



COALITION FOR SMARTER GROWTH

Celebrating 10 Years of Smart Growth!

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From: Stewart Schwartz and Cheryl Cort, Coalition for Smarter Growth

To: Fairfax County and PB Placemaking

Subj: Input Regarding Tysons Corner Scenarios

We regret that we have not been able to provide input earlier toward the refinement of your Tysons Corner scenarios. Here are our recommendations:

- 1) **Traffic:** Ultimately the ability to add development density to Tysons Corner is contingent upon demonstrating to the community that transit will be a success and that the combination of design, transit/bike/ped, TDM/parking and other measures will keep congestion manageable and offer viable and well-used alternatives.
- 2) **Community Benefits:** The ability to add density also depends on demonstrating a full range of community benefits and a realistic plan for how those benefits will be paid for and implemented. Transparency in the economic analysis and the potential contribution by the private sector and state and local identification of public fund sources will be important. Community benefits include traffic mitigation, improving character of approach roadways, parks and open space, civic buildings, good urban design, funding for infrastructure, etc. The Livability/Walkability Subcommittee has done an excellent job of identifying design and amenity characteristics that should be include in the final plan.
- 3) **TDM:** The TDM subcommittee has done an excellent job and we support their analysis and recommendations with the following amendments:
 - a. **Implementation and Enforceability:** Ultimately the most meaningful part of this analysis is the implementation & enforceability. We support the concept of the "Trip Reduction Ordinance/TDM Plan Requirement" and ask that it be developed to guide aggressive mode share and trip reduction goals. Given its efficacy, pricing parking should be a required, not optional component of any TDM plan. Trip reduction goals and measures should be clear and application to existing buildings considered. Monitoring and enforcement of such a requirement should also be an important element of this recommendation.
 - b. **Parking:**
 - i. Parking should always be priced. Pricing of parking should not be an option from

a menu of TDM options but should always be the first priority. Too often other incentives such as transit passes are undermined by the continuation of free parking.

- ii. More emphasis could be put on requiring shared parking. Given the practice of shared parking, especially in Arlington, it is an important tool to highlight for Fairfax. Parking caps should also be analyzed given the large investment in non-auto modes.
 - iii. More discussion of management of on-street parking would be helpful. On-street parking is a critical component to creating urban streets.
 - iv. The discussion of residential parking mentioned rental of parking spaces but does not mention the sale of parking spaces in for-sale housing developments. Unbundling should apply in all tenure situations.
- 4) **Access In and Out of Tysons Corner:** With very few roadways providing access to Tysons Corner and great public concern about the impact of traffic on McLean, Vienna and other nearby communities, it is essential that the scenario(s) clearly identify solutions for handling demand along these corridors.
- a. Metrorail, Light Rail, BRT, Express Bus and dedicated bus lanes in addition to robust bicycle lane and trail access will be critical.
 - b. Of course, strong parking pricing and parking caps are also key tools for mitigating demand.
 - c. We consider the **Purple Line** (preferably rail) to also be an essential component. Connecting from Springfield through Annandale to Merrifield/Dunn Loring and Tysons, and then to Maryland, perhaps to the North Bethesda/Rock Spring area. At a minimum, a transit circulator connection from Merrifield/Dunn Loring up Gallows Road is necessary (a “transit bypass” for Vienna’s crowded Maple Avenue (123).
- 5) **HOT Lanes:** We request that the traffic impact of the HOT lanes be fully evaluated and compared to other alternatives such as HOV-only and Purple Line. Our concern is that the HOT lanes, in our wealthy region, will generate too much vehicle traffic entering Tysons Corner and will undermine other transit investments.
- 6) **Routes 7 and 123:** We consider it essential to design these roadways to support a vibrant and inviting pedestrian environment around the stations. You will need to demonstrate boulevard design alternatives that support the TOD areas. We also request that the Route 7/123 interchange be totally reconfigured into an urban interchange that allows for complete street level integration between Tysons Central 123 and Tysons Central 7 (the Bill Gallagher/Peter Bass proposal).
- 7) **Street Grid:** Please include and test a finer grained street grid in the updated scenarios. Illustrate complete streets concepts. We are pleased to see how successfully this contributes to reduced traffic congestion.
- 8) **Transit circulators** that provide frequent service for up to 18 hours per day will be essential.
- 9) **Bicycle/Pedestrian:** Top priority should be placed on making Tysons Corner a model of pedestrian and bicycle accommodation. Fully interconnected streets with sidewalks, bike lanes and frequent,

narrow/safe crossings will be essential. Pedestrian and bicycle accessibility from outside Tyson's Corner is also necessary. All Beltway and Toll Road crossings should accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists.

- 10) **Environmental:** In addition to what is discussed in the Livability/Walkability paper, all possible consideration should be made to improve environmental conditions, restore streams, increase infiltration of storm water, reduce heat retention, require green/energy efficient building technology, and reduce air pollution and global warming emissions. The development will take place over 20-50 years and must anticipate and incorporate state of the art environmental and energy efficiency measures.
- 11) **Mix of uses:** We concur that adding significant additional residential development to the mix will offer some of the most significant traffic reduction benefits and will contribute to Tysons Corner becoming a vibrant 18-hour community. Changing demographics including more empty nesters, retirees, and creative class young professionals will contribute to demand for living in this type of community.
- 12) **Visualizations and Design:** The refined scenarios must include far more illustrations using both oblique and street level views, but sterile massing illustrations should not be used. Landscape architect illustrations of stream corridor parks, town squares/greens and pocket parks will be important. The design concepts for the 123 and 7 corridors must be shown and must be able to convince us that the environment around the stations will be inviting and successful at generating transit ridership.
- 13) **Overall Development Configuration:** Community consensus appears to be to focus development in the TOD areas.
 - a. Due to the barrier presented by the Beltway, the Tysons East station will of necessity represent a somewhat independent mixed-use community, although strong consideration should be given to its potential link to downtown McLean via dedicated bus lane/BRT service. Ped/bike connections should still be provided to central Tysons but cannot fully overcome the Beltway barrier.
 - b. The other three stations can and should be as well-integrated as the Courthouse to Clarendon and Clarendon to Ballston stations, such that people feel perfectly able to walk to from one end to the other rather than using the Metro.
 - c. Choosing a TOD focus for most of the development will require a commitment to redesign Routes 7 and 123.
 - d. It would seem that reducing traffic to and from Tysons Corner would argue for focusing more jobs at the transit stations compared to residential in order to attract the maximum number of employees to transit. But to achieve this also requires an analysis of, and success in, improving transit access at the origins of worker trips and would include such things as enhanced feeder bus service to Metro stations including outer Dulles Rail transit stations.
 - e. With evidence showing that people are more willing to walk longer distances to transit from their residences than from transit to jobs, more residential units could potentially be located at ¼ mile and beyond and in the transit circulator neighborhoods beyond ½ mile from transit.
 - f. For areas beyond ½ mile from the transit stations, the densities should be compatible with the mode shares and traffic results achievable with transit circulators, mixed uses, and ped/bike friendliness.
 - g. A Purple Line connection up Gallows Road might allow for additional corridor style TOD along Gallows and where it connects into Old Courthouse Road and Route 7.

Thank you for continuing opportunities to provide input. We hope these ideas prove helpful.

Sincerely:

(via email)

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