

**EXHIBIT 8 – DISCRETIONARY TREE PERMIT FINDINGS  
FOR CAMP RAMAH MAJOR MODIFICATION TO CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO.  
3048 AND VARIANCE, CASE NOS. PL18-0052 AND PL23-0002**

Pursuant to the Ventura County Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance (NCZO) (Sec. 8105-4, Sec. 8111-1.2 et seq.), the Planning Commission is the decision-maker for the requested modification to CUP No. 3048. Though the Planning Director would ordinarily be the decision-maker for the requested Discretionary Tree Permit (NCZO Section 8105-4), the Planning Director has elected to defer the decision to the Planning Commission, as it would be most efficient to consolidate review and not to hold duplicative hearings (NCZO Sections 8111-1.2 and 8111-4.1.1(e)). Therefore, the Planning Commission must make certain findings in order to determine that the proposed project is consistent with the permit approval standards of the Ventura County NCZO Section 8107-25.7.1. The applicable standards and the ability to make the required findings are evaluated below.

**Section 8107-25.7 - Discretionary Tree Permits and Standards:** *Except as provided in Sections 8107-25.4, 8107-25.5 or 8107-25.6, no person shall alter, fell, or remove a Protected Tree without obtaining a Planning Director approved discretionary Tree Permit. The Planning Director may approve a discretionary Tree Permit application with necessary conditions to promote the purpose of these tree ordinance regulations if:*

**Section 8107-25.7.1(a).** *A heritage or historical tree is to be felled or removed from the site and its continued existence in its present form and/or location denies reasonable access to the subject property and/or the approved construction, maintenance, or use in a manner permitted by the zoning on said property.*

Response: Access to Camp Ramah Machon Village is via an existing access road east of the parking area and then along the western property boundary. This road will serve as secondary access and will be extended and widened to also serve as necessary access to Machon Village, per Ventura County Fire Protection District requirements (Exhibit 5, Condition Nos. 61 and 62). According to the Arborist Report and Tree Protection Plan (Exhibit 4, Attachment 4), in order to make the necessary secondary access improvements, it is necessary to remove four protected Coast Live Oak trees (Tree Nos. 437, 438, 478, and 480) and encroach into the Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) of four protected Coast Live Oak trees (Tree Nos. 481, 482, 598 and 599 - tree nos. 598 and 599 are heritage trees). The continued existence of these trees in their present form and/or location would therefore deny reasonable access to the subject property and/or the approved construction, maintenance, or use in a manner permitted by the zoning on the property. Therefore, a discretionary Tree Permit (Case No. PL23-0002) is required. The location of the secondary access currently exists and separates vehicular traffic from camp operations and activities. The extension to Machon Village and widening of the road eliminates the need to construct a new road and further disturbance to protected trees (Exhibit 4, Attachment 4). Tree protection measures include temporary fencing around Tree Nos. 481, 482, 598 and 599 during construction. Further, recommended MM BIO-5 (Exhibit 5, Condition No. 35), requires a qualified arborist to submit annual arborist monitoring reports that address the success of the tree protection measures and the

overall condition of encroached-upon trees relative to their condition prior to the widening of the access road. Based on the discussion above, this finding can be made.

**Section 8107-25.7.1(b).** *The cumulative number of trees to be felled or removed from the site number four (4) or more oak or sycamore trees and their continued existence in their present form and/or location denies reasonable access to the subject property and/or the approved construction, maintenance, or use in a manner permitted by the zoning on said property.*

Response: The cumulative number of trees to be felled or removed from the site number four (4) Coast Live oak trees, specifically Tree Nos. 437, 438, 478, and 480 (Arborist Report and Tree Protection Plan, Exhibit 4, Attachment 4). The access road currently exists and required VCFPD improvements eliminate the need to construct a completely new access road thereby avoiding impacts to other onsite protected trees. The continued existence of these trees in their present form and/or location would therefore deny reasonable access to the subject property and/or the approved construction, maintenance, or use in a manner permitted by the zoning on the property. With the implementation of Recommended MMs BIO-4 (Tree Protection Plan) and BIO-5 (Tree Health Monitoring and Reporting), the applicant will be required to retain a qualified arborist to prepare and implement a Tree Protection Plan to offset the loss of the four protected oak trees and submit annual monitoring reports for a 5-year period that address the success of tree protection measures and the overall condition of encroached-upon trees relative to their condition prior to the initiation of construction activities. Based on the discussion above, this finding can be made.

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**Section 8107-25.7.1(c).** *The cumulative number of trees to be felled or removed from the site number six (6) or more protected trees (not listed in a or b above) and their continued existence in their present form and/or location denies reasonable access to the subject property and/or the approved construction, maintenance, or use in a manner permitted by the zoning on said property.*

Response: The cumulative number of trees to be felled or removed from the site do not exceed four (4) or more. Note, on April 29, 2021, a ministerial emergency tree permit (Tree Permit No. AD21-0064) was issued for the removal of a heritage sized oak tree (Tree No. 251) and on February 11, 2022, a ministerial emergency tree permit (Tree Permit No. AD21-0162) was issued for the removal of a heritage sized oak tree (Tree No. 428). In accordance with Sections 8107-25.6(a) and 8107-25.5(a) of the Ventura County Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance (NCZO), no mitigation to offset the loss of these two trees was required as the trees posed a significant threat to people.

**Section 8107-25.7.4:** *The tree alteration, felling, and/or removal is part of a larger project which, as conditioned, would on balance result in significant benefits to the public and if:*  
*a. Established public policy including General Plan policies would be advanced, or b.*

*Resources of local, regional, or Statewide significance could be productively utilized, or c. The public benefits outweigh the unavoidable negative impacts associated with the removal of protected trees required by the project.*

Response: The removal of the four protected Coast Live Oak trees and encroachment into the TPZ of four protected Coast Live Oak trees is necessary for compliance with Ventura County Fire Protection District standards for secondary access. The project is located in a high fire hazard area. Fire Apparatus Access Roads, whether public or private, located within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Ventura County Fire, must provide access for fire apparatus. Camp Ramah hosts numerous programs and events to the public and the secondary access road will provide for unobstructed traffic circulation during a fire or other emergency, safe access for emergency equipment, and a civilian evacuation route.

The tree removal is part of a larger project which, as conditioned, would on balance result in significant safety benefits to the public. Camp Ramah draws a significant number of people to participate in its activities or work on site. During the summer (peak season) an overnight population of approximately 1,014 (i.e., campers, overnight staff, daycare assistants, spouses, visiting educators, and special guests) would be onsite. Daily population is estimated to be up to 1,168 persons. As discussed in Exhibit 6, General Plan Consistency, applicable Hazards and Safety Element policies of the General Plan would be advanced to protect life by providing an additional evacuation route via the proposed secondary access for the large number of people routinely on site. The public benefits of providing a safe evacuation route for the large number of people who utilize Camp Ramah outweighs the unavoidable negative impacts associated with the removal of protected trees, and these unavoidable negative impacts are the minimum necessary to comply with Ventura County Fire Protection District fire apparatus access standards.