



**Development** CITY OF AUSTIN  
SERVICES DEPARTMENT

# Stakeholder Meeting

Building Plan  
Review and Inspections

October 30, 2023

# Engagement Format



- Presentation followed by question and answer session
- Two ways to participate:
  - Speak by raising your hand on the control panel. You will be asked to unmute. Please mute yourself when finished.
  - Written questions using the Q&A function at the bottom of your screen.

# Overview

- Citywide Site Plan Process Improvement Initiative
- Regulatory Policy and Administration
- Intake and Service Center
- Building & Expedited Building Plan Review
- Tree Review
- Building & Environmental Inspections
- Austin Energy
- Transportation and Public Works
- Austin Water
- Austin Fire



An aerial photograph of a city skyline. In the foreground, a river flows through a park-like area with trees showing autumn foliage. A bridge with graffiti on its structure spans the river. In the background, a dense urban skyline features several prominent skyscrapers under a clear blue sky. A semi-transparent white banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the title text.

# **Citywide Site Plan Process Improvement Initiative**

# Citywide Site Plan Process Improvement Initiative



## Updates & Critical Initiatives

- Initiated an interdepartmental **site plan process assessment** with **McKinsey & Co** in March
- Worked with **stakeholders and staff** to assess each phase of the site plan process and **recommend opportunities for improvement**
- High-level **findings**:
  - Processes and regulations are extensive, complicated and change often
  - Internal and external frustration with the process
  - Customer satisfaction is low

# Citywide Site Plan Process Improvement Initiative



## Updates & Critical Initiatives

- Assessment process also included **co-creation of 41 potential improvement initiatives** that would address concerns
- August 31 Council authorized negotiation and execution of an **implementation contract with McKinsey & Co.**
- Contract has been executed and **implementation** work with McKinsey **kicked off last week**
- **Progress** has also been made on **several initiatives** that have been **moving forward on a parallel path**

# Citywide Site Plan Process Improvement Initiative



## Updates & Critical Initiatives

### What to expect moving forward:

- **Rapid implementation** with interdepartmental leadership and support at all levels
- Targeted and initiative specific stakeholder **engagement**
- Frequent **communication**
  - Dedicated web page with information about initiatives, implantation teams, progress and feedback opportunities
  - Monthly newsletter updates
  - More frequent stand-alone communications on major milestones
- **Improved experience overall**

# Citywide Site Plan Process Improvement Initiative

■ quick wins

## Critical enablers

Initiatives that enable other initiatives

- 1 Establish gold standard training ground
- 6 Align Site Plan reviewers on their primary mission and customer
- 2 Staff incentives aligned with process goals
- 5 Evaluate organization design
- 7 Cadenced inter and intra departmental meetings to discuss continuous improvement
- 8 Enhanced centralized process around KPIs within and across departments
- 22 Determine and map overlapping codes/regulations and metrics
- 23 Rationalize / refine / consolidate code criteria manual(s) and publicize interpretation(s)
- 32 Enhance & ensure consistent use of internal system of record

## Quality of experience

Initiatives designed to enhance experience of staff and applicants

- 3 Optimize hiring methodology
- 9 Rationalize fee schedule
- 10 Implement customer service best practices (e.g., turn camera/video on, accessibility)
- 11 Consolidated review team for completeness check
- 12 Empower the case manager and ensure consistency in case manager assignments
- 13 Formalize and publish permit signing order
- 16 Recalibrate completeness check
- 17 Improve Master Comment Report format
- 18 Prioritize application by tiers
- 19 Formalize "re-review" process if/when department reviewers change
- 20 Improve internal and external conflict resolution process
- 24 Formalize approach around LDC additions/changes
- 25 Enhance application wizard (questionnaire) that exists as part of the City of Austin website
- 26 Application training resources
- 27 Implement applicant attestation of Site Plan completeness and accuracy upon intake
- 28 Cadenced inter and intra departmental meetings to discuss ongoing applications
- 33 Enhance customer facing portal
- 39 Automate fee calculation and posting

## Speed of the process

Initiatives that facilitate faster process execution

- 4 Contractors/ temps for site plan reviews
- 14 Standardize site plan formal review activities
- 15 Formalize pre-submission meetings
- 21 Formalize post-first review cycle meetings
- 29 Scheduling (office hours/rotating customer meetings days)
- 30 Provide rolling draft comments to applicant
- 31 Applicant ability to self-certify (w/potential fee)
- 34 Enhance application wizard (questionnaire) that is linked and a part of the site plan application process
- 35 Automate required documents at submission
- 36 Digitize signature process
- 37 Automate/ integrate application entry to system of record
- 38 CRM system to auto-capture communications
- 40 AI digitized completeness check
- 41 AI digitized formal review



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# Regulatory Policy & Administration

# Regulatory Policy & Administration



## Updates & Critical Initiatives

- Implementation of **Phase I of Site Plan Lite** regulations, which establishes a new process for **3 – 4 unit residential**
- Creating a **Technical Advisory Review Panel** to support the **Land Development Rules Administrator** in providing greater citywide coordination and oversight of rules process
- Continued work on the **Code Interpretation Library**

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# Intake & Service Center

# Intake & Service Center



## Updates & Critical Initiatives

- Continued effort to maintain **1 business day-turnaround** for all new intake tickets and to **reduce processing time** for permits
- **Removed requirement to check for water taps** prior to permit issuance
  - General contractors with an AB+C account will be able to **self-assign permits**
  - Could **significantly reduce** tickets and chats

An aerial photograph of a city skyline. In the foreground, a river flows through a park-like area with trees showing autumn foliage. A bridge with graffiti on its structure spans the river. In the background, a dense urban skyline features several prominent skyscrapers, including a tall, modern building with a distinctive top section and a uniquely shaped, angular tower. The sky is clear and blue.

# Building Plan Review

# Residential Building Plan Review



## Updates & Critical Initiatives

- **FY23 processing times at 89%**
- Piloting use of **artificial intelligence software through Archistar** to assess planning rules and restrictions on residential lots
- **Reviewers can schedule private appointments with customers on Time Trade** for the following:
  - Pre-submittal appointments (general pre-review questions)
  - Paid consultations (projects under review)
  - Volume Builder Program appointments

# Residential Building Plan Review



## Updates & Critical Initiatives

- **Upgrade of the AB+C Portal** planned for later this calendar year
- **Code amendments allowing Tiny Homes** in single-family zoned districts (note consideration of **RVs shifted to a future phase**)
- **Code amendments** to diversify housing types and allow more housing units on single-family lots:
  - **Minimum lot size** reduction to **2,500 square feet or less**
  - Amending **max unit count to allow at least 3** in SF zoning districts
  - Creation of new **“three-family residential” use**
  - **Limiting Subchapter F** restrictions to one-dwelling developments

# Commercial Building Plan Review



## Updates & Critical Initiatives

- **FY23 processing times at 93%**
- **Commercial Review Team fully staffed** with hiring practices focused on finding skilled reviewers who will be continuously trained
- **Electrical Reviewer appointments extended by 2 hours, Monday – Thursday** to provide more flexible scheduling options



# Commercial Building Plan Review



## Updates & Critical Initiatives

- **Teams realigned** to group like disciplines together:
  - **Sue Hagerty** will oversee **building plan reviewers** to streamline communication and coordination, and improve consistency
  - **Eliud Buenrostro** will supervise **trade reviewers** (mechanical, electrical, plumbing) for specialized technical oversight and expertise

# Structural Building Plan Review



## Updates & Critical Initiatives

- **Saroj Shrestha** joined the structural review team as an **Engineer C**
  - Supporting **Commercial Plan Review**
  - Fully dedicated as the primary structural reviewer for the **Public Projects Team**
- **Retaining Walls:** All general retaining wall inquiries shall be directed to LDIS by virtual appointment or email ([dsdzoningsiteplan@austintexas.gov](mailto:dsdzoningsiteplan@austintexas.gov))

# Structural Building Plan Review



## Updates & Critical Initiatives

- **Structural Team presenting locally and nationally:**
  - **Eliud Buenrostro: 2023 Structural Engineering Institute Conference** covering performance-based wind design in mid-rise structures.
  - **Alan Woo:** Panel discussion on the use of **Heavy Timber Construction in Texas** highlighting the City’s plan review process and new industry regulations



# **Expedited Building Plan Review**

# Expedited Building Plan Review



## Updates & Critical Initiatives

- Working on development and testing of upgraded **ProjectDox Plan Review software**- will use the new software in **early November**
- **Shortened pre-requisite review cycles** for simple commercial projects to minimize customer wait times for review meetings
- **Increased project eligibility** to include residential projects requiring Erosion Hazard Rvw and “Site Plan Lite” projects
- **Staffing challenges** for Fire and Structural review; fully staffed in all other areas



# Tree Review

# Tree Review



## Updates & Critical Initiatives

- **Processing time down** for residential and standalone
  - Down 11% for Residential (13 days)
  - Down 26% for standalone (11 days)
- **General contractors are now linked to and can access tree permit** with the other permits generated from approved building plan review
- Tree permit is now **visible on AB+C under My Permits/Cases** under the tree permit case number
- Tree permit can now be **opened directly from the building permit folder** by field staff

# Tree Review



## Updates & Critical Initiatives

- Created a standard **operating procedure** to support clear and consistent direction for **different violation scenarios**
- Working on revisions to the **single-family plan review comments**
- Hosting **monthly Tree Smart Lunch and Learns** that provide information to stakeholders



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# Building Inspections

# Building Inspections



## Updates & Critical Initiatives

- **Inspections turnaround times:**
  - Residential at 81% on-time
  - Commercial at 91% on-time
- Implemented **stop gap measures preventing scheduling of inspections** if requisite inspections do not show “**Closed**” in AMANDA
  - Permits containing the **605 Fire Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Framing inspection** and/or the **606 Fire (WUI) Final inspections**
  - Electrical permits containing the **Austin Energy “Spot Location”** inspection process

# Building Inspections



## Updates & Critical Initiatives

- Building permits receiving a **Certificate of Occupancy (CO)** became available through **AB+C portal account as of May 26, 2023**
  - Plan Review Folder Info tab must reflect “yes” for CO to be issued
  - Customers seeking a CO or Certificate of Compliance for permits that received a CO before May 26 need to submit request to: [DSDCertificateofOccupancy@austintexas.gov](mailto:DSDCertificateofOccupancy@austintexas.gov)

# Building Inspections



## Updates & Critical Initiatives

- **Safe Fence Ordinance** Approved by Council July 20, 2023; effective July 31, 2023
- **2023 National Electrical Code** adoption approved by Council August 31, 2023; effective November 1, 2023.
- **Air Test on Plastic Non-Pressure Plumbing Systems** rule adopted August 10, 2023
  - New section added to the Building Criteria Manual
  - Provides safety requirements when low-pressure air testing under constant pressure will be utilized for a plastic non-pressure plumbing system

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# Environmental Inspections

# Environmental Inspections



## Updates & Critical Initiatives

- **North and South Commercial Inspections** teams transitioned to one Commercial Team effective **July 31, 2023**
- **Boat Dock Registration Program** transitioned to Environmental Inspections and Enforcement Division effective **October 1, 2023**
- **Austin 3-1-1 Mobile App Update – October 9, 2023**
  - Enhanced reporting capabilities
  - 3-1-1 Environmental complaints investigated by Enforcement staff and documented in CSR and AMANDA

# Environmental Inspections



## Updates & Critical Initiatives

- **Expanding Environmental Inspections Lunch and Learn** series and increasing frequency to monthly; training materials used **internally and externally**
- **Ongoing process improvements in AMANDA** – coming soon, TimeTrade and numerous other improvements within AMANDA for increased efficiency in residential inspections.

The image is a composite of two scenes. The top half shows a clear, bright blue sky over a dense urban skyline of Austin, Texas, featuring several prominent skyscrapers, including the distinctive, angular One Austin Center. The bottom half shows an aerial view of a river with a bridge. The bridge has graffiti on its side, including the word 'TOGETHER'. The surrounding area is lush with trees in autumn colors, and a large, modern building with a blue facade is visible on the left. A semi-transparent white banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text 'Austin Energy' in a bold, dark blue font.

# Austin Energy



# Austin Energy

## Distribution Field Support Operations



### Updates & Critical Initiatives

- Created a new **Meter Review Team** to manage the Electric Service Plan Application - Design will be responsible for infrastructure
- Launched **new communication feature** through AMANDA updating customers on the **disposition of jobs**.
- Coming soon – new **booking platform** for electric contractors registered with **Contractor Disconnect Program**



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# Transportation & Public Works

# Transportation & Public Works



## Updates & Critical Initiatives

### Street Impact Fee

- SIF ordinance was adopted December 2020 and took effect **June 2022**
- Exemption for Building Permits with an approved Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) ends **December 2023**
- All Building Permits on **Jan 1, 2024**, will be assessed a Street Impact Fee



TRANSPORTATION  
PUBLIC WORKS

# Transportation & Public Works



## Updates & Critical Initiatives

### Street Impact Fee (continued)

- Affordability Requirements:
  - Rentals: 60% MFI for no less than 40 years
  - Ownership: 80% MFI for no less than 99 years
- TIAs approved after June 2022:
  - Staff memo identifies credit/offsets for constructed improvements
  - Credit applied sequentially to PRs unless an allocation agreement has been submitted



TRANSPORTATION  
PUBLIC WORKS

# Transportation & Public Works



## Updates & Critical Initiatives

### Street Impact Fee (continued)

- Legacy TIAs/ previously constructed improvements:
  - Offsets for constructed improvements are possible
  - Staff to establish standardized costs for credit purposes
  - PUDs – will be reviewed individually
- **Your Action Is Required:**
  - Credit for constructed improvements must be authorized prior to building permit application



TRANSPORTATION  
PUBLIC WORKS

# Transportation & Public Works

## Street Impact Fee (continued)



## Updates & Critical Initiatives

Contact: Nate Aubert, TDS: [Nathan.Aubert@austintexas.gov](mailto:Nathan.Aubert@austintexas.gov)

For more information:  
<https://www.austintexas.gov/department/street-impact-fee>



TRANSPORTATION  
PUBLIC WORKS



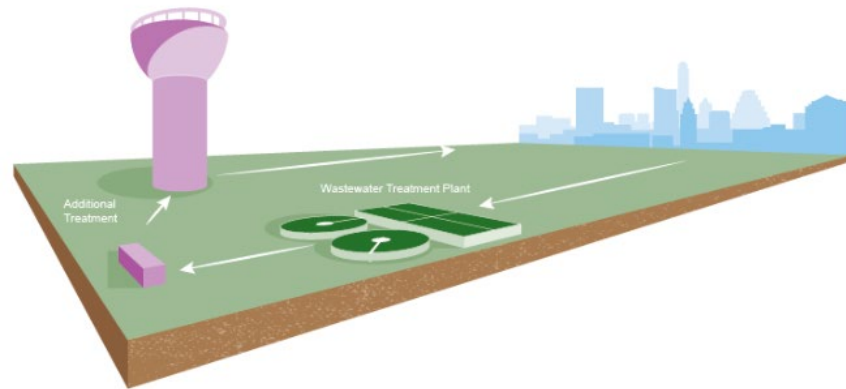
# Austin Water

# Water Forward LDC Amendments



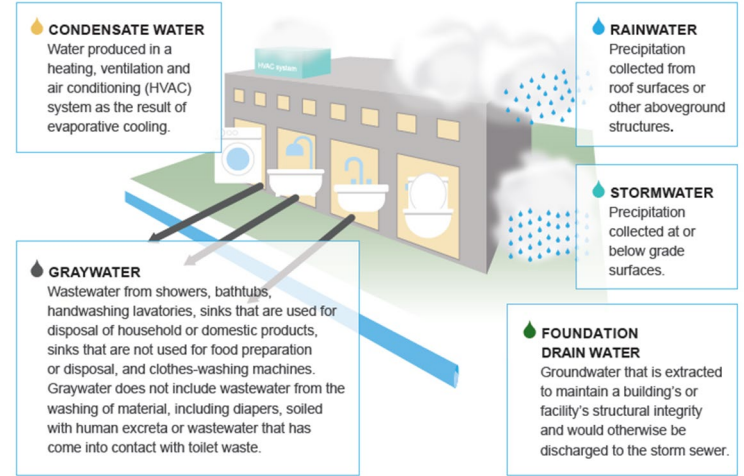
## Updates & Critical Initiatives

### RECLAIMED WATER



Effective Dec. 1, 2021

### ONSITE WATER REUSE



Effective Dec. 1, 2023

Proposal to extend to  
**Apr. 1, 2024**





# Water Forward LDC Amendments



## Updates & Critical Initiatives

- Applies to **new site plan applications** submitted after the effective dates
- Requires **dual plumbing supply for non-potable water** in buildings
- Requirements **vary depending on the size** of development
- [Mandatory Water Reuse Ordinances - PublicInput \(speakupaustin.org\)](https://speakupaustin.org)



# Water Reuse Permitting Webinars



Reclaimed Water Permitting Webinar:

**Wednesday, October 18 from 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. CST**

Recording available at [Obtaining Reclaimed Water Service | AustinTexas.gov](https://www.austintexas.gov/recordings/Obtaining-Reclaimed-Water-Service)



Onsite Water Reuse Permitting Webinar:

**TBD: January 2024**



Onsite Water Reuse Best Design Practices Webinar:

**TBD: February 2024**



Invitations will be sent via the DSD stakeholder newsletter ahead of time





# Austin Fire Department

## 2015 Wildland-Urban Interface Code Plan Review Requirements

Presented By the Office of the Austin Fire Marshal



# 2015 Wildland-Urban Interface Code (IWUIC)

January 2021, applies to:

- Residential Construction
- Commercial Construction
- Site Plans

January 2021 - Formal Review and Inspections began for

- Residential
- Expedited Residential & Commercial Review

June 2023 - Formal Review and Inspections began for

- Commercial 7-day +
- All Site Plans



# Resources

**Austin Wildland-Urban Interface Web Site at:** <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/wildland-urban-interface-code>

- Interactive WUI Map
- 2015 Base IWUIC
- 2015 IWUIC Amendments
- WUI Approved Materials List

Visit the Austin Fire Marshal's Office at: <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/fire-marshals-office>

Visit Austin Fire Department Wildfire Web Site at: <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/wildfire>

Email questions to: [fireprevention@austintexas.gov](mailto:fireprevention@austintexas.gov)

**Disclaimer: DO NOT use any material in this presentation for personal or professional use.**

# Submittal Requirements

## WUI Floor Plan Note

- “This project will meet the requirements of the 2015 International Wildland-Urban Interface Code and will be constructed to the WUI Proximity Class {A, B, or C} Ignition-Resistant requirements of the code. Please see Detail Sheet XXX for construction requirements and material to be used.”

## Drawing Details

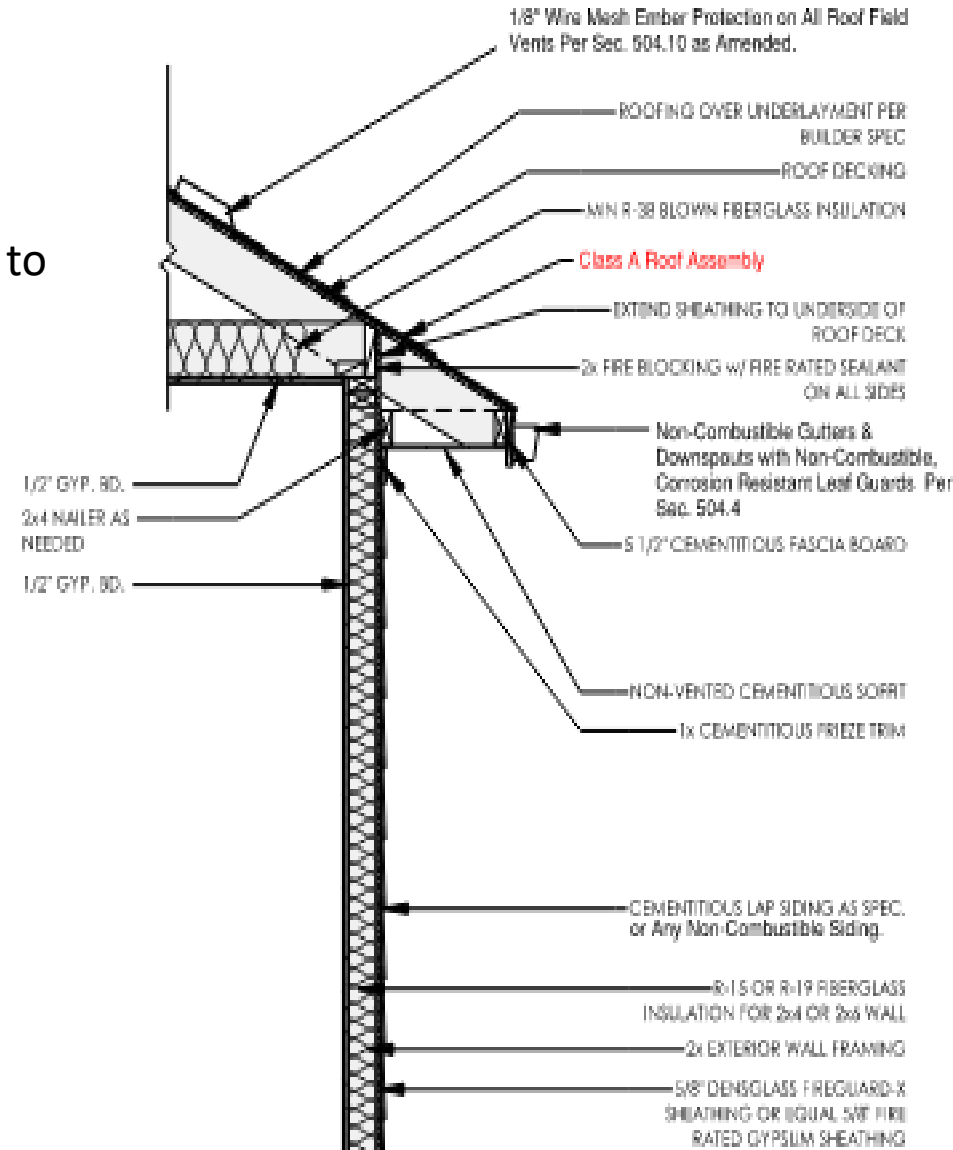
- Wall sections, elevations, other specific construction details
- For Site Plan items that do not require a building permit

## Hydrant Flow Test, Site Plan or Residential new construction and additions

- Conducted within the past 12 months
- <https://www.austintexas.gov/department/fire-hydrant-reporting>

## Vicinity Plan, sites with multiple buildings or to clarify WUI Class A and B

- Show where the adjacent wildland begins (may be on the property!)
- Must match Vicinity Plan submitted with approved Site Plan



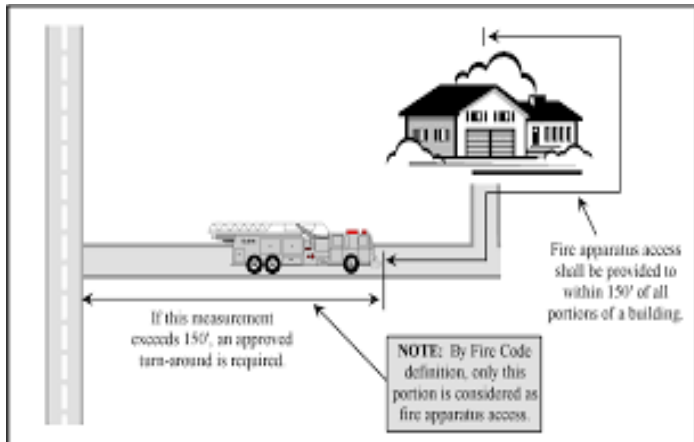
# General Compliance Requirements

**Access** [IWUIC 403](#) (and [amendments](#))

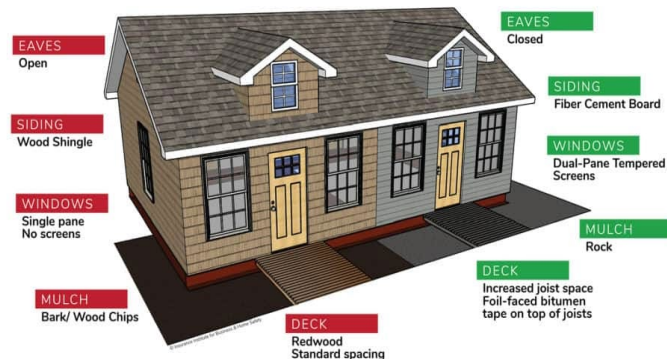
**Water Supply** [IWUIC 404](#) (and [amendments](#))

**Ignition-Resistant Construction, “Structure Hardening”** [IWUIC 504](#) (and [amendments](#))

**Ignition Source Control** [IWUIC Appendix A104](#), [IFC 307](#) (and [amendments](#))



## Wildfire-Resistance: Make the “RIGHT” Choices



# Chapter 5 - IGNITION RESISTANT CONSTRUCTION

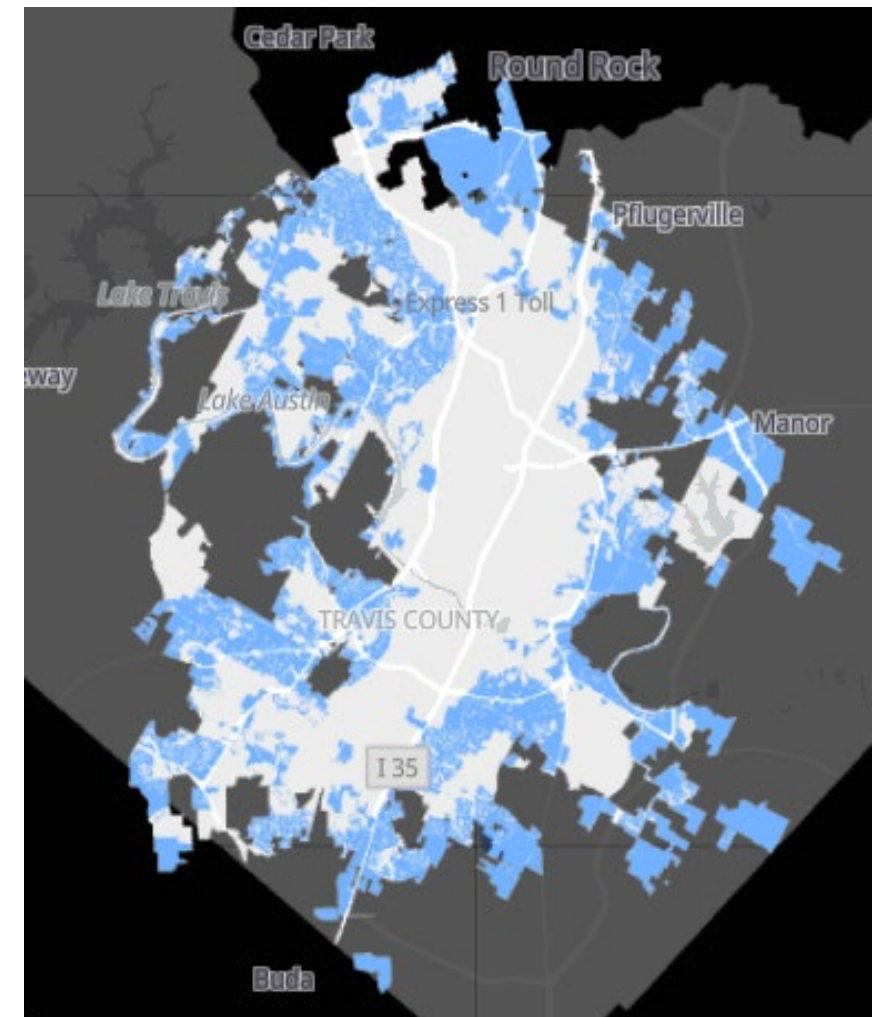
## Three Classes Of Ignition Resistant Construction

### Classes Based off Proximity to Wildland

- **Class A:** Structures located within **50'** from the Wildland
- **Class B:** Structures located more than **50'** up to **150'** away from the Wildland
- **Class C:** Structures more than **150'** up to **1.5** miles away from the Wildland

### Interactive Map Provided to Determine WUI Compliance

- **Dark Blue** Indicates **0 to 150 Feet** from Wildland (A or B)
- **Light Blue** Indicates up to **1.5 Miles** from Wildland (C)
- Measure Proximity Class A or B, map is a general guide
- Do not confuse Class A, B or C fire rated materials with Class A, B or C Ignition Resistant Construction.





# Class C Ignition Resistant Construction

## Structures Located 150' to 1.5 Miles from Wildland

### *Protect against Ember Intrusion and Ignition*

- Class A Roof Covering or Roof Assembly – 504.2 Protected Roof Valleys – 504.2.1
- Roof/Wall Vent\* Ember Protection – 504.10 amended.
  - \*Includes mechanical ventilation
- Non Combustible Gutters and Downspouts – 504.4
- Gutter Leaf and Debris Protection – 504.4
- Appendages/Structures (decks/balconies) – 504.7 amended
  - Over a slope greater than 10 percent - 504.7.1
  - Fences within 5' – 504.7 amended
  - Spark Arrestors – 605
- Outdoor fires, barbecues, grills, outdoor fireplaces –A104.7, A104.8



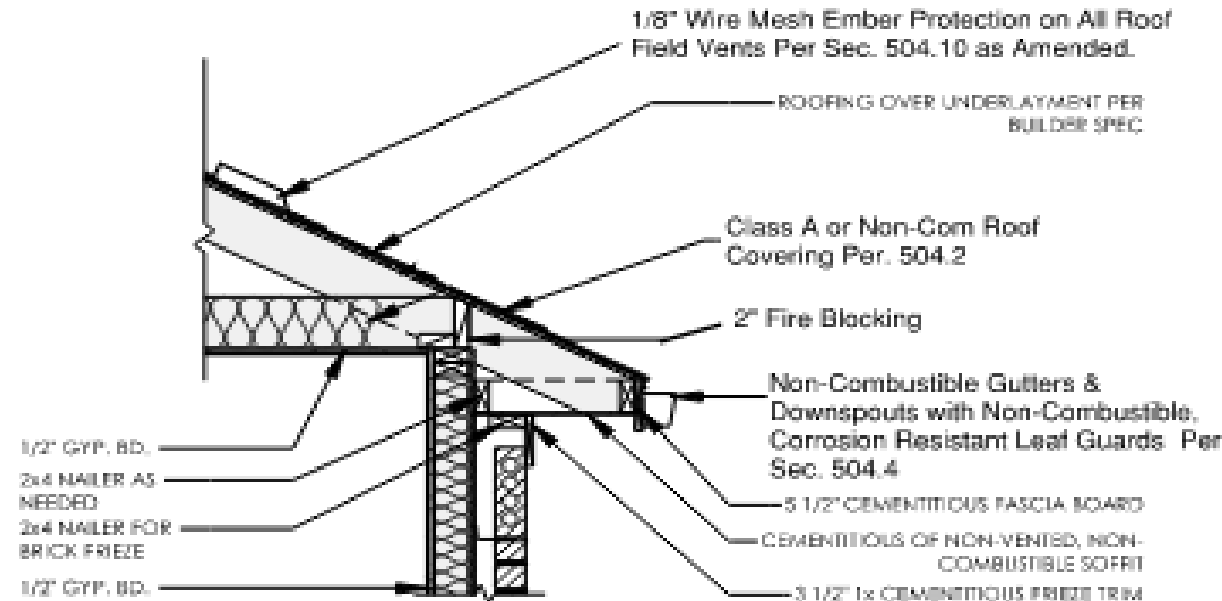
# Class B Ignition Resistant Construction

## Structures Located 50' to 150' from the Wildland

*Protects against Radiant Heat Transfer and Embers*

All of Class C Requirements, *plus*

- Eaves, Soffits, and Fascia Protected – 504.3.2.1 amended
- Heavy Timber Exposed Rafter Tails – 504.3.2.2 amended
- Enhanced Protection of detached accessory structures within 50' – 504.11 and 504.11.1 amended



# Class A Ignition Resistant Construction

## Structures Located Within 50 Feet of the Wildland

*Protect against Direct Flame Impingement, Radiant Heat & Embers*

- All of Class B & C Requirements, *plus*:
  - **Eaves, Soffits, Fascia & Rafter Tails** – 504.3.1 amended
  - Enhanced **Exterior Wall** Construction – 504.5 amended
  - Enhanced Protection of **Glazing** – 504.8 amended
  - Enhanced Protection of Ext. **Doors** – 504.9 amended



# Do's & ~~Don'ts~~

***It is the designers responsibility to review the codes and provide required information on the plans.  
Questions to AFD are always welcome [fireprevention@austintexas.gov](mailto:fireprevention@austintexas.gov)***

## Do's

- ✓ Provide An Exterior Wall Section Detail and Label All Required WUI Components
- ✓ List Brands & Product Names
- ✓ Generic material names ok for widely available materials: cementitious siding, steel, aluminum, concrete, stucco, clay tile, FRTW ...(when in doubt, list a Product Name!)
- ✓ If an Assembly is Required, Provide a Detail Drawing Showing and Labeling All Components and Layers
- ✓ When Specific Ratings are Required, Provide UL or ASTM or Equivalent Rating Number or Data Sheet
- ✓ Use Class A fire rated materials, Fire-retardant-treated wood, and materials with permanent fire or ignition-resistant properties

## ~~Don'ts~~

- X Don't Copy and Paste Generic AFD Examples, Generate and Use Your Own Drawings Specific to Each Project.
- X Don't Provide a standard WUI Detail Page and
  - Show Non-compliant Materials on the Other Drawings
  - Not Show Notes or Details Unique to the Project
  - Not update for City of Austin local amendments
  - Not check for typos
- X Don't Just Say "Deck is Compliant With 2015 IWUIC Sec. 504.7" or "Class A Roof Assembly per ASTM E 108", be product specific
- X Don't use paints, coatings, or sprays for fire-retardant

# WUI Specific Fire Inspections

## WUI Inspection Required for Commercial and Residential Structures

- Two Inspections required most times
  - One before Covering Frame
  - One Before Building Final
  - One Inspection on Occasion
    - Permitted Decks
    - Permitted Pools and Pool Decks
    - Interior Remodels
- You Must Coordinate and Call in Fire Inspections
  - 512.974.0153



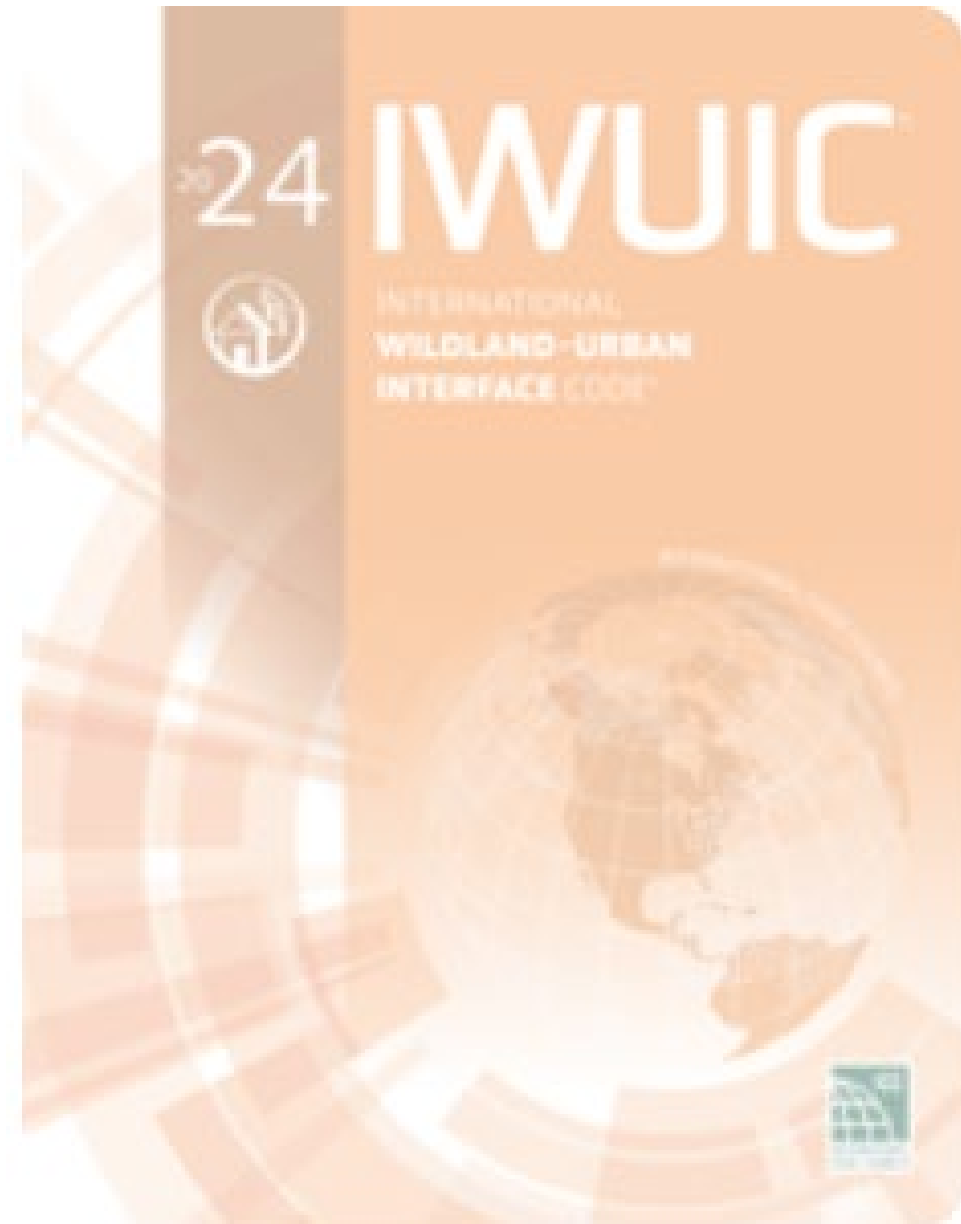
# 2024 International Wildland-Urban Interface Code

- Working on 2024 Code and Amendments Now
- Clarifications in Code and Code Amendments
- Clarifying WUI Boundaries
- Clarifying Ignition Resistant Construction Classes
- Expected Adoption Date Fall 2024
- 2024 Fire WUI Criteria Manual Alignment

**Austin Wildland-Urban Interface Web Site at:**

<https://www.austintexas.gov/department/wildland-urban-interface-code>

Email WUI Review & Inspection questions to: [fireprevention@austintexas.gov](mailto:fireprevention@austintexas.gov)





CITY OF AUSTIN  
**Development**  
SERVICES DEPARTMENT

**Thank you!**