

Outline of Comments for Planning Commission's Tysons Committee

1. Planning and Density

- a. Thirty years is an appropriate planning horizon for the Tysons Comp Plan given the forecasting horizon.
- b. There will be ample opportunity to amend the Comp Plan as Tysons is redeveloped. A mere 4 years after approval, APR nominations will be submitted requesting higher densities and land use changes. Furthermore, another Tysons task force will be formed in 15 years.
- c. The density targets recommended by the task force could not be achieved in even a hundred years and undermine the land use planning process.
- d. The transformation of Tysons will not be from suburban to urban, but rather from suburban to higher intensity suburban then gradually to urban, over a period of two generations or more. All the while, Tysons' absorption rate will inexorably continue at its historical average of 1 million SF of development per year.
- e. All increased density should be limited to the area closely surrounding the Metro stations and the county should retain its 2007 TOD policy that designates two concentric rings of TOD development densities at 1,000 and 1,600 feet.
- f. To allocate greater intensities outside the proximate Metro station boundaries is to foster a perverse form of sprawl within Tysons itself where higher intensity development springs up randomly and haphazardly in constant search of the lowest land values. The basic definition of TOD is quite straightforward--Development close to transit that maximizes transit utilization.
- g. There is no justifiable urgency to expedite Plan or partial Plan approval in order to have the Tysons West parcels built up when Metro goes operational. The abutting Tysons West property, if not yet completed, will follow soon enough. The R-B corridor wasn't ready either when Metro came through.

2. Redeveloping Tysons will mean never ending infill development.

- a. To the extent possible, new buildings should be sensitive to built and natural environment.
- b. A modicum of harmony should be required in terms of height and scale and the view shed should be protected. Tysons is blessed with an outstanding vista that will provide visual relief as Tysons intensifies.
- c. Great architecture is good, but not the objective. The goal is well-designed and thought out development that accommodates human activity. This includes driving cars.
- d. Disparities in street setbacks and building heights will be problems as infill development proceeds, and halts periodically. Tysons may appear schizophrenic at times as the new displaces the old.
- e. The current Comp Plan language on height limitations should be retained.

- f. Public workshop feedback indicated hi-rise caverns and 30-story buildings were not wanted.

3. Parking

- a. The task force complains Tysons has 167,000 parking spaces with the implication its recommendations will reduce them. However, the task force recommends adding at least 85,000 new workers, 75,000 new residents and 12-14 miles of new roads. At the same time it claims Tysons needs to make parking expensive and sparse because we don't want to attract any more cars. I cannot explain this dichotomy; however it is clear that given the densities advocated by the task force, the number of parking spaces is only going one way. Up!
- b. Amount of available parking in Tysons was driven by the landowners...good for business.
- c. The current county Zoning Ordinance standard for office parking of 2.6 spaces/1000 GSF, while perhaps slightly high, is not unreasonable.
- d. Office use can be highly variable: 2-5 employees/1000 GSF
- e. Lenders like plentiful parking because it enables greater potential reuse of properties and, in a similar vein, dedicated parking is preferred over shared parking. Attitudes will shift as new parking strategies are successfully implemented and shown to be reliable and not detrimental to business.
- f. The Comp Plan needs to address both suburban and urban parking requirements within Tysons.
- g. While structured parking is highly preferred, some surface parking is appropriate outside TOD areas.
- h. High FARs are emphatically not required for developing underground parking. Downtown McLean has several buildings with underground parking and while one of the buildings (The Palladium) is built at a FAR of 1.65, the rest are built to a FAR of 1.0 or less.
- i. Given Tysons' symbiotic relationship with the automobile, county-imposed TDM measures levied on landowners are not certain to work. The effectiveness of these measures must be continually monitored and enforced. This is a key requirement.
- j. During public workshops, local area residents repeatedly requested parking at the periphery of Tysons. They want to enter Tysons, park, and then take transit to their destination. The task force has ignored such requests.

4. Parks

- a. In the words of GB Arrington: 'Parks are everything'.
- b. It is apparent that Tysons cannot provide even minimal athletic fields (FCPA estimates the need at 31) and recreation facilities will require major investment.
- c. Inadequate parks and recreation facilities are viewed as a major problem by the local community.

- d. The community would like to see the locations of planned parkland indicated on a county planning map, along with the planned public facilities, in order to assess better the 30-year plan for Tysons.
- e. County budget woes notwithstanding, if land values continue to decline over the next few years, it may present a rare and unique opportunity to acquire distressed properties in the non-TOD areas for parkland.

5. Open Space

- a. The character and quality of Tysons' open space are more important than the quantity.

6. Tysons East

- a. East Tysons abuts Pimmit Hills and McLean and it is only 1.7 miles from downtown McLean via Chain Bridge Road.
- b. Compare the estimated 12-14,000 East Tysons residents with existing 28,500 residents in McLean zip code 22101.
- c. East Tysons needs its own library, community center, recreation center, parks and neighborhood retail. McLean facilities lack the carrying capacity.
- d. Pimmit Hills has 1,642 SFDs with 5,000 residents and generates 16,000 trips/day.
- e. Magarity Road handles 50% of all Pimmit daily trips. Current Plan language requiring D Level of Service at Magarity intersections should be retained.
- f. The current Comp Plan height restriction and buffering requirements along Magarity Road should also be retained, if not strengthened.
- g. Single family attached dwellings (townhouses) are appropriate for East Tysons with front and rear entrances and garages accessed from a rear alley.
- h. Developers should be required to provide adequate storage space in dwelling units to keep garages uncluttered allowing cars to be parked inside.

7. Residential in Tysons

- a. Tysons' total development is 23% residential. R-B's residential component is almost 60% and more than half is located at the two Metro stations closest to the District, Rosslyn and Courthouse. Increased residential use in Tysons is an important goal.
- b. Multi-family housing has made gains against rentals in the US, but not SFDs.
- c. MF housing makes up only 9% of Fairfax's housing market. The marketability of MF housing in Tysons is unknown.
- d. The current Plan's housing bonus, while generous, has clearly not worked. It would be very useful to know why before planning additional incentives that are even more generous. Residential uses should always be encouraged, however instead of blindly upping the ante to

impose its will, the county should respect market conditions in Tysons and patiently await a market cycle favorable to residential development.

8. Grid of streets

- a. All modeling data have indicated the grid of streets will greatly facilitate traffic flow within Tysons. Clearly, the grid of streets is badly needed, but given the 45 MSF of existing development it will be highly problematic and far worse than the Merrifield experience. To a certain degree, as the grid of streets goes, so goes Tysons. Allowable intensities should be predicated on not only the grid of streets, but also its connectedness and ultimate effectiveness to facilitate the movement of traffic within Tysons.
- b. If adequate parking were not provided for, it would defy logic to add 12-14 miles of new roads in Tysons.

9. Light pollution

- a. We are adding 12-14 miles of new streetlights.
- b. Pedestrian walkways must also be illuminated.
- c. We will have lighted high-rise buildings. Per smart growth practice, window treatments are proscribed on the first few floors.
- d. Tysons is highest point in the county and the backscattered light will be seen for many miles. Great Falls has the darkest skies in Northern Virginia and it may lose that designation.
- e. The problem needs to be studied and updated lighting standards adopted accordingly.

10. Noise pollution

- a. Noise limit proffers and development condition should become standard practice. Noise generation discipline will be vital with Tysons' anticipated intensity.

11. Off-street loading

- a. Tysons will generate an enormous amount of truck traffic.
- b. All loading and unloading should be off-street to minimize disruption to auto, pedestrian and bike traffic.
- c. Loading areas should be concealed from streets, sidewalks and public open spaces.
- d. County needs to rework its off-street loading Zoning Ordinance to better serve future urban requirements. It currently fails to allow adequate loading spaces for large, multi-use buildings.

12. Underground pedestrian connections should be encouraged where appropriate.

13. Taxi service at Metro stations

- a. No taxi waiting zones are planned for Tysons Metro stations. Major oversight.
- b. Visit a few stations along the Orange line to gauge the current level of taxi use. I believe there will be a high demand for taxi service everywhere in Tysons, not only at the Metro stations.

14. Capture

- a. The premise of smart growth and TOD within Tysons is ‘capture’, where residents live, work, dine, shop and recreate all within Tysons.
- b. As soon as residents need to exit Tysons to recreate (due to lack of recreational facilities) and school children are bused/driven to outside schools and after school activities, this concept of capture begins to crumble and daily auto trips soar.

15. Transportation

- a. Please show me how even the Tysons’ Base case with 74 million SF of development can be made to work transportation-wise.
- b. Prototype B failed transportation modeling at 127 MSF and PB’s proposed preferred alternative at 114 MSF was equally dysfunctional with congestion 22% worst than the Base case.
- c. Tysons has inherent and intractable transportation impediments that will ultimately establish the upper limit of built-out density.
- d. Tysons’ prime location at the junctions of I-267/I-495 and state highways 7 and 123 tightly binds Tysons to automobile travel. Prototype B modeling data revealed, even with aggressive TDM measures, 78% of daily trips in Tysons would be by automobile. This number was estimated at an astounding 1.1 million auto trips per day at buildout
- e. The local community is intensely interested in the results of the current transportation modeling and the local intersection study requested by the BoS.

16. Triggers

- a. Current Tysons’ Comp Plan has ‘non-degradation’ transportation policy for new development.
- b. The very next paragraph defines an ‘Offsetting Impact’ policy which is invoked if the non-degradation policy is deemed inappropriate. The developer is instead permitted to pay into a transportation improvement fund.
- c. Is there any wonder why Tysons performs so poorly? County policy established this environment.
- d. Triggers are needed to drive or inform the phasing process. Triggers must be based on infrastructure improvements completed, in progress or reasonably expected to commence in the near term. In this new economy with the severe cutbacks at VDOT, having

transportation improvements listed on the 6-year CIP will mean nothing and cannot be relied upon.

- e. Measurement-based triggers that assess the performance of the infrastructure should also be considered as this would force planners to compensate for underestimating infrastructure requirements or for infrastructure improvements that under-perform or simply fail to deliver the promised relief.
- f. Two prime examples of infrastructure triggers would be the completion of Dulles Toll Road interchanges at Boone Blvd or Greensboro Drive and piecemeal completion of the grid of streets.

17. Affordable housing

- a. Tysons should conform to current county policy re: affordable housing.
- b. Tysons is expensive; cost of living in zip code 22102 is 194% of US average. Assumptions about savings attributed to transit usage, foregoing automobile ownership, etc may not hold in Tysons.
- c. Nonetheless, mixed-income housing should be appropriately planned and developed.

18. Storm water management

- a. TF recommendations are silent on the SWM plan. What is the remedy? Will there be a recharging requirement?
- b. The local community has historically supported aggressive SWM and stream valley protection.

19. Mixed Use

- a. Mixed use, currently the rage among land use planners and admittedly very appropriate for Tysons, is not that simple and certainly is not a panacea.
- b. Planning, financing, developing and marketing mixed-use development is different from and more complex than single use development. Landowners, developers and lenders will be burdened with making it work.
- c. Tysons neighborhood retail space will be a challenging environment with the presence of the regional mall and existing retail. Although the task force vision statement is replete with illustrations and pictures of ground floor retail as far as the eye can see, I have yet to see any demand estimates. Will the Tysons Committee obtain projections for the amount of ground floor retail square footage that needs to be planned?