Planning Commission's Tysons Corner Committee
January 27, 2010

First, I want to commend everyone for their hard work on the draft plan.

Although I am very concerned about the intensity and infrastructure provisions in the Third Draft, one thing that is essential is a strong mechanism to provide more residential development in Tysons Corner. That's missing in this draft, because the Land Use Categories and Map are over-weighted with offices.

There's a huge imbalance of too few people living in Tysons compared to the number of office workers. Without a major emphasis on housing to make-up this shortfall, it won't become a vibrant community. The amount of office workers in Tysons is projected to double, but the number of residents needs to grow by a multiple of six times to reach the desired balance stated in the plan. Improving the balance will also lessen the traffic impact, so the priority should be housing.

The First Draft Straw Man, and the recommendations from the Tysons Task Force and consultant, PB PlaceMaking, all specified lower intensities for non-residential space than for residential space. However, that method was removed in the Second Draft. Instead of separate intensity limits, the non-residential limits were increased. Also, the Office Mixed-Use category became prominent throughout the plan, while the Mixed-Use category (which was at least 40% residential) was done away with completely. These changes greatly increased the office space allowed, because, not only was the permitted intensity increased, but Office Mixed-Use development (with only a 20% residential minimum) now covers more of Map 3 and includes the tallest buildings. The result will be many more offices, and much less housing. How are these changes justified, and how does this draft fix the housing ratio?

I recommend that you return to the method in the First Draft which stressed residential development by applying lower intensity limits to non-residential space, and required substantially more housing in the Land Use Categories and Map. Another option is to use the current methodology, but raise the 20% residential minimum in the Office Mixed-Use category to 40% or more. That would put more of the housing closer to the metro stations where the highest intensities are planned.

75% of all development in Tysons will be in the TOD Districts, so the cores of those districts must include a strong residential component of 40% or more to correct the current imbalance and make Tysons a vibrant community for the future.

Mark Tipton
3018 Hickory Grove Court
Fairfax, VA 22031