Tree Maintenance Assessment (2024)

Prepared for:

San Elijo Hills Unit II POA
c/o Jenna Jacobs
Vice President
Curtis Management Company
5050 Avenida Encinas, Suite 160
Carlsbad, CA 92008
(760) 643-2200 Phone

Prepared by:

Ron Matranga
Board-Certified Master Arborist
Registered Consulting Arborist
Tree Risk Assessment Qualified
Tree and Plant Appraisal Qualified
Atlas Environmental Services, Inc.
9032 Olive Drive
Spring Valley, California 91977

September 17, 2024

Table of Contents

SUMMARY ----------3
ASSIGNMENT----------3
LIMITS OF THE ASSIGNMENT ----------4
DISCUSSION ----------4
CONCLUSION ----------9
RECOMMENDATIONS ----------9
ARBORIST DISCLOSURE ----------10
ASSUMPTION & LIMITING CONDITIONS ----------10
APPENDIX
SITE MAPS with Tree #'s
SPREADSHEET (Ordered by Tree #)

NOTE:

This report is best viewed in color. Black and white copies of this report may make some details difficult to properly understand. Atlas accepts no responsibility for misunderstandings due to the reading of a black and white copy of this report.

SUMMARY

On September 11, 2024, I completed the site work necessary for the latest maintenance assessment of the large *Eucalyptus* trees throughout the association. This annual evaluation was requested by the association, via Ron Tinkham. I have updated the site maps and spreadsheets to include all the existing large *Eucalyptus* trees located near homes. Per Mr. Tinkham's request, I have also added trees over approximately 15 feet tall on the same slope/common areas as the large *Eucalyptus* trees. A total of 102 newly added trees are included, all of which should receive Early Care pruning to promote healthy structural development for the future. Trees that have been removed since my previous assessment have been taken off the site maps and spreadsheets.

I conducted a Limited Visual Assessment of each existing large *Eucalyptus* tree and have generated an updated spreadsheet (two pages) that assigns a current risk rating (Low, Moderate, High, or Extreme) for each tree. Additionally, I have provided recommendations for tree removal or pruning based on the goal of mitigating or reducing identified risks. Of the 71 large *Eucalyptus* trees currently reflected on the site maps, none have been classified as Extreme risk, none as High risk, 20 as Moderate risk, and 51 as Low risk. I am not recommending the removal of any trees at this time. However, 47 large *Eucalyptus* trees have been identified for some type of pruning (many trees appear to be heavy with foliage, likely due to our positive rainy season early in 2024), while 24 trees have no recommendations at this time. I recommend completing the pruning work between now and the end of March 2025.

ASSIGNMENT

At the request of the association, I agreed to evaluate all the large *Eucalyptus* trees and all the newly added 'smaller' trees on the association slopes using the current industry recognized risk assessment process. Specifically, I agreed to perform the following work:

1) Update the community site map to reflect the current large *Eucalyptus* tree population near homes. Add all new trees over approximately 15 feet in height on the same slope areas.
2) Perform a Limited Visual Assessment of each tree, generating a description of the relative level of risk each large *Eucalyptus* tree presents.
3) Provide appropriate recommendations based on my observations and findings.
4) Submit a written report summarizing my findings and recommendations.

LIMITS OF THE ASSIGNMENT

My assessment of all trees identified on the map was based on a visual examination from ground level only; I did not climb into, or access by lift truck, any canopies. No on-site testing, lab analysis, or detailed analysis of any tree was performed. I did not dig into the soil or conduct any below-ground investigation of any kind. Inspection of the upper canopy of some trees was done with binoculars.

All assessments are based on my one-time observations and each tree's status at the time of my site work. This report considers the next 12 months; however, it represents the condition of each tree and the site at the time of my assessment. If there are any changes in tree or site conditions prior to the next assessment, the affected tree or trees should be reassessed. This risk assessment should not be considered a guarantee against tree failure. Any tree, whether it has visible weakness or not, will fail if the forces applied exceed the strength of the tree or its parts. Although I have attempted to be as accurate as possible, all map locations are approximate and for reference only.

DISCUSSION

My assessment for the large *Eucalyptus* trees utilized current International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Tree Risk Assessment standards and accompanying Best Management Practices. These standards utilize words to describe the level of risk a tree may present based on a systematic risk assessment process. The four words used to describe risk are

Low, Moderate, High, or Extreme (they are color-coded on the spreadsheet pages). Risk is best defined as the combination of the likelihood of an event and the severity of the potential consequences. In the context of the possible structural failure of trees, risk is the likelihood of tree failure occurring and affecting a target, and the potential severity of the associated consequences - personal injury, property damage, etc.

My assessment was a Limited Visual Assessment. In this process, I conducted a walk-by visual inspection of each tree and I was looking for obvious defects such as dead or dying trees, large cavity openings, large dead or broken branches, fungal fruiting structures, large cracks, and severe leans. I also observed and considered canopy density and foliage weight (on limbs) and how they may relate to the potential for failure.

All trees rated Moderate are recommended for pruning at this time. Additionally, there are trees rated Low risk which I have recommended for pruning. With these trees already being rated Low, I have identified that pruning will not technically lower the risk rating (Low is the lowest risk rating available) but will be of benefit regarding overall risk. This work is typically recommended to help reduce the likelihood of significant failure occurring.

The concept of risk mitigation is an important idea to discuss. Mitigation is the process of reducing risk. Measures to mitigate tree risk can be arboricultural (pruning, removal, etc.), to reduce the likelihood of failure; or they can be target-based, to reduce the consequences of failure and impact. Any risk mitigation I have considered and/or recommended is arboricultural, not target-based, and I have considered the general desire for retaining trees when practical.

Additionally, with every condition containing risk and mitigation action, there is residual risk; that is, the risk remaining after mitigation. With tree removal, that residual risk is brought to near zero (even a stump can pose some residual risk), and with pruning it is my expectation that any residual risk has been lowered to an acceptable level of risk for the association; usually, but not always, Low.

Regarding the pruning recommendations listed in the spreadsheet pages, you may find the following specifications: Crown cleaning, Crown thinning (by approximately 25%), Crown restoration, Crown reduction, or Early Care pruning. Tree #125 has a special instruction note to reduce the length of the branches growing over the golf course area.

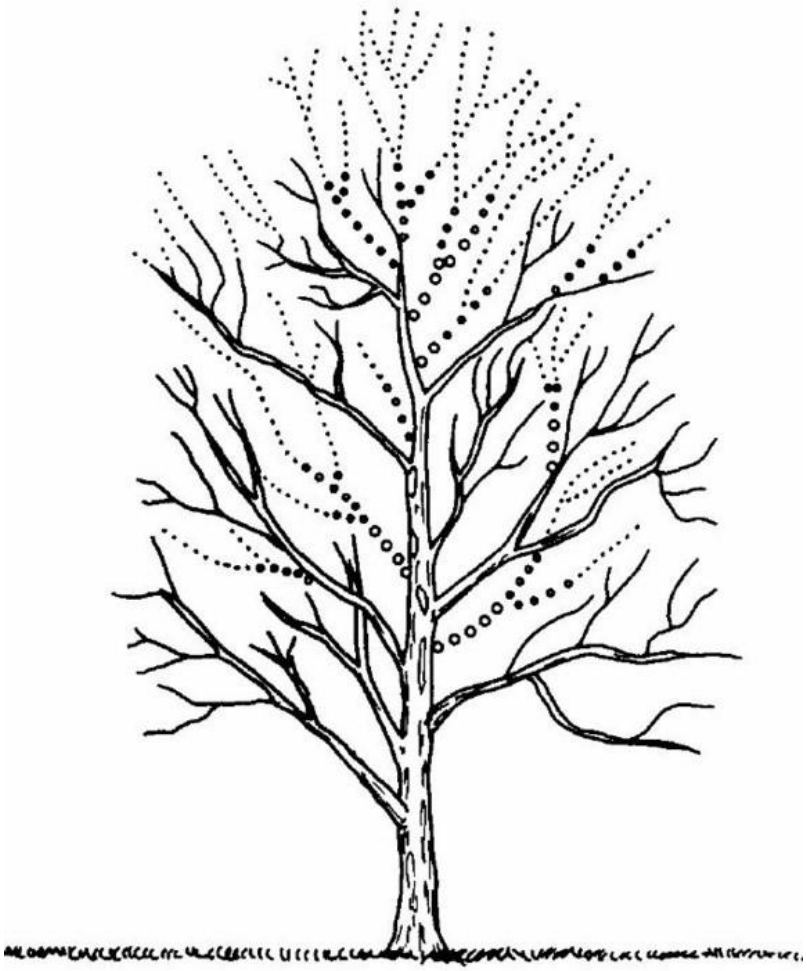
Crown cleaning is the removal of dead, diseased, infested, rubbing, declining, detached, and/or broken branches from a tree crown.

Crown thinning (also simply called thinning) includes the removal of dead, dying, diseased, crowded, weakly attached, and low-vigor branches and watersprouts from a tree crown as well as the selective removal of live branches to increase light penetration and air movement into the crown. Thinning reduces the wind-sail effect of the crown and the weight of heavy limbs. In general, this thinning should target the removal of multiple smaller live branches (2" diameter and smaller) and few, if any, medium and large sized branches (over 2" diameter).

Crown restoration is the process of pruning and restoring a tree which has been topped (or vandalized, damaged in a storm, etc.). Crown restoration helps prevent a topped tree from being dangerous and includes the reduction (in number and height) of new sprouts. The most favorable new sprouts, usually two or three on each scaffold limb, are chosen to remain, and they may be reduced to laterals, so that the restoration process may begin or continue. Crown restoration should help improve health and structural strength and should be performed about every 2-3 years depending on general and specific circumstances.

Crown reduction is the selective removal or shortening of branches to decrease the height and/or spread of a tree. When Crown reduction is performed, proper reduction cuts are most effective in maintaining the structural integrity and natural form of a tree and in delaying the time when it will need to be pruned again. The lateral to which a branch or trunk is cut (reduced) should be at least one-third the diameter of the cut being made. On the following page is a graphic that helps

visualize how Crown reduction can work. It is important to keep in mind that this type of reduction is an accepted industry practice for properly and effectively reducing the overall height and/or spread of a tree and is NOT the same as topping.



The image above illustrates the principle of Crown reduction on a simple tree diagram. The dashed lines show the original canopy outline/size, and the removal of those branches leading to a properly reduced, smaller canopy.

Early Care pruning is the process of selectively pruning young trees during their formative years to establish a strong, healthy structure that will support their growth and long-term stability. This practice involves removing poorly positioned, crossing, or weak branches, encouraging the development of a central leader, and ensuring proper branch spacing. The goal is to promote a well-balanced canopy and sturdy framework, reducing the likelihood of structural issues, such as branch failure or

improper growth patterns, as the tree matures. Early care pruning sets the foundation for a tree's long-term health, minimizing the need for more extensive corrective pruning in the future.

Regarding this year's assessment and report, Mr. Tinkham and I met at his home to discuss various aspects of previous work and this year's assessment. During the meeting, we discussed height reduction efforts (Crown reduction pruning) over the last couple of years and the topping of Trees #105, 106, and 107 in 2018. The Association, in general, would like to continue to reduce tree heights where possible and where it can be done properly. Unfortunately, the reduction efforts of 2018 resulted in topping those three trees, and those trees will continue to need special attention going forward. (Tree #'s 105, 106, and 107). Various trees that were reduced last year appear to have been done in a correct manner.

In most cases, it is worse to perform improper reduction work, especially if it results in topping, than to leave trees at their 'original and natural' height. As a result of our conversation, it was decided that reduction work would continue with a process that ensures specific direction to the contractor that will be performing the work, which should ensure successful reduction work results. We also discussed my availability to perform a post-work follow-up to ensure that all recommended work was properly completed by the tree care contractor chosen for this year's work.

Mr. Tinkham and I discussed an emphasis on Crown reduction pruning and that trees which receive Crown reduction pruning should <u>not</u> necessarily also receive Crown thinning work at the same time; that is if a tree is so designated, the Crown reduction may be enough for this cycle and additional unnecessary thinning may not necessarily be performed on trees which receive Crown reduction.

It is important to remember tree size (height) can be controlled by pruning, but it will be a continuing task. When performing reduction, and using proper reduction cuts, the remaining branch should typically be at least one-third the diameter of the branch being removed (ANSI A300-2023 Tree Care Standards, Clause 5, Pruning standards, Section 5.5.10.1.2).

Even if this standard is followed, trees which receive reduction work are likely to produce watersprouts (often called suckers) throughout their canopy. Watersprout growth is sporadic, vigorous, and weakly attached. As it continues to grow, the watersprout branch attachment does not significantly improve while the diameter, length, and weight of the branch significantly increases. Failure at the point of attachment is a common problem with watersprout branches. Crown reduction may involve the need for pruning in the future to control the size of, or eliminate, watersprout branches. I recommend that as the association continues with reduction work on various trees, they keep these ideas in mind. Once reduction work is performed there is no reversing the process.

CONCLUSION

My assessment indicates that all the large *Eucalyptus* trees included in this report pose either a Low or Moderate risk. At this time, there are no trees rated as Extreme risk, no trees rated as High risk, 20 trees rated as Moderate risk, and 51 trees rated as Low risk. Recommended tree pruning work on the large *Eucalyptus* trees should be accomplished according to the spreadsheet pages included in this report. If reduction is performed, the need for reduction pruning of these trees will be a continuing task. In any case, reduction work should be performed by a tree care contractor who is knowledgeable and familiar with proper *Crown reduction* techniques and processes. Early Care pruning work on all the smaller trees will be helpful in developing their structural quality. Trees recommended for action should be pruned during this current season (prior to the end of March 2025), and the recommended pruning action should follow the definitions as I have detailed in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Perform all listed action items (pruning of 47 large *Eucalyptus* trees and all the 102 smaller trees) between now and March 2025 (inclusive).
2) Annually perform an assessment of each tree on the site maps to evaluate its current condition and obtain recommendations for action.

3) For all work, contract with a qualified tree care contractor that is properly and currently licensed for tree work in California (C-61/ D-49 or C-49) and can provide proof of insurance for liability, property damage, and workers compensation.

ARBORIST DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

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. Clients may choose to accept or disregard the recommendations of the arborist or seek additional advice.

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 specified period of time. Likewise, remedial treatments, like any medicine, cannot be guaranteed.

Treatment, pruning, and 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, landlord-tenant matters, etc. Arborists cannot take such issues into account unless complete and accurate information is given to the arborist. The person hiring the arborist accepts responsibility for authorizing the recommended treatment or remedial measures once explained and acknowledges that successful results can never be guaranteed.

Trees can be managed, but they cannot be controlled. To live near trees is to accept some degree of risk. The only way to eliminate all risks from trees is to eliminate all trees.

ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITING CONDITIONS

 The consultant has personally inspected the tree(s) and/or the property referred to in this report and has stated his/her findings accurately. The extent of the evaluation and appraisal is stated in the attached report;

 The consultant has no current or prospective interest in the vegetation or the property that is the subject of this report, and has no personal interest or bias with respect to the parties involved;

 The analysis, opinions, and conclusions stated herein are the consultants and are based on current scientific procedures and facts;

 Compensation is not contingent upon the reporting of a predetermined conclusion that favors the cause of the client or any other party, nor upon the results of the assessment, the attainment of stipulated results, or the occurrence of any subsequent events;

 Analysis, opinions, and conclusions were developed and this report has been prepared according to commonly accepted arboricultural practices;

 No one provided significant professional assistance to the consultant, except as indicated within the report;

 All property lines and ownership of property, trees, and landscape plants and fixtures are assumed to be accurate and reliable as presented and described to the consultant, either verbally or in writing. The consultant assumes no responsibility for verification of ownership or locations of property lines, or for results of any actions or recommendations based on inaccurate information;

 It is assumed that any property referred to in any report or in conjunction with any services performed by Atlas Environmental Services, Inc., is not in violation on any applicable codes, ordinances, statutes, or other governmental regulations, and that any titles and ownership to any property are assumed to be good and marketable. Any existing liens and encumbrances have been disregarded;

 All reports and other correspondence are confidential, and are the property of Atlas Environmental Services, Inc. and its named clients and their assigns or agents. Possession of this report or a copy thereof does not imply any right of publication or use for any purpose, without the express permission of the consultant and the client to whom the report was issued. Loss, removal or alteration of any part of a report invalidates the entire appraisal/evaluation;

 The scope of any report or other correspondence is limited to the trees and conditions specifically mentioned in those reports and correspondence. Atlas Environmental Services, Inc. and the consultant assume no liability for the failure of trees or parts of trees, either inspected or otherwise. The consultant assumes no responsibility to report on the condition of any tree or landscape feature not specifically requested by the named client;

 All inspections are limited to visual examination of accessible parts, without dissection, excavation, probing, boring or other invasive procedures, unless otherwise noted in the report. No warranty or guarantee is made, expressed or implied, that problems or deficiencies of the plants or the property will not occur in the future, from any cause. The consultant shall not be responsible for damages caused by any tree defects, and assumes no responsibility for the correction of defects or tree related problems;

 The consultant shall not be required to provide further documentation, give testimony, be deposed, or to attend court by reason of this appraisal / report unless subsequent contractual arrangements are made, including payment of additional fees for such services as described by the consultant or in the fee schedules or contract;

 Atlas Environmental Services, Inc. makes no warranty, either expressed or implied, as to the suitability of the information contained in the reports for any purpose. It remains the responsibility of the client to determine applicability to his/her particular case;

 Any photographs, diagrams, graphs, sketches, or other graphic material included in any report, being intended solely as visual aids, are not necessarily to scale and should not be construed as engineering reports or surveys, unless otherwise noted in the report. Any reproductions of graphic material or the work product of any other persons is intended solely for the purpose of clarification and ease of reference. Inclusion of said information does not constitute a representation by Atlas Environmental Services, Inc. or the consultant as to the sufficiency or accuracy of that information.

I, Ronald Matranga, certify that I have personally prepared this report. I further certify that I am a Registered Consulting Arborist and Tree and Plant Appraisal Qualified with the American Society of Consulting Arborists, and a Board-Certified Master Arborist and Tree Risk Assessment Qualified with the International Society of Arboriculture.

Signed:_____ Date: _____

asca | RCA #488
Registered Consulting Arborist®