FIREWISE LANDSCAPE
PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

AUSTIN’S
TREE ORDINANCES

City Arborist Program
Planning & Development Review Department

February 13, 2013
Urban Forest Benefits

Trees are critical to Austin’s quality of life

Also:
- Wildlife habitat
- Screen views & noise
- Property value
- Sense of place
- Aesthetics
- Added ecological value of mature trees
- Infrastructure which improves with time
Tree Conservation Goals

- Safeguard public health, safety, and welfare
- Recognize the ecological and aesthetic values
- Manage the urban forest (via preservation, maintenance, and replanting)

Preserve the character of Austin’s urban forest and protect its current health and increase its longevity
Tree Conservation Puzzle

- Development interests
- Economic dynamics
- Environmental concerns
- Citizens
- Public Policy Initiatives
  - Tree Taskforce
  - Urban Density
  - Comprehensive planning process
  - Urban Heat Island Initiative
  - Climate Protection Plan
  - Tree Oversight Committee

Various Boards and Commissions (Environmental and Urban Forestry Boards, Land Use Commission)

Multiple departmental tree programs
Impacts on Urban Forest

Fire
Weather
Habitat Change
Disease and Pests
Biological Competition

Development
Jurisdiction and Authority

City Limits
Tree Preservation
Tree Protection
Tree Replacement

TREE & ROOT PROTECTION ZONE

Per City of Austin code (Chapter 25-8, Subchapter B, Article 1) this protective device is to remain in place for the entirety of the development project and illegal removal is subject to fines and work suspensions. Additional information can be obtained at the:
City Arborist (512-974-1876)
web site (http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/trees).

Zona de Protección del Árbol y las Raíces el dispositivo protector debe quedarse en el lugar para la totalidad del proyecto de la construcción. Para información adicional, contacta la Arborista Municipal (512) 974-1876 o http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/trees/trees_spanish.htm
Commercial Development Process

Early Design

- Plan Submittal
- Development Assessment
- Zoning
- Subdivision
- Site Plan

Evaluation

- Discipline Review
  - Land Use
  - Transportation
  - Drainage
  - Safety/Fire
  - Utilities
  - Environmental

Environmental Considerations

- Watershed Limitations
- Water Quality
- Critical Environmental Features
- Landscaping
- Tree Preservation & Replacement

Tree Requirements

- Tree Survey
- Tree Preservation Design
- Constraints & Alternatives
- Mitigative Measures

Environmental Trees

Land Development Code
Variable Development Requests

- Economy
- Volume of Development Permits, phone calls, emails...
- Austin mindset
- Citizen adjusting to changes “of what use to be”
Variable Tree Conditions

- 19-inch DBH
- 8-inch DBH
- City location regs.
- DBH only qualifier
- Critical Root Zones
- 30% canopy removal
- Unique attributes (i.e. species, location, health, canopy position, DBH size)
Balancing Act

Land development rights and requirements (feasible design, zoning, setbacks, water quality/detention, etc.)

V.

Tree preservation requirements (type, size, form, location, health, etc.)

“...tree preservation is inherently less definitive...”
#1 Subdivision
Pre-development
~100 acres
Subdivision
Post-development
Residential Development

Trees 19-inches and larger

A tree permit is required when the canopy or roots of a protected size tree will be impacted by proposed work. Below are examples of when a tree permit may be needed:

- Installing a pool
- Installing a utility line or irrigation system
- Building a deck
- Building a home and driveway
- Installing a sidewalk
- Public trees in the Right of Way
- Protected trees on neighboring lots

A protected size tree measures 19 inches and greater in diameter at 4.5 feet from the ground.
# Ordinance Generalities
(native healthy trees)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trunk Diameter</th>
<th>Determined</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 – 19</td>
<td>Applicant</td>
<td>Where Feasible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 &lt;</td>
<td>With Staff</td>
<td>Trees Within Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 – 30*</td>
<td>With Staff</td>
<td>Preserved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30* &lt;</td>
<td>With Commission</td>
<td>Public Hearing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Select Species (Heritage Trees)
Tree Preservation & Protection

Mitigation Options

• Planting Replacement Trees
• Natural Area Preservation
• Tree Maintenance
• Special Construction Techniques
• Transplanting
• Tree Fund

Proposed developments are reviewed to assure that a final product is achieved which results in a diversified and sustainable urban forest.
Important Players

- Citizens
- City Council
- Boards & Commissions
- Upper Management
- Engineers & Architects
- City Employees
- Home Owner Associations
- Certified Arborists
- Citizen Foresters
- Master Gardeners
Thank You

City Arborist Program
michael.embesi@austintexas.gov
974-1876