

Casey Trees is a Brookland-based nonprofit, with a mission is to “restore, enhance and protect the tree canopy of the nation’s capital.” As members of the Brookland community and neighbors to the nearby Brookland Manor site, we appreciate the opportunity to provide public comment on the Brentwood Village PUD application and project proposal (Z.C. CASE NO. 14- 18).

Each year, Casey Trees plants more than 2,500 trees across the District. We do this because we know firsthand how trees transform spaces for the better and we want D.C. to be best city in which to live, work and play. We are also committed to helping the District achieve its ambitious 40 percent canopy coverage goal by 2032. Protecting mature trees and increasing tree coverage at sites that are undergoing redevelopment is critical to the success of this goal.

In October 2013, Casey Trees planted over 25 trees at Brookland Manor, helping foster community pride by connecting residents to nature. Trees help to activate public space and increase economic activity. Studies have shown that trees create vibrant, pedestrian-oriented retail environments that attract more businesses and customers. Trees have also been shown to calm traffic and improve community safety by deterring crime.

We applaud Mid-City Financial for creating a neighborhood plan that integrates 20-acres of Northeast DC with the city’s street grid to create a more sustainable and walkable community. However, providing tree-lined streets and a community green is not enough. We believe that this development can and should support more trees throughout the property in order to maximize canopy benefits on the entire site.

For the benefit of residents and businesses, we suggest the developer take the following steps:

- Set a tree canopy goal: In order to demonstrate the project’s commitment to a sustainable, livable, and walkable community, the new development should create a tree canopy goal as one of its sustainable metrics. Casey Trees’ initial analysis of the site shows that currently, the 20 acre area has a 20% tree canopy cover. Moving forward, Casey Trees would be willing to work with Mid-City Financial and its designers to help create a tree canopy goal for the development project – one that would exceed its existing 20% cover and better help the city to achieve its 40% city-wide goal.
- Protect existing trees: Compared to a small-stature tree, a strategically located large-stature tree has a bigger impact on conserving energy, cleaning the air, and cooling parking lots. When possible, we ask that the developers preserve the larger canopy trees on site. Additionally, it is important that construction practices protect existing trees - especially mature trees - and their root systems and leave spaces to sustain large, healthy trees throughout the site.
- Incorporate advanced tree growth systems: The project renderings show trees lining the perimeter of the site and all internal streets. Best practices for tree space design should be used to give these trees the best chance to thrive and provide maximum canopy benefits. These include:
 - Provide street trees adequate soil volume for their roots to grow. We recommend suspended sidewalks through the use of soil cells or structural soils. This allows for soil to remain un-compacted and facilitates tree root growth. These tree growth systems should be used under all sidewalks and other hardscapes.
 - Choose tree species based on the amount of available rooting space and relation to buildings and any overhead infrastructure that could conflict with expanding tree canopy.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and we look forward to working with all parties on this project for the benefit of Ward 5 residents and the city as a whole. If you have any questions, please contact me at eoaksford@caseytrees.org or 202-349-1892.

Sincerely,

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Submitted on 3/16/2015 by:

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