



Testimony of  
Kristin Taddei, Planning Advocate, Casey Trees  
May 31, 2017

Before the Board of Zoning Adjustment  
on  
3015 4<sup>th</sup> Street NE Townhouse Development  
BZA Case No. 19377: The Boundary Companies and The Missionary Society

Good morning board members,

My name is Kristin Taddei and I am the Planning Advocate with Casey Trees. As you may know, Casey Trees is a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit with a mission “to restore, enhance, and protect the tree canopy of the nation’s capital.” To fulfill this mission, we plant trees; monitor the city’s tree canopy; and work with decision makers, developers, and residents to encourage tree planting and protection. We are dedicated to helping the District reach its 40 percent tree canopy goal by 2032. As a city, we will achieve this goal with sustainable development projects that protect existing trees and achieve no net loss in tree canopy. We hope to work with the development team to ensure that trees are prioritized in the development of a townhome community on St. Paul’s College property at 3015 4<sup>th</sup> Street NE.

Preserving trees is integral to preserving the historic nature of St. Paul’s College, as many of the 165 trees on site have likely been growing since the early years of the College. These trees would also provide a valuable community amenity; add value and privacy to the homes of future residents; and help to lessen pollution, flooding, erosion, extreme temperatures, and cooling costs.

Boundary Companies’ proposed site and roadway configuration for the St. Paul’s College project shows 78 rowhomes located where a grove of mature trees exists today. If this plan were to be actualized, 70 trees would be removed, some of which are missing from Boundary Companies’ tree inventory. This would reduce the tree canopy in the project area from 32% to 13%.

In addition to the environmental losses, significant costs would be associated with the removal of Special Trees, designated by the Urban Forest Preservation Act of 2002 as any tree greater than 55 inches in circumference. Permits to remove the 24 Special Trees currently growing where townhomes are proposed would cost roughly \$82,000 (Figure 1).

After analysis, Casey Trees has found that it is possible to reconfigure the 78 units and preserve the grove of mature trees along 4<sup>th</sup> Street (Figure 2). It is possible to achieve both of these goals if the request to create a historic viewshed from 4<sup>th</sup> Street is repealed. As you can see in photos 1 through 4, there are few site lines from 4<sup>th</sup> Street to the St. Paul's College building due to distance, elevation, and tree cover.

Casey Trees offers the following recommendations, which, if adopted, would require removal of only 11 Special Trees, and would allow a 32% tree canopy to remain on site:

1. **Configure 31 homes on the north side of the site** in the same orientation as the Chancellor's Row development to the east.
2. **Configure 49 homes at the south side of the site** in the same orientation as the townhomes south of the property.
3. **To achieve no net loss in tree canopy, plant replacement trees at a ratio of 3 new trees for every 1 tree removed.** We recommend selecting appropriate species based on available sunlight and rooting space. In addition, we request that the development team prioritize shade trees to maximize benefits.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

St. Paul's College Townhome Development  
Boundary Cos. Proposed Design

access rowhome garages



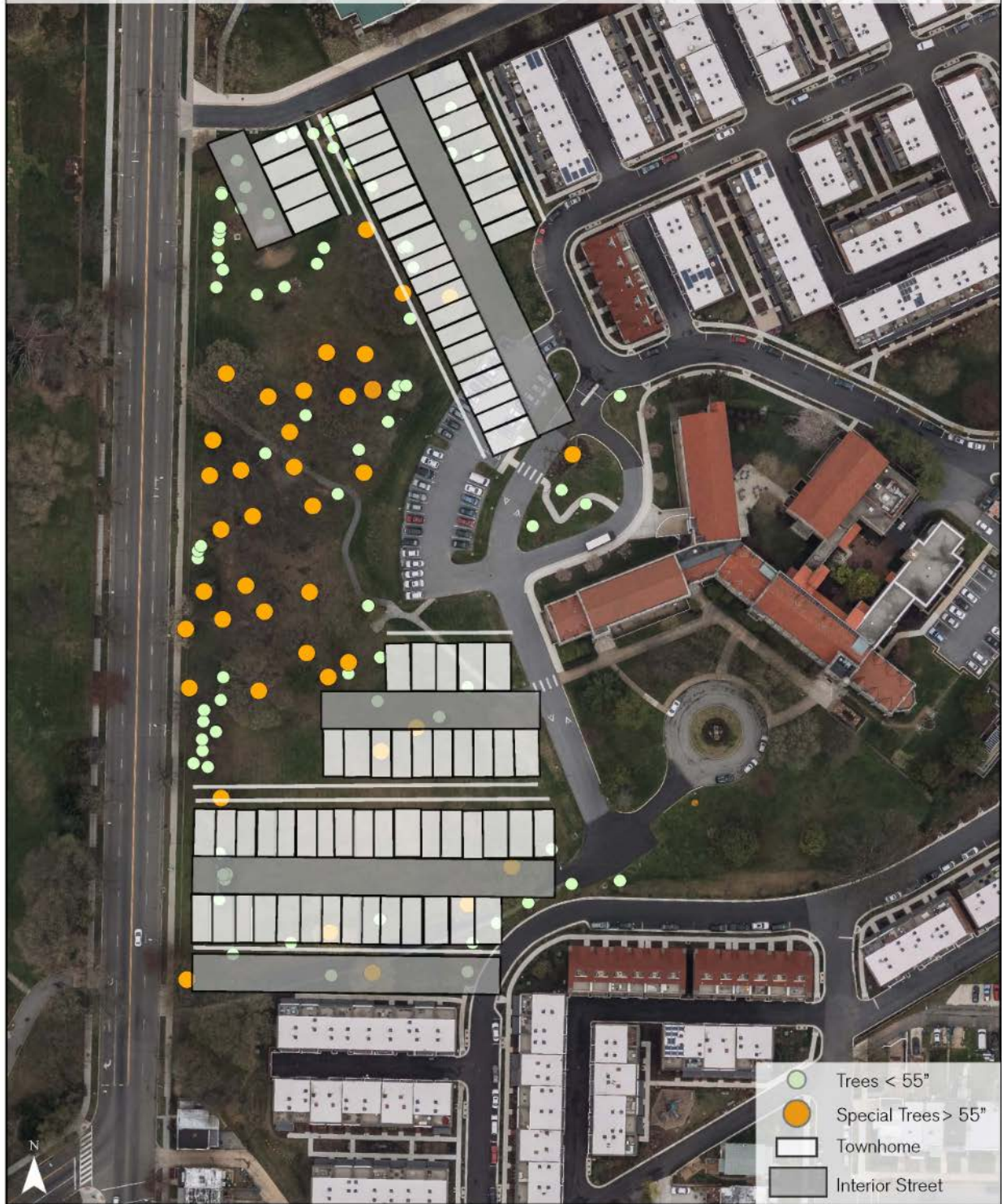
connecting to 4<sup>th</sup> Street



Figure 1. Boundary Cos.' townhome development proposal would remove 70 trees, including a historic grove of mature trees along 4<sup>th</sup> Street NE.

# St. Paul's College Townhome Development

Casey Trees' Design Alternative



**Figure 2.** Casey Trees' proposed alternative footprint would protect the historic grove of mature trees.



Photo 1. View of St. Paul's College from across 4<sup>th</sup> St. NE



Photo 2. View of St. Paul's College from the sidewalk along 4<sup>th</sup> Street NE.



Photo 3. View of St. Paul's College at the southern entrance from 4<sup>th</sup> St. NE.



Photo 4. View of southern entrance to St. Paul's College from across 4<sup>th</sup> St. NE