



Government of the District of Columbia

Office of the Deputy Mayor
for Planning and Economic Development

February 20, 2007

Carol Mitten
Chairperson
Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia
441 4th Street, NW, Suite 220
Washington, DC 20001-2714

Dear Chairperson Mitten and Members of the Zoning Commission:

Subject: Zoning Commission Case No. 04-24 Rhode Island Avenue Metro, 2nd Stage PUD

I am writing to express the firm support of the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (“DMPED”) for the Rhode Island Avenue Metro Plaza project currently under PUD review. The set asides of twenty (20) percent affordable housing and ten (10) percent local community retail in this section of Ward 5 reflect the Mayor’s 2007 Action Plan for Economic Development and Affordable Housing: A City of Opportunity.

Mid-City Urban and A&R Development have worked closely with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (“WMATA”), local stakeholders and several agencies of the District of Columbia through a responsible planning process to create a site design that meets the priorities of the community and WMATA, while achieving the Ward 5 vision articulated in the District’s most recent comprehensive plan. That vision is to “[make] the Rhode Island Avenue Metrorail Station a major mixed commercial/retail/housing center for the ward.”

The development is a critical component of plans to revitalize the entire Rhode Island Avenue corridor, and it is expected to spur further investment along this major thoroughfare into and out of the City. It is also a model for Transit-Oriented Development (“TOD”), demonstrating the ability of private developers, WMATA, the District and local residents to collectively collaborate to create an exciting, mixed-use, mixed-income development at a major transit center.

This development promotes the District policy objective of increasing our supply of affordable housing and our policy of encouraging and placing residents near TOD at metro stations. Moreover, with a 20% set-aside for households earning 50% or less of the Area Median Income, the Rhode Island Metro Plaza will place a substantial number of District citizens within close proximity of the transportation.

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Furthermore, the developers have committed 10% of the retail space to local community businesses at the same terms available to national credit tenants. This will ensure a place for local businesses in a new Class A retail development. Before the construction of the Rhode Island Avenue Metro-rail Station, like many other areas of the District, this area of Northeast had not experienced the economic boom that is taking place in our City. With the development of the new stores such Home Depot, Giant Food, Downtown Locker Room, America's Best Optical, Citibank and others, this area is beginning to see much needed commercial and residential development.

We believe Rhode Island Avenue Metro Plaza is an important initiative not only for the purpose of revitalizing the area, but to bring new and affordable housing and other retail services to this section of our City. The Rhode Island Avenue Metro Plaza is also consistent with the District's policy and objective of encouraging mixed-use development near our transit system and our support of "Transit Oriented Development". We urge the Commission to act favorably on the Rhode Island Avenue Metro, 2nd Stage PUD.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Neil Albert
Deputy Mayor

cc: Harriet Tregoning
Director, Office of Planning