

University Blvd Corridor Plan Testimony

Dear County Councilmembers:

Thank you for setting up 2 different times and locations for residents to testify regarding this plan. Though you know me as a county employee, this testimony is from me personally as a resident of this area.

The 2 main issues myself and many neighbors have revolved around transportation and unrealistic development plans. Before getting into those 2 topics, I wanted to make sure I did mention that I do understand the overall goal of a masterplan, as do many of my neighbors. The Planning Department did make themselves available for several meetings with the community.

The main concerns both myself and my neighbors have is that even though the Planning Department did conduct many meetings with the community, we don't feel we were listened to. We do understand that just because we asked for something to be modified that does not mean that it will be modified. What we do expect is an explanation, some kind of reasoning why something can or cannot be modified.

The Kemp Mill community feels like we are the only part of this plan where the actual plan is coming off University Blvd and directly into our community by increasing the density of the Kemp Mill Shopping Center. The current zoning allows the owners to build a residential building today; they haven't mentioned any appetite to even do that, so why increase the density even more? Do we really want to significantly change the dynamics of an older and diverse community that is already vibrant?

We also understand that there is a housing shortage and the Planning Department, and the County Council are working hard to come up with solutions. We do not want our community to be the guinea pigs for projects that can and should be in Downtown Wheaton. In fact, there are many opportunities there already that are not being taken advantage of. It would make more sense to fix those first, then come back to this area to see if there are some smaller pockets that can help.

From a transportation perspective, we would like the turn lane from Arcola to University to remain. Our small community does not have many ways in and out, so creating gridlock will negatively affect our quality of life.

I understand that the bus lanes on University Blvd, no matter how many complaints you hear, will remain in place. County officials often point to it being a State Road so it's out of their purview. This is only somewhat true, because you do have the ability to work with the

state and voice concerns on our behalf. Perhaps a compromise can be made and the bus lanes remain in place, but they are only dedicated bus lanes during rush hour hours. Buses are an important mode of transportation, but what percentage of our community uses buses?

The goal of buses is to lower the number of cars on the road, as well as provide transportation for people who don't own a car. We need cars in this county. The idea that cars are 'bad' or 'evil' is insulting, especially when many of us need cars to travel through the county. I would not be able to perform my job without a car. I would not be able to go from Downcounty to Upcounty and all through Upcounty, without a car. There are many people like me in the county, let's figure out a way to make things work for everyone.

Lastly, and I can say this for many plans that come before you, if the plan you are reviewing is not clearly stating how the current residents in the plan area are going to gain from this plan, perhaps it makes sense to get that clarified by the authors of the plan as part of the plan. Increased housing may help the county overall, but how does that help those living there now? Make that case to us, explain how our lives will be improved, and then we can all work together to make that dream happen. We are not seeing that. We don't feel that. We feel we deserve better and hope you feel the same.

Thank you for your time.

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