



August 18, 2011

The Honorable Walter Alcorn, Chair
Fairfax County Planning Commission Tysons Committee
Fairfax County Government Center
12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 330
Fairfax, Virginia 22035

Dear Chairman Alcorn:

As always, the Town of Vienna welcomes the opportunity to participate in the process of charting the future of Tysons Corner and Fairfax County. We have been, and will continue to be ardent advocates for a workable and successful redeveloped Tysons. We firmly believe achieving that success depends on performance of the promise made at the outset of the re-planning process that Tysons' development will be coordinated and cohesive, taking into account regional interests and effects.

The Tysons Committee asked for input as it prepares recommendations for the Planning Commission on funding schemes for Tysons infrastructure improvements, and on the process of moving forward on implementation issues. We are glad to address both.

FUNDING

We understand that there are public as well as private benefits to be reaped from a thriving Tysons Corner. Accordingly, both public and private beneficiaries should contribute to the cost of improving Tysons, to make these benefits possible.

Those of us who live in the Town of Vienna will be contributing our share as Fairfax County taxpayers and Commonwealth taxpayers. *We should not have to contribute more than our share, by being additionally burdened with the cost of transportation improvements within the Town limits that are necessary as a result of Tysons' growth.*

Table 7 on pages 68-69 of the Comprehensive Plan for Tysons Corner Urban Center sets out the need for "Intersection improvements outside of Tysons as identified in the Neighborhood Improvement Traffic Impact Study." We contend this is only the starting point for what should be included as Tysons-related improvements.

The "Neighborhood Traffic Impact Study" was not a comprehensive analysis of all intersection or transportation needs in surrounding areas. Several intersections that were proposed for study were not included (whether for considerations of cost or time). Limiting the scope of "Areawide Recommendations" to only those intersections addressed by the study ignores the real need for other improvements that will be necessitated by Tysons' growth. The Town of Vienna cannot afford to, and should not have to pay the cost of such improvements—which are above and beyond what our residents are already paying for as Fairfax County taxpayers.

We propose that, for planning purposes, the County employ a presumption that all transportation projects within three miles of the Tysons Corner boundary which improve traffic flow or increase access are part of the Tysons "area-wide needs". Projects beyond the three-mile limit which can be demonstrated as being needed because of growth at Tysons should also be funded as part of the Tysons plan. The Board of Supervisors could make such a determination, with recommendations from the Planning Commission.

The three-mile range is consistent with the boundaries of the TMSAMS analysis. It acknowledges the undeniable fact that traffic volume and transit needs will increase in this area as a result of growth at Tysons. Managing that increase, to keep traffic moving into and out of Tysons depends on roads that don't stop at the Tysons boundary. To cut off financial support for necessary improvements outside that boundary will choke Tysons' functionality and its economic potential.

Under no circumstances should the already limited scope of projects in Table 7 located outside of Tysons boundaries be reduced. The regional effects of Tysons' growth demand regional responsibility by its beneficiaries. We disagree with the staff commentary at the July 14 meeting, that characterized "Neighborhood and Access" improvements as "addressing existing conditions" and therefore designating them "100% a public sector responsibility."

How to capture the funds from the beneficiaries and distribute them to meet the needs is a thorny issue. Because needs aren't limited by boundaries, the situation requires a funding mechanism that allows money to be spent beyond those boundaries.

One possible mechanism is proposed by County Staff in the form of a "road club" where Tysons developers contribute a dollar amount per square foot of development, or residence, generating a fund to support projects not on the development site. Another possibility is to identify the value of anticipated revenue from Tysons tax contributions to the County and commit an amount equal to a percentage of that to transportation needs beyond the Tysons boundary. In whatever method is adopted, a commitment to fund the transportation improvements is essential, or the promise of successful Tysons will be broken.

PROCESS

We are running out of words to use to describe the task of implementing the Tysons Plan—"massive", "complex", "overwhelming". Maybe the best analogy is that it is the trying to eat a Carnegie Deli sandwich: there is so much to it, you just don't know where to begin. But begin you must, and so you take a first bite, no matter how imperfect your approach is. And, you work at it from all sides until it is manageable.

The Committee was presented with a proposed approach to tackle implementation issues at its July 11 meeting. Some questions were raised as to specifics, that the proposal didn't address this or allow for that, but overall we find the proposal to be a good map for moving forward. We urge the Committee to adopt it and take the first bite.

MONITORING

As this Committee's work continues, we look forward to addressing another key element to realization of the Tysons Plan, which is "to work with representatives of communities adjacent to Tysons to formulate policies and procedures for addressing traffic congestion, including measurable strategies to be included as part of the overall plan monitoring."

Ongoing performance measurements and accountability are essential to fulfilling the promise of an urbanized Tysons Corner. The pace of growth at Tysons must be modulated to the transportation capacities of the region, not just the network within Tysons' boundaries. Vienna has a vital stake in this aspect of Tysons' future and we are ready to work with County and Commonwealth representatives to establish the necessary "policies and procedures."

The Town of Vienna would advocate a measured implementation strategy and utilizing benchmarked intervals.

We remain committed to working toward the best possible outcome for Vienna and Fairfax County as the realization of the Tysons Plan moves ahead.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "M. Jane Seeman".

M. Jane Seeman, Mayor

On Behalf of the Vienna Town Council