



Testimony of  
Kristin Taddei, Planning Advocate, Casey Trees  
September 19, 2018

Before the Board of Zoning Adjustment  
on  
Redevelopment of 304 Livingston Terrace SE  
BZA Case No. 19819: Southern Hills LP

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 a net gain in tree canopy.

We have been in touch with the development team regarding the 24 Special Trees and 2 Heritage Trees at Southern Hills. Our goal is to ensure that mature, healthy trees are preserved where possible, and that the level of tree canopy after development exceeds the tree canopy that exists today, so that as a city, we continue to get closer to 40% tree canopy.

We were pleased to hear that the development team has the support of the community for this project, and that residents will be able to remain in their current homes until new housing is available. We also understand that this phased plan makes it difficult to preserving existing trees in some cases.

At a site visit on August 8, 2018, the development team shared their plans to protect the critical root zone of the two Heritage Trees on this property (Figure 1). They have taken exceptional care to do so, and we are impressed by the steps they have taken in this case. In addition, our independent analysis shows that once trees in the landscaping plan reach maturity, tree canopy will more than double on this site (Figure 2). These trees will provide a valuable community amenity; add privacy to the homes of current residents; and help to manage pollution, flooding, and erosion on this hilly site.

We do have four requests that we would like to bring to the BZA today. Our intent is not to delay this project – we understand that residents and the development team would like this project to move ahead quickly. Rather, we would like to request two small plan modifications and two commitments before the BZA moves to approve this project:

1. We believe it would be possible to relocate one of the proposed units along 3rd Street SE in Building G6. This modification would allow the development team to preserve Special Trees #1670 – an elm tree in very good condition (Figure 3).
2. In addition, slightly changing the orientation of the parking lot entrance from 4<sup>th</sup> Street SE would allow the development team to retain Special Tree #1666 – a London plane tree with a very high 85% condition rating (Figure 3).
3. We also believe it would be possible to protect Special Tree #1667 – a sweetgum tree with a 70% condition rating – which falls in green space near the intersection of 4<sup>th</sup> Street SE and Livingston Terrace SE. We would like to request that the development team commit to protecting this tree using metal tree protection fencing and signage per DDOT's tree protection requirements (DWG No. 608.10) (Figure 3).
4. Finally, we would like to request protection of Special Tree #1725 – a very large, healthy red oak with an 80% condition rating – which is at the very edge of the property near 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SE. The development team plans to install bioretention near this tree. Retaining this tree, which is currently intercepting over 10,000 gallons of stormwater per year, will only strengthen this robust stormwater management plan (Figure 3).

Taking these actions would add roughly 5,000 square feet of shaded green space. Even though we are only requesting that 4 of the 24 Special Trees on this property be retained, we urge the development team and the BZA to consider these trees a significant community benefit.

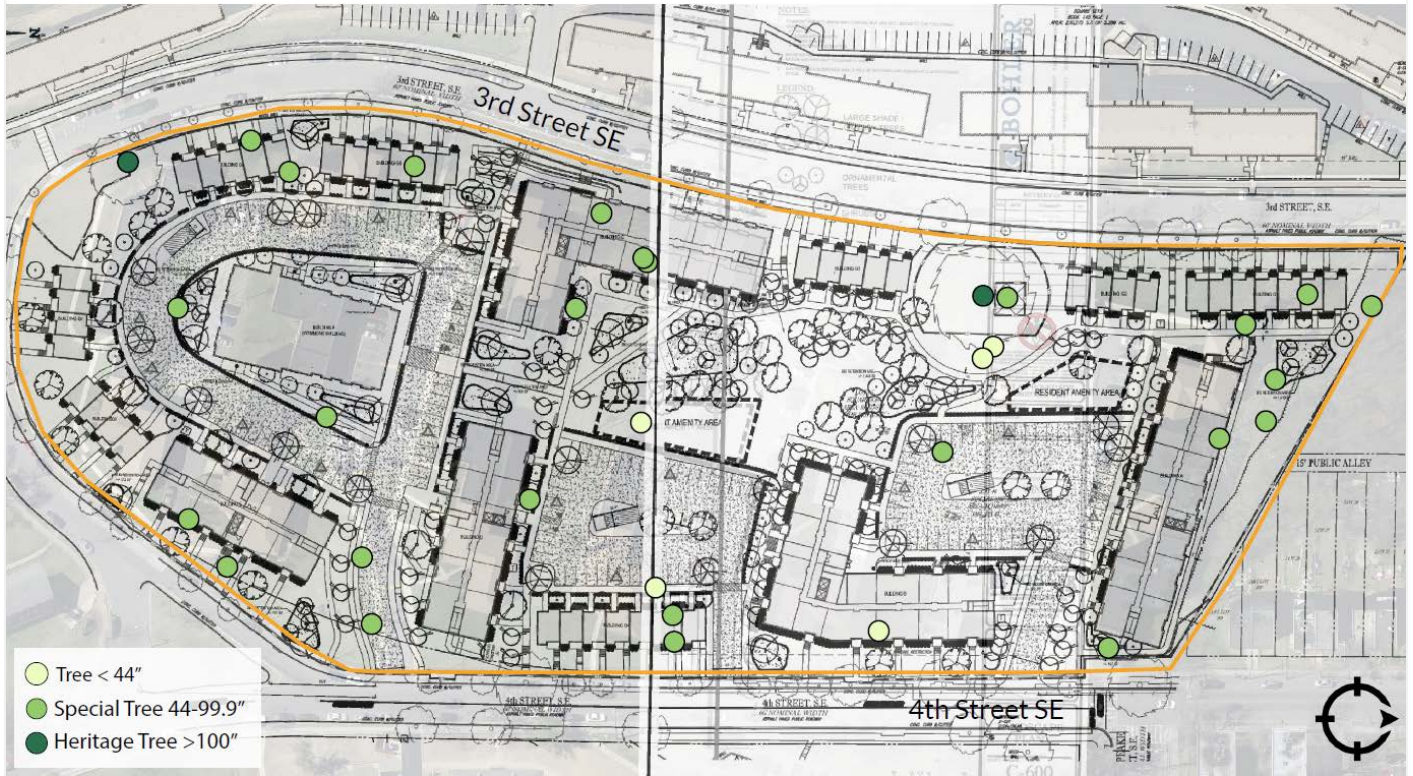
I would also like to note that over the past month, the development team committed to including trees in rain gardens/bioretention where possible and consulting with Casey Trees when determining tree species to be planted to create a diverse palette of trees that increases resilience to temperature fluctuations and disease.

Again, we do not want to delay the project and are happy there is community support. We are appreciative of the developer's openness to input and the commitments they have made throughout this process, and we look forward to the BZA's review of the three requests outlined above. We are confident that if our suggestions are implemented, this development will be a shining example of an environmentally conscious design that also meets the needs of this community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

# Special & Heritage Trees

Southern Hills, 304 Livingston Terrace SE

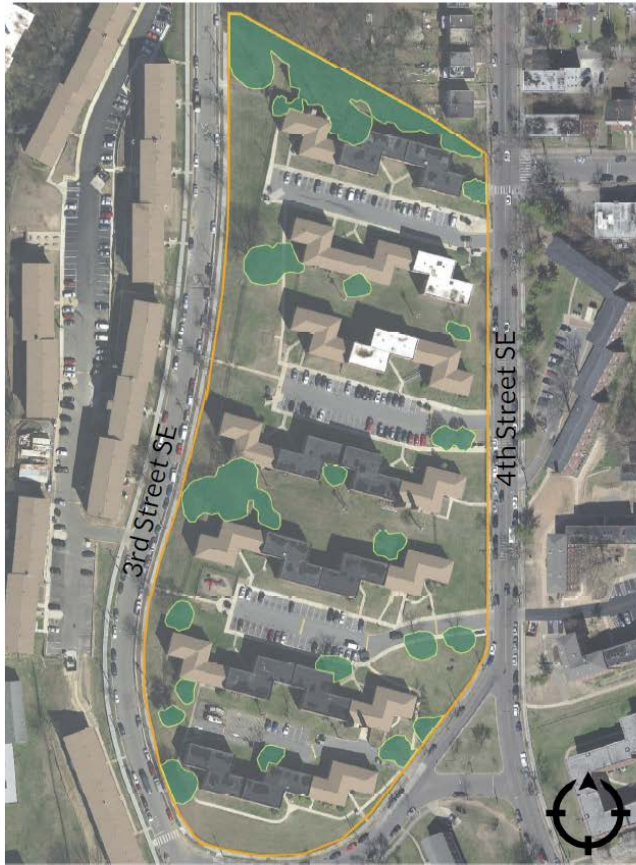


**Figure 1.** There are currently 24 Special Trees and 2 Heritage Trees at Southern Hills. The development team plans to protect the critical root zone of the two Heritage Trees on this property.

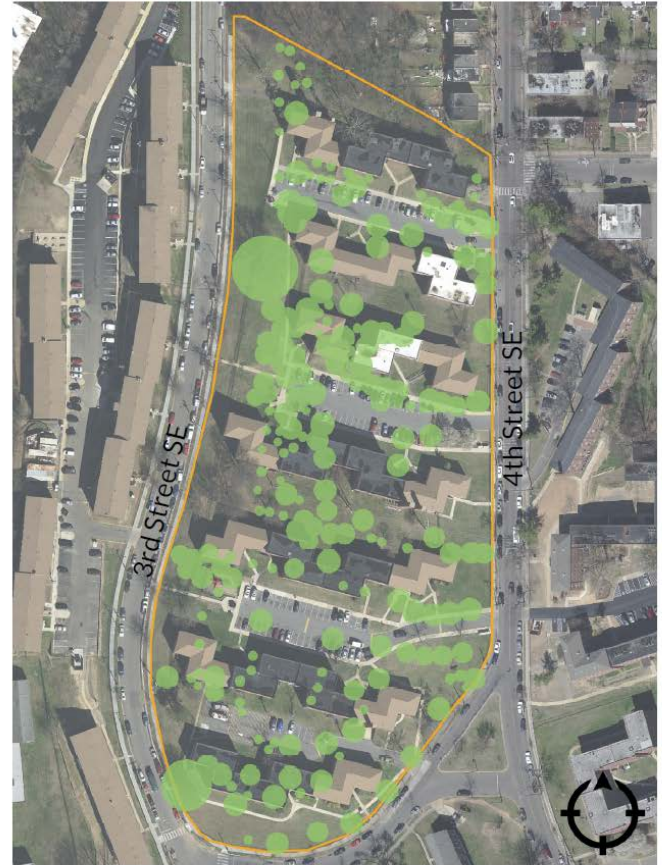


# Existing & Future Tree Canopy

Southern Hills, 304 Livingston Terrace SE



Existing Tree Canopy

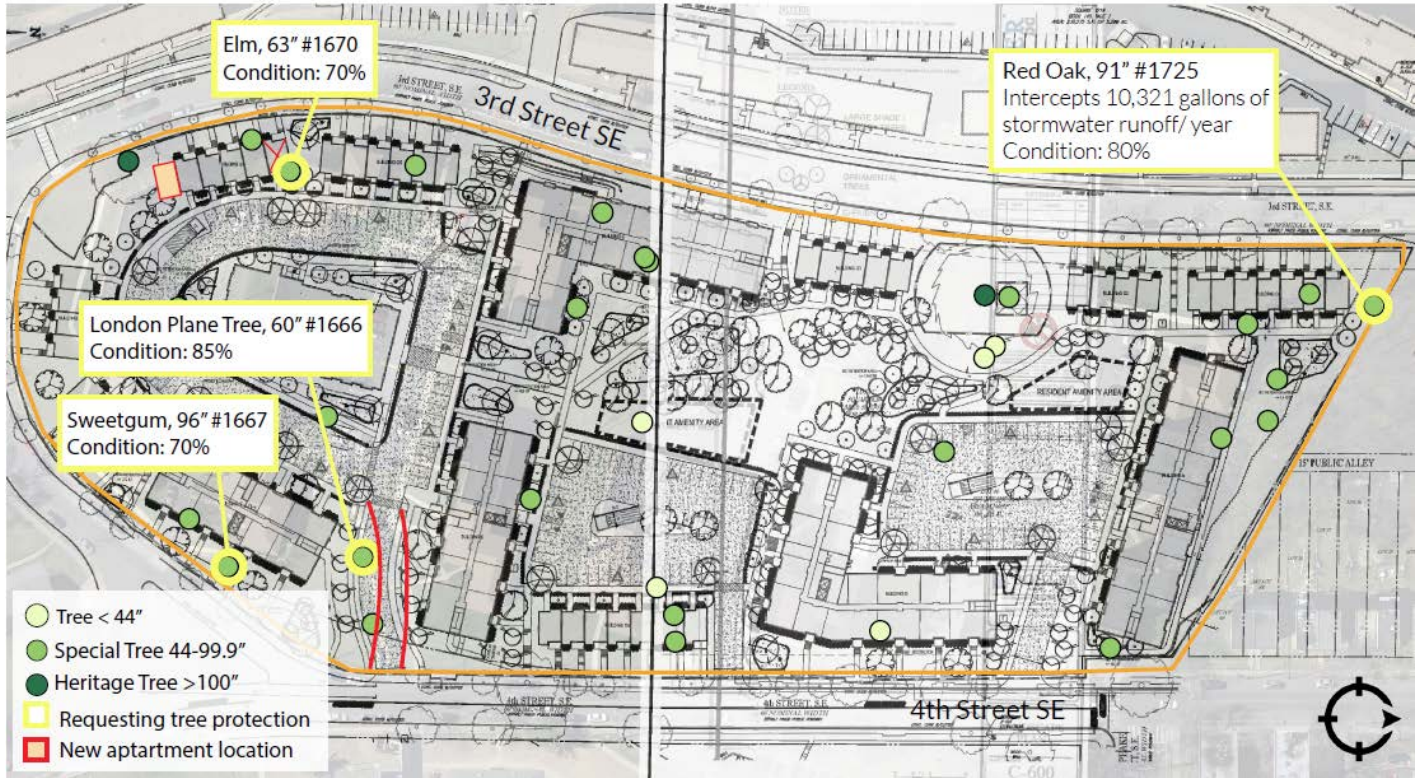


Estimated Future Tree Canopy

**Figure 2.** Our independent analysis shows that once trees in the landscaping plan reach maturity, tree canopy will cover an estimated 29% of the property, compared to 12% today. For the purposes of this analysis, the canopy of a mature canopy tree was considered 35' in diameter and 90 m<sup>2</sup> area, and the canopy of a mature ornamental tree was considered 15' in diameter and 16 m<sup>2</sup> area.

# Special Tree Protection Requests

Southern Hills, 304 Livingston Terrace SE



**Figure 3.** Protecting the 4 Special Trees circled in yellow by relocating one apartment building, changing the orientation of the parking lot entrance from 4<sup>th</sup> Street SE, and implementing tree protection measures would add roughly 5,000 square feet of shaded green space.