

## **Livability/Walkability Subcommittee of the Tysons Land Use Task Force**

Report for Consultant Liaison Subcommittee and PB Placemaking  
March 7, 2007

The Tysons Land Use Task Force formed the Livability/Walkability Subcommittee to address standards and criteria for creating livable, workable, and walkable neighborhoods within Tysons Corner. This report is divided into three sections: physical amenities, programmatic amenities, and transportation/safety issues.

### **I. Physical Amenities**

#### Challenge:

Configured in ways that no longer meet today's retail needs and design standards, Tysons Corner has the capacity for substantial alteration or expansion, incorporating newer, more intense, diverse uses. To create a more pedestrian oriented, livable community with a diversity of uses, development should be pedestrian oriented, engaging public with interior space as well as exterior space.

#### Open Space Considerations:

- Open space that invites the public to gather, relax, and participate in events, and is closely connected to commercial activities and transportation;
- Open space amenities could include plazas with art or water features, kiosks, music or recreational events such as open air concerts, skating, outdoor cafes;
- Landscaping to provide shade and softens the hardscapes;
- Open space should provide comfortable seating and attractive and adequate lighting.

#### Built Environment Considerations:

- Buildings should be oriented toward and opened to the street with large window retail or commercial uses to attract interest in the interior space;
- Sidewalks should be wide enough for ease of passage and include landscaping for shade;
- A master plan for Tysons is desirable to 1) ensure implementation of the guiding principles throughout the proposed study area, and 2) promote compatible design and complementary uses for contiguous parcels.
- To promote pedestrian orientation, the Tysons study area should be redeveloped as compact, walkable mixed-use "neighborhoods". Points of highest density should occur at the proposed metro stations and taper down to levels that are compatible with existing residential areas.
- Design guidelines should be developed for each "neighborhood" reflecting community input defining the character of that neighborhood.

- Community participation in the design guidelines for the Metro stations is encouraged and desirable.

#### Connectivity Considerations:

- There should be an identifiable transition from neighborhood to neighborhood with well placed signs that identify transit nodes, directions to major points, identification of neighborhoods, etc.
- Additional facilities for walking, biking can help get people out of cars. Major investment needs to be put into a thoughtful, friendly bike and walk system that Major investment needs to be put into a thoughtful, friendly bike and walk system that can connect and facilitate movement throughout the entire area.

#### Protecting and Restoring the Environment

##### Over-all considerations

- Use of the topography to underpin design.
- Environmental protection for areas outside Tysons from increased development within Tysons, with careful focus on increased impervious surface impacts.
- Awareness and utilization of all natural features including streams and valleys

##### Trails and Connectivity

- Some green connectivity to outside Tysons so as not to create an ‘island effect’
- Shaded green trails throughout Tysons to the extent possible
- Maximum replacement of tree cover where possible

##### Water Resources

- Restoration of Scotts Run and Old Courthouse Run to the extent possible and protection of downstream segments from the development impacts at Tysons
- These streams should become featured amenities in the revitalization efforts with paths and small stream valley parks that invite people to enjoy them.
- Tysons appears to sit on an aquifer recharge zone so utilization of infiltration for Stormwater management should be considered

##### Building Considerations

- Use of strategies and opportunities to reduce energy consumption- minimizing heat retention including green roofs, recommending materials used for paving and building to minimize heat retention.
- Use of plants and green space to soften the built environment wherever possible
- Suggested Orientation of buildings to increase air flow through Tysons
- Incentivizing Green Building (LEEDS) practices wherever possible
- Create healthy green indoor space wherever possible

##### Parking Policies

- Parking policies and maximum multimodal street connectivity that discourage single auto use and increase transit bicycle and pedestrian use

- Parking policies reduce and share parking supply, reduce the amount of impervious surface in parking
- Street parking: all retail and residential streets should maximize on-street parking in order to reduce off-street parking, share parking resources, reduce cost and space devoted to parking, and provide support retailers with convenient parking, and pedestrian safety by using parked cars as a buffer between moving traffic and the sidewalk, reduced vehicle speeds generated by parked vehicles.

### Accessibility

- Sidewalks, trails, public rights-of-way, and outdoor amenities must be 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>

## **II. Programmatic Amenities**

This section examines program standards for public services and amenities set forth in the Fairfax County Policy Plan and notes changes to the region to be considered as we update the Tysons Comprehensive Plan to reflect an urban, high-density environment. Current considerations listed here reflect the discussions and recommendations of the Tysons Land Use Subcommittee on Livability and Walkability.

Current language from the Tysons plan can be found at the end of this document.

### **1. Fire and Rescue Services:**

Policy plan standards: Establish and maintain at a minimum, a seven-minute total response time coverage for fire and rescue emergencies to at least 95 per cent of the County's population.

#### Current Considerations:

- Equipment, location of stations, and training for emergency personnel should be updated if plans result in higher density, more narrow streets, and/or higher buildings.

### **2. Police Services**

Policy Plan standards: None provided

Current Considerations:

- County should follow best practices in urban-style community policing, e.g. community police centers, bicycle and walking patrols.

### **3. Libraries**

Policy Plan standards:

- Library facilities should be compatible with adjacent land uses and with the character of the surrounding community and should be sized to provide adequate space for the population to be served
- Library facilities should sustain adequate levels of patronage

Current considerations:

- Current County space standards are based on suburban parking model.
- Tysons should provide small community, specialty, and/or storefront libraries, with a focus on on-line services.

### **4. Arts Activities and Access**

Policy Plan Standards: There is no specific category for arts standards in the Fairfax County comprehensive plan.

Current Considerations:

Best practices applicable in Tysons include:

- Public art (some provision exists in the current Metro system for public art in the stations. Communities such as Arlington and Chicago have made good use of public art as identifiers for particular neighborhoods.)
- Regular public performance by community, school, and professional groups
- Affordable live/work space for artists
- Commercial space for galleries and studios, with price breaks for those offering training in the arts
- Mechanisms for connecting nearby institutions with Tysons Corner, e.g. shuttle service to Wolf Trap; programming connections between Wolf Trap, Fairfax County Arts Council, and proposed small amphitheatre; auxiliary exhibit space for McLean Project for the Arts
- Funding: set-aside for public art and/or programming, based on % of cost of new development.

### **5. Education**

Policy Plan standards: None provided

#### Current Considerations:

- Careful, realistic analysis of potential school aged population in Tysons area is required. Are current student yield ratios from Staff of FCPS, Dept. of Facilities Planning, consistent with Tysons-style high density development? (See Public Facilities standards <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/tysonscorner/nofind/pubfacstandards.pdf> , p. 10)
- Satellite programs for universities would serve the Tysons workforce.
- Depending on the projected demographics of the area, education and activities for seniors should be explored.

### **6. Sanitary/Sewer**

Policy Plan standards: Public Facilities standards for design flow are based on population and land use. (Please see <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/tysonscorner/nofind/pubfacstandards.pdf> , pp.8-9)

#### Current Considerations:

- No new considerations have been identified to date.

### **7. Power**

#### Current considerations:

- Concur with Dominion Power recommendation that the County plan and provide for a space for an additional electrical substation to support the future electrical load growth of Tysons Corner.
- Input is needed re: Natural Gas and other forms of power.
- Consider whether plans to create a more environmentally sound area will reduce power consumption.

### **8. Water**

#### Policy plan standards:

- Plan and provide for facilities to treat, transmit and distribute a safe and adequate potable water supply
- Maintain the 110 gallons per person per day guideline for the provision of water with a peak factor of 1.6 times the estimated average day demand to determine maximum daily demand.
- Maintain the standards establishes for fire protection flows: one and two family dwellings (1,000 – 2,000 gallons per minute); townhouses and multiplex units (2,500 gallons per minute); Commercial, office, industrial (2,500 gallons per minute).

Current Considerations:

- Consider in planning that public water to Tysons Corner is provided by two entities: the Fairfax County Water Authority and the Falls Church Department of Public Utilities.
- Fairfax County and Falls Church are discussing whether to adjust services so that the entire area will be served by Fairfax County.

**9. A mix of large and small retail and business**

Policy Plan standards: None provided

Current Considerations:

- The new Tysons Plan should proscribe a balance of retail service without restricting the marketplace.
- Building Design, streetscape and public access should support a service-oriented retail environment.
- Explore further how service oriented retail (e.g. grocery stores, dry cleaners) are encouraged to locate conveniently to work and home in urban areas.?

**10. Recreation and park facility services**

Policy plan standards: Park acreage standards are established for Local Parks and District and Countywide Parks. (Please see <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/tysonscorner/nofind/pubfacstandards.pdf> , p.5, Item A) In addition, service level standards are established for core park facilities on a population basis. Area-specific analysis is conducted to determine cumulative localized facility needs for planning purposes and to identify development impacts of new residential units.

Current considerations:

The following amenities identified in the Policy Plan are good options in a high-density, urban Tysons Corner setting; they are listed here with Population-based countywide service level standards noted:

- Trails (*Consistent with adopted countywide trails plan and goal to link trails to park facilities*)
- Playgrounds *1 playground / 2800*
- Multi-use Courts *1 court / 2,100*
- Reservable Picnic Areas *1 site / 12,000*
- Neighborhood Dog Parks *1 site / 86,000*
- Neighborhood Serving Skate Parks (Modular/Portable types) *1 site / 106,000*
- Nature Centers (measured in building square feet) *0.04 sf / person*
- Rec Centers, including indoor Aquatics, Fitness and other Community Uses (measured in building square feet) *1.1 sf / person*
- Indoor Gyms (measured in building square feet) *2.8 sf / person*

- Horticulture/Garden Parks 1 site / 350,000
- Waterfront Parks 1 site / 90,000

## 11. Health and Human Services

This topic was not addressed in the current document because the committee felt that it needed more time. It will be addressed in the next iteration.

## Tysons Corner Comprehensive Plan 2003 Program References

### *Fire and Rescue*

*“The Tysons Fire and Rescue Company 29, McLean Company 1, and Dunn Loring Company 13 all provide coverage to Tysons Corner. In addition, a new fire and rescue station is proposed just west of the area at the intersection of Beulah Road and Leesburg Pike. These existing and planned fire and rescue facilities are projected to provide sufficient coverage to the area.”*

### *Libraries*

*“Library coverage is provided by the Dolley Madison and Patrick Henry Community Libraries and the Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library. These libraries meet the County’s library locational standards and no additional facility requirements are anticipated. However, the provision of a mini-library or a specialized library (e.g. business and/or technology) may be desirable for inclusion in a new development or one of the shopping malls.”*

### *Sewer*

*“The Tysons corner area is composed of two principal sewer sheds: Difficult Run and Scotts Run. Sanitary sewer service is provided by lines owned by Fairfax County and the District of Columbia (Potomac Interceptor). In general, sewer lines have been sized to serve either the planned land use or existing zoning, whichever generates the greater flow. In some cases, as redevelopment occurs, trunk lines may need to be replaced with lines with greater capacity.”*

### *Water*

*“Public water to Tysons Corner is provided by the Fairfax County Water Authority and the Falls Church Department of Public Utilities. That portion of the area north of Route 123 and west of I-495 is served by the Fairfax County Water Authority with the remainder being served by the City of Falls Church.*

*The Fairfax County Water Authority has storage for 4.64 million gallons (MG) of treated water at their facilities located on International Drive. Falls Church has storage for 3.57 MG at their two locations, and proposes storage for an additional 1.5 MG in the Dunn Loring, Vienna, or Tysons Corner area. This future storage need for Falls Church will probably be met by providing a second water tower at their chain Bridge Road/DAAR Site.”*

## III. Transportation and Safety Issues

Establishing a livable/walkable community in Tysons Corner will require close attention to pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle transportation issues so that the needs of each are balanced appropriately. Safety issues associated with crime and with conflicts among pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles must also be carefully considered so that Tysons Corner is perceived to be and actually is a safe place to live, work, and visit.

*“Everyone’s a pedestrian.”* All people arriving in Tysons Corner by any means will become pedestrians for all or part of their stay. The ability to get around in Tysons Corner easily, pleasantly, and conveniently by foot, bicycle, or vehicle circulation system will be crucial to attracting people to live in Tysons Corner and to convincing them to leave their cars at home and use other means to travel to and from Tysons.

*“We’ve talked the talk, now we need to walk the walk (literally).”* 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 the greater Tysons Corner area will be important to meeting the goal of achieving a livable/walkable Tysons Corner.

Listed below are some major elements of a livable/walkable Tysons Corner. Some considerations are provided for each major element. Examples in Tysons Corner are listed.

### **Connections**

- All parts of Tysons Corner should be well connected for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles; routes should be direct and enabled by well-designed street grids and by appropriate sizes of blocks;
- Streets must be safe and easy to cross. Special attention is required for major roads such as Routes 7 and 123 and International Drive. The intersections that involve these major roads also should be redesigned to maximize pedestrian and bicycle passage.
- Barriers to good connectivity should be identified and remedied. The Beltway especially presents a barrier as do large intersections such as those referenced above;
- Crossings should be provided on long blocks and on major roads; safety measures such as median pedestrian refuges should also be provided;
- Connections should be provided through blocks;
- Pedestrian and bicycle access routes to and from Metro stations should be provided;
- Pedestrian and bicycle connections for Tysons should be coordinated with Countywide Trails Plan and Area Plans and updated/corrected as needed to align with goals and objectives for Tysons Corner; and
- Frequent, direct, and efficient circulator transportation systems are necessary—to and from Metro stations and to and among neighborhoods around and near Tysons Corner.

### **Streets and Streetscapes**

- The street environment should encourage walking and bicycling;
- Streets should be “complete”, designed and operated to enable safe access for all users;

- Streets characteristics such as width, number of lanes, and parking should be appropriate to adjacent land use and type of neighborhood;
- The streetscape should be attractive, interesting, and allow for mixed use (residential, commercial, business, and leisure); and
- Designs of streets should provide a buffer for pedestrians from traffic with consideration of such techniques as trees along curbs, on-street parking, and wide sidewalks.

### **Pedestrian Experience**

- The pedestrian experience should be pleasant and appropriate for the type of environment;
- Efforts should be made to reduce or mitigate the perception of threat from street traffic and at crossings; and
- The area should be designed in such a way to be perceived as a safe environment and to discourage crime and vandalism and reduce hazards from automobiles.

### **Bicycle Travel**

- Bicycle travel should be safe and convenient;
- Good connections should be provided to areas within and beyond Tysons;
- On road as well as off facilities should be provided as appropriate;
- Secure and safe bicycle parking facilities should be provided; and
- Design so as to eliminate, reduce, or mitigate bicycle/vehicle and bicycle/pedestrian conflicts.

### **Vehicular Travel**

- Vehicle accommodations should be appropriate to their location and purpose;
- Balance is necessary to move traffic effectively while recognizing that priority in most areas might be given to pedestrians;
- Traffic speed should be appropriate to adjacent land uses and for safety;
- Local streets should not be made attractive as possible bypasses for congested main thoroughfares;
- Designs should enhance the efficiency of through traffic; and
- Good connections are necessary from and through Tysons to the Beltway and Dulles Toll Road.

### **Safety**

- Tysons should be a safe environment;
- All possible techniques to ensure that Tysons is a safe environment should be employed such as elimination of pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle conflicts; traffic calming devices; lighting for security and safety; visible community policing; and call boxes and security cameras.

## **Additional Transportation/Safety Resources**

*Creating Walkable Communities: A Guide for Local Governments*

December 1998

Bicycle Federation of America, Washington, DC

<http://www.bikewalk.org/pdfs/ncbwpubwalkablecomm.pdf>

Complete the Streets

<http://www.completestreets.org/>