

McLean Citizens Association Board of Directors Meeting Final Minutes, March 7, 2007

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers (6)

Tom Brock	President	Present
Rob Jackson	First Vice President	Present
Jim Turner	Second Vice President	Present
William Denk	Treasurer	Present
Mark Zetts	Corresponding Secretary	Present
Desmond B. O'Rourke	Recording Secretary	Present

DIRECTORS REPRESENTING NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS (19)

John Adams	Georgetown Pike & Potomac River Assoc.	Absent (Excused)
Ted Alexander	Westberry HOA	Present
Brian Blood	Evermay Community Association	Present
Donald Borcharding	Brookhaven/Forest Villa Association	Present
Germaine Broussard	McLean Commons	Absent
Steve DelBianco	Franklin Area Citizens Association; FCFCA	Present
Darren Ewing	Pimmit Hills Citizens Association	Present
Louis Freeman	McLean House North Council	Present
Lynn Bays Fuechsel	McLean County Estates	Present
Jane Greenstein	Chesterford Community Association	Present
Michelle Meehan	Greenway Heights Civic Association	(Alternate Jenn. Carley present)
Robert (Bob) Philipp	Shouse Village Community Association	Present
James A. Robertson	Evans Mill Pond Owners Association	Present
Ed Saperstein	Glen Haven Farms	Present
John Schaefer	McLean Broyhill Estates	Present
Bill Stephens	Chesterbrook Woods Citizens Association	Absent
Susan Turner	Summerwood	Present
Paul Wieland	McLean Hamlet Citizens Association	Present
Stephanie Weisbroth	West McLean Citizens Association	Present

AT-LARGE BOARD MEMBERS (14)

Robin Bates	Present
Mike Clancy	Present
Chris Cole	Absent (Excused)
Frank Crandall	Present
Dan DuVal	Present
Donald Finberg	Present
Lawrence Glick	Absent
Stephen Keller	Present
Margaret Malone	Present
Chris Monek	Present
Dale Murad	Present
Bob Nagle	Present
Merrily Pierce	Present
Wade Smith	Absent (Excused)

Guests whose presence was recorded by signing in or being introduced:

Irv Auerbach	Tysons Task Force
Whit Field	MCA's EP&R Committee and P&Z Committee
John Foust	MCA/MPC

Cheryl Patten
Monty Taloe
Aranya Tomseth
Brian Trompeter

Beverly Manor
The Times
The McLean Connection
Sun Gazette

CALL TO ORDER

President Brock called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. at McLean Community Center, Community Hall (sections B & C).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Brock announced that this Board meeting had been called for 7:30 to allow time for a full agenda, and thanked directors for making the extra time to attend it.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the MCA Board of Directors' meeting of February 7 were approved as amended.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Bill Denk announced that the recent receipt of about \$7500 in dues, in response to our mailings, has pushed our net worth over \$32,000. Between September and December 2006 we received about \$2000 in dues in response to mailings. A financial report is attached to the minutes.

REPORT OF PRESIDENT / EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President Brock announced that the meeting concerning the Old Firehouse will take place March 14. MCA support for the plans was formally approved.

Jim Robertson will resign as Co-Chair of the Planning & Zoning Committee this year. Mark Zetts has been nominated to succeed him.

President Brock encouraged directors to speak to each HOA president before submitting application forms for directorship of the MCA for the 2007-2008 term. Forms must be postmarked by March 15.

President Brock invited Irv Auerbach to introduce the public workshop schedule for the Tysons Land Use Task Force to be held on six occasions in March. President Brock urged that we attend one of the workshops. The County web site www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/tysonscorner/ contains all available information and Task Force materials. A timeline of public outreach opportunities may be found at: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/tysonscorner/plprocessinput.pdf.

STANDING COMMITTEES

A BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE and EDUCATION AND YOUTH COMMITTEE joint

McLean Citizens Association FY 2008 Fairfax County School Budget Resolution

Whereas the School Board of Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) has proposed a FY 2008 School Operating Budget of about \$2.2 billion, an increase of about \$89.7 million, or 4.3%, over the FY 2007 approved budget, and about \$36.6 million, or 1.7%, over the FY 2007 estimated budget; and

Whereas total students for FY 2008 are expected to be about 164,490 versus in FY 2007 it is about 164,700; and

Whereas there is a desire to provide quality education for the children in Fairfax County; and

Whereas there is a desire to avoid burdensome increases in residential property taxes; and

Whereas approval of the proposed budget would result in a county transfer increase of about 4.6% plus \$8 million for the Initiatives for Excellence-Teacher Salary Enhancements, and the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (BOS) has proposed a county transfer increase of about 3.5% plus the \$8 million for the Initiatives for Teacher Excellence, for a difference of about \$17 million; and

Whereas \$5.6 million is for expanding full-day kindergarten to an additional 21 elementary schools; and

Whereas a proposal for \$1 million for Preventive Maintenance was left unfunded; and

Whereas FCPS receive proffers from real estate developers that are inadequate to cover FCPS costs incurred due to additional students from new development, and such amounts are less than the amounts generally proffered in nearby jurisdictions, thus creating a further burden on residential property taxes;

Therefore, be it resolved by the Board of Directors of the McLean Citizens Association that:

1. We recognize and appreciate that the Superintendent and School Board have a proposed budget so close to the BOS guideline on the increase in county transfer.
2. We support the 4.6% increase in the county transfer to the extent it is feasible in terms of the overall county budget needs and projected county revenue.
3. We commend the Superintendent, the School Board and BOS for having the Teacher Excellence Initiatives.
4. If funds become available, we encourage additional initiatives to recruit, retain and develop teachers.
5. We support full-day kindergarten, but request that the additional schools be chosen by lottery or by a pro-rata allocation by cluster.
6. We urge that the \$1 million for Preventive Maintenance be funded.
7. We urge the BOS and School Board to take the required steps to increase the proffer for schools to a level that more appropriately recovers forward-looking costs incurred due to additional students from new development.
8. We recommend reducing funds allocated to step increases to create a bonus pool for exceptional employees. We recommend that the number of employees receiving bonuses be limited, and that a group be set up to develop methods to implement the bonus pool in practice.

9. Regarding the format of the budget, we commend FCPS for including in its budget presentation:

- Long-term statistics and tables showing trends over time.
- FY 2007 Washington Area Board of Education Guide.

We also appreciate the inclusion of the School Board Strategic Governance including the areas on vision, student achievement goals and operational expectations and encourage you to keep improving this section.

Distribute to:

School Board

Kathy Smith, kathy.l.smith@fcps.edu
Catherine Belter, catherine.belter@fcps.edu
Brad Center, brad.center@fcps.edu
Stu Gibson, stuart.gibson@fcps.edu
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Jane Strauss, jane.strauss@fcps.edu
Judith (Tessie) Wilson, tessie.wilson@fcps.edu
Jessica Miller Jessica.miller2@fcps.edu

Fairfax County Public Schools Superintendent

Jack Dale, jack.dale@fcps.edu

Board of Supervisors

Gerry Connolly, chairman@fairfaxcounty.gov
Sharon Bulova, braddock@fairfaxcounty.gov
Joan DuBois, dranesville@fairfaxcounty.gov
Michael Frey, sully@co.fairfax.va.us
Penelope (Penny) Gross, mason@fairfaxcounty.gov
Cathy Hudgins, hntmill@fairfaxcounty.gov
Gerry Hyland, mtvernon@fairfaxcounty.gov
Dana Kauffman, leedist@co.fairfax.va.us
Elaine McConnell, springfield@fairfaxcounty.gov
Linda Smyth, provdist@fairfaxcounty.gov

The Resolution was passed unanimously.

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMITTEE

**McLean Citizens Association Resolution
On a Proposed Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance Amendment
Regarding the Use of Portable Storage Containers in Residential Areas**

March 7, 2007

Whereas the Fairfax County zoning ordinance currently regulates accessory storage structures (sheds), but contains no specific provisions to address a subset of such structures designed for temporary use, and

Whereas accessory storage structures are not permitted on a front yard, except on lots of over 36,000 square feet, and

Whereas Fairfax County has proposed zoning ordinance amendments (ZOA) to accommodate and regulate the use, *on residential properties*,¹ of temporary portable storage containers (PSCs) within the county as a subset of accessory storage structures, and

Whereas the ZOA proposes to define PSC as a “purpose-built, fully enclosed, box-like container with signage on one or more of its outer surfaces that is designed for temporary storage of household goods and/or equipment. Such containers are uniquely designed for ease of loading to and from a transport vehicle,” and

Whereas the definition should not turn on whether or not a particular PSC actually has signage, and

Whereas it should be easy enough for providers of the PSCs to provide evidence of the length of time they have rented out their PSCs, by address, at a publicly available web site, and

Whereas people renting PSCs may have little choice in determining where on their property to place the PSCs (as it may only be possible to place them on driveways located in their front or side yards), and

Whereas PSCs should be regulated in the same way in residentially-zoned areas, whether or not the particular property on which they are used is subject to a special permit or special exception, and

Whereas the ZOA proposes to limit the use of PSCs

1. by time (duration) of use (except in casualty situations, which are governed by separate rules currently proposed to allow up to ninety days within a six month period):
 - a. (on lots developed with detached single family dwellings) to a period of thirty days within a six month period;
 - b. (on lots developed with single family attached or multiple family dwellings) to a period of 72 hours within a six month period;
 - c. (in cases subject to a special permit) to a period of the shorter of up to nine months or for the period of an active building permit;
2. by size (to a height of eight and one half feet and a cumulative gross floor area of 130 square feet);
3. by size (to a height of eight and one half feet and a cumulative gross floor area of 130 square feet);
4. by location, allowing their placement anywhere on a lot *other than* on required open space, in pedestrian or vehicular walkways, and in areas that would violate the sight-distance provisions of the zoning ordinance;
5. such that signage is limited to PSC-provider information (i.e. that no other advertisement be allowed),

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the McLean Citizens Association recommends that the Board of Supervisors adopt the proposed amendments modified as follows:

1. By changing the definition of PSC to read: “purpose-built, fully enclosed, box-like container which may contain signage on one or more of its outer surfaces that is designed for

¹ Previously, the County had advertised a proposed ZOA which would have addressed both residential and commercial use of PSCs, as well as the use of roll-offs. Following submission of an MCA resolution and resolutions by other groups to address many of the issues not adequately covered by that earlier proposal, the County withdrew the earlier proposal and is now limiting this proposal to the use of PSCs on residential lots. The staff report on the current proposal indicates that the County will consider commercial portable storage and roll-off debris containers in two separate amendments to be proposed in the future.

temporary storage of household goods and/or equipment. Such containers are uniquely designed for ease of loading to and from a transport vehicle,” and

2. By running time restrictions *by resident* at a particular address, so that people moving into a home will be able to use PSCs to unload furniture even after the people moving out of that home have used the maximum time allotted to them to move furniture out, and
3. By allowing PSCs with a total footprint not to exceed one hundred thirty (130) square feet to remain on lots developed with detached single-family homes for a period of forty-five (45) days within a six-month period, and
4. By allowing PSCs not exceeding a footprint of 130 square feet to remain on lots developed with single-family attached or multiple-family dwellings for a period of ninety-six (96) hours within a six month period, and
5. By requiring the providers of PSCs to maintain a publicly available website indicating how long a PSC has been on a particular property, and
6. Without requiring that PSCs be addressed by special permits/special use exceptions in situations where the principal structure is allowed by special permit/special use exception,

AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the McLean Citizens Association supports the decision to allow PSCs on any portion of a residential property.

Distribute to:
Fairfax County Planning Commission
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

The Resolution was passed as amended with 2 abstentions (Jennifer Carley, Chris Monek) and 1 opposed (Steve Keller).

ENVIRONMENT, PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

McLEAN CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

Resolution Regarding Dolley Madison Library/Possible McLean Community Center Expansion

March 7, 2007

Whereas the McLean Citizens Association (MCA), originally known as the McLean School and Civic League, was formed in 1914 to demand quality schools, a library, and a fire department for McLean; and

Whereas over the years, members of the McLean Trees Foundation (formerly, the MCA’s McLean Trees Committee) have fostered a community spirit of tree protection and preservation; and

Whereas for many years, the MCA has participated with local elected officials and government to implement stronger regulations for control of stormwater runoff and other stream protection measures; and

Whereas the County is in the process of creating Master Stormwater Management Plans for each watershed and multiple MCA members are currently active participants on the steering committee of the Middle Potomac Watersheds Management Plan effort involving each of McLean’s watersheds: Bull Neck, Scotts Run, Dead Run, Turkey Run, and Pimmit Run; and

Whereas as part of that planning effort, it has been conservatively estimated that the cost for repairing damage to our watersheds, primarily caused by years of uncontrolled stormwater runoff, will cost County taxpayers upwards of a billion dollars county-wide over the next 25 years; and

Whereas the Library occupies a parcel of land owned by the County within the Dead Run Watershed that also includes the McLean Community Center, and both are adjacent to the Park Authority's McLean Central Park, tot lot, and gazebo, plus a portion of the Dead Run Stream Valley and a stream valley trail that connects several neighborhoods; there are also recreational facilities on the site that include tennis courts, a second tot lot, and a multipurpose court used primarily for basketball; and

Whereas these facilities exist today because of the efforts of the MCA and the McLean Community which recognized the need for them in the past; and

Whereas it has recently been learned that the expansion of the Library will include space for relocating the Dranesville District Supervisor's Office, which adds another public use and requires the addition of an access road and another parking lot that would increase impervious surface and expand the tree-clearing area needed for construction; and

Whereas to meet the limits of clearing, the preliminary site plans show that more than 100 trees behind the library are planned for destruction thus destroying the trees' function as a visual separation for park uses and much needed buffer and protection for the stream valley park; and

Whereas it is well observed by neighbors in the vicinity of the Library that upstream construction, even with inclusion of county stormwater management controls, has further degraded the condition of the Park and stream valley; and

Whereas it is generally known that in the near future the McLean Community Center intends to move forward with a major renovation and addition which may include such things as a teen community center; and

Whereas the proposed McLean Community Center expansion has not been coordinated with plans for the major adjacent Library expansion and relocation of the Government Center; and

Whereas the MCA remains committed to its longstanding support for the Library, the Community Center, and for the protection of adjacent natural resources; and

Whereas planning for expansion of the Library has been ongoing for a considerable length of time, but input from the McLean residents has not been a part of that process, the plans have only recently been made available for the public to review, and only one public meeting attended by fewer than two dozen people has been held; and

Whereas while County staff continue to review the preliminary site plan and considerable planning work still is required, including such things as a VDOT study, a 2232 public hearing is scheduled before the Planning Commission on March 22, with construction supposed to begin during the summer; now therefore

Be it resolved, that the McLean Citizen Association urgently recommends immediate deferral of the scheduled Planning Commission Public Hearing as premature; and

Be it further resolved, that the McLean Citizens Association strongly recommends that a master plan be developed for the County-owned land and the Park Authority land that considers and addresses the potential cumulative impact on the entire site; and

Be it finally resolved, that the McLean Citizens Association strongly recommends that the MCA, other appropriate community organizations, and the general public be included in any and all County planning efforts involving these public facilities.

Distribution:

Supervisor Joan DuBois, Dranesville District
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Fairfax County Planning Commission
Fairfax County Executive
Fairfax County Environmental Quality Advisory Council
Dr. Kambiz Agazi, Fairfax County Environmental Coordinator
Mr. Noel Kaplan, Fairfax County DPZ
Mr. Michael Kane, Fairfax County Park Authority
Mr. Kevin Fay, Dranesville Representative, FCPA Board
Mr. Michael Cadwallader, McLean Community Center
Mr. Sean Dunn, McLean Community Center

The Resolution was passed unanimously.

Concerning increases in **local aircraft noise levels** over McLean and Great Falls, Paul Wieland reported on a meeting held March 7 in Congressman Frank Wolf's Office, attended by MCA (Frank Crandall and Paul Wieland) and representatives of FAA and the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority. It resulted in a pledge to reinforce training and the procedures for pilots to follow.

Thanks to the meeting with Congressman Wolf, MCA members Chris Grootaert, Frank Crandall, Dan Duval & Paul Wieland will tour the TRACON (Terminal Radar Approach Control) facility, Vint Hill, VA. They will also tour the control tower at Reagan National Airport. President Brock warmly thanked Paul Wieland and Frank Crandall, Co-Chairs of the EP&R, for their pursuit of the matter.

REPRESENTATIVES/DELEGATES TO OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

MCLEAN PLANNING COMMITTEE

Dan Duval reported 1) there is a proposal for a school of music to be established and 2) the public communication phase of McLean Community Center/Old Firehouse Teen Center expansion has started. The MCC, MCA, MPC and MRC invite all McLean residents to a public meeting to be held Wednesday, March 14 at 7:30 pm in the Center. The McLean Community Center Governing Board will present its proposal for expansion related to the Old Firehouse Teen Center and the Center itself on Ingleside Ave. The aim of the meeting is consensus within the community on what to do with the Old Firehouse Teen Center.

MCLEAN REVITALIZATION CORPORATION

MRC will hear a presentation about the Old Firehouse Teen Center plans to be given by Sean Dunn.

Rosemary Ryan stated in reference to concern about the Chesterbrook Safeway that it would not be torn down. It will be closed in late 2008 and a second story will be added to the building in 2009.

FAIRFAX COUNTY FEDERATION OF CITIZENS ASSOCIATIONS

Steve DelBianco reported that Sally Ormsby will be honored as Citizen of the Year by the federation.

MCLEAN CITIZENS FOUNDATION

No report.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Dan Duval presented a majority Ad Hoc Committee Resolution arising out of its consideration of the resolution put forward at the MCA February meeting by Susan Turner regarding rail through Tysons, and concerning issues such as transportation, taxes, the tunnel alternative, and Metrorail. Chairman Dan Duval said it was worthwhile to investigate the issues despite the steep learning curve for the Ad Hoc Committee. Susan Turner indicated that she was withdrawing her original resolution in favor of the Committee's Resolution regarding plans for Phase I of the Dulles Metro Rail Line, as follows:

McLEAN CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

Resolutions Regarding Tysons Corner Plan for Phase I of the Dulles Metro Line March 7, 2007

Whereas the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan for the Tysons Corner Urban Center was amended in 1994 to permit increased densities up to 2.0 floor area ratio ("FAR") within 1,000 feet of any Metro station, and up to 1.6 FAR from 1,000 feet to 1,600 feet of the rail station, and then significantly limiting density/intensity outside these non core areas, with a goal to use all planned road capacity during peak hours at maximum build out, but not exceed planned road capacity; and

Whereas the Tysons Corner Urban Center ("Tysons Corner") is generally triangular in shape and the proposed four rail stations will service 1,700 acres, or 425 acres per station, which will leave significant areas of Tysons Corner outside of a walking distance of a rail station, in contrast to the Arlington Ballston-Rosslyn Corridor that services a linear route where each station services 205 acres per station; and

Whereas during the 2004 Providence District Area Plans Review cycle, 20 Comprehensive Area Plan Review nominations ("APRs") were filed for properties throughout Tysons Corner requesting densities of 3.5 FAR or greater, although hundreds of acres of land covered by the APRs were not within the 1,600-foot walking distance of a proposed station; and

Whereas these 20 APRs represent only approximately 35% of the total land area in Tysons Corner ; and

Whereas an additional 1,108 acres in Tysons Corner, most of which are not within 1,600 feet of a proposed rail station, could be nominated for consideration as amendments to the Area Plan requesting comparable increases in density in the future; and

Whereas allowing increased density at Tysons Corner outside the 1,600-foot radii threatens to overburden road networks leading into, out of and surrounding Tysons Corner, and in other ways negatively impacts the quality of life in neighborhoods adjacent to and in the vicinity of Tysons Corner; and

Whereas it is a stated top priority goal of the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan and of the Tysons Corner Land Use Task Force to protect and preserve neighborhoods adjacent to and in the vicinity of Tysons Corner; and

Whereas Governor Kaine advocates linking land use planning and transportation in Virginia to prevent overburdening already congested roads in Northern Virginia; and

Whereas the cost estimates for Phase I of the Silver Line have gone up 30% from \$1.52 billion since December 2004 to \$2 billion in 2006 and if such cost trend continues it is likely that the final costs for the project would exceed current estimates of roughly \$2.4 billion;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the McLean Citizens Association calls upon the Governor, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, the Fairfax County Planning Commission, the Tysons Corner Land Use Task Force and other public officials to make as their top priority in the Tysons Corner planning process preserving, protecting and enhancing the quality of life in neighborhoods adjacent to and surrounding Tysons Corner;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any planned density increases at Tysons Corner be limited to amounts that can be proven by an open and verified traffic and ridership analysis not to overburden road networks into, out of, and in areas surrounding Tysons Corner or the Metrorail system;

RESOLVED FURTHER that the details of such traffic and ridership analysis must be fully open to the public so that the assumptions and computations may be checked by citizens in detail;

RESOLVED FURTHER that the Governor should direct the proper offices of the state government to analyze and verify any traffic and ridership analysis produced by Fairfax County, with such analysis also fully open to the public so that interested citizens can verify the computations;

RESOLVED FURTHER that, subject to the foregoing paragraphs, any increases in densities over those provided in the 1994 Comprehensive Plan shall be permitted only within 1,600 feet walking distance of the rail platform entrances (measured from the turnstiles), and densities outside of those areas should be limited to no greater than those permitted by the 1994 Comprehensive Plan (as amended to date) and in any event any increase within or outside the 1,600 feet must be implemented to avoid transportation degradation;

RESOLVED FURTHER that the McLean Citizens Association reiterates the concerns previously expressed by it regarding the financing and cost of the rail project, in particular that any costs not be funded by increasing the tax burden on residential taxpayers;

RESOLVED FURTHER that the McLean Citizens Association believes that, to minimize disruption of traffic and business services, occupancy permits for any buildings developed with increased FARs which are permitted under the Comprehensive Plan then current due to proximity to rail stations not be granted until the rail system is operational;

RESOLVED FURTHER that the McLean Citizens Association calls on each candidate for public office in the 2007 elections to join in supporting the foregoing resolutions and to commit to implementing these resolutions while in public office; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the McLean Citizens Association solicit the positions of the candidates on the issues addressed by the foregoing resolutions and inform the public of those positions.

Copies of the resolution shall be sent to the following:

Honorable Tim Kaine, Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia
Honorable Pierce Homer, Secretary of Transportation
Honorable Frank C. Wolf
Honorable Tom Davis
Honorable Jim Moran
James E. Bennett, President and CEO MWA

Mame Reiley, Chairman, MWAA
State Senator Janet D. Howell
State Senator Jeannemarie Devolites-Davis
State Delegate Vincent F. Callahan
State Delegate James M. Scott
State Delegate Stephen C. Shannon
David S. Ekern, Acting Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner
Matthew O. Tucker, Director of the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation
Honorable J. Douglas Koelemay, Commonwealth Transportation Board, Northern Virginia District
Katharine D. Ichter, Acting Director Fairfax County Department of Transportation
Richard Stevens, Fairfax County Project Manager - Dulles Rail Project
Jonathan Gaffney, VP, MWAA
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,
Providence District Council
Rosemary Ryan, Legislative Assistant
Nancy Hopkins, Planning Commissioner, Dranesville District
Ken Lawrence, Planning Commissioner, Providence District
Honorable Gerry Connolly, Chairman Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Honorable Joan Dubois, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Dranesville District
Honorable Catherine M. Huggins, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Hunter Mill District
Honorable Linda Q. Smyth, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Providence
Tysons Land Use Task Force
Fairfax County Planning Commission
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

Ad Hoc Committee Member Susan Turner submitted a Minority Report as follows:

Minority Report of the Special Committee Regarding the Tysons Rail Resolution

March 5, 2007

The following language should be added to the Resolution: "Regarding Tysons Corner..."

"Be it further resolved that if a fully underground (tunnel) design is not utilized, the project should not be built using the current elevated track scheme.

The shortcomings of the elevated track design have been extensively publicized. An elevated track will:

- stymie Fairfax County's efforts to turn Tysons into a walkable downtown
- increase the disruption that will occur during construction of the line
- increase long-term maintenance costs
- have a significantly shorter life span than a tunnel
- detract from the appearance of the downtown of Fairfax County

The argument has been made that because of the need to ameliorate the growing traffic congestion in Tysons, the construction of the Silver Line should proceed even with the elevated track arrangement as expeditiously as possible. But to determine whether this is the best course, other deficiencies in the rail plan must be examined as well.

The most critical problem in the Phase I plan is the limitation on the Virginia rail lines created by the choke point at the Rosslyn tunnel under the Potomac. The Silver Line will share the same track as the Orange Line beginning at the East Falls Church station. The Orange, Blue and Silver Lines will all run through the rail tunnel that extends from the Rosslyn station to the Foggy Bottom station.

Because of limitations in the capacity of this tunnel, the addition of the Silver Line will require a reduction in the frequency of trains on the Orange Line.

In 2001 the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) undertook a major study of Metro's present and future capacity. This study has been removed from the public domain and because WMATA is exempt from the provisions of the federal Freedom of Information Act, the study cannot now be obtained for review. However, its conclusions have been cited by several sources.

The most critical limitation in the Phase I plan is highlighted by this excerpt from 2005 Washington Post article entitled, *"Choke Point Slows Orange Line Trains"*:

"To accommodate the growing demand on the Orange Line as well as the riders from the proposed extension through Tysons Corner, Metro officials say they will add cars to each train -- to the maximum of eight -- and reroute some Blue Line trains to the Yellow Line. This, they say, will create enough capacity in the tunnel to meet the predicted demands at least through 2025. But that contradicts a 2001 study by Metro that found that traffic in the tunnel -even with those fixes - will exceed its capacity by 2020.

Moreover, if the Orange Line ridership through the tunnel at morning rush hour grows as quickly as Orange Line ridership in Northern Virginia has over the past five years, the tunnel will be over its capacity long before Metro's predictions."

Additional confirmation of the impending crowding crisis on the Orange Line can be found on page 12 of a WMATA presentation to promote the Metro Matters funding initiative. Even with the addition of 120 cars, WMATA predicts that the Blue and Orange Lines will reach "unmanageable" levels of congestion (120+ people per car, over 50 standees) by the year 2013 and that the Yellow Line (from Alexandria to DC) will continue to be "highly congested" (100-120 people per car, 30-50 standees) during the rush hour periods.

In addition, during the next several years, the Orange Line must absorb the ridership from a potentially massive increase in density in the Tysons area and at the same time absorb the ridership generated by major increases in density recently approved around the stations at Vienna and Dunn Loring and from the addition of tens of thousands of new homes that have already been approved for construction in Loudoun County.

To reduce the congestion that already exists on the Orange Line, according to Richard Stevens, Project Coordinator for the Dulles Rail project, Fairfax County Department of Transportation, some Blue Line trains were diverted to the Yellow Line crossing over the during the summer of 2006. But since the Yellow Line is already "highly congested," the capacity of that Line to absorb additional trains from the Blue Line is constrained. At his presentation to the resolution study committee, Mr. Stevens offered vague assurances that the congestion level on the Virginia lines would not become unmanageable, but he provided no data or written documents to corroborate this claim.

The WMATA Core Capacity study estimated in 2001 that the cost of constructing a new tunnel under the Potomac to alleviate the gridlock in the Rosslyn tunnel at \$6.5 billion.

Given the severe limitation on the ability of the Virginia Metro Lines to absorb additional passengers, the exorbitant cost of adding an additional tunnel and the unlikelihood of obtaining this amount of funding from either federal, state or local sources, the widely advertised reduction in traffic congestion in Tysons Corner as a result of the operation of the Silver Line is unlikely to occur. The bottom line is that in approximately 5 years, the Virginia Metro Lines will hit an insuperable wall.

Indeed, the Commonwealth's Environmental Impact Statement states that the level of congestion at the major intersections in Tysons Corner will remain at "F" after the Silver Line is in operation.

But even with these serious limitations, isn't the Phase I plan better than no plan to provide mass transit to Dulles? Only if we assume no superior third alternative exists. Before we invest \$6 billion in a plan that may not be capable of providing the needed traffic relief in Northern Virginia, we should pause to re-evaluate our options. Several years ago a new, cutting edge mass transit technology referred to as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) was rejected in favor of the rail option to expand transit service to Dulles Airport. In the intervening years the outstanding track record of this novel technology in locations as diverse as Brisbane, Los Angeles and Ottawa justifies a second look.

BRT has many advantages over traditional rail systems. For example, BRT has more than enough capacity to meet passenger demand in almost any US corridor. Many BRT systems exceed 10,000 passengers per hour in the peak direction (PPHPD), including systems in Ottawa, Canada and Brisbane, Australia. A dedicated bus lane in New Jersey carries over 25,000 PPHPD. By contrast, the maximum design capacity of Dulles Rail is only about 8,000 PPHPD.

A second advantage is that, unlike Metrorail, a BRT vehicle is not confined to a single track in each direction. As a result, BRT vehicles can pass each other, enabling express service. The ability to pass each other and skip stations is particularly important in long, linear systems like the Dulles Corridor.

A third advantage is that BRT vehicles can leave their guideway and take passengers directly to their destination. With rail, passengers must get to the rail station and transfer to the rail vehicle, thus adding substantial time to their trip. BRT enables many more "one-seat" rides.

A fourth advantage is cost. For every mile of Metrorail, it is possible to have 8-10 miles or more of very high quality BRT. This means more opportunities for people to choose public transportation and more opportunities for transit-oriented development.

No final funding agreement for the current plan has been approved by the Federal Transit Administration. No contract for the construction of Phase I has been signed by the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority for the construction of rail. Before we invest \$6 billion in a plan that may not be capable of providing the needed traffic relief in Northern Virginia, we should pause to re-evaluate our options.

After further discussion, the Minority Report's resolution "Be it further resolved..." and amendments sought by Rob Bates affirming the MCA's "strong preference for a tunnel rather than the overhead alignment" and for BRT to be completed before construction of the Silver Line began, were defeated. The question was called and the Ad Hoc Committee Resolution passed with 1 abstention (Bill Denk).

ADJOURNMENT

President Brock officially thanked former Transportation Committee Co-Chair Bill Byrnes for his long and dedicated service to the MCA and adjourned the meeting at 10:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Desmond B. O'Rourke
Recording Secretary