

From: [Brian Stagg](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Letter of Support for the University Boulevard Corridor Plan, February 27, 2025
Date: Wednesday, February 19, 2025 9:10:29 AM

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Brian Stagg

[REDACTED]

Silver Spring, MD 20901

[REDACTED]

February 19, 2025

**Subject: Letter of Support for the University Boulevard Corridor Plan, Public
Testimony Hearing February 27, 2025**

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for the University Boulevard Corridor Plan. As a resident of the South Four Corners neighborhood, I believe this plan represents a crucial step towards improving my community and creating a more vibrant and sustainable corridor.

I am particularly in support of the plan's focus on improving connectivity, pedestrian/bicycle safety, upzoning existing development, and environmental sustainability.

-

Improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure: The proposed construction of the separated sidepath/breezeway along University Boulevard will create a safer and more welcoming environment for pedestrians and cyclists, encourage alternative modes of transportation and reduce reliance on cars for short trips. This is particularly important for University Boulevard where the Pedestrian Level of Comfort is awful. When I walk with my family to North Four Corners Park or to the shops at Woodmoor, it is extremely uncomfortable to have cars and buses zooming by inches away from myself and my children at 45 MPH. Over the past few years, two teenagers (17 and 18 years old) have been killed using sidewalks abutting right up to traffic on Old Georgetown Road in Bethesda. At the time of those tragedies, Old Georgetown Road had the same

design University Boulevard currently has (narrow sidewalk, no shoulder). The best way to improve the utility of University Boulevard is to create a planted buffer between the traffic and those on foot/bike/scooter/stroller/wheelchair like the one suggested in the University Boulevard Corridor (UBC) Plan.

-

Economic development from upzoning: The plan's focus on attracting new businesses and supporting existing ones will revitalize the corridor, creating jobs and strengthening our local economy. Zoning improvements recommended in the UBC Plan are a necessary step to encourage investment and maintain the quality of life in this corner of the County. The changes in zoning along properties fronting University Boulevard will allow for greater housing density and improved commercial opportunities. Permitting new residential types like duplexes or triplexes along this busy roadway will increase the housing supply and help to ease future housing price increases.

-

Environmental sustainability: The plan's consideration of green infrastructure, tree planting, and other sustainable practices will contribute to a healthier environment and a more resilient community. The improvement in tree canopy will make traveling along the corridor for pedestrians and rollers much more enjoyable. The focus on improving transit connectivity will also help to reduce the need for polluting car trips along this stretch of roadway.

I believe that the University Boulevard Corridor Plan represents a thoughtful and comprehensive vision for the future of my neighborhood. It addresses the critical needs of our community while also creating opportunities for growth and improvement. I moved to my home in South Four Corners about two years ago because of its great location and potential. The UBCP will unlock that potential to serve the residents along University Boulevard and for the region at large. I urge the Planning Board to move forward with the implementation of this plan as expeditiously as possible.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Brian Stagg

From: [Ryan Costello](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Excellent University Boulevard plan
Date: Friday, February 21, 2025 4:35:05 PM

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Dear Sir or Madam,

I was very pleased to review the University Boulevard Corridor Plan, which I think is excellent.

I reached out to those surveying the community early in the process and noted my concerns regarding pedestrian safety along University Boulevard. Specifically, while crossing at Reddie and Sligo Creek Parkway I've had some somewhat close calls with cars running the lights, and walking right along the Boulevard - sometimes in ice - has always felt treacherous with traffic so close.

So I am pleased that there is a plan in place to institute wide sidepaths along with planting strips on University and undertake a number of other improvements both big and small, like connecting Blueridge to Amherst and ensuring better pedestrian walkways there. I also appreciate the attention to issues including racial justice, food security and the environment, and am enthused for more bicycle access in the area which - outside of Sligo Creek Trail/parkway - has always looked rather daunting, even for experienced cyclists.

I am happy to put this in a formal letter as the website suggests, though I also thought I'd explore the testimony option. Can you share how long you expect the hearing to last, and how many have offered to testify? Is there any option to testify in a hybrid format, or is testimony only in person?

Thanks a bunch,

Ryan Costello
Resident from the Amherst Ave/Chestnut Ridge District

From: [Ryan Costello](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Re: Excellent University Boulevard plan
Date: Friday, February 21, 2025 4:36:52 PM

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Per your bounceback notice, I am including my address:

 Silver Spring, MD 20902

Sincerely,

Ryan

On Fri, Feb 21, 2025 at 4:34 PM Ryan Costello <rn.costello@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Sir or Madam,

I was very pleased to review the University Boulevard Corridor Plan, which I think is excellent.

I reached out to those surveying the community early in the process and noted my concerns regarding pedestrian safety along University Boulevard. Specifically, while crossing at Reddie and Sligo Creek Parkway I've had some somewhat close calls with cars running the lights, and walking right along the Boulevard - sometimes in ice - has always felt treacherous with traffic so close.

So I am pleased that there is a plan in place to institute wide sidepaths along with planting strips on University and undertake a number of other improvements both big and small, like connecting Blueridge to Amherst and ensuring better pedestrian walkways there. I also appreciate the attention to issues including racial justice, food security and the environment, and am enthused for more bicycle access in the area which - outside of Sligo Creek Trail/parkway - has always looked rather daunting, even for experienced cyclists.

I am happy to put this in a formal letter as the website suggests, though I also thought I'd explore the testimony option. Can you share how long you expect the hearing to last, and how many have offered to testify? Is there any option to testify in a hybrid format, or is testimony only in person?

Thanks a bunch,

Ryan Costello
Resident from the Amherst Ave/Chestnut Ridge District

From: [Joseph Turitz](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: University Boulevard Corridor Plan
Date: Monday, February 24, 2025 3:08:43 PM

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Dear Chair Harris -- My name is Joseph Turitz. I have lived in the Kemp Mill area of Silver Spring since 1996 -- nearly 30 years. For all of those nearly 30 years the neighborhood has been a wonderful area to live. I recently learned about the UBCP that is currently being proposed. I strongly encourage the Montgomery County Planning Department to abandon the UBCP. The UBCP will significantly adversely impact most -- if not all -- current residents creating unneeded upheaval and change in a neighborhood that has been wonderful for many years. At minimum, the terribly increased traffic and reduced car lanes on University Boulevard will change residents' lives and experiences for the worse. Higher density mixed-use development will not bring a better living experience to most of the area and will only increase the departure of many long-time residents who pay significant amount of taxes already. There already are many great walking and biking areas in the neighborhood and additional ones are not necessary.

As a long time resident and tax payer I strongly urge that Planning Department abandon the UBCP/

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Joseph Turitz

[Joseph Turitz](#)



From: [s Winter](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Arcola proposals
Date: Monday, February 24, 2025 9:41:27 PM

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I'm calling to register my concern about the proposed changes. specifically the changes to the shopping center. There are multiple Jewish and Kosher establishments, actually the only ones in the city. as well as 4 synagogues both on the property and nearby. and and it would greatly impact and harm our community if they were to be affected.

Surely, it would not be ethically correct to disenfranchise so many of the Jewish members of the community.

Sincerely,
S winter

From: [Chana Wiggins](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: University Blvd
Date: Monday, February 24, 2025 10:48:30 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Planning Board Members and Council Members,

I am writing as a Montgomery County resident and a frequent user of University Boulevard and the surrounding streets. I have serious concerns about the proposed University Boulevard Corridor Plan, which prioritizes the needs of a small minority of users—those who travel by bus, bike, or foot—over the vast majority who rely on personal vehicles. This approach is impractical and inequitable. I strongly oppose elements of the plan that would: Make the underutilized bus lanes on University Boulevard permanent, further reducing the space available for drivers. Eliminate dedicated right-turn lanes, forcing vehicles to wait for a signal and increasing congestion. Reduce University Boulevard and Colesville Road to two lanes at Four Corners, without a designated turnaround, creating a bottleneck. Lower speed limits to 25-30 mph throughout University Boulevard between Four Corners and Wheaton, further slowing traffic and adding to commuter delays. Beyond these concerns, it is important to recognize that Arcola Avenue and this section of University Boulevard serve as critical emergency routes. The proposed changes will significantly increase congestion and slow emergency response times, particularly for ambulances traveling from Kemp Mill and neighboring communities to Holy Cross Hospital. This is a serious public safety issue. Just as speed bumps were avoided on Arcola for this reason, similar consideration must be given here to ensure emergency vehicles can reach those in need without unnecessary delays. Additionally, with the reopening of Northwood High School and the enforcement of return-to-office policies, traffic on this already highly traveled route will only increase. Reducing lane capacity and lowering speed limits at a time when more commuters, students, and families will be relying on University Boulevard is shortsighted and will lead to even greater gridlock and possible traffic injuries and fatalities. Rather than restricting the flow of traffic, the county should be seeking solutions that accommodate the growing number of drivers and improve road efficiency. While each of these proposals is problematic on its own, their combined effect will be severe traffic congestion, increased commute times, and gridlock. This will not only frustrate drivers but also have environmental and economic consequences, as idling cars contribute more pollution and lost productivity. I urge the Planning Board to reconsider this plan and develop a more balanced approach—one that acknowledges the needs of the tens of thousands of taxpaying Montgomery County families who rely on University Boulevard for their daily commutes and essential travel while also preserving the existing communities and the ability of emergency services to operate effectively. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Hannah Wiggins

[REDACTED]
Silver Spring, MD 20902
February 24, 2025

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Board
Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reddie Drive
Wheaton, MD 20902

Subject: University Boulevard Corridor Plan

Dear Mr. Harris:

The proposed University Boulevard Corridor Plan along with its appendices raise a number of troubling issues. It cannot go forward as is because it has basic flaws in logic and common sense, it lacks a credible effort to obtain community input prior to its presentation, and it demonstrates lack of knowledge and understanding of the communities it will severely impact. The comments I present below reflect my perspective living in Kemp Mill, but they are applicable in other areas along the Corridor as well. It's also worth noting that the County Executive has voiced opposition to the plan as currently designed because of a variety of issues such as the impact on water and sewage systems, lack of independently verified data driving the plan itself, and lack of involvement by citizen groups.

1. Flaws in logic and common sense:

- a. **The “planning districts” do not reflect neighborhoods, just artificially delineated geographic areas.** In Kemp Mill (KM), the Planning Board’s “Arcola District” focuses only on the areas adjacent to Arcola Ave and Univ Blvd, which it calls the “University Towers Neighborhood.” It includes Sligo Creek Park land on the south side of University Blvd **but does not reflect the rest of KM much more than a block beyond Arcola, and nothing on or off Arcola north of the Yeshiva.** It doesn’t even reflect Odessa Shannon Middle School, St. Andrews School, and other schools which impact the traffic density.
- b. The Planners seem unaware that southbound Arcola Ave, the focus Arcola “District,” is the **ONLY outlet** to the south (to the Beltway, Sligo Creek Pkwy, and Four Corners) for the **thousands** of residents of KM Estates, Kemp Mill Farms, etc., not to mention those who come in via Kemp Mill Road and Arcola north of Kemp Mill Road.
- c. **University Blvd was built as a corridor, not a street.** Treating it as a low speed with interrupting crosswalks street means drastically impacting two-way access between

Wheaton and Four Corners and beyond! The plan gives no hint of understanding this impact.

- d. The plan references reducing speed limits, to 20 MPH in some cases, but **does not present a case-by-case justification** for doing so! In fact, one has to analyze the planners' terminology and color coding to figure out what limits they're actually planning to change.
- e. The plan references developing "fast transit" with little explanation. One can only ask how *fast* can such transit be if they lower the speed limits and increase residential and commercial density?
- f. The plan advocates eliminating right turn on red at signalized intersections, with no explanation or understanding of the impact on the cross streets such as Arcola Ave. It also intends to eliminate segments of roadway that facilitate right turns, again with **no understanding of the impacts on cross-streets**. This lesson should have been learned when the Count tried to install bike lanes a few years ago.
- g. The plan for Kemp Mill Shopping Center is a mixture of vision, common sense, pie-in-the sky delusion, and ignoring the needs of KM residents.
 - Vision – Replace the office building at the corner of the shopping center with some form of housing. It sounds nice, but there are **no specifics on what type of housing** the planners are thinking of or what the impact of such development would be on overall traffic patterns.
 - Common sense – Create a street, partly out of existing access roadway, to directly link the shopping center to University Blvd. What the planners failed to consider is the likelihood that this will become an alternate route for vehicles from southbound Arcola to access University. **How will that traffic be managed?**
 - Pie in the Sky Delusion – Create a series of small streets in a series of mixed-use blocks to replace current shopping buildings on the north side of the center. The current shopping center has difficulty keeping existing storefronts occupied – and the County wants to add more business spaces? how will the residents and customers for those buildings access them from the street network? Who will
 - Ignoring the Needs of KM Residents – The shopping center provides vital services for the local KM community. For residents of both the existing high-density housing and the residents of individual houses in the adjacent neighborhoods, the shopping center provides a walkable destination for shopping and other services. This is critical for many people especially for the elderly, the disabled,

and those who do not have cars. Yet the Plan blithely ignores those needs by proposing the redevelopment of the northern side of the shopping center. How can such redevelopment take place without cutting off pedestrians from access to those services for a year or more?

- The proposed redevelopment also would severely impact the Jewish kosher-keeping community (about 5,000 in KM alone) and thousands beyond in White Oak, Silver Spring, and DC. Shalom Kosher and the kosher eating establishments are vital resources that have no duplicates anywhere in the DC area except for Rockville. The destruction of the north side of the shopping center to make way for the mixed-use blocks would be a major blow to the community. It would eliminate vital local resources; it would add to the density of cross-county traffic by encouraging people to shop in Rockville, or even Baltimore, and it would put such resources beyond the reach of those who do not have cars/cannot drive and who rely on walking to the shopping center.
2. Lacks of a credible effort to obtain community input: Ultimately, the plan reflects a lack of effort to obtain community inputs during the development of the plan. For Kemp Mill, it was almost as bad as the Planners' self-admitted lack of engagement with Kemp Mill and other communities prior to the University Blvd bike lane fiasco a few years ago!
 - a. The Planning Board's outreach efforts were weak at best, and, at worst, reflect an almost deliberate intent to restrict input to a strictly defined and constrained population to the detriment of the larger actual community. The appendices list only two community meeting or events in the Kemp Mill area – a meeting with KMCA in 2022 and a meeting in nearby Northwood HS in 2023. Other areas had multiple meetings.
 - b. The only other "engagement" with the KM community was some "everyday canvassing" in the Warwick Apartments in April 2023. Oh yes, the planners sent out 400 mailers to the residents of multi-family housing – **but not to any of the thousands of other residents of the impacted area.**
 3. Lack of knowledge and understanding of the communities it will severely impact:
 - a. The planners seem unaware of the sizeable number of people who walk to the KM Shopping Center.
 - b. The appendices do provide a section on the growth of the Jewish Community in Kemp Mill, but the information is very dated. It does not reference the presence of five synagogues in Kemp Mill or the evolution of new Jewish businesses in the Kemp

Mill Shopping Center. The section needs to incorporate a better understanding of what drives the religious “logistics” that are unique to the Jewish community, e.g. the need for kosher foods, kosher eating establishments, the requirement to walk to/from services or other events on a Sabbath or major Jewish holy day, etc. This should be a key element of their recommended *“Evaluate the Following Resources in the Future for Designation in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Jewish Synagogues, Schools, and Other Institutions.”* If there is no attempt to understand the unique needs of the growing Jewish Orthodox community in Kemp Mill and adjust for that, the planners will seriously undercut the credibility of the Plan in the eyes of that population. It may not be the job of the County to “encourage” the growth of any ethnic or religious community. But, it’s certainly not the job of the County to stifle or get in the way of such growth.

In summary: The Planning Board needs to revisit this plan and evaluate whether it’s based on validated needs. It needs to incorporate input from a swath of citizens broader than the narrow focus of the Board’s earlier efforts. And it needs to adjust the plan to the realities of living in living in suburban Montgomery County. It cannot just reflect the dreams and preferences of well-meaning people who think they know best for the rest of us in the absence of actually finding out our real needs.

Respectfully,

Howard S. Kern

From: [Julie Malka](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Kemp Mill Corridor Proposal
Date: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 10:36:29 AM

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Dear Chairperson,

We are unequivocally opposed to the University Boulevard Corridor Plan as it is written.

It promises to disrupt life to the residents of Kemp Mill in a way that will force us to leave this neighborhood.

You have proposed a plan and have not solicited public input on such an important matter.

The impact on the Jewish community here will be devastating. You propose to eliminate the Kemp Mill shopping center which provides most of the kosher infrastructure for this community—in easy walking distance—by the way. There are no less than four kosher establishments there that service the neighborhood and the multi-family dwellings of the high-rise apartments on Arcola Avenue.

Other negative impacts will be the slowing of traffic, and hence congestion and pollution.

You will destroy a neighborhood that served as home for a cultural minority that has been here for well over a half a century.

We ask that you revoke this plan and seek input from the stakeholders before you destroy our homes and neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Raphael and Juliet Malka

From: [Avraham Sussman](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: University Boulevard Corridor
Date: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 10:39:20 AM
Attachments: [20241211-all-staff-except-hr_2392bc60-c0c0-4f6a-9d92-4d94bc325248.png](#)

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Honorable chairperson,

I have heard about the proposed plan, and are very excited that attention is being paid to this area, with the hopes of making improvements. With that being said, I think serious pause should be given to the matter in recognition of the following concerns:

- The plan needs to take adequate consideration of the impact on existing, self-sufficient communities, including apparent internal inconsistencies in its goals.
- The plan needs to consider economic considerations and recent societal events, such as “back to work” programs.

Consequently, I think the plan needs refinement.

To elaborate on each of these points:

- While the Planning Board staff has been working on this plan for quite some time, it has only recently been released, in final draft form, for public comment. It would seem fair to allow the public time to analyze it and consider it more fully.
- It seems that The Plan will have a negative impact on the existing Kemp Mill community, by
 - Reducing and slowing traffic, yet
 - Encouraging a significant increase in population requiring transportation, while many transportation needs within and to/from the community will still only be met by driving
 - It will also stress and possibly overwhelm other neighborhood infrastructure and institutions, such as public (and non-public) schools
 - Redevelopment of the shopping center has a high probability of destroying the current retail establishments located in that center, which the report describes as “the only retail use in this neighborhood.” At least four of those establishments support the cultural needs of a specific minority, and they will probably not survive during a redevelopment period.
 - This will materially impact the viability of a well-established ethnic group within the existing community, severely damaged in the interest of building a new self-sufficient community.
- The Plan is not, by its own admission, sufficiently comprehensive.
 - Under the rubric of Historic Preservation, the plan states: “Montgomery County lacks a comprehensive understanding of architectural and cultural resources

associated with Jewish history. Synagogues, schools, institutions and businesses in the Plan area should be studied as part of a larger effort to evaluate this integral part of Montgomery County.” (p. 132).

- The report then identifies 4 Synagogues (one converted to a Baptist Church) and one school (Yeshiva of Greater Washington).
 - No other institutions or businesses are identified, despite there being 4 kosher food establishments - several with long histories in Montgomery County - prominently located in the Kemp Mill Shopping Center.
 - This suggests a lack of sufficient understanding of the current demographics and dynamics of the Arcola Avenue District and its ethnic composition, which could be severely impacted by the current plan.
- The Plan is relatively silent on the development of additional employment opportunities within the Arcola Avenue District, which is a cornerstone of the concept of developing self-sufficient communities
 - There is no discussion of what types of businesses might wish to locate or relocate to the area
 - It is not clear that any might wish to do so – especially when the trend of office location has shifted from “work from home” and decentralization to “back to the office” and centralization to permit what has been found to be essential in-person, face-to-face interaction among co-workers.

For all these reasons, I think the plan needs to be further researched and modified accordingly before action is taken.

Thank you for your consideration of the matter.

With deepest respect and gratitude,

Avraham Sussman

Avraham Sussman

Kosher Food Supervisor

Rockville, MD 20852



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From: [Yaffa Klatzkow](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: University Boulevard Corridor Input
Date: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 10:43:11 AM

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Dear Chairperson,

I am writing to express my opposition to the “University Boulevard Corridor Plan” specifically as it applies to the Kemp Mill neighborhood. I both live and work in Kemp Mill. Thus far, there has been very limited public input on such an important matter.

The Plan is not, by its own admission, sufficiently comprehensive.

- Under the rubric of Historic Preservation, the plan states: “Montgomery County lacks a comprehensive understanding of architectural and cultural resources associated with Jewish history. Synagogues, schools, institutions and businesses in the Plan area should be studied as part of a larger effort to evaluate this integral part of Montgomery County.” (p. 132).
 - The report then identifies 4 Synagogues (one converted to a Baptist Church) and one school (Yeshiva of Greater Washington).
 - No other institutions or businesses are identified, despite there being 4 kosher food establishments - several with long histories in Montgomery County - prominently located in the Kemp Mill Shopping Center.
 - This suggests a lack of sufficient understanding of the current demographics and dynamics of the Arcola Avenue District and its ethnic composition, which could be severely impacted by the current plan.

For all these reasons, we think the plan needs to be further researched and modified accordingly before action is taken.

Thank you,

Mrs. Yaffa Klatzkow

Office & Admissions Manager
Yeshiva of Greater Washington
Boys Division & Yeshiva Gedolah

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: MCP-Chair
Subject: FW: Written Testimony regarding UBCP Plan prior to 2/27/2025 Meeting

-----Original Message-----

From: Manasseh Katz <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 11:26 AM
To: MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>
Cc: Adrianvala, Zubin <Zubin.Adrianvala@montgomeryplanning.org>
Subject: Written Testimony regarding UBCP Plan prior to 2/27/2025 Meeting

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Chair Harris:

I have many concerns about the University Boulevard Corridor Plan, including (but not exclusively, as I don't have time to write a 10 page thesis):

1 - Very high traffic volume that would be severely affected by the proposed changes (lower speed limits, permanent bus lanes, etc.). Data from MDOT SHA Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) Segments

- * University Blvd. between Arcola and Four Corners: 42,724 AAWDT
- * University Blvd. between Arcola and Georgia Ave.: 27,732 AAWDT
- * Arcola Ave. between Lamberton Dr. and University Blvd. 16,735 AAWDT
- * Arcola Ave. between Lamberton Dr. and Kemp Mill Rd. 16,395 AAWDT
- * Arcola Ave. between Lamberton Dr. and University Blvd. 16,285 AAWDT

These 2022 numbers, showing a complete recovery from pre-pandemic numbers. While public bus usage has NOT fully recovered from the pandemic drop, private car usage has recovered - which is in itself an indication of preference for private cars over public transit.

These numbers also indicate that a significant amount of traffic uses University + Arcola as a path from Four Corners (and likely much of that going to/from the Capital Beltway 495) through to Georgia Ave. and beyond. Such traffic can't be easily replaced by bus rapid transit (BRT) as BRT would only cover a portion of that route.

Most of this traffic is presumably going from or to (or both) locations more than a few blocks outside the UBCP area, and would be unable to make use of mass transit as a substitute.

THERE IS NO PLACE ELSE FOR THIS TRAFFIC TO GO!

Arcola Ave. and Kemp Mill Rd. already see huge amounts of through traffic due to the lack of alternate routes through this section of Montgomery County, and mass transit can't solve that with anything close to the proposed BRT solution.

2 - "Walking, biking and rolling" is a wonderful phrase. While it can be practical for a small number of people some of the time, for the vast majority of people who live near the affected area it is simply not viable.

- * Many people can't - due to physical limitations
- walk or bike or roll for any significant distance. This especially includes elderly, but realistically includes many middle-aged and younger people as well.

* For those who can walk/bike/roll to get to transit for the rest of their trip, there is a practical limit as to how far they will go. If the non-transit distance on either end of the journey is more than 1/2 mile, the vast majority of people simply will not consider this a practical option.

* Even for those who can walk/bike/roll up to 1/2 mile on each end, that does not work in MANY situations, including:

- * Inclement weather - rain, snow, very hot, very cold

- * Shopping. Carrying more than one bag of groceries or other items for even a short walk (e.g., 1/4 mile on each end of a trip) or on a bus (because buses are not designed with trunks and back seats for people to put their bags in, plus the safety issues of trying to maneuver with multiple bags while getting on/off a crowded bus) is simply not practical. So even those people (such as myself) who routinely walk a few blocks in decent weather will not do so when shopping. This also applies to Wheaton Plaza (Shoppingtown Wheaton, whatever it is called these days) which is next to the Wheaton Metro station - while that is great for employees commuting to work at Wheaton Plaza, transit is nearly useless for people going to shop at Wheaton Plaza - and if you can't shop at a shopping center it will cease to exist.

- * Children - There are both monetary costs and practical considerations taking a large family on a trip via walking + transit - simply not practical for most people, even if individually the bus is functional.

But most of all, the vast majority of trips by most people in the affected neighborhoods, except for a small percentage who commute to a location near a Metro station, simply find it impractical to use transit for such trips. This includes medical appointments (and if you are sick with any respiratory or other potentially contagious disease then a bus is not advisable, and if you have mobility problems, even temporary ones such as a broken leg, again a bus just doesn't work) as so many medical offices are not convenient to transit, visiting friends and family, entertainment venues, etc. The list is endless.

3 - Bus Rapid Transit done right is much more than bus lanes. A true BRT system is 100% dedicated to extremely frequent bus service.

There is no indication that there is anywhere near sufficient potential ridership to support that.

4 - The extremely low speed limits (5 to 10 MPH lower than existing limits, which already have been lowered over the past few decades in many cases) will simply not be followed without extreme enforcement measures. Such extreme measures such as automated speed cameras everywhere are very controversial. But if actually enforced, streets that are already severely congested during rush hour (including Arcola, University, Kemp Mill, Georgia) will become far worse. And there is NO PLACE FOR THE TRAFFIC TO DIVERT TO.

5 - The vast majority of Montgomery County is SUBURBS, not CITIES. Housing and transit simply work differently. Throwing around buzzwords and bike paths and bus lanes will NOT magically turn suburbs into cities. Period. If people want to live in cities, they can move to downtown Bethesda or Washington, DC or New York City or Baltimore (city, not county). Plenty of people live in cities and WANT to live in cities. Let the people who WANT to live in SUBURBS have that choice.

6 - Much is made of the need to right past wrongs against various groups of people. While that is a noble cause, I firmly believe that the way to help such groups is NOT by making everyone else's lives worse but rather to make their lives better. Whether someone is black, white, brown or green with purple polka dots (yes, I use that as an example of how absurd it is to group people by skin color), most Americans I know want:

- * The ability to get a good job - to make it big, move up in the world, not to be lumped forever with "you can't afford what the others have, so let's give you second-best" - which is I think the message shown about "affordable housing must be high-density, no cars, etc."


- * Mobility. For the past 100 years that has meant private cars. Period. Make them better (more efficient, electric, etc.) if you are concerned about pollution and "climate change". But you can't convince people who want mobility - the ability to go anywhere they want, when they want - that "transit is good enough for you, because we say so". Restricting movement to specific times and places is a sign of a totalitarian regime, not of the free country we live in.

* The ability to choose what type of housing they live in. For most people that ultimate goal is a single family home - no worry about noise from upstairs at 2am, your own patch of land to enjoy and many other advantages. Montgomery County was built primarily on that concept and that is why people moved here rather than into Washington, DC or other places. For those who prefer (because they don't want to deal with mowing the lawn or home maintenance or whatever) to live in apartments or other mutli-family dwellings, let them choose that. But this plan seems to FORCE high-density homes both by zoning changes allowing more such construction and also by trying to push people into "walk, bike, roll" + "transit".

Noble goals. But the wrong place, affecting THOUSANDS of people who live nearby or travel through the area, without actually giving people what they want.

If you truly want to build a 15-minute city, build something new, planned from the beginning. Columbia, MD. Or perhaps Brasilia - a fascinating experiment in "planned cities" - and by the way, according to Wikipedia "The average commute time on public transit in Brasília, for example to and from work, on a weekday is 96 min. 31% of public transit riders, ride for more than 2 hours every day." - now there are some wonderful numbers to compare. - ah, the glories of public transit.

Manasseh Katz

 Wheaton, MD 20902 (Less than 1 block outside the official plan area)

From: [Malki Zirkind](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: University corridor plan testimony
Date: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 11:32:05 AM
Attachments: [University Blvd corridor opposition.pptx.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Hello,

Please include the attached document to the record and have it available as handout and displayed for my testimony at the February 27th meeting.

Thank you

Malkitzedek Zirkind

 Silver Spring, MD 20902

University Blvd corridor opposition

DEI. WEF. 15 minute city agendas

- Walk-ability, for/according to who?
- Increased surveillance
- Increased fines
- Travel restrictions


There is no demand for additional bike lanes.
We have plenty of trails crisscrossing the county. This plan is a pipe dream designed to control the populace.

Anti Religious policies

- No discernable community outreach
- Rezoning/historical landmark designation of houses of worship & study halls (designed to restrict and then take such properties)

University Blvd corridor opposition

Obstruction to travel

- Removal of the right turn lane increases travel to by 3-4+ traffic signal  cycles. (As observed during off-peak/work from home trial)
- Lack of turning lanes increases congestion
- Increased surveillance/fines
- Current bus lanes already increase travel time for everyone and are a safety hazard.

Plan does not address the added strain to our already failing public schools.

Plan is designed to hurt the current residents.

Plan is designed to take via eminent domain,

And give to developers and other insiders.

Plan will tax current residents to build for others.

Proposals

Don't spend taxpayer money on projects they did not request.

Permit the building of ADUs without extra restrictions vs. primary residence.

Sensor controlled traffic signals to improve flow.

Not taxpayers funds for DEI, WEF, 15 minute city agendas.

From: [Jules Szanton](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Kemp Mill Civic Association Comment on UBCP
Date: Tuesday, February 25, 2025 11:58:08 AM
Attachments: [KMCA comment on University Boulevard Corridor Plan -- FINAL.pdf](#)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Chair Harris and Members of the Planning Board,

Attached, please find my organization's comment on the UCBP.

Respectfully,
Jules

Jules Szanton
President, KMCA



February 19, 2025

Chair Artie Harris
Montgomery Planning Board
2425 Reedie Drive, 14th Floor
Wheaton, MD 20902

Dear Chair Harris and Members of the Planning Board,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding the draft University Boulevard Corridor Plan. We are the Kemp Mill Civic Association (KMCA), a neighborhood association serving the approximately 1,300 households in Kemp Mill.

We developed this position statement collaboratively and democratically, including through a Transportation Committee [meeting attended by over 60 members](#), through dozens of emails exchanged through our listserv, and through countless conversations between our nine directors and members of the community. We do not pretend this letter reflects the unanimous views of all our members (or directors), but we are proud of our process and believe these comments reflect a broad consensus. Underscoring this, our members approved this letter by a vote of 54 households to 5 households at an in-person vote on February 19.

As an overview, the community is appreciative of the opportunity presented to make our community and the surrounding community a better place to live in. There are plenty of elements here that we will discuss that we feel would be of great benefit to the community and corridor if implemented in the proper way. But there is also significant concern about some elements within the plan as well as some omissions.

Our concerns are compounded by the lack of trust we have with the County right now, particularly as it relates to the process of public/community input. This is evident from the process regarding the bike lanes along University Blvd (MD 193), followed by the bus lanes along MD 193, and then the bus lanes along Georgia Ave (MD 97). While we felt that this process was somewhat better, we are still upset at the very short timeframe to provide comments after seeing the draft plan that is over 350 pages long with appendixes. We also felt that some of the results were skewed based on not getting enough representation from certain stakeholders, such as institutions just outside of the corridor and the many people who do not live adjacent to the corridor but utilize University Blvd for a variety of reasons. This lack of trust is contributing to a lot of the concerns you will see in our comments. Some of the elements could have great potential, but if the County cannot deliver the elements needed to meet the great potential, the results could significantly harm our community.

Below is an overview of our position as it relates to the University Blvd. Corridor plan. Note that we are not able to provide every single point that has been articulated by the community and would encourage the County to meet with us before the Plan is finalized.

University Blvd Corridor Vision

There are many ideas presented to transform University Blvd (MD 193). But looking at the big picture of the corridor, the primary purpose of MD 193 is to be a road to connect destinations that are in defined places. KMCA does not oppose efforts to improve other modes of transportation through

the corridor, such as walking, biking, and taking transit, but KMCA is concerned that the Plan does not adequately address the needs of vehicular traffic.

MD 193 is classified as an arterial. Arterials are meant to move people from place to place. Arterials are not meant to be places within the corridor. We need slow streets in defined places such as downtown Wheaton. We need faster, efficient roads to connect places. When a corridor is transformed into a place, the road becomes a “stroad,” part street, part road ([What Is a Stroad and Why Is It Dangerous? | Streetlight Data](#)).

The plan’s current vision is to essentially convert MD 193 from a road that has some stroad elements into a complete stroad. This is bad for every mode of transportation for both operations and safety. KMCA fully supports MD 193 remaining a “road” between Wheaton and Four Corners, not a street or a stroad. We need a suburban design strategy, not an urban design strategy.

This means that KMCA does not want to see any reduction in the speed limit along MD 193 through this section of the corridor. We need moderate to higher speed corridors along MD 193 and other arterial roads to have a desirable, livable suburban community that relies on traveling longer distances than in an urban environment. Higher speeds reduce travel time not just for vehicular traffic, but for transit traffic as well. This is critical for a successful transit system. If MD 193 is planned properly, it may even be possible to raise the speed limit.

Rather than reduce speed limits, KMCA supports other aspects of the Plan that will protect the safety of drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders. These include:

- Separating pedestrian and bicycle facilities from the roadway. Greater separation of the modes allows higher speeds along the corridor to be safe.
- Better access management, by encouraging future development to reduce the number of access points that open directly onto MD 193. Removal of these access points reduces conflicts between vehicles and all the modes of transportation. Better access management allows drivers to travel at faster speeds due to only needing to be concerned with a limited number of potential conflicts that are spread out.
- Ensuring that planned BRT stations are located at or near existing traffic signals that allow controlled pedestrian crossings. This is key to pedestrian safety along a corridor with moderate speeds. The speed limit when there is a pedestrian crossing any road should be zero (0). This happens at controlled crossings when the driver must stop at a red light for the pedestrian to cross.

For this same reason, KMCA opposes the Plan’s intention to create corridor-fronting properties along MD 193 midway between existing traffic signals. Adding pedestrians between traffic signals will either force pedestrians to walk long distances for a traffic signal, or to cross at uncontrolled crossings—which presents the greatest risk of pedestrian fatalities and creates the “stroad” that needs to be avoided. The corridor needs safe “points” along the road and not “places” that make MD 193 into a stroad. In sum, we believe that with responsible safety measures, MD 193 can have safe speeds that are equivalent to the current design speed of the road.

Concerns with Effects of Thrive Montgomery 2050

KMCA is strongly opposed to the Thrive Montgomery 2050 policy that stops proposing 4+ lane roads in master plans. There is clear evidence already that this policy does not work. Old Georgetown Road (MD 185) is a prime example where the road diet to 4 lanes has created unbearable gridlock conditions not just during rush hour, but throughout a large portion of the day. The removal of thru lanes on Georgia Ave (MD 97) to make room for a bus lane, has created gridlock conditions during rush hour along the remaining 4 lanes, with many drivers ignoring the designated bus lane signs. These State Highways were meant to be the primary routes for vehicular traffic, i.e. they were meant to be roads, not streets. Essentially, the County's policy is trying to systematically convert all roads to streets. This forces traffic into the streets that were not designed for traffic. For example, many in our community for many years use Sligo Creek Pkwy as an alternative route to MD 97. Sligo Creek Pkwy, a street, was never meant as a commuter route, but it has turned into one due to the congestion issues along MD 97, a road, that are now getting much worse.

Along MD 193, the current road diet between Amherst and Dennis avenues has not produced significantly longer delays through the corridor. However, the results of this temporary road diet are skewed and do not mean that a permanent road diet will necessarily work, especially the one proposed in the corridor plan that is more extreme in length and restrictions. The current traffic conditions are still not close to traffic conditions pre-pandemic. (It was also very helpful to traffic that Northwood High School has been closed this entire academic year.) But there is a growing trend, not just in the federal government, to get workers back into the offices. This will soon get traffic beyond pre-pandemic numbers. There will continue to be a steady increase in traffic growth in general by the standard 1-2% a year. In and near designated growth areas, such as MD 193, the growth rate could be even higher, even with improved transit potentially taking many of those extra vehicle trips away.

KMCA is currently opposed to making the current MD 193 road diet permanent, let alone having a road diet in the corridor plan. Furthermore, the KMCA has great concerns with how this would affect the MD 193/Arcola Ave intersection, which is further discussed below.

To summarize the main concern with the overall corridor plan, our community is almost fully reliant on the vehicle as the only mode of transportation. So are most of the communities adjacent to us and the corridor. Improving transit in the corridor is not going to change this fact due to a combination of not being able to access transit to begin with (i.e. "last mile" problem) and that the transit lines do not go efficiently to the vast majority of destinations that residents of our surrounding communities are trying to get to anyway. In addition, certain functions like grocery shopping are difficult via transit.

"Arcola Ave District"

There are only two roads that access our community, Arcola Ave and Kemp Mill Road, with entries only from MD 193, MD 97, and Randolph Road. Arcola Ave is our community's Main Street that accesses our neighborhood shopping center and several religious institutions/schools, which are all very active. The pedestrian and bicycle activities along Arcola Ave and within our community are

extremely high compared to similar looking communities. Arcola Ave is also an important part of the County roadway network. It acts as a cut-through between MD 193 with MD 97 and Randolph Road.

Arcola Ave is a local stroad. Arcola Ave had a road diet about 20 years ago from 4 lanes to 2 lanes after a pedestrian fatality. Our community loves that Arcola Ave is now very pedestrian friendly. But the congestion in our community has historically been very severe due to the road diet, that pre-pandemic was about 2.5 miles in length. KMCA has significant concerns that the corridor plan with the higher-density development within the proposed Arcola Ave district, as well as the proposed development along the corridor will cause congestion to significantly exceed the historic congestion issues.

The corridor plan proposes a new access point from MD 193 to the Kemp Mill Shopping Center and the Arcola Ave/Lamberton Drive intersection. This new connection, which we will call Lamberton Drive Extension, presents some opportunities, but also some concerns.

On the positive side, the KMCA sees the Lamberton Drive Extension as a potential new access point into our community that can alleviate the recurring and non-recurring (i.e. crash-related, weather-related) congestion that is experienced along Arcola Ave. The Lamberton Drive Extension also creates opportunities for the Shopping Center to get new customers, which could help the businesses survive and thrive more. Lastly, the new added traffic to the MD 193/Lamberton Drive Extension intersection could justify a traffic signal, which would be great for all modes of transport.

On the negative side, the combined increased traffic along Lamberton Drive Extension and Arcola Ave will make an already severely congested intersection into a complete nightmare. Additionally, there is concern about the effects of safety and security along this new extension. Young Israel Shomrai Emunah Synagogue, located on the corner of this intersection, has experienced anti-Semitic events in front of the synagogue entrance and would want to make sure that their security needs are met. Lastly, we would like to ensure that any plan for Lamberton Drive Extension is a street and not a road.

To address our concerns and help us decide whether we could support this extension, the KMCA would like to see more information on what Lamberton Drive Extension would look like, such as typical sections and general strategies for safety and security. We also want a commitment in the plan that the Arcola Ave/Lamberton Drive intersection will be upgraded to meet the operational and safety demands of all users. Lastly, we want a commitment from the County that it will work with the community to update the Kemp Mill Master Plan as soon as this corridor plan is complete. In that updated Kemp Mill Master Plan, we want to ensure that all the secondary effects that the University Blvd Corridor Plan will have on Kemp Mill will be addressed.

Zoning Changes

The corridor plan also has some zoning changes within the Arcola Ave district. This includes a combination of higher density and mixed-use development. Again, the KMCA sees some opportunities but also concerns.

Members of our community are open to additional housing, but our community also has concerns about traffic and overloading existing infrastructure. If additional housing is built, our members are particularly interested in owner-occupied multi-family housing (such as condos or townhouses) that could enable first-time homeowners to begin developing home equity. The Kemp Mill community is a very desirable community where many multiple generations of the same family are spread out through the community. With housing prices skyrocketing and mortgage rates relatively high, it is getting harder and harder for the next generation of a family to return to the community or get younger families from outside the community to buy. Additional townhouses or condos could help meet this need. Before supporting a specific proposal for additional housing, KMCA would ask for additional information regarding the number of units and intended price points.

In terms of the proposed mixed-use development, the KMCA again sees opportunities and concerns. On the positive side, mixed-use development with higher-density housing has great potential for the current businesses within the Kemp Mill Shopping Center, as well as attract other businesses that could benefit the community. It would also be great for Kemp Mill Shopping Center to become a more pedestrian/bicycle-friendly environment.

But there are concerns that are very unique to our community. Kemp Mill has a very large Jewish community, much of which keeps kosher. Several businesses in the Kemp Mill Shopping Center cater specifically to the Jewish community such as a kosher supermarket, restaurants, and bakeries. Other businesses in the shopping center cater to non-kosher keeping patrons, or to the general public. All these businesses are a huge resource to the community and if any of them were to go out of business either temporarily due to the transition of the property or permanently due to economic factors (similar what happened to the kosher establishment in Cabin John Shopping Center as it transitioned to mixed-use development), it would take away a huge community resource that is vitally important to the Jewish community.

It was disappointing that the planning team recognized the Jewish history of the area and yet did not proactively engage the Jewish community in Kemp Mill regarding the community's unique needs. The KMCA wants to ensure that our concerns are addressed appropriately before considering whether we could support the mixed-use zoning changes proposed in the corridor plan.

The last major concern that the KMCA has regarding the Arcola Ave District relates to the MD 193/Arcola Ave signalized intersection. We simply cannot accept an intersection that has any fatal flaws in traffic operations. These fatal flaws include recurring cycle failures for any turning movement within the intersection, as well as recurring queuing of any lane that backs into another intersection or blocks an adjacent lane. The corridor plan should not reference details such as restricting right turns on red or removing the channelized right turn from Arcola to MD 193. These details should be discussed during the preliminary design phase. Instead, the corridor plan should set minimum standards of service for the intersection and require significant improvements to the intersection if needed to meet the vision of the corridor.

“Four Corners District”

KMCA has some specific concerns as it relates to the Four Corners District proposal. Four Corners is unique in that it is not only an area of business, but it is also an integral part of the I-495 interchange with both US 29 and MD 193. Both MD 193 and US 29 must remain “roads” through Four Corners and not “streets” or “stroads”. Any proposal that increases vehicle delay through Four Corners is unacceptable, as this is a key junction to connect to other places. If BRT needs to go through this intersection, BRT must be on its own alignment through Four Corners. Four Corners needs to be considered a point within the corridor and not a place.

Furthermore, removing the one-way pair of MD 193 will not just hurt vehicle operations, but it will also remove the whole character of Four Corners. Further analysis of various alternatives are needed to meet the functionality of MD 193 as a road while supporting the growth of Four Corners.

Secondary Effects

As stated earlier, the University Blvd Corridor Plan will have secondary effects. These secondary effects are not just for our community, but the communities that surround the corridor and the many drivers that use MD 193 as simply a road to get to other destinations. These effects are not just transportation related. There are also social and environmental effects that are beyond the corridor. The corridor plan must recognize these secondary effects and discuss a plan on how they would be addressed.

BRT

There are a wide variety of opinions as it relates to the proposed BRT through the corridor. The community recognizes that if more growth is desired in this corridor, it needs to be supported by better transportation. Whether growth should be in this corridor is debatable within the community. It is also debatable whether the only growth in the County should be transit-oriented, particularly in a County that is primarily suburban in nature, not urban. It is also debatable if a BRT system in this corridor has enough benefits to the County that it is worth the cost of developing and operating a BRT system.

There are members in our community that fully support better transit along the corridor. Some of them are upset though that we live in a community that is just out of range of being able to use it because of the “last mile” issue.

While there are a variety of opinions within the community of whether a BRT system is appropriate in this corridor, it is nearly unanimous in the community that if a BRT system is built, it cannot be to the detriment of vehicle traffic to the point of congested intersections or corridors. This is not just an operational issue, it is also a safety issue, as crashes exponentially increase in congested conditions. A detailed traffic study must be conducted to meet the operational and safety needs of all users,

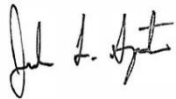
which include pedestrians, bicycle, transit, and vehicular traffic. KMCA is opposed to any BRT that is designed to disproportionately hurt vehicular traffic.

Conclusions

Due to the tight time crunch of responding to this plan and the limitations of getting everyone's point across in this type of letter, these comments and positions from KMCA are not fully comprehensive. We would encourage the County to meet with KMCA and the community at the earliest opportunity possible to discuss our concerns and how they can be addressed in this Corridor Plan. As stated at the beginning of this letter, we do see many of positive elements within this corridor plan if implemented properly, some of which we noted, some of which we didn't. But there are significant concerns related to transportation, housing, and our shopping center that need to be addressed.

Thank you for carefully going through our comments and we hope we can have a fruitful discussion that can ultimately lead to a better vision of our community and the MD 193 corridor.

Respectfully,



Jules Szanton
President, KMCA

On behalf of the Members of the Kemp Mill Civic Association

Cc: County Executive Marc Elrich
Montgomery County Council

From: [Frank G.](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: University Blvd Plan of Disaster Very Sad
Date: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 4:05:39 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

To Chair person:

As a resident Montgomery County (over 50 year resident) and someone who frequently uses University Boulevard and surrounding streets as part of my daily schedule. I'd like to express my concerns with the proposed University Boulevard Corridor plan.

In general, the plan prioritizes the needs of the minority of University Boulevard users who use buses, sidewalks, or bike over the vast majority who drive. This is IMPRACTICAL AND INEQUITABLE.

In particular , I oppose any plan to:

- 1) Make the currently underutilized bus lanes on University Boulevard
- 2) Eliminate designated lanes for right-turning vehicles to turn without a signal
- 3) Make University and Colesville two-lane roads at Four Corners, with no designated turnaround
- 4) Set speed limits along all of University Blvd between Four Corners and Wheaton to 25mph or 30mph

While each of these proposals has issues, the combined effect of all them will be unmanageable traffic congestion and gridlock for drivers, with serious consequences for the environment and quality of life.

Look what happened in White Oak by putting Section 8 housing behind the former Sears building.

I STRONGLY encourage the Planning Board to reconsider the plan to better account for the tens of thousands of taxpaying Montgomery County families who drive on University Boulevard as part of their commute and daily life.

Thank you,

Frank Gittleson

[REDACTED]
Silver Spring, Md 20901