

Coalition for Smarter Growth

Choices for Our Communities

Choices for Our Region

May 17, 2007

Mr. David S. Ekern, P.E.
Commissioner
Virginia Department of Transportation
Annex building
1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Commissioner Ekern:

Fairfax County is currently engaged in a \$1 million plus effort to redesign Tysons Corner into a pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly urban center focused on the four new Metrorail stations. Well-designed streets are essential to support this type of redevelopment and to ensure that the multi-billion dollar Metrorail investment is successful in maximizing transit ridership. We are writing to solicit your commitment that VDOT will support new street configurations throughout Tysons Corner that are in keeping with a pedestrian-, bicycle- and transit-friendly urban center. We hope that you will be able to respond with detailed commitments in response to the following specific questions:

- 1) Will VDOT approve the redesign of Routes 7 and 123 from the proposed 8-lane (and multiple turn-lane) configurations into an urban boulevard which draws lessons from DC's avenues and other urban boulevards nationwide, and would include such features as:
 - a. more frequent cross streets and pedestrian crossing points
 - b. a wider center median as a safe-haven for pedestrians
 - c. single, rather than multiple turn lanes
 - d. fewer lanes if parallel capacity is created through an expanded street grid
 - e. bicycle lanes
 - f. wide sidewalk, street trees and well-marked cross-walks
- 2) Will VDOT approve the conversion of the Route 7 and 123 interchange (which sits between the two central Tysons Corner Metrorail stations) from a cloverleaf to a more urban configuration that brings the site to ground-level with surrounding development and replaces the cloverleaf?
 - a. Will VDOT evaluate interchange designs that might include depressing one roadway below ground while allowing for safe bicycle/pedestrian friendly movements at the surface level?
 - b. Would VDOT allow the reclaimed land to be sold for development to allow for a good urban environment between the two Tysons Central stations?
- 3) Will VDOT approve a denser street network and the redesign of the street network into "complete streets" with wider sidewalks, narrower lanes, bike lanes, and other pedestrian safety measures such as shorter crossing distances, medians, street trees and on-street parking?

- 4) Will VDOT set aside funding in the 6-Year Program to pay for these street modifications to the extent that they are not paid for by private landowners as a condition of their development approvals?

Thank you for your time and we appreciate your commitment to supporting the urban redesign of Tyson's Corner.

Sincerely,

Stewart Schwartz
Executive Director