



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
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WASHINGTON, DC 20004



HARRY THOMAS, JR.
COUNCILMEMBER
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May 1, 2008

D.C. Zoning Commission
441 4th Street, N.W.
Suite 210
Washington, D.C. 20001

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RE: Consent Calendar – Minor Modification
Zoning Commission Order No. 04-24AB
Rhode Island Avenue Metro PUD

Dear Members of the Commission:

I am writing to express my strong support of the request by Rhode Island Avenue Metro, LLC (RIAM) for a minor modification to allow up to 20% office uses in the commercial portion of the Rhode Island Avenue Metro development.

Both my predecessor and I have worked closely with RIAM and the residents of Ward 5 over the past six years to realize the vision for this site: a first-rate town center to serve as the lynchpin for further redevelopment in our community, particularly along the Rhode Island Avenue corridor, which was recently selected for inclusion in the Great Streets program. RIAM has been truly committed to partnering with local stakeholders throughout the planning and design of Rhode Island Avenue Metro.

While my constituents are excited to see the first ever luxury new construction apartments come to this area, many are even more excited by the commercial component of Rhode Island Avenue Metro. In a community that has long been underserved by retailers, the Class A convenience shopping, cafes, and sit-down restaurants that will be part of this project cannot come soon enough. We are excited about Rhode Island Avenue Metro and recognize that it builds the foundation for more retailers to continue to be attracted to Ward 5. We are equally pleased about the new jobs that this project will bring to the community.

As Councilmember, I meet frequently with retailers interested in Ward 5, as well as city agencies devoted to economic planning and development. Although there has been significant, sustained interest in Rhode Island Station for several years, over the past six months retailers have become reluctant to enter into lease agreements until projects are well under construction.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 04-24B
EXHIBIT NO. 6

It quickly became clear to me that the District has the opportunity to help ensure the success of crucial economic development projects by participating as a tenant. At Rhode Island Avenue Metro, there are several office uses that would serve this purpose while meeting the project's other key goals:

- Increase community amenities – Rhode Island Avenue Metro can bring the easy-to-use city services such as the Department of Motor Vehicles or taxpayer services as well as retail conveniences.
- Increase the local employment base – Offices offer substantial employment opportunities at many different skill levels.
- Ensure Rhode Island Avenue Metro's long term success as a lively town center – Office uses will bring a daytime population of employees and customers that makes the development even more attractive to retailers, especially restaurateurs in need of lunch and dinner crowds.

Rhode Island Avenue Metro is a priority economic development opportunity for Ward 5. A minor modification to the PUD allowing up to 20% office use will help to ensure that the project moves forward and is sustainable over the long term. Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,



Harry Thomas Jr.
Ward 5 Council Member