

City of Austin
2021 Environmental Commission Retreat

City of Austin Tree Regulations Overview

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Keith Mars, AICP, CA
Naomi Rotramel, City Arborist



Overview

- **History and Values**
 - The Austin Way
- **Policy and Governance**
 - Tree Preservation Ordinances Work
- **Government that Works**
 - Process and Due Diligence Matters
- **Austin's Future Urban Forest**

The Community Tree Preservation Division: Urban Forest Program



(A Healthy Urban Forest for All)

Click [here](#) to see all the great work

The Community Tree Preservation Division: City Arborist Program



(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 its 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 are critical to climate and equity outcomes



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 is crucial to the future of our urban forest



Does the Heritage Tree Ordinance Work?

- Ordinance adopted in February 2010
- ~16 Commission variances
- Over 5,000 reviews by City Arborist staff
- More than 70,000 inches of Heritage Trees reviewed
- 95% preservation rate. National model.

Administering the Tree Ordinances


(Process matters-Government that Works for All)

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

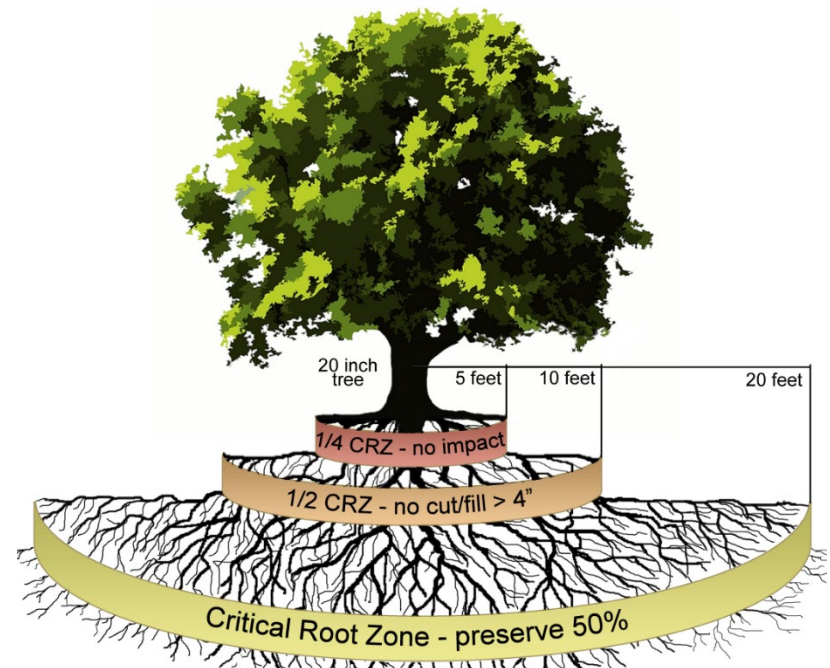
- Proposed variances must go through the public process

Review Criteria for Protected and Heritage Trees

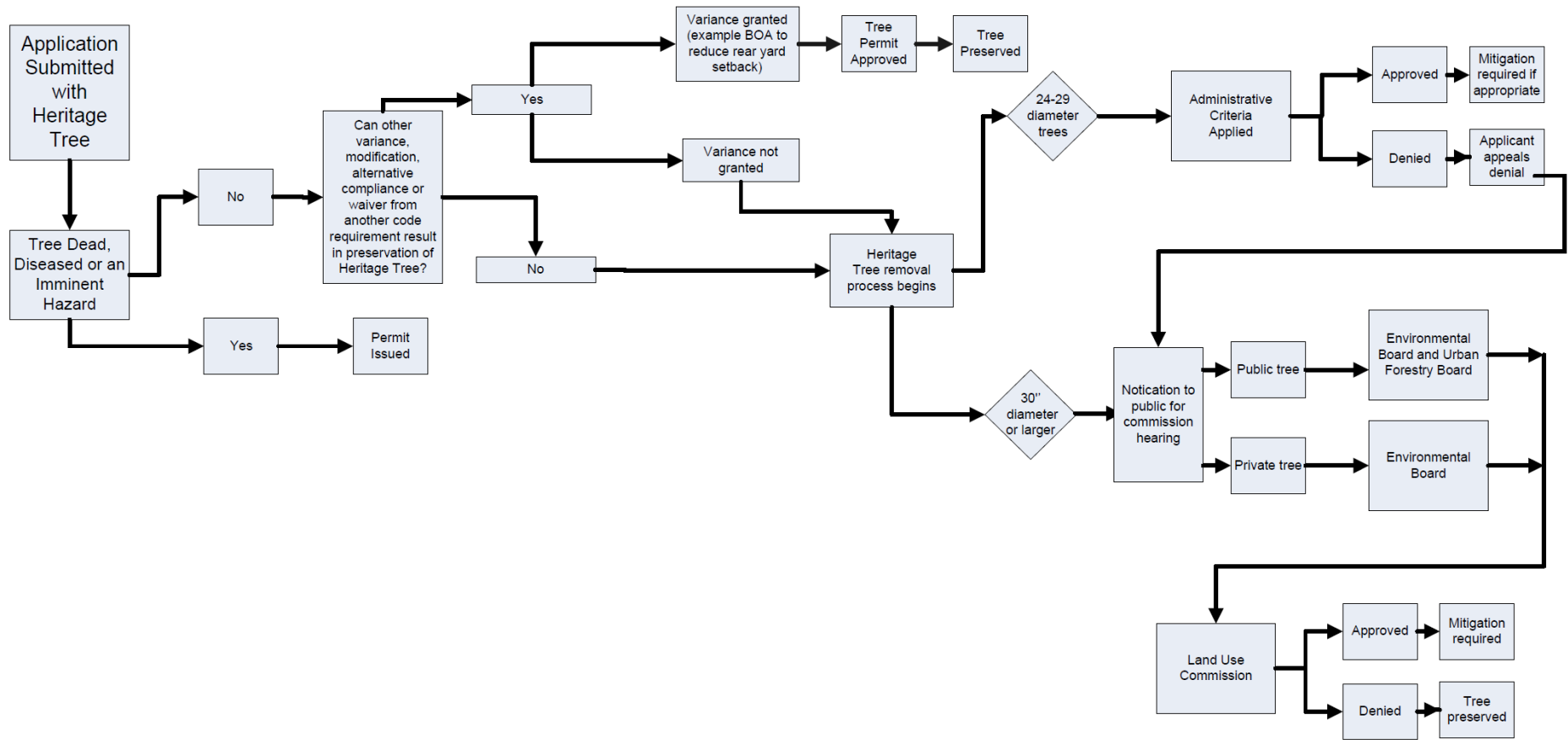
Code Criteria for Removal

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

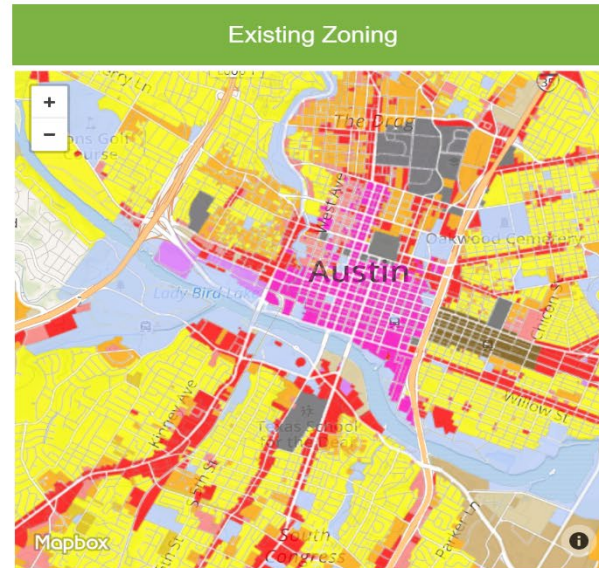


Due Diligence for Reasonable Use


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

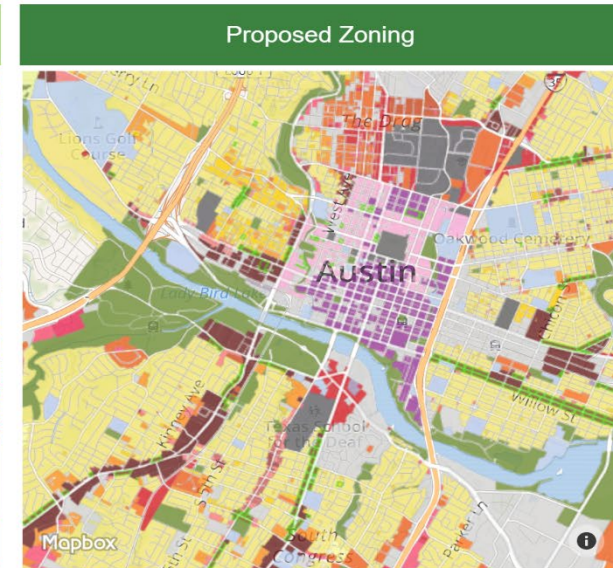
Zoning Regulations

- By right or up to?



Existing Zoning Legend

Rural Residence (RR)	Central Business District (CBD)
Single Family Residence (SF-1, SF-2, SF-3, SF-4A, SF-4B)	Downtown Mixed Use (DMU)
Lake Austin Residence (LA)	Limited Industrial Services (LI)
Urban Family Residence (SF-5)	Industrial Park (IP)
Townhouse & Condo Residence (SF-6)	Warehouse Limited Office (W/LO)
Multifamily Residence (MF-1, MF-2, MF-3, MF-4, MF-5, MF-6)	Major Industrial (MI)
Mobile Home Residence (MH)	Research and Development (R&D)
Commercial Recreation (CR)	Public (P)
Neighborhood Office (NO) Limited Office (LO)	Aviation Services (AV)
Neighborhood Commercial (NR)	Development Reserve (DR)
General Office (GO)	Planned Unit Development (PUD)
Community Commercial (GR)	Planned Development Area (PDA)
Commercial Services (CS) Commercial Liquor Sales (CS-1)	Transit Oriented Development (TOD)
Commercial Highway (CH)	East Riverside Corridor (ERC)
Lake Commercial (LC)	North Burnet/Gateway District (NBG)
	Traditional Neighborhood District (TND)
	Unzoned (UNZ)



Proposed Zoning Legend

Rural Residential (RR)	Mixed-Use 1 (MU1A, MU1B, MU1C, MU1D)	Commercial Recreation (CR)
Lake Austin (LA)	Mixed-Use 2 (MU2A, MU2B)	Commercial Warehouse (CW)
Residential 1 (R1A, R1B, R1C)	Mixed-Use 3 (MU3A, MU3B)	Industrial Heavy (IH)
Residential 2 (R2A, R2B, R2C, R2D, R2E)	Mixed-Use 4 (MU4A, MU4B)	Research and Development (R&D)
Residential 3 (R3A, R3B, R3C, R3D)	Mixed-Use 5 (MU5A)	Public (P)
Residential 4 (R4A, R4B, R4C)	Main Street 1 (MS1A, MS1B)	Aviation Services (AV)
Manufactured Home (MH)	Main Street 2 (MS2A, MS2B, MS2C)	Agricultural (AG)
Residential Multi-Unit 1 (RM1A, RM1B)	Main Street 3 (MS3A, MS3B)	Parks (PR)
Residential Multi-Unit 2 (RM2A, RM2B)	Commercial Center (CC)	Conservation Lands (CL)
Residential Multi-Unit 3 (RM3A)	Urban Center (UC)	Unzoned (UNZ)
Residential Multi-Unit 4 (RM4A)	Downtown Core (DC)	Former Chapter 25 (F25)
Residential Multi-Unit 5 (RM5A)		(F25 properties within existing zoning)

Zoning Regulations

- By right or up to?
- Use based, form based, or both?

Euclidean Zoning

Single Family	Multifamily
Commercial	Industrial

This type of zoning separates different land uses and concentrates similar land uses into distinct areas or zones. For example, single-family housing is concentrated in one area, multi-family in another, retail uses in another, and industrial uses in another.

Performance Zoning



Performance zoning regulates the effects or impact of land uses on surrounding properties through performance standards. Key elements of Performance zoning include number of vehicle trips, density or noise levels.

Negotiated Zoning



Negotiated zoning evolved out of the perceived rigidity of Euclidean zoning and allows landowners to vary uses and development standards in a zoning ordinance through a negotiated process. When approved, this type of zoning becomes a “mini-zoning ordinance” that regulates development of the site.

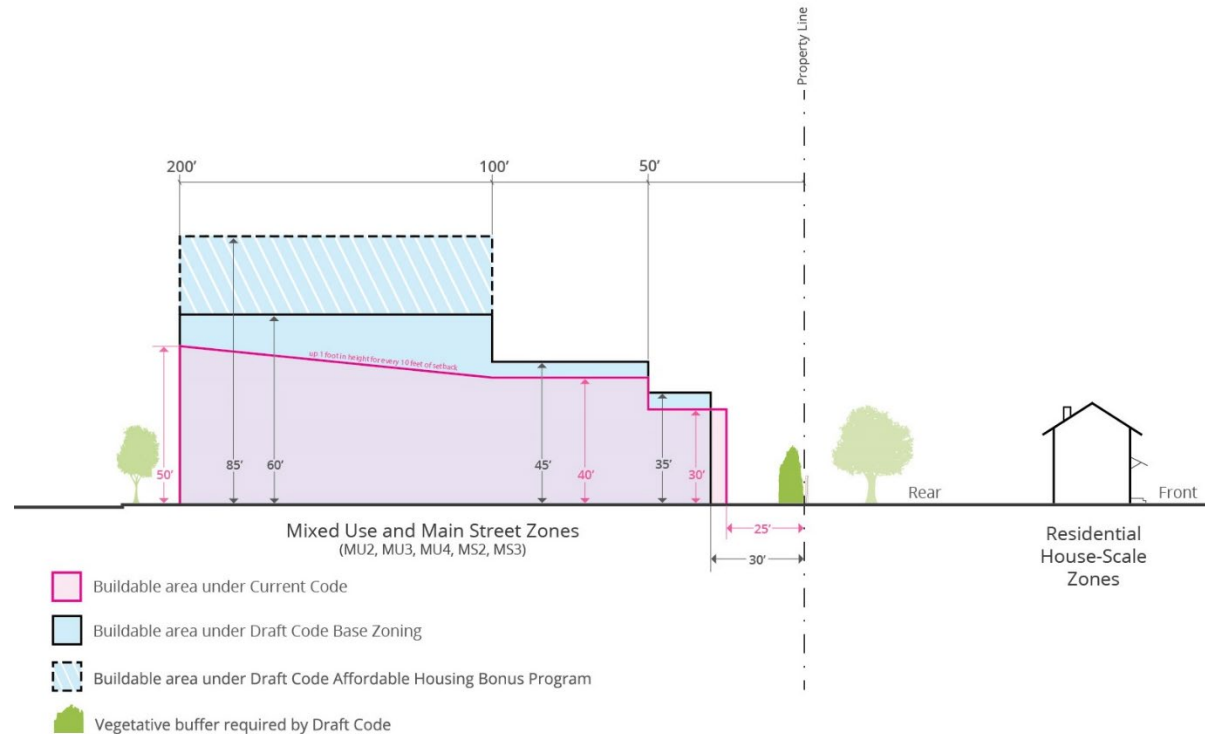
Form-Based Code



Form-Based Codes are a zoning tool that utilize a community's unique characteristics of walkable urban development patterns, or the existing DNA of a place, as the framework for a code to foster compatible, predictable, high-quality built results.

Zoning Regulations

- By right or up to?
- Use based, form based, or both?
- Do you know the setbacks?



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



Austin's Future Urban Forest


(Opportunities and challenges abound)



VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT OF AUSTIN'S URBAN FOREST AND NATURAL AREAS

A report from the Urban Forestry
Climate Change Response Framework

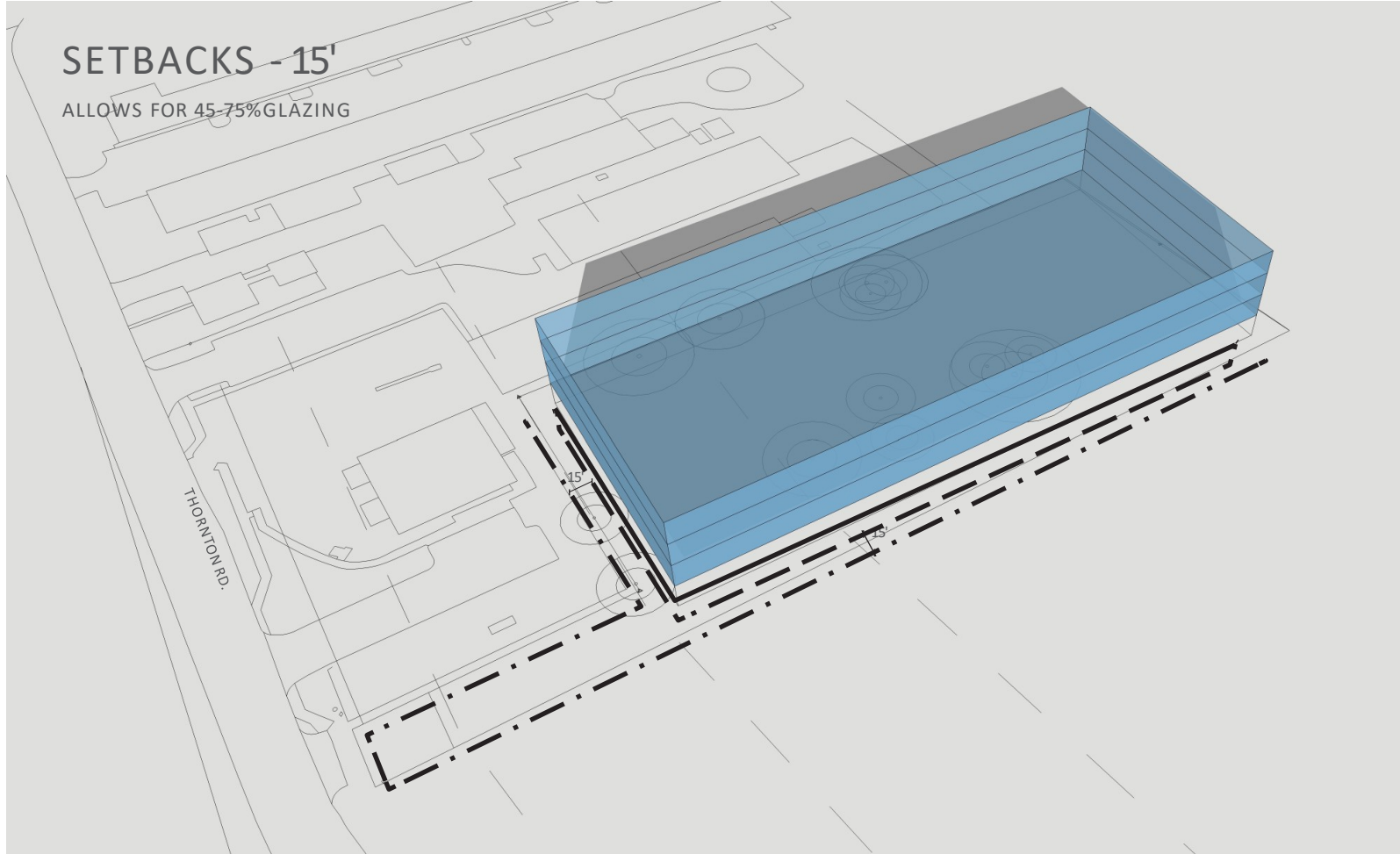


Thank You. Questions?



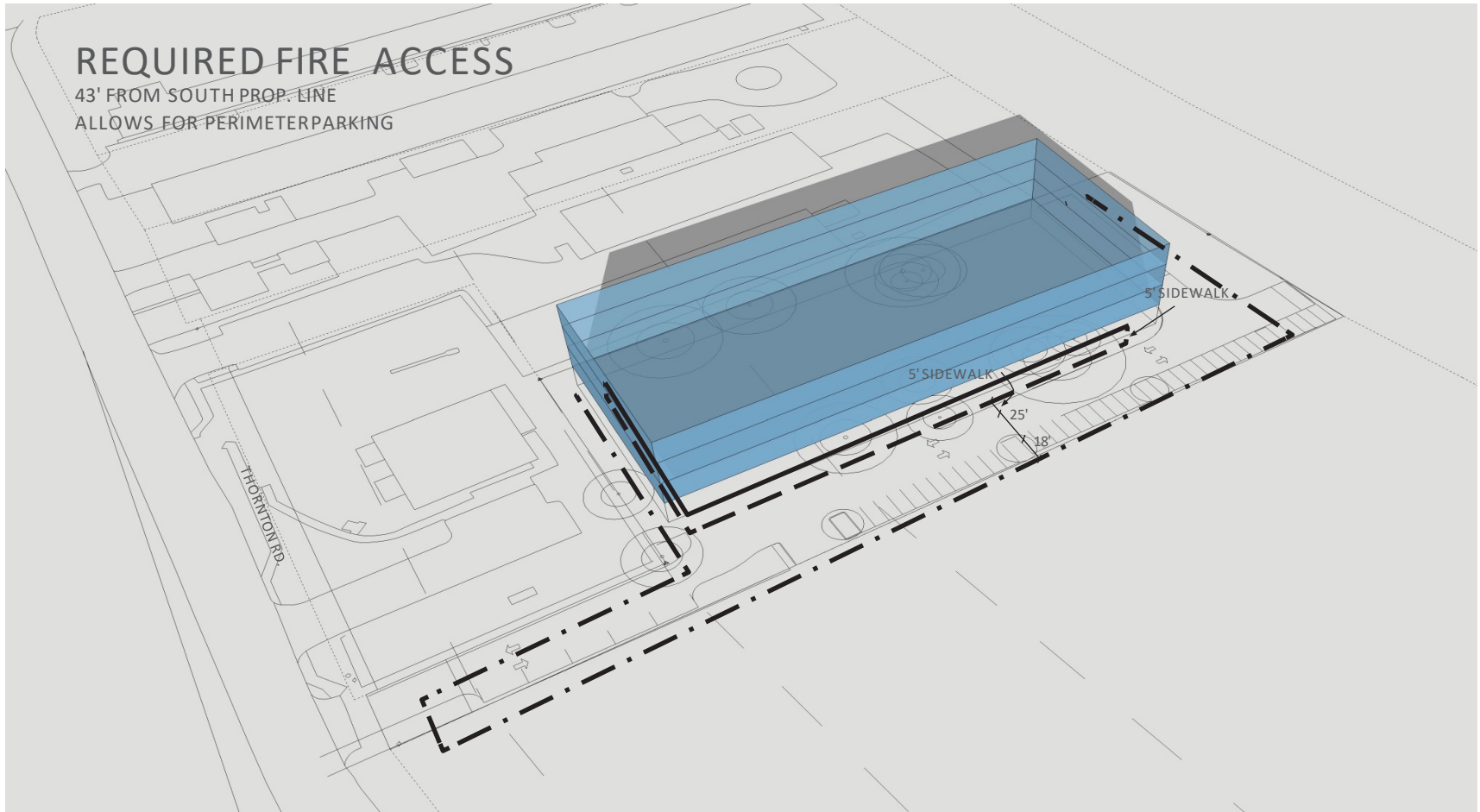
SETBACKS - 15'

ALLOWS FOR 45-75% GLAZING

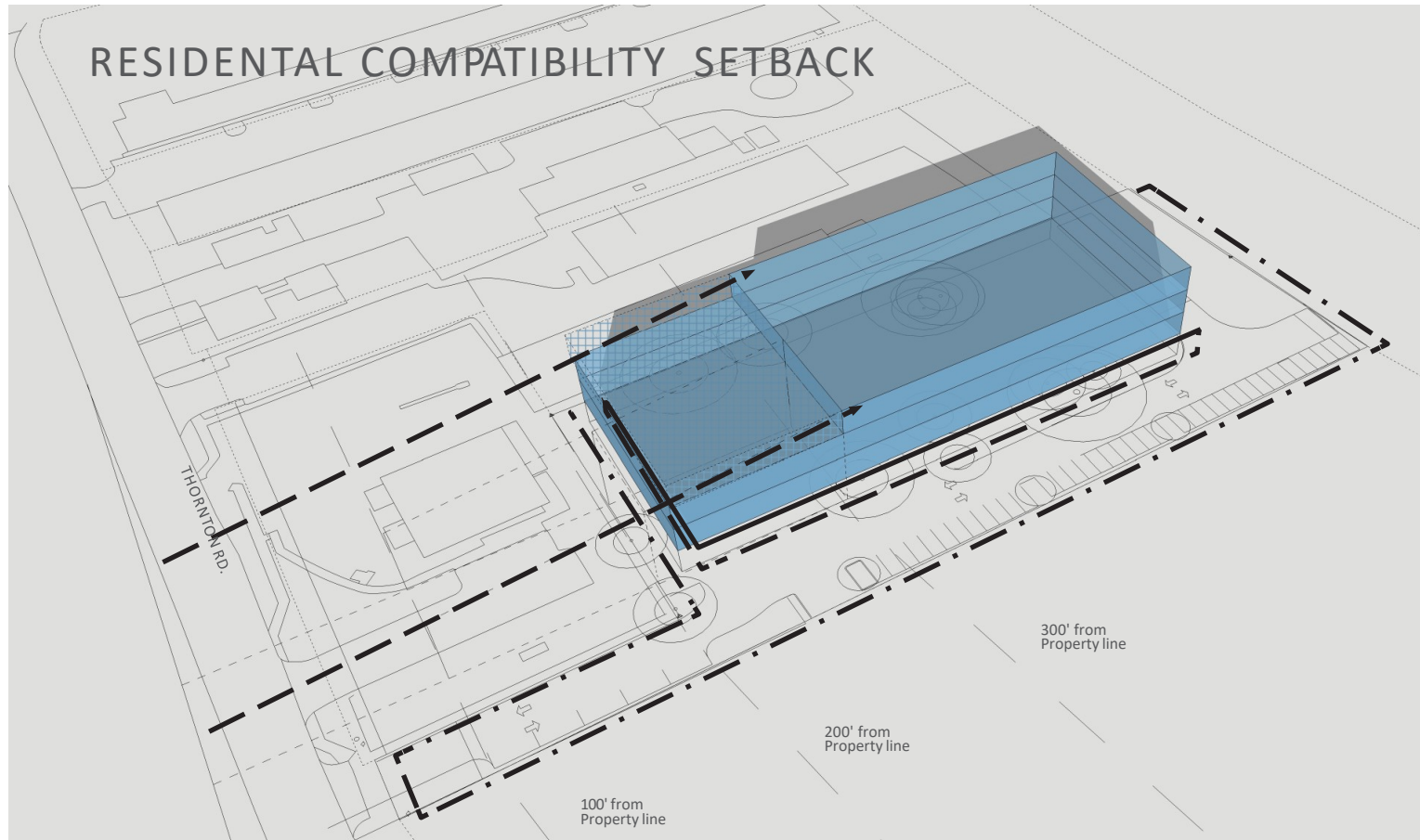


REQUIRED FIRE ACCESS

43' FROM SOUTH PROP. LINE
ALLOWS FOR PERIMETER PARKING



RESIDENTIAL COMPATIBILITY SETBACK



TREE PRESERVATION

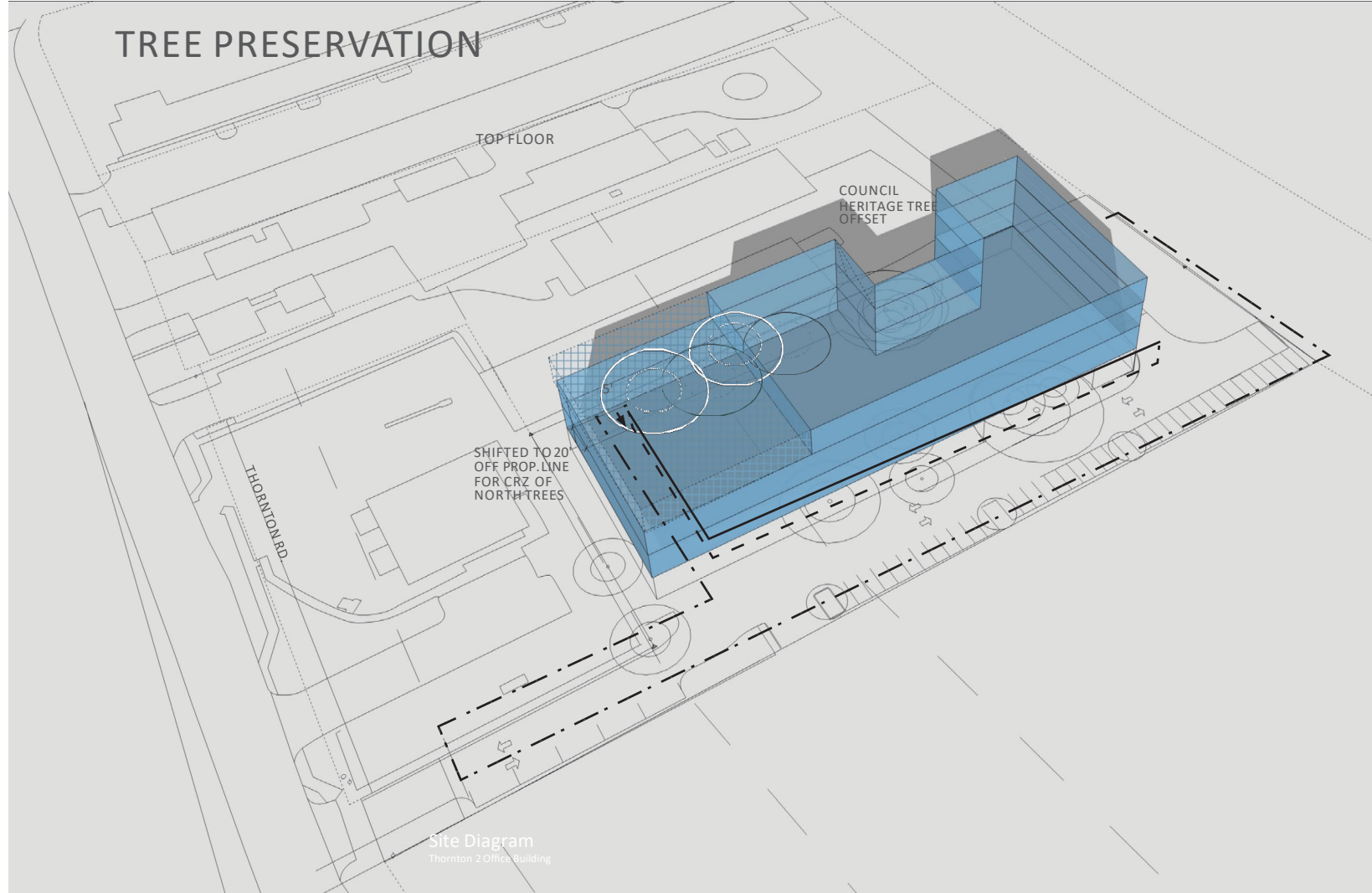
TOP FLOOR

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

