

## **Vote NO to the University Boulevard Corridor Plan**

September 10, 2025

We are writing to express our strong objections to the University Boulevard Corridor Plan. Specifically, **we oppose zoning changes that will result in more high-density housing and we oppose changes to roadways that will reduce travel lanes available to automobile traffic.**

We attended a public meeting hosted by Councilmember Natali Fani-Gonzalez and attended by hundreds of residents of the University Boulevard Corridor. Not a single person supported the plan.

Listening is not sufficient. We need the Council to respect and respond to the community and stop this plan that residents do not want.

Our area already has significant high-density housing. University Towers and the Warwick are in the boundaries of the plan. There already is significant high-density housing nearby in the area bounded by University Boulevard, Georgia Avenue, Arcola Avenue, Amherst Avenue, Elkin Street, and Bucknell Drive. Parking in this area is extremely difficult and we do not want similar parking problems in the plan area. There is also significant high-density housing near the Wheaton Metro station.

We especially object to zoning Kemp Mill Shopping Center for high-density housing which will destroy the neighborhood character and utility of this resource. Additional high-density housing will significantly increase existing traffic congestion on Arcola Avenue. It is already difficult and dangerous to enter Arcola Avenue from the adjoining streets because of the current high traffic levels most of the day. At certain times left turns onto Arcola Avenue are nearly impossible. Existing high traffic has resulted in collisions and pedestrian deaths which will only increase under this plan.

We purchased our home in this area because we want to live in a suburban environment of single-family homes, not in an urban environment of high-density housing. Our lives will not function if we are unable to conveniently drive to the many destinations that are key to our lives including, but not limited to, religious schools in DC and Rockville that our girls attend; religious facilities in Rockville; physicians in various parts of the county that are key to our health; art and entertainment facilities such as Strathmore, Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts, AMC theaters, Phillips Collection, George Mason Center for the Arts, Smithsonian Institution. Bus lines and bicycles are not a viable alternative for us.

Forcing us off the roads by reducing travel lanes and increasing population density is unacceptable to us. We object to repurposing or narrowing car lanes to implement bicycle lanes which will rarely be used. The bicycle lane project on University Blvd was a failure as it was almost never used. Dedicated public transit lanes are inappropriate given the low frequency of buses, the low demand for bus transportation on University Boulevard, and the impact on car traffic.

The plan appears to be based on an implicit, unstated, belief that people in our neighborhood will abandon their cars and transition to public transit and bicycles. Also implicit is a belief that all or

most of the new people who live in high-density housing will travel by public transit or bicycle. These beliefs are unsupported by any evidence provided and are unlikely to be true. The street parking in the area around the nearby high-density housing and the failure of the University Boulevard bicycle lanes to attract any significant number of people argues against these beliefs. We have driven University Boulevard for decades and observed that the bus stops never attract large numbers of passengers. The bus lanes have no buses most of the day. The most likely outcome of this plan would be that most residents will continue to use cars which, with the increased population and fewer travel lanes, will result in additional traffic congestion to the point of gridlock and a parking nightmare in our neighborhood.

Montgomery County has many areas zoned for high-density housing so there is no need to destroy our suburban neighborhood to solve housing demand issues. An obvious example is the land where the former White Flint Mall once stood. This huge property has sat undeveloped for years. There is also a large property on 16<sup>th</sup> Street just south of the intersection with Georgia Avenue that used to be a shopping center and is now an unsightly construction logistics facility but could be developed as high-density housing.

We support:

- Protecting existing trees
- Increasing tree canopy with native species
- Moving sidewalks farther from the street and planting trees along University Boulevard
- Shaded bus stops
- Stormwater management
- Energy efficiency and on-site clean energy generation
- Underground utilities

No person we know who lives in our area supports this plan. We call on you and the other members of the Montgomery County Council to stop this plan from moving forward to destroy our neighborhood. We need to stop this ill-advised rezoning.

Your constituents,

*Laura Messing*

*Fredric Messing*, Ph.D.