

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES STAFF REPORT

For Planning Commission Meeting of October 16, 2018

**SUBJECT: Signature Club Apartments Landscape Modification Petition for Planning Commission Approval
File No. SP18-035**

PROPOSED CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION

The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission hereby approves Signature Club Apartments Landscape Modification Petition to maintain and continue landscape elements which are part of a previously approved site plan as nonconforming.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the petition be **approved** because no alterations to the existing landscape elements are proposed.

LOCATION:

Generally south of West Eisenhower Boulevard between Ann Arbor-Saline Road and South Main Street, and specifically on Signature Boulevard at Waymarket Drive. South planning area. Ward 4.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:

This [petition](#) requests permission to maintain and continue landscape elements which are part of a previously approved site plan even though a site plan (for administrative approval) has been submitted which normally triggers compliance with current requirements.

The petitioner has submitted a separate [site plan for administrative approval](#) to rearrange and reduce the parking lot immediately adjacent to the apartment clubhouse. No other changes to the site, including the parking areas serving the apartment buildings, are proposed. The Unified Development Code Section 5.20.2 (Landscape, screening, and buffering applicability) requires compliance with the landscaping, screening and buffering requirements whenever a site plan is submitted¹. Although the existing landscaping conditions, specifically the vehicular use area landscaping, are consistent with the approved Signature Club Apartments Site Plan, the existing landscaping conditions no longer meet current vehicular use area landscape requirements.

¹ Applicability requirements of repealed Chapter 62 Landscaping and Screening Ordinance were exactly carried forward in Chapter 55 Unified Development Code Section 5.20.2.

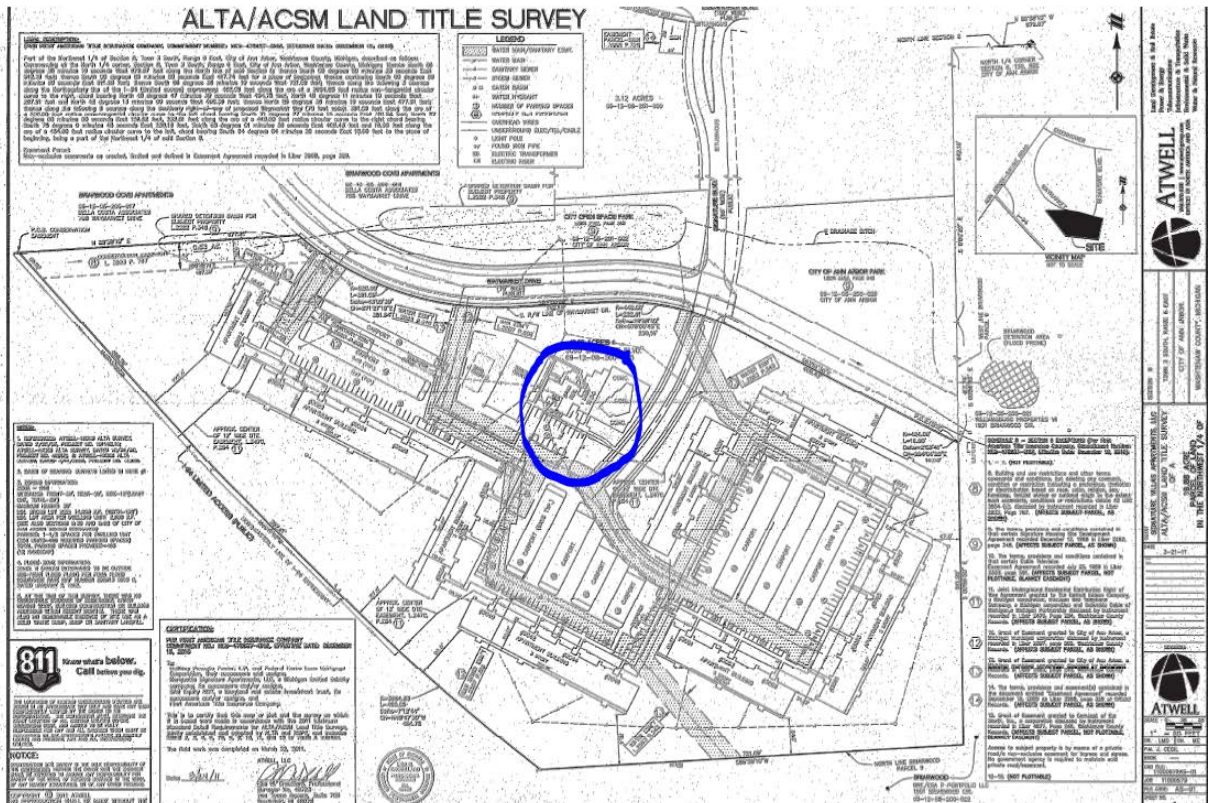


Figure 1 Existing Conditions Survey (clubhouse area circled)

There are several components to the vehicular use area landscape requirements: the ratio of landscape area to vehicular use area, the location of required landscaped areas, the minimum dimensions of each interior landscape island, the maximum number of spaces in a parking row without a break, the number of shade trees required in landscape islands, and the threshold for creating depressed bioretention areas utilized for storm water management. It is this last component, Section 5.20.3.B.7 depressed bioretention areas utilized for storm water management, with which the previously approved site plan and current conditions do not comply. Section 5.20.7.B.7 requires that 50% of the area of the landscape islands be depressed bioretention areas that are utilized for storm water management; none are.

Section 5.20.3 Landscape Modification provides flexibility in the application of landscaping and screening requirements under certain conditions, one of which (5.20.3.A.2.g) is maintaining and continuing nonconforming landscape elements which are part of a previously approved site plan provided no alterations of the existing landscape elements are proposed.

LAND USE ANALYSIS:

	Surrounding Land Use	Surrounding Zoning Districts
NORTH	Multiple-Family Residential, office	R4B (Multiple-Family) and O (Office)
EAST	Hotel	O and R4B
SOUTH	Hotel, Highway	R4B
WEST	Highway	

HISTORY AND PLANNING ANALYSIS:

The Signature Club Apartments Site Plan was approved on May 2, 1988 and an amendment was approved on June 14, 1989. The apartment complex was built soon after the first amendment was approved. On October 20, 2015 (file no. SP15-032), a second amendment was approved to expand the clubhouse building and add a maintenance garage next to it. A third amendment, to rearrange the clubhouse parking lot by removing 7 spaces and relocating one of the entrance drives, is currently under review.

Chapter 62 Landscaping and Screening was amended in 2011 to require depressed bioretention areas utilized as part of the storm water management system, along with many other regulation changes. Chapter 62 was repealed in 2018 and replaced by Chapter 55 Unified Development Code. Neither the standards and requirements for landscaping and screening or the provisions for landscape modifications were amended with adoption of the UDC. The language requiring compliance when a site plan is proposed, including depressed bioretention areas, and approving modifications, was carried forward exactly.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Forestry and Natural Resources – Staff supports the petitioner’s request to allow the landscape plan for the vehicular use areas other than the clubhouse parking lot to continue as nonconforming.

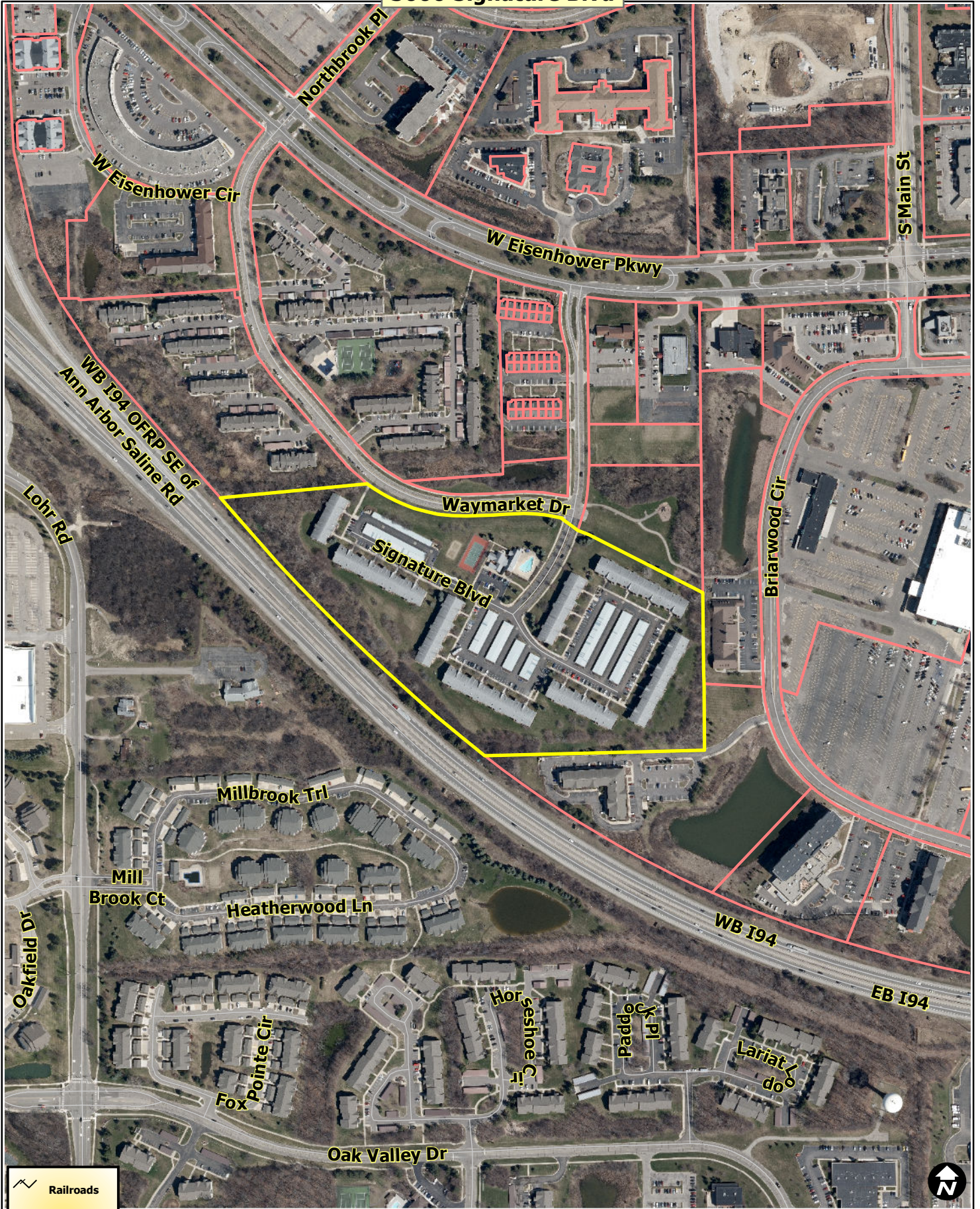
Planning – The request meets the procedure requirements and approval standards for a landscape modification.

Prepared by Alexis DiLeo
Reviewed by Brett Lenart
10/11/18

Attachments: Zoning Map
Aerial Photo
[Landscape Modification Petition](#)
[Site Plan](#)

c: Petitioner’s Agent – Midwestern Consulting, Inc. (Scott Betzoldt)
Assessor’s Office
Systems Planning
File

3000 Signature Blvd

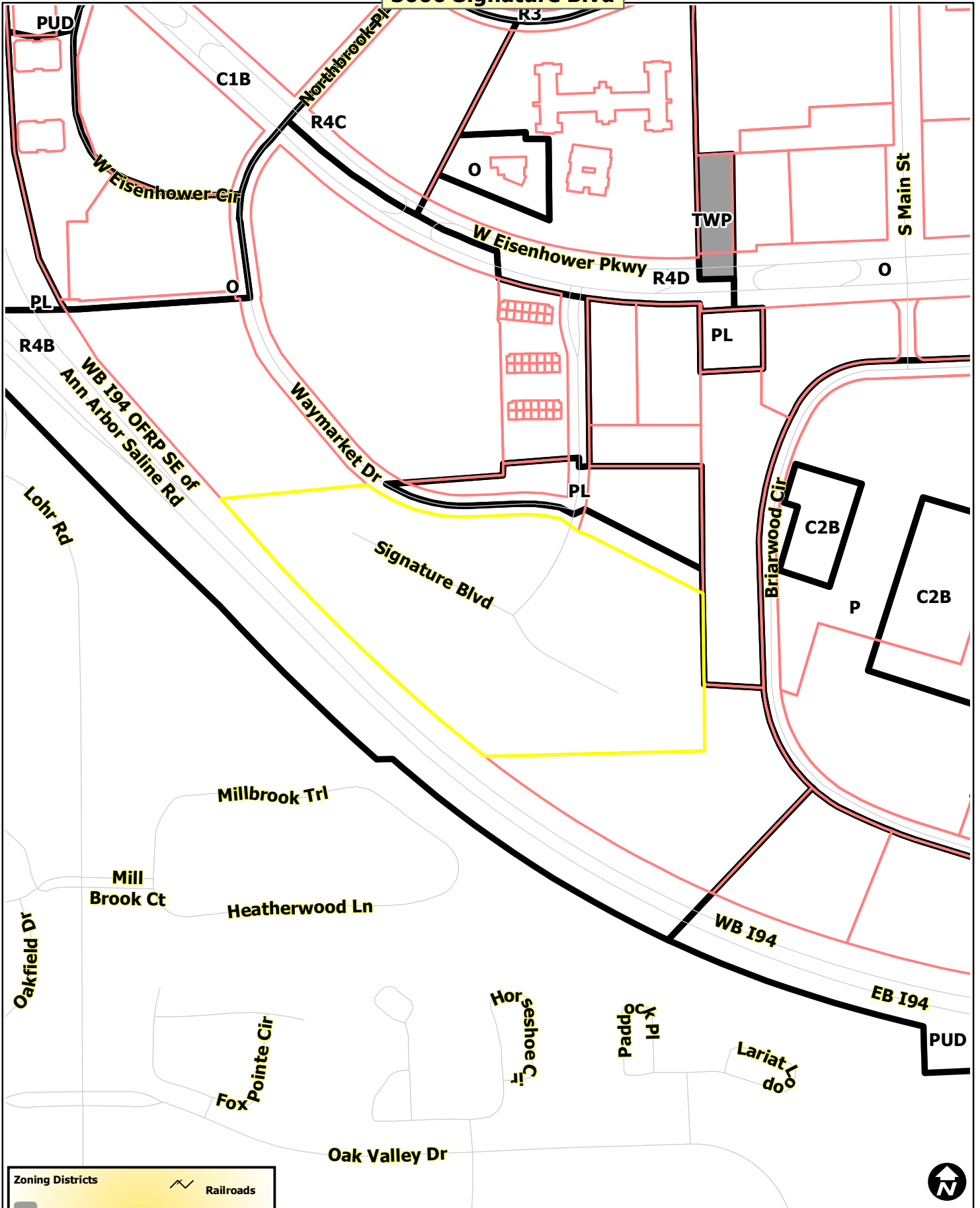


- Railroads
- Huron River
- Tax Parcels



Map date: 9/25/2018
Any aerial imagery is circa 2018
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3000 Signature Blvd



Zoning Districts	Railroads
Township Islands	Huron River
City Zoning Districts	Tax Parcels



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