

Livability and Walkability in Tysons Corner
Draft Recommendations 12/17/07

The Livability/Walkability Subcommittee presents this list of community benefits essential to a livable, walkable Tysons Corner. The items were drawn from interviews with experts and presentations on best practices, in addition to response from community forums.

To present a complete picture of the livability/walkability potential in Tysons, we have included items that are already required by County, State, or Federal government.

The items on this list are not yet prioritized, nor do they include implementation recommendations. Once the committee receives feedback from PB Placemaking, other subcommittees, and County staff, we will review them again and address prioritization and any recommendations for implementation, in addition to the separate recommendations of the Implementation Subcommittee.

GOAL

Fairfax County, developers, businesses, and citizens should work together to create a Tysons Corner that is pedestrian and bicycle oriented, engaging the public with interior space as well as exterior space, creating opportunities for vibrant civic engagement, preserving the environment, and providing safety and community services for citizens.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To promote pedestrian orientation, Tysons should be redeveloped as compact, walkable mixed-use neighborhoods and districts. Points of highest density should occur at the proposed metro stations and transit nodes, and taper down to levels that are compatible with surrounding areas.
2. Civic uses and green spaces should be incorporated into each neighborhood during the first phase of each new development to jump start the vibrant, 18 hour environment that will encourage continued use and build community appetite for future development.
3. A master plan for Tysons should a) ensure implementation of the guiding principles throughout the proposed Tysons, and b) promote compatible design and complementary uses for contiguous parcels.
4. Design guidelines should be developed for each neighborhood and district, reflecting community input defining the character of that neighborhood.
5. Community participation in the design guidelines for the Metro stations is encouraged and desirable.
6. Well placed signs should identify transit nodes, directions to major points, identification of neighborhoods, etc.
7. Safety issues associated with crime and with conflicts among pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles must also be carefully considered so that Tysons is perceived to be and actually is a safe place to live, work, and visit.
8. Creating livability and walkability may require that the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and effective circulation systems be given priority in many circumstances over the need to move traffic quickly and efficiently. Effectively balancing these two often mutually exclusive objectives within Tysons Corner will be important to meeting the goal of achieving a livable/walkable Tysons Corner.

ACTION ITEMS

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Open space that invites the public to gather, relax, and participate in events, and is closely connected to commercial activities and transportation
- Retail and commercial building orientation that encourages pedestrian activity, e.g. buildings oriented toward and opened to primary streets with wide sidewalks and large window retail or commercial uses to attract interest in the interior space
- Attractive streetscapes, including proper lighting, street trees, and features in the center of wide streets that would encourage pedestrian to cross
- Community retail in each neighborhood to meet daily needs
- Residential units situated to provide welcome for pedestrians and privacy for residents, e.g. steps, porches, or ground floor retail to avoid the shutter effect that occurs when windows are directly at sidewalk level
- Safety measures, such as elimination of pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle conflicts; traffic calming measures; lighting for security and safety

PROTECTING AND RESTORING NATURE

- Transportation improvements and built design to restore and protect nature.
- Topography and natural features of the land that enhance the design of Tysons Corner.
- Tysons connected to surrounding communities with corridors of green space.
- Streams
 - Downstream segments of Old Courthouse Spring Branch (Difficult Run), Scotts Run, and Pimmit Run outside of Tysons are protected by reducing runoff created by the impacts of impervious surfaces within Tysons.
 - Stream function protected and restored within Tysons' built environment.
 - Streams and stream valleys are natural features within the built environment
- Built Environment
 - Silver, Gold, and Platinum LEED certification for all development.
 - Building techniques that maximize energy efficiency
 - Use of construction materials that reduce heat retention and use porous paving materials.
 - Wide range of implementation strategies for reducing energy and water consumption, such as differential tax rates for green buildings.

- Trees and Vegetation
 - Maximized tree planting with an emphasis on street trees.
 - Trees to shade sidewalks, trails, and urban plazas.
- Stormwater Management
 - Modified public facilities manual to include most up-to-date ultra-urban stormwater management techniques. Includes things like linear bioretention systems, stormwater wetlands, green walls, and infiltration courtyards.
 - Low Impact Development (LID), green roofs, sand filters and other techniques that increase filtration and recharge aquifers.
 - Peak flow and runoff volume reduction for new construction and redevelopment.

ACCESSIBILITY

- Roads, sidewalks, trails, public rights-of-way, and outdoor amenities designed for universal accessibility. These designs must be functionally accessible, which may require exceeding the literal universal design standards for construction and renovations in order to make these features in fact welcoming and useable under normal conditions by people with all abilities.
- Accessibility Guidelines:
 - <http://www.access-board.gov/prowac/index.htm>
- Accessible right-of-way Guidelines:
 - <http://www.access-board.gov/prowac/guide/PROWguide.pdf>

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND SAFETY

- Equipment, location of fire stations, and training for emergency personnel that reflect the needs of an urban community.
- Best practices in urban-style community policing
- Small community, specialty, and/or storefront libraries, with a focus on on-line services
- Medical and veterinary services readily available to workers, residents, and visitors.

ARTS

- Public art (some provision exists in the current Metro system for public art in the stations)
- Regular public performance by community, school, and professional groups
- Affordable live/work space for artists
- Space for galleries and studios, with price breaks for those offering training in the arts

- Performing arts space suitable for new urban environment
- Mechanisms for connecting nearby arts institutions with Tysons Corner, e.g. shuttle service to Wolf Trap; programming connections between Wolf Trap, Fairfax County Arts Council, and proposed performing spaces; auxiliary exhibit space for McLean Project for the Arts

EDUCATION

- Careful, realistic analysis of potential school aged population in Tysons area and how they will be best served.
- Satellite programs for universities
- Community continuing education opportunities

UTILITIES

- Energy and water conservation best practices in place, such as integrated rainwater and grey water capture and reuse systems and Energy Star Certification.
- Utility planning reflects urban water and energy use.

RECREATION

- Land and resources set aside for a large central urban park and series of smaller urban parks, including both green space and urban-appropriate recreation facilities:
 - Trails
 - Playgrounds
 - Multi-use Courts
 - Reservable Picnic Areas
 - Neighborhood Dog Parks
 - Neighborhood Serving Skate Parks (Modular/Portable types)
- Space for affordable, indoor community recreation centers

TRANSPORTATION

- All parts of Tysons Corner well connected with Complete Streets designed for all users of the road including pedestrians, bicyclists, and motor vehicles; routes should be direct and enabled by well-designed street grids and by appropriate sizes of blocks. Barriers to surrounding neighborhoods should be overcome.
- Balance to move traffic effectively while recognizing that priority in most areas should be given to pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Streets that are safe and easy to cross. Special attention for long blocks and major roads such as Routes 7 and 123 and International Drive. The intersections that involve these major roads redesigned to maximize safe pedestrian and bicycle passage.

- Designs of streets provide a buffer for pedestrians from traffic with consideration of such techniques as trees along curbs, on-street parking, and wide sidewalks.
- Street characteristics such as width, number of lanes, speed, and parking appropriate to adjacent land use and type of neighborhood.
- On road as well as off road facilities for bicycles, such as bike lanes, multi-use trails, including safe, secure, covered bicycle parking.
- Pedestrian and bicycle connections on local streets, especially to and from Metro stations, while discouraging cut-through motor vehicle traffic.
- Frequent, direct, and efficient circulator transportation systems—to and from Metro stations and to and among neighborhoods around and near Tysons Corner.
- Good vehicular connections from and through Tysons to the Beltway and Dulles Toll Road.