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**Statement to Planning Commission**  
**December 17, 2008**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you for the opportunity to address you on the subject regarding the expansion of Tysons Corner. My name is Joel Stillman and I am the President of McLean Youth Athletics, Inc. an umbrella organization with over 7,000 McLean youth athlete participants ranging in age from 4-18. MYA represents 10 youth sport programs including Basketball, Cheerleading, Field Hockey, Football, Lacrosse, Rugby, Soccer, Track & Field, Volleyball, and Wrestling. Because of this we feel uniquely qualified to provide information regarding the facts and circumstances of field and facility requirements for youth sports in this area.

Let me begin by reiterating the positive results that a community receives from high participation in organized youth sports. Not only does it help to raise strong and healthy individuals, but youth sport participation also provides the life lessons of leadership, teamwork, and self esteem that enable our youth to develop into productive and contributing adults. It is well known and a proven fact that the more our youth are busy with fun and productive activities, the more they will stay out of trouble and the more chance that they will turn into community contributing adults.

Although we realize that the level of required recreational facilities in the Tysons expansion area are still in the planning stage, I would like to present to you the facts about current usage of fields and facilities in the Mclean area and then an extrapolation of what would be required in the Tyson area. And please keep in mind that all MYA sport programs are already busting at the seams due to a lack of field and facility availability. I am also on the Board of Directors of McLean Youth Basketball and am very familiar with the problems it has. As an example we have practice times during school weeknights that go until 10:00 PM. We also have such a lack of proper of gym space that we need to have high school teams practice in elementary schools gyms where the distance from the court to the wall is about 12 inches. Maybe this is proper for elementary school age kids but very dangerous for the older athletes. And please remember that due to a lack of space, most practice slots have two teams sharing the gym at the same time. It is getting to the point where we may have to turn kids away due to this lack of not only adequate space but any space at all.

This is not a farfetched concept. The local high schools in McLean are requesting gym usage in the middle schools for their sport practices and we are already sharing middle school and high school gyms with our neighboring town Great Falls. At the same time our rec league high school program has grown 50% over the last two years without the expansion of Tysons Corner. With this impact to our already limited amount of space, we have had to add a greater number of players to each team. This decreases the quality of participation for the players and is a mediocre short-term solution at best. And this is the very age group that is most at risk for adverse behavior if not involved with an extracurricular sport activity.

MYA sport programs are currently using rectangular fields in 17 different locations. Within those locations there are a total of 28 fields of various sizes (See Attachment A for specifics). There are also

the two high school fields which are used by the Field Hockey and Track & Field sport programs. As far as we know there are only two additional locations contemplated in the McLean area each of which would have two rectangular fields.

Here is the point I am attempting to make. Based on statistics compiled by the Fairfax County Department of Systems Management for Human Services, 2007, Greater McLean has a population of 66,395. The Tysons expansion is planned to create approximately 100,000 new residents when fully developed. Therefore, the Tysons expansion must include 42 rectangular fields, i.e. 50% more than McLean has just to be equal to the inadequate field availability that McLean is currently experiencing. Keep in mind that McLean Baseball is not at this time part of MYA and therefore I am not including the diamond fields that baseball would require which I would presume would be close to the same amount.

MYA sport programs are currently using indoor gym facilities in 10 locations. Within those locations there are 13 gyms of various sizes (See attachment B for specifics). Again, based on the same statistics mentioned previously, the Tysons expansion must include 20 additional gyms to accommodate the expansion. Keep in mind that although outdoor rectangular fields may not be used by sport programs for the entire year due to weather, indoor gyms are used year round since AAU programs and adult programs play when youth sport programs are not using the gyms. This brings me to another point. The usage I am suggesting is relevant not just to youth sport programs, but also to adult sport programs and other community usage such as social and religious events currently being held in school space.

From what we can tell there are only vague suggestions for gyms to be located inside high rise buildings without an indication of whether those gyms would be for profit establishments or set aside for public use. And there appears to be only one rectangular field planned with more vague indications that facilities near Dulles Airport or some other far off place would be built. As if to say that families would be happy to, and would in fact, drive out to the Dulles Airport vicinity for weeknight practices and weeknight and weekend games.

Of course we are concerned that the residents of the Tysons expansion receive the necessary recreational facilities they deserve. But of equal concern to the McLean area and other surrounding communities is the realization that if there are no or inadequate facilities available in the Tysons expansion area, then those children will seek to join immediately adjacent sport programs. We have been experiencing an increase in youth sport participation every year without increases in field and facility availability. What will we do when an additional 150% of our current population comes asking to join our programs. Should we turn them away? Or should we refer them to the county representatives that developed an insufficient expansion plan?

Please make the right decision to provide what is necessary for a positive, productive, and safe environment for our youth to develop and become contributing community members. My two children participated in multiple McLean youth sport programs. I am absolutely confident that it was a major contributor to the way they are now. That is why I am continuing to be involved in youth sports as a coach, a referee, and a member of youth sport program governing board of directors. And that is why it is imperative that you consider and implement an adequate plan for youth recreational facilities in the Tysons expansion. Washington, DC and New York City have open space for fields and indoor facilities and so can Tysons Corner. We are all for the development and expansion of Tysons Corner and the prosperity it may bring, but not at the expense of sacrificing quality of life. Either mandate the required quality of life fields and facilities that are required or rethink the expansion. After all, it's not for us, it's for the kids.

## ATTACHMENT A

### RECTANGULAR FIELD USAGE

| <u>FIELD</u>                 | <u>SIZE</u>                 |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Currently Using</b>       |                             |
| Linway Terrace               | Full                        |
| Lewinsville Park #2          | Full                        |
| Lewinsville Park #3          | Full                        |
| Lewinsville Park #4          | Full                        |
| Spring Hill Park #2          | Full                        |
| Spring Hill Park #3          | Full                        |
| Spring Hill Park #4          | Small                       |
| Spring Hill Park #5          | Small                       |
| Spring Hill Park #6          | Small                       |
| Spring Hill Park #7          | Small                       |
| Cooper MS                    | Full                        |
| Longfellow MS – Front        | Full                        |
| Longfellow MS – Back         | Medium                      |
| Lemon Road ES                | Medium                      |
| Haycock ES                   | Small                       |
| Chesterbrook ES              | Medium                      |
| Kent Gardens ES              | Small                       |
| Franklin Sherman ES          | Small                       |
| Churchill Road ES            | Small                       |
| Spring Hill ES – upper       | Small                       |
| Spring Hill ES – lower       | Medium                      |
| Langley Fork – front         | Full                        |
| Langley Fork – back          | Full                        |
| Lewinsville Center           | Medium                      |
| Police Field                 | Small                       |
| MYS Field                    | Full                        |
| Capital One – North          | Full                        |
| Capital One – South          | Medium                      |
| <b>Possible Future Sites</b> |                             |
| Salona Park                  | 2 full fields               |
| Langley Fork                 | adding 2 full fields        |
| Langley HS                   | Stadium and practice fields |
| McLean HS                    | Stadium and practice fields |

## ATTACHMENT B

### GYM USAGE

| GYM             | SIZE   |
|-----------------|--------|
| Chesterbrook ES | Small  |
| Churchill ES    | Small  |
| Cooper MS-1     | Large  |
| Cooper MS-2     | Medium |
| Haycock ES      | Small  |
| Kent Gardens ES | Small  |
| Lemon Road ES   | Small  |
| Longfellow MS-1 | Large  |
| Longfellow MS-2 | Medium |
| Spring Hill ES  | Small  |
| Westgate ES     | Small  |
| Langley HS-1 HS | Large  |
| Langley HS-2    | Medium |