

Written Testimony of
Lynne Breaux, President
Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington

**Public Hearing on the Extension of the Term of the
Golden Triangle Business Improvement District**

May 16, 2008

My name is Lynne Breaux, and I am the President of the Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington and also a Board member of the Golden Triangle Business Improvement District.

As President of RAMW, I serve as a voice for the food service industry. As a Board Member of the BID, I focus on making sure the BID meets the needs of its hospitality members. From both perspectives, as well as from the fact that my office is located the BID, I can attest to the fact that the BID offers the support and services needed by area establishments and businesses.

The BID has been extremely successful in making a difference in the streetscape of the central business district. Cleanliness is key in attracting and retaining restaurant customers and the BID spearheads the process of keeping the area clean through its Ambassador program and other initiatives. It is also crucial that an environment be friendly and safe for business to prosper, and the BID delivers on that front too, through its ongoing and timely communication of safety concerns to businesses in the area and through hospitality Ambassadors who greet visitors and give directions.

In just the 42 blocks of the BID there are over 200 restaurants, and new restaurants are opening constantly in the area. Many of these restaurants are award-winning and internationally known. These facts are testaments to the BID's work toward creating a sustainable atmosphere in which restaurants can operate successful businesses.

The BID has been fundamental in supporting the transformation of what was previously conceived to be just a business destination to what has become a vibrant city center full of high-end dining and shopping. It has done this in part by marketing the individual businesses; attracting customers to the area with events such as its popular summer concert series; and partnering with government agencies and the real estate community.

Over the BID's ten year life, services have ramped up exponentially and the positive impact on the community has noticeably increased each year. As a member of the Board, I know that the BID is a forward-thinking organization that projects budgets years in advance as part of its planning process to ensure that it can continue to offer the top-notch services members have come to rely on. As a result, in order to keep up with inflation and continue to respond to the community's needs, in 2011, an increase of 3.5 cents in the annual tax rate is necessary.

This will mark just the second time since the BID's inception that it has proposed increasing member fees. Even with this increase to begin in 2011, the BID's tax rate will continue to be the lowest rate of all the BIDs in town and still remain below an averaged inflationary rate.

Let me put this rate increase in context: For an average restaurant in the BID of around 2,100 square feet, the increase for 2011 would amount to \$73.50 annually. One of the largest restaurants in the BID would end up with an increase in annual tax of just \$238 and a small coffee shop could expect to pay an increase of about \$35. While no business wants additional fees or increases in taxes, the BID provides superb stewardship of the funds and you'd be hard-pressed to find a business that has not benefited substantially from everything the BID provides in return. I am certain that this increase will have a positive impact on the neighborhood since it will allow the BID to continue its services for members.

The Golden Triangle BID has become fundamental to the maintenance and enhancement of DC, and the renewal of its charter is critical, especially for the restaurants and other businesses that truly rely on the BID. The BID has come a long way through the diligence and hard work of members, staff, and allied groups, and I know the area's potential continues to be great as long as the BID is in existence to bring about positive change in the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lynne Breaux". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "L" and "B".

Lynne Breaux
RAMW President