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**ENGINEERING & PROPERTY
MANAGEMENT**

City of Charlotte Tree Ordinance

Single Family Tree Save Briefing

May 25, 2016

- Purpose and history of Tree Ordinance
- Single family development: incentives for increasing tree save
- Examples of parcels using incentives
- Concerns with incentives
- Addressing concerns with incentives
- Next Steps



Purpose of the Tree Ordinance

- Preservation and planting of trees to maintain and enlarge the tree canopy cover across the city
- Tree save
- Tree planting

Why Trees are Important

- Aesthetics
- Oxygen production
 - One large tree can supply a day's oxygen for four people
- Temperature reduction/shade
 - Build up of heat during the day that is radiated at night
- Energy savings for heating/air
- Increased property values (5 to 15% higher)
 - Rent faster and have a higher occupancy rate
- Reduce erosion
- 50% tree canopy goal by 2050

Tree Ordinance History

- 1978 – Tree Ordinance Chapter 21 City Code adopted
- 1988 – Revised: added tree protection
- 2000 – Revised: included UMUD and MUDD zones
- **2002 – Revised: requirements for Single Family development including incentives to increase tree save**
- 2011 – Revised: required 15% tree save for commercial development

Tree Save for Single Family Development



- Minimum of 10% of site required to be preserved as tree canopy
- Tree save area is platted and recorded with Register of Deeds
- Tree save area maintained by Homeowner Association

Incentives to Increase Tree Save

- In 2002, incentives were incorporated into tree save requirements for single family development to encourage developers to preserve more than the minimum 10% tree save:
- Density Bonus
 - Allows for additional houses
- Reduced lot size



Tree Save Incentive Allows for a Reduction in Lot Size

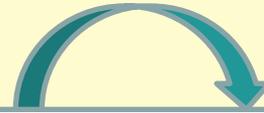
- Preserve 10% to 25% in Common Open Space (COS)
- Preserve greater than 25% in COS
- Lot area and widths are reduced

- The Tree Save provision was intended for use in subdivisions as an incentive to save existing trees
- Individual lots in existing neighborhoods have applied these incentives resulting in reduced lot sizes and increased density which is negatively impacting the character and fabric of some neighborhoods

- Tree save areas for individual lots are small. During construction, grading, and demolition of existing structures, the trees in the tree save area are often damaged
- Tree save areas established as a result of incentives applied to individual lots in existing neighborhoods is administratively burdensome to enforce in perpetuity

Example 1: Impacts of Reduced Lot Size (10% to 25% Tree Save Preserved)

- Greater than 10% tree save in R4 zoning results in R4 cluster
 - Lot area reduced by 25%
 - Lot width reduced from 60 to 50 feet

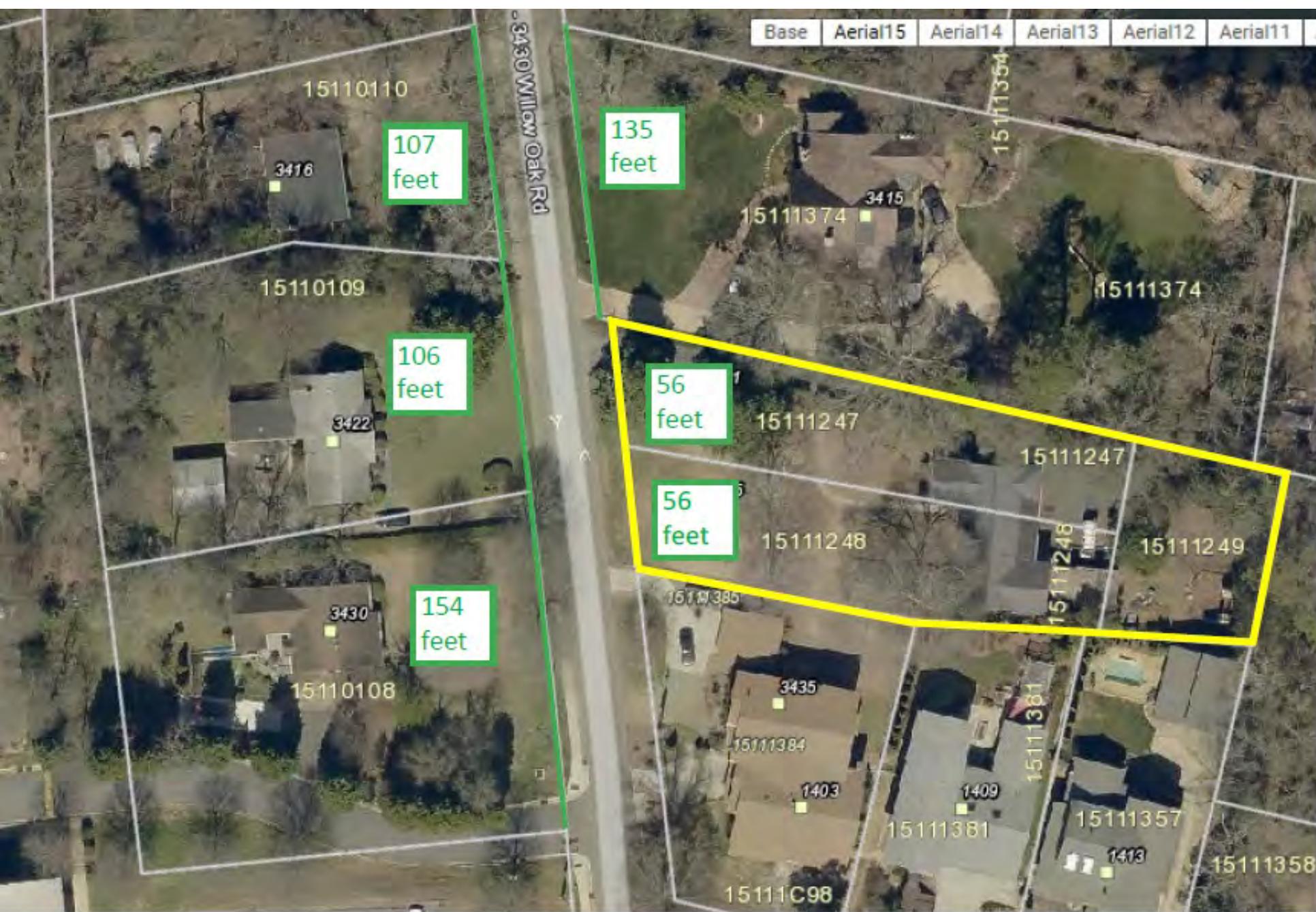


	R-3	R-3 Cluster	R-4	R-4 Cluster	R-5	R-5 Cluster	R-6	R-6 Cluster
Min. Lot Area	10,000	8,000	8,000	6,000	6,000	4,500	4,500	3,500
Min. Lot Width	70'	60'	60'	50'	50'	40'	40'	40'



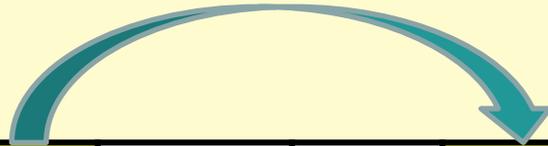
Example 1: Reduced Lot Size (10% to 25% Tree Save Preserved)

- 3427 Willow Oak Road
 - Greater than 10% tree save in R4 zoning allowed to develop as R4 cluster (allows minimum 50 foot lot width)
 - Lot widths of adjacent parcels range from 106 to 154 feet



Example 2: Impacts of Reduced Lot Size (Greater than 25% Tree Save Preserved)

- Greater than 25% tree save in R3 zoning results in R4 cluster
 - Lot area reduced by 40%
 - Lot width reduced from 70 to 50 feet

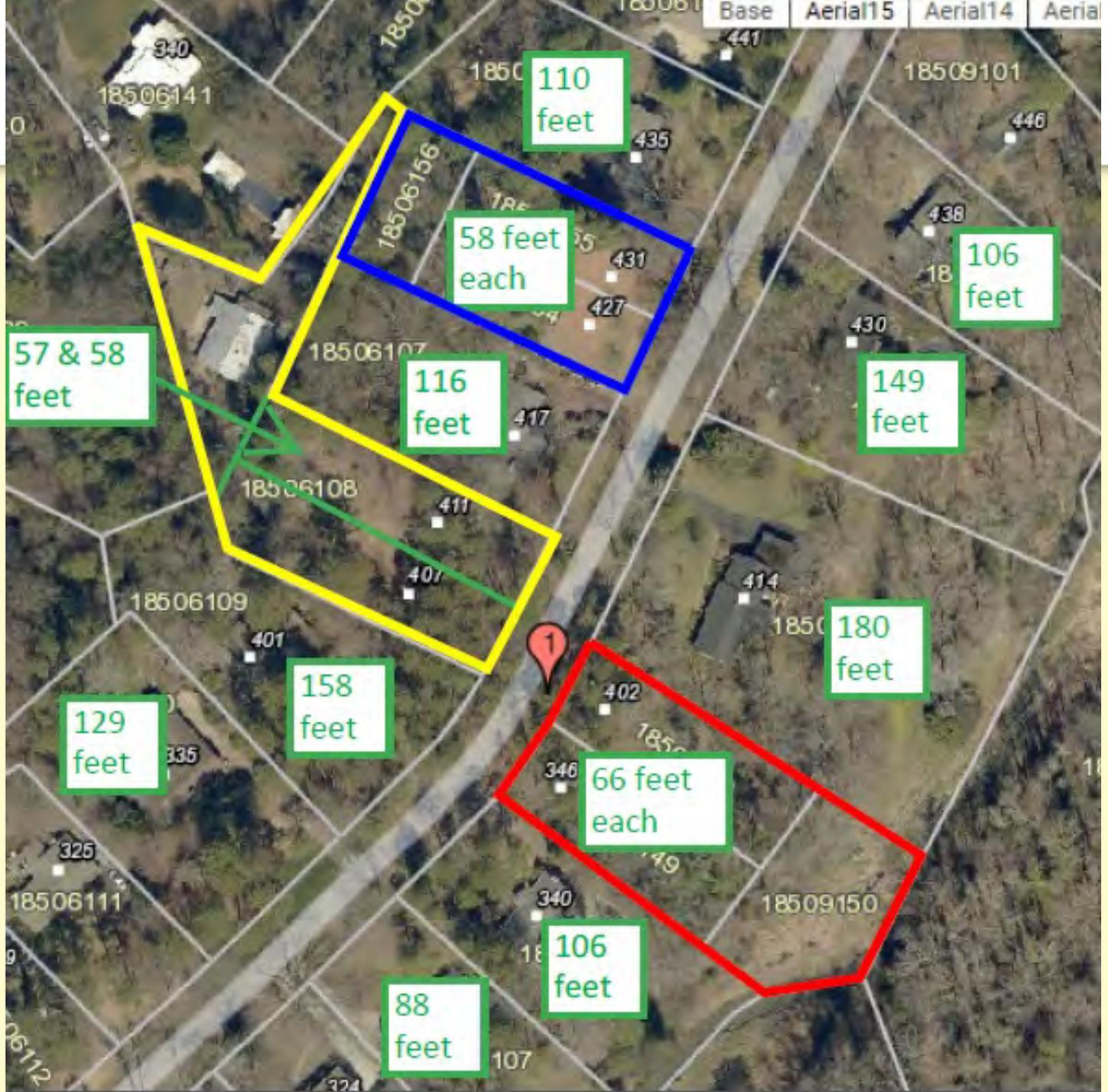


	R-3	R-3 Cluster	R-4	R-4 Cluster	R-5	R-5 Cluster	R-6	R-6 Cluster
Min. Lot Area	10,000	8,000	8,000	6,000	6,000	4,500	4,500	3,500
Min. Lot Width	70'	60'	60'	50'	50'	40'	40'	40'



Example 2: Reduced Lot Size (Greater than 25% Tree Save Preserved)

- Wonderwood Drive
 - Three separate parcels preserving greater than 25% tree save in R3 zoning allowed to develop as R4 cluster (allows minimum 50 foot lot width)
 - Lot widths of adjacent parcels range from 88 to 180 feet





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Wonderwood Dr, Charlotte, North Carolina
Address is approximate

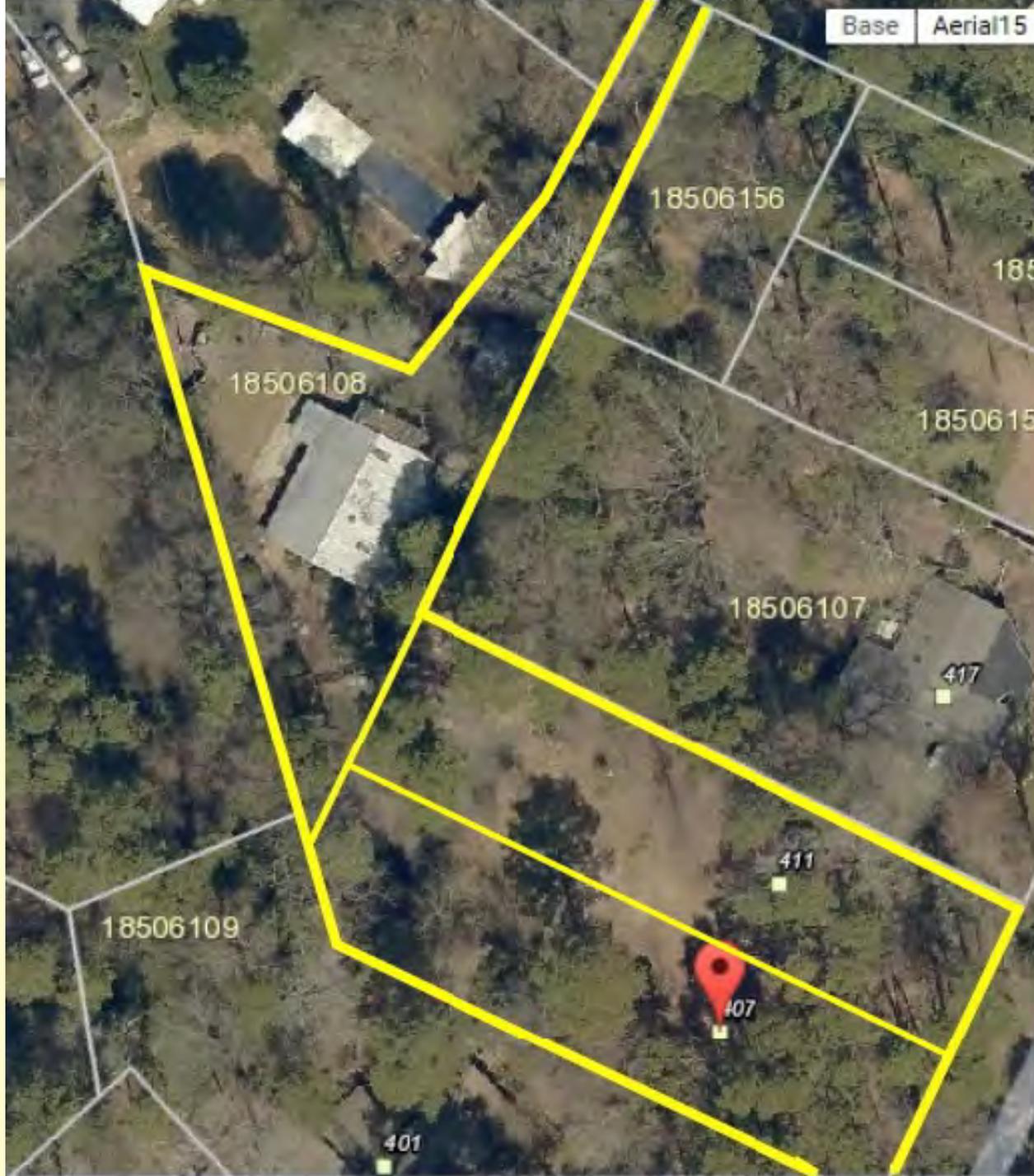


Google

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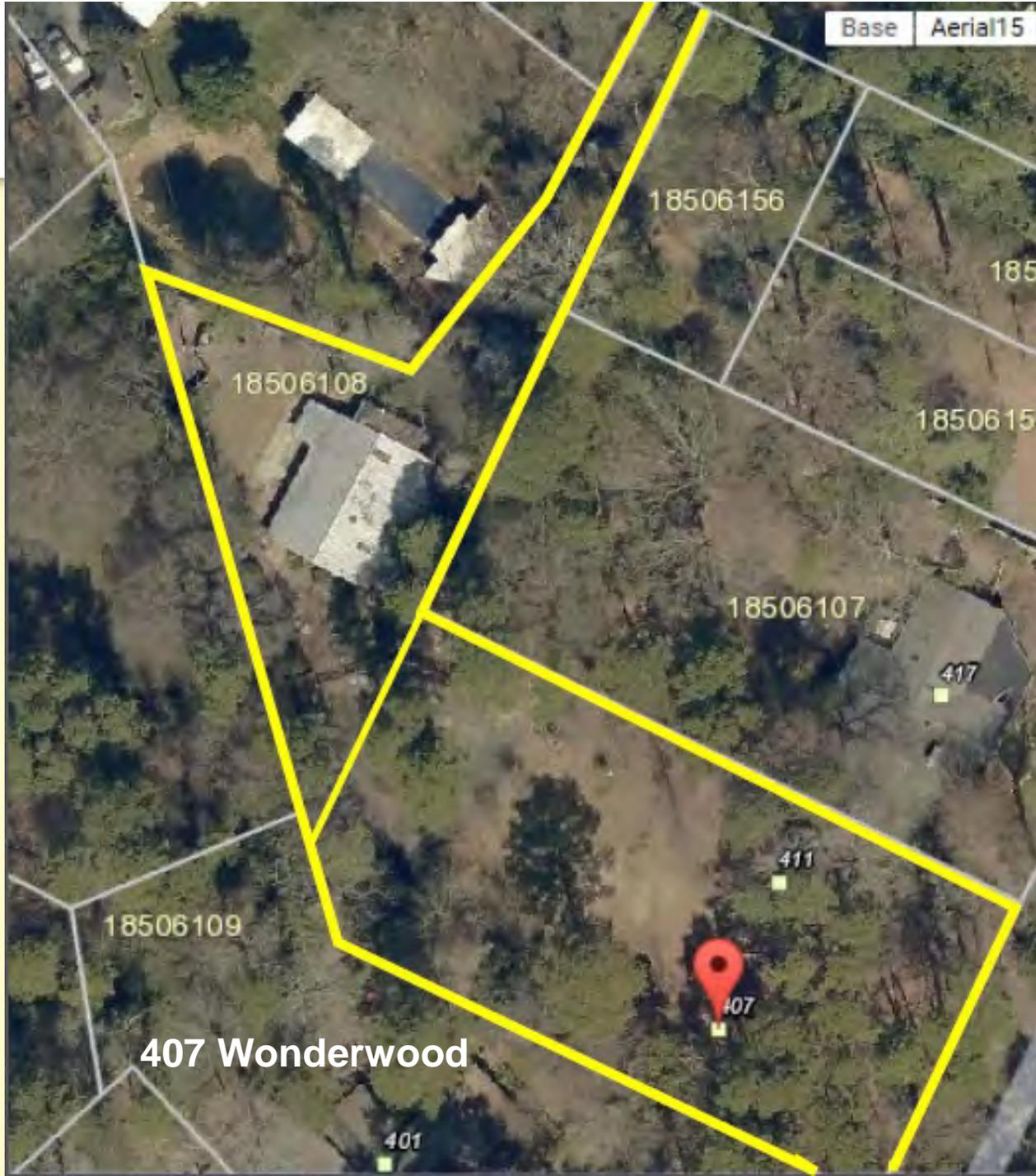
400 Wonderwood





407 Wonderwood

20



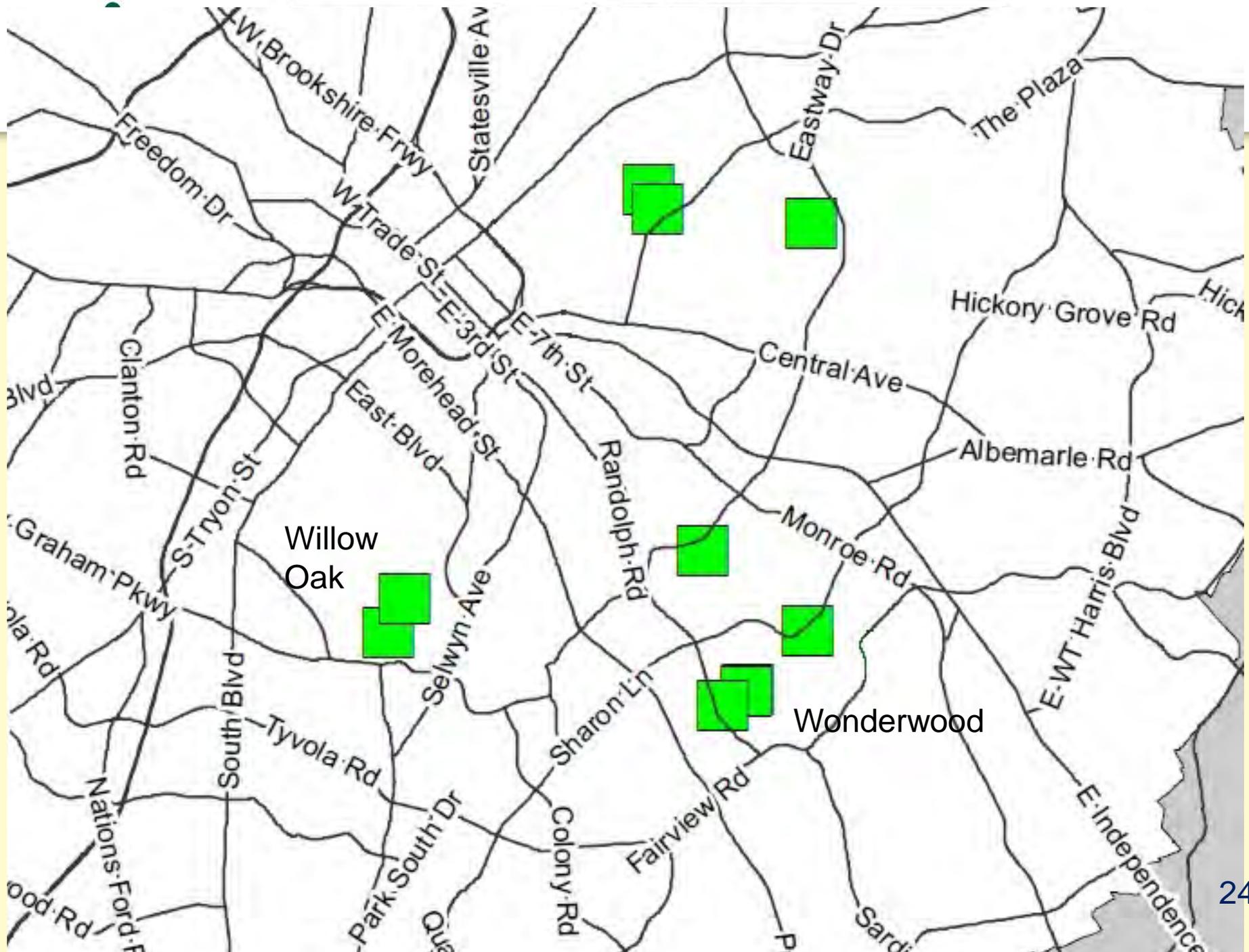
407 Wonderwood



407 Wonderwood

Frequency of Incentives Being Applied to Individual lots in Existing Neighborhoods

- September 1, 2014 to May 1, 2016, Urban Forestry approved 13 plats (less than one per month on average)
- Currently, 8 plats are under review (not approved)



Willow
Oak

Wonderwood

- The Tree Save provision was intended for use in subdivisions as an incentive to save existing trees
- Application of the Tree Save provision for individual lots in existing neighborhoods resulting in reduced lot sizes and increased density has negatively impacted the character and fabric of some neighborhoods

- Focus incentives to Single Family Subdivisions and not apply these incentives to individual lots in existing neighborhoods



Will an Ordinance Revision Impact Charlotte's Tree Canopy?

- The 2012 tree canopy study:
 - Existing tree canopy of 47% for single family development
 - At maturity this canopy coverage should be 50% -70%



Will an Ordinance Revision Impact Charlotte's Tree Canopy?

- It is difficult to assess the impact (net gain or loss) on tree save if individual lots in existing neighborhoods are excluded from utilizing these incentives
- It is staff's judgment this revision will have minimal impact on the overall tree canopy percentage

Conclusion

- Tree save incentives resulting in reduction of lot sizes and increased density in existing neighborhoods has negatively impacted the character and fabric of some neighborhoods
- Tree save areas obtained due to incentives applied to small parcels are negligible and administratively burdensome to enforce in perpetuity

Next Steps

- Brief Environment Committee (May)
- Brief Transportation and Planning Committee (May)
- Staff seek input from Stakeholders (May/June)
 - Development Services Technical Advisory Committee
 - Charlotte Tree Advisory Committee
 - Home Builders Association
 - Chamber Land Use Committee
 - Neighborhoods
- Seek recommendation by Zoning Committee of Planning Commission (July)
- Request Council approval (July)



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