

**BEFORE THE FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 8, 2017
TESTIMONY OF SOL GLASNER, PRESIDENT OF THE TYSONS
PARTNERSHIP**

My name is Sol Glasner. I am pleased to appear before you tonight on behalf of the Tysons Partnership, which I have the honor of serving as interim president and executive director pending the arrival in late March of our just hired permanent president and executive director. I am accompanied tonight by David Gelfond, a co-chair of the Partnership's Land Use Council.

The Tysons Partnership is a stakeholder association dedicated to doing all that we can to help make Tysons the next great American City. Our members include landowners, developers, employers, hoteliers, retailers, professional service providers, residential associations and just about any organizational entity with a significant presence in Tysons. We do our work in partnership with the County, which also has a seat on our board.

We provided a detailed written submission to the Commission earlier this week. I intend in the next few minutes to summarize our key points.

Let me begin by saying that the Partnership is in agreement with most of the tactical edits and updates that appear in the Draft Text, and we commend staff for its collective effort and diligence. In our written submission, we identified proposed edits which we believe lock us in to approaches and restrictions that may have unintended negative consequences or otherwise be impractical or of limited usefulness in light of evolving development realities.

To guide development most effectively, the Tysons Comprehensive Plan would ideally anticipate and accommodate the kinds of real world changes that are inherent in an evolving urbanscape. And for the most part we think it succeeds in this regard. The changes occurring now in Tysons reflect forces catalyzed and set into motion by the Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2010 together with the arrival of Metro in 2014. The result is a Tysons that is alive, dynamic and exciting. Proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan that limit flexibility will make it more challenging to achieve the vision of Tysons that we all share.

Tonight, I would like to highlight three of the ten issues we noted in our earlier written submission. These three issues best exemplify the need for flexibility in executing on a Plan and the potential consequences when flexibility is lacking.

1. **FIRST,**

The Tysons Partnership believes that the use of athletic fields and active recreational facilities should be continuously monitored so that changing demographics and other factors can be taken into account in determining real needs. Tysons today lacks the population to support a kids' sports league. And, it's not at all clear how many years it will be before our Tysons population reaches a point of size and composition that warrant formation of a

league. In the meantime, interested residents are able and do participate in the surrounding leagues. It therefore makes good sense for developers in Tysons to support improvements in the playing fields outside Tysons boundaries. The proposed new language allows for the accommodation of needs generated by Tysons residents in that regard through improvement in fields outside of Tysons. We strongly support the proposed language and applaud staff for recognizing the intersection of land use policy with demographic reality.

2. SECOND,

Concern about the potential for very tall buildings to be constructed well outside the Tier 1 height areas is apparently motivating staff's recommended retention of Plan language that we believe will yield an overly restrictive outcome. We appreciate staff's concern as regards building heights—and agree that an unconstrained outcome is not desirable. We are, however, concerned that the proposed treatment of building height errs too much on the side of restriction and, in doing so, does not account for the realities of current development in Tysons. The proposed edits would stymie the pace and scope of development within Tysons which serves neither the areas outside or inside Tysons boundaries. Here too we advocate the use of more flexible language that allows for adjustment based on evolving demographic and other practical realities.

3. THIRD and FINALLY,

Language is proposed that, if adopted, would revise the design criteria for above-ground parking podiums. Though we agree that some amount of architectural screening and shielding for parking podiums is necessary and desirable, the proposed language would require massive mechanical installations to overcome the increased impediment to the venting of vehicle exhaust emissions. There are other architectural and construction techniques that would accomplish the practical and esthetic goals sought by the County while avoiding the high cost and rigidity that would be imposed by the proposed language. Language that expresses the County's objectives rather than a one-size-fits-all solution would be a more productive and effective way to achieve the outcomes sought.

We appreciate that editorial updates to our Comprehensive Plan are important, but also strongly believe that flexibility and continuous engagement are the way to best respond to changes occurring in Tysons. The County and our Tysons Partnership share an interest in ensuring that Tysons is in the best possible position to attract scarce investment dollars and also to benefit from the most innovative planning and development trends that are out there in the marketplace. Let's continue to work together to address evolving demographic and market conditions. Together we will succeed in building America's next great city.

On behalf of the Tysons Partnership, thank you again for this opportunity to appear before the Planning Commission. We look forward to continued focus and discussion on these important topics.