

Montgomery County Council,

My name is Sylvia Fine, and I am the President of the Springbrook Forest Citizens Association. The residents of Springbrook Forest have multiple concerns regarding the University Boulevard Corridor Plan. While we understand the goal of this plan is to positively impact the community, we believe it will do the opposite.

The SFCA opposes the bus lanes on University Boulevard becoming permanent. Very few people ride the buses on University Boulevard. Recently, I was on the bus, and there were only four other riders. Creating permanent bus lanes would permanently disrupt the lives of hundreds of thousands of car drivers to benefit the few bus users in the area of University Boulevard. Currently, the bus lanes cause frequent congestion on University Boulevard that wasn't there before. This leads to cars idling, leaking fumes into the atmosphere that negatively affect our planet. These toxic fumes from idling cars are also unsafe for walkers and people living along University Boulevard. The congestion on University Boulevard causes drivers to then take neighborhood roads to get to where they need to go. This practice can be unsafe for young children biking or playing in or alongside the road, unused to heavy traffic in their play areas. The SFCA

understands the importance of having buses, but simply put, we feel having bus lanes that cars can not drive in would not sufficiently improve bus times compared to the negative effect it would have on drivers. The way to improve public transportation in MoCo is to create more bus routes and put more buses on the roads, not create permanent bus lanes.

The SFCA opposes rezoning the areas of the UBC Plan to host high-density housing. We especially oppose high-density housing on Arcola, the areas of University Boulevard by Arcola, and the Kemp Mill Shopping Center. We are concerned about the new roads that would be added near the Kemp Mill Shopping Center, which would disrupt the forest areas surrounding it. This specific part of Montgomery County has one of the last surviving Oak Savannas in the country. The rest have been demolished to make way for new cars and houses. The county has stated multiple times in multiple ways that they are concerned about the environment. If the county was truly concerned about the environment, it would be more worried about the number of trees that would be cut down to implement components of the plan. It is essential that our old-growth forests to remain intact. University Boulevard is already frequently congested. We understand that the county's Plan is for everyone moving in to ride the buses. Unfortunately, the public transportation system in

Montgomery County has multiple issues, which are not being solved by this proposal. Therefore, we can assume that more families on University would cause more congestion in the road ways as they would need to drive cars. If no one ever needed to get anywhere this plan would be perfect, but that is not the case. If the county chooses not to listen to us about the housing alongside University Boulevard, we ask that third spaces like bars, restaurants, and supermarkets are also added.

The SFCA opposes the lowering of speed limits on University Boulevard and the surrounding roads that would be affected by the University Boulevard Corridor plan. We believe that the speed the roads are currently at is a safe speed with the infrastructure provided. We also believe that there are better ways to prevent pedestrian-related accidents within the corridor, for example, coming up with solutions to discourage the very dangerous act of jaywalking. Studies have shown that playgrounds with more dangerous equipment have a lower injury rate compared to playgrounds with safer equipment. This is because children playing in the supposedly more dangerous playground become more cautious to not get hurt. The same could be true in regard to streets. A slow-moving street is more inviting to jaywalking, while jaywalkers may have higher levels of concern about being hit on a faster road, causing them to not jaywalk.

The SFCA opposes the placement of “No right turns on red” signs throughout the University Boulevard Corridor. We believe that decisions about whether or not right turns are safe should be made on a case-by-case basis.

The SFCA opposes the removal of merge lanes, as proposed in the UBC plan. We believe this would cause more congestion and backup in our neighborhood, which already faces daily congestion for issues the county has refused to fix. We also see the concern for pedestrians regarding merge lanes.

Thank you for listening to our comments. We hope you consider them.