

**PLANNING COMMISSION SITE PLAN  
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT REVIEW SHEET**

**CASE NUMBER:** SP-2020-0354C **PC DATE:** 09/28/21

**PROJECT NAME:** Rainey Street Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) Substation

**ADDRESS:** 706 1/2 LAMBIE ST

**APPLICANT:** City of Austin (Tara Delagarza– Austin Energy)  
2624 KRAMER LANE BLDG E  
AUSTIN, Texas, 78758  
(512) 505-7175

**AGENT:** Civil Land Group, LLC (Gregory Ulcak)  
206 W Main STREET Suite 101  
ROUND ROCK, Texas, 78664  
(512) 992-0118

**CASE MANAGER:** Renee Johns, (512) 974-2711 or [renee.johns@austintexas.gov](mailto:renee.johns@austintexas.gov)

**WATERSHED:** Lady Bird Lake (Urban)

**NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN:** N/A Downtown Rainey District

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The applicant proposes a new energy substation with an art screening, pedestrian pathways located outside the substation area, shared use paths, open space improvements, utilities, and other associated improvements. Renderings of the art screening are enclosed and have been shown to the Waller Creek Design Team and Art in Public Places Division (attached email in back up) and were received with positive feedback.

**SUMMARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the Conditional Use Permit. The utility project on this site has been provided with many pedestrian and urban design elements: art screening, pedestrian pathways, shared use path, and preservation of many trees that are consistent with the design intentions for the downtown area. The site plan will comply with all requirements of the Land Development Code prior to its release.

**SUMMARY STAFF COMMENT ON SITE PLAN:**

The applicant proposes a new energy substation with several pedestrian and urban design components. Sites zoned Public (P) greater than one acre in size are a Conditional Use that require Land Use Commission approval according to Land Development Code section 25-2-625.

**PROJECT INFORMATION:**

<b>SITE AREA</b>	62,726 SF, 1.440acres
<b>ZONING</b>	P-NP (Public)
<b>PROPOSED NEW USE</b>	Major Utility Facility
<b>CVC</b>	NA
<b>PROPOSED IMPERVIOUS COVER</b>	43,185 SF, 68.8%
<b>WATERSHED ORDINANCE</b>	Current
<b>PROPOSED BUILDING COVERAGE</b>	10.5%
<b>PROPOSED ACCESS</b>	Gated entrance on both I-35 SB and Lambie St
<b>TIA</b>	No, extremely low traffic generation
<b>PROPOSED HEIGHT</b>	28'
<b>PARKING REQUIRED</b>	No parking required for use and none proposed

**EXISTING ZONING AND LAND USES**

	<b>ZONING</b>	<b>LAND USES</b>
<i>Site</i>	P	Major Utility Facility
<i>North</i>	River St then Vacant	Street then Vacant
<i>South</i>	Lambie St then CBD	Street then Parking/Vacant
<i>East</i>	I-35 Frontage, vacant, then I-35	Street then Vacant/TXDOT Frontage
<i>West</i>	East Ave then CBD	Street then Professional Office

**NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS:**

Austin Independent School District  
 Austin Lost and Found Pets  
 Austin Neighborhoods Council  
 City of Austin Downtown Commission  
 Del Valle Community Coalition  
 Downtown Austin Neighborhood Assn.  
 East Austin Conservancy  
 East Cesar Chavez Neighborhood Plan Contact Team  
 East Town Lake Citizens Neighborhood Association  
 El Concilio Mexican-American Neighborhoods  
 Friends of Austin Neighborhoods  
 Friends of the Emma Barrientos MACC  
 Greater East Austin Neighborhood Association

Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation  
 Homeless Neighborhood Association  
 Neighborhood Empowerment Foundation  
 Neighbors United for Progress  
 Preservation Austin  
 Rainey Neighborhood Association, Inc.  
 SELTexas  
 The Shore Condominium Association, Inc.  
 Sierra Club, Austin Regional Group  
 Tejano Town  
 Waller District Staff Liaison  
 Waterloo Greenway

**CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT REVIEW AND EVALUATION CRITERIA**

The following evaluation is included to provide staff position on each point of the conditional use permit criteria. Section 25-5-145 of the Land Development Code states: “The Commission shall determine whether the proposed development or use of a conditional use site plan complies with the requirements of this section.

**A conditional use site plan must:**

- 1. Comply with the requirements of this title;** Staff response: This application complies with the requirements of this title.
- 2. Comply with the objectives and purposes of the zoning district;** Staff response: This application complies with the objectives and purposes of the zoning district.
- 3. Have building height, bulk, scale, setback, open space, landscaping, drainage, access, traffic circulation, and use that are compatible with the use of an abutting site;** Staff response: This application is compatible with the abutting sites.
- 4. Provide adequate and convenient off-street parking and loading facilities;** Staff response: Facility will only need occasional maintenance and a limited number of onsite vehicles.
- 5. Reasonably protect persons and property from erosion, flood, fire, noises, glare, and similar adverse effects;** Staff response: The proposed project does not contribute to any of these adverse effects.

**A conditional use site plan may not:**

- 1. More adversely affect an adjoining site than would a permitted use;** Staff response: The site plan will conform to all regulations and standards established by the Land Development Code prior to its release.
- 2. Adversely affect the safety or convenience of vehicular or pedestrian circulation, including reasonably anticipated traffic and uses in the area;** Staff response: no pedestrian circulation will be impacted nor traffic use encumbered due to limited access to authorized personnel and limited vehicle access.

3. **Adversely affect an adjacent property or traffic control through the location, lighting, or type of signs;** Staff response: No, due to limited access to authorized personnel and limited vehicle access.

206 W. Main, Ste 101 (512) 992-0118  
Round Rock, TX 78664 (512) 246-1856  
TBPE Firm # 10523

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September 25, 2020

Ms. Denise Lucas  
Director  
Development Services Department  
City of Austin  
One Texas Center  
505 Barton Springs Road  
Austin, TX 78704

RE: Austin Energy – Rainey Street Substation  
Project Summary Letter

Dear Ms. Lucas,

Austin Energy is planning a new substation in downtown Austin in order to meet the growing demand of development within the city. The proposed Rainey Street Substation is located at 806 ½ Lambie Street on 1.44 acres. Austin Energy acquired the tract in 1999 from the City of Austin for the purposes of constructing a substation to serve the growing needs of downtown Austin. The tract consists of two parcels – a 0.47-acre triangular parcel along the IH 35 access road and a 0.97-acre rectangular tract along East Avenue. The 0.47-acre parcel is zoned Single Family 3 (SF3) and the 0.97-acre parcel is old East Avenue right of way that is not currently zoned. A Public (P) zoning is required for this project since it is a major utility. A zoning change has been submitted to the City of Austin for review and approval. It was approved the Planning Commission on September 08, and is going to City Council for approval on October 15.

The Rainey Street Substation will be developed on a much smaller footprint than a typical substation outside the city by utilizing a gas insulated switchgear rather than a conventional open-air switchgear. The actual substation will be constructed on approximately 43,185 square feet, slightly over an acre; compared to a typical substation that would be on 3 plus acres. A large portion of the substation (the gas insulated switchgear and breakers) will be housed in a building rather than being placed outside. The transformers will still need to be located outside due to the amount of heat that they produce. A twelve-foot-tall screening solid wall will surround the substation for safety. The substation will include rain gardens for water quality and we are requesting participation in the Region Stormwater Management Program.

Per the 2012 Texas Accessibility Standards, Section 203 General Exceptions, Paragraph 203.5 Machinery Spaces, substations are exempt from accessibility and from having an accessible route.

The site is located within the Lady Bird Lake Watershed (Urban) per the City of Austin GIS Mapping. This site is not within the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone as defined by the City of Austin. This site is not within the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone as regulated by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).



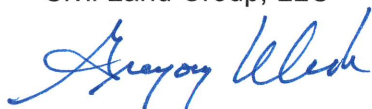
No portion of the site is located within the 100-year floodplain as shown on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) Panel No. 48453C0465J, dated January 06, 2016 (Exhibit 1).

No portion of the Rainey Street Substation site is located within a Critical Water Quality Zone (CWQZ). There are not any Critical Environmental Features that were identified within 150 feet of the site.

The site topography generally slopes north toward River Street. The slopes vary from 1% 3% across the site. The site has an overall topographic change of approximately 3 feet.

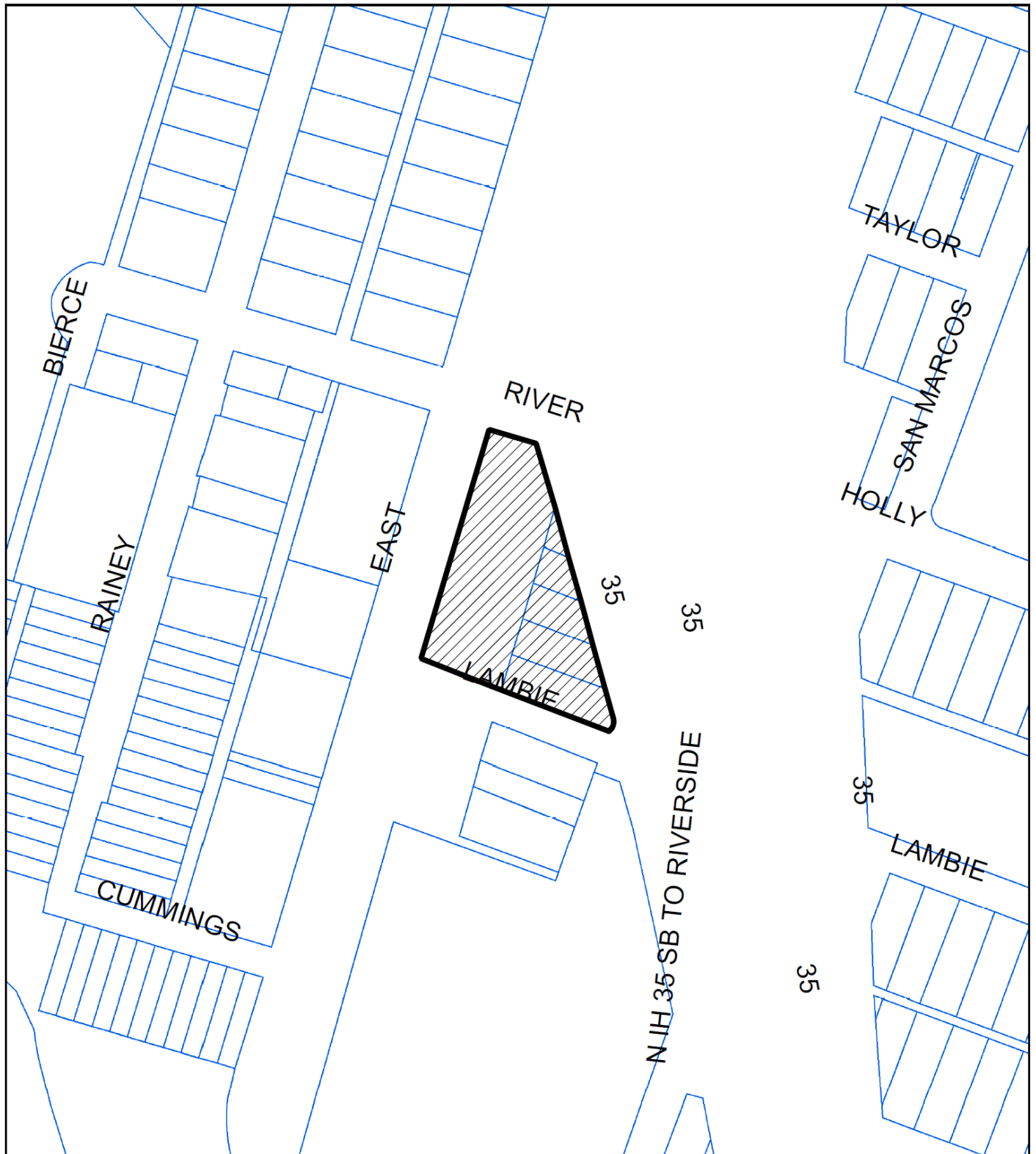
Please let me know if you have any additional questions or concerns. I can be reached at 512.990.0118 or by email at [gulcak@civlndgrp.com](mailto:gulcak@civlndgrp.com).

Sincerely,  
Civil Land Group, LLC



Greg Ulcak, PE





Subject Tract



Base Map

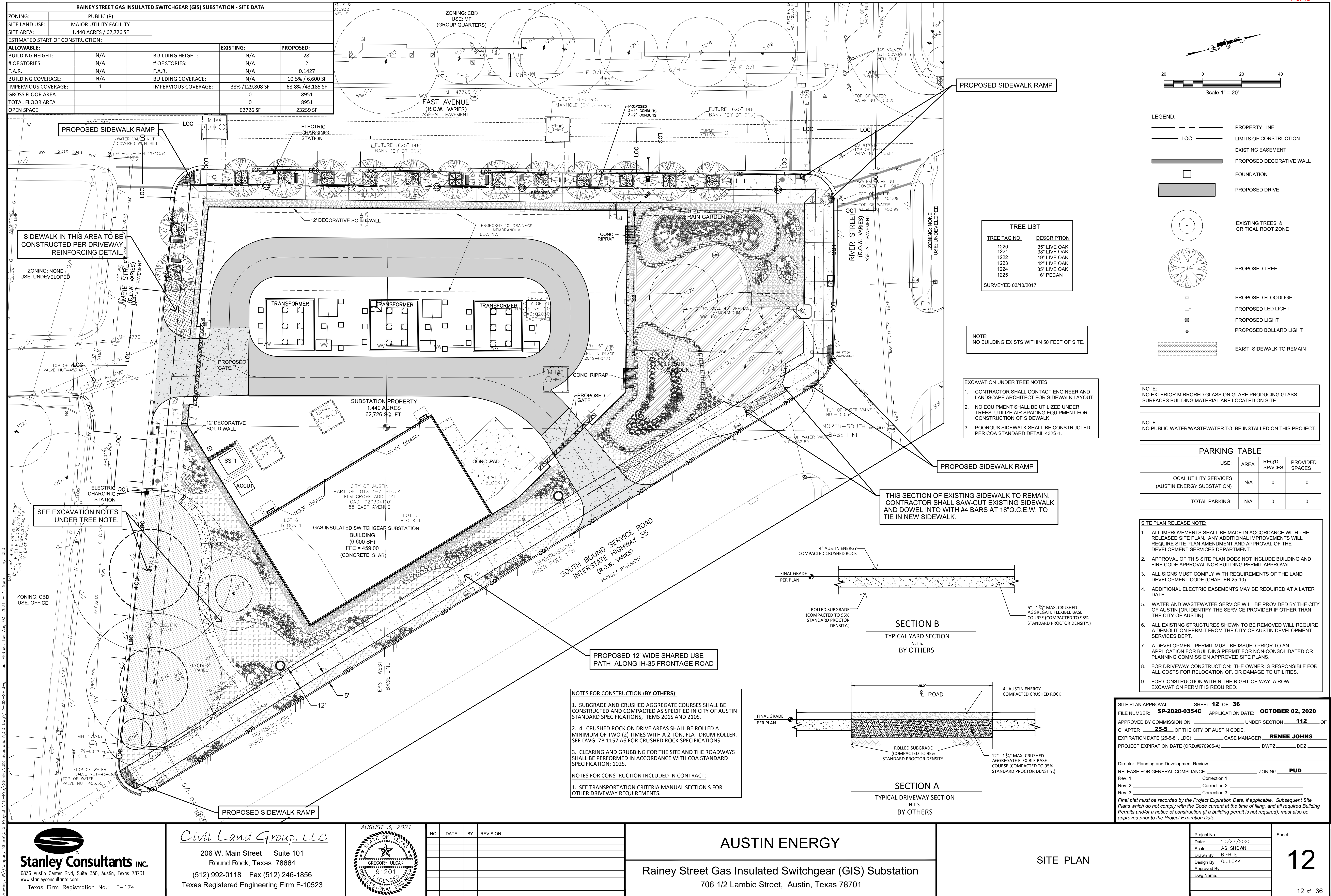
CASE#:SP-2020-0354C  
LOCATION:706 1/2 LAMBIE ST

This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. It does not represent an on-the-ground survey and represents only the approximate relative location of property boundaries.

This product has been produced by the Planning and Development Review Department for the sole purpose of geographic reference.









Ms. Renee Johns  
Senior Planner  
Development Services Department  
Austin, TX

Re: Case Number SP-2020-0354C

Dear Ms. Johns,

I own a residence at 70 Rainey Street. I am also the vice president of the 70 Rainey Homeowners Association.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the proposed Rainey Street GIS Substation.

I am fully aware of the need to improve and enhance the infrastructure in our rapidly growing and changing Rainey Street District.

Having said this, I would ask that the design be highly sensitive to the grand plans for mobility in this area.

This project could be an opportunity to provide ride share pick up and drop off flow that is not functioning safely on Rainey Street and River Street at this time.

The functional parts of the substation clearly have set requirements, but the included hardscape and softscape could make this a multifaceted success.

I have personally seen EMS and Fire Department unable to navigate the River Street roundabout intersection due to back up of rideshare activities.

If you would, please add my comments to the public hearing documents for the September 28, 2021 Planning Commission hearing.

Thank you.

Naomi Lynn Weiner  
70 Rainey Street, #2006  
Austin, TX 78701  
(805) 795-0804  
[nlweiner@hotmail.com](mailto:nlweiner@hotmail.com)

Dear Renee,

Once again, thank you for your support of the AIPP Ordinance. I have spoken with Tara and her team about the Rainey Street GIS Station and want you to know that, per the ordinance, there is no requirement to have an AIPP project at this site. The sponsor project is primarily installing equipment to deliver electrical services, the cost of which is excluded from figuring AIPP's 2% eligible portion of the construction budget. Please clear the comment.

On a personal note, it is exciting to see the creative enclosure that Tara's team has created around the substation as an enhancement for the neighborhood. I look forward to seeing it in person.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,  
Sue

Susan Lambe, PLA *She/Her/Hers*  
[Art In Public Places Program](#) Manager  
512.974.7852  
Cell 512.694.6833  
[austincreates.com](http://austincreates.com)

**Do you have questions for AIPP staff?** You are invited to pop into Virtual Open Office Hours held every 2nd & 4th Tuesday from 10:00 am – Noon Central Time. Link to connect: <https://zoom.us/j/94549263216>



**Economic  
Development**  
CITY OF AUSTIN

















Dear Ms. Johns,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed development of case SP-2020-0354C.

The Rainey Street neighborhood is in need of many infrastructure improvements to facilitate and sustain the ongoing development. I believe this land could be used much more efficiently for taxi/rideshare pick-up/drop-off. I have major concerns with emergency vehicle access to Rainey Street given the lack of access points and capacity to handle the volume of traffic experienced on a regular basis.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my position.

Michael Simone

70 Rainey Resident

630-746-7131