

Earlier this year I wrote to the County Council about the University Blvd Plan. I had been invited to attend an informal meeting with neighbors who were quite concerned that this plan would mean high rise buildings overtaking our neighborhood and worsening traffic, all to benefit developers.

In my letter I expressed my concerns about pedestrian safety and traffic at the intersection of University Ave and Colesville Ave and the special nature of our community. I think my message would have been put in a pile of those against the plan. That being said, in looking at the current version of the plan, I don't see anything that supports the idea that our neighborhood will be taken over by high rise buildings. I also want to mention that change is hard for most people, and there has been a very organized effort to encourage people to express their concerns (which is fine and good) but I haven't seen any similar effort promoting the potential benefits or encouraging people in our neighborhood to discuss improvements in a constructive way. Nor have I seen the same effort to urge those who may be more open to the plan to share their opinions with representatives.

I have however talked to many folks who agree that the area of four corners is an eyesore, not particularly safe for pedestrians, congested, and that the commercial space is not well utilized. There is so much room for improvement. From what I can tell, the current proposal would actually help quite a bit. And I am not sure that this sentiment has come across in public testimony. I do think we should be mindful of development, perhaps there are still tweaks that could be made to this plan, but I think it is going to be hard to enact any changes without some resistance.

I also strongly feel that we have to address housing if we care about others. Most of us reaching out to the County Council already own our homes. But the cost of housing is currently un-manageable for many who would like to buy a home, and if we care about the greater good we will in some way need to get behind an increase in housing. Especially in places that have access to transportation.

Thank you for your service to our county.