

SMART GROWTH ALLIANCE

February 8, 2007

Ms. Vicki Davis
Mid-City Urban
8403 Colesville Road
Silver Spring, MD 20910

RE: Rhode Island Avenue Metro Plaza – Smart Growth Recognition

Dear Ms. Davis:

We are pleased to inform you that the Smart Growth Alliance's Project Recognition Jury has recognized Rhode Island Avenue Metro Plaza as a Smart Growth Project Proposal.

The Smart Growth Alliance (the "SGA") is a joint effort of the Greater Washington Board of Trade, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Enterprise Community Partners, the Metropolitan Washington Builders' Council, the Coalition for Smarter Growth, and the Urban Land Institute Washington. The SGA's mission is to research, identify and encourage land use, development and transportation policies and practices that protect environmental assets and enhance our region's quality of life. The SGA's Recognition Program distinguishes specific development proposals that exemplify smart growth characteristics. Please note that this recognition is coming solely from the Smart Growth Alliance, and should not be construed or communicated as coming from any of the six organizations specifically or individually.

The Recognition Program uses criteria including project location, mobility and accessibility, density, design, diversity of uses, affordable housing, the environment, community assets, and public participation to evaluate project proposals. The Alliance's Recognition Jury meets quarterly to review project proposals and to select those best meeting the criteria.

SGA PARTNERS

Urban Land Institute
Washington

Chesapeake Bay
Foundation

Greater Washington
Board of Trade

Coalition for
Smarter Growth

Metropolitan Washington
Builders' Council

The jury met on January 11, 2007 to review a number of projects including Rhode Island Avenue Metro Plaza. The review included a careful analysis of each project based on specific information submitted with the application and independent research and review by staff. Applying all of the SGA criteria, the jury agreed to recognize your project as a Smart Growth Project Proposal. The jury believes your proposal is a well-designed and thoughtful example of a mixed-use development around a transit station in a neglected neighborhood. We understand this is no small task. The jury was especially impressed with the commitment to keep 20% of the units as affordable. As you know, affordable housing is rapidly disappearing around the District, especially around Metro stations. Finally, your letter of support from the ANC and the civic associations proves that you have worked in good faith with the surrounding neighborhoods.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO. 04-244
CASE NO. 04-244
EXHIBIT NO. 24
sga@uli.org

The jury recognizes a project proposal based on the project's design as of the time of the jury's review and based on the information available to the jury at the time of review. The jury reserves the right to modify or revoke its recognition if the project changes so significantly that it no longer meets one or more of the SGA criteria. For projects at an early development approval stage, we encourage work by the developer and the public authorities to fully utilize the Smart Growth Recognition Program criteria as such design details are finalized.

We consider this letter confidential, and will not share it with anyone without your approval. You may, however, use this letter as you choose. If we can provide more support, such as by submitting comments to any of the public reviewing bodies, we would be glad to do so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Bailey', written over a horizontal line.

John Bailey
Executive Director
Washington Smart Growth Alliance

WASHINGTON REGIONAL NETWORK FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

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Testimony by
Washington Regional Network for Livable Communities to
the Washington Area Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) regarding:

Hearing No. 169, Docket No. R05-2

Proposed Parking Reduction, Relocation
and Garage Construction

In Support of Proposed Parking Reduction at the Rhode Island Avenue Metro Station

July 26, 2005

My name is Cheryl Cort and I am the Executive Director of the Washington Regional Network for Livable Communities -- or WRN. WRN is a non-profit organization that advocates transportation investments, land use policies, and neighborhood designs that enhance existing communities and the environment of the Washington, D.C. region.

WRN has worked extensively with community members around the Rhode Island Avenue Metro station. We have conducted workshops, walking audits and developed a set of recommendations to make the Rhode Island Avenue Metro station more accessible to the community that it serves. We have also supported the detailed analysis conducted by D.C. Office of Planning which demonstrated that many more Metro riders could be served by improving walk, bicycle and bus access to the Metrorail station at the same cost of replacing the 387 commuter parking spaces.

Support Commuter Parking Reduction; Invest in Improved Walk, Bicycle and Bus Access

We strongly support the proposed reduction in commuter parking. This proposal makes sense for several reasons.

- *Since Metro commuter parking mostly serves out-of-state Metro riders, D.C. residents should not be required to pay for this costly form of transit access.* Most commuter parking at this station is used by out-of-state park and riders. According to two weekday license plate surveys conducted by my organization, 60 percent of vehicles parked in the Metro lot were from out-of-state. Since replacement parking will be paid with D.C. funds in the form of tax increment financing (TIF), commuter parking is a subsidy from D.C. taxpayers to mostly out of-state-drivers.
- *Full replacement of commuter parking, as a major investment for rider access at the Rhode Island Avenue Metro station, is no longer justified.* The large amount of surface parking at Rhode Island Avenue Metro station might have been justified when it was the terminus in 1976, but today many other Metro stations along the Red and Green lines can better serve

the park and ride functions. The station should be treated as an urban station like the adjacent station of Brookland, which offers no long term parking, but enjoys substantially higher ridership. The Rhode Island Avenue Metro station serves an urban neighborhood where many households do not drive or own cars. The proposed development project would generate approximately 1279 transit trips a day through new residential and retail uses. This is a substantial increase over the ridership from the existing 340 all day parking spaces, generating about 360 riders.¹

- *Alternative modes of access – walk, bicycle and bus – would serve more people, improve Metro's bottom line, and better serve the surrounding neighborhood.* This is a much fairer approach to serving the needs of all community residents and transit riders, as 40 to nearly 60 percent of the families in the surrounding neighborhoods do not have access to a car (see Table 1). More investment should be directed to creating a safe and inviting station area environment with housing and shops, good walking connections to surrounding neighborhoods, and improved bicycle facilities and access, and bus service. In addition to this being more equitable, this approach will also provide the most benefits to improve safety, and support economic revitalization.

Parking is an extremely costly and inefficient way to provide Metro access. At \$15,000 - \$20,000 per space for construction costs alone, we appreciate that the D.C. government has carefully evaluated the costs and benefits of investing in replacing all the commuter parking which would amount to \$8 million. A 45 percent reduction in commuter parking will save over \$2 million. We would like to see this cost savings invested in access to Metro that would increase ridership, revenues and enhance the surrounding community. First and foremost, \$2 million is needed to improve walking access to Metro. We recommend that funds be devoted to improving the pedestrian environment along Rhode Island Avenue, particularly between 4th St., NE and the Metro station (see attached streetscape recommendations). Also, funding for a safe pedestrian crossing from the Metropolitan Branch Trail and the Metro station across the railroad tracks is needed.

Quality of the Bus Passenger Waiting Area

We also want to make a comment regarding the bus passenger waiting area. We are concerned that the quality of the waiting experience for bus passengers is the lowest priority of the developer of the joint development site, and not a sufficient priority of WMATA. We ask that the placement of bus passenger waiting facilities under the garage be reconsidered as exhaust from buses, potential for obstructed site lines and obscured visibility and increased hiding places could make the bus waiting experience less pleasant and potentially more dangerous. Increased amenities and conveniences should at the least be provided to bus passengers. We suggest a small retail kiosk such as the one at the Friendship Heights bus terminal, and real time/next bus information displays for each bus route and other amenities to make the bus waiting experience more pleasant and safe.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal.

¹ Rhode Island Avenue Parking Analysis, January 2003 Draft, USEPA & DCOP, prepared by Nelson/Nygaard Consulting.

Table 1 – Household Access to a Vehicle

Census Tract	Boundaries	Households with no access to a vehicle
87.02	Rhode Island Ave. to NY Ave., 2 nd St, NE to rail road tracks	52.6%
92.04	Edgewood Terrace to Rhode Island Avenue	57.8%
93.02	18 th Place, NE, Reed St., Franklin to Rhode Island Ave.	39.0%
91.02	Home Depot site to New York Avenue	47.6%

Source: 2000 Census – Table DP-4 Profile of Selected Housing Characteristics: 2000

WASHINGTON REGIONAL NETWORK FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

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Rhode Island Avenue Streetscape Improvements from 4th NE to Reed Street (Metro Station)

Four primary strategies are used in creating successful street environments – places where each of a street's components complement the surrounding neighborhood and are beneficial to both the pedestrians and automotive users of the street corridor.

The four main strategies used in redefining Rhode Island Avenue as a successful community street are:

1. Design a street which successfully accounts for the scale, function and safety of its pedestrian and automotive users.
2. Create a street which acts as a connector and community link to its surrounding neighborhoods, community destinations and as a gateway entering the District of Columbia.
3. Design an aesthetic streetscape which promotes an attractive community identity, pleasant pedestrian environment and enhances the public realm.
4. Create a holistic street environment which promotes Rhode Island Avenue as a destination for the surrounding community's everyday needs.

For the purposes of this study, only investigations for the *physical* improvements of the Rhode Island Avenue corridor were identified and illustrated on a streetscape enhancement concept plan. In order to truly recognize Rhode Island Avenue as true community street, a comprehensive neighborhood master plan and a 'macro' level land use study of the overall Rhode Island Avenue corridor and the surrounding neighborhoods it connects should be conducted in order to truly plan a successful community street as outlined above. The concept plan created for the WRN study is a working tool for the community and identifies the opportunities and constraints for physical streetscape enhancements along the study section of Rhode Island Avenue.

Rhode Island Avenue acts as a main entrance, or gateway, leading into the District of Columbia from Prince George's County, Maryland. The segment of our study area focuses on the corridor and immediate surrounds which connect the neighborhoods of Brentwood and Edgewood, between 4th Street NE and Reed Street. The main uses along the corridor are the Rhode Island Shopping Center, the Mt. Calvary Church and community center, several automotive garages, other auto-oriented commercial uses and the Rhode Island Avenue Metro Station.

The corridor carries large numbers of suburban Maryland commuters using the street as an entry into downtown Washington, D.C. In addition, a large number of pedestrians walk along the corridor to reach the Metro station and adjacent retail and community centers.

In the proposed concept plan for Rhode Island Avenue, the separation of the pedestrian zone from the automotive zones of the corridor was a priority goal in creating a safer environment for all travelers. On the southern side of Rhode Island Avenue, the generous area existing between the existing curb and the front façade of the commercial uses along that side of the corridor allows for a new vegetation buffer zone (composed of understory plantings and street trees) of approximately 5-10' in width to be created in order to physically separate pedestrians

from automotive traffic. Adjacent to this buffer, a new, wider sidewalk path ranging between 8-12' in width should be located for pedestrian movement and amenities.

On the northern edge of the corridor, due to limited right-of-way, strategically placing street trees and hedges on private easements would help enhance the entire street environment by buffering some of the undesirable uses along the street edge. Widening the existing sidewalks would provide additional room to have a more comfortable and safer walking area for pedestrians. Along the northern sidewalks, it would greatly benefit the pedestrian users to widen the sidewalk by 12-18" minimum, with a minimum width of 8' as a preferred minimum in order to complement the pedestrian patterns of Rhode Island Avenue. The widened sidewalk should be extended under the railroad underpass east along Rhode Island Avenue.

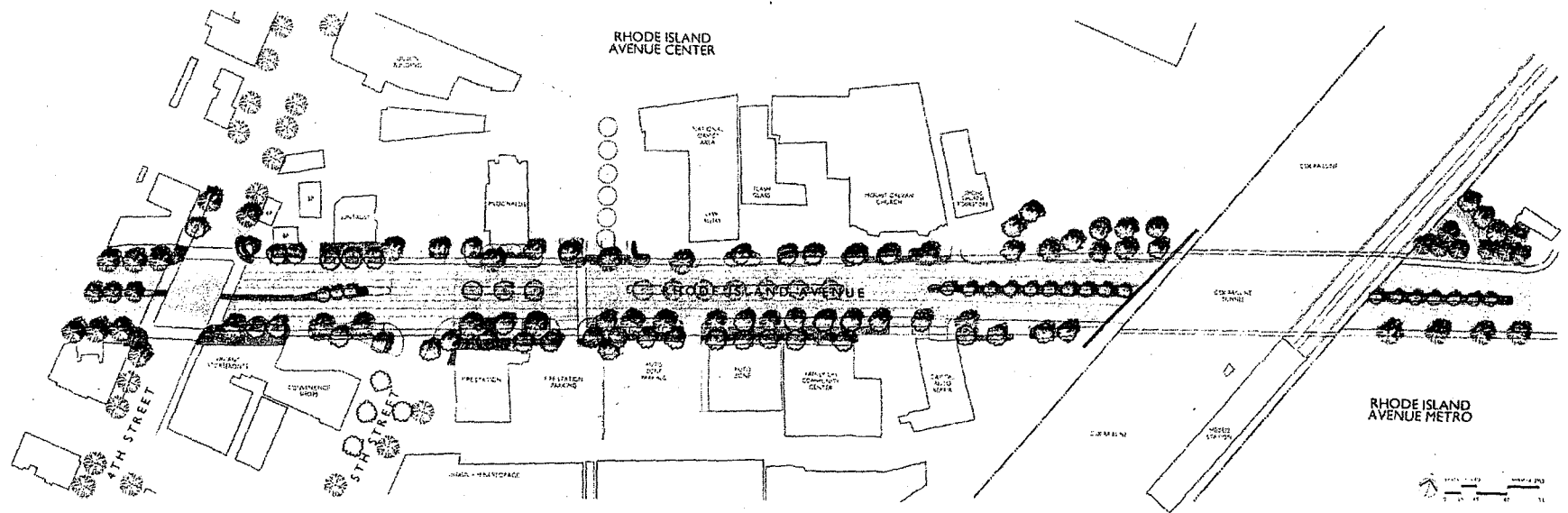
The additional area needed to widen the sidewalks on the northern side of Rhode Island Avenue can be accumulated by using one, or a combination of the following techniques: 1.) by reducing the typical lane widths along the entire cross section of Rhode Island Avenue by as little as 6" per lane and applying the excess area to the northern sidewalk, or 2.) by realigning the overall street geometry toward the southern edge of the street where there is additional R.O.W. to support both a repositioning of the street and an expanded pedestrian zone on the north and south side.

In combination to the infrastructure improvements described above, the Rhode Island Avenue pedestrian environment would benefit from the addition of streetscape furnishings and amenities. Such items as wayfinding signage and kiosks, trash receptacles, pedestrian-scale light fixtures, benches and user-friendly bus shelters all contribute to creating a usable destination. Such special features as specially paved crosswalks, sidewalks and pocket plazas along the street also help identify key attractions or places of pedestrian activity for both auto motorists and pedestrians. Better use and treatment of a center roadway median would also benefit both motorists and pedestrians, serving as a pedestrian refuge, fostering lower travel speeds for automobiles, and improving the attractiveness of the street.

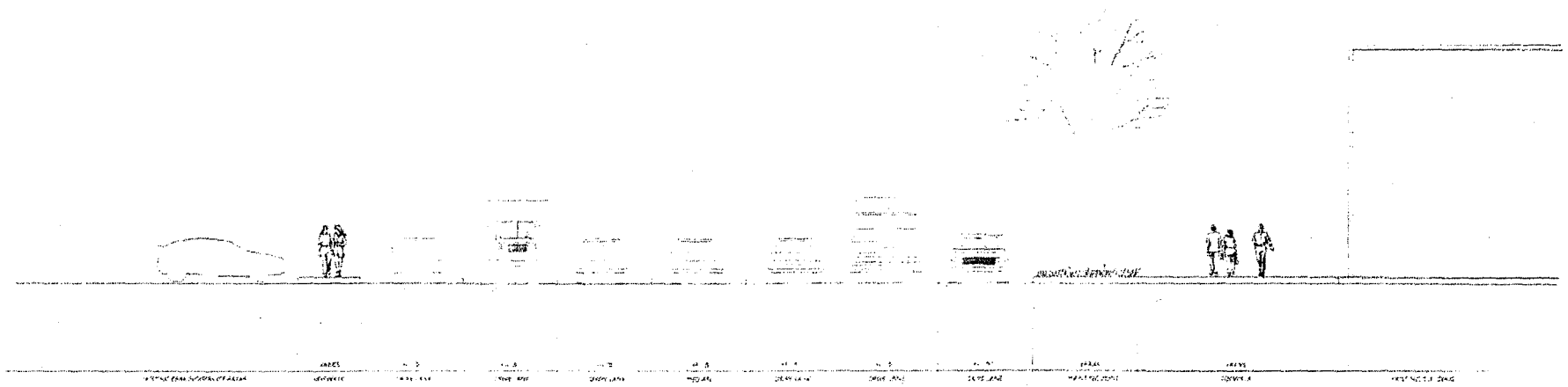
Finally, additional strategies to assist in creating a successful main street environment include working with land owners in an educational process in order to negotiate easement access for streetscape enhancements and for coordination of main street improvement programs including streetscape plantings, façade renovation programs, and reducing the amount of vehicular access points, or curb-cuts, leading into and out of each parcel.

-- Carlos Somoza of HNTB Corporation, is a WRN *pro bono* Urban Designer

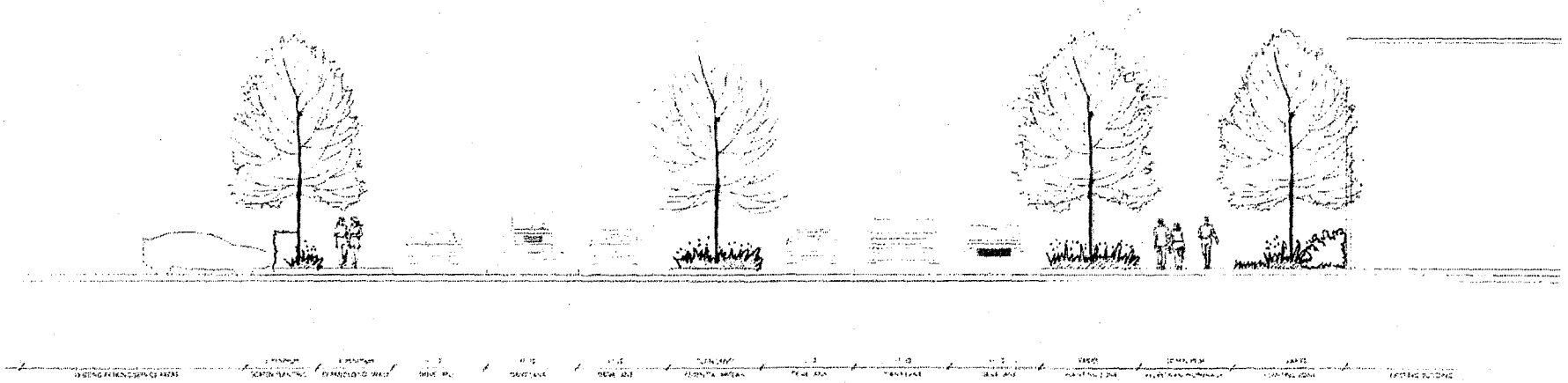
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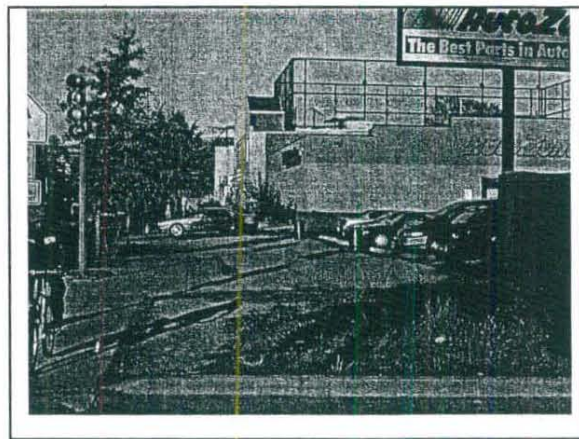
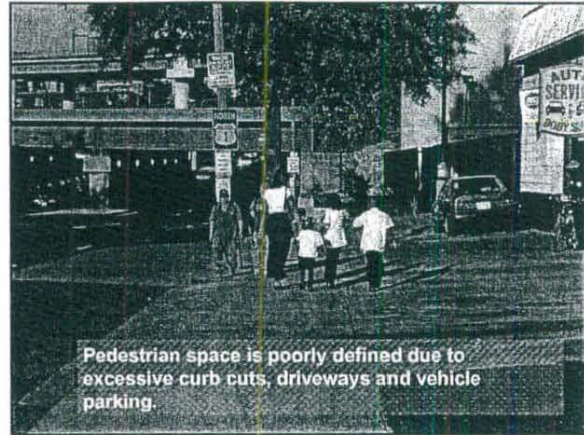
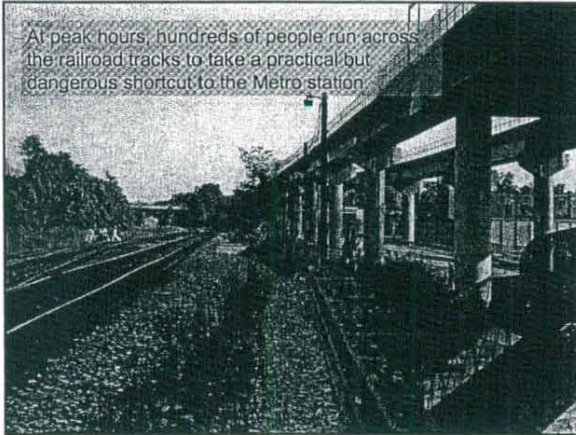
RHODE ISLAND AVENUE STREETScape ENHANCEMENT A Washington Regional Network Community Vision Project



EXISTING CONDITIONS



ENHANCEMENT CONCEPT I



Testimony from Ward Five Residents
Hearing No. 169, Docket No. R05-2
July 26, 2005

In Support of Proposal Parking Reduction at the R.I. Ave Metro Station

We the undersigned support the proposed reduction parking. However, we believe that D.C. and Metro should be investing in improved walk, bus, wheelchair and bike access to the Metro Station.

This proposal is important to my family and others in the neighborhood for several reasons – i.e., for those of us who live West of the R.I. Ave Metro, a lot of our young people cross the railroad tracks to access Metro because it's faster (particularly the children attending Hyde Charter School and McKinley H.S.) while we older people are walking to the Metro Station via R.I. Ave going under the underpass. Mind you both ways are equally dangerous. If the train doesn't get you on the tracks – the vehicles traveling along R.I. Ave certainly can. There isn't anything to buffer the pedestrian from fast moving traffic under the underpass such as street furniture, jersey walls or guard rails on either side of the street. If a vehicle should jump the curve, pedestrians have no where to go – they are at the mercy of the vehicle driver and the wall. A bridge or overpass should be considered for the younger people crossing the railroad tracks. It could also use better lighting under there at nights too!

Moreover, we would like to see either a shuttle bus or the regular scheduled buses such as the P-6 or D-8 accommodate us seniors in midday for at least hourly trips to and from the Safeway and Home Depot Shopping Center.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

[Submitted & collected by Annie Long, July 26, 2005, 9 am – 5:30pm, on Rhode Island Ave. between 4th & 5th St. NE]

- 1) Annie Smith Long, 409 V St, NE #4, Wash, DC 20002
- 2) Howard Beale, 102 U Street, NE, Wash, DC 20002
- 3) Carl Jackson, 611 Edgewood St, NE, 20017
- 4) Mildred Samuel, 2031 North Cap, NE
- 5) A. Ward, 2020 4th Street, NE, 20002
- 6) Robert L. Murray, Jr., 200 R.I. Ave, NE #118, 20002
- 7) Arnold Reed, 319 U Street, NE, 20002
- 8) Phillip Harland, 324 T St, NE, 20002
- 9) Andrea Dickens, 1322 Downing Pl, NE, 20018
- 10) Marcella Thomas, 1835 3rd St, NE Apt B, 20002
- 11) Darren Snell, 22 Q St, NE, 20002
- 12) Thelma Frazier, 211 Adams St, NE
- 13) James Pressley, 304 Bryant St, NE
- 14) AE Whitfield, 318 Channing St, NE

- 15) Edmosiu Sims, 213 Slaton Pl, NE
- 16) Elma J. Campbell, 211 4th Street, NE
- 17) Samuel Baker, 2015 ½ 4th St, NE DC
- 18) Ellen Washington, 301 V Street, NE, Wash, DC 20002
- 19) Larry Tucker 230 R.I. Ave, NE, Wash. DC
- 20) Dozu Dhis (?) 2241 Douglas St, NE
- 21) William Morrison, 2015 3rd St, NE
- 22) Roy Marbery, 2012 4th St, NE, Wash, DC
- 23) Yvonne Haynes, 2021 4th St, NE, Washington, DC
- 24) Andre Busey, 1835 3rd St, NE
- 25) Charles Middleton, 2015 4th Road Island Ave
- 26) Edna Frazier, 2117 3rd St, NE
- 27) Mike Davis, 324 W St, NE
- 28) Martha Barner, 2015 4th St, NE
- 29) Laura Booze 315 W St, NE
- 30) Dolores Vaughn, 2326 3rd St, NE
- 31) Willie Mae Robin, 212 V St, NE
- 32) William L. Lavender Bey, 1900 3rd St, NE #3, WDC 20002-1466 "Magic
- 33) Cal King, 211 Adams St, NE #3
- 34) Robin Foster, 155 U St, NE, Washington, DC 20002
- 35) Tracy Rogers, 1222 Penn St, NE
- 36) Richard Artes, 1222 Penn St, NE
- 37) J.C. Coney, 2119 3rd St, NE
- 38) Robert Mack, Jr, 2122 4th St, NE
- 39) Warren E. Thomas, 2016 4th St, NE
- 40) Julian Glenn, 643 Girard St, NE
- 41) Vickie Smith, 2301 3rd St, NE WDC 20002