



2: TYSONS TODAY

Over the past 50 years, Tysons has grown from a rural community to the nation's 12th largest employment center and one of the country's largest retail centers. It is a major economic force in Fairfax County, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the larger Washington D.C. region. It has been a place, however, where most people come to work or shop and then leave immediately. There have been limited public amenities and limited access to the daily needs of residents, such as a grocery store. It has been a destination, not a place to stay.

The Tysons of today is defined not by what it offers, but by deference to the automobile – the dominant land use is streets designed for automobiles and surface parking:

- Routes 7 and 123 at times are highly congested thoroughfares. The lack of a well connected grid of streets results in most cars using these major roadways to get around Tysons.
- Because of the design of these arterial streets, Routes 7 and 123 are practically uncrossable by foot. Few safe pedestrian connections exist. As a result, virtually all trips, even those within what should be easy walking distance, are made in cars.
- Nearly half the land in Tysons is covered by impermeable surfaces. With 167,000 parking spaces, Tysons has 1.3 parking spaces for every resident and employee living and working there today.
- With extensive impervious surfaces, the few usable green spaces are not enough to manage stormwater. Over 70% of the stormwater flows untreated, resulting in harmful chemicals entering local streams.
- The large superblocks and campus-style, sprawling development that exists in Tysons turns its back to the streets. Large parking structures, widely separated buildings, and large setbacks focus on the internal development and are not welcoming to visitors.

Continued Pattern of Growth

If growth were to continue as it has in the past, Tysons would remain largely a jobs-heavy, auto-dependent edge city environment. Infrastructure improvements could take some pressure off Route 7 and other arterials. However, the continued imbalance of jobs and households in Tysons would lead to rising levels of congestion and the erosion of Tysons as a major center. Such a continued pattern would preclude the transformation envisioned by the Task Force.

Under the current Comprehensive Plan, the primary change to the future pattern of growth would be the addition of Metrorail in Tysons, and the evolution of greater concentrations of more intense office and residential redevelopment around the four new Metrorail stations. Despite the mid and high-rise housing allowed in the current Comprehensive Plan with Rail, the additional residential development would not be enough to improve the jobs/housing balance nor sufficient to affect congestion levels in Tysons.

Redevelopment might include grocery stores and other neighborhood-serving retail within an easy walk for local residents. Some pockets of green space and public plazas might be added to developments to provide gathering places for the community. Although Metrorail would bring more development to Tysons, with no amendments to the current Comprehensive Plan, the land uses would not be linked to the Metrorail line: only a small portion of the overall development would be within a 5 minute walk of the transit stations.

Tysons



Boston



Washington D.C



All Same Scale

The Tysons of the past has been planned one parcel at a time. The Tysons of the future needs to be planned with an overarching vision for all of Tysons as a guide for every decision. There needs to be a new direction, new stewardship, and a new implementing authority to help Tysons regain its position as a leader. This approach models the vision-driven process that created Reston as one of the best communities in Fairfax County and the nation.



With continued limited pedestrian and bicycle access, significant traffic congestion, lack of parks and public amenities, limited availability of services to support basic needs, and the negative impacts of poorly managed growth on neighboring residential communities, Tysons cannot thrive under the current piecemeal projects permitted by the existing Comprehensive Plan. With the world's focus on sustainable practices and energy conservation, Tysons' auto dominated environment would create a barrier to future economic growth. **A bold departure from the existing practices is needed.**

Tysons Today and Tomorrow

	Total Floor Area	Residential Population	Employee Population
Existing (2006)	44m square feet	16,000	105,000
Base Case	74m square feet	35,000	161,500

(Assuming the existing Comprehensive Plan)