

City of Austin Environmental Commission

Heritage Tree Ordinance Overview

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Development CITY OF AUSTIN
SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Building a Better and Safer Austin Together

Overview

- **Tree preservation policy objectives and outcomes**
- **Code and process**
- **Due diligence**
- **Questions**

Chapter 1

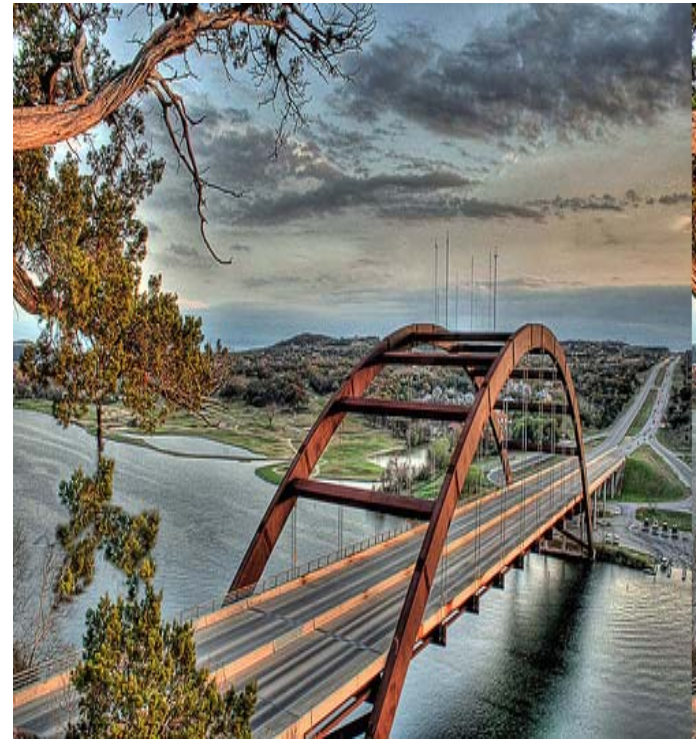
Tree Ordinances in Austin and Successes



(Nationally recognized tree preservation ordinances)

Tree Ordinances in Austin

- First adopted in 1983
- Public health, safety, and welfare (Home Rule & Discretionary)
- Preserve first then replenish
- Alignment with council strategic outcomes



Preserve the character of Austin's urban forest, protect its current health, and increase it's longevity

The Value of Trees in the Urban Environment

- Trees are foundational to multiple public policy objects
- Trees are a \$16 billion asset
- Trees reduce energy cost by ~\$20M/year
- Trees reduce speed and shade pedestrians



CITY OF AUSTIN STRATEGIC DIRECTION

OUR VISION

Austin is a beacon of sustainability, social equity, and economic opportunity; where diversity and creativity are celebrated; where community needs and values are recognized; where leadership comes from its community members, and where the necessities of life are affordable and accessible to all.

OUR STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

Together we strive to create a complete community where every Austinite has choices at every stage of life that allow us to experience and contribute to all of the following outcomes:



ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY & AFFORDABILITY

Having economic opportunities and resources that enable us to thrive in our community.



MOBILITY

Getting us where we want to go, when we want to get there, safely and cost-effectively.



SAFETY

Being safe in our home, at work, and in our community.



HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT

Enjoying a sustainable environment and a healthy life, physically and mentally.



CULTURE & LIFELONG LEARNING

Being enriched by Austin's unique civic, cultural, ethnic, and learning opportunities.



GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS FOR ALL

Believing that city government works effectively and collaboratively for all of us—that it is equitable, ethical and innovative.

Our Community Values Trees

- Home Rule—Tree protection is an expression of our values
- Continued public support for trees and tree preservation



Efficacy of Heritage Tree Ordinance

- Ordinance adopted in February 2010
- 14 Commission variances
- Over 5,000 reviews by City Arborist staff
- More than 70,000 inches of Heritage Trees reviewed
- 95% preservation rate. National model.

Chapter 2

Administering the Tree Ordinances



(Process matters)

The Larger the Tree, the Greater the Protection

Levels of Tree Ordinance Protection



8" and larger

- Required to be surveyed on commercial site plan submittals



19" and larger are PROTECTED SIZE TREES

- All species are protected
- Tree permit is required for impacts or removal (residential and public)



24" and larger can be HERITAGE TREES

- Only specific species qualify
- Requires a variance for removal or impacts that exceed code requirements
- Variances can be administrative
- Greater penalties for unpermitted impacts



30" and larger HERITAGE TREES

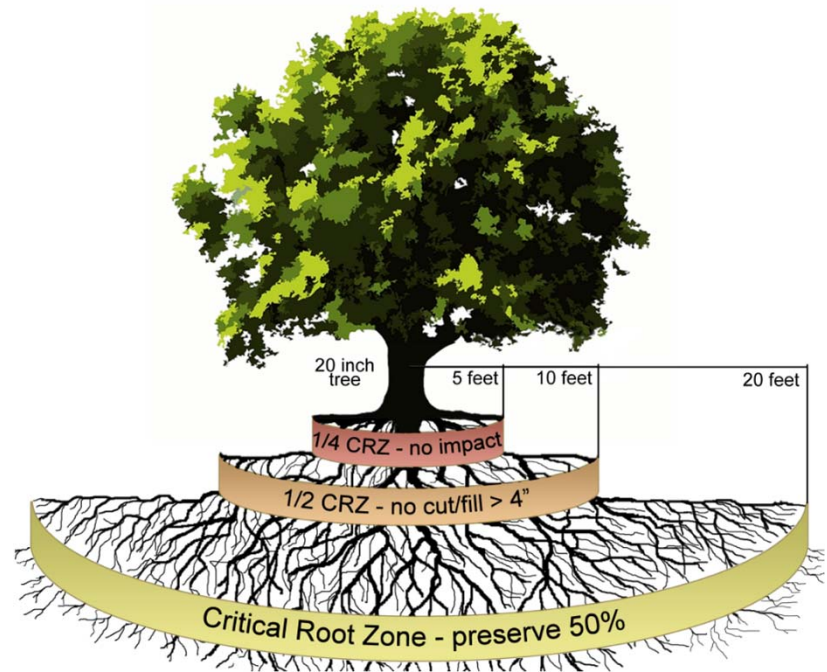
- Proposed variances must go through the public process

Review Criteria for Protected and Heritage Trees

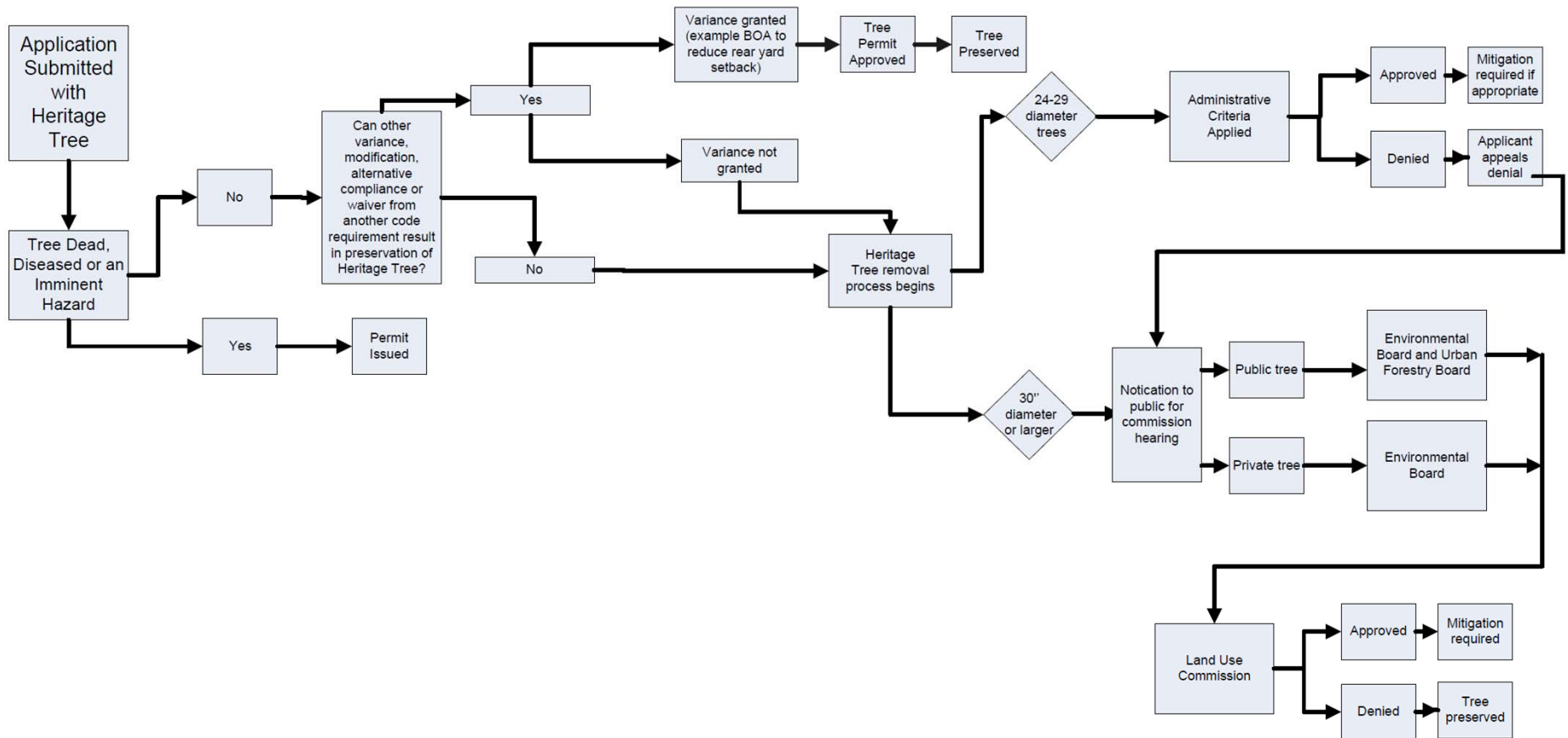
Code Criteria for Removal

1. Prevents a reasonable use
2. Prevents reasonable access
3. Dead, diseased, or imminent hazard

Rules for Protecting Trees



Due Process for Administering Heritage Tree Ordinance



Chapter 3

Due Diligence for Reasonable Use

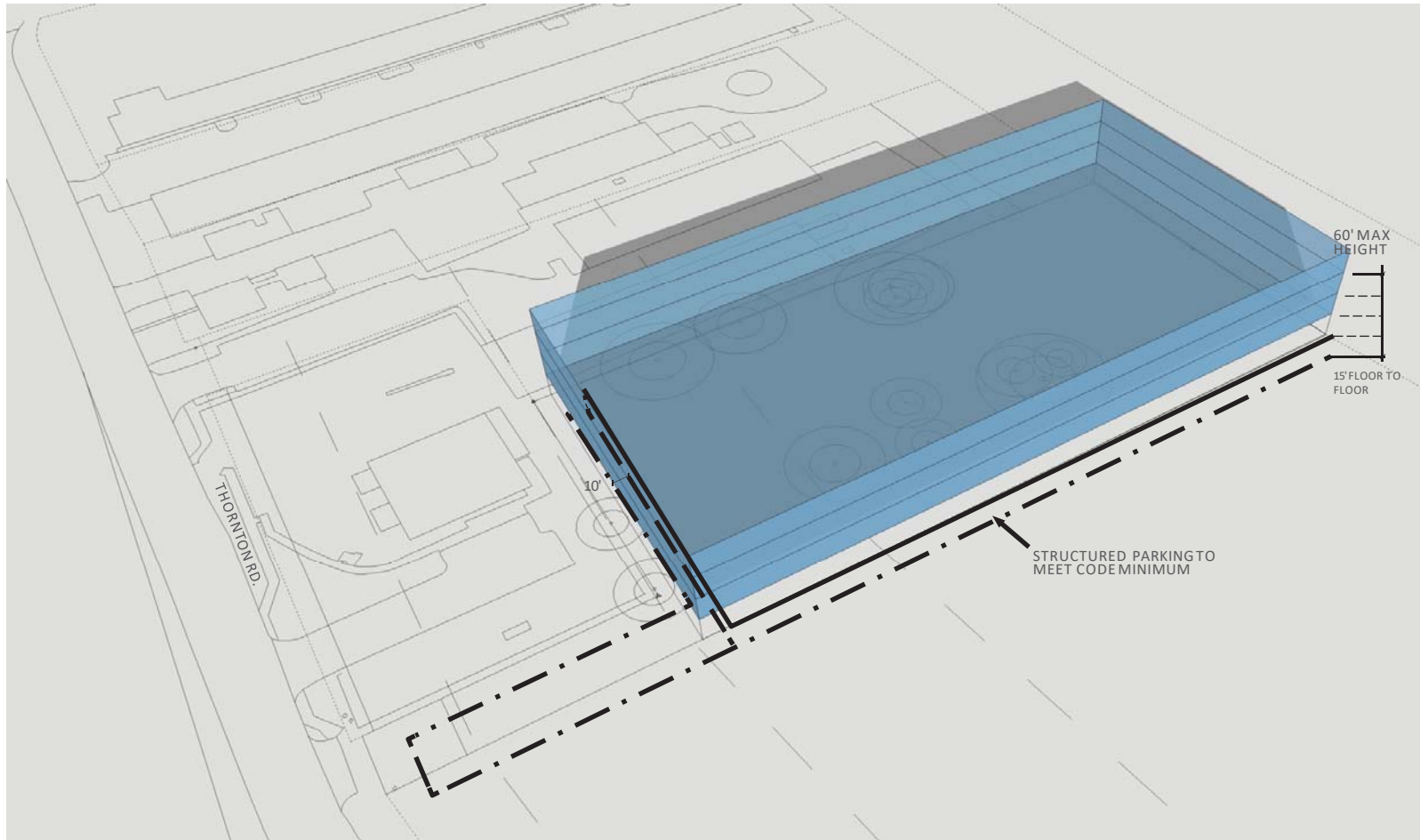


(Reveal the real and perceived constraints, protect more trees)



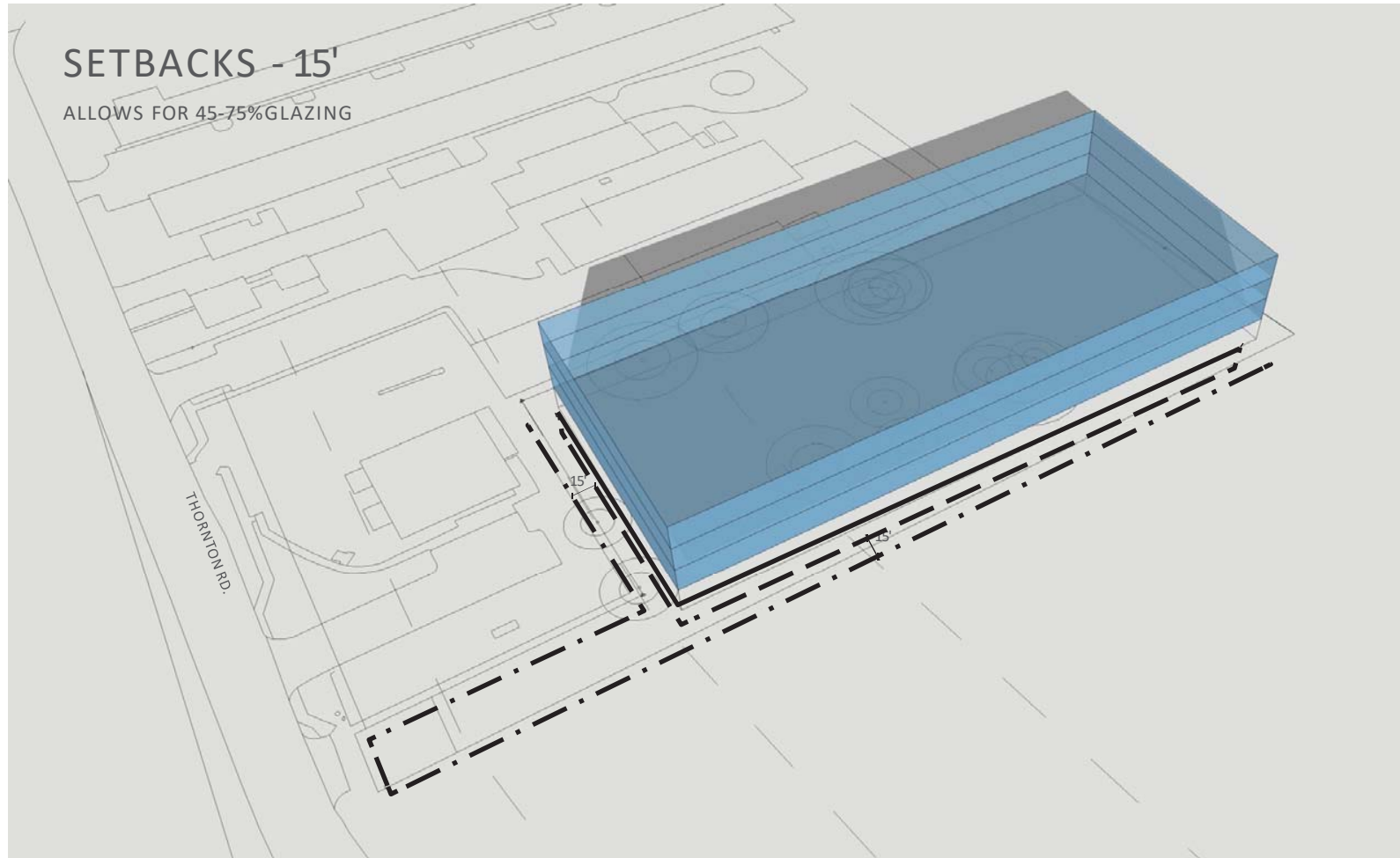
- Parking standards.
- Know your Fire Code! It has a big impact on land use and trees.
- Know your driveway alignment options.





SETBACKS - 15'

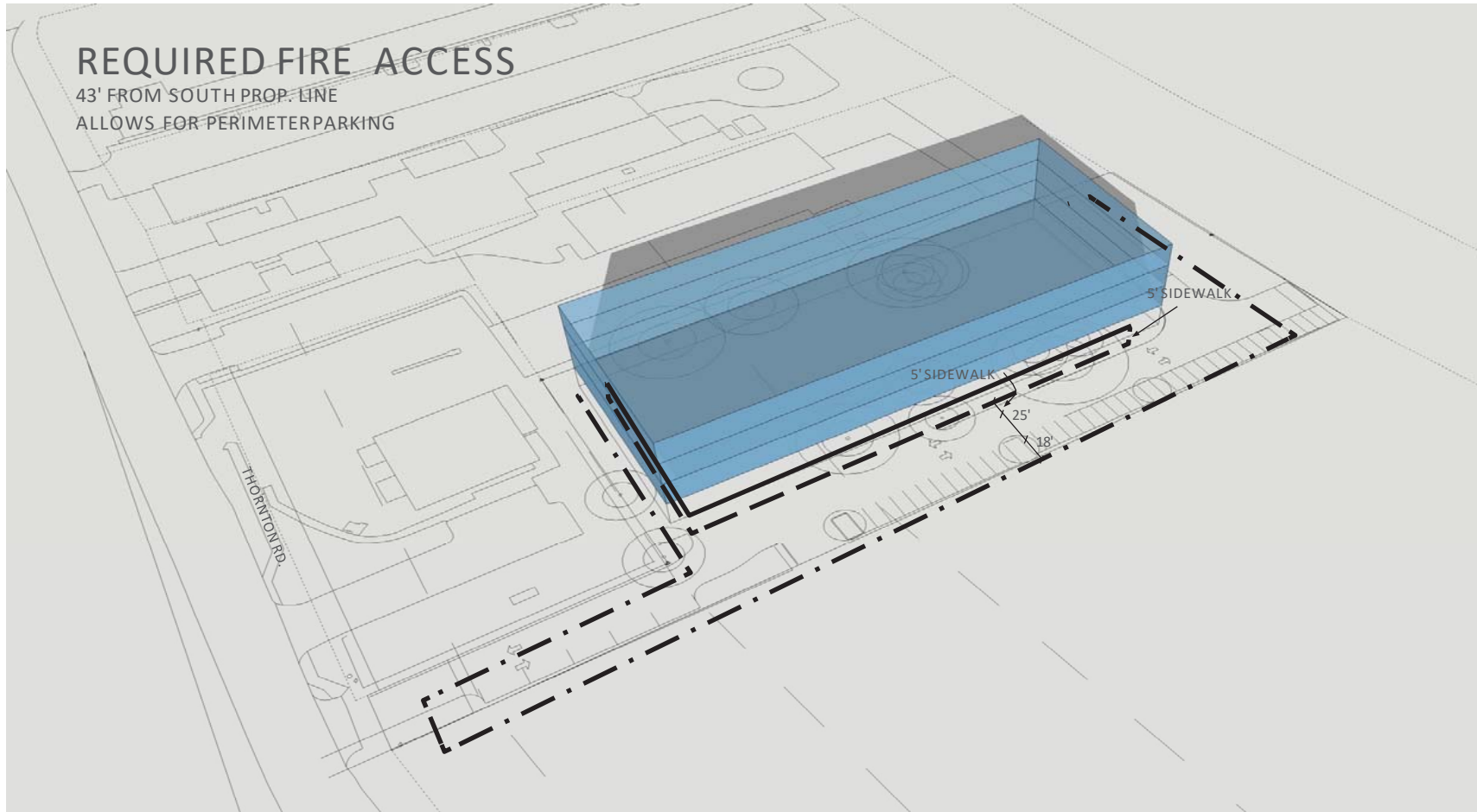
ALLOWS FOR 45-75% GLAZING



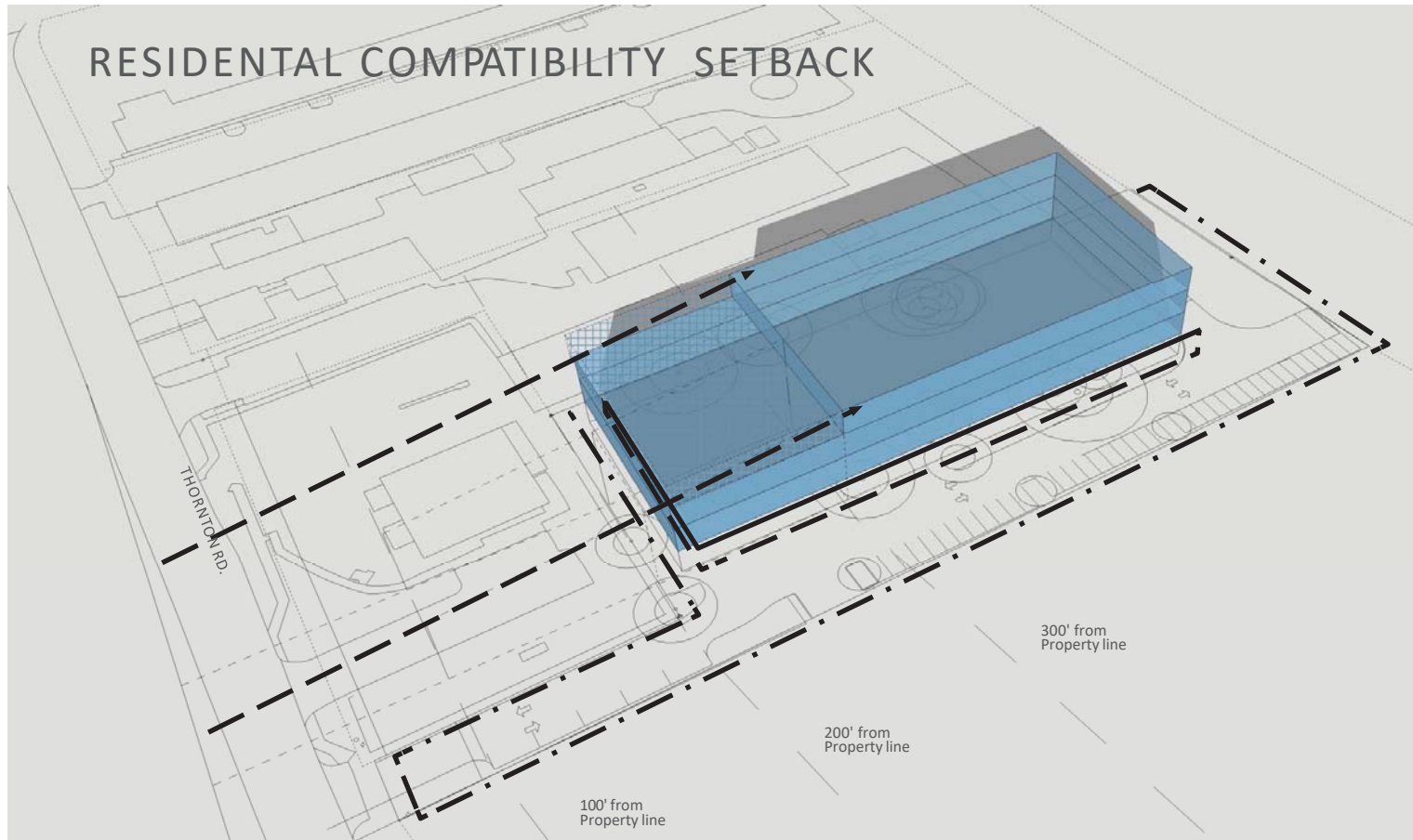
REQUIRED FIRE ACCESS

43' FROM SOUTH PROP. LINE

ALLOWS FOR PERIMETER PARKING



RESIDENTIAL COMPATIBILITY SETBACK



TREE PRESERVATION

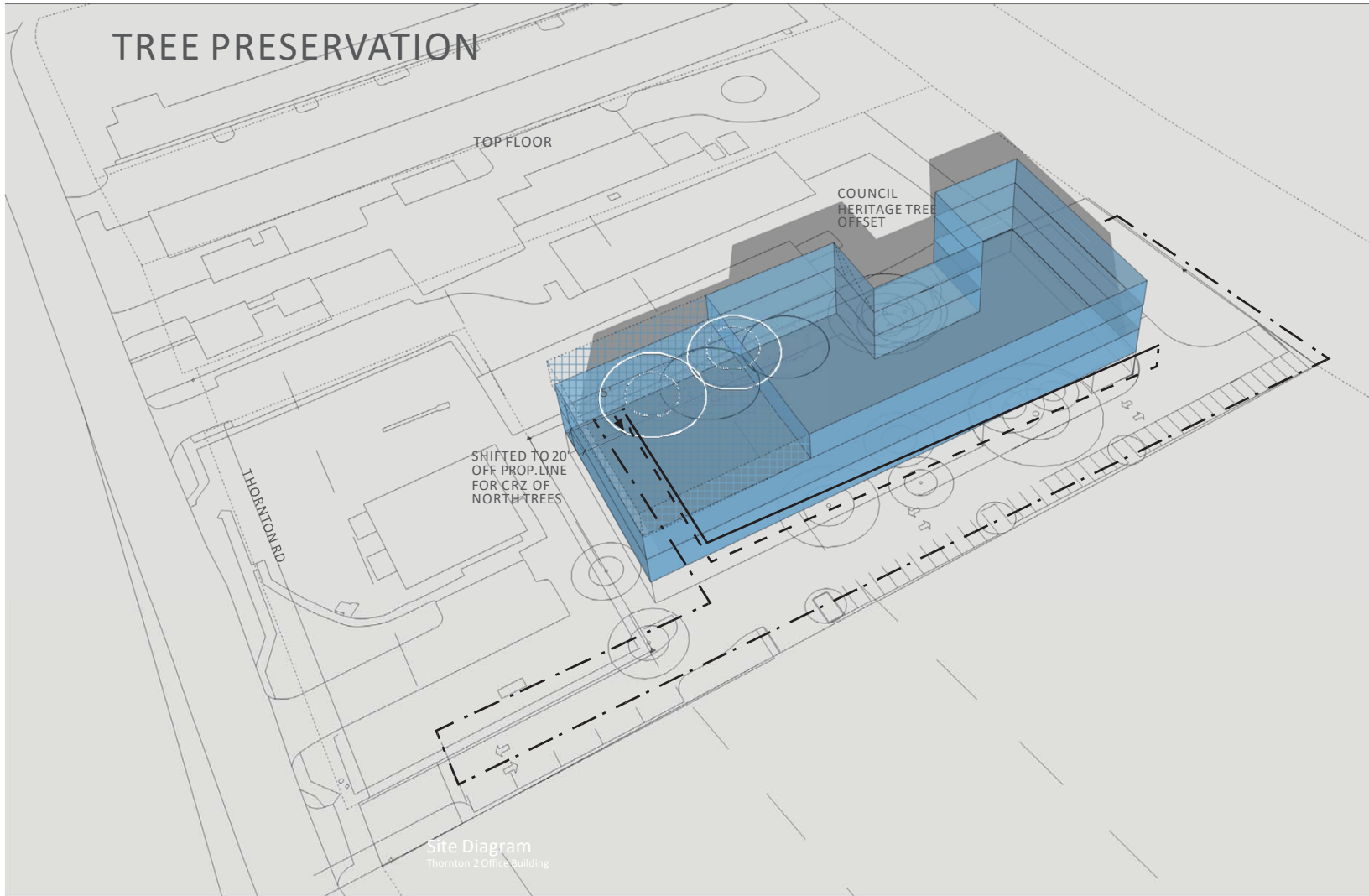
TOP FLOOR

COUNCIL
HERITAGE TREE
OFFSET

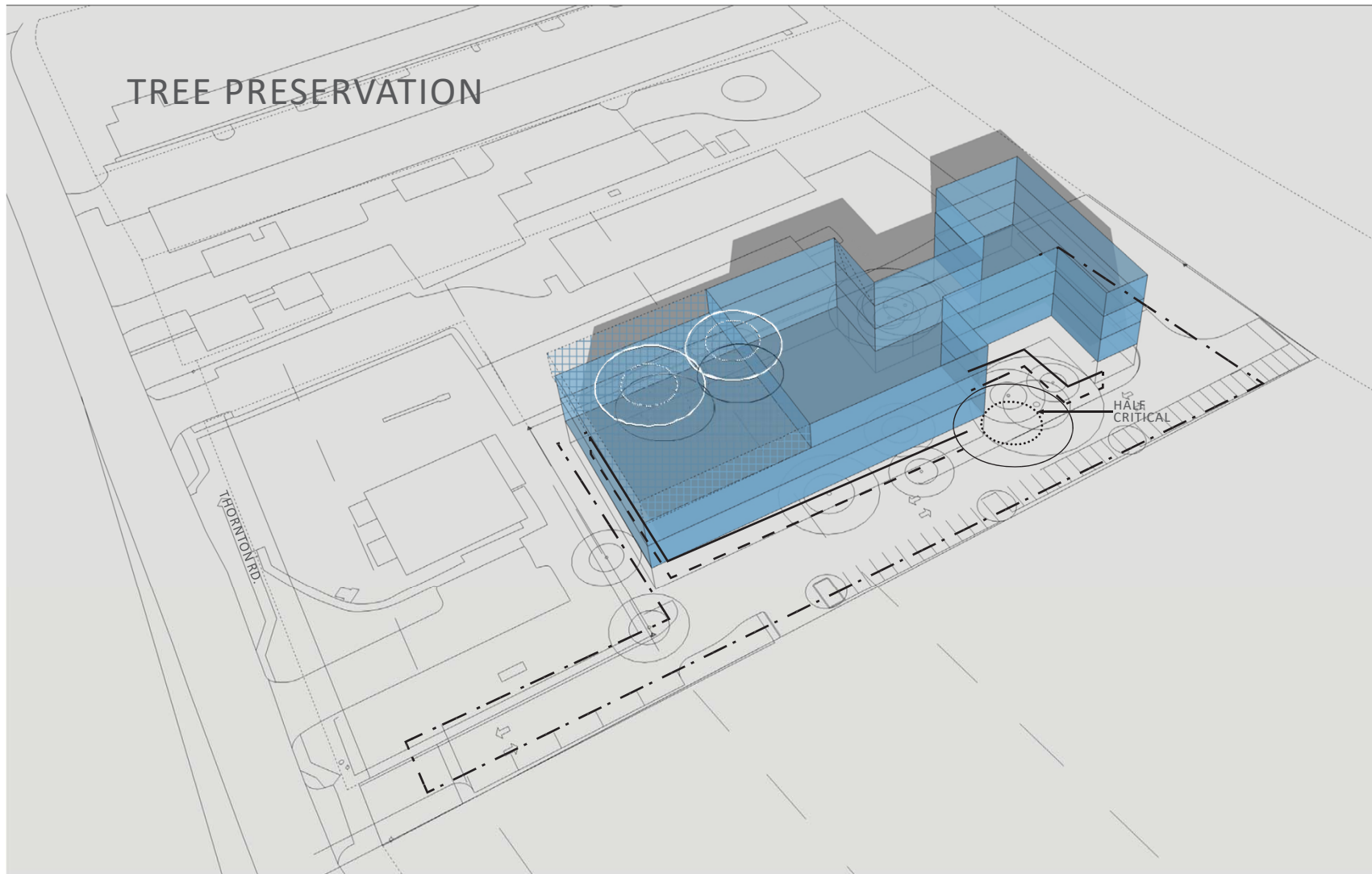
SHIFTED TO 20'
OFF PROP. LINE
FOR CRZ OF
NORTH TREES

THORNTON RD.

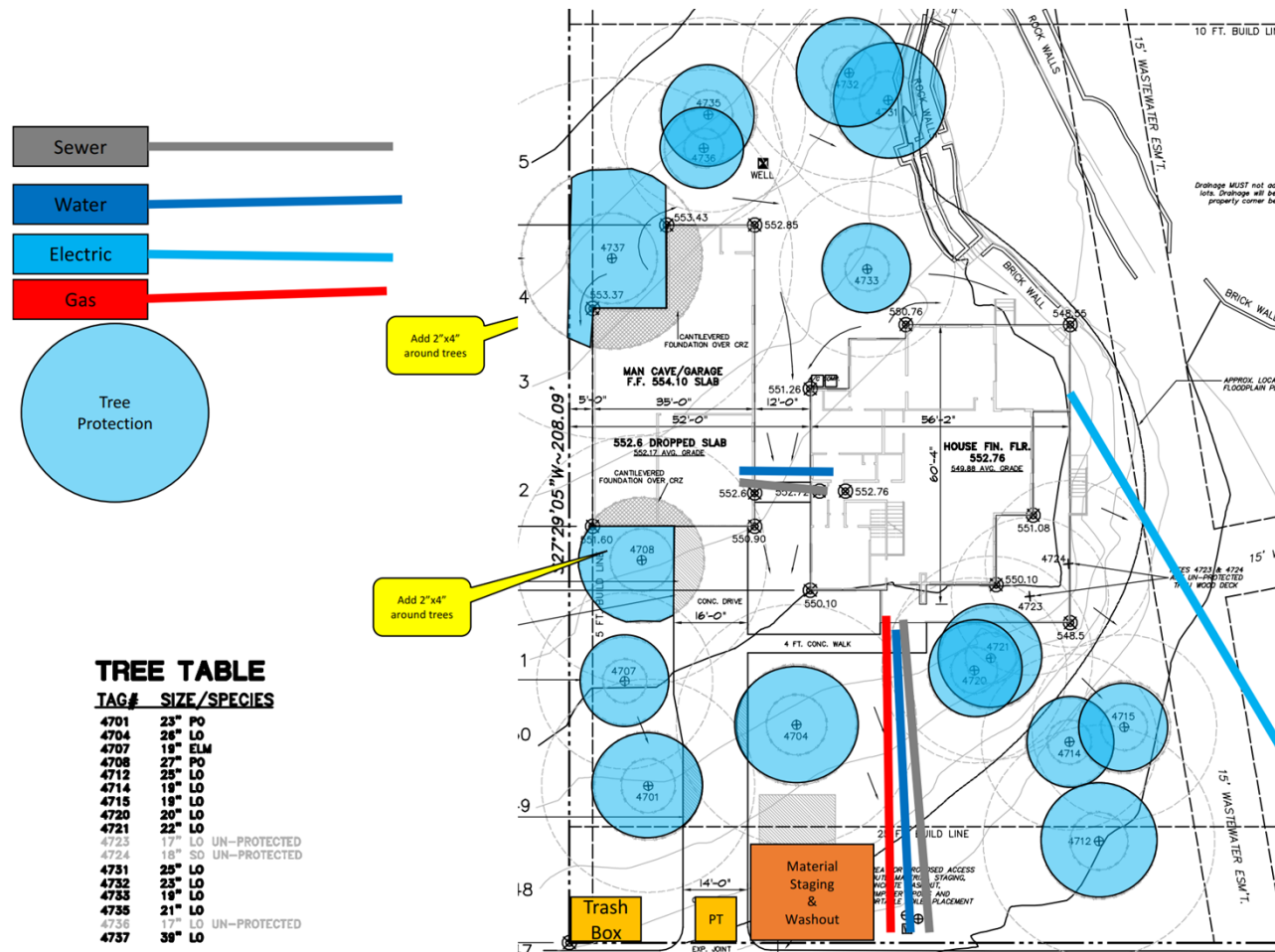
Site Diagram
Thornton 2 Office Building



TREE PRESERVATION



Example Plans for Tree Review



Thank You. Questions?



<http://austintexas.gov/departments/community-tree-preservation>

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