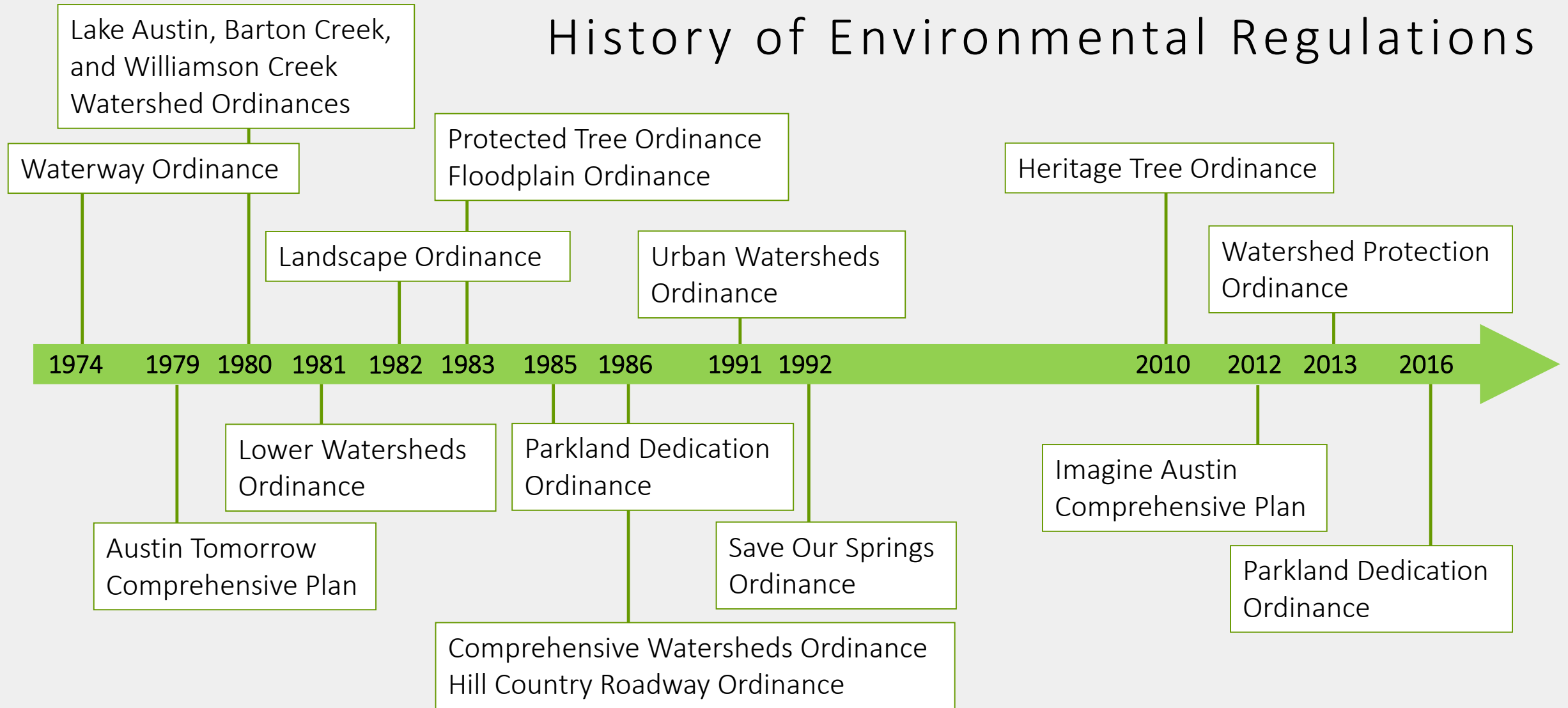# natural+
RESILIENT

CITY OF AUSTIN · FOUNDED 1835

CODE NEXT

Imagine Austin: Vision and Priorities

- **Austin is Natural and Sustainable**
  - Austin is a green city. We are environmentally aware and ensure the long-term health and quality of our community through responsible resource use as citizens at the local, regional, and global level. Growth and infrastructure systems are well-managed to respect the limitations of our natural resources.

- **Sustainably Manage our Water Resources**

- **Use Green Infrastructure to Protect Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Integrate Nature into the City**

CODE NEXT

History of Environmental Regulations

Lake Austin, Barton Creek, and Williamson Creek Watershed Ordinances

Waterway Ordinance

Protected Tree Ordinance
Floodplain Ordinance

Heritage Tree Ordinance

Landscape Ordinance

Urban Watersheds Ordinance

Watershed Protection Ordinance

1974 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1985 1986 1991 1992   2010 2012 2013 2016

Lower Watersheds Ordinance

Parkland Dedication Ordinance

Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan

Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan

Save Our Springs Ordinance

Parkland Dedication Ordinance

Comprehensive Watersheds Ordinance
Hill Country Roadway Ordinance

CODE NEXT

Major Themes for CodeNEXT

Water Stewardship

Flood Mitigation

Urban Forest
Preservation

Open Space
and Parks

Nature in the City

CODE**NEXT**

Water Stewardship: Challenges

Heat
Drought
Population
Urbanization

Rainfall
Surface &
Groundwater
Natural Land Cover

Current requirements for stormwater controls do not significantly address goals of enhancing creek baseflow, sustaining on-site vegetation, and reducing potable water consumption.

CODE NEXT

Water Stewardship: Solutions

- Keep stormwater on-site and soak it into the ground or offset potable water use

- Accomplished through the use of green stormwater infrastructure practices, including rain gardens, porous pavement, rainwater harvesting, and green roofs

- Similar requirement has been adopted by multiple cities and states around the country

Rain Garden *Rainwater Harvesting* *Porous Pavement* *Green Roof*

CODE NEXT

Flood Mitigation: Challenges

- Older sites built before drainage requirements were introduced in 1974 can contribute to downstream flooding

- Current code requires development projects to demonstrate they will not result in additional adverse flooding

- Redevelopment projects that are not increasing impervious cover or changing drainage patterns are generally not required to provide flood mitigation

2015 Memorial Day Flood

CODENEXT

Flood Mitigation: Solutions

- Redevelopment projects contribute fair share to address downstream flooding

- Tools for mitigating flood impacts and reducing peak flows include:
  - On-site/Off-site detention
  - Off-site conveyance improvements
  - Regional Stormwater Management Program

- Type of solution employed will be dependent on the location in the watershed and the available capacity of the downstream conveyance system

Subsurface Detention   *Parking Lot Detention*

Conveyance Upgrades   *Regional Solutions*

CODE NEXT

Urban Forest Preservation: Challenges

- Code is unorganized, lacks clarity, and has redundancy

- Administrative process is cumbersome

- Applicability of code is unclear

- Public tree code is another code chapter

- Code undervalues importance of small existing trees

- How to improve soil volume and soil quality for streetscape trees

CODE NEXT

Urban Forest Preservation: Solutions

- <u>Code Clarity, Administration, and Organization</u>

  The proposed code includes:

  – An intent statement, clearly stated applicability, and simplified organization

  – Reduces needless wording and language that could be perceived as conflicting

  – Consolidated into three easy-to-follow sections: General Provisions, General Administration for Regulated Trees, and Heritage Trees

CODE NEXT

Urban Forest Preservation: Solutions

- ### Public Trees
  - Public trees previously addressed in Chapter 6-3 of City Code has been consolidated into the Land Development Code and clarified

- ### Smaller Existing Trees and Planted Trees
  - Codifying that existing trees less than 19 inches in diameter will be counted towards satisfaction for mitigation on single-family property
  - Trees 8 to 18 inches in diameter are recognized as Keystone Trees as they represent the majority of our trees in the city and need to be preserved when possible
  - Improved landscape standards for planted trees

CODE NEXT

Open Space and Parks: Challenges

- Density: less open space in the city places more pressure on existing parks

- Quality amenities: need to build active recreation amenities; difficulty in meeting all development requirements in an infill project

- Connectivity: maintenance of open space corridors for wildlife and forest protection; and for multi-use trails to promote healthy and sustainable lifestyles.

- Goal for Open Space: no clear expectation of what open space is or what it should do

CODE NEXT

Open Space and Parks: Solutions

- Open Space planning up front:

  - New parkland dedication ordinance requires more up-front discussion about parks (park deficient map and early determinations) (23-3B)

  - New Community Design section (23-4C-1) increases open space requirements to 10% on larger sites and provides design standards for open space, including street frontage and public accessibility

- Incentivizes for more active private parks:

  - Gives developers credit for building active amenities (23-3B), more discussion needed on how impervious cover and private common open space credits count if parkland is dedicated
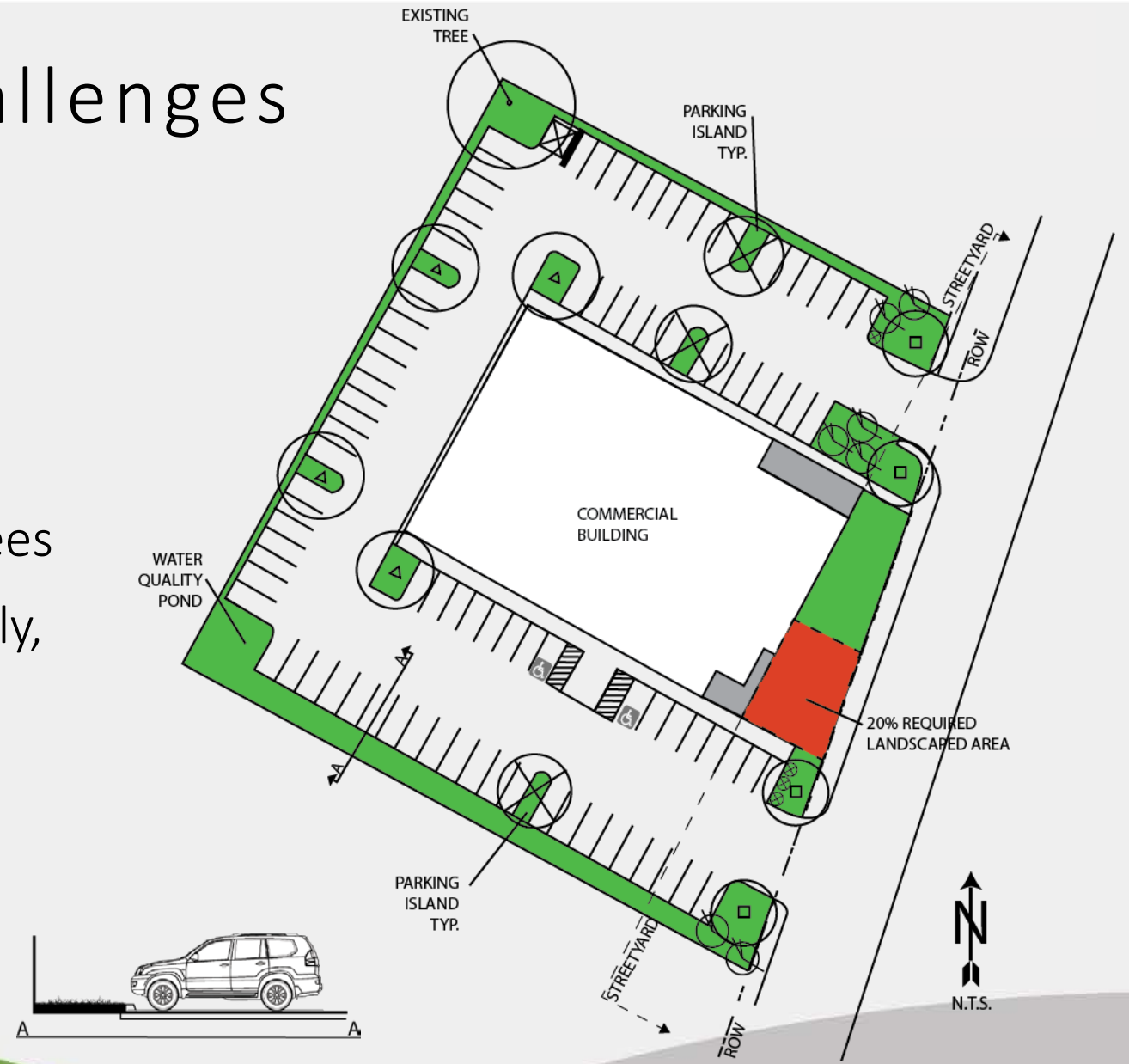
CODE NEXT

Open Space and Parks: Solutions

- Connectivity:

  - New requirements for dedicating easements for Urban Trails even if parkland dedication is not owed (i.e. commercial and civic buildings) (23-9E-5)

- Simplify terms and land uses for open spaces: (23-2M)

  - Clarify Land Uses related to recreation and open space to create a common language about the expectations for open space areas (private, public, green infrastructure)

  - Ensure that passive recreation areas can be built in any Zone and more intense uses continue to require a Conditional Use Permit
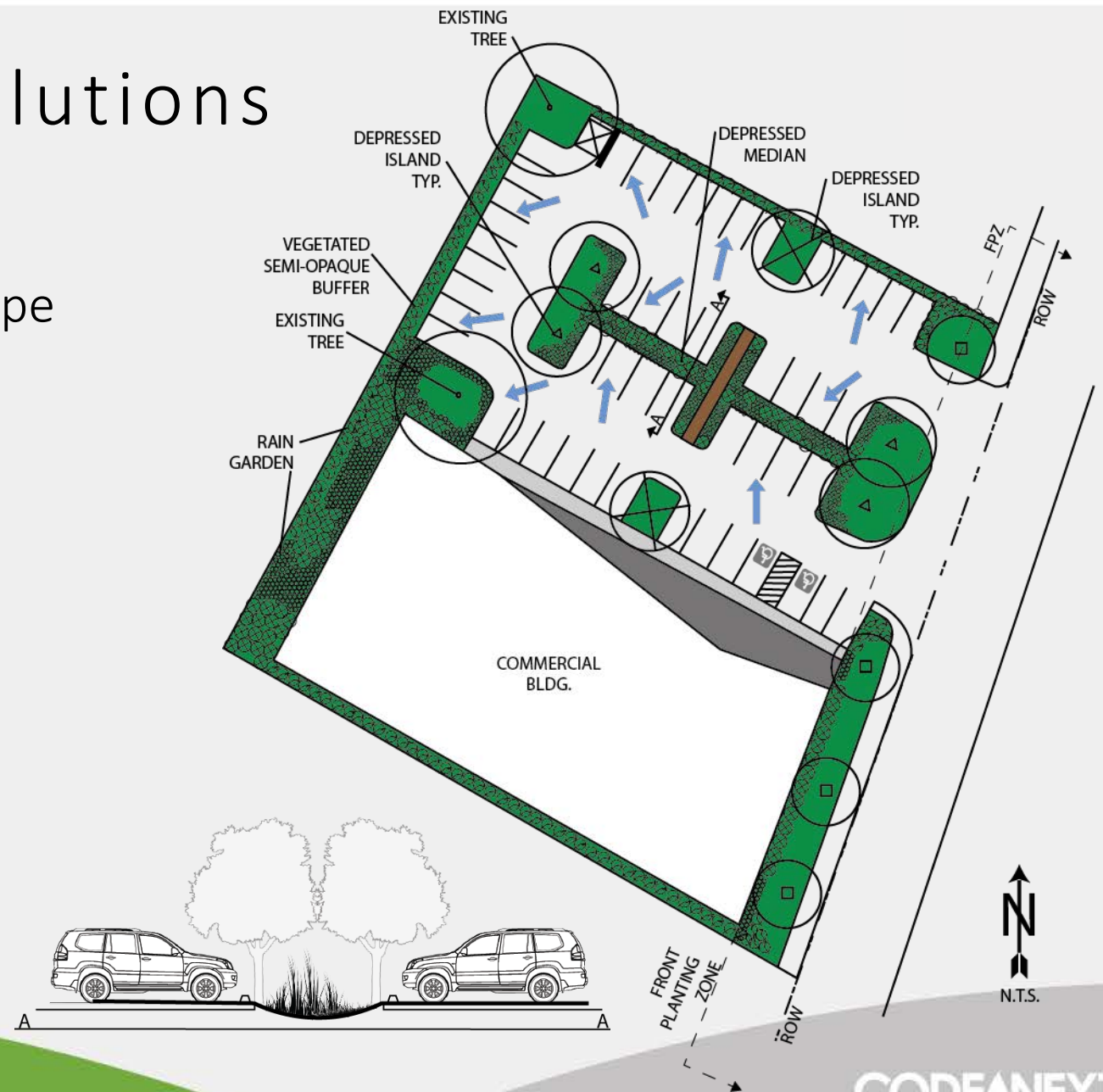
CODENEXT

Nature in the City: Challenges

- Limited to 20 percent of streetyard

- Tree preservation requirements infrequently incorporated into design

- Tree islands for parking spaces do not allow adequate root zone for shade trees

- Stormwater is shed from the site quickly, bypassing trees and vegetation

CODE NEXT

Nature in the City: Solutions

- Provides vegetated buffers for compatibility and distributes landscape elements throughout the site

- Accommodates existing trees and root zones for shade trees

- Front planting zone provides shade trees for pedestrians

- Medians and islands are depressed for infiltration of stormwater

- Functional Green Tool for highly urbanized sites (details tbd)
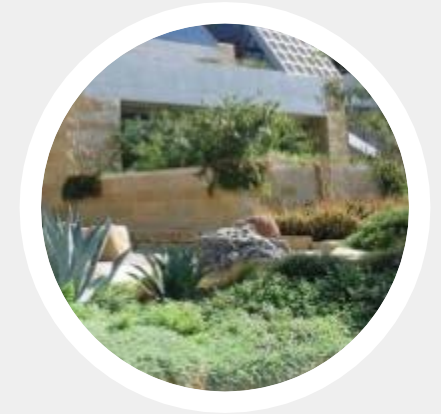
Breakout Sessions

Water Stewardship

Flood Mitigation

Urban Forest Preservation

Open Space and Parks

Nature in the City

CODE NEXT