EMERGENCY CONDITIONS ON ELLWOOD MESA

CITY OF GOLETA

City Council

September 5, 2017

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Presentation Outline

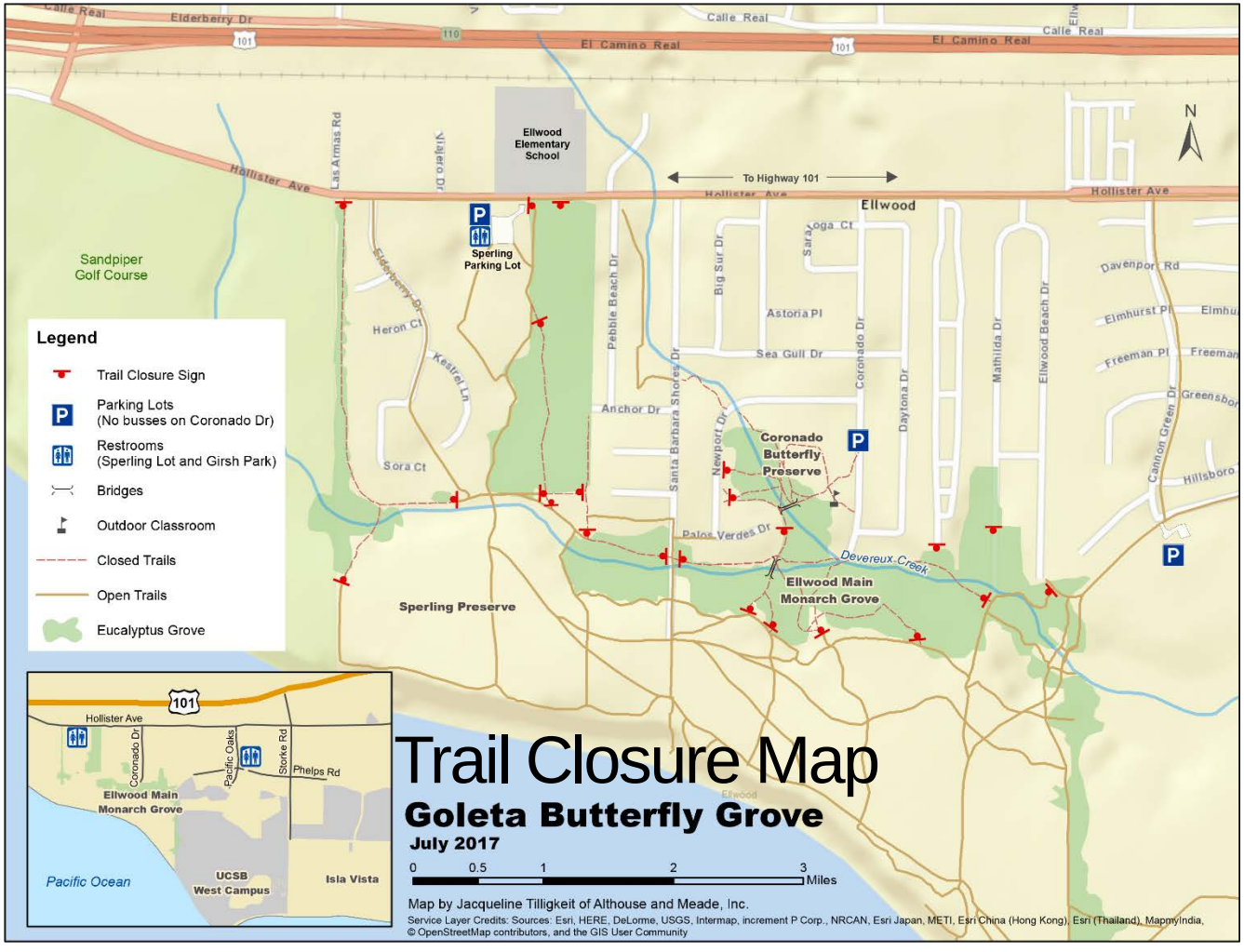
- Background
- Project Need
- Project Objectives
- Options 1 through 5
- Proposed Methods for Tree Removal
- Environmental Protection During Tree Work
- Permitting and Environmental Review
- General Plan Consistency
- Restoration

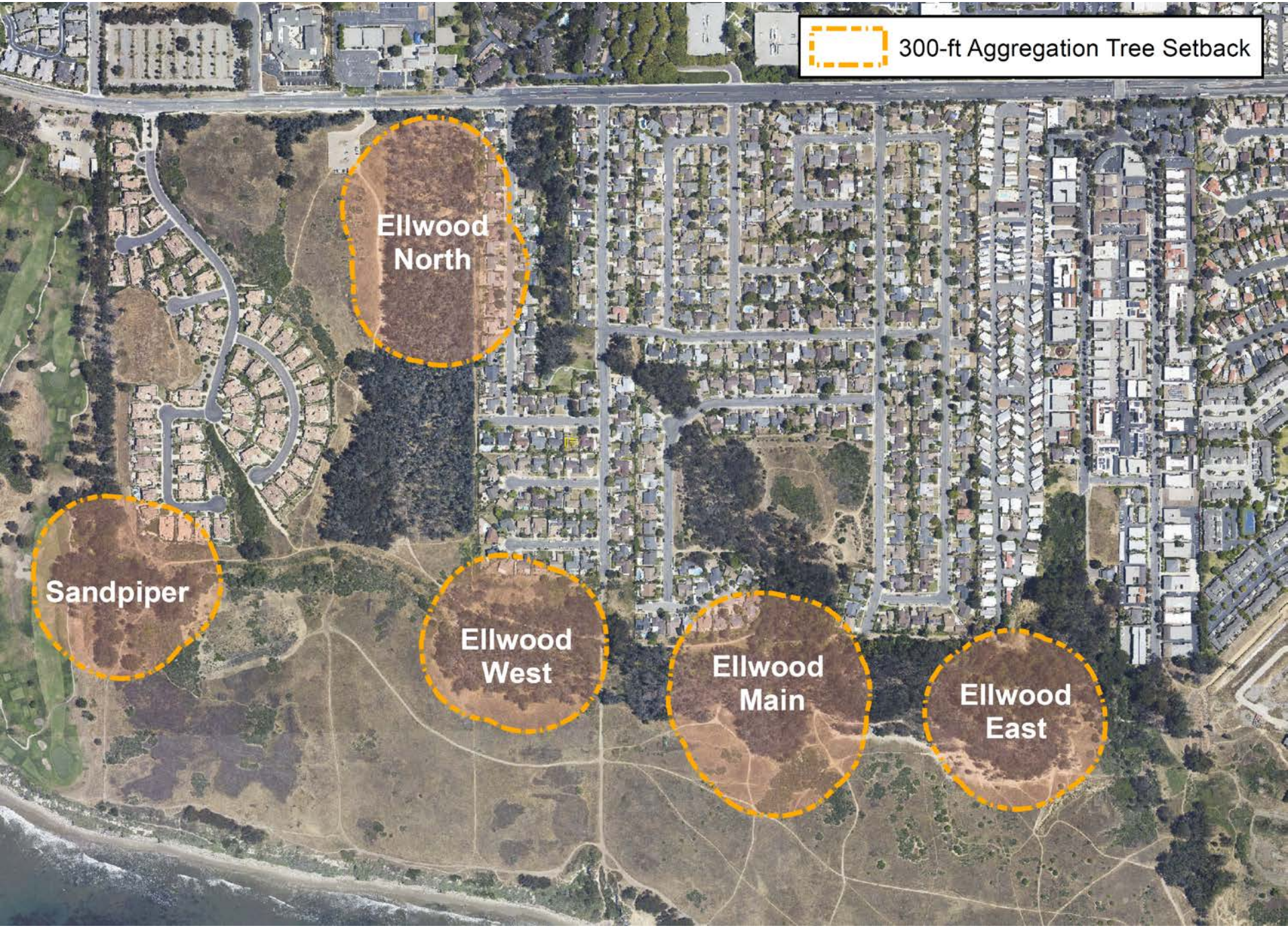
Background

- Recent surveys as part of Habitat Management Plan identified declines in Ellwood butterfly population over time.
- Tree health decline in aggregation sites was observed.
- City Council authorized contract to survey tree health in February 2017.
- Aggregation site tree health survey results presented to City staff, multi-agency science group, City's insurance provider, and California Coastal Commission.
- A presentation of survey results was provided to City Council on July 18.
- Trails in eucalyptus groves were closed to public access starting on July 20.
- A public workshop was hosted on July 26.

Background (concluded)

- Trails in groves closed to public access starting on July 20.
- A public workshop was hosted on July 26.




300-ft Aggregation Tree Setback
Ellwood North
Sandpiper
Ellwood West
Ellwood Main
Ellwood East

0 and 1 Tree Map

Project Need

- To remedy the existing hazardous conditions at Ellwood Mesa
- Protect the remaining trees and butterfly habitat from further harm
- Remove the dead and dying or hazardous trees from the eucalyptus groves

Project Objectives

- Protect public health and safety
- Maximize the potential for prompt restoration of the eucalyptus grove
- Re-establish public access to the trails system as soon as possible

Options 1: Staff Recommendation

- The staff recommended action is to remove all trees rated as 0 or 1 as determined by Althouse and Meade survey results. This includes the removal of over 1,395 trees based on a recent survey (as of 9/1/17)

- Completion of a Habitat Management Plan and restoration program together with environmental review would proceed over the next 3-4 years

- Costs for the tree removal would total approximately $2.1 million, based on 1,395 trees and a removal cost per tree of $1,500

Option 1


Tree Health
0 (1,260 Trees)
1 (135 Trees)
Aerial from June 26, 2017 Fugro Flight Manned Aircraft
Inset Map Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap,
INCREMENT P, NRCan, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri
(Thailand), MapmyIndia, NGCC, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User
Community

Options 2: Removal & Targeted Care

- Remove trees rated as 0 and 1 (Option 1), or with the exception of specific trees in aggregation sites
- City's contract biologist/arborist identified 22 trees with 1 rating that are providing short-term, but significant butterfly habitat
- This option would place the 22 identified trees under an arborist's care, with the intent to extend the length of time for which the trees provide meaningful butterfly habitat
- Each of the trees receiving targeted care would be inspected by an arborist and be monitored quarterly
- Permit process and timing would be the same as for the staff's recommended option
- Costs for the tree removal would be similar to Option 1 with added arborists costs


Tree Removal Locations Without Targeted Trees - Optio
Tree Health
0 (1,260 Tre
1 (113 Trees
Aerial from June 26, 2017 Focal Flight Manned Aircraft
0 200 400 800 1,200
Feet
City of Goleta
Ellwood Grove Restoration
N
Althouse and Meade, Inc.
Biological and Environmental Services
Map Updated: September 05, 2017 04:04 PM
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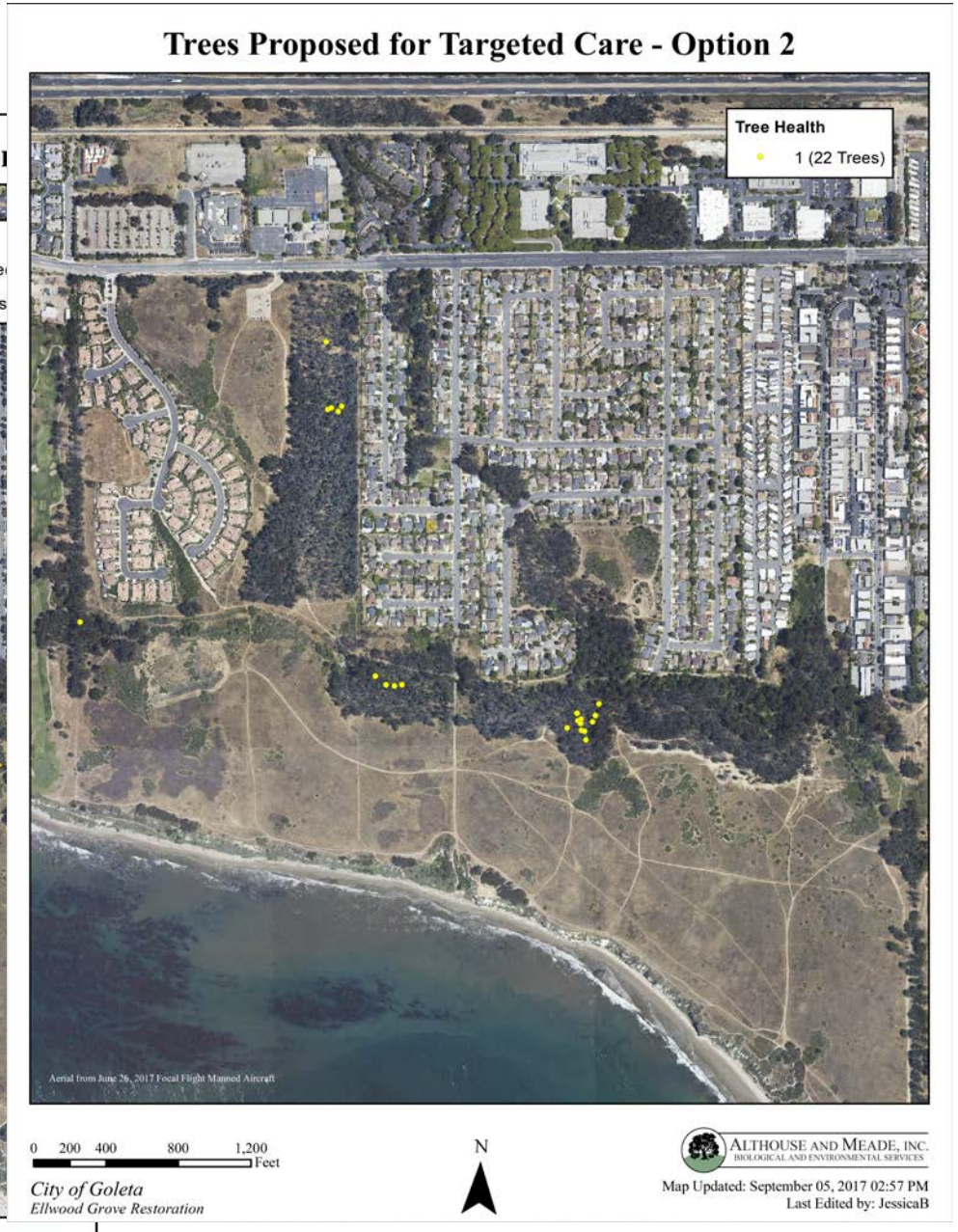
Trees Proposed for Targeted Care - Option 2
Tree Health
1 (22 Trees)
Aerial from June 26, 2017 Focal Flight Manned Aircraft
0 200 400 800 1,200
Feet
City of Goleta
Ellwood Grove Restoration
N
Althouse and Meade, Inc.
Biological and Environmental Services
Map Updated: September 05, 2017 02:57 PM
Last Edited by: JessicaB

Options 3: Phased Tree Removal

- The City would select limited removal area, such as a single grove, and would retain a contractor to remove all dead/dying trees (0s and 1s) totaling 338 trees to start

- Within the removal area, habitat conditions would be encouraged to improve through passive regeneration or active restoration efforts, and corresponding butterfly habitat suitability and use could be monitored

- Costs per tree for this option would be higher than for Option 1, because a larger removal area with more trees usually results in a lower cost per tree – initial costs estimated at a minimum of 338 trees x $1,500/tree = $.5 mil


Tree Removal Locations - Option 3
Trees Ranked 0 and 1 Removal Area
Tree Health
0 (313 Trees)
1 (25 Trees)
Aerial from June 26, 2017 Focal Flight Manned Aircraft
0 125 250 500 750 1,000
Feet
N
City of Goleta
Ellwood Grove Restoration
Althouse and Meade, Inc.
Biological and Environmental Services
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Options 4: Removal of “0” Trees Only

- Only remove trees that were rated 0 (deceased) in the Althouse and Meade arborist assessment, but retain trees that were rated 1 (dying or hazardous trees)

- Allowing 1 (dying or hazardous) trees to remain in place would pose a safety risk to the public, and would place the remaining trees at further risk and stress due to risk of tree falls and additional spread of pests

- Timing and permitting of the tree removal would be the same as for Option 1. It is unknown if the lower number of trees needing to be removed would result in a higher per tree removal cost - 1,260 trees x $1,500/tree = $1.89 mil


Tree Removal Locations - Option 4
Tree Health
0 (1,260 Trees)
Aerial from June 26, 2017 Focal Flight Manned Aircraft
0 200 400 800 1,200
Feet
N
City of Goleta
Ellwood Grove Restoration
Althouse and Meade, Inc.
Biological and Environmental Services
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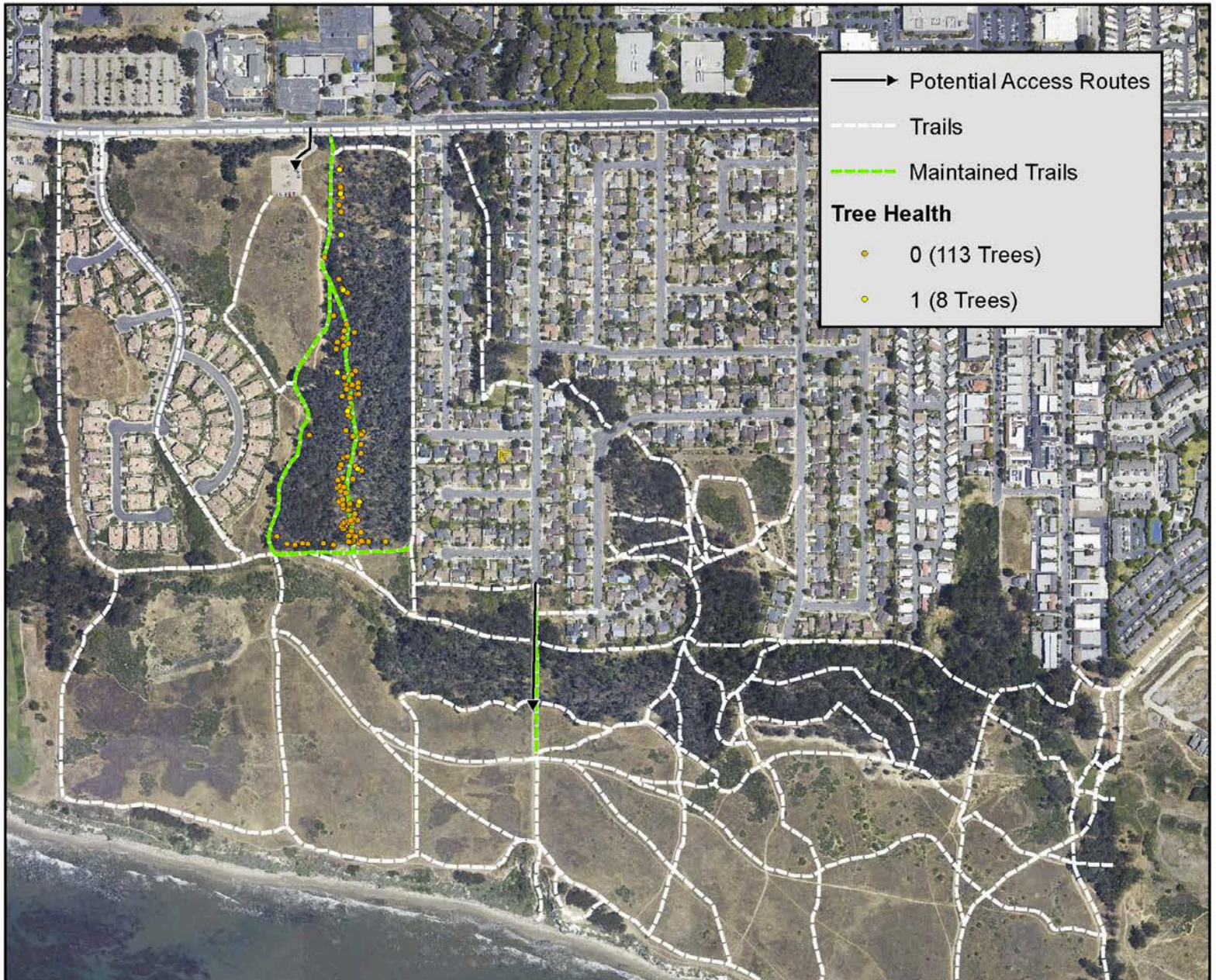
Options 5: Tree Removal Post Habitat Management Plan Approved

- No immediate removals of deceased, dying, or hazardous trees would be performed
- Ensures that detailed study and evaluation of habitat restoration techniques along with public input occurs prior to addressing tree health issues
- Preparation of the Habitat Management Plan will take 3-4 years
- Tree removal would take at least an additional year to complete (4-5 years total). Costs of tree removal would ultimately be higher than under the other options

Tree Removal Locations - "Option 6"



Proposed Methods for Tree Removal

- Securing areas where tree removal work will be conducted
- Construction notification signs
- All trees to be removed will be specified by the City in consultation with Althouse and Meade
- Trees will be cut ~6-12 inches off the ground, to encourage stump-sprouting
- Cut material will be processed promptly, and will not be stockpiled on-site for more than two weeks
- Use of the parking area off of Hollister Avenue for work crews will be limited to five spaces. Carpooling will be required

Environmental Protection During Tree Work

- Worker environmental sensitivity training
- Pre-construction nesting bird surveys
- Butterfly aggregation surveys
- Soil disturbance will be minimized and appropriate erosion controls will be used
- Pesticides and herbicides will not be used
- Fire suppression equipment will be onsite at each work area

Permitting and Environmental Review

- Current safety hazard is an “emergency” as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), California Coastal Act, and the City’s Municipal Code.

- Emergency Permits would be issued to allow work to begin immediately and would not require CEQA review

- Long-term restoration and Habitat Management Plan will require permitting (non-emergency) and CEQA review.

General Plan Consistency

- General Plan requires protection of ESHA (CE 1.6) – Ellwood eucalyptus are designated as ESHA because of raptor nests and butterfly aggregation sites

  (Coastal Act Section 30240 similarly protects ESHA)

- General Plan requires protection of Butterfly ESHA (CE 4.4) – trees proposed for removal would remove threat to ESHA and allow for restoration of butterfly habitat

Restoration Actions

- Long-term restoration of the groves will be conducted through the Habitat Management Plan – sustainable butterfly habitat remains highest priority, consistent with General Plan

- Restoration activities under the Habitat Management Plan will require City and Coastal Commission approval through normal (non-emergency) processes

- Habitat Management Plan will go through CEQA review prior to adoption

- Public participation will be afforded through the CEQA process and additional outreach

Council Consideration

Provide feedback to staff on the proposed options for the scope of work to remedy the immediate public safety conditions on Ellwood Mesa. Note added "Option 6".

Option 1 (Staff Recommendation)	**Option 2**	**Option 3**	**Option 4**	**Option 5**
Hazardous Tree Removal Before Habitat Management Plan ***Timing*:** **Tree Removal: Immediate** **Habitat Management Plan and restoration 3 to 5 years** ***Permit* Type:** **Emergency Permit, Follow-on CDP and DP**	**Targeted Care for Dying Trees with Significant Value** ***Timing*:** **Tree Removal: Immediate** **Habitat Management Plan and restoration 3 to 5 years** ***Permit* Type:** **Emergency Permit, Follow-on CDP and DP or Monarchs**	**Phased Tree Removal Plan** ***Timing*: begin tree removal immediately in target area, timing on remainder of grove uncertain** **Habitat Management Plan and restoration 3 to 5 years** ***Permit* Type:** **Emergency Permit, CDP and DP**	**Removal of Trees Rated "0" Only** ***Timing*:** **Tree Removal: Immediate** **Habitat Management Plan and restoration 3 to 5 years** ***Permit* Type:** **Emergency Permit, Follow-on CDP and DP**	**Tree Removal After Habitat Management Plan Approved** ***Timing*: begin 4 to 5 Years** ***Permit Type*: CDP and DP**