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**ITEM FOR ZONING AND PLATTING COMMISSION AGENDA**

**COMMISSION MEETING**

**DATE REQUESTED:** October 19, 2010

**PROJECT NAME:** Woodlawn Baptist Church

**ADDRESS  
OF PROPERTY:** 4600 Manchaca Rd.

**SITE PLAN:** SP-2010-0158C

**NAME OF APPLICANT:** Sandy Stone, 478-1621  
Heimsath Architects

**PDR/CITY ARBORIST  
STAFF:** Keith Mars, 974-2755  
keith.mars@ci.austin.tx.us

**ORDINANCE:** Comprehensive Watershed Ordinance (current code)

**REQUEST:** The applicant is appealing the denial of an administrative variance request to remove two Heritage Trees, as allowed under Land Development Code Section 25-8-644.

**STAFF  
RECOMMENDATION:** Recommend variance request

**REASONS FOR  
RECOMMENDATION:** Both trees display severe structural and physiological defects

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Betty Baker, Chair  
Commissioners of the Zoning and Platting Commission

**FROM:** Keith Mars, City Arborist Program  
Planning and Development Review

**DATE:** October 6, 2010

**SUBJECT:** Woodlawn Baptist Church  
SP-2010-0158C

**REQUEST:** The applicant is appealing the denial of an administrative variance request to remove two Heritage Trees, as allowed under Land Development Code Section 25-8-644.

### Area Description

Woodlawn Baptist Church is an existing church located on 4600 Manchaca Road. The applicant is proposing to demolish an existing building, construct a new worship building, and other associated improvements.

### Tree Evaluation

Two heritage size trees are proposed to be removed. The subject trees are a 27" dbh Cedar Elm (*Ulmus crassifolia*) located just within the footprint of the proposed worship hall and a 24" non-native Red Oak (*Quercus spp.*) located within the footprint of the proposed parking spaces (Exhibit 1).

#### 27" Cedar Elm (*Ulmus crassifolia*)-

Based on a September 28, 2010, tree assessment, the 27" Cedar Elm displays severe structural defects. The main leader of the subject tree is no longer present (Exhibit 2). This defect is likely due to either storm damage or improper pruning. Further, at some point in the past the subject tree likely had two stems, possibly codominate. One of the stems is no longer present (Exhibit 3). This defect is also likely due to either storm damage or improper pruning. The absence of a main leader has resulted in lateral bud growth and an imbalanced canopy (Exhibit 4). This has further exacerbated the structural weakness of the tree already weakened by decay and poorly attached adventitious stems (Exhibit 5).

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#### 24" Red Oak (*Quercus spp.*)-

Based on a September 28, 2010, tree assessment the 24" Red Oak (*Quercus spp.*) was identified as a Red Oak displaying severe symptoms of foliar chlorosis (Exhibit 6). This tree has likely suffered from chronic chlorosis due in part to soil compaction (Exhibit 7) and calcareous soils, but more so from a poor choice in species selection as this species or cultivar of Red Oak does not appear to be a native species based on analysis of the leaf morphology. The subject tree appears to be either (1) a cultivar of *Quercus shumardii* or (2) a species of red oak from the southeastern United States. Either way, the tree species is likely adapted to more acidic soils than the existing soil conditions.

Chlorosis, which is the loss or reduced development of chlorophyll, is typically due to a micronutrient deficiency in iron, manganese, and/or zinc. These minerals are essential to chlorophyll production. In turn, chlorophyll is necessary for photosynthesis. In soils with a pH greater than 6.5 these minerals may be present, but may not be readily available for uptake by the plant. The resulting symptom of this soil condition is displayed by intervenial chlorosis in the foliage (Exhibit 8). In this case, long-term treatment of chlorotic leaves or modifying the soil conditions surrounding the tree are not feasible options to correct this condition. These options are costly, timely, and unlikely to correct the chlorosis. Foliar sprays only provide temporary results as they treat the leaves not the soil. Injections into the vascular tissue of the tree only provide temporary results as well. Soil treatments attempt to lower the soil pH though this depends on the soil chemistry, depth of treatment, and other factors that may not be able to be adequately modified to address the chlorotic conditions of the tree.

#### Variance Request

The applicant is appealing the denial of an administrative variance request to remove two Heritage Trees, as allowed under Land Development Code Section 25-8-644. Though neither tree is greater than 30" dbh, the removal of the two subject trees cannot be administratively approved. Staff has denied the administrative variance request since the removal request does not meet the criteria set forth in LDC 25-8-624. Do note that decay, structural defects (conditions of the 27" Cedar Elm) and chlorosis (condition of the 24" Red Oak) are, in this case, not diseases or symptoms of diseases and therefore cannot be administratively approved under 25-8-624 (A)(5). Also, though a potential hazard due to poor structure, the 24" Cedar Elm does not meet the approval criteria of LDC 25-8-624(A)(3) allowing the removal of a heritage tree if it is an imminent hazard to life or property.

#### Recommendations

Staff recommends, with condition, approval of the variance request given the defects of the subject trees. The condition is:

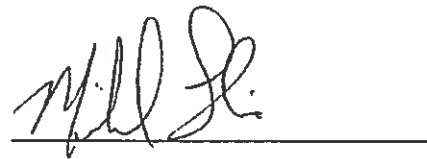
1. 150% mitigation for both trees given their respective conditions.

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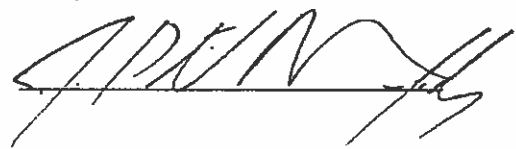
If you need further details, please feel free to contact me at 974-2755.

Keith Mars, City Arborist Program  
Planning and Development Review

City Arborist:  
Michael Embesi

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Embesi", written over a horizontal line.

Environmental Officer:  
Patrick Murphy

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Murphy", written over a horizontal line.

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**Planning and Development Review Department  
Staff Recommendations Concerning Heritage Tree Variances**

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<b>Application Address</b>	<b>4600 Manchaca Road</b>
<b>Size and Species of Tree(s):</b>	<b>27" dbh Cedar Elm (<i>Ulmus crassifolia</i>) and a 24" dbh Red Oak (<i>Quercus</i> spp.)</b>
<b>Reason for Request:</b>	<b>The applicant is appealing the denial of an administrative variance request to remove two Heritage Trees, as allowed under Land Development Code Section 25-8-644.</b>

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**Section 1 – Approval Criteria**

1) The requirement for which a variance is requested prevents a reasonable access to the property.

**No.**

2) The requirement for which a variance is requested prevents a reasonable use of the property.

**No.**

3) The tree presents an imminent hazard to life or property and the hazard cannot be reasonably mitigated without removing the tree.

**No.**

4) Is the tree dead?

**No. However, both trees have severe structural and physiological defects.**

5) Is the tree diseased? If so, is restoration to a sound condition practicable or can the disease be transmitted?

**No. However, significant structural deficiencies are present in the 27" Cedar Elm and the 24" Red Oak shows severe symptoms of foliar chlorosis. Neither condition can practicably be remedied.**

6) For a tree located on public property or a public street or easement, the requirement for which a variance is requested prevents:

- a) the opening of necessary vehicular traffic lanes in a street or ally, or
- b) the construction of utility or drainage facilities that may not feasibly be rerouted.

**NA.**

7) The applicant has applied for and been denied a variance, waiver, exemption, modification, or alternative compliance from another City Code provision which would eliminate the need to remove the heritage tree, as required in Section 25-8-646 (*Variance Prerequisite*).

**No.**

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- 8) Removal of the heritage tree is not based on a condition caused by the method chosen by the applicant to develop the property, unless removal of the heritage tree will result in a design that will allow for the maximum provision of ecological service and historic and cultural value from the trees preserved on the site.

No.

*Do any of these criteria apply? Yes/No [state which # applies]*

No. Therefore, staff cannot meet findings of fact to administratively grant the removal of the two subject trees despite their state of decline and that restoration to sound condition is not possible. Though not able to approve the variance request administratively, staff recommends the Environmental Board and Zoning and Platting Commission recommend approval of the removal of the two subject trees given the structural and physiological defects of the trees.

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**Reviewer Name:** Keith Mars, City Arborist Program

**Reviewer Signature:** Keith Mars

**Date:** 09/29/2010

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## MEMORANDUM

**Project:** Woodlawn Baptist Church

**Site Plan No.:** SP-2010-0158C

**Date:** September 20, 2010

**By:** Sandy Stone, Heimsath Architects (512) 478-1621

Woodlawn Baptist Church at 4600 Manchaca is building a new sanctuary. In the planning stages it was important to the church to retain as many of their mature oaks, cedar elms, and other large trees as possible. In order to do this it was decided that the church would tear down an existing building to create an open area large enough to add the new sanctuary. This area of the site was chosen because it had few large trees and would protect most of the existing large trees on the site. Because of the large square footage needed for the sanctuary, there is not another area on the site that would allow the church to build a new building that would not impact even more large trees than the area that was chosen. The only significant tree that is being impacted by the location of the new sanctuary is a 27" cedar elm (*Ulmus crassifolia*) that was damaged in a windstorm, and the two main leaders were removed as a result of this damage. It has significant rot inside both remaining trunks.

The remaining tree, a 24" non-native red oak (*Quercus* spp.), is impacted by the new handicap parking and access that is required on along Cimmaron Street. Because the existing building is so close to the building setback line there not enough room to install the required handicap access without removing the tree. The red oak is a non-native tree, and is exhibiting signs of severe micronutrient deficiency or foliar chlorosis.

Based on this, we are requesting a variance to allow the church to remove the two heritage trees. The development of this site as proposed will cause the minimum change necessary. The church will plant the required number of trees in order to mitigate the removal of these two trees.

cc:



P.O. BOX 50179 • AUSTIN, TX 78763

TREE  
CLINIC

Applicant's arborist report

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Jerry Pulley, President  
Registered Consulting Arborist, #329

(512) 385-6604  
Fax (512) 385-6612

September 3, 2010

Woodlawn Baptist Church  
Mr. Lane Northcut  
4600 Manchaca Road  
Austin, TX 78745

**RE:** Health status of the 24" Red Oak and the 27" Cedar Elm on the north side of the building within the proposed construction corridor.

**Definition of the Assignment:**

You requested Tree Clinic to provide an evaluation of health and prognoses.

**Discussion:**

The Red Oak is located in a small area between the building and the sidewalk facing north. The trees leaves are exhibiting signs of a severe micronutrient deficiency or foliar Chlorosis. This condition is common with this species when planted in our alkaline soils. If the tree is planted from nursery stock that is not native or not adapted to a soil pH of 6.5 or above the micronutrients iron, manganese and zinc may not be readily available.

The Cedar Elm is located on the east side of the building. The tree has lost a substantial amount of both main trunks in the past. Presently the remaining trunks are 8'-10' in height. Decay is evident inside both trunks. In my opinion neither tree adds value to the property.

**Recommendations:**

Older photos show the Red Oak has had this condition for years; it is a non- native tree that will probably never achieve its full potential regardless of remedial efforts.

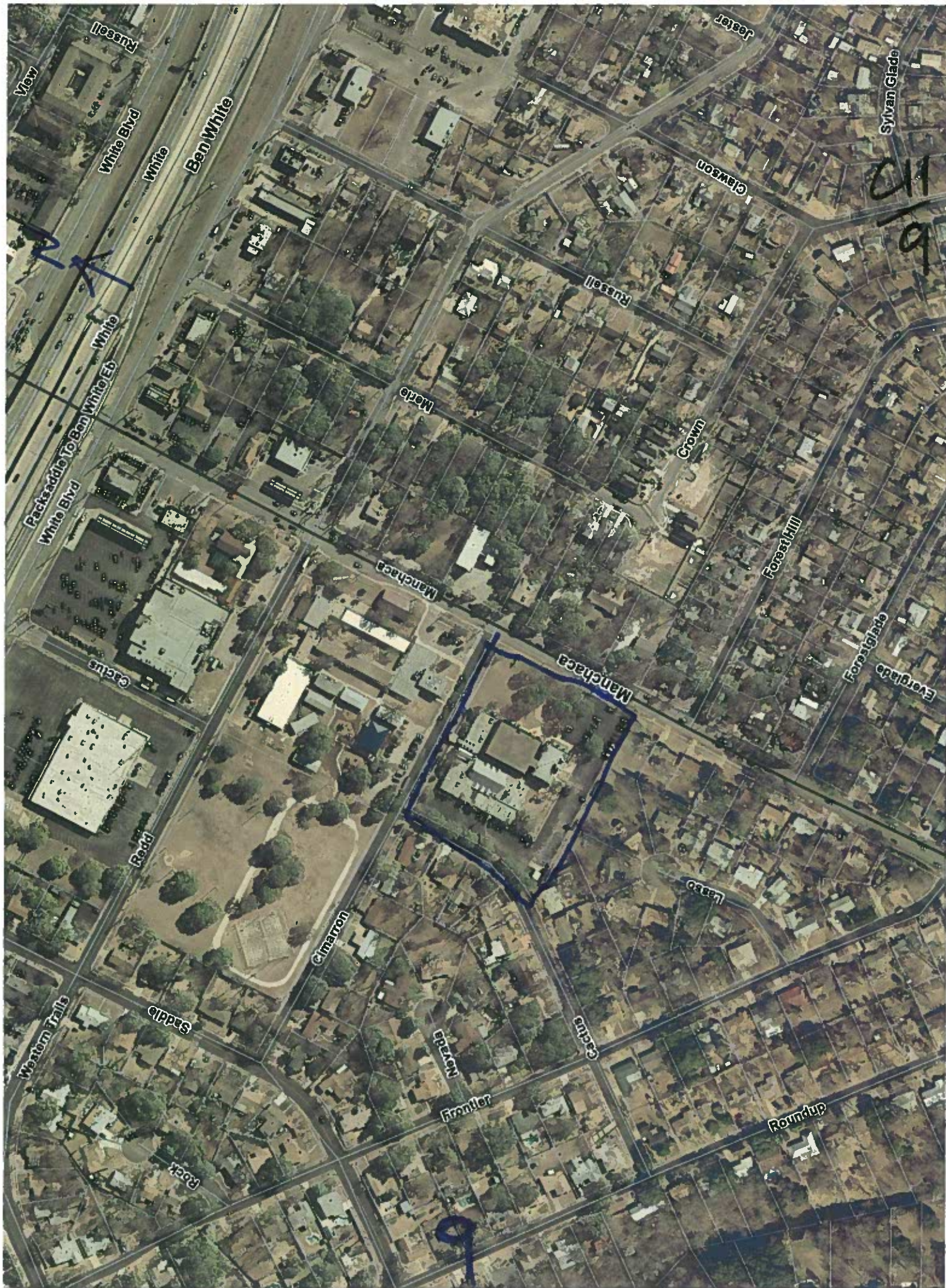
The structural condition of the Cedar Elm prevents any growth to its remaining canopy. This tree should have been removed after losing the majority of its canopy.

Chris Poeth  
Certified Arborist  
# TX-3198

MEMBER

American Society of Consulting Arborists • International Society of Arboriculture • Society of American Foresters





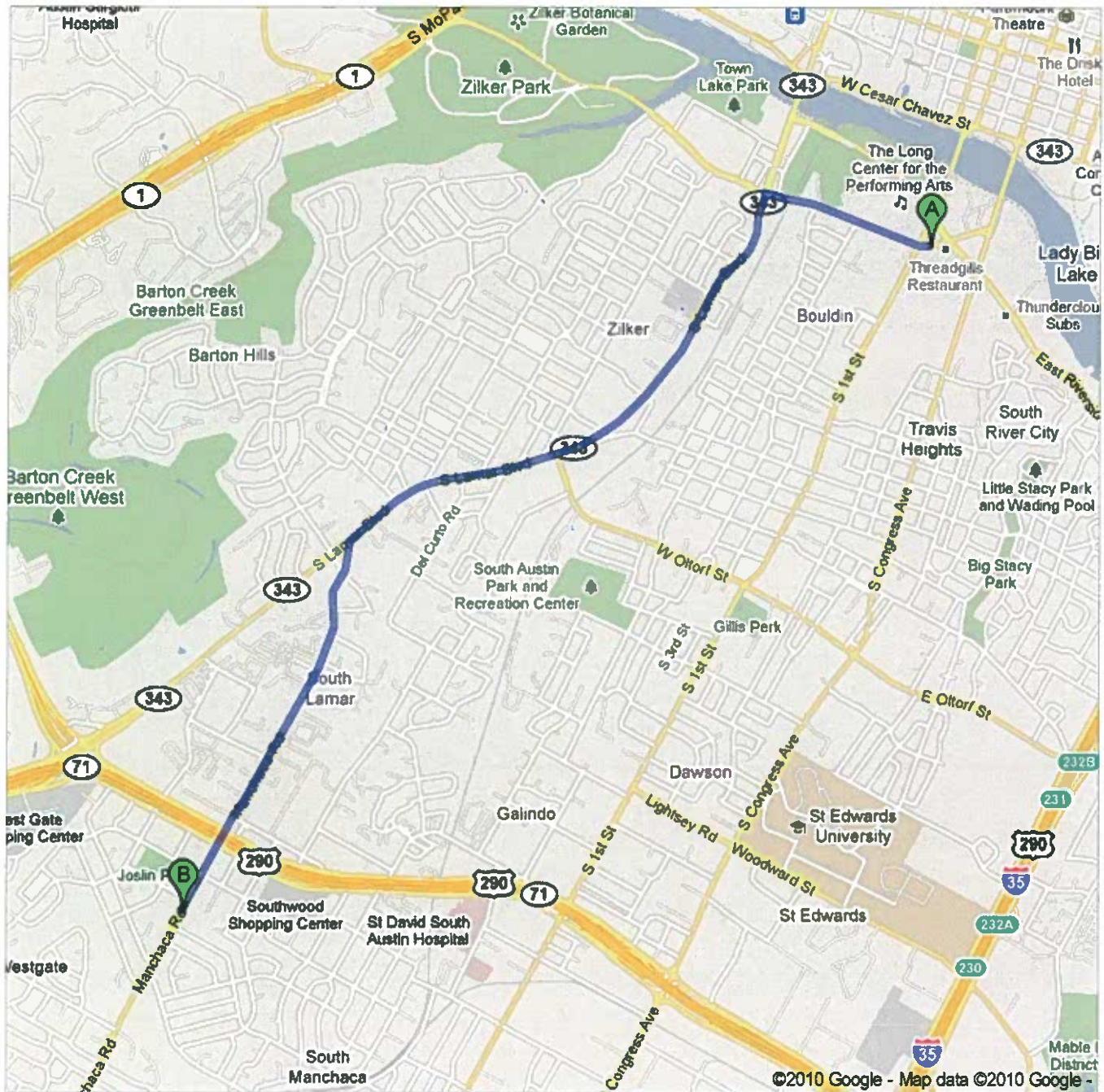




**Directions to 4600 Manchaca Rd, Austin, TX 78745**  
**3.8 mi – about 8 mins**

**Save trees. Go green!**

Download Google Maps on your phone at [google.com/gmm](http://google.com/gmm)




 505 Barton Springs Rd, Austin, TX 78704


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1. Head **west** on **Barton Springs Rd** toward **S 1st St**  
About 1 min

go 0.6 mi  
total 0.6 mi

-  2. Turn **left** at **S Lamar Blvd**  
About 4 mins

go 1.9 mi  
total 2.5 mi

-  3. Turn **left** at **Manchaca Rd**  
Destination will be on the right  
About 3 mins

go 1.4 mi  
total 3.8 mi

 4600 Manchaca Rd, Austin, TX 78745

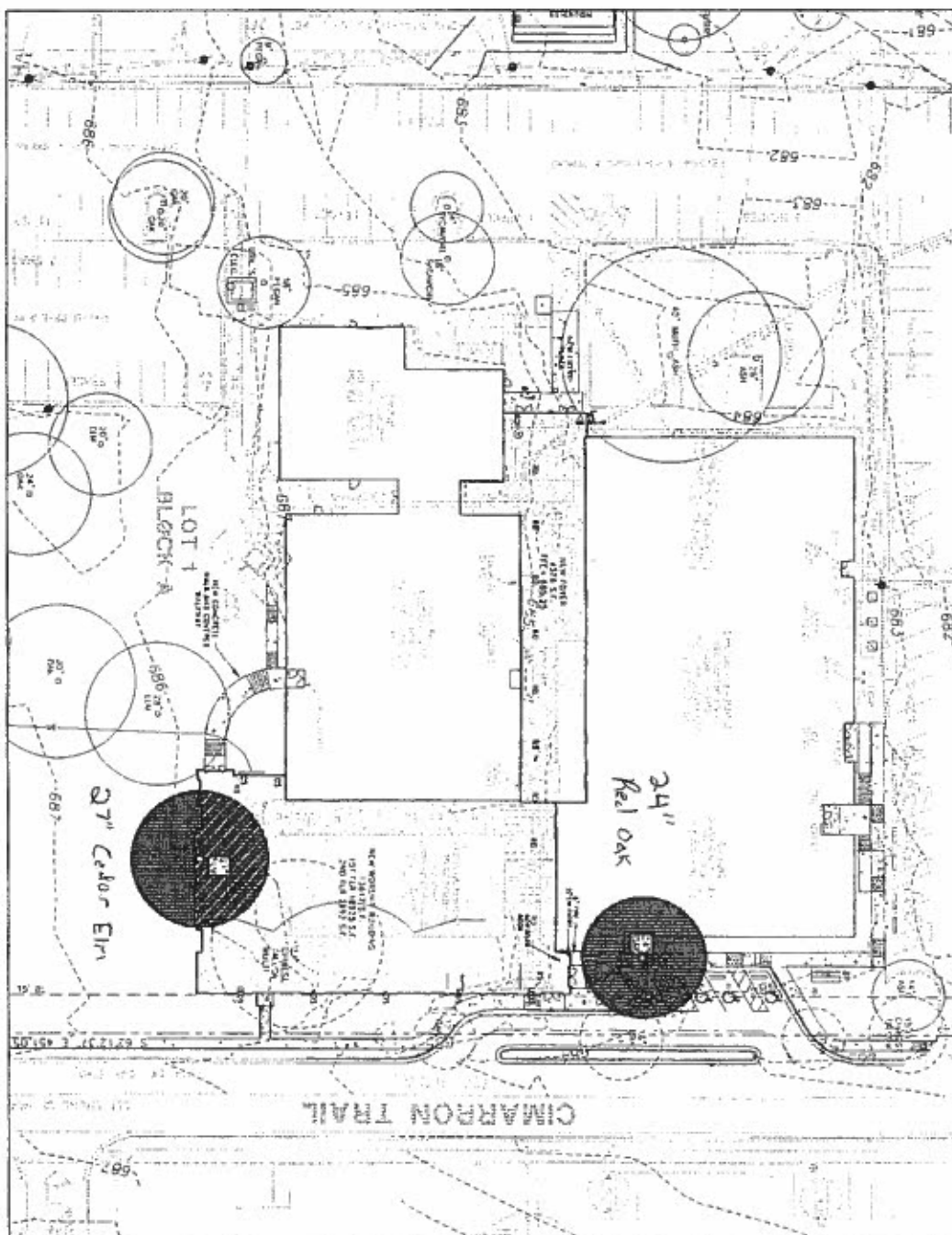
These directions are for planning purposes only. You may find that construction projects, traffic, weather, or other events may cause conditions to differ from the map results, and you should plan your route accordingly. You must obey all signs or notices regarding your route.

Map data ©2010 Google

Directions weren't right? Please find your route on [maps.google.com](http://maps.google.com) and click "Report a problem" at the bottom left.

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HERITAGE TREE EXHIBIT - 24" <sup>Red</sup> OAK AND 27" ELM  
(LOCATIONS SHOWN IN RED)



<p>WOODLAWN BAPTIST CHURCH NEW WORSHIP BUILDING 4600 MANCHACA RD., AUSTIN, TEXAS 78745</p>		<p><b>TCE</b> THORNTON CONSULTING ENGINEERS, INC. SURVEYING • CIVIL/MECHANICAL • WATER &amp; SEWER/STORM FOR INFORMATION NO. 0-000001</p>		<p>DATE: 01/11/2010 BY: [Signature] CHECKED: [Signature] APPROVED: [Signature]</p>	
<p>PROJECT: 1 OF 2 SHEET NO. 1 OF 2</p>		<p>HERITAGE TREE EXHIBIT</p>		<p>10% CAPITAL COST STUDY NOTE: SEE ATTACHED SHEET FOR DETAILS</p>	

Exhibit # 1









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Exhibit #3





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Exhibit #4





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Exhibit #5

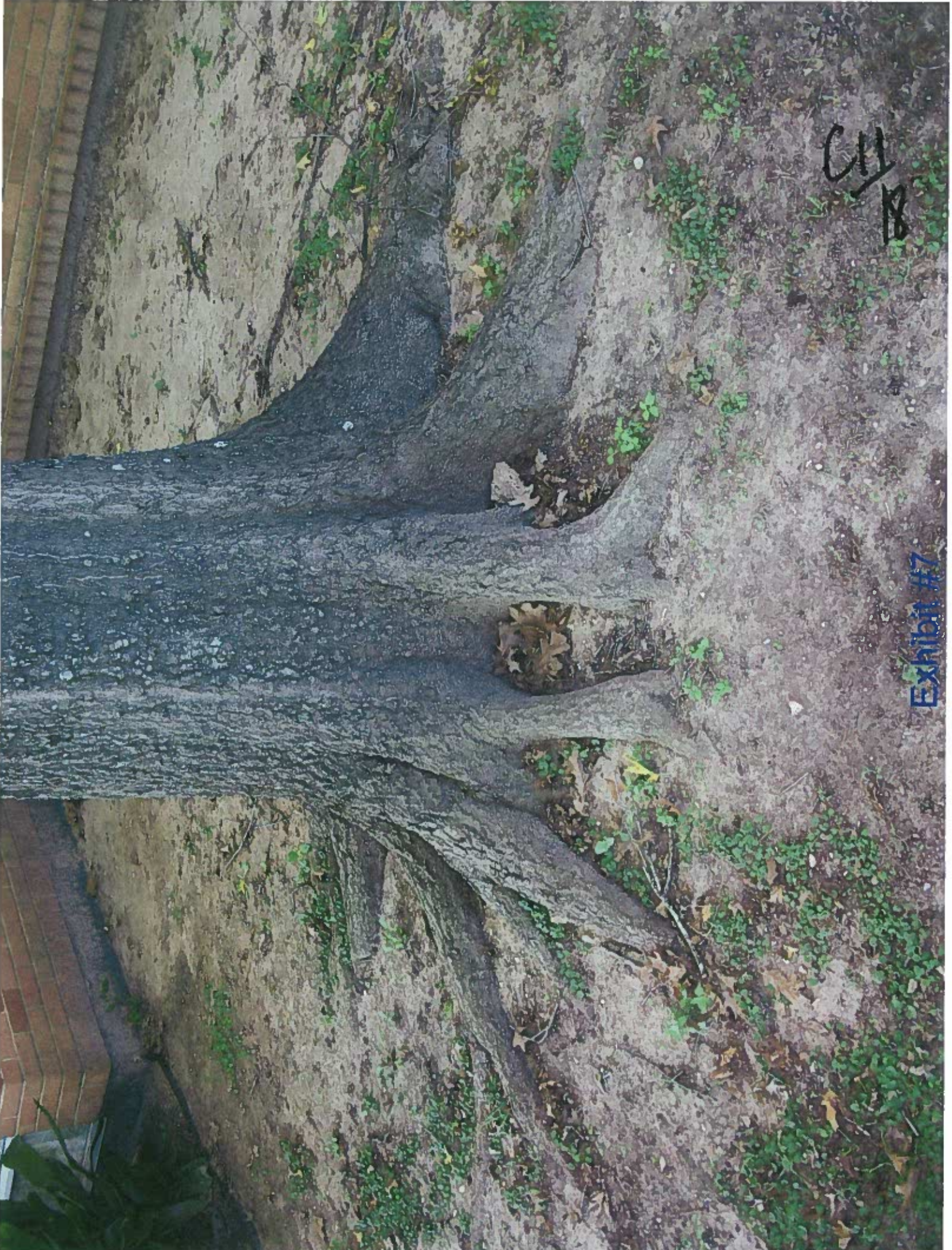




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Exhibit #6





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Exhibit #7



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## ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD MOTION 100610 4b

Date: October 6, 2010

Subject: Woodlawn Baptist Church

Motioned By: Phil Moncada

Seconded By: Jim Schissler

### Recommendation

The Environmental Board recommends **approval with conditions** to a variance to Land Development Code 25-8-644. Applicant is appealing the denial of an administrative variance to remove 2 Heritage Trees.

### City of Austin Tree Arborist conditions:

1. 150% mitigation for both trees given their respective conditions.

### Rationale

Both trees have severe structural and physiological defects. (27 inch Cedar Elm, 24 inch Red Oak). One of the trees has severe symptoms of Foliar chlorosis. Neither tree can be remedied. Also there is an arborist report from a local firm.

**Vote** 5-0-0-2

**For:** Beall, Gary, Maxwell, Moncada, and Schissler

**Against:**

**Abstain:** None

**Absent:** Anderson and Neely

**Approved By:**

Mary Gay Maxwell, Chair