

MCLEAN CITIZENS ASSOCIATION RESOLUTION ON
THE PROPOSED EXTENSION OF METRO THROUGH TYSONS CORNER

AUGUST 22, 2006

WHEREAS, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Secretary of Transportation are currently considering proposals to extend the Metro from West Falls Church to Dulles International Airport; and

WHEREAS, the current plans for the extension of Metro call for its extension through Tysons Corner; and

WHEREAS, at the request of to Secretary of Transportation Pierce R. Homer, the American Society of Civil Engineers formed the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Tunnel Review Panel ("TRP") to conduct an independent analysis of engineering options for the proposed alignment through the Tysons Corner area in Phase 1 of the Metrorail extension to Dulles Airport and Loudoun County; and

WHEREAS, the TRP recently issued a Report to the Secretary of Transportation entitled "Dulles Corridor Metrorail – Phase 1, Tysons Corner Segment" that evaluated the option of construction of a large bore tunnel and the construction of an aerial structure through Tysons Corner, and

WHEREAS, the TRP concluded that, "it is reasonable to assume that the tunnel option would provide greater positive long-term economic and business impacts than the aerial option," and

WHEREAS, the TRP concluded that "The tunnel option could provide the impetus needed to transform Tysons Corner from an auto-dependent, pedestrian-hostile, business-and-retail-oriented edge city to an urban community that is pedestrian-friendly and enhanced by substantial residential fabric," and

WHEREAS, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Secretary of Transportation intend to decide whether to decide by the end of August, 2006, how to proceed with the extension of the Metro to Dulles;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the MCA should send the attached letter to the Governor of Commonwealth of Virginia and the Secretary of Transportation expressing the views of the MCA regarding the Report of the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Tunnel Review Panel of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

August 22, 2006

Honorable Tim Kaine
Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia
Patrick Henry Building, 3rd Floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Honorable Pierce Homer
Secretary of Transportation
Ninth Street Office Building
202 North 9th Street, 5th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Governor Kaine and Secretary Homer:

The McLean Citizens Association (MCA) appreciates the opportunity to submit our comments for your consideration in making your decision regarding the proposal for the construction of a tunnel through Tysons Corner.

The MCA is a non-profit corporation that has served since 1914 as an unofficial town council for the residents of McLean. The MCA provides a forum in which all McLean residents can discuss ways to address community and county issues affecting the area.

The MCA has voiced its support for the extension of the Metro to Dulles in the past. Still, we are concerned that the extension of the Metro will lead to over-development in Tysons Corner, which already is a rapidly growing area. And, while the extension of Metro may address certain transportation issues, it will spur further growth that will generate new sets of issues that our community must address. This includes environmental problems, planning and zoning issues, the likely increase in traffic on Routes 7, 123, I-495 and associated feeder routes, the demands on our schools, and the like. The Metro extension must be rationally and fairly implemented or it may eventually cause more problems than it solves.

We are also concerned about the financing of the Metro extension. The projected costs are significant and there is a very real possibility that the actual cost of the project will exceed current projections. Therefore, while we understand that your immediate decision is whether Metro should be extended through Tysons Corner above ground or through an underground tunnel, we suggest that you should consider the attendant financing issues.

With these concerns in mind, we have two basic comments regarding the proposal.

FIRST, if Metro is extended, the MCA supports the large-bore tunnel option.

SECOND, as part of your decision on the tunnel option, basic financing policies should be developed that guarantee that the costs of the tunnel, and any potential cost overruns, are equitably distributed among the various stakeholders.

DISCUSSION:

I. If the Metro is extended, the MCA supports the large-bore tunnel alternative for the Tysons Metrorail project analyzed in the recent report of the American Society of Civil Engineers Tunnel Review Panel ("TRP") as set forth in this letter.

The MCA believes that this deep tunnel alternative would make it possible to develop a pedestrian-friendly plan for the Tysons area that will facilitate the implementation of several long-needed road improvements, such as the conversion of Route 7 into a boulevard¹ and also permit the development of aesthetically pleasing public amenities. It would avoid the physical division of Tysons resulting from the aerial alternative and reduce the congestion problems created during the course of construction and would substantially enhance the value of business and commercial real estate adjacent to the new rail line.

If you decide in favor of the large bore tunnel alternative, there are two design questions touched upon by the TRP study that should be addressed immediately.

A. To minimize disruption to the community during construction, the Commonwealth should consider beginning tunnel boring from the west portal and employ trucks using the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority's right-of-way in the Dulles Road; and

B. The Commonwealth should assess the adequacy of the proposed heavy duty elevators to bring large numbers of passengers to and from the platforms as the sole method of station access and should determine the right combination of elevators, escalators and stairways that will be needed to provide sufficient redundancy to accommodate mechanical breakdowns, power outages and emergencies.²

II. There are two other non-technical matters we also ask you to consider.

A. First, the TRP was initially asked to examine the Federal Transit Authority's (FTA) cost effectiveness but the issue was later withdrawn "because of changes occurring in FTA regulations."³ Failure to meet those criteria or obtain an appropriate waiver could result in the loss of the \$900 million Federal contribution and that would probably be fatal to the program. The problem was mentioned in the July 26, 2006 letter to you from Congressmen Wolf and Davis.

¹ See *Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan*, 2000 ed., Tysons Corner Urban Center, at 64.

² The Roosevelt Island Subway Station, which opened in New York City on October 29, 1989, uses two elevators and eight escalators.

³ TRP Report, p.6.

The MCA understands that the FTA criteria for Section 5309 New Starts have historically been based on a mechanical measure of the incremental cost per hour of transportation system user benefits. The criteria prevent parties other than the Federal Government from increasing their contributions above a certain threshold, irrespective of benefits not considered as direct user benefits in the formula. We further understand that the Commonwealth might seek a waiver of these criteria to obtain federal funding for extension of Metro, including the large-bore tunnel alternative, based on various factors such as meeting of Clean Air Standards, pedestrian improvements, or much longer service life of a tunnel than an elevated track.

While these may be good arguments that could possibly justify a waiver of the FTA's existing cost-benefit formula in this situation, the grant of such a waiver could also have the effect of exposing the residents of Fairfax County to future tax increases to pay for substantial cost overruns that may occur with the construction of the Metrorail extension.

B. Second, because the extension of Metro will be expensive, and there are the risks of cost overruns, we suggest that the endorsement the large-bore tunnel alternative should be accompanied by a policy statement as to how the additional costs of the tunnel and potential cost overruns will be financed. Accordingly, in making your decision, we suggest that guidelines should be developed to govern the financing of the extension of Metrorail, including the cost of the tunnel.

It must be recognized that the Federal Government, the Washington Metropolitan area, and the Commonwealth will benefit from the extension of Metro to Dulles. We are concerned, however, that neither the Federal Government nor the Commonwealth would share potential liability for these additional costs. By default, it would be all too easy to pass these costs along to residents of Fairfax County. We specifically oppose, however, financing these costs significantly either from local residential real estate taxes (either directly or indirectly) or from any local personal income tax, sales tax or personal property taxes.

Instead, we suggest that any additional costs of the Metro extension, including the costs for any tunnel, should be financed predominately by the Federal Government (through the FTA) or, if that is not possible, by the Commonwealth. And, to the extent there are local assessments, these costs should be borne by proffers or special district payments on the business and commercial landowners which are directly adjacent to the proposed Metro extension. Further, any proffers offered by the landowners, developers, or builders should not be offset against the taxes and fees now assessed against them. Finally, proffers or taxes for the Metro should not be offset against other assessment or proffers for other infrastructure, including schools, parks, fire and police stations, libraries and the like.

We hope that these financing principles will be included in your decision regarding the construction of the tunnel.

We appreciate your consideration of our views in making your decision. The MCA stands ready to provide any help it can, both in your decision regarding the tunnel and with the other issues that you will address as the Metro is extended to Dulles.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas H. Brock". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "T".

Thomas H. Brock
President
McLean Citizens Association
6611 Georgetown Pike
McLean, Virginia 22101
(703) 506-9376

cc Hon. Frank C. Wolf
Hon. Tom Davis

State Senator Janet D. Howell
State Senator Jeannemarie Devolites-Davis
State Delegate Vincent F. Callahan
State Delegate James M. Scott
State Delegate Steve Shannon

Hon. Gerry Connolly, Chairman Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Hon. Joan Dubois, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Dranesville District
Hon. Catherine M. Hudgins, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Hunter Mill District
Hon. Linda Q. Smyth, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Providence District
Hon. Dana Kaufman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Lee District

Gregory A. Whirley, Acting Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner
Matthew O. Tucker, Director of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public
Transportation
J. Douglas Koelemay, Commonwealth Transportation Board, Northern Virginia District
Katharine D. Ichter, Acting Director Fairfax County Department of Transportation
James E. Bennett, President and CEO MWAA
Mame Reiley, Chairman, MWAA
Jonathan Gaffney, VP, MWAA
Richard Stevens, Fairfax County Project Manager - Dulles Rail Project
Corey W. Hill, Director of Administration and Capital Projects, Virginia Department of
Rail and Public Transportation
Dennis C. Morrison, Northern Virginia District Administrator VDOT
Kevin B. Page, Director of Rail Transportation