



Testimony of  
Spenser Balog, Sustainable Development Associate, Casey Trees  
June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Before the Zoning Commission  
on  
2nd-Stage PUD for Market Terminal Building A2 (Sq. 3587, Lot 840)  
DCOZ Case No. 15-27A: Grosvenor USA Limited

Good evening commissioners,

My name is Spenser Balog and I am the Sustainable Development Associate with Casey Trees. 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 can achieve this goal with sustainable development projects that protect existing trees and achieve a net gain in tree canopy.

Washington, D.C., is rapidly changing to accommodate the influx of residents moving into the city to experience the multiplicity of cultures and character found within the District. Areas such as Union Market have become an epicenter for creativity, supporting a diverse array of experiences through art, food, and entertainment. As Union Market has evolved, housing developments have followed. To support this development, tree canopy and open green space in the greater-NoMa neighborhood has become increasingly rare, putting dense areas with large expanses of impervious surface at greater risk of heat-related climate change effects.

We were very pleased to see green roofs and bioretention used to mitigate stormwater and the urban heat island effect within this parcel of Florida Market. Moreover, we were extremely excited to see trees on structure planned for the residential rooftop garden of building A2 (Figure 1). Green roofs greatly assist with stormwater management, storing and filtering stormwater on-site, while cooling the buildings and lowering energy costs at the same time. By incorporating trees into these storm-gardens, benefits can be maximized by providing shade to the area and helping to filter air quality as well.

Providing many new trees to the site through rooftop and plaza garden bioretention will help to make this site resilient in the face of DC’s worsening climate change projections. We have a few recommendations that we would like to present to the Zoning Commission today. It is not our

intention to delay this project or inhibit the development of this site, however, we recommend that, before the Zoning Commission approves the second-stage PUD for building A-2 of the development site, the developers consider the following:

- **Incorporate advanced tree growth systems**  
To maximize canopy benefits, street trees need to grow quickly and have long, healthy lives. We recommend suspended sidewalks using soil cells or structural soils in Neal Place Park plaza (Figure 2). Doing so will allow the tree roots to spread and access a greater volume of soil than traditionally provided in planter boxes and tree pits. Paired with permeable pavement, the at-grade trees within the plaza will be able to thrive and provide a garden oasis for residents and visitors to enjoy.
- **Consult Casey Trees' Urban Tree Selection Guide**  
We support the use of appropriate trees in bioretention systems. Trees uptake and filter rainwater before it enters the drainage system, reducing polluting overflows into the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers. Certain trees are adapted to thrive in wetter conditions and are specialized in capturing and storing rainwater. We are requesting a detailed species selection plan and recommend that the development team consult our species selection guide to ensure that the right trees are planted in the ideal places to provide them with long, healthy lives.

Providing ample soil space to support large canopy trees will ensure cooler temperatures throughout the site and effectively meet the goals of the Climate Ready DC plan, while beautifying the site and providing mental and physical health benefits to residents. We are appreciative of the developer's existing sustainable considerations and we look forward to working with the development team on these suggestions. We believe that adopting these commitments will help to make Union Market more resilient in the face of worsening climate effects and make this project a shining example of innovative green design.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**Figure 1:** There are roughly 21 trees planned for the rooftop courtyard, with a mix of canopy and understory to provide residents with an immersive garden experience.

- 1. RESIDENTIAL COURTYARD
- 2. UPPER ROOF TERRACE



BUILDING A2 ROOF SPACES

December 20, 2018

**A-2\_501** SCAPE BRINNSTOOL + LYNCH sh p GROSVENOR

**Figure 2:** Silva Cells are an example of a suspended pavement system that allows tree roots to access a large volume of uncompacted soil underneath sidewalks and roadways. These trees are shown to grow larger than trees in other planting mediums and maximize stormwater management benefits.

