

**Testimony on Behalf of County Executive Marc Elrich on the
Montgomery County Pedestrian Master Plan**

July 25, 2023

My name is Maricela Cordova and I am the Acting Deputy Director for Transportation Policy with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation. Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of County Executive Elrich regarding the Montgomery County Pedestrian Master Plan Draft introduced by the Planning Board in May 2023.

There are many initiatives we strongly support in this plan, and we are excited to see the breadth of the recommendations. We look forward to working with the Council and Planning on creating a better environment for our residents to walk and travel in. We have carefully reviewed the plan and provided detailed input, some of which has been incorporated; however, we still have substantial concerns about how some of these recommendations may be implemented.

Scope

Focusing first on the scope, there are several items that overstep the authority of a master plan. To avoid conflicts and to enable a more multiagency means of implementation, we propose a few revisions to the Recommendations section. This would recontextualize the Recommendations as items suggested for multiagency consideration by the Vision Zero Action Plan, Climate Action Plan, and other existing multiagency efforts.

The Plan proposes new monitoring mechanisms which would appear to create new Planning Board oversight authority over the Executive Branch. We suggest that these monitoring efforts instead be a more robust partnership between the Executive Branch and Planning, also using existing multiagency partnerships and efforts.

Cost

Our next focus is on costs. There are many recommendations that seem appropriate, but that may exceed the resources that the County has available.

We ask that Council consider implementation and maintenance costs to ensure we have a prioritized plan that is achievable, does not give the public unreasonable expectations and allows implementing agencies to achieve the goals.

Regulatory Conflicts

From a regulatory perspective, some recommendations conflict with existing Code, Regulations, policies, or other obligations. Where there are conflicts with items within the County's purview, the Plan should identify changes necessary to the Code, Regulations, and policies. Some recommendations conflict with State and Federal requirements, and while the County can advocate for changes, some of these items may be unlikely to change, rendering the

recommendations unachievable.

We ask that upcoming worksessions consider how to resolve these conflicts.

Area Designations

Lastly, we ask that Council give more consideration toward the area designations included in the Plan. There are three areas proposed to become Downtowns, which we believe are more suited to Town Centers. If Council and Planning continue to consider these as Downtown areas, we would seek more intensive land use and transportation infrastructure to support those designations. Similarly, there is one area that is proposed as a Town Center, which we believe should be designated as Downtown. There are two other Town Centers which could be expanded. And, we also seek a technical clarification in the Plan on the Grosvenor area, as raised in our written comments.

We look forward to working with the Council to finalize this master plan. Thank you.