

Statement by Irv Auerbach, President  
The Lewinsville Coalition  
to the Tysons Committee of the Planning Commission  
December 11, 2008

**Access to Metro west station.** We look forward to using Metrorail. To be able to do that, we need a convenient way to get to and from the nearest station, which for our area is Tysons West. There are no plans to build parking garages near the Tysons West station, and that's just as well. We agree that the use of single-occupancy vehicles to get into Tysons Corner ought to be discouraged, but we need an alternative for people living in the communities along Lewinsville and Spring Hill Roads. Frequent bus service during peak and non-peak hours would be one option. The Task Force report mentions such service but provides no details and thus begs the question of whether it's a realistic option. Office buildings near the station might make some spaces available by permit, especially on weekends, to citizens living within, say, a two or three mile radius. Also, there are churches in the area that might make spaces available on weekdays. This issue may not be one that can be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan, but it deserves attention. Perhaps you could recommend creation of a special committee to deal with it.

**Recreation facilities.** If the Task Force's recommendations are implemented, thousands of new residents will move to Tysons Corner in years to come. They will want to swim, exercise, play soccer, and so on. The nearest facility is the Spring Hill Recreation Center, which is already heavily used and which has neither the facilities nor the parking to handle an additional influx of adults and children. The solution? Build a recreation center in Tysons Corner. Perhaps it cannot be surrounded by acres of playing fields and parking lots. But it could be part of a mixed-use development and could include a swimming pool, exercise rooms, a basketball court, and other indoor recreation options, and if there isn't space for playing fields on the ground, perhaps they could be built on rooftops. We urge that you designate a recreation center site and take whatever other steps are necessary to ensure that the site will be used for this purpose.

**Traffic.** Lewinsville Road is the 'main street' of our neighborhoods. For many of us, it's the only route into and out of our subdivisions. It's already heavily used to by-pass Tysons Corner and to avoid the Dulles Road toll plaza. Possible solutions?

1. Build a street grid in Tysons Corner to keep traffic moving well enough that motorists will not resort to using neighborhood streets as a by-pass. The Task Force has recommended creation of a grid of streets in Tysons Corner. We hope you will not only endorse that recommendation but make it a mandated part of redevelopment.
2. Move the Dulles Road toll plaza westward so that eastbound traffic on Leesburg Pike can use the toll road to get to the Beltway and Route 123 without paying any toll and without going through Tysons Corner or using Lewinsville Road. The Lewinsville

Coalition has discussed this idea with VDOT and various elected officials several times. Perhaps this cannot be included in the Comprehensive Plan, but we hope you will urge the Board of Supervisors to pursue it.

At least in theory, there is another option. That's to widen Lewinsville Road. The Lewinsville Coalition has always opposed widening and always will. As far as we're concerned, it's not even a last resort.

**Building height.** Building height along the Dulles Toll Road must be low to protect our neighborhoods. We urge you to recommend that the County maintain the current building height limit of 75 feet along the Dulles Toll road. As you know, this issue resulted in a lawsuit against the County several years ago. McLean Hamlet has been impacted by construction of the Gannett building adjacent to the Toll Road. To see the impact, drive down Falstaff Street in McLean Hamlet, day or night, and look to your right across the Dulles Road, where the Gannett Building stands. We are very concerned about the issue of building height in the new plan because at least one developer sent the Task Force a proposal for a tall building along the Toll Road and cited the Gannett building as justification and precedent for the proposed height.

The Task Force has recommended that building heights be low in the Transition Zone on the edges of Tysons Corner, including the Corridor Transition Zone along the Dulles Toll Road. The Task Force report also says that building height should not be used as a gateway element in the Transition Zones. As you know, the gateway concept was used as a huge loophole in the current plan to justify approving a 300-foot height for the Gannett building. That should never happen again.

**Stormwater management.** Because of the almost complete absence of stormwater management in Tysons Corner [unless you think that get-it-off-my-property-as-quickly-and-cheaply-as-possible qualifies as management], several streams in the area have been damaged. Alongside Lewinsville Road, a flood-control dam was built about 13 years ago to control the flow of stormwater from the Tysons west area. Now, in a heavy rain, the impoundment area behind the dam becomes a lake, and the water over-tops the dam, flows across Lewinsville Road, and turns Rocky Run into a torrent that has toppled many trees and eroded the banks. The Task Force report recommends that Rocky Run and other streams in the area be protected by using the best available techniques to manage runoff more carefully. We urge you to make up-to-date stormwater management a condition of all redevelopment activities in Tysons Corner.