

# **Staff Report & Recommendations**

# Highland Terrace Subdivision

# Type II Tree Removal Permit (2021-012-TRE) June 3, 2021

PROPOSAL:	The Applicant is requesting a tree removal permit for the previously approved Highland Terrace Subdivision (see 2020-011-PDR/VAR/SEPA and 2006-019-SUB). The tree removal permit is subject to a Type II review according to LCMC 18.350.070.
LOCATION:	<ul> <li>34305 NW Pacific Highway, La Center, WA 98629</li> <li>Assessor's serial number: 258636000, 258704000, 258702000, 258727000, 258644000</li> </ul>
APPLICABLE STANDARDS	This staff report addresses the following standards and approval criteria: LCMC Title 18, Development Code: LCMC 18.30.030, Type II Procedures; 18.350, Tree Protection
RECOMMENDATION:	APPROVAL, subject to conditions

#### **CONTACT LIST**

### **OWNER/APPLICANT**

Linda Jellison Evergreen Homes 13217 NW 30<sup>th</sup> Ct Vancouver, WA 98661

#### **APPLICANT'S REPRESENTATIVE**

Scott Taylor SGA Engineering 2005 Broadway Vancouver, WA 98663

#### **LA CENTER STAFF**

Anthony Cooper, PE, City Engineer 305 NW Pacific Highway La Center, WA 98629 360.263.7665 acooper@ci.lacenter.wa.us

Sam Rubin, AICP, Consulting Planner WSP USA 210 East 13th Street, Suite 300 Vancouver, WA 98660 360.823.6108 sam.rubin@wsp.com Ethan Spoo, AICP, Consulting Planner WSP USA 210 East 13th Street, Suite 300 Vancouver, WA 98660 360.823.6138 ethan.spoo@wsp.com

## I. OVERVIEW AND PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

#### **Proposal**

The applicant is seeking approval for the removal of 65 trees within the Highland Terrace Subdivision. 30 trees have already been removed and 35 additional trees will be removed in the spring of 2021. The applicant removed 35 trees subsequent to City engineering document approval. Following that, the City entered into an amended development agreement amendment with the applicant and required the applicant to comply with La Center Municipal Code (LCMC) 18.350 (Tree Protection), a code that did not exist at the time the applicant's preliminary plat application was approved in 2006.

The requested tree removal permit is a Type II review as it does not qualify as a Type I per LCMC 18.350.070 (1) as the majority of the trees have already been removed and are not dead or considered hazard trees. The removal of the additional 14 trees does not constitute an emergency. This staff report focuses on compliance with the City's tree removal permit requirements only.

#### **Application Timeline:**

- Preliminary subdivision approval (2006-019—SUB)
- City approval of post decision review, variance, and state environmental policy act checklist (2020-011—PDR/VARSEPA) – May, 2006
- Development Agreement (546098 AGR) recorded: November 20, 2017
- City engineering document approval- 5/18/2020
- Initial tree removal of 35 trees-Fall of 2020
- Development agreement amendment approved: October 28, 2020
- Application materials filed on April 16, 2021
- The City issued a determination of completeness on April 23, 2021.
- Notice of application was mailed to property owners within 150-feet on May 4, 2021 with the public comment period closing on May 19, 2021. Public comments received are included as Exhibit B.

#### **Applicable Standards and Approval Criteria**

This staff report addresses the following standards and approval criteria: LCMC Title 18 Development Code. 18.30.030, Type II procedures; 18.350, Tree Protection.

#### **Public Comment**

Public comments received during the public comment period are included as Exhibit B. Two comments were received. The Department of Ecology issued a letter on May 18, 2021 stating that all grading and filling of land must utilize only clean fill and that all removed debris resulting from this project must be disposed of at an approved site.

**Finding:** A **condition of approval** is that the applicant must use clean fill for all grading and or filling for the project and all removed debris resulting from the project must be disposed of at an approved site.

An additional comment was received by the City on May 13, 2021 from Betty Lou Harris, parcel number 25876300. Ms. Harris requested that it be confirmed that some trees on the southern end of her parcel

were in fact on the applicant's property and not on her property prior to any tree removal. Ms. Harris indicated that some of the trees were purchased by her and her husband and planted for the purposes of addressing an issue with the previous owner's septic system.

The applicant conducted a field visit on May 13, 2021 and confirmed that the trees in question were located on the applicant's property and were proposed to be removed. Anthony Cooper, City Engineer, spoke with Ms. Harris and shared that the trees to be removed are indicated on the plans and both the removal and staking are on the Felida Rose (applicant) property.

#### II. ENGINEERING REVIEW

The City Engineer does not have any separate review comments on this application.

### III. LAND USE REVIEW

#### **Chapter 18.30 -- Procedures**

**Findings:** The application follows a Type II procedure outlined in LCMC 18.30.090 and was noticed in accordance with 18.30.050 and 18.30.120 to property owners within 150 feet, applicant, and agencies with jurisdiction. The notice of application was issued on May 4, 2021. The Department of Ecology submitted comments which are included as an attachment to this staff report. The applicant submitted their application on April 16, 2021 and was deemed complete on April 23, 2021. Type II reviews do not require a public hearing.

Staff find that the applicant has met the burden of proving they meet the applicable regulations or can be conditioned to do so as summarized in this staff report.

#### Chapter 18.350— Tree Protection

#### 18.350.010 Purpose

**Findings:** The purpose of this code section is to regulate the removal of trees, prescribe preventative protection measures, and regulate required mitigation. Per the definition section of this chapter a "Tree" means any woody plant having a trunk five- caliper inches or larger at breast height (DBH). Only trees with a 5-inch DBH or greater require a tree cutting permit and per LCMC 18.350.050 only trees with greater than a 10-inch DBH require mitigation. A total of 65 trees are proposed for removal under this application.

#### 18.350.050- Mitigation required

**Findings:** The proposed removal of 65 trees requires that the applicant replant either a minimum two-inch caliper DBH deciduous tree or a six-to-eight-foot-tall ever green for each tree removed and be planted according to specifications in LCMC 18.340. The applicant is proposing to plant 138 trees and exceeds the required 1:1 mitigation ratio.

## 18.350.060- Tree protection plan required

**Findings:** A tree protection plan is required for development activities that include but are not limited to clearing, grading, excavation, or demolition work on a property which requires a Type II or Type III permit. The applicant has provided a tree protection plan that meets the standards in this section and

clearly shows an inventory of all trees on site, their identifying information, and whether they will be removed as part of this permit.

#### 18.350.070- Tree removal permits

**Findings:** The proposal is a Type II tree removal permit. As part of the tree removal permit the city shall conduct verification of the trees to be removed through this process. Of the 65 trees proposed for removal 30 of the trees covered under this removal permit have already been removed and the additional 35 trees are yet to be removed.

As a **condition of approval**, prior to further removal of any trees the applicant must clearly identify the trees to be removed by tying yellow tagging tape around each tree. The City will verify the location of these trees with the submitted tree protection plan.

#### 18.350.080- Approval Criteria

(1) Removal of the tree will not have a significant negative impact on erosion, soil stability, flow of surface waters, protection of adjacent trees, or existing windbreaks;

**Findings:** It is not anticipated that the 65 trees covered under this tree removal permit will have a significant negative impact on erosion, soil stability, flow of surface waters, protection of adjacent trees, or existing windbreaks. The applicant is planting 138 trees which exceeds the required 1:1 mitigation ratio for tree plantings. Stormwater will not be negatively impacted as the proposed subdivision and approved preliminary plat was approved to address local and state stormwater requirements and to capture and treat stormwater runoff from the fully developed site. The applicant previously applied for and was granted engineering document approval including for grading and temporary erosion control.

(2) Removal of the tree is not for the sole purpose of providing or enhancing views;

**Findings:** Proposed and existing tree removals are required for site construction and not for enhancing views.

(3) The tree is proposed for removal for landscaping purposes or in order to construct development approved or allowed pursuant to the La Center Municipal Code or other applicable development regulations. The city planner may require the building footprint of the development to be staked to allow for accurate verification of the permit application; and

**Findings:** The proposed and existing tree removals are being removed to construct development that has been approved by the City of La Center and the planner as part of the preliminary plat approval and the follow-on post decision review application (see 2006-019-SUB and 2020-011-PDR/VAR/SEPA) Therefore, this requirement is met.

(4) Removal of the tree will not have a significant negative impact on the character, aesthetics, or property values of the neighborhood. The city may grant an exception to this criterion when alternatives to the tree removal have been considered and no reasonable alternative exists to allow the property to be used as permitted in the zone. In making this determination, the city may consider alternative site plans or placement of structures or alternate landscaping designs that would lessen the impact on trees, so long as the alternatives continue to comply with other provisions of the La Center Municipal Code.

**Findings:** The removal of the 65 trees is not anticipated to have a significant negative impact to the character, aesthetics, or property values of the neighborhood. The applicant is planting an additional 138 trees as street trees and yard trees that will provide positive aesthetic impacts to the neighborhood. In addition, the property has been zoned for low-density residential development since at least the time of the 2006 preliminary plat approval and urban-level development and densities are expected on the site. Finally, prior to development, the site was primarily a cleared, agricultural property with very few trees and neighboring property owners have been accustomed to viewing a site with few trees.

The city did receive a public comment from a property owner to the north at parcel number 258763000 who requested that it be verified that the proposed trees on the southern end of their property were in fact located on the applicant's property. The applicant verified and confirmed that all of the trees in question are located on the applicant's property. The trees proposed to be removed at the southern end of the property would be removed for the construction of a retaining wall and fill placement in order to make developable lots.

(5) The city shall require the applicant to mitigate for the removal of each tree pursuant to LCMC 18.350.050. Such mitigation requirements shall be a condition of approval of the permit.

**Findings:** The applicant is planting 138 street trees and yard trees which exceeds the required 1:1 mitigation ratio for the 65 removed trees.

- (6) The city may impose conditions of approval on any tree cutting permit if the condition is reasonably related to preventing, eliminating or mitigating a negative impact or potential impact on natural features or processes or on the built environment of the neighborhood which is as created or contributed to by the approved tree removal. Conditions of approval may include, but are not limited to:
  - (a) Cutting a tree or stump flush with the grade instead of grinding or fully removing a stump;
  - (b) Requiring modifications in the location, design or intensity of a development or activities on a site or to require or prohibit certain construction methods;
  - (c) Requiring vegetation not requiring a tree removal permit to remain in place or be planted;
  - (d) Requiring the removal of injurious vegetation (English ivy) from other trees on the property.

**Findings:** The applicant is removing the entire tree and its stump as part of this tree removal permit as it is necessary for site grading and infrastructure construction. No additional conditions of approval are requested under this section.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATION

The review authority finds the applicant has sustained the burden of proving the application complies with the applicable provisions of the La Center Municipal Code. Therefore, the subject application is recommended for approval, subject to the following conditions:

#### A. Land Use

**General Conditions** 

- 1. The applicant must comply with the conditions provided by the Department of Ecology which states that the applicant must use clean fill for all grading and or filling for the project and all removed debris resulting from this project must be disposed of at an approved site.
- 2. Prior to occupancy, the applicant must plant the 138 trees indicated in the project narrative which serve as mitigation for the 65 trees removed.
- 3. Prior to further removal of any trees, the applicant must clearly identify the trees to be removed by tying yellow tagging tape around each tree. The City will verify the location of these trees with the submitted tree protection plan.

#### V. APPEALS

A final decision regarding a Type II application may be appealed by the applicant, applicant's representative, or by any person, agency, or firm with an interest in the matter within 14 calendar days after the date of decision. Appeals shall contain all information specified in LCMC 18.30.130. The public record for this file is available at the City's Public Works Building, 305 NW Pacific Highway, La Center, Washington between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Please contact Sarah Dollar at 360-263-7665 for further information.

Ethan Spoo, AICP Anthony Cooper, PE Consulting City Planner City Engineer

Sam Rubin, AICP Consulting City Planner

### VI. Exhibits

#### Exhibit A – Application Materials

- 1. Master Land Use Application
- 2. Permit Narrative
- 3. Application Materials (Site Plan/Tree Removal Plan)

#### Exhibit B - Public Comments Received

# Exhibit A

# **Master Land Use Application**



City of La Center, Planning Services 305 NW Pacific Highway La Center, WA 98629 www.ci.lacenter.wa.us

Ph. 360.263.7665 Fax: 360.263.7666

www.ci.lacenter.wa.us

# **Property Information**

Site Address 34305 W Pacific Hwy, La Center, WA		
Legal Description		
Assessor's Serial Number <u>258636000, 258704000, 258703000, 258702000, 258727000, 258644000, 258763000</u>		
Lot Size (square feet)		
Zoning/Comprehensive Plan Designation LDR - 7.5		
Existing Use of Site		
Contact Information		
APPLICANT:		
Contact Name Linda Jellison		
Company Evergreen Homes		
Phone 503515-8128 Email lilnda@evergreenhomesnw.com		
Complete Address 13217 NW 30th Ct. Vancouver, WA 98661		
Signature Linda Collings (Original Signature Required)		
APPLICANT'S REPRESENATIVE:		
Contact Name Scott TAYLOR		
Company SAA ENGINEERING		
Phone 360-993-091/ Email STAYLORESHAENGINEERING.COM		
Complete Address 2005 BROADWAY UNICOUR, WA 78663		
Signature(Original Signature Required)		
PROPERTY OWNER:		
Contact Name Chris Sundstrom		
Company Felida Rose LLC		
Phone 360-624-3116 Email chris@evergreenhomesnw.cpm,		
Complete Address 13217 NW 30th Ct. Vancouver, WA 98661		
Signature (Original Signature Required)		

# **Development Proposal Project Name** Type(s) of Application Par. ARR WAINER & TREE REMOVAL PERMIT Previous Project Name and File Number(s), if known HIGHLAND TERRACE SUBDIVISION Pre-Application Conference Date and File Number \_\_\_\_\_ Description of Proposal Office Use Only File # \_\_\_\_\_ Planner \_\_\_\_\_ Received By \_\_\_\_\_ Fees: \$\_\_\_\_\_ Date Received: Date Paid: \_\_\_\_\_ Receipt # \_\_\_\_\_ Procedure: Type I Type II ☐ Type III ☐ Type IV

## **Highland Terrace - Tree Removal Permit Narrative**

The Highland Terrace Subdivision proposes to subdivide 25.3 acres into 95 single-family detached lots in two phases of construction. Individual driveways will take access off of the proposed public streets as shown on the Revised Preliminary Plat. The three existing homes have been removed with construction. The parcel is zoned LDR-7.5.

The applicant is submitting this tree permit to allow for the 30 trees that have been removed and for 35 more trees that will be removed in the spring of 2021. A site visit was conducted on May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to confirm the existing trees which remain on-site and which trees have already been removed with site construction and grading efforts. The applicant has responded to the approval criteria below in bold text. The approved landscape plans for Phase I will plant 138 trees to mitigate for the 65 trees being removed. Additional trees will be planted in phases 2 and 3.

### 18.350.080 Approval criteria.

An applicant for a tree removal permit shall demonstrate that the following criteria are satisfied. The city planner may require an arborist's report to substantiate the criteria for a permit.

(1) Removal of the tree will not have a significant negative impact on erosion, soil stability, flow of surface waters, protection of adjacent trees, or existing windbreaks;

Removal of the trees will not have a significant negative impact on erosion, soil stability, flow of surface waters, protection of adjacent trees, or existing windbreaks.

(2) Removal of the tree is not for the sole purpose of providing or enhancing views;

The removal of the trees is not for the sole purpose of providing or enhancing views. Tree removals are required for site construction and grading. Numerous retaining walls are also required for this project to allow for buildable lots. (3) The tree is proposed for removal for landscaping purposes or in order to construct development approved or allowed pursuant to the La Center Municipal Code or other applicable development regulations. The city planner may require the building footprint of the development to be staked to allow for accurate verification of the permit application; and

The trees are being removed in order to construct development approved or allowed pursuant to the La Center Municipal Code or other applicable development regulations. Surveyor staking has confirmed the property lines and corners. All trees being removed are on-site.

(4) Removal of the tree will not have a significant negative impact on the character, aesthetics, or property values of the neighborhood. The city may grant an exception to this criterion when alternatives to the tree removal have been considered and no reasonable alternative exists to allow the property to be used as permitted in the zone. In making this determination, the city may consider alternative site plans or placement of structures or alternate landscaping designs that would lessen the impact on trees, so long as the alternatives continue to comply with other provisions of the La Center Municipal Code.

The removal of the trees will not have a significant negative impact on the character, aesthetics, or property values of the neighborhood. The removal of the trees is necessary to develop the property as permitted in the zoning ordinance. Future street trees and yard trees will improve the neighborhood.

(5) The city shall require the applicant to mitigate for the removal of each tree pursuant to LCMC 18.350.050. Such mitigation requirements shall be a condition of approval of the permit.

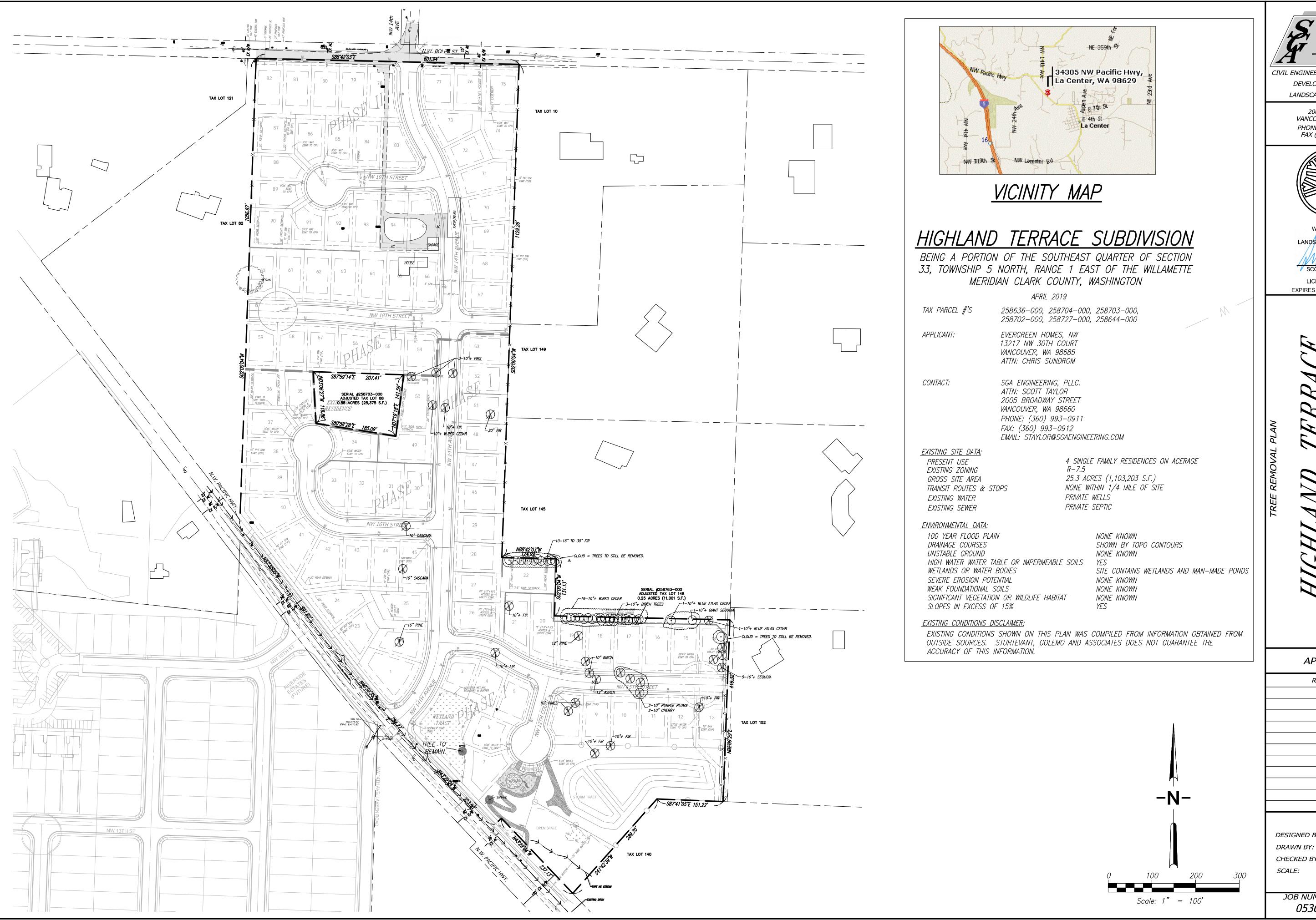
# Street trees and yard trees will be planted to mitigate for the loss of the existing trees.

(6) The city may impose conditions of approval on any tree cutting permit if the condition is reasonably related to preventing, eliminating or mitigating a negative impact or potential impact on natural features or processes or on the built environment of the neighborhood which is as created or contributed to by the approved tree removal. Conditions of approval may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Cutting a tree or stump flush with the grade instead of grinding or fully removing a stump;
- (b) Requiring modifications in the location, design or intensity of a development or activities on a site or to require or prohibit certain construction methods;
- (c) Requiring vegetation not requiring a tree removal permit to remain in place or be planted;
- (d) Requiring the removal of injurious vegetation (English ivy) from other trees on the property. [Ord. 2006-17 § 1, 2006.]

No conditions of approval should be necessary for this tree removal permit. All removed trees will have their stumps removed for necessary site grading and infrastructure construction.

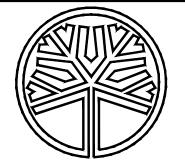
Thank you to staff for your review of this permit. If you have any questions please contact Scott Taylor with SGA Engineering via email or phone. staylor@sgaengineering.com or 360-993-0911



ENGINEERING & DESIGN

CIVIL ENGINEERING ~ LAND PLANNING DEVELOPMENT SERVICES LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

> 2005 BROADWAY VANCOUVER, WA 98663 PHONE (360)993-0911 FAX (360)993-0912



STATE OF WASHINGTON LICENSED

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

SCOTT A. TAYLOR

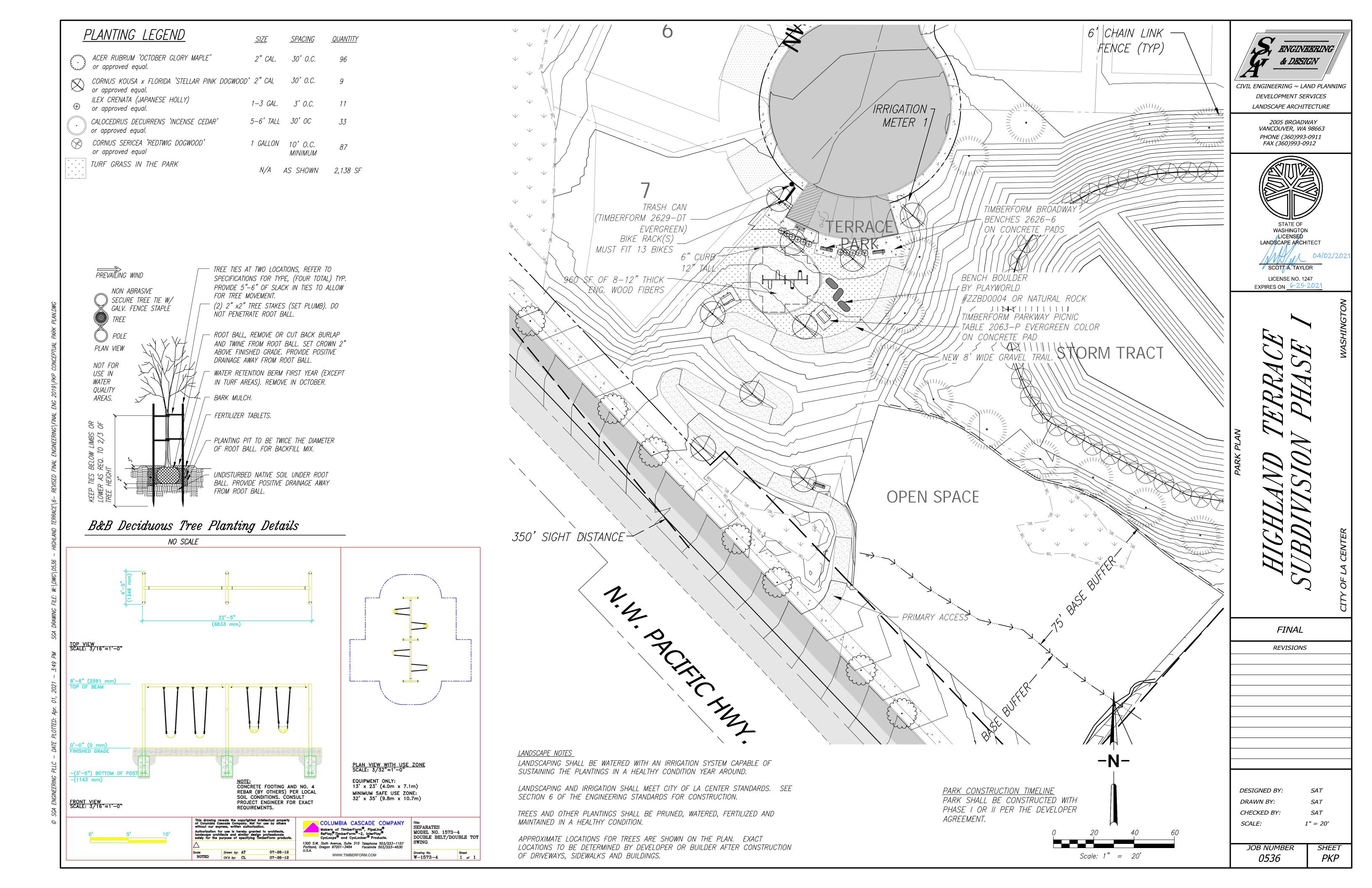
LICENSE NO. 1247 EXPIRES ON 6

**APPROVED REVISIONS** 

SAT DESIGNED BY: SAT CHECKED BY: 1'' = 100'

JOB NUMBER 0536

SHEET



# Exhibit B

From: Anthony Cooper
To: "Scott Taylor"

Cc: Spoo, Ethan; Sarah Dollar

Subject: FW: [External] Highland Terrace Tree Mitigation Questions

**Date:** Thursday, May 13, 2021 3:52:27 PM

Scott:

We got a call from the property owner north of Felida Rose. The property owner is Hollis.

They are asking us if the trees shown in half circle hatch boundary around the trees are to be removed. From the picture I took in the field of the temp lot corner, it appears they are on the Felida property.

She got a notice in the mail about tree removal.

Can you give us a plan of what trees are supposed to be removed an what trees if any are on their property?

Thanks

From: Spoo, Ethan <ethan.spoo@wsp.com> Sent: Thursday, May 13, 2021 1:17 PM

To: Sarah Dollar <sdollar@ci.lacenter.wa.us>; Anthony Cooper <acooper@ci.lacenter.wa.us>

**Cc:** Jessica Nash < inash@ci.lacenter.wa.us>

**Subject:** RE: [External] Highland Terrace Tree Mitigation Questions

Sarah, Tony,

Please see email attached from Sam Rubin. We can't quite tell yet whose trees belong to who because they haven't provided an improvement plan so we can't tell yet. Can you respond back and let her know we still need additional information from the applicant?

Ethan

**From:** Sarah Dollar <<u>sdollar@ci.lacenter.wa.us</u>>

**Sent:** Thursday, May 13, 2021 11:30 AM

To: Spoo, Ethan <<u>ethan.spoo@wsp.com</u>>; Anthony Cooper <<u>acooper@ci.lacenter.wa.us</u>>

**Cc:** Jessica Nash < <u>jnash@ci.lacenter.wa.us</u>>

**Subject:** Highland Terrace Tree Mitigation Questions

Hello Ethan & Tony,

A lady named Betty Lou Hollis called today and she is the property owner north of one of the Highland Terrace properties. I believe it is the lot that had the large, white, Victorian house. She said that the original owners had an issue with their septic and ended up planting a lot of

trees with the help of Betty and her husband and it seems by the way she was saying it that they also bought some of the trees. She is now questioning whether the trees are on her property or the other property, she is wondering if someone can survey her property from the City, and if someone can come out and walk the field with the flags. I believe Highland Terrace put up the flags, from what I would assume would be the surveyor, but I am not sure. I think she feels the trees they may want to remove are her trees.

Her address is 34506 NW 11<sup>th</sup> Ave She gave two phone numbers Land Line – 360-263-6275 Husband's cell – 360-921-5143

This is in the tracking.

Thanks,

Sarah Dollar Community Development Department 360-263-7665 305 NW Pacific Hwy La Center, WA 98629

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