

**Comments to the Planning Commission Committee on Tysons Corner
January 27, 2010**

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee,

The Plan text is generally solid and well structured. There is a lot to like in this plan and the extensive public process has yielded a good result.

BUT

The language remains ambiguous in several areas, especially on the ultimate buildout and/or planning horizon. Actually, I think it's implied that the level recommended by staff is reasonable, because the higher level is for later – much later. So you should just accept it.

{Extemporaneous remarks: In response the Task Force call for greater density, this is only meaningful for a 70 year horizon and there could be many unanticipated social trends and technological developments in that time. All of the analysis (to determine needed infrastructure) was done on the basis of the staff recommendations, so to adopt the higher level would require a full reanalysis.]

However, even getting to the staff's level of development is dependent on getting the transportation right. As acknowledged on pg 42, additional urban rail transit is needed to connect Tysons (to other regional nodes). But on pg 43, it refines that somewhat to:

- "A direct connection to a future orange Line station." Why should it be to a future station? Why not just say to the Orange Line, or better yet, name an existing station?
- "a Beltway rail line to Montgomery County." From where?

These sound like two ends of one line, what some have given a color, which seems to be a taboo. It would be preferable to identify one line going from Merrifield to Montgomery County, then another line could connect other centers, such as Vienna or Falls Church. It is critical to identify these routes so that rights-of-way and station designs can accommodate them, even if they may not be built for 20 years. Figure this out now.

There is a problem with the design of the Boulevards for Rts 7 and 123. Four travel lanes and no bicycle lane is a freeway, not a Blvd. It is not pedestrian friendly nor a complete street.

Something I have previously mentioned is the measures noted on pg 65 to address congestion. Please reverse the order so that optimizing TDM measures and even land use mix will come before considering additional vehicle capacity. Could accessibility be used as a measure also?

I'm bothered that we don't have information on densities along circulators nor a bicycle plan.

Table 8 on pg 74 has a lot of road expansions besides the street grid. It is not possible for an individual to judge the likely performance of a lane or ramp, but I would like to see some non-road improvements, such as bus, bicycle and transit moved up in time. Some of these are more affordable and we may discover that some of the road improvements can be avoided.

Parking requirements seem reasonable, but I would encourage tightening up some on features like shared parking and pricing. There is no mention of the location of parking, which at least should be outside the ¼ mile, if not the half mile in TODs.

TDM measures are fairly strong, but hinge on how well they are managed. The Transportation Management Authority (TMA) should probably include parking management in lieu of a separate entity. The management of TD measures will rely on the monitoring regime and perhaps more than vehicle trips should be monitored, even if less frequently.

I am not commenting on the many environmental features as I have not fully reviewed these sections, but I am concerned about where 20 fields will be located. I hope to add more comments later.

The success or failure of this project will fall heavily on how well the many moving parts are coordinated over time by the Implementation Entity (IE). The IE remains undefined in terms of its makeup and its powers. It should include the TMA as a subset even if the TMA is given some independence. What would be the relationship between the IE and any CDAs that may form?

So my initial praise of the plan has to be qualified by my concern for these factors, especially the unknowns.

Roger Diedrich
3322 Prince William Dr.
Fairfax, VA 22031