

Dear Zoning Commission Officers and Staff,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony. I am writing today as the executive director of the Friends of Rhode Island Avenue NE and the Rhode Island Avenue Main Street program, in reference to Zoning Amendment Case 15-16.

The Rhode Island Avenue NE Main Street program exists for the purpose of supporting and enhancing the commercial corridor of Rhode Island Avenue NE. Over the last few years, community members have spoken loudly and clearly when they say they want more neighborhood-serving retail and dining options. They want a more vibrant and attractive commercial corridor. Based on various urban planning studies that have been conducted for Rhode Island Avenue NE, it is clear that in order to attract and support the types of businesses that our neighbors have indicated they want, we must encourage and support appropriate development projects. By approving this PUD application, the entire project will not only create tremendous new opportunities for retail, dining, and other neighborhood amenities, but it will also provide opportunities for new jobs, and a much-needed boost in residential density for the entire corridor. More importantly, it will be providing a net gain of affordable housing, where none existed before.

MRP has engaged with the community extensively, including outreach to the surrounding Civic Associations, ANCs, and at events such as the inaugural Holiday Market they hosted on the proposed development site. Our organization has also been impressed by the efforts that Mr. Skena and the MRP team have undertaken to reach out to, and work with community members from the entire length of the RIA Main Street corridor.

One of the long-term goals held by Rhode Island Avenue NE Main Street is the formation of a BID. Our vision for this future BID encompasses the properties along the RIA Metro station, which includes this MRP development. Mr. Skena and the MRP team have been incredibly supportive of this vision, and in fact, have been proactive in helping us find a path to make it a reality.

MRP is bringing a valuable asset to the community. On behalf of Rhode Island Avenue NE Main Street, we support this PUD application, as it is congruent with the recommendations from DMPED and Office of Planning, and when developed, will contribute to an increase in residential density that will help us attract the types of retailers that our community wants to support. Thank you again for the opportunity to speak tonight. I look forward to your decision.

Best regards,

Kyle Todd, Executive Director

Rhode Island Avenue NE Main Street

Submitted on 5/25/2016 by:  
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