Tysons Land Use and Transportation Phasing Strategies
Alternatives for Discussion

The following three approaches to phasing growth in Tysons have been suggested, at a conceptual level, by stakeholders involved in the planning process. They are intended to facilitate discussion about the balance between development and transportation improvements.

Some observations associated with each strategy have been identified to foster discussion toward achieving consensus on the best approach to phasing. It may be possible to combine aspects of these options into a phasing strategy that can be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan, or other phasing options could be considered.

Option A: Transportation Triggers

This phasing approach is similar to the strategy outlined in Straw Man II. Development phases would be triggered by the achievement of trip reduction goals and the construction of transportation infrastructure. For example, a development consisting of eight buildings might be allowed to construct two buildings at the time of rezoning approval, but subsequent buildings could not be constructed until trip reduction objectives were met for the first two buildings and specific transportation improvements were in place. Straw Man II recommends not phasing support retail, hotel, and a portion of the residential development to major transportation improvements. Such an approach might mitigate some of the observations addressed below.

Observations about this approach:

- It would phase development based on performance (i.e., meeting proffered trip reductions) and incentivize landowners to support off-site transportation improvements.
- It would facilitate a balance between the pace of growth and the provision of transportation improvements.
- Developers would be asked to proffer to phase developments to events that are beyond their control. Feedback from the development community suggests that this is highly problematic. Even if developers were willing to make such commitments, it has been suggested that they might not be able to secure financing.
- Redevelopments might not be completed for 20 to 40 years, likely leaving gaps in the street grid and park network. Such a long phasing period would also make it difficult for individual sites to create an urban sense of place.
- There is no guarantee that the earliest redevelopments will occur near Metro stations at desired intensity levels, where the benefits of transit-oriented development are the greatest.
- Developments on smaller sites that cannot be phased would need to either develop after critical infrastructure is funded or partner with other property owners to facilitate the phasing of development to transportation infrastructure over larger land areas.
- While developers would be expected to make contributions towards transportation improvements, this approach does not include an explicit funding strategy to balance land use with transportation. Limiting growth until the infrastructure is in place could incentivize landowners to support necessary funding for transportation improvements.

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Option B: Vehicle Trip Caps

Under this phasing approach, each site in Tysons would be allowed a certain number of vehicle trips in the PM peak period. This number could be based on the intensity, land use mix, and trip reduction goals that are ultimately adopted. The planned intensity and land use of a development could be modified as long as the peak period trips generated do not exceed those allocated to the site. The number of trips allocated to each site would be limited to the capacity of the transportation system and would be increased over time as improvements to the transportation network are completed.

Observations about this approach:

- It is a performance-based approach that is calibrated to the ability of the transportation network to absorb new vehicle trips.
- It would facilitate a balance between the pace of growth and the provision of transportation improvements.
- It allows developers to alter the uses to be built on the site based on market demand, as long as the trips generated are consistent with the adopted Plan.
- Growth is constrained and possibly driven by the ability to accommodate automobiles rather than the vision to create mixed-use urban environments (e.g., developers may choose to develop uses because they generate fewer vehicle trips rather than balanced mixed use developments).
- It requires developers to commit to limiting the number of vehicle trips generated by their sites. As the effect of a trip cap would be similar in many respects to the *Option A* approach, it is anticipated that the development community would be unlikely to accept this approach.
- Increases to the trip caps would be tied to the provision of additional transportation improvements, which are beyond the control of individual developers.
- Because it is similar to *Option A*, it could result in a scattered redevelopment pattern with incomplete street grids throughout Tysons, especially during the first 10 or 20 years of implementation.
- It could result in lower intensity redevelopment projects that do not achieve the desired trip reduction objectives (e.g., a 1.0 FAR development with a 10% trip reduction might have the same number of vehicle trips as a 3.0 FAR development with a 70% trip reduction). If such low intensity projects were sited at Metro stations, they would undercut the goal to concentrate higher intensity development near transit.
- As in *Option A*, trip reductions objectives will be less rigorous in areas farther from Metro stations. This might encourage redevelopment to occur at the edges of the TOD districts before areas closer to the stations.
- While monitoring vehicle trips to and from individual developments is theoretically possible, it is more difficult and potentially less precise than traditional methods of plan monitoring (e.g., measuring square feet built). The County currently monitors TDM achievement, but efforts of this magnitude will require additional resources from the County and/or some implementation entity.

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- A cap on vehicle trips is not a widely used method of planning development, making it a riskier and less transparent metric than traditional land use measures like FAR.
- The trip reduction objectives necessary for Tysons under any transportation scenario are much more aggressive than what is being achieved today. Depending on how vehicle trips were allocated, some sites may be planned for fewer trips than they currently generate.
- Setting vehicle trips would have to account for external factors beyond the control of land owners, such as through-trips or existing development that is not subject to limits on vehicle trips.
- While developers would be expected to make contributions towards transportation improvements, this approach does not include an explicit funding strategy to balance land use with transportation. *As with Option A*, limiting vehicle trips until the infrastructure is in place could incentivize landowners to support necessary funding for transportation improvements.

Option C: Community-Based Phasing

This approach would allow land owners to propose specific areas, such as an entire district or half of a district, which would be given priority for redevelopment. In exchange, the land owners would commit to financing specific critical public infrastructure improvements as defined in the adopted Plan. These areas could be completely redeveloped, including the system of streets and parks, without site-specific phasing restrictions as contemplated in *Options A and B* above.

Redevelopment areas could be self-selected by land owners who petition to create a Community Development Authority (CDA). It is anticipated that the CDA would include all properties within a district or half-district. The CDA would provide the private sector's share of funding for the transportation improvements necessary for the area. Land owners who participate in a CDA would not need to phase their developments to the provision of transportation improvements. Under this approach, only sites that are a part of a CDA would be eligible for rezoning to the redevelopment option.

Observations about this approach

- It increases the potential that one or more districts will be substantially completed in the coming 10 to 20 year period, thereby creating the synergistic urban places, walkable streets, and transit-oriented mixed-use developments envisioned in the Plan.
- Developers would not be asked to phase to events or actions beyond their control.
- While redevelopments that occur as part of a CDA would not be phased to the completion of transportation projects, they would still need to comply with the trip reduction objectives set forth in the Plan.
- Land owners may be unwilling to participate in a CDA that is large enough, or with a self-tax rate that is high enough, to raise the funds necessary to support associated public infrastructure.

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- It assumes that Board of Supervisors would establish a CDA if property owners representing at least fifty-one percent of the land area or assessed values in a district agree to participate.
- Additional analysis and agreement would need to occur on the specific transportation improvements to be funded in whole or in part by a CDA.
- While some areas of Tysons might redevelop to an urban form relatively soon, other districts or portions of districts might not redevelop above existing zoning or base Comprehensive Plan levels for many years.
- In the event that the public sector is not able to fund its portion of the infrastructure costs, growth would occur without the improvements necessary to accommodate it.
- In order to ensure that the public sector's share of the funding is in place, it may be necessary to allocate growth that could occur through the rezoning process in defined increments. For example, it may be appropriate to allocate development potential equivalent to the first 10 years of the 40 year period set forth in the adopted Plan. With the funding of improvements for the first ten years assured, additional increments of growth could be allocated.

Other Phasing Issues

The following questions should be considered in conjunction with each of the phasing options:

- *Planning horizon*: What should the planning horizon be for the first allocation of growth? Staff has previously recommended a horizon year of 2050, but some of the phasing strategies identified might be implemented more effectively with a different horizon. If, for example, the horizon year were to be 2030, growth beyond that year could still be incorporated into the vision for Tysons but not specifically allocated in the Plan. Balancing this approach with desired intensities around metro stations would have to be considered.
- *Targeting growth:* Should growth be targeted to specific areas within Tysons or allowed to occur on a first come, first served basis? If growth is targeted, how will redevelopment areas be identified? If self selection through creating Community Development Authorities is determined to be the preferred approach to phasing growth, should additional criteria be applied in identifying targeted areas? Should targeting of growth also consider locational opportunities for needed public facilities?
- *Exemptions for phasing*: Should certain types of development be excluded from phasing requirements? Examples could include sites located adjacent to Metro stations, residential uses, hotels, or highly desirable projects that meet Countywide goals.

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