

Dear Councilmembers and Council President Stewart,

I live in the Sligo Woods neighborhood, close to Dennis Ave and University Boulevard, and just outside the area that is proposed to be rezoned for more homes in the University Boulevard Plan. I have lived and owned a house here for almost 12 years. I love my neighborhood, and I think it could be even better. I am in favor of the University Boulevard Corridor Plan.

My daughter attends Forest Knolls Elementary School in the plan area. She takes the school bus there, but sometimes we walk home and on Fridays she joins the bike bus. Our home is a very short walk to the public bus stops and the proposed BRT stop at University Blvd and Dennis Avenue, and I also take the M12 (previously C2/C4) and Ride-On buses to work every day. Currently, it's not comfortable or safe to walk or bike along University Boulevard. The UBC Plan sets standards for widening sidewalks and adding bike paths which is the first step in making it safer for us. Ideally, these safety (and accessibility) improvements would be implemented independent of and before other aspects of the plan, but it is good and important that the plan acknowledges this need.

My family and I have a good life in this neighborhood, but looking at Redfin and Zillow, I am aware that if I were to try to move here today, I would not be able to afford to buy my small 1950s era home. There are no truly affordable neighborhoods left in this county. There is a housing shortage, especially of smaller homes like mine. The University Boulevard Corridor Plan includes common sense zoning changes that will make it easier to build small scale housing to welcome more families in our neighborhoods. Density will increase gently and gradually, avoiding dramatic alterations to the look and feel of the corridor for most people who already live here.

The University Boulevard Corridor Plan does not address everything that I or others think could be improved in our area. I wish it was more ambitious about placemaking in Four Corners, and more aggressive about adding pedestrian safety improvements more quickly. I also support making it legal to build duplexes through the entire plan area, and preferably, the entire county. However, even as written, this plan is an important first step.

We live in a time where, looking at the national news, it is sometimes hard to conceive of a better future. However, we must believe that a better future is possible in this county and this neighborhood. I believe we can act with hope and with open hearts, and not with fear, uncertainty, or doubt. I encourage you to pass the UBC Plan without delay.

Sincerely,

Sanjida Rangwala

--- Dryden Street
Silver Spring MD