SHAPING THE AUSTIN WE IMAGINE
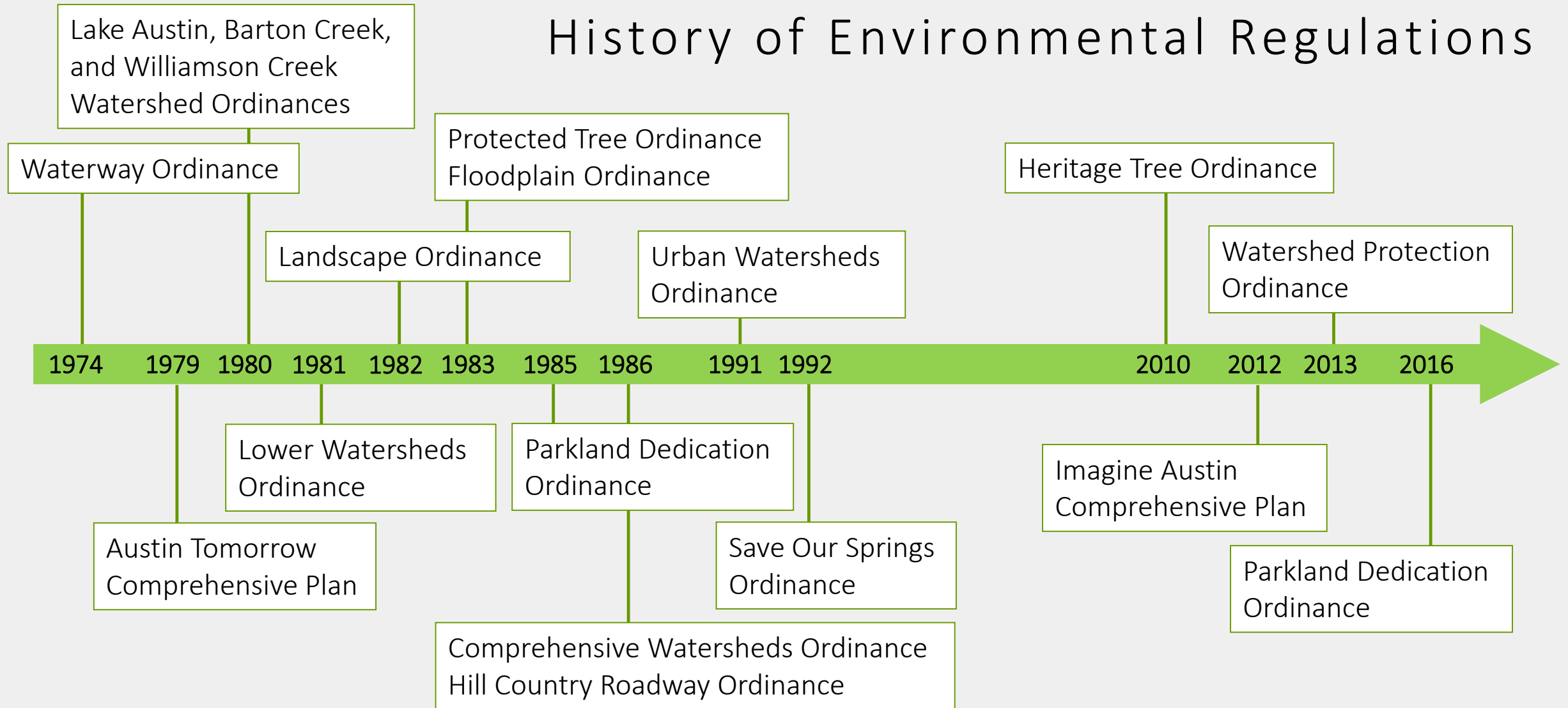
natural+
RESILIENT

CodeNEXT: Introduction

The goal of CodeNEXT is to revise land use standards and regulations to:

✓ Preserve and enhance the best qualities of our communities

✓ Be fair, predictable, and easy to use

✓ Align with Imagine Austin's vision, policies, growth concept map, and priority programs

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**
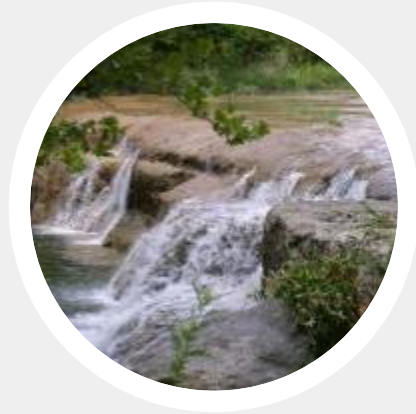
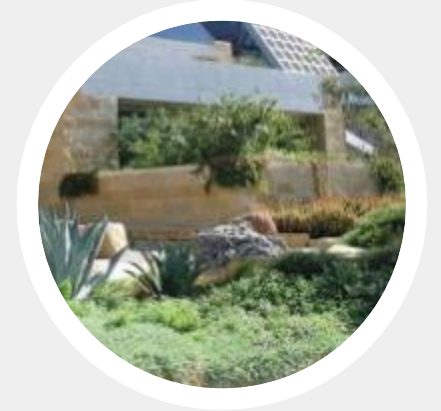CODE NEXT

Major Environmental Themes

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.

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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*

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

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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

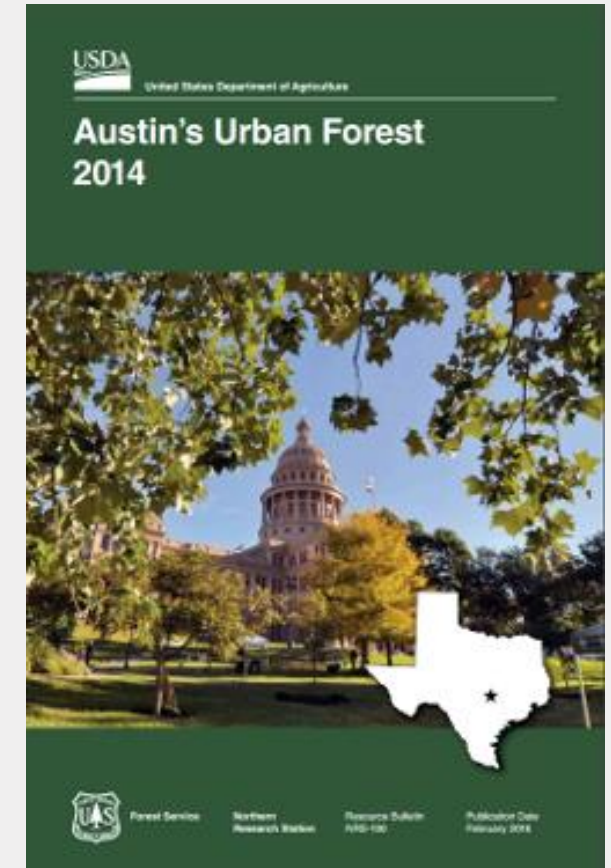*Subsurface Detention*

Parking Lot Detention

Conveyance Upgrades

Regional Solutions

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Urban Forest Preservation: Background

- Seeing the forest as infrastructure

- Paradigm shift – beyond aesthetics

- First-of-a-kind study

- Urban forest structure/value

  – 34 million trees

  – 31% canopy coverage

- Compensatory value = $16 billion

- Less than 1% of all trees are Protected size or larger

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

Urban Forest Preservation: Solutions

- **Code Clarity, Administration, and Organization**
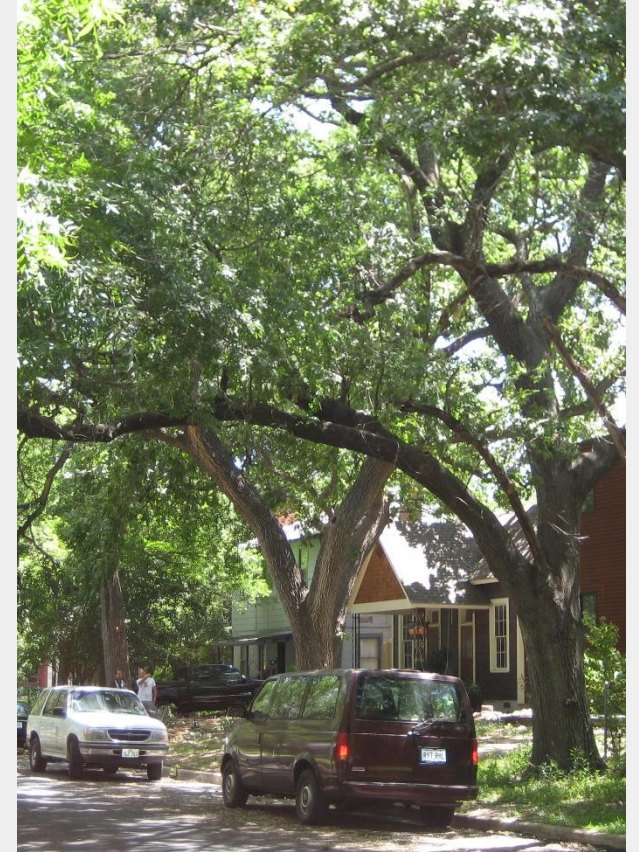
    The proposed code includes:

    – 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
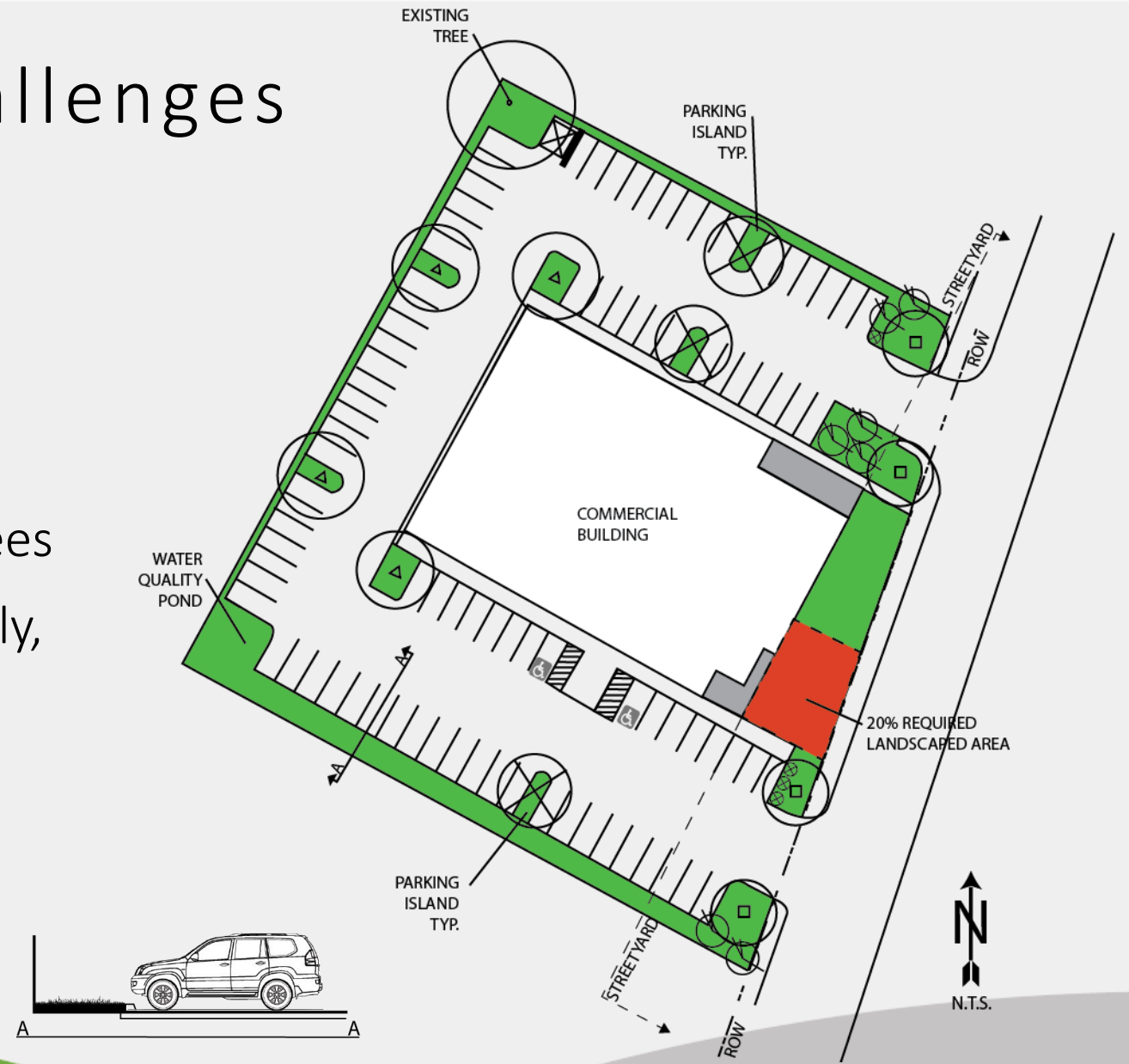

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Urban Forest Preservation: Solutions

- ## 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
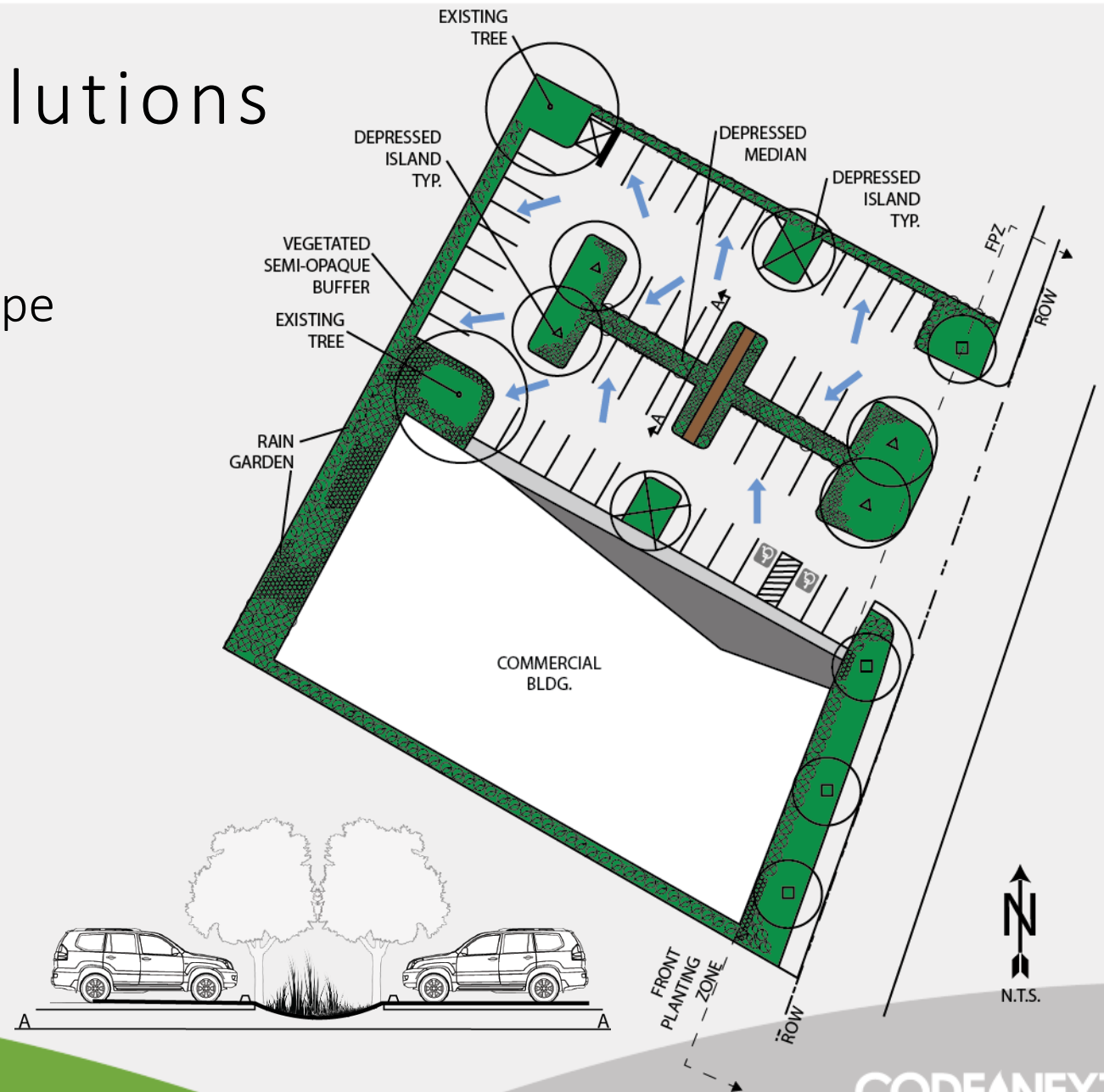
CODE NEXT

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

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)

Survey Tool

The survey is focused on how the draft code implements the Imagine Austin Priority Programs and alleviates the 10 major issues identified in the Land Development Code Diagnosis.

Current code issue: Code Changes Adversely Affect Department Organization

The current complexity of the LDC has an adverse effect on the organizational structure of the Planning and Development Review department.

CodeNEXT solution:
Portions of the new code have been rearranged to reflect the responsible city staff, so that a user dealing with a certain part of the code will interact primarily with the same set of staff members.

On a scale of 1-10 with 1 being not at all and 10 being completely, how well does the solution address the problem?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

>>

Online and Print

Current code issue: Code Changes Adversely Affect Department Organization

The current complexity of the LDC has an adverse effect on the organizational structure of the Planning and Development Review department.
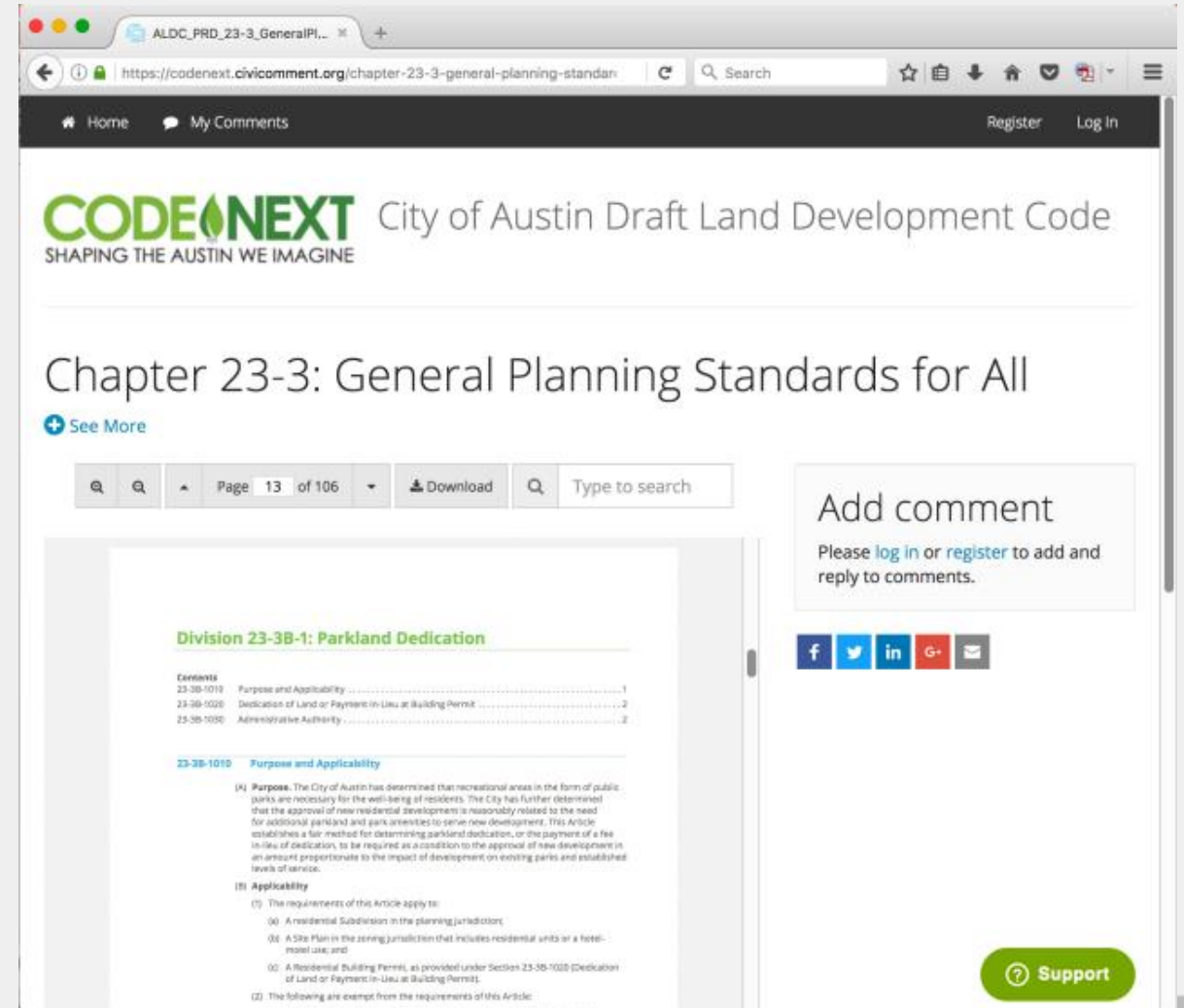
CodeNEXT solution:
Portions of the new code have been rearranged to reflect the responsible city staff, so that a user dealing with a certain part of the code will interact primarily with the same set of staff members.

On a scale of 1-10 with 1 being not

Mobile

CODE NEXT

Code Comment Tool

Using a tool (CiviComment) that has been implemented in code rewrites across the country, staff will receive comments on the actual code document from Austinites.
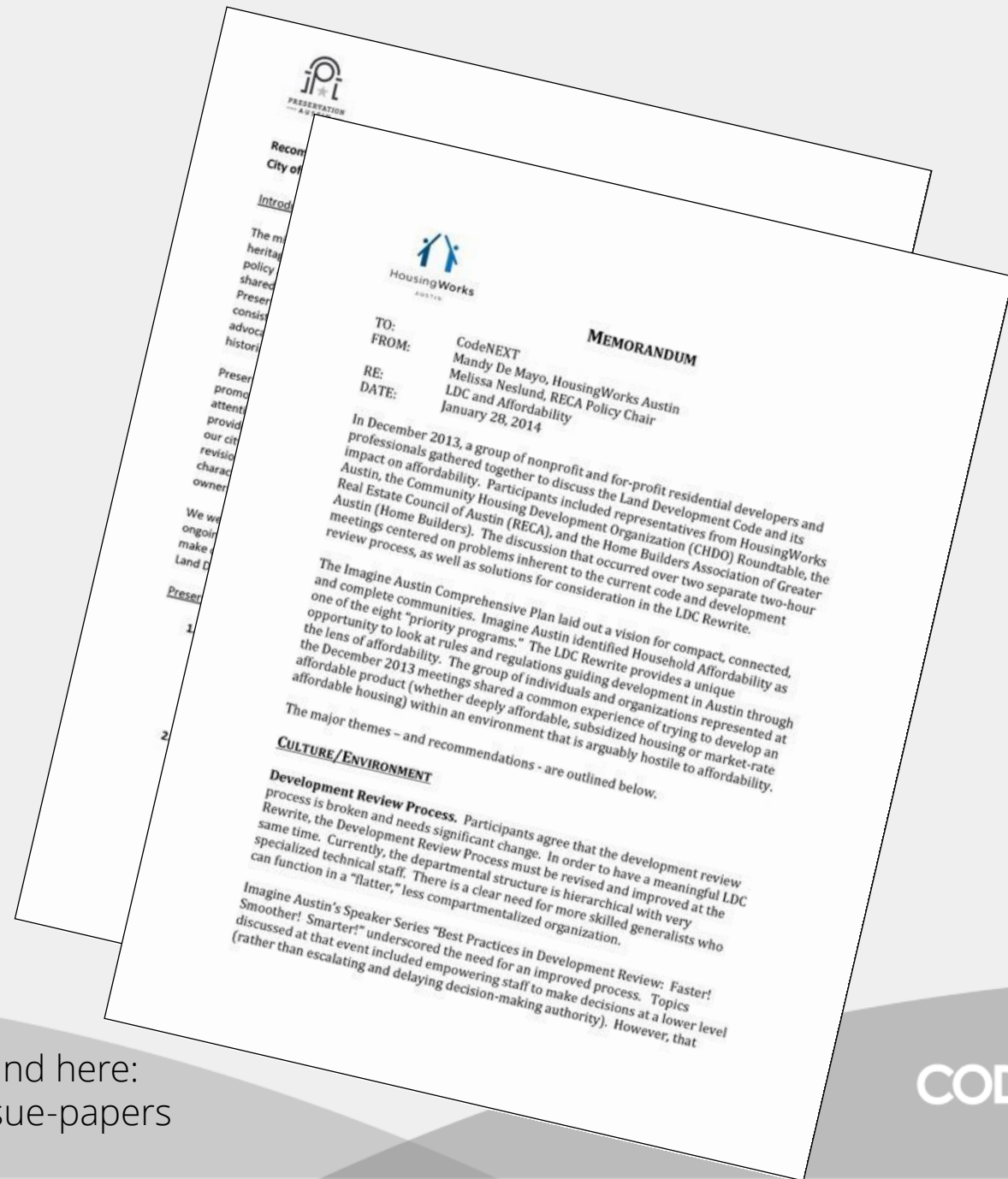
Viewpoints & Community Issue Papers

In the interest of transparency, all group position papers and suggestions will be posted on the CodeNEXT document-hosting site.

Previous Group Position Papers can be found here:
http://www.austintexas.gov/department/issue-papers

Help us get it right.

We invite you to review and comment on the draft code document, ask questions, and stay connected.

www.austintexas.gov/codenext
codenext@austintexas.gov