

## City of Austin Responses to Questions at Tree Ordinance Workshop October 4, 2006

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8a. All trees are protected once they reach 19" DBH.

9c. The City of Austin has multiple inspectors to ensure compliance. It is common for an inspector to follow-up after the project is completed. There are ordinances (tree, landscaping, and zoning) to ensure the property owner maintains their trees. If the owner does not maintain their trees, an official letter is sent to identify the non-compliance, and ensuing follow-up inspections occur.

10a. The City of Austin distinguishes four classes of trees: Class 1 (most desirable) to Class four (least desirable). All trees, no matter which class they may be considered, have diverse values (i.e. create a sense of place, provide shade, reduce erosion, provide water quality, assist with conserving energy, temper local climate, conceal unsightly views).

12c. The tree preservation ordinances protect all trees equally (inner city and newly plated). An additional review is frequently required on newly plated sites due to the required plat submittal to the City. This allows the City to review trees, lot lines, utility location, etc.

12d. Survival rates are not known however the Environmental Criteria Manual has established guidelines with the intent of having a viable tree once the project is completed. It is rare when both the ½ critical root zone and 50% of the critical root zone is impacted to the maximum extent possible. Typically the ½ critical root zone is the most challenging design criteria to comply with, if this can be met; the 50% critical root zone requirement has been satisfied.

12g. Pervious pavement is being used more frequently. The Environmental Criteria Manual states the following:

### Permeable Paving

Another design alternative which may be considered in some situations is the use of permeable paving. This alternative is less preferable than leaving 50 percent of the root zone natural. The qualities that make a good paving surface are in direct conflict with the qualities necessary to save tree roots. Permeable paving is permitted, however, provided the installation meets City of Austin Standards and City of Austin Standard Specifications and the following design criteria (see [Figure 3-8](#) in Appendix V of the Environmental Criteria Manual):

- Finished grade of the permeable paving surface must be a minimum of six (6) inches and a maximum of 18 inches above existing grade to provide room for base and paving material without cutting.
- A minimum distance of three (3) feet must be maintained between curb and tree to minimize potential for trunk scarring by vehicles.
- Minimum of 25 percent of the CRZ must remain at natural grade with a natural ground cover.
- The combined area of permeable paving and natural cover around a tree must be at least 75 percent of the CRZ.
- Permeable paving is only permitted in parking spaces and low traffic drives. It is not permitted in areas that are likely to be staging areas for fire ladder trucks.

These design criteria, as well as the construction specifications must be observed in the field. Deviations may be considered code violations.

18c. Pier and Beam construction is encouraged if the beams are established above grade. If a "stem wall" is used, they are typically required to be established 24 inches below grade. This would be contradictory to tree preservation efforts.