

April 25, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Tysons Land Use Task Force (TLUTF)

FROM: WEST*GROUP, Keith S. Turner

RE: WEST*GROUP's Comments on "Consultant Draft Preferred Concept & Discussion Points for Developing a Preferred Network"

- The proposed draft preferred concept for the land use model does not appear to have taken the current land owners plans under consideration, nor does it provide the flexibility necessary to implement many of those proposed plans.
- In the development of the two most recent land use models (prototype A & B) the TLUTF recommended NOT to split density allocations when a parcel extends beyond more than one "distance zone". We should not change that recommendation for the preferred network because it significantly limits the ability to develop many station area parcels.
- Intensity Allocation Rules – If gross FAR underestimates net FAR by approximately 25 to 35%, does that mean that a 4.75 FAR could actually become a 6.00 FAR? It is not clear if all the new roads, public, private, primary are included in Gross FAR.
- Why is there such a significant drop off in the distribution of FAR as the distance from the station platforms increases? It seems way too dramatic. The densities are too low, especially for areas outside the ¼ mile, which does not provide incentive to change from the existing suburban office model. The densities along the circulator are not TOD densities and also do not provide incentive to change from the existing office model. The existing PDC and PRM zones at 2.5 – 3.0 FAR provide more incentive to change to residential or mixed use and are more appropriate for a circulator TOD neighborhood.
- There should be a review of what uses and parcels would most likely remain unchanged to determine their impact on the total vision and actual expected density levels.
- "All existing and approved developments with intensities higher than those indicated on table 1 & 2 override the proposed intensities and are allowed to continue with their existing and approved intensities". What parcels is this aimed at? Are we down-zoning certain parcels? Are you encouraging land owners to file under the current comprehensive plan?
- On the "Draft Preferred Concept: Intensity" does the designation "Existing/Comp Plan" mean current comprehensive plan with rail? Does it include the PRM zone and the 3 to 1 residential development incentive?
- Why are we eliminating density bonuses for the provision of community benefits? Since it has been used successfully in many other urban, TOD areas shouldn't it be a tool that is included in the Tysons Corner Urban Center? What density bonus % is already included in the Gross FAR? How can they state that their Gross FAR is the maximum possible? This is not flexibility.

- The maximum land use mix is now at 114 million square feet. Why did the consultant decide to use such a low number?
- Remaining Schedule. What is the new timeline for the TLUTF? What and when are all of the necessary, associated zoning ordinance changes expected to be completed? What is the consultant's recommendation for an interim plan in light of the current status of the Dulles Metrorail project?
- There needs to be a lot more emphasis on flexibility if they are going to show parcel specific uses and density. They are only using the word "concept" on the plans, but clearly are getting focused on a specific plan.
- There does not seem to be any rationale to allocations of commercial and residential FAR around stations. Having an office only focus along Rt 123 as you enter Tysons from McLean does not seem appropriate and greatly conflicts with our plans for Garfield, Westgate, Van Buren, Cleveland and Johnson II. There has been absolutely no regard for our plan for any of those sites, nor for Lincoln or Taft.
- A fire station should not be located in the base of Taylor or anywhere along Colshire Meadow Drive. It is using up retail frontage along a key pedestrian street right across from a rail station. Fire stations should be located outside the ½ mile radius of the stations.
- An elementary school should not be located on the Dickenson site. Given the recommendation, this West*Park area is most likely to remain a suburban office park without significant residential uses and without an urban park until adequate densities are approved to justify the conversion to a residential area. Also, the urban park (when it is built) is not intended to serve elementary school functions. A school site in the future might be appropriate in the West*Park area if the residential densities are set high enough to justify replacement of the office park, but that school should be explicitly an urban format school (i.e. vertical), perhaps some sort of magnet school, and certainly located on the north side of the park closer to the center of the residential area rather than adjacent to the mixed-use area.
- Any large signature park should include a significant density incentive and not be just considered a TDR parcel. The Consultant doesn't seem to realize the importance of such a large community benefit and opportunity for the Tysons Corner Area and doesn't appear to understand the density levels needed to achieve it. It won't happen under this plan.
- The Consultant Draft Preferred Concept recommendation for the North Central Area (West*Park) will result in this area remaining a suburban office park without significant residential uses and without an urban park until adequate densities are approved to justify the conversion to a residential area.
- In the current comprehensive plan, the Essex Block is considered part of the Tysons Core area and as such, our development plans have generally followed many of those principles. The current plan states that this area "develop as a large multiple use area that integrates three major components: office, regional retail and hotel and allows for a fourth component of high density housing." The plan also states that this area provides the greatest opportunity for creating a pedestrian and transit-oriented environment" and that "future buildings can be sited closer to roads and to each other to provide for a more concentrated built environment that people can walk through easily or that can be efficiently served by transit. This area will also include some of the tallest buildings in

Tysons Corner, up to 270 feet.” The Consultant Draft Preferred Concept seems to disregard the language of the former plan as well as current landowner plans. This area needs to be considered part of the second station TOD area, should be mixed-use and should be at much higher density levels (at Level 3 intensity). It is also planned to be served by two of the proposed circulators.

- Chapter 8 of the “Outline of Summary Document” is titled Transportation. This chapter does not incorporate any of the recommendations that were presented in the materials provided by the Transportation/TDM Subcommittee. Why?
- Intensity Map - Level 1, 2, 3, and 4 intensities seem to be arbitrary. They should be established by actual circles centered on station entrances. Areas that are served by two crossing or parallel circulators should get higher intensities than those served by only one circulator.
- The Taft site should have level five intensity.
- A Tysons wide FAR bonus pool should be created to allocate FAR for major civic amenities – major parks, land for civic uses, etc.

Discussion Points for Developing a Preferred Network:

- Does congested VMT increase on average by 22% throughout all of Tysons?
- Network 1 draws more trips to Tysons and makes it an attractive alternative to drive through it rather than around it. Can this concept be separated out to improve internal flow but restrict travel through?
- Grade separated interchanges are not proposed on Rt. 123 at Scotts Crossing and Old Meadow Road because they are claimed to “interfere with the grid of streets and restrict traffic” which is in fact exactly the opposite of the purpose of these grade separated crossings. The plan should at the very least identify them as possible grade separated crossings which would be implemented if they improve pedestrian access/connections and improve vehicular traffic flow. Can the Consultant demonstrate whether the densities shown in the draft preferred concept can be achieved around the Tysons East Station without grade separations at Old Meadow and Colshire Dr?
- How can FAR be placed on specific parcels if the circulator route is still undefined?
- What is the perceived impact on the Taft site of the Route 123/Old Meadow Overpass?
- Who is conducting the feasibility of the ramp from the East bound DAAR to Jones Branch Drive? Are feasibility studies being done for all of the other recommended improvements?
- Cost considerations have also been referenced – can we be provided with the list?