared by the County of Los Angeles Fire Department, Forestry Division. A copy of the publication is enclosed with these conditions.

**MITIGATION TREES:**

10. The permittee shall provide mitigation trees of the Oak genus at a rate of two to one (2:1) for any tree or ten to one (10:1) for any heritage tree specified above that dies as a result of the approved encroachments. In addition, any tree that reaches ordinance size during the construction and monitoring period shall be included in this permit and subject to these conditions of approval.
11. Each mitigation tree shall be at least a 15-gallon specimen in size and measure one (1) inch or more in diameter one (1) foot above the base. Free form trees with multiple stems are permissible provided the combined diameter of the two (2) largest stems of such trees measure a minimum of one (1) inch in diameter one (1) foot above the base.
12. Mitigation trees shall consist of indigenous varieties of Quercus agrifolia, grown from a local seed source.
13. Mitigation trees shall be planted within one (1) year of the permitted Oak tree removals. Mitigation trees shall be planted on site or within the same community if approved by the County Forester. If mitigation trees are deemed impossible by the County Forester, only then a contribution to the County of Los Angeles Oak Forest Special Fund may be made in the amount equivalent to the Oak resource loss. The contribution shall be calculated by the consulting arborist and approved by the County Forester according to the most current edition of the International Society of Arboriculture's "Guide for Plant Appraisal."
14. The permittee shall properly maintain each mitigation tree and shall replace any tree failing to survive due to a lack of proper care and maintenance with a tree meeting the specifications set forth above. The two-year maintenance period will begin upon receipt of a letter from the permittee or consulting arborist to the Director of Regional Planning and the County Forester, indicating that the mitigation trees have been planted. The maintenance period of the trees failing to survive two (2) years will start anew with the new replacement trees. Subsequently, additional monitoring fees shall be required.
15. All mitigation Oak trees planted as a condition of this permit shall be protected in perpetuity by the Los Angeles County Oak Tree Ordinance once they have survived the required maintenance period.

**NON-PERMITTED ACTIONS AND VIOLATIONS:**

16. Encroachment within the protected zone of any additional tree of the Oak genus on the project site is prohibited.

17. Should encroachment within the protected zone of any additional tree of the Oak genus on the project site not permitted by this grant result in its injury or death within two (2) years, the permittee shall be required to make a contribution to the Los Angeles County Oak Forest Special Fund in the amount equivalent to the Oak resource damage/loss. Said contribution shall be calculated by the consulting arborist and approved by the County Forester according to the most current edition of the International Society of Arboriculture's "Guide for Plant Appraisal."
18. No planting or irrigation system shall be installed within the dripline of any Oak tree that will be retained.
19. Utility trenches shall not be routed within the protected zone of an Oak tree unless the serving utility requires such locations.
20. Equipment, materials and vehicles shall not be stored, parked, or operated within the protected zone of any Oak tree. No temporary structures shall be placed within the protected zone of any Oak tree.
21. Violations of the conditions of this grant shall result in immediate work stoppage or in a notice of correction depending on the nature of the violation. A time frame within which deficiencies must be corrected will be indicated on the notice of correction.
22. Should any future inspection disclose that the subject property is being used in violation of any one of the conditions of this grant, the permittee shall be held financially responsible and shall reimburse the County of Los Angeles Fire Department, Forestry Division for all enforcement efforts necessary to bring the subject property into compliance.

To schedule a County Forester inspection, please contact the Environmental Review Unit at (818) 890-5719.

If you have any additional questions, please contact this office at (818) 890-5719.

Very truly yours,



KIEN TAN, DEPUTY FORESTER, FORESTRY DIVISION  
PREVENTION SERVICES BUREAU

KT:jl

Enclosure

An illustration of several oak leaves and a branch. The leaves are detailed with veins and have a lobed, wavy edge. Some leaves are shaded in light gray, while others are white with black outlines. The branch is dark and textured, showing small knots and a rough surface.

# OAK TREES: Care and Maintenance

This Oak Tree Care and Maintenance Guide offers basic information and practical guidelines aimed at the preservation and continued health and survival of oak trees in the residential landscape.

Increasing pressure for development is changing the oak woodland of Los Angeles County. Heritage oaks which once survived in open rolling hills are now being preserved or replanted and incorporated into the community.

How do we protect these trees during the planning and development process, and ensure their survival once they are in the home garden?

### **The Oak Tree**

Oak Trees in the residential landscape often suffer decline and early death due to conditions that are easily preventable. Damage can often take years to become evident, and by the time the trees show obvious signs of disease it is usually too late to help.

Improper watering, especially during the hot summer months, and disturbance to critical root areas are most often the causes. This booklet will provide guidelines on where these critical areas lie and ways to avoid disturbing them, as well as information on long-term care and maintenance of both natural and planted oaks. Lists of additional resources for more information and demonstration areas to visit are also included.

## The Oak Tree Ordinance

The Los Angeles County Oak Tree Ordinance has been established to recognize oak trees as significant historical, aesthetic, and ecological resources. The goal of the ordinance is to create favorable conditions for the preservation and propagation of this unique and threatened plant heritage. By making this part of the development process, healthy oak trees will be preserved and maintained.

The Los Angeles County Oak Tree Ordinance applies to all unincorporated areas of the County. Individual cities may have their own ordinances, and their requirements may be different.

### Permit Requirements:

Under the Los Angeles County Ordinance, a person shall not cut, destroy, remove, relocate, inflict damage, or encroach into the *protected zone* (see text) of any ordinance sized tree of the oak tree genus without first obtaining a permit.

Damage includes but is not limited to :

- Burning
- Application of toxic substances
- Pruning or cutting
- Trenching
- Excavating
- Paving
- Operation of machinery or equipment
- Changing the natural grade

Chapter 22.56.2050: Oak Tree Permit Regulations, Los Angeles County, Adopted: August 20, 1982. Amended: September 13, 1988.

For more information about the County Oak Tree Ordinance, visit the Forestry Division's website at:

<http://www.fire.lacounty.gov>

Or contact:

**Department of Regional Planning**  
320 W. Temple Street, 13th floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90012-3284  
(213) 974-6411  
TDD: (213) 617-2292  
<http://planning.co.la.ca.us>

## Types of oaks commonly found in Los Angeles County:

Many kinds of oak trees are native to Los Angeles County. A few of the more common ones are shown below, but *all* oak trees are covered by the Oak Tree Ordinance.

Older oaks which have thrived under the natural rainfall patterns of dry summers and wet winters often can't handle the extra water of a garden setting. These trees must be treated with special care if they are to survive.

Those oaks that have been planted into the landscape or sprouted naturally tend to be more tolerant of watered landscapes. These vigorous young trees may grow 1½ to 4 feet a year in height under good conditions. Once established these trees would benefit from the same special care outlined in this guide.



*Valley Oak*  
**QUERCUS LOBATA**

LARGE DECIDUOUS TREE 60'-75' HIGH, BROADLY SPREADING 50'-80' WIDE.

LEAVES: DEEP GREEN, 3"-4" LONG; PAPER-LIKE TEXTURE WITH DEEP ROUNDED LOBES ON THE LEAF EDGE.

TENDS TO FAVOR VALLEY BOTTOMS; FOR THIS REASON THE VALLEY OAK HAS DISAPPEARED FROM THE LANDSCAPE MORE RAPIDLY, IMPACTED SEVERELY BY AGRICULTURE AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT.



*Coast Live Oak*  
**QUERCUS AGRIFOLIA**

LARGE EVERGREEN TREE WITH A BROAD, ROUND SHAPE AND LARGE LIMBS. 30'-70' HIGH, 35'-80' WIDE.

LEAVES: GLOSSY GREEN, 1"-3" LONG; SPINY, ROUNDED, AND HOLLY-LIKE; BUT DISTINCTLY CUPPED OR CURLED UNDER AT THE EDGES.



*Interior Live Oak*  
**QUERCUS WISLIZENII**

EVERGREEN TREE 30'-75' HIGH OR A SHRUB 8'-10' HIGH IN CHAPARRAL AREAS. HAS A FULL, DENSE ROUNDED SHAPE, NOT BROAD OR WITH LARGE LIMBS LIKE A COAST LIVE OAK. THEY TEND TO GROW IN CLUMPS RATHER THAN AS A SINGLE TREE.

LEAVES: DARK GREEN, 1"-4" LONG. EDGES EITHER SMOOTH OR SPINY, BUT ALWAYS FLAT— NOT CURLED UNDER.

### OTHER COMMON OAKS :

CALIFORNIA BLACK OAK : QUERCUS KELLOGGI  
CANYON LIVE OAK : QUERCUS CHRYSOLEPIS  
ENGELMANN OAK : QUERCUS ENGELMANNII

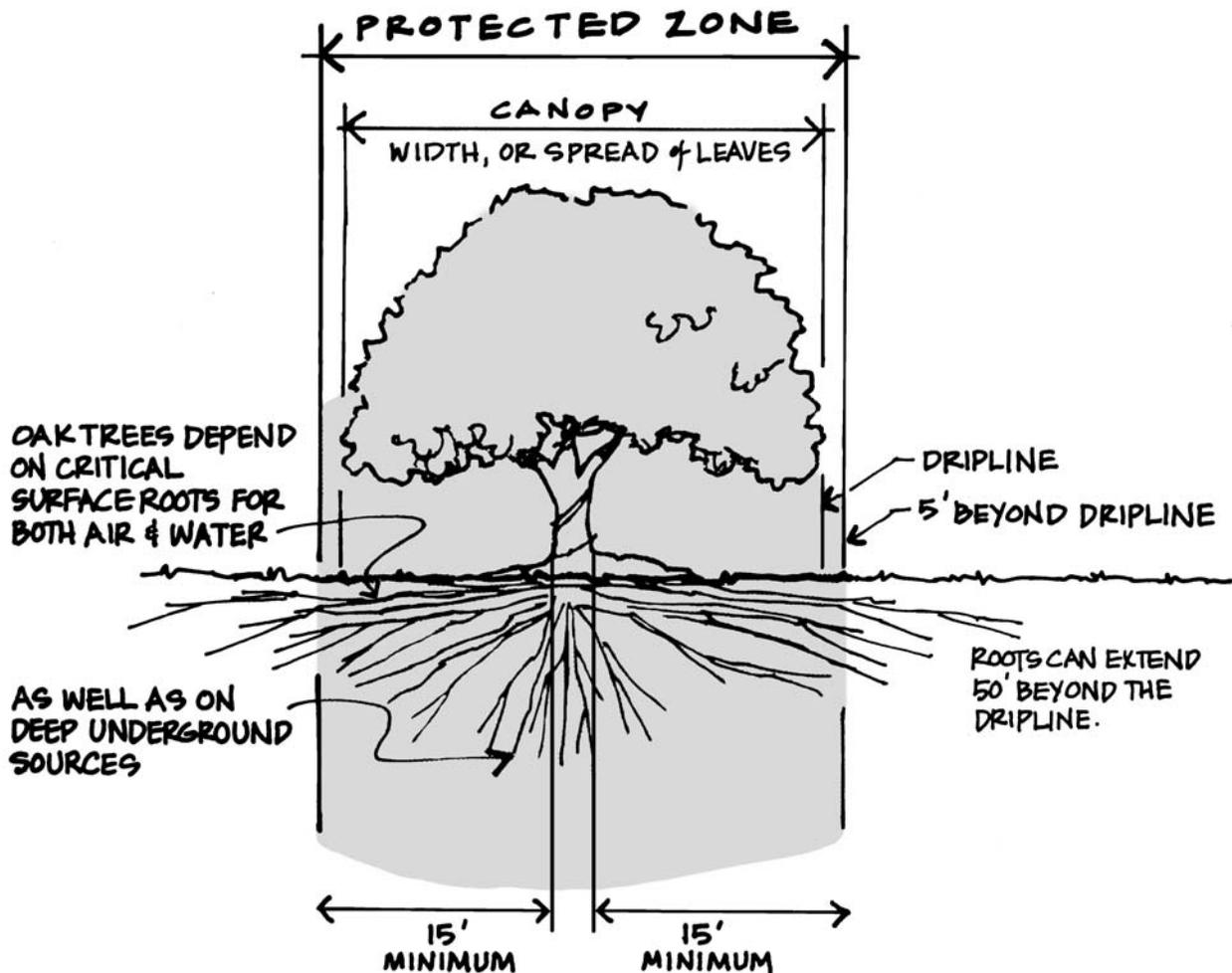
# THE PROTECTED ZONE

The **protected zone** defines the area most critical to the health and continued survival of an oak tree. Oaks are easily damaged and very sensitive to disturbances that occur to the tree or in the surrounding environment.

The root system is extensive but surprisingly shallow, sometimes radiating out as much as 50 feet beyond the spread of the tree leaves, or canopy. The ground area at the outside edge of the canopy, referred to as the *dripline*, is especially important: the tree obtains most of its surface water and nutrients here, and conducts an important exchange of air and other gases.

The protected zone is defined in the Oak Tree Ordinance as follows:

“The Protected Zone shall mean that area within the dripline of an oak tree and extending there from to a point at least 5 feet outside the dripline or 15 feet from the trunk, whichever distance is greater.”



# CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY WITHIN THE PROTECTED ZONE

## Changes in Grade

Any change in the level of soil around an oak tree can have a negative impact. The most critical area lies within 6' to 10' of the trunk: no soil should be added or scraped away. Water should drain away from this area and not be allowed to pond so that soil remains wet at the base.

Retaining walls designed to hold back soil above or below an existing tree should be avoided if at all possible, especially within the protected zone. These types of structures cause critical areas at the dripline to be buried, or require that major roots be severed. Water trapped at the base of the tree could lead to root rot or other impacts, and to the decline and premature death of a highly valued landscape tree.

Construction activities outside the protected zone can have damaging impacts on existing trees. Underground water sources can be cut off due to falling water tables, or drainage may be disrupted.

## Trenching

Digging of trenches in the root zone should be avoided. Roots may be cut or severely damaged, and the tree can be killed.

If trenches must be placed within the protected zone, utilities can be placed in a conduit, which has been bored through the soil, reducing damage to the roots. Insist that as many utilities as allowed be placed in a single trench, instead of the common practice of digging a separate trench for each individual line.

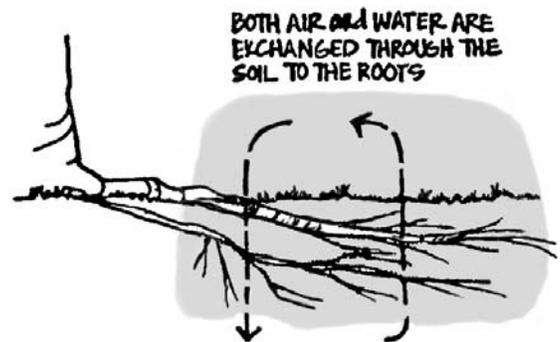
Trenching can also be accomplished using hand tools or small hand held power equipment to avoid cutting roots. Any roots exposed during this work should be covered with wet burlap and kept moist until the soil can be replaced.

## Soil Compaction and Paving

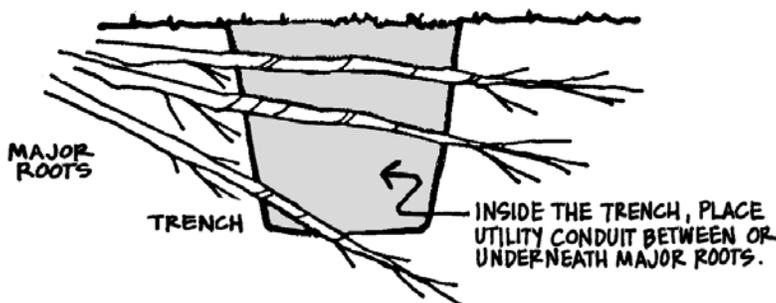
The roots depend upon an important exchange of both water and air through the soil within the protected zone. Any kind of activity that compacts the soil in this area blocks this exchange and can have serious long-term negative effects on the tree.

If paving material must be used, some recommended surfaces include brick paving with sand joints, or ground coverings such as wood chips (note the advantages of natural materials for providing nutrients under *mulching*).

## SOIL COMPACTION



## TRENCHING



# MAINTENANCE

## Watering

The key is prevention – **do not over water**. Improper watering is often overlooked as the cause of tree death because it can take years for the damage to show. Once the tree shows obvious signs of decline, it is often too late to correct the problem.

The seasonal weather pattern for this region is one of dry summers and winter rain. Oak trees are naturally drought tolerant and adapted to this cycle. If the tree is vigorous and thriving it should not require **any** additional water.

If the natural source of surface or underground water has been altered, some supplemental water may be necessary, but proceed with caution. The goal of any watering schedule for oak trees should be to supplement natural rainfall and it should occur only when the tree would normally receive moisture. This might be in the winter, if rains are unusually late, or in spring if rainfall has been below normal levels.

Over watering, especially during the summer months, causes a number of problems which can lead to decline and eventual death of the tree. It creates ideal conditions for attacks of Oak Root Fungus by allowing the fungus to breed all year. In addition, both evergreen and deciduous oaks grow vigorously in the spring and naturally go dormant in the summer. Extra water only encourages new tip growth which is subject to mildew. Oaks need this period of rest.

Newly planted oaks may need supplemental watering during their first few summers. After they become established water should be applied according to the previous guidelines.

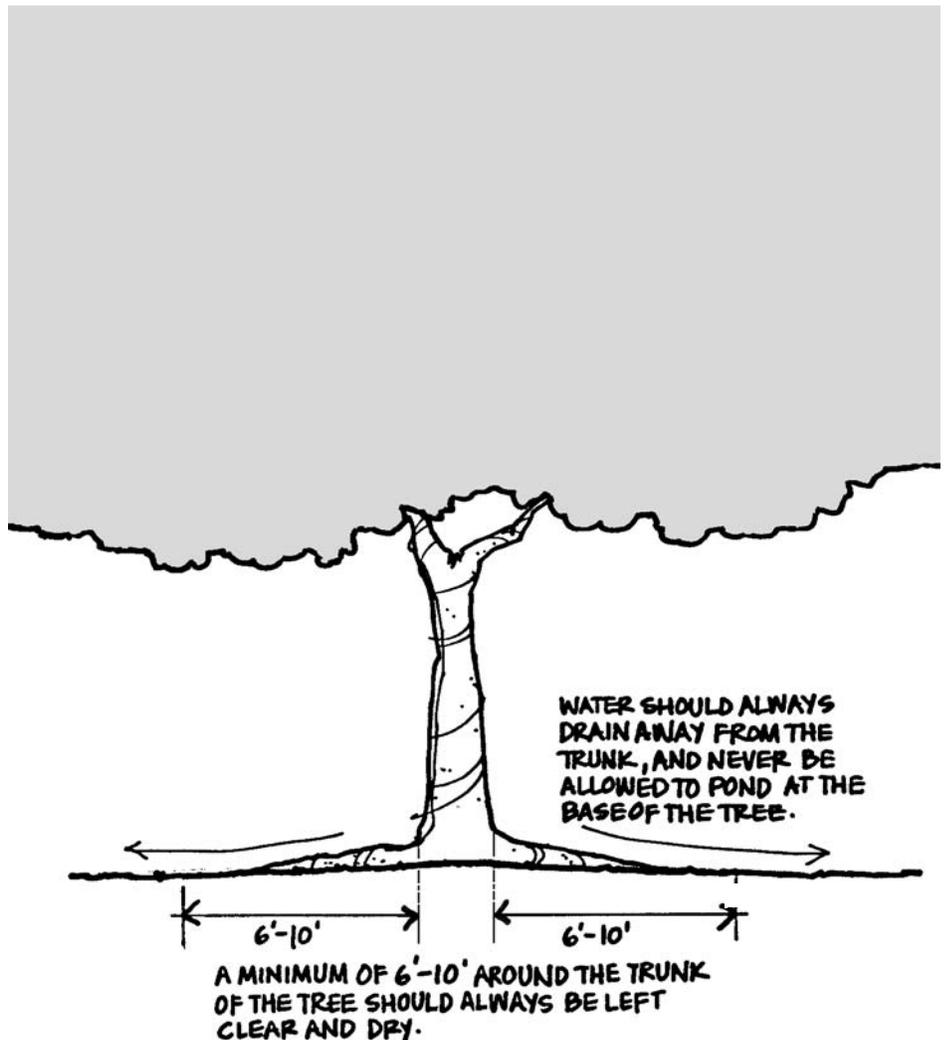
## Pruning

For oak trees the periodic removal of dead wood during periods of tree dormancy should be the only pruning needed. Any cutting of green wood opens scars that could allow the entry of organisms or disease.

Before pruning obtain the advice of a certified arborist or other professional and consult the local city or county where the tree is located to find out what regulations apply. Pruning of both live and dead wood can sometimes require a permit.

## Mulching

Leaf litter from the tree is the best mulch and should be allowed to remain on the ground within the protected zone. Crushed walnut shells or wood chips can be used, but the oak leaves that drop naturally provide the tree with a source of nutrients. Avoid the use of packaged or commercial oak leaf mulch which could contain Oak Root Fungus. Redwood chips should not be used due to certain chemicals present in the wood.



## Disease and Pests

Trees that are stressed, especially because of improper watering practices, are prone to certain diseases and attacks by pests.

The most damaging of these diseases is the Oak Root Fungus *Armillaria mellea*. Occurring naturally in the soil, the fungus thrives under wet conditions and dies back in the summer when soils dry out. This is why summer watering of oaks can be a deadly practice. As noted in the watering guidelines, wet soil in the summer allows the fungus to grow all year. As the population grows, their natural food sources are depleted and they begin feeding on oak tree roots. The fungus does not require an open wound in the tree to gain entry.

Indications of the fungus include:

- die back of branches or tips.
- honey colored fungus at or near the root crown.
- white fan-like fungus between wood and bark.
- the presence of black, shoestring-like growths in the soil.

Once the tree begins to show obvious signs of infection treatment is generally ineffective. The best treatment is to *avoid* the conditions that lead to Oak Root Fungus infections.

Pit Scale, Oak Moth, and other pests: any significant changes in leaf color, branch die back, presence of black sooty materials on leaves or other changes should be noted. Seek the advice of a professional forester, arborist, farm advisor or other expert before the application of any pesticides on an oak tree.

## Planting Underneath Oaks

The natural leaf litter is by far the best ground cover within the protected zone. If plants must be placed, the following guidelines should be followed:

There should be no planting within a minimum 6 to 10 feet of the trunk.

Avoid plants that require any supplemental water once established.

Choose plants suited for “dry shade.” Those listed in the box below offer some good choices. To see some examples of how these plants have been used under oaks refer to the Additional Resources section on the following page.

### PLANTS TO CONSIDER:

Plant Name	Description
<i>Arctostaphylos densiflora</i> 'Howard McMinn' Manzanita	3' high, 6' wide. Toughest of available forms. Whitish-pink flowers.
<i>Arctostaphylos edmundsii</i> Little Sur Manzanita	1-2' high, 4-5' wide. Tolerant of full shade.
<i>Arctostaphylos hookeri</i> Monterey Carpet Manzanita	1-2' high, spreading to 12' wide by rooting branches. White to pink flowers.
<i>Ceanothus griseus horizontalis</i> Carmel Creeper	Less than 2 1/2' tall, low & creeping. Clusters of small blue flowers.
<i>Heuchera spp.</i> Coral Bells	2-4' mound. Flowers on an upright stem 2-3' high and spotted with red or pink.
<i>Mahonia aquifolium compacta</i> Oregon Grape	2-4' high, spreading by underground roots. Bright yellow flower clusters.
<i>Ribes viburnifolium</i> Evergreen or Catalina Currant	2-3' high, spreading to 12' wide. Flowers pink to red in small clusters.

### NOTES:

Before deciding on plants, check a source such as the [Sunset Western Garden Book](#) to determine which plants will grow in your area.

When choosing shade tolerant plants, consider that the ground under the south side of the tree will get more sunlight while the northern side will tend to remain more deeply shaded.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES and Places to Visit

## Public Agencies

**County of Los Angeles Fire Department**  
Prevention Bureau, Forestry Division  
5823 Rickenbacker Road, Rm #123  
Commerce, CA 90040-3027  
(323) 890-4330  
<http://www.fire.lacounty.gov/forestry>

**University of California  
Oak Woodland Conservation Workgroup**  
[http://ucanr.edu/sites/oak\\_range/](http://ucanr.edu/sites/oak_range/)

## Private Organizations

**The Theodore Payne Foundation**  
10459 Tuxford Street  
Sun Valley, CA 91352-2126  
(818) 768-1802  
[www.theodorepayne.org](http://www.theodorepayne.org)

**California Native Plant Society**  
2707 K Street, Suite 1  
Sacramento, CA 95816-5113  
(916) 447-2677  
[www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org)

**California Oaks**  
428 13th. Street, Suite 10A  
Oakland, CA 94612  
(510) 763-0282  
[www.californiaoaks.org](http://www.californiaoaks.org)

## Arboretums and Botanic Gardens

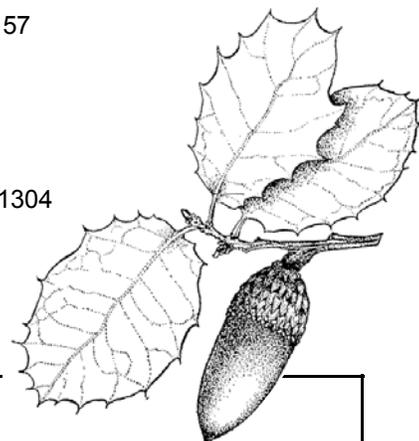
**Los Angeles County Arboreta and Botanic Gardens**  
301 N. Baldwin Ave.  
Arcadia, CA 91007-2697  
(626) 821-3222  
[www.arboretum.org](http://www.arboretum.org)

**Los Angeles County South Coast Botanic Garden**  
26300 Crenshaw Blvd.  
Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA 90274-2515  
(310) 544-1948  
[www.southcoastbotanicgarden.org](http://www.southcoastbotanicgarden.org)

**Los Angeles County Descanso Gardens**  
1418 Descanso Drive  
La Canada-Flintridge, CA 91011-3102  
(818) 949-4200  
[www.descansogardens.org](http://www.descansogardens.org)

**Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden**  
1500 North College  
Claremont, CA 91711-3157  
(909) 625-8767  
[www.rsabg.org](http://www.rsabg.org)

**The Lummis Home**  
200 E. Avenue 43  
Los Angeles, CA 90031-1304  
(818) 243-6488



## Publications

For a list of publications both free and for purchase checkout the **University of California Oak Woodland Conservation Workgroup** at [http://ucanr.edu/sites/oak\\_range/](http://ucanr.edu/sites/oak_range/)

*Goldspotted Oak Borer: Integrated Pest Management for Land Managers and Landscape Professionals*  
University of California Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program. January 2013.



# County of Los Angeles Fire Department Forestry Division

## County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors

Hilda L. Solis, First District  
Mark Ridley Thomas, Second District  
Sheila Kuehl, Third District  
Janice Hahn, Fourth District  
Kathryn Barger, Fifth District

## County of Los Angeles Fire Department

Daryl L. Osby, Fire Chief

Brush Clearance Unit  
605 N. Angeleno Avenue  
Azusa, CA 91702-2904  
(626) 969-2375

Camp 17  
6555 Stephens Ranch Road  
La Verne, CA 91750-1144  
(909) 593-7147

Environmental Review Unit  
12605 Osborne Street  
Pacoima, CA 91331-2129  
(818) 890-5719

Fire Plan/Interpretive Unit  
12605 Osborne Street  
Pacoima, CA 91331-2129  
(818) 890-5783

Fuel Modification Unit  
605 N. Angeleno Avenue  
Azusa, CA 91702-2904  
(626) 969-5205

Henninger Flats Forestry Unit  
2260 Pinecrest Drive  
Altadena, CA 91001-2123  
(626) 794-0675

Lake Hughes Forestry Unit  
42150 N. Lake Hughes Road  
Lake Hughes, CA 93532-9706  
(661) 724-1810

Malibu Forestry Unit  
942 N. Las Virgenes Road  
Calabasas, CA 91302-2137  
(818) 222-1108

San Dimas Forestry Unit  
1910 N. Sycamore Canyon Road  
San Dimas, CA 91773-1220  
(909) 599-4615

Saugus Forestry Unit  
28760 N. Bouquet Canyon Road  
Saugus, CA 91390-1220  
(661) 296-8558

Vegetation Management Unit  
12605 Osborne Street  
Pacoima, CA 91331-2129  
(818) 890-5720