

**To: Andrew Friedson, President, Montgomery County Council**

**From:** Alex Pulisic, [REDACTED]

**Date:** 2/6/24

**Subject:** Unified Testimony Regarding Clarksburg Library Project (No. P710500)

Dear Council President Friedson and Members of the Montgomery County Council,

As a dedicated resident of Clarksburg, I am compelled to address the council regarding the proposed amendment to the FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program and Supplemental Appropriation #24-53 for the Clarksburg Library project. My testimony, enriched by factual data and community sentiments, underscores significant concerns over the project's proposed relocation and budget escalation.

### **Community Voice and Fiscal Responsibility**

The Clarksburg community has eagerly anticipated the establishment of the library at the Clarksburg Town Center, a plan supported by past commitments and the donation of strategically located land. The shift to a new location not only disregards these commitments but also introduces unnecessary financial burdens. With the initial budget set at \$15.363 million, the proposed increase to over \$22 million, largely due to land acquisition and delayed project timelines, raises substantial concerns about fiscal stewardship.

### **Cost Efficiency and Community Benefits**

The donated Town Center land represents not just a cost-saving opportunity but also aligns with the community's preference for an accessible library. Utilizing this land avoids the financial implications of acquiring new property and accelerates the project's timeline, directly benefiting the rapidly growing population of Clarksburg, which projects to nearly triple by 2025. This strategic decision can redirect funds towards enhancing library services, embodying a prudent allocation of resources.

### **Adherence to Original Plans**

The historical development and planning approvals have consistently indicated the Town Center as the library's location. This not only reflects a logical use of county resources but also honors the promises made to our community. Ignoring this plan in favor of a new site with an inflated budget undermines the trust placed in our county officials and disregards the efficient use of already developed land ready for immediate construction.

### **Community Engagement and Support**

Public forums, surveys, and petitions have overwhelmingly demonstrated the community's preference for the Town Center location. This unified voice is a testament to the community's engagement and vested interest in seeing the library serve as a central hub for learning and connection at the heart of Clarksburg.

In light of these considerations—community preference, fiscal responsibility, and the strategic use of available resources—I urge the Montgomery County Council to reevaluate the proposed amendments concerning the Clarksburg Library. The decision to proceed with the library's construction at the Clarksburg Town Center, leveraging the donated land and adhering to original budgetary allocations, not only fulfills a promise to our community but also exemplifies prudent fiscal and planning practices.

The Clarksburg Library is more than a project; it is a future cornerstone for our community's educational and social fabric. As such, it deserves the thoughtful consideration of its impact, costs, and location to best serve the needs and expectations of Clarksburg residents.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I trust that the council will make a decision that best reflects the interests and voices of the Clarksburg community.

Sincerely,

Alex Pulisic  
[REDACTED]