

Testimony of Michael DeLong in Support of the University Boulevard Corridor Plan

September 10th, 2025

President Stewart, Vice President Jawando, members of the County Council:

My name is Michael DeLong and I am a 35 year old young professional who lives in Silver Spring. I'm involved in several different kinds of advocacy work and care deeply about making Montgomery County a better and more affordable place to live, including building more housing. I strongly support the University Boulevard Corridor Plan, which will rezone certain areas to promote more housing, improve bicycle and pedestrian safety, and prioritize affordable and diverse housing that will bring down costs.

While I live just to the west of downtown Silver Spring, I spend a fair amount of time in this area along University Boulevard. I love hiking along the Northwest Branch not far away and often go to Red Maple, the Woodmoor Pastry Shop, and other places. A few years ago I decided to put down roots in Montgomery County and buy a home. Unfortunately the lack of affordable housing meant that it was a struggle to find any place that was not outrageously expensive. I lucked out and found a condominium, but many other young residents were not so fortunate, and so had to leave the county.

Montgomery County is facing a housing crisis. The median sale price of a home is around \$660,000, which is out of reach for most residents. Rents have been rising substantially, putting strain on people's budgets. The University Boulevard Corridor Plan does a lot of things, but one of its best features is that it will increase the housing supply and the housing diversity by rezoning corridor-fronting residential blocks, institutional properties, and existing single-use commercial shopping centers. It also emphasizes different housing options for residents of all ages and income levels.

I believe that Montgomery County needs more housing of all kinds—single family homes, townhouses, duplexes, courtyard apartments, triplexes, small apartment buildings, and even larger apartment buildings. The plan before you will promote that housing and help bring down costs for both homeowners and renters. The neighborhoods around University Boulevard are lovely places to live, and a bunch of different housing types will make it easier for people who are not affluent to live there. Individuals and families who can't afford single family homes, but who can afford townhouses or condos, or who rent, deserve economic opportunity. The plan will further disproportionately help low-income residents, and Black and Latino residents, who are often priced out of housing markets.

Additionally, it will help the environment by promoting more walkable neighborhoods, foot traffic, and more use of public transportation like Bus Rapid Transit.

Community input is important. But community input should not be used as an excuse for exclusion and prejudice against those who are less fortunate. By not building enough housing and not welcoming others, we are contributing to the already existing trend of Montgomery County only being affordable for the very wealthy. But by adopting this corridor plan and encouraging more housing, we can reduce home prices, make the neighborhoods more welcoming, and ensure that Montgomery County is a place that promotes economic opportunity for everyone.

My email is michaeldelong94@gmail.com and I am happy to answer any questions.

Thank you,

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