

Testimony of Helen Schietinger
Before the Board of Zoning Adjustment
Regarding Boundary Cos. proposal for
St Paul's Townhomes Development
May 31, 2017

Good morning. My name is Helen Schietinger and Washington DC has been my home for over 25 years. I am a resident of Ward 4, but I am often in the Brookland neighborhood, which is why I am here today. The beauty of Brookland lies in its quiet neighborhood feel: the older homes and larger church buildings on lawns shaded by magnificent shade trees. Now there's a vibrant "town center" around the Brookland Metro, but the defining characteristic of Brookland is quiet streets lined with green space and mature shade trees.

My hope is that this board will assure that the St Paul's Townhomes Development maintains the neighborhood feel of the area it is in, which it can do by adhering to the goals set forth in the Sustainable DC Plan. As a DC resident, I strongly support all the goals of this plan, including enhanced green space and a 40% tree canopy; more affordable housing; active and vibrant neighborhoods; effective stormwater management; and improved energy efficiency in all new buildings.

Specifically, the plan requires that there be trees and green spaces on all new development sites (Action 2.4 under Nature and Green Area Ratio).

However, as the visual plans for St Paul's Townhomes stand, the dense townhome development proposed would not meet these goals.

To get an idea of what this maximum density development would look like, I walked -- and drove -- through the existing warren of private streets and townhomes behind St Paul's. I was frankly shocked, having been familiar with St Paul's spacious campus before those buildings were built. The buildings are crowded together leaving little room for landscaping, much less yards, and no place for children to play. The setbacks don't allow an appropriate distance from the buildings for shade trees, even along the street! For example, the trunk of one street tree was less than 12 feet from

the building itself; the recommended distance for a large tree is at least 15 to 20 feet from all buildings.

I urge this board to require the developer for the St. Paul's Townhomes development to contribute to a Sustainable DC by making the following changes:

1. Reduce the number of units from 78 to 65 or less to allow for more green space with trees, both in front of the units and in a common area;
2. Leave the existing grove of mature trees as the basis for the common open area;
3. Implement a 3:1 ratio for replacement trees;
4. Utilize permeable pavement in the alleys for water retention;
5. Enhance the energy efficiency of the units, making the homes more affordable, by installing solar panels on all roofs.

By requesting these changes, this board can be in the forefront of achieving the goals of the Sustainable DC Plan, whose ultimate aim is "to make DC the greenest, most livable city in the U.S."

Thank you.