

## Project Memorandum

**To:** Clark Tyler, Chair

**From:** GB Arrington

**Date:** March 5, 2008

**Subject:** Preferred Alternative

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At the end of the last Task Force work session, you asked that we provide you with our thoughts on what is needed to get to the Preferred Alternative, Task Force recommendations and ultimately the plan text. This memo is our response.

We view the Preferred Alternative as the framework to provide one strategy to guide development for all of Tysons. It provides an overarching vision for which all development, plan reviews, proffers, transportation improvements and other decisions must be consistent. It should have the weight of a moral covenant, providing the basis for trust between the neighbors, government and development community that what is built is what was envisioned. That what is built will be part of building a better Tysons, not just a bigger Tysons.

We see three elements to this framework:

1. Allocations - the development allocations revised based on Task Force direction to the level of detail necessary to conduct the transportation analysis.
2. Conceptual maps - the land use, intensity, parks and open space, and circulation illustrative maps revised based on the revised allocations.
3. Narrative - revised summary document describing the Preferred Alternative, organized to address the vision components of the current plan.

The process to create the Preferred Alternative begins with fine-tuning the components of the Preferred Alternative drawing on Prototypes A and B. Through this process, many "next steps" will be identified that will need to occur after the shell of the Preferred Alternative has been refined.

### Task Force Direction Needed

There are several issues that need Task Force direction before the Preferred Alternative can be created. The issues are identified below, with a summary of the analysis done to date, what we heard at the February 28-29 workshops, and the consultant team recommendation. These are the issues that we need the Task Force to provide direction on at your March 10 and 24 meetings.

You may want to consider organizing the Task Force conversation on the Preferred Alternative around these seven topic areas.

## A. Urban Form

**Analysis to Date:** Density and mix of uses around transit reduces automobile trips, increases walking and improves transit ridership. The greatest density in Tysons should occur at the Metro stations because of frequency of transit and overall capacity. Density should be tiered with higher density at the stations with lower densities at the edges. The circulator corridor can have higher density (than surrounding land uses) in order to take advantage of the transit benefits of having the circulator.

**What we Heard:** Protect the edges. Focus densities at the Metro stations during the first phase of Tysons' evolution. The urban form of Prototype B is an appropriate long-term vision for Tysons, but the plan should get there in phases. Overall intensity included in the Preferred Alternative should be less than Prototype B. Higher densities are a fair trade off for more park and open space land. Overall the pattern and location of land uses are generally OK.

**Consultant Recommendation:** Start with the land use pattern in Prototype B (i.e., greater mix of uses, density focused at Metro stations and along circulator). Modify the urban form to:

1. represent a development target of approximately 110 M square feet; and
2. follow the FAR guidance of Prototype B, adjusted for along the edges and the circulator corridor to provide for the lower development target. This would keep the intensity of B for the four Metro stations.

## B. Open Space

**Analysis to date:** Urban standards should be applied for parks and open space. Parks Authority recommends 1.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents and 1 acre per 10,000 employees. For Prototype A and B, the draft urban standards translate to 125 to 170 acres. The Parks Authority recommends three tiers of parks:

1. urban pocket parks (1/4 acre to 1 acre) - privately owned
2. urban park nodes (1 to 5 acres) - public/private partnerships
3. large, centrally located accessible park (10 acres) - publicly owned

Prototype A and B provide between 55 and 89 acres of new park land. In addition, there are 85.5 acres of existing parkland - most of it in Scotts Run and Old Courthouse Spring Branch stream valley parks.

**What we heard:** More parks, both large and small. Located throughout Tysons. Must be usable for active recreation (ball fields, playgrounds, trails - not strips of green in medians of streets). Parks should be connected.

**Consultant Recommendation:** Allow for more small parks throughout Tysons. Parks in the non-TOD districts should be designed to serve as a buffer between Tysons and the adjacent neighborhoods. The park network should be linked. Use the parks and open space network in Prototype B of 89 acres as the proposed park network to achieve a higher level of parks in

Tyson's. The target of total park acreage needed should be based on the County draft urban standards.

The overall vision of parks and open space should be included in comprehensive plan, including a statement of how parks should be provided by private developers. The proposed illustrative park network should be described as a conceptual network of linked parks.

As part of the next steps, the County should work with the Park Authority to create an overall network of parks and open space. Provision of parks should also be included in the implementation of the Plan.

### C. Circulator

**Analysis to date:** A circulator increases the mode share of transit under Prototype A and B. Ridership increases more with a form based circulator (Prototype B) because more people have access to it.

**What we Heard:** A circulator is important. The service should be frequent, inexpensive, convenient and reliable. It should be in a dedicated right of way as much as it can be. It should have higher densities along the circulator, as long as it doesn't impact the edges. Implement sooner rather than later - it is important to get people out of their cars once they are in Tysons.

**Consultant Recommendation:** Include a circulator. The next steps should include a study to analyze the circulator alignment, cost and financing.

### D. Roadway, Bike and Pedestrian Connections

**Analysis to date:** Network 2 with a greater emphasis on transit and walkability performs well and fits with the land use vision for Tysons. A grid of streets is important to improve connectivity and walkability. Urban design guidelines can provide a framework for creating livable, walkable streets.

**What we Heard:** The ability to walk around Tysons is important. Pedestrian environment must be friendly. The transportation network needs to include both moving around within Tysons and getting into and out of Tysons. The adjacent communities and Tysons need to be linked.

**Consultant Recommendation:** Use Network 2 as the basis for building and testing a preferred network. Include a fine grid of streets, based on a new typology of streets, consistent with the cross sections in the plan, to address the changing nature of streets. Include street cross section recommendations that address separated bike and pedestrian lanes. Include a circulation and street design element in the urban design guidelines based on best practices.

### E. Parking

**Analysis to date:** The availability of parking impacts urban form, the financial feasibility of new development and the level of transit ridership. Parking is a key part of moving from a suburban to an urban Tysons.

**What we Heard:** Parking in Tysons needs to be managed. There needs to be a way for people who live outside of Tysons to get to Tysons.

**Consultant Recommendation:** In the comprehensive plan, parking ratios reduced to be broadly consistent with Rosslyn-Balston corridor. Parking should be managed on a district basis so that existing and future parking supply can be addressed at the same time. Move toward maximum parking ratios and no minimum parking requirements. Include more on-street parking and parking pricing as parking strategies.

## E. Community Benefits

**Analysis to date:** Recognition of the need for community benefits was made through the designation of civic space. No specific need or use has been identified. Discussion has included general discussion of affordable housing, schools, community gathering places (community centers, libraries, concert halls, etc) and government services (post office, government annex, etc).

**What we Heard:** Community benefits are important to create a sense of place. With increased population, more civic and cultural services are needed in Tysons. Facilities should also serve the region and adjacent neighborhoods.

**Consultant Recommendation:** Include clear provisions for the provision of community benefits in the implementation of the Plan. As part of the next steps, the specific types of civic needs should be identified and mapped.

## F. Implementation

**Analysis to date:** The existing planning and implementation framework for Tysons Corner is not capable of delivering the vision for a new Tysons. Some fundamental change will be necessary. The Task Force Committee has done significant research into implementation options.

**What we Heard:** Partnerships, funding, timing and implementation are everything. There was broad agreement the development community should pay a significant share of the public improvements to support growth in Tysons. New tools like tax increment financing will be necessary to fill the gaps. How the buildings are designed and how height is varied will help make the planned density acceptable. Public facilities, including community benefits, must be provided as the population increases.

**Consultant Recommendation:** New structures seem to be a necessary precursor to implementation of the plan. Rather than upzone all of Tysons at once, a phased strategy should be implemented, starting with the Metro stations and moving to the circulators. Explicit within the implementation of the plan is the notion that there is sufficient provision of public facilities when development occurs.

The implementation narrative that accompanies the Preferred Alternative will be the most important element. It should include specific direction as to how the plan can be phased in, services that must be in place before development can occur, and the design standards that must be met.

## Steps to Create the Preferred Alternative

- 1 **Allocations** - After we receive Task Force direction on the above issues, the Consultant Team will work with the County to refine the allocations. Once the allocations are refined, the transportation analysis can begin and we will refine the Preferred Alternative maps.
- 2 **Maps** - The Preferred Alternative maps lay out the framework for the urban form, land use, street network and open space. The maps are for illustrative purposes only. If they are to be included in a regulatory document, they should be noted as such. The specific locations of land uses, new streets and new parks and open space will need to be vetted and discussed in greater detail with the various County agencies, Park Authority and the public.
- 3 **Narrative** - The Preferred Alternative narrative will be completed in conjunction with the Preferred Alternative maps. The narrative will use the existing summary document as the starting point. It will be updated to reflect the preferred alternative, and references to the Prototypes will be limited to the discussion on process. The document will be reorganized to follow the current plan outline and will include:
  1. Opportunities and constraints related to TOD
  2. Concept for Future Development: Vision of the Urban Center
    - a. Concept/Vision description
    - b. Major objectives for Tysons Corner
  3. Development Review Guidelines
    - a. Land use and urban design recommendations provided at a conceptual level for County and Task Force consideration
  4. Area wide recommendations
    - a. Quantity of development/land use pattern
    - b. Urban Design guidelines, addressing the overall urban design concept, building heights, gateways, pedestrian and TOD, streetscapes
    - c. Street cross sections
  5. District level recommendations
    - a. Quantity of development/land use pattern
    - b. Concept/vision description

The narrative will also identify specific next steps that need to be included in an implementation strategy. Inclusion of specific language from the Task Force committees should be determined by the Task Force.