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Testimony before the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on  
Planning Commission September 20 Recommendations on Certain Tysons-Related Activities  
October 16, 2012

Chairman Bulova and Members of the Board of Supervisors,

Thank you for this opportunity to share the perspectives of the McLean Citizens Association (MCA) on the Planning Commission's September 20, 2012 Recommendation on Certain Tysons-Related Activities (Recommendations Document).

MCA, which will celebrate its centennial in 2014, is the unofficial town council for, and voice of, McLean. We have unfailingly advocated for the interests and welfare of the residents of McLean and this great County of ours since our inception as the School and Civic League of McLean.

We have two goals with regard to the Recommendations Document before you today: (1) to ensure that the substantial infrastructure costs required to urbanize Tysons do not fall disproportionately upon Fairfax County residential taxpayers but are equitably shared among all stakeholders, and (2) to ensure adherence to the criteria established in the Tysons Comprehensive Plan regarding the issues addressed in the Recommendations Document. Both are critical to follow-through on the compact with the County residents that yielded broad support for the plan to create an urban center in Tysons.

I wish to thank the Planning Commission's Tysons Committee and the County staff who supported them for the open and transparent process they embraced in developing the Recommendations Document, for their fidelity to the basic principles underpinning the Tysons Comprehensive Plan that the Board of Supervisors endorsed in June 2010, and for their dedication. Due in no small measure to their efforts, the document before you provides a solid policy foundation and rationale and a workable roadmap for funding the transportation improvements needed to make the vision of the Comprehensive Plan a reality.

MCA recognizes that today, and in written communications that you will receive or have received, various stakeholders may ask for you to reconsider certain of the recommendations from the Planning Commission. This is quite understandable, as the final document before you is a compromise document, in which none of the stakeholders, including the MCA, achieved all of their incoming objectives. That said, the reality is that the final document before you – particularly as it relates to the allocation of funding responsibilities, funding sources, and processes for continuing review -- is an equitable, realistic and achievable plan for building the transportation infrastructure required to reach the density levels permitted by the Tysons Comprehensive Plan. The responsibilities it levies on both the public and private sectors are substantial, but they are a fair allocation of responsibilities, given the anticipated benefits to each sector. Any changes to the recommendations should not do violence to the expressed and implicit compact on funding that this document represents or to the commitments made to the County residents in the Tysons Comprehensive Plan.

I am pleased to report that MCA supports the Planning Commission's recommendations for financing Tysons' transportation infrastructure, and that support is reflected in our October 3, 2012 resolution on Financing Tysons' Transportation Infrastructure, a copy of which is attached to this statement. We agree with the overall approach and allocation of funding responsibilities outlined in the recommendations and with the decision to reject fixed dollar caps on private or public funding contributions. We are especially supportive of Recommendation 24, which proposes that: "As the Tysons transportation funding arrangements are reviewed and adjusted if necessary to accommodate the expected changes, there should be no disproportionate change in the share of the total burden that is borne by Fairfax County taxpayers." Your acceptance and implementation of that recommendation will ensure an equitable burden sharing in all situations, including should state and/or federal funding fall short. We also believe that the philosophy underpinning the financing approach -- to look to the private sector as the primary funder of those improvements required by the grant of significant new density and to the public sector as the primary funder for those improvements on roads with higher levels of through traffic -- provides a solid and sustainable rationale not only for the construction of the transportation infrastructure to support Tysons, but also reasonably could be applied elsewhere in the County.

As outlined in our Resolution on Financing, we do believe that it would be appropriate for the Board of Supervisors to revisit Recommendation 26, which addresses transportation improvements that would be required should developers seek to increase density in the 2012-50 time frame beyond that anticipated in the Tysons Comprehensive Plan. In this regard, MCA supports adding to Table 7, those projects that are demonstrably shown by transportation modeling to be needed prior to 2050, and we support the proposal in Recommendation 26 that "any additions to Table 7 should be funded by the development that exceeds the 2050 threshold." MCA also supports removing from the Table 7 list, those projects that the County identifies through the review processes called for in the Recommendations Document as no longer needed, feasible or supportive of the Tysons transportation improvement policies. MCA cannot, however, support substitution of new transportation projects for transportation projects approved in the Tysons Comprehensive Plan and listed in Table 7 of that Plan. Both at the time of adoption of the Plan and subsequently, County officials publicly called those projects listed in the "Tysons-wide" and Neighborhood and Access categories as essential to mitigate current as well as prospective traffic congestion. We would, therefore, ask that you remove the sentence in question or modify it to apply only to those projects that do not fall in these categories. Our rationale is two-fold: (1) to ensure that projects that already are known to be necessary are not dropped, and (2) to permit deletion of projects that in 2010 were thought likely to be needed to keep pace with Tysons' development but which, as development within Tysons proceeds over the next 40 years, turn out not to be necessary.

On October 3, MCA passed a second resolution, also attached, that addresses the Recommendation Document's proposals related to Interim Parking and the Initial Development Level for Office Space. MCA endorses the interim parking recommendation to issue a Request for Interest to all property owners near the Metro stations to identify possible locations for temporary commuter parking. Temporary commuter parking is a win-win-win: It would increase rail ridership, provide a benefit to the surrounding communities who otherwise have

virtually no access to public modes of transportation, and provide a steady revenue stream to property owners in the vicinity of the metro stops until they are ready to develop their properties.

MCA opposes Recommendation 31, which calls for consideration of increasing the Initial Development Level (IDL) for office development beyond 45 million square feet (MSF), since it does not include the criteria established in the Tysons Comprehensive Plan to guide the timing for and consideration of increases in office space. MCA believes that any increase in the IDL should be deferred until the Tysons Plan criteria are met. Specifically, MCA opposes any increase in the IDL until there is: (1) a demonstrated increased demand for office space; (2) significant progress in implementation of the Table 7 projects funded in the Recommendations; (3) funding identified for the additional transportation projects identified in the Tysons Plan as required to exceed the 84 MSF in office space; and (4) a demonstrated reduction in vehicle trips and congestion in the redeveloped areas. If the recommendation remains in the Recommendation Document, for consistency with the Tysons Comprehensive Plan, we request that you add the criteria in the Tysons Comprehensive Plan to Recommendation 31. The recommendation then would read: “The Board direct staff to incorporate within the next Tysons-wide plan amendment consideration of a change to the current IDL of 45 million square feet of office use, provided that there has been: (1) a demonstrated increased demand for office space; (2) significant progress in implementation of the Table 7 projects funded in the Recommendations; (3) funding identified for the additional transportation projects identified in the Tysons Plan as required to exceed 84 MSF in office space; and (4) a demonstrated reduction in vehicle trips and congestion in the redeveloped areas.”

Thank you.