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To whom it may concern,

I am writing regarding the use of the product called CU-Structural Soil® on the SUNY College at Oneonta campus. As you may know, trees play an important role in bettering our environment. They improve air quality and reduce heat island effects that have overall negative impacts. While a campus may seem to have a great deal of open space and may appear green, most campuses, in fact, are more like urban environments with a great deal of pavement to facilitate the complex pedestrian and vehicular movements that are required in the normal use of the spaces. Underground, complex utility systems are also present. These factors lead to high rates of tree failure on many campuses. While there are several measures that can lead to improved tree health, the use of CU-Structural Soil® is one innovative method that can greatly improve tree health adjacent to pavements.

CU-Structural Soil®, developed through research at Cornell University's Urban Horticulture Institute, was patented and marketed through AMERREQ in 1999. It was slow to be accepted as traditional practice required that pavement bases be dense and as rigid as possible. Over several years though, many studies have shown very good durability and functioning of the product and it now accepted by the NYS DOT. A more complete description of the product can be obtained from the sales representative's website: <http://www.amerreq.com/pages/1/index.htm> but essentially, CU-Structural Soil® is a patented method of site mixing a granular base course for pavements. Traditional base courses are heavily compacted and have little void space between the stones and particles that comprise it. This means that trees cannot obtain the water, nutrients and air that they require to live if surrounded by this material. CU-Structural Soil® is different in that topsoil and hydrogel are mixed with stones which have a greater proportion of void space. This material supports pavements but also allows tree roots to grow through it. Additionally, since the tree roots can grow through the base material rather than trying to squeeze between the base and the pavement layers, much less heaving of pavements occurs. This means pavements last longer thereby creating a more sustainable condition.

Please advise me if you require further information.

Sincerely,

Michael Palmer

Michelle A. Palmer, R.L.A.

Templeton Landscape Architecture & Planning