Planning and Urban Design for Tysons Corner

Rail~Volution October 2008
Where is Tysons Corner?
Tysons Corner, Virginia

- The original “edge city”
  - Equivalent of 12th largest US downtown
- Sprawl on steroids
  - 46m sq ft development – 120,000 jobs
  - Additional 30m sq ft by current plan & zoning
  - 40m sq ft parking
“A walk across Tysons is more dangerous than a walk from the Baghdad airport to the Green Zone”

“The blob that ate Northern Virginia”
Opportunity for change: Metrorail through Tysons
Task Force Direction

• A Vision to Transform Tysons
• New Urban Plan Text
  – Land use
  – Transportation
  – Environmental stewardship
  – Public facilities
  – Urban design
• Implementation
The Project:
The Vision and Recommendations
Path to a Transformed Tysons

• Task Force Principles set the direction
  – Focus growth within Tysons & around transit
  – Mix of uses for an active 24-hour place
  – Increase connectivity & walkability
  – Preserve & enhance natural features
Vision: Transforming suburbia

- Great place to live, work and play
- World-class downtown
- Prestigious office & affordable housing
- People oriented streets
- Convenient transit
- Variety of open space & civic uses
Recommended Plan

95% of growth w/in an easy walk of transit
The Concept

Metro TOD

Residential

Green Network

Transportation

Urban Design
Lower Carbon Footprint

Preliminary US EPA assessment:

- Greenhouse Gas emissions reduced 2.5 billion lbs annually (½ of a coal plant)
- Results from
  - Compact development
  - Fewer auto trips
  - Greater transit use

Daily CO2 Per Capita

Base Case: 43 LBS
Prototype B: 36 LBS
Challenge: Melding the Human with the Technical
The Competing Interests

- Adjoining communities
- Local businesses
- Residents
- State agencies
- Utilities
- Emergency services
- Commuters through
- Transit operators
- Pedestrians & Bicyclists
- Construction requirements

- Landowners
- Large employers
- Employees
- County agencies
- Environmental interests
- Commuters to
- Developers
- MWAA
- Freight carriers
- Financial interests
Task Force Subcommittees

- Transportation
- Livability/Walkability
- Affordable Housing
- Implementation
The Technical Side
Tysons Analysis Toolbox

- Transportation & Land Use integration
  - Optimize the mix

- Visualization
  - What will it look like?

- Transportation reform
  - Grid of streets
  - Circulator
  - New standards

- Sustainability
  - Green network
  - LEED

- Urban design
  - Guidelines

- Implementation
  - New governance
  - New financial tools
Grid of Streets

- Walkable place
- Urban sized blocks
- Increased connectivity for bikes, pedestrians and cars
- New standards for streets
Redesign transportation
Green Stewardship

- Network of parks & opens space
- Urban parks standards
- Stream restoration
- Green architecture
- Green building
Urban Design Principles

- Walkable Blocks
- Interconnected Streets
- The Pedestrian Realm
- The Building
- Landmarks, Gateways and Public Art
What’s Next?
How Does the Plan Become Reality?

- Leveraged density
- Incentives
- Coalitions of landowners
- Realistic planning
- Three decades
- Political will

- Creative financing
- Consensus
- Intercessory prayer
- All of the above
Implementation Is The Key!

- Why? – transition from suburban to urban standards
- A new authority as a governance framework
- New code language to support the vision
- Design review & expedited, consistent processing
- Power to raise, receive & expend funds for prioritized improvements
- Create & use improvement districts, tax increment financing, public/private partnerships
Tysons Transformed

Editorials :: October 5, 2008

Transformation for Tysons
A green vision for the traffic-clogged commercial center

“… from a textbook case of suburban sprawl into a model of environmentally conscious smart growth in urban planning … “

The Washington Post
Questions?