



Tyson's Corner Task Force, Fairfax County Planning Commission
Remarks by Roger Diedrich, Sierra Club
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Like several other speakers, the Sierra Club is concerned about how the County will address transportation for the redeveloped Tysons. You will not be surprised to hear that we want to see a reduction in auto dependency to reduce congestion, save energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. But it's more than that.

There has been discussion about whether Tysons should be "urbanized" and to what degree. We do accept the smart growth concept - that a properly designed package of features, including mass transit and higher density, can work. The emphasis is on well designed and it must have the full complement of characteristics. If that is done, it makes the higher density feasible and desirable.

I get the distinct sense that some believe that, should the transportation elements shown in the vision fall short, the response should be to limit the density. I think the transportation plan indicated may very well fall short, but would suggest a different option.

When we talk about promoting transit oriented development in Tysons, we often compare it to the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor or Washington DC. There is however, a unique difference in that Tysons is surrounded by freeway barriers and has limited routes into it, which creates choke points for automobile trips. As others have indicated, even a good Metro ridership share will result in increased auto trips from the planned densities, in part because many people will travel to and from areas other than along the Metro corridor. They will travel by car and will be funneled through these choke points (Rt 7, Rt 123 and Gallows Rd.). This could be true even at modest levels of development.

The plan must do more to consider mass transit other than the Silver Line, such as BRT or LRT on these routes, so as to provide additional alternatives to automobile travel. This issue was raised with the Task Force, but was not pursued and furthermore will still not be addressed in the forthcoming study by Cambridge Systematics. Not only do we need transit on these routes, but we need a much more robust bike network feeding into it along each of the routes. I don't see how this plan can physically work without these features and it especially will have no hope of ever becoming carbon neutral without it.

It is not necessary to build an auto-lite network at the outset any more than any other element of Tysons, but it should be planned. You are, after all the Planning Commission! That would mean, at a minimum, being aware of the need for dedicated rights-of-way and not otherwise precluding the eventual construction of such transit links. Make sure they appear on the long-range plan. The next federal administration will likely be more friendly to transit and we may find funding coming our way about the time we need it. Please give it the consideration it deserves.

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