Staff Response to Intensity Alternatives in the Draft Tysons Plan

The draft Comprehensive Plan for Tysons distributed on March 24, 2010, includes four intensity alternatives, some of which have additional variations. These alternatives can be found on pages 28 - 35 of the draft. The intensity alternatives are intended to give the Planning Commission a wide range of approaches to planning the future of Tysons. **Staff recommends that the Commission advance three of these alternatives for consideration: Alternative 1 (Staff Recommendation), Alternative 3A (No Maximum FAR within 1/4 Mile of Metro), and Alternative 4A (Two Phased Development: FAR Allocation).**

Alternative 1 (Staff Recommendation) was first presented to the Planning Commission's Tysons Committee in July 2009. The staff report for the Plan amendment describes how this option has been further refined, including an increase in Tier 2 intensity. It allocates intensity within the TOD Districts based on distance from Metro stations. The portions of the Non-TOD Districts that are planned for redevelopment are allowed intensities that are equivalent to or higher than the mixed-use options in the current Plan. The total amount of development allocated by this option is approximately 116 million square feet, including bonus floor area for affordable and workforce housing, green buildings, and major public facilities. Economic forecasts indicate that this level of development is likely to be built over a period of at least 40 years.

The Planning Commission's Tysons Committee requested that staff include **Alternative 3A (No Maximum FAR within 1/4 Mile of Metro)** in the draft Tysons Plan. This alternative would allow applicants within Tiers 1 and 2 (0 - 1/4 mile from Metro stations) to redevelop without being subject to a maximum floor area ratio (FAR). An interim development target set at the highest forecast level for the year 2030 would apply Tysons-wide. Development above this target would be allocated through a future re-planning exercise that would occur prior to reaching the 2030 interim target. At its recent workshop on the proposed Plan, the Planning Commission asked staff to analyze and refine this alternative. **Staff's proposal for incorporating Alternative 3A into the Plan and implementation efforts is included as an attachment to this document.**

Alternative 4A (Two Phased Development: FAR Allocation) retains the overall vision for the future of Tysons in 2050, but it allocates an amount of development that is closer to the forecast for the year 2030. This alternative allows sites within Tiers 1 and 2 (0 - 1/4 mile from Metro stations) to rezone to the intensities in **Alternative 1**. However, applicants would be expected to build only a portion of their total development (3.0 FAR in Tier 1, 2.0 FAR in Tier 2) as a first phase. This interim level of development is similar to what has been approved within 1/4 mile of the Tysons Central 123 station. The remainder of a site's development could be built when funding is secured for the transportation improvements needed to accommodate 116 million square feet of development Tysons-wide. Sites located more than 1/4 mile from a station could redevelop through a concurrent Plan amendment and rezoning approval process. Sites outside the 1/4 mile rings could also redevelop by taking advantage of a public facility bonus, as described in the draft Plan. This option allocates approximately 78 million square feet Tysons-wide, which could be augmented by an additional 6 million square feet of bonus floor area for public facilities. Economic forecasts indicate that this level of development is likely to be built over a period of at least 20 years.

Attachment
Proposal for Alternative 3A (No Maximum FAR within 1/4 Mile of Metro)

At its March 17, 2010, meeting, the Planning Commission's Tysons Committee asked staff to consider an alternative that would set a 20 year planning horizon and remove site-specific floor area ratio (FAR) maximums. This option was included in the draft Plan amendment as Intensity Alternative 3.

The following proposal represents staff's preferred approach if this alternative is carried forward. **Phasing is critical to the redevelopment of Tysons, and this and all other intensity options should be considered in the context of the draft Plan's alternatives for phasing development with transportation improvements.** A summary of the five phasing alternatives is included at the end of this document. Some elements of this proposal, such as the treatment of areas outside the 1/4 mile rings, could also be applied to other intensity alternatives included in the draft Plan.

1. Tysons-wide Guidance

a. Instead of using the 20 year development target of 84 million square feet for all land uses as had originally been suggested by the Tysons Committee, **an interim development target is set at 45 million square feet of office uses**.
   i. This amount is the office component of the GMU high forecast for 2030 and the input to the 2030 transportation analysis.
   ii. Existing office development in Tysons is approximately 27 million square feet, and an additional 6 million square feet have been approved through rezonings but not yet built.
b. The interim development target focuses on office uses because they represent the majority of existing uses and have high peak period trip generation characteristics. Uses that have trip generation characteristics similar to offices should be carefully reviewed.
c. To encourage new housing in Tysons, these uses may be rezoned at levels above the 2030 forecast for residential development. The total amount of other uses, such as retail, is not anticipated to increase substantially from its current level, as new stores with an urban form will likely be replacing similar uses in existing buildings.
d. Two million square feet of office development and four million square feet of non-office (residential, hotel, neighborhood retail, etc.) development should be reserved as public facility bonus intensity, as described in the Land Use section of the Plan. This floor area could be applied to sites throughout Tysons that provide exemplary contributions toward public facility needs.
e. The interim development target could be increased by a Plan amendment through a special study that considers the increase in the context of documented transit usage, updated transportation plans, and available transportation funding. Such a Plan amendment would reflect a policy decision by the Board of Supervisors to adopt a new planning horizon for Tysons.
f. Development approvals and progress toward meeting Plan objectives will be monitored annually. A review of the Plan would be initiated at one or more of the following times:
   i. At least 12 to 18 months before the interim development target is zoned,
   ii. When the first 10 million square feet rezoned under the new Plan are built,
   iii. Twenty years after initial Plan adoption, or
   iv. When requested by the Planning Commission or of the Board of Supervisors.

g. Plan reviews may increase or decrease the intensity of future development based on Tysons-wide performance and commitments to public facility improvements, particularly for transit and other non-SOV modes of transportation.

2. Guidance for Tiers 1 and 2 (0 - 1/4 mile from stations in TOD Districts)

a. Proposals within 1/4 mile of Metro stations may redevelop without a specific maximum FAR in the Plan. The purpose of this policy is to incentivize redevelopment near the Metro stations during this initial phase of the long-term transformation of Tysons.
b. Any floor area that exceeds 4.75 in Tier 1 or 2.75 FAR in Tier 2 (plus any bonus FAR achieved) should be approved through a special exception (SE) that accompanies the rezoning. Such rezonings would effectively have two development options, one at the rezoning level and one at a higher SE level.
   i. The floor area approved through SE would have a time limit set by the Board, which may be extended if it is determined that adequate progress is being made toward completing the project and meeting performance objectives.
   ii. The purpose of the SE and time limit is to encourage complete development projects near Metro stations.
   iii. Proposals that apply for a SE allowing additional intensity are strongly encouraged to have a lower percentage of office and other high peak period trip generating uses than the maximum specified in their land use category. For example, a project in the office mixed use category would be encouraged to have an office component closer to the minimum of 50% than the maximum of 80%.
c. An alternative to requiring a SE for development above a certain intensity could be tighter controls on the range of building sizes allowed in conceptual development plans.
   i. This could work if developers proffered to relinquish development rights for intensity that is not built. For example, if a building is approved for a range of 300,000 to 500,000 square feet, and it is built at 300,000 square feet, the difference of 200,000 square feet could not be shifted to other buildings within the rezoning.
   ii. The unbuilt floor area could be made available to other projects through subsequent rezonings since it would no longer be counted toward the interim development target.
d. Proposals in Tiers 1 and 2 should meet the development criteria listed in section 5 of this document regardless of their intensity.
e. The draft Plan's guidance on re-allocating intensity between tiers may need to be modified to ensure that the highest intensities are built near the Metro stations.

3. Guidance for Tier 3 (1/4 - 1/2 mile from stations in TOD Districts)

a. These areas should be planned primarily for residential uses to encourage office development within Tiers 1 and 2. The land use concept map should be modified to reflect this. As older office buildings are redeveloped as residential neighborhoods, the total amount of office in Tysons will decrease. Since such changes in use are counted toward the 2030 development target of 45 million square feet of office uses, this will allow additional office square footage to be rezoned in Tiers 1 and 2, where employees are most likely to commute by Metro.

b. The base plan recommendation should be consistent with the current Plan, adopted in 1994.
   i. The current Plan allows some sites to utilize a 1-to-3 commercial to residential floor area conversion (with a 50% cap on the overall FAR increase). This conversion option should be allowed in all Tier 3 areas, and the 50% cap should be removed.
   ii. The intensity created through the 1-to-3 conversion should not exceed 2.0 FAR. Intensity above 2.0 FAR could be achieved through bonuses as set forth in the Plan.
c. Proposals that exceed the base plan intensity should meet the development criteria listed in section 5 of this document.
d. Projects that seek a higher intensity or different land use than allowed with this option could achieve a public facility bonus or apply for a concurrent Plan amendment and rezoning.

4. Guidance for Non-TOD Districts

a. These areas would be allowed to develop at the intensities set forth in the District Recommendations of the proposed Plan.
b. The land use concept map should be modified so that Non-TOD areas with redevelopment options are planned Residential Mixed Use. The land use map was created for a 40 year planning horizon, and allowing significant office development in Non-TOD Districts could work against the overall vision for Tysons, particularly in the short term.
c. Proposals that exceed the base plan intensity should meet the development criteria listed in section 5 of this document.
d. Projects that seek a higher intensity or different land use than allowed with this option could achieve a public facility bonus or apply for a concurrent Plan amendment and rezoning.

5. Development Criteria

Redevelopment proposals will be evaluated for conformance with the development criteria set forth in the Plan, including but not limited to the following:

a. Mix and arrangement of uses
b. Affordable and workforce housing
c. Green building expectations
d. Stormwater management
e. Consolidation or coordinated development
f. Transportation
   i. Grid of streets on and off-site
   ii. Vehicle trip reduction objectives
   iii. Parking management
   iv. Phasing to transportation improvements and programs
   v. Traffic impact analysis evaluating three time periods: first phase, interim phase, and Plan build-out
g. Urban design

   i. A variety of buildings heights with the tallest buildings in the ranges specified by the building height map
   ii. Shadow and wind studies demonstrating that the design creates an inviting environment and does not cause a canyon effect
h. Urban park standards
i. Active recreation facilities
j. Public facilities
k. Demonstrating how other properties in the subdistrict can develop in conformance with the Plan
l. Development plans should include a Tysons-wide summary of existing and approved development based on information provided by the County.
m. If additional intensity is achieved in Tiers 1 and 2 through a special exception, a market study should demonstrate how the development can be absorbed within the proposed time frame.

6. Summary Table of Phasing Alternatives

Phasing Alternative	Brief Description
A. Phase development to infrastructure	Developers proffer to phase their developments to the provision of Tysons-wide transportation improvements
B. Tysons-wide CDA with self tax	Tysons-wide CDA commits to fund the private sector share of Tysons-wide transportation improvements; CDA should be established prior to rezoning approval for any development approved under the new Plan
C. Combined Sub-District CDA	Rather than a Tysons-wide CDA, several sub-districts form a CDA that commits to fund the private sector share of Tysons-wide transportation improvements; Areas that do not participate in the CDA are subject to another phasing alternative
D. Residential Un-phased	All or a portion of the residential development planned for Tysons would not be phased to Tysons-wide transportation improvements; Non-residential development is subject to one of the other phasing alternatives
E. 1994 Plan Development Level Un-phased	Development up to 73 million square feet in Tysons would not be phased to transportation improvements; Development above this level is subject to another phasing option.