City of Encinitas

4.8.17 Assessment of Ficus Tree At 610 2nd Street (Side-4)

SUBMITTED TO:

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PREPARED BY:

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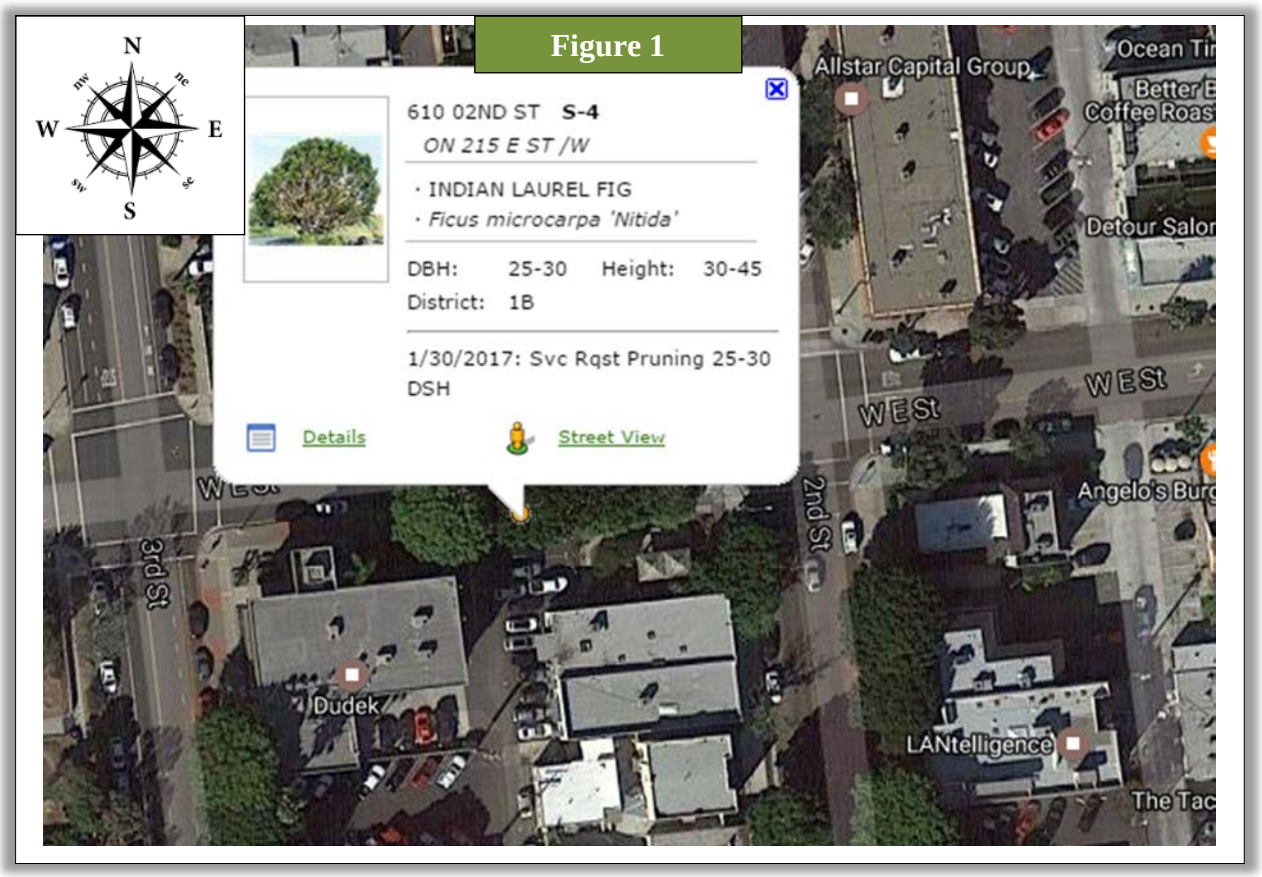
BACKGROUND AND ASSIGNMENT

In March of 2017, West Coast Arborists, Inc., (WCA) was contacted by John Ugrob (City of Encinitas) in regard to the assessment of an Indian Laurel Fig tree (*Ficus microcarpa 'nitida'*) located near 610 2nd St. In ArborAccess (WCA's tree inventory database), the tree is inventoried as 610 2nd St. S-4 and had a Facility I.D. # of 4774ETREE (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1



The City of Encinitas was concerned with the structure, health, and stability of the subject tree. Mr. Ugrob requested that WCA perform a health and risk assessment and present management recommendations in order to help determine a course of action regarding the subject tree. The assessments performed as part of this report are valid for a period of one year from the date of inspection unless there are any abnormal, site impacting changes or events. The contents of this report are intended to be used by Mr. Ugrob and the City of Encinitas.

OBSERVATIONS

I inspected the subject tree on April 7, 2017. On site, I performed a **Level 2**: **Basic Assessment**[1]. I assessed the health and structural integrity of the tree using the **Best Management Practices (BMPs)** for tree risk assessment. I visually inspected the **crown** and **stem** of the tree, looking for structural defects such as **included bark**, **cavities**, **fungal fruiting bodies**, and/or **decay**. My inspection of defects in the crown was limited to a ground-level visual inspection. On site, I observed the following:

Tree Observations

- The tree was growing in a tree well on the south side of E St. (see Photo #1 in Appendix A).
- Judging by the color and density of the foliage, the tree appeared to be in fair health for the species and time of year. The tree had a moderate **live crown ratio** of approximately 50% which is common for street trees necessitating raised crowns for vehicle and building clearance (see Photo #1 in Appendix A).
- The tree had a DSH[2] measurement of 28 inches and a height of about 38 feet (measured with a TruPulse laser).
- The tree had multiple overextended codominant stems and scaffold branches which are indicative of poor structure yet fairly common among this species (see Photo #1 in Appendix A).
- Some of the stems and scaffold branches had presence of included bark as well as a shallow debris cavity between the unions (see Photo #2 in Appendix A).
- Judging by the lighter tone of concrete, it appeared that an area of sidewalk and curb face had been replaced around the tree (see Photo #3 in Appendix A).
- There were some large root wounds on the north side of tree (see Photo #3 in Appendix A).
- Vehicles appeared to use this area frequently throughout the day.

[1] Terms appearing in boldface type are defined in the Glossary at the end of this report.
[2] Diameter at Standard Height (DSH) is the trunk diameter measured 4.5 feet above grade level.

RISK ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

According to the *Tree Risk Assessment Manual,* published by the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), it is impossible to maintain trees free of risk. There is no way to guarantee that a tree will not fail. Tree benefits increase as the age and size of trees increase; however, some level of risk must be accepted to experience the benefits provided. The goal in assessing and managing trees is to strike a balance between the risk that a tree poses and the benefits that individuals and communities derive from trees.

Data collected from the Level 2 Basic Assessment is used to derive a level of risk based on the matrices found in the *ISA Tree Risk Assessment Manual* (see **Figure 2** below). The level of risk determined (low, moderate, high, or extreme) is to be used by risk managers to help in tree management decisions. When assessing risk, the value of targets is taken into consideration in order to categorize the consequences of failure (negligible, minor, significant, or severe). The people who use and frequent the target zone are generally the most important target with buildings, structures, and cars being secondary in importance. Factors such as occupancy rate and protection factors are used to help determine the target that constitutes the highest overall Risk Rating.

Figure 2

Matrix 1

This matrix is used to estimate the liklihood of a tree impacting a specified target.

Likelihood of Failure	Likelihood of Impacting a Target			
	Very Low	*Low*	*Medium*	*High*
Imminent	Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
Probable	Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely
Possible	Unlikely	Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Likely
Improbable	Unlikely	Unlikely	Unlikely	Unlikely

Matrix 2

This matrix is used to determine the level of risk as the combination of liklihood of a tree failing and impacting a target, and the severity of the consequences.

Likelihood of Failure and Impact	Consequences			
	Negligible	*Minor*	*Significant*	*Severe*
Very Likely	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme
Likely	Low	Moderate	High	High
Somewhat Likely	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate
Unlikely	Low	Low	Low	Low

The risk matrices in Appendix C can guide you through the process used in determining the subject tree's overall risk.

Likelihood of Failure[3]

The defect of greatest concern for the subject tree was the significant root injuries. The *likelihood of a* root *failure* within the next year was assessed as **possible** for the subject tree. A failure event would be most likely to occur during abnormal or extreme weather conditions.

Likelihood of Impacting Target

The main **target** chosen was vehicles due to their frequent occupancy and exposure to a potential failure. The *likelihood of impacting a target* (vehicle) was assessed as **high** because of these factors.

Consequences

Considering the potential fall distance and mass of the defective part(s), *consequences* of this possible failure were assessed to likely be **severe** (based on assumed damages and repair costs to the average vehicle in this area).

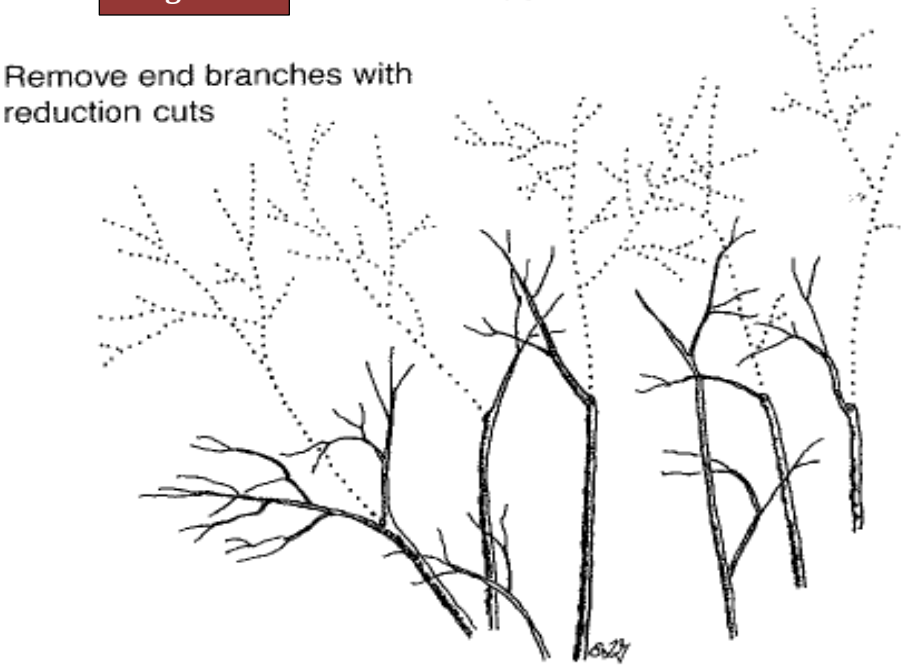
Based on the categorization of the above risk factors, this tree is currently presenting an overall **moderate risk** (see Appendix C for matrices).

[3] Italicized terms are those terms used in the risk rating matrices (see Appendix B).

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Risk and Mitigation – After performing a **Level 2 Basic Assessment**[4], the subject tree was assessed to have an overall moderate risk rating. In regards to mitigating these risks, I recommend applying and maintaining an approximate 20% overall crown reduction (retaining interior growth) with the structure and canopy balance of the tree in mind (see Appendix B as well as Figure 3 below). This recommended pruning should be done in compliance to ANSI A300 Arboricultural Standards and will likely need to be applied over multiple spaced out pruning doses (taking up to 5 years) to minimize health impacts on the tree. This is also recommended to allow time for interior growth to further develop and broaden the options for new branches to prune back to. Pruning techniques such as **reduction pruning**, and **removal pruning cuts** should be used (not topping) to achieve this overall squattier appearance and are further explained in Appendix B. The end outcome should be a reduction of **mechanical stress** from overextended loads. A residual risk of "Low" should be achieved after implementing these recommended pruning strategies. It is with the health and safety of the community that I present these recommendations.

Figure 3 **After canopy reduction**



- Shown above is an example of reduction pruning techniques to achieve a canopy reduction. The diagram is from the International Society of Arboriculture "*Best Management Practices for Tree Pruning"* 2008 publication.
- If there are not suitable laterals meeting the 1/3rd size correlation, pruning other reduction cuts may only be considered under the direction of an ISA Certified Arborist. Some of these reduction pruning cuts will be done to a shoot, branch, or stem that extends nearly as far as the removed parent branch; if this is the case then additional subordination pruning cuts back to a bud or young growth may be acceptable in order to maintain a point of **apical dominance** and to achieve the reduction goal.

[4] Terms appearing in boldface type are defined in the Glossary at the end of this report.

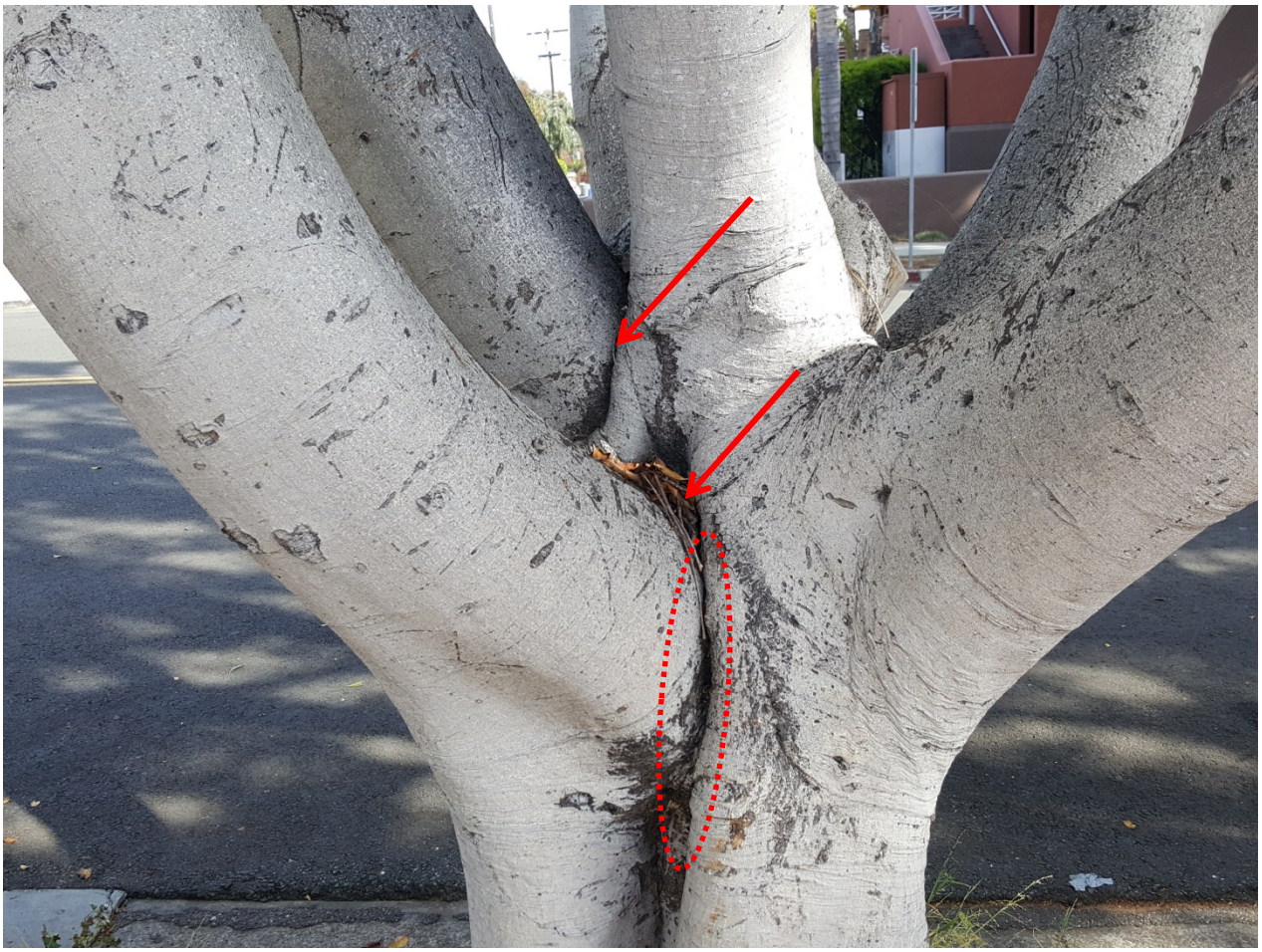
APPENDIX A – PHOTOS

Photo #1

- The tree (red arrow) was growing in a tree well on the south side of E St.
- Judging by the color and density of the foliage, the tree appeared to be in fair health for the species and time of year. The tree had a moderate **live crown ratio** of approximately 50% which is common for street trees necessitating raised crowns for vehicle and building clearance.
- The tree had multiple codominant stems and overextended scaffold branches which are indicative of poor structure yet fairly common among this species.

APPENDIX A – PHOTOS

Photo #2



- Some of the stems and scaffold branches had presence of included bark (red dotted oval) as well as a shallow debris cavity between the branch unions (red arrows).

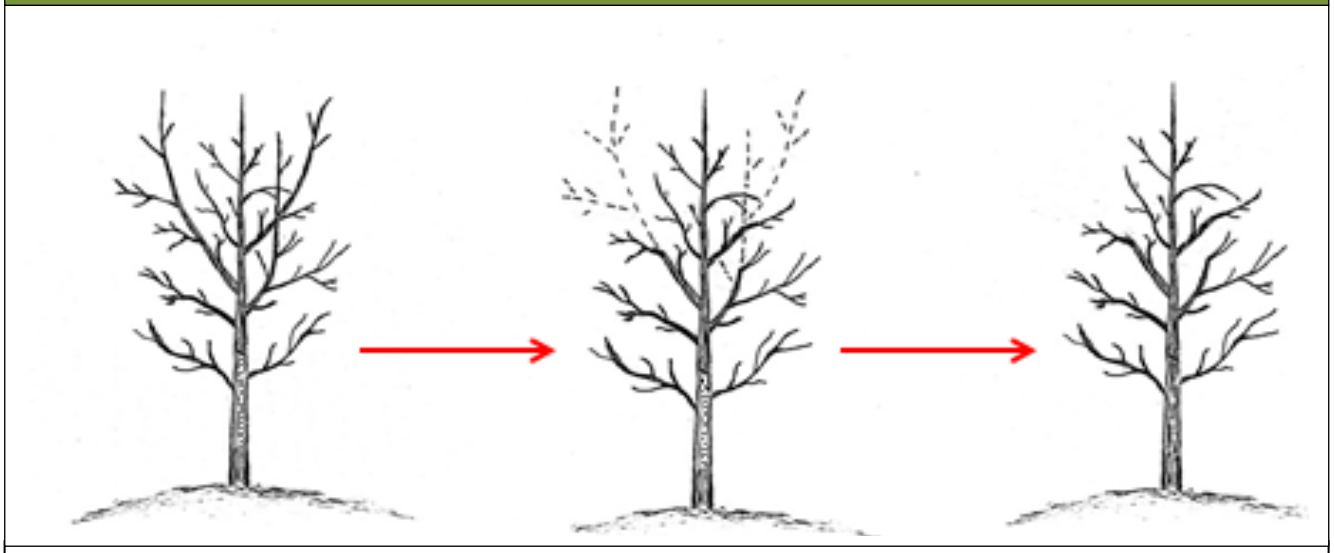
APPENDIX A – PHOTOS

Photo #3

- Judging by the lighter tone of concrete, it appeared that a large area of sidewalk and curb face had been replaced around the tree (see red dotted area).
- There were some large root wounds on the north side of tree (red arrow).

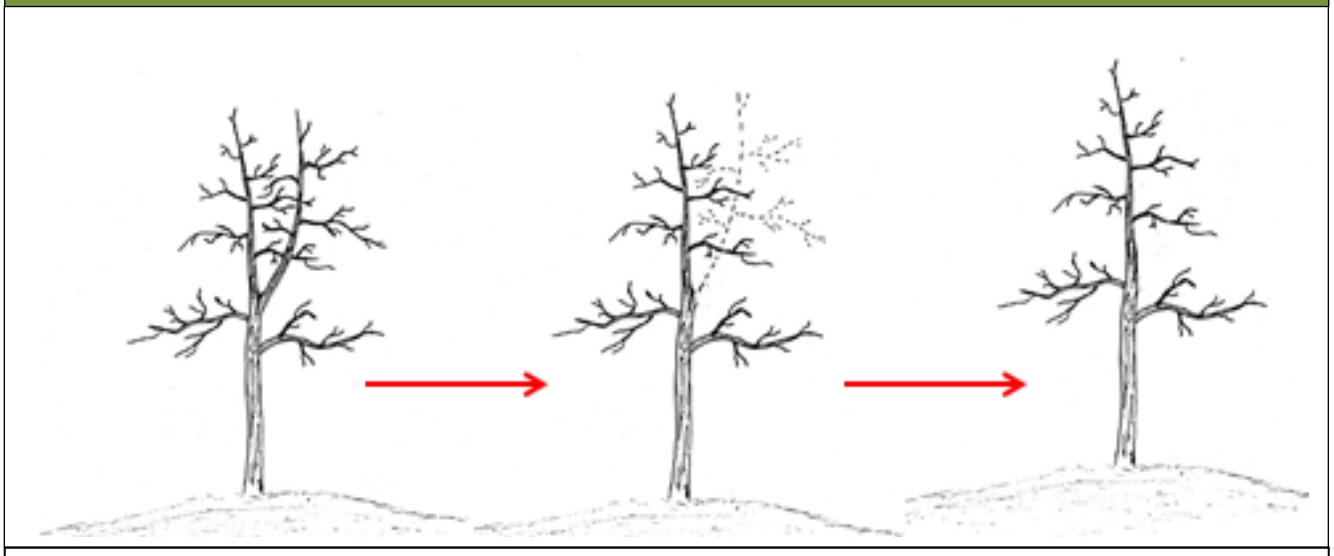
APPENDIX B – RECOMMENDED PRUNING TECHNIQUES

Reduction Pruning Techniques



Reduction pruning: A pruning cut that reduces the length of a branch or stem back to a live lateral branch large enough to assume apical dominance, typically at least 1/3 the diameter of the cut stem.

Removal Pruning Cut Techniques



Removal Pruning Cut: A pruning cut that takes off a branch back to the trunk or parent stem to just beyond the branch collar.

APPENDIX B

Crown Reduction Pruning Goal

This tree had a measured height of 38 feet (see purple arrow). The proposed goal is to achieve a 20% (7.6 feet) **crown reduction through a multi-year pruning plan (up to five years)** leaving the tree with a height of approximately 30 feet (see red dotted line and arrow) after the final pruning dose.

APPENDIX C - RISK MATRICES

The red arrows are used to guide you through the process of determining the overall risk associated with the subject tree.

Matrix 1 Windthrow/ Root Failure

This matrix is used to estimate the likelihood of the specified tree failure and impact to a parked vehicle. The pink box exemplifies a somewhat likely failure and impact scenario in the next year if no mitigation is implemented.

Likelihood of Failure	**Likelihood of Impacting Target**			
	Very Low	Low	Medium	High
Imminent	Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
Probable	Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely
Possible	Unlikely	Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Likely
Improbable	Unlikely	Unlikely	Unlikely	Unlikely

Matrix 2 Windthrow/ Root Failure

This matrix is used to determine the overall level of risk associated with the subject tree by using the likelihood of failure and impact in combination with severity of the consequences. The pink box exemplifies an overall moderate risk for the tree under discussion at its current state.

Likelihood of Failure and Impact	**Consequences**			
	Negligible	Minor	Significant	Severe
Very likley	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme
Likely	Low	Moderate	High	High
Somewhat likely	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate
Unlikely	Low	Low	Low	Low

ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITING CONDITIONS

1. Care has been taken to obtain all information from reliable sources. All data has been verified insofar as possible; however, the Consultant can neither guarantee nor be responsible for the accuracy of information provided by others. Standard of Care has been met with regards to this project within reasonable and normal conditions.

2. The Consultant will not be required to give testimony or to attend court by reason of this report unless subsequent contractual agreements are made, including payment of an additional fee for such services as described in the fee schedule and contract of engagement.

3. Loss or alteration of any part of this report invalidates the entire report.

4. Possession of this report or a copy thereof does not imply right of publication or use for any purpose by any other than the person to whom it is addressed, without the prior written consent of the Consultant.

5. This report and any values expressed herein represent the opinion of the Consultant, and the Consultant's fee is in no way contingent upon the reporting of a stipulated result, a specified value, the occurrence of a subsequent event, nor upon any finding to be reported.

6. Unless expressed otherwise: 1) information contained in this report covers only those items that were examined and reflects the condition of those items at the time of inspection; and 2) the inspection is limited to visual examination of accessible items without dissection, excavation, or coring, unless otherwise stated. There is no warranty or guarantee, expressed or implied, that problems or deficiencies of the tree(s) or property in question may not arise in the future.

7. Arborists are tree specialists who use their education, knowledge, training, and experience to examine trees, recommend measures to enhance the beauty and health of trees, and attempt to reduce the risk of living near trees. It is highly recommended that you follow the arborist recommendations; however, you may choose to accept or disregard the recommendations and/or seek additional advice.

8. Arborists cannot detect every condition that could possibly lead to the structural failure of a tree. Trees are living organisms that fail in ways we do not fully understand. Conditions are often hidden within trees and below ground. Arborists cannot guarantee that a tree will be healthy or safe under all circumstances, or for a specific period of time.

9. Any recommendation and/or performed treatments (including, but not limited to, pruning or removal) of trees may involve considerations beyond the scope of the arborist's services, such as property boundaries, property ownership, site lines, disputes between neighbors, and any other related issues. Arborists cannot take such considerations into account unless complete and accurate information is disclosed to the arborist. An arborist can then be expected to consider and reasonably rely on the completeness and accuracy of the information provided.

10. The author has no personal interest or bias with respect to the subject matter of this report or the parties involved. He/she has inspected the subject tree(s) and to the best of their knowledge and belief, all statements and information presented in the report are true and correct.

11. Unless otherwise stated, trees were examined using the risk assessment criteria detailed by the International Society of Arboriculture's publications *Best Management Practices – Tree Risk Assessment* and the *Tree Risk Assessment Manual*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Harris, Richard W., James R. Clark, and Nelda P. Matheny. *Arboriculture: Integrated Management of Landscape Tree, Shrubs, and Vines.* New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2004. Print (ISA) *International Society of Arboriculture*. Web. 15 March 2014.

Smiley, Thomas E., Nelda Matheny, and Sharon Lilly. *Best Management Practices: Tree Risk Assessment.* Illinois: International Society of Arboriculture, 2011. Print.

Kelby Fite, E. Thomas Smiley. *Best Management Practices: Managing Trees During Construction.* Illinois: International Society of Arboriculture, 2008. Print.

Edward F. Gilman, Brian Kempf, Nelda Matheny, Jim Clark. *Structural Pruning, A Guide For The Green Industry:* Urban Tree Foundation, 2013.

GLOSSARY

Best Management Practices (BMPs) – The International Society of Arboriculture has developed a series of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for the purpose of interpreting tree care standards and providing guidelines of practice for arborists, tree workers, and the people who employ their services.

Bending Moment - The algebraic sum of all the moments to one side of a cross-section ofa beam or other structural support.

Buttress Root- Large structural roots most common to trees native to rainforest soils where nutrients are not as abundant or accessible in the deeper soil layers.

Canopy – The part of the crown composed of leaves and small twigs (Harris, Clark, and Matheny 526).

Cavity – An open wound, characterized by the presence of decay and resulting in a hollow (Harris, Clark, and Matheny 527).

Codominant – Equal in size and relative importance, usually associated with either the trunks/stems or scaffold limbs/branches in the crown (Harris, Clark, and Matheny 527).

Compartmentalization – Natural defense process in trees by which chemical and physical boundaries are created that act to limit the spread of disease and decay organisms.

Crown – The leaves and branches of a tree measured from the lowest branch on the trunk to the top of the tree (Harris, Clark, and Matheny 527).

Decay – Process of degradation of woody tissues by fungi and bacteria through the decomposition of cellulose and lignin (Harris, Clark, and Matheny 527).

Elevated Root Bridging- Root bridging and ramps can be used to create a spatial separation between infrastructure elements (typically sidewalks) and the root zone. This is an important yet costly remedial design option when root pruning is not possible. An added benefit of this technique is the facilitation of root evaluation when fitted with removable steel plates. Coarse aggregate material and drains can be implemented to reduce water and debris accumulation within the gap if necessary.

Failure – Breakage of stem, branch, roots, or loss of mechanical support in the root system (Smiley, Matheny, and Lilly 48).

Fungal Fruiting Bodies – Any complex fungal structure that contains or bears spores.

Frass- Solid fecal matter produced by certain insects.

Included Bark – Pattern of development at branch junctions where bark is turned inward rather than pushed out (Harris, Clark, and Matheny 529).

Level 2: **Basic Assessment -** A Level 2 or basic assessment is a detailed visual inspection of a tree and its surrounding site, and a synthesis of the information collected. It requires that a tree risk assessor walk completely around a tree looking at the site, buttress roots, trunk, and branches. A basic assessment may include the use of simple tools to gain additional information about the tree or defects. This is the standard assessment that is performed by arborists in response to a client's request for tree risk assessment (Smiley, Matheny, and Lilly 15).

Level 3: Advanced Assessment – Advanced assessments (generally more time intensive) that are performed in conjunction with or after a Level 2 assessment to provide detailed information about specific tree parts, defects, targets, or site conditions. Specialized equipment, data collection and analysis, and/or expertise are usually required for advanced assessments. Procedures and methodologies should be selected and applied as appropriate, with consideration for what is reasonable to specific conditions and situations. All technologies involve some uncertainty and have their limitations; any evaluation of an individual tree will not be an accurate measure, but a qualified estimation. Information collected from advanced assessments can aid in making a final tree removal or retention recommendation.

Live Crown Ratio – The ratio of the height of the live crown to the height of the entire tree.

Minor Consequence – A consequences that involves low to moderate property damage, small disruptions to traffic or communication utility, or a very minor injury, examples include:

- A small branch striking a house roof from a high height.
- A medium sized branch striking a deck from a moderate height.
- A large part striking a structure and causing moderate monetary damage.
- Short term disruption of power at a service drop to a house.
- Temporary disruption of traffic on a neighborhood street.

Negligible Consequence – A consequence that involves low-value property damage or disruption that can be replaced or repaired; they do not involve personal injury, examples include:

- A small branch striking a fence.
- A medium-sized branch striking a shrub bed.
- A large branch striking a structure and causing low monetary damage.
- Disruption of power to landscape lighting.

Reduction Pruning – Pruning cut that reduces the length of a branch back to live lateral branch large enough to assume apical dominance. Typically at least one-third the diameter of the cut parent branch.

Response Growth - New wood produced in response to loads to compensate for higher strain in marginal fibers; includes reaction wood (compression and tension) and woundwood (Smiley, Matheny, and Lilly 50).

Removal Pruning Cut: A pruning cut that takes off a branch back to the trunk or parent stem to just beyond the branch collar.

Risk – The combination of the likelihood of an event and the severity of the potential consequences. In the context of trees, risk is the likelihood of a conflict or tree failure occurring and affecting a target, and the severity of the associated consequence—personal injury, property damage, or disruption of activities (Smiley, Matheny, and Lilly 50).

Severe Consequence – A consequence that could involve serious personal injury or death, disruption of important activities, damage to high-value property, examples include:

- Injury that may result in hospitalization or permanent damage.
- A medium- sized part striking an occupied vehicle.
- A large part striking an occupied house.
- Serious disruption of high-voltage distribution and transmission powerline.
- Disruption of arterial traffic or motorways.

Significant Consequence – A consequence that involves property damage of moderate – high value, considerable disruption, or personal injury, examples include:

- A medium sized part striking an unoccupied vehicle from a moderate to high height.
- A large part striking a structure and resulting in high monetary damage.
- Disruption of distribution primary or secondary voltage power lines, including individual services and street- lighting circuits.
- Disruption to traffic on a secondary street.

Stem – The main trunk of a tree or other plant (Harris, Clark, and Matheny 533).

Structural Pruning – Pruning that influences the orientation, spacing, growth rate, strength of attachment or ultimate size of branches and stems, resulting in a strong tree.

Target – People, property, or activities that could be injured, damaged, or disrupted by a tree (Smiley, Matheny, and Lilly 50).

Target zone – The area where a tree or branch is likely to land if it were to fail (Smiley, Matheny, and Lilly 50).

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