

28 September 2012

To the following County leaders:

- The Honorable **Sharon Bulova**, Chair, **Jeff McKay**, Chair, Transportation Committee, **Catherine Hudgins**, **John Foust**, and **Linda Smythe**, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors,
- The Honorable Peter Murphy, Chair, **Walter Alcorn**, Vice Chairman and Chair, Tysons Corner Committee, and **Frank de la Fe**, Hunter Mill representative, Fairfax County Planning Commission,
- **Tom Biesiadny**, Director, **Eric Teitelman**, **Dan Rathbone**, **Leonard Wolfenstein**, **Jeffrey Hermann**, and **Seyed Nabavi**, Fairfax County Department of Transportation,
- **William Mayland**, Staff Coordinator, Fairfax Department of Planning and Zoning
- **Bill Bouie**, Chairman of the Board and Hunter Mill representative, **John Dargle, Jr.**, Director, and **Cindy Walsh**, Director, Resource Management Division, Fairfax County Park Authority
- **Charles Wu**, Deputy Director, Fairfax County Office of Community Revitalization

**Re: FCDOT Proposals and Old Courthouse Spring Branch Stream Valley EQC/RPA**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The undersigned represent neighborhood associations and homeowners living in and adjacent to the “West Side” District of Tysons Corner -- collectively, approximately 2,000 property owners (see attached map), as well as several of our local elected representatives, acting in an unofficial capacity. We strongly oppose certain planned or potential West Side development activities, particularly “Ramp Option 3” described below, that would impose serious, irreversible negative environmental impacts and conflict with the agreed-upon vision for the future of Tysons Corner, as reflected in the recently approved Comprehensive Plan.

**FCDOT's Proposals for Road Development in the West Side District Pose Many Concerns**

As outlined in its draft proposals and in recent public meetings, the Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) believes two and possibly three new ramps between Route 7 and the Dulles Airport Access Road (DAAR) will be needed to accommodate anticipated increases in traffic as Tysons undergoes redevelopment. While, by its own admission, FCDOT is not at this stage taking into account the environmental impacts of its proposals, we believe one of its proposals – Ramp Option 3 – poses such profound and unacceptable environmental and quality of life impacts that it must be eliminated from consideration now, rather than continuing to be treated as one of FCDOT’s “preferred” options, pending future study of these (and perhaps other) serious concerns. Considering the complex nature of Ramp Option 3, which contains several elements, our specific concerns arise from the provisions that would connect the planned Boone Blvd. extension to the DAAR through or adjacent to the Old Courthouse Spring Branch Stream Valley Park:

1. While the need for an improved street grid in Tysons is clear, the need for **three** ramps to/from the DAAR is not. This point was made previously by our representative, Planning Commissioner Frank de la Fe, in providing his support to FCDOT’s tentative plans.
2. By cutting directly through the Old Courthouse Spring Branch Stream Valley Park, proposed Ramp Option 3 appears to violate at least two of the eight Guiding Planning Principles of the Comprehensive Plan: "2. Retain compatible transitions at the edges to adjacent neighborhoods...";

and “8. Respect the unique natural features and topography of Tysons in all plans, expand useable and publicly accessible open space and improve the existing natural environment.” Furthermore, specific language in the “West Side District,” “Resource Management” and “Parks and Recreation” sections, among others, directly requires the County to provide “protection, enhancement, and management of natural resources in existing stream valley parks in Tysons [as] critical to the long term viability,” and delineates Old Courthouse Spring Branch Stream Valley Park for that protection. The Comprehensive Plan is very specific: “Stream valley park expansions should not include large hardscape areas (other than trails) and resources management should drive park design.” Thus, a road or highway ramp would be prohibited by explicit provisions of the Comprehensive Plan.

3. Ramp Option 3 (and perhaps others) also would not only neglect other important Comprehensive Plan goals, notably pedestrian and bicycle access from the surrounding neighborhoods to Metro stations and other Tysons Corner destinations, but make their attainment difficult or impossible.
4. Ramp Option 3 would violate the spirit and the letter of the deeds conveying ownership of the parcels comprising the Stream Valley Park to the County. There are seven separate deeds, all of which refer to the land’s environmental value with Covenants about preserving and protecting it in its natural condition. Accordingly, FCDOT would impose substantial legal risk (and associated costs) on the County should it decide to proceed with Ramp Option 3.
5. Ramp Option 3 would involve substantial excavation in and paving of major portions of the Stream Valley Park, a resource containing the last stands of undisturbed mature trees and stream valley in Tysons Corner, and an area recognized as an Environmental Quality Corridor (EQC) by the County and as a designated Resource Protection Area (RPA) by the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Park also is adjacent to the historic Ash Grove Site. Substantial portions of the Park are in a 100-year flood plain and are also wetlands recorded in the National Wetlands Inventory. Road development in, through, or adjacent to any such areas (much less one having all of these characteristics) is legally permissible only under very limited circumstances, which assuredly do not exist in this case. Such development also is generally very costly.
6. Lastly, the Old Courthouse Spring Branch subwatershed is the most densely developed portion of the Difficult Run Watershed. This area needs critical improvements, not more impervious surfaces going through it.

### **FCDOT Actions to Date Exacerbate, Rather than Resolve, Many of these Concerns**

By steadfastly adhering to an approach to alleviating traffic congestion that focuses only on the ease with which land or easements might be acquired, FCDOT has predictably come up with a proposed ramp option that would obliterate an important County-owned natural resource. While the concerns we are raising here are not new – indeed, they go back to the mid-1970s and were explicitly presented to the Tysons Committee in April 2010 – we believe strongly that now is the time for the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors to step in and add a dose of reality to this process by explicitly taking into account the devastating environmental, public access, and cost impacts that Ramp Option 3 would impose, and causing FCDOT to drop this option, as currently defined, from its planning process.

### **We Request and Recommend Several Short-Term Actions and Ongoing Dialog**

In view of these facts and circumstances, we respectfully request the following:

1. Immediately and explicitly remove from further consideration Ramp Option 3 altogether, or relevant portions thereof, and any other road-related “improvements” that might adversely affect the biological health of the Old Courthouse Spring Branch Stream Valley Park or the ability of our Citizens to make use of its amenities.
2. Publicly commit to investing the resources necessary to improve the Park as described in the Comprehensive Plan and other County planning documents (e.g., restored stream bed, upgraded/new walking trails, bike paths) and to provide pedestrian/bike access from the surrounding neighborhoods to the new Spring Hill Metro station (formerly Tysons West) and beyond.
3. Provide to the public the underlying data and analyses that FCDOT is using to evaluate road development options, as well as the criteria and weightings being used to select among them.
4. Commit to an ongoing and open dialog with representatives of the communities surrounding the West Side to ensure that our concerns are heard and understood and that the County has the benefit of informed and constructive ideas and suggestions from those to be most affected by any new road construction in the area.

For additional background information, please refer to our website – [www.SaveTysonsLastForest.org](http://www.SaveTysonsLastForest.org).

We would appreciate and expect a prompt written reply to each of the concerns and requests presented above. Your reply may be sent to Pamela Kondé at [pkonde@cox.net](mailto:pkonde@cox.net) or Peter Soyka at [PSLSoyka@verizon.net](mailto:PSLSoyka@verizon.net). If you do not anticipate being able to reply on or before October 12, 2012, please let us know as soon as possible.

Respectfully,

**Pamela Kondé**, President  
Greater Tysons Green Civic Association

**John Shreffler**, President  
Westbriar Civic Association

**Linda White**, President  
The Manors at Wolftrap HOA

**Ronald H. Ouellet**, President  
Westwood Village Unit Owners  
Association

**Dean Manson**, President  
Ashgrove Estates HOA

**Earl Dunn**, Vice President and  
Registered Agent  
Tysons Court Association, Inc.

**Claudia Diamond**, President  
Westwood Village HOA

**Greg Fritz**, President  
Tysons Townes HOA

**Dan McLean**, President  
Bluffs of Wolftrap HOA

**Scott Dondershine**, President  
Fairfax County Spring Lake Association

**Paul Overberg**, President  
Carrington Community  
Association

**Daniel L. Benson**, President  
TheTrails at Wolftrap HOA

**Michael Crehan**, President  
Wolf Trap Woods/Wolf Den Community  
Association

**Alex Saad**, on behalf of  
Wolftrap Downs HOA

**Deepak Dutt**,  
Montmorency Drive,  
Vienna, VA

Town of Vienna residents:

**Jane Seeman**,  
Vienna, VA

**Laurie Genevro Cole**,  
Vienna VA

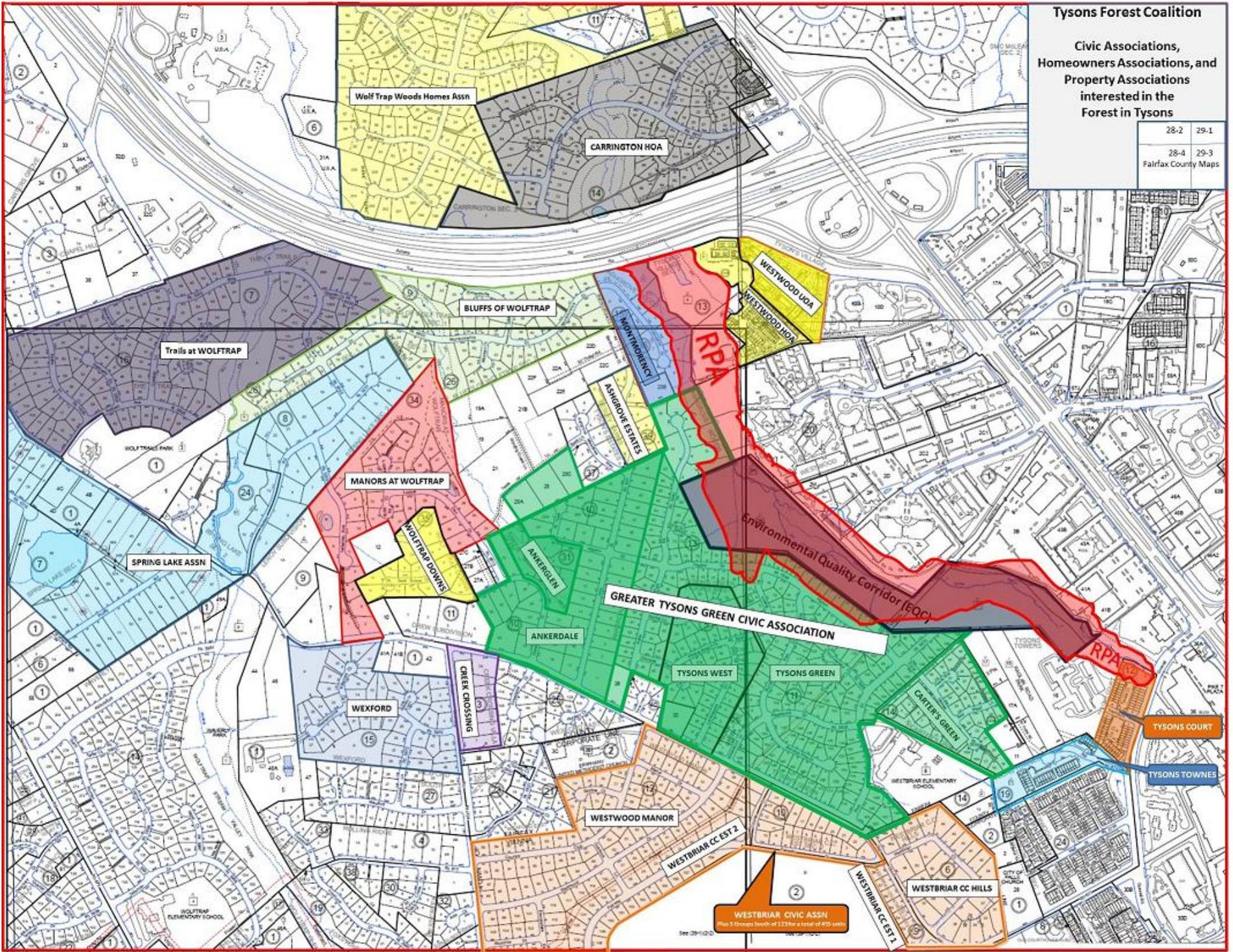
**Laurie DiRocco**  
Vienna, VA

Attachment (1)

**Tyson's Forest Coalition**

**Civic Associations,  
Homeowners Associations, and  
Property Associations  
interested in the  
Forest in Tyson's**

28-2	29-1
28-4	29-3
Fairfax County Maps	



**WESTBRIAR CIVIC ASSN**  
Plus 3 Groups South of I23 for a total of 415 units  
See 28-1/2/3