CREATING A PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY TYSONS CORNER

By

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Tysons Corner, Virginia is an autocentric edge city located just outside of Washington, D.C. It lies on the highest elevation and some of the most prime real estate in Northern Virginia. Since the 1950s, it has become a small mecca for many large, successful businesses to locate, however, it also grew and expanded with no planning put into the community’s future vision. The land in Tysons Corner is largely paved over by an overly abundant number of parking lots and wide streets. The car is king in Tysons Corner because that is how almost every single one of the area’s employees gets to work each day.

The question to be addressed by the research is what types of development and amenities are necessary to make Tysons Corner a successful pedestrian friendly community. With construction beginning on a new metro line running through Tysons Corner, meant to connect Dulles Airport with downtown Washington, D.C., government officials agreed that redevelopment is necessary. The purpose in the redevelopment is to reduce the number of commuters in Tysons Corner that rely on personal vehicles. The goal is to make it a pedestrian friendly environment, which will include many residential areas, restaurants, shops, and jobs all within a short walk of public transit.
This thesis is a descriptive study that reviews concepts for creating walkable communities and analyzes successes and shortcomings of redevelopment projects in other cities in order to see what can be done to most effectively benefit Tysons Corner.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Tysons Corner, or simply Tysons as it is commonly known, in comparison to nearby Washington, D.C., is a relatively new conglomeration of buildings that cannot quite call itself a city. It is not a municipality of its own, nor does it have its own governing body. It covers 1,700 acres of land straddling the towns of McLean and Vienna in Fairfax County. It sits atop the highest natural point in Northern Virginia at 486 ft. and has become a monstrous corporate center primarily due to its proximity to the nation’s capital at the crossroads of Route 123 and Route 7 (Senese, 2004). Tysons Corner is considered an edge city, a term coined by Joel Garreau, who is an author and editor for the Washington Post. Tysons Corner began growing in the 1950s and has gradually expanded in size and functionality. Beginning primarily as a haven for government contractors in search of cheaper land outside Washington, D.C., it attracted shops, malls, and large private companies, particularly during the internet boom when many companies located there. Currently in Tysons Corner there are two large regional malls, many auto dealerships, “big box” retail, strip malls, and huge corporate campuses. Although Tysons Corner began its development around the intersection of Routes 123 and 7, it has since become an enormous interchange that also includes the Capital Beltway and Interstate 66. This has provided easy access for cars to the area, which has also caused many of Tysons’ issues.

All this rapid development over a few decades came at a cost. There was little to no planning that went into the structure and vision of Tysons Corner. Without being a municipality of its own, Fairfax County was left to oversee its growth process. Tysons became an autocentric community with buildings that are surrounded by endless seas
of parking lots and an abundance of wide boulevards. With the major interchanges in Tysons, congestion has become problematic at many times throughout the day, not just morning and evening commutes. There are more parking spaces in Tysons Corner than are necessary. If every employee and shopper drove their own car, there would still be excess parking. In previous decades, the car was the dominant form of transportation and it was important to make sure that people could have a place to park their car at their destination. The other thing that adds to Tysons’ car problems and congestion is that roughly 120,000 people work there each day while only 17,000 of those live in Tysons. This means that over 100,000 people are coming into Tysons on a daily basis to work, thus creating traffic, especially during peak commuting hours. These numbers do not account for the shoppers that come from around the mid-Atlantic region daily to take advantage of its two large shopping malls and the abundance of retail options.

Since the development of Tysons Corner revolves around the automobile, it completely lacks means that allow pedestrians to get around. Sidewalks are almost nonexistent and people must get in their cars just to cross the street. As populations grow and gas prices rise, driving personal vehicles becomes increasingly difficult due to congestion and cost. The research question to be addressed in this thesis is what types of development and amenities are necessary to help remove people from their cars allowing more focus to be placed on the pedestrian.

The advent of the Silver Line will help ease traffic by providing metro service connecting downtown Washington, D.C. to Dulles Airport. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) uses a color scheme to designate the different lines of the metro system and silver was the color selected for the newest of the lines that is
being built. As it passes through Tysons Corner, the Silver Line will provide four stations to serve different areas of Tysons. Fairfax County officials have decided that the implementation of the metro line will be a great opportunity to redevelop Tysons Corner into a denser, pedestrian friendly community. To do so, elements of smart growth, transit-oriented development and mixed-use will be utilized to encourage people to use their vehicles less and rely more on their feet and public transportation.

This paper looks into the history of Tysons Corner and why redevelopment is necessary, including the problems with Tysons Corner that need to be addressed. Concepts such as edge city, smart growth, transit-oriented development and mixed-use development are examined to better understand Tysons and how to deal with its issues. Three case studies of cities across the country that have undergone redevelopment and transportation projects are analyzed to look for elements that could benefit Tysons. If the projects were failures, why did they fail and how can those mistakes be avoided. The three cities that will be analyzed are Portland, Oregon; Los Angeles, California; and Arlington, Virginia. Each was chosen with a specific purpose that relates to Tysons Corner. Also, three interviews were conducted to gauge opinions and suggestions for Tysons. The interviews consist of a former local and city GIS supervisor, a district supervisor of Fairfax County, and an employee within Tysons that commutes to work everyday. Lastly, there is a discussion and conclusion section, including recommendations on how Tysons Corner should go about its redevelopment, to make it pedestrian friendly.
Figure 1-1. Location of Tysons Corner in the United States. [http://pics2.city-data.com/city/maps/fr2075.png](http://pics2.city-data.com/city/maps/fr2075.png)

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CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this literature review is to cover themes and concepts that are directly related to the redevelopment that will occur at Tysons Corner. The research question that is being addressed is what type of development, structure and amenities are necessary to help transform Tysons Corner into a pedestrian friendly community. The terms that are described in detail in the following paragraphs are helpful to identify solutions to the research question. The topics that are covered include edge city, smart growth, transit-oriented development and mixed-use development. A few of these topics overlap. Edge city is a term used to describe the type of settlement that Tysons Corner is and to better understand its context. Smart growth, transit-oriented development and mixed-use all incorporate elements of one another but are all useful concepts that have been utilized to place more focus on pedestrians.

**Edge City**

Joel Garreau coined the term “edge city” in his book by the same name in 1991. The term refers to suburban districts that grow outside the periphery of core or traditional urban areas, generally around major highway intersections. In other words, “every single American city that is growing, is growing in the fashion of Los Angeles, with multiple urban cores,” (Garreau, 1991, p.3). Edge cities define sprawl. Edge cities are often synonymous with office parks and corporate campuses, which have wide parking lots surrounding the individual buildings. There are few modes of transportation aside from the automobile, and the concept of a walkable community is unheard of. “The hallmarks of these new urban centers are not the sidewalks of New York of song and fable, for usually there are few sidewalks,” (Garreau, 1991, p.3).
Keeping in mind that Edge City was written in 1991, many, if not most, of these edge cities have grown further in size. A true edge city as defined by Garreau contains all of the following criteria:

- Five million square feet or more of leasable office space.
- Six hundred thousand square feet or more of retail space.
- A population that increases at 9 A.M. on workdays – marking the location as primarily a work center, not a residential suburb.
- A local perception as a single end destination for mixed-use – jobs, shopping, and entertainment.
- A history in which, thirty years ago, the site was by no means urban; it was overwhelmingly residential or rural in character (Garreau, 1991, p.7).

Tysons Corner fits easily into these parameters as it contains roughly 45 million square feet of residential, commercial, retail and office space. The breakdown of spaces is as follows:

- 25.6 million square feet of office space
- 4.1 million square feet of retail space
- 2.5 million square feet of hotel space

The remaining 12 million square feet is comprised of other commercial space and residential units (Fairfax County Economic Development Authority, 2004). Additionally, Tysons’ population expands enormously during weekday mornings and declines in the evening as 100,000 people are commuting in each day.

Tysons Corner is not its own municipality and has weakly defined boundaries because it is located partially in McLean and partially in Vienna, Virginia. However, this is the case with most edge cities as Garreau describes. “The reasons these places are tricky to define is that they rarely have a mayor or a city council, and just about never
match boundaries on a map… The reason there are no “Welcome to” signs at Edge City is that it is a judgement call where it begins and ends,” (Garreau, 1991, p.6).

In Garreau’s Edge City, he discusses metropolitan areas throughout the U.S. that have several of these edge cities in association with the core city. Some metropolitan areas that Garreau covers in his text include: Atlanta, GA; Baltimore, MD; Boston, MA; Dallas, TX; Detroit, MI; Houston, TX; Los Angeles, CA; Phoenix, AZ, San Francisco, CA; and Washington, DC. The previously mentioned cities are the biggest ones in terms

Figure 2-1. It can be seen how distinctive edge cities appear in large metropolitan areas. There is often continuous development of residential, commercial, and retail between the urban core and an edge city but they are typically low rise. It is easily distinguishable where the edge cities are located due to the abrupt rise in average building height. This particular picture is in the Atlanta area and shows a view from the edge city of Buckhead looking south toward midtown and downtown Atlanta.
of the number of edge cities, some with upwards of ten. Among these metropolitan areas there are still edge cities forming as the suburban areas continue to spread further and further from the traditional downtown and core (Garreau, 1991, p.425-439).

Phoenix became the first major American municipality to formally recognize that it is made up of edge cities, for planning purposes. Many of these edge cities were already full grown such as Uptown, the Camelback Corridor and Scottsdale by 1991 (Garreau, 1991, p.434). However, today several others in Phoenix have grown to prominent status, as well, such as Tempe, Mesa, and Chandler.

Edge cities feature amenities that serve large suburban populations. Shopping malls, entertainment centers, hospitals, and regional airports often define their landscape. They are very attractive areas for corporate headquarters, which typically like to develop in appealing suburban campuses. Edge cities have convenient access due to the abundance of roads connecting it to other areas and are often free of many problems that are normally associated with inner-city areas (Hutchison, 2001).

According to Witold Rybczynski, “cars are bad, density is good- put them at odds with the general American public, which believes the exact opposite,” (Rybczynski, 1991). This is a testament to how the typical suburban dweller thinks. Cars are convenient and necessary to get from point A to point B. For a long time edge cities continued functioning with little regard for the pedestrian. Planners for these areas were long under the impression that attention to edge cities was unnecessary since the traditional downtown functioned as the main center (Rybczynski, 1991).

Many of these edge cities, like Tysons Corner, grew with little or no planning. They start at the crossroads of major highway intersections generally within 10 to 20 miles of
the traditional downtowns. These major intersections provide good access so office buildings, malls, car dealerships, etc. begin being built, which allows cars from all over to flock to these regions (Garreau, 1991, p.349). Meanwhile, while development was occurring, there was no attention given to pedestrians. Many of these edge cities need to undergo drastic makeovers due to lack of planning and reliance on automobiles.

There are roughly 200 edge cities scattered throughout major metropolitan areas in the United States (Garreau, 1991, p.4). They are the areas outside the urban cores that are characterized by clusters of “dense” suburban development. Due to their suburban settings, parking lots and cars cover the landscape. They are generally not pedestrian friendly, particularly Tysons Corner. They do not function as bedroom communities. The population rises and falls with each day’s commute as people return to other suburban neighborhoods where they reside. Additionally, edge cities have all the necessities that one needs, including shopping, entertainment, jobs and more. Almost everyone in edge cities drives personal vehicles and with so many activities in one area, congestion is often a problem that plagues them. Edge cities, like Tysons Corner, are popular destinations but come with their flaws like congestion and lacking alternative modes of transportation.

**Smart Growth**

Smart growth is a relatively new term, emerging in the 1990s, that has arisen from the realization that attention on development needs to be refocused on the city center rather than continued outward expansion (Porter, 2002, p.5). Communities all over the U.S. are concerned that current development patterns are no longer in the long-term interest of our cities. Douglas Porter, in collaboration with the Urban Land Institute, evaluated smart growth in America. In pre-car living, most people resided in
neighborhoods that provided their daily needs. Essential services respected the limits of walkable distances (Porter, 2002, p.2).

The automobile quickly and drastically changed the traditional city mold. People became enamored by larger home lot sizes located on the fringes of cities. There was a large exodus from city centers as suburban living was viewed as the ultimate American lifestyle (Porter, 2002, p.3). However, as suburban development has continued over the past several decades, concerns surrounding their growth have arisen. Some of these concerns are issues surrounding their growth and change becoming out of control. Many believe the charm that their communities once had is being eroded away. Commercial uses are sprawling too much, too much farm and forestland is being converted for development, the environment is being threatened and taxes are increasing to continue the extension of infrastructure (Porter, 2002, p.4). Between 1978 and 1998, the U.S. population increased by 22% but the total number of vehicle-miles traveled increased by 70%, showing that people are driving farther and farther to destinations (Porter, 2002, p.4). It is for these reasons that the idea of smart growth arose.

Continued outward growth is an unnecessary use of the land when resources can be concentrated on already urbanized areas to enhance its efficiency. The following quote gives a sense of how many communities throughout the United States are beginning to feel towards development. “Though supportive of growth, communities are questioning the economic costs of abandoning infrastructure in the city, only to rebuild it further out,” (www.smartgrowth.org, 2010). Unfortunately, the mass exodus of upper
and middle class residents to the suburbs brought blight, poor services, fewer jobs, and rundown housing into many urban cores (Porter, 2002, p.3).

Smart growth is the antithesis of sprawl and the theory contains many principles that guide future development. The Smart Growth Network has laid out several of these principles and explanations behind them. Many of them are similar in concept to elements of mixed-use development:

- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices. It is important to provide quality housing for people of all income levels.
- Create walkable neighborhoods. They are desirable places to live, work and play.
- Encourage community involvement and collaboration. Great communities can be created if they receive input and ideas from residents of what they want.
- Create distinct and attractive communities that have a strong sense of place. This makes people have a strong desire to be in that particular community, take care of it, and attract further residents and business.
- Preserve open space. A community’s quality of life can be improved by providing open green space and preserving critical environmental areas.
- Provide a variety of transportation choices.
- Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities. This seems to be the strongest principle of smart growth. It brings development back to preexisting city centers rather than creating new ones farther away on greenfields.
- Take advantage of compact building design (www.smartgrowth.org, 2010)

An organization called Smart Growth America says smart growth is based around six goals. The goals are similar to the principles of the Smart Growth Network but are more to the point. The organization states that smart growth should have neighborhood livability, better access and less traffic, should have thriving city centers, shared benefits, lower costs and lower taxes, and keep open space open (Smart Growth America, 2010). To clarify a couple of these points, “shared benefits” means that
housing, jobs, healthcare and education should be provided for all income levels. Often, in suburbs, people of lower incomes cannot afford some of those things. Smart growth communities allow people to spend less on transportation, like a new car and the gas for it, because they can rely more on walking or public transit. Taxes are lower because construction costs are less due to development in existing structures rather than new facilities that would need to be built on open land (Smart Growth America, 2010).

Smart growth, in conceptual form, is a great idea, however, sometimes implementation of these strategies cannot live up to their ideals. A concept may look great on paper but if it is not properly administered then it cannot be successful. Since 1992, Maryland has been looked to as a leader in smart growth strategies when they first passed laws and policies to control growth. The purpose is to conserve valuable natural resources and only develop where preexisting or planned infrastructure is in place (Maryland Department of Planning, 2010). With towns like Greenbelt, the name even implies their growth strategy, and the region is thought to be a leader in the smart growth movement, but lately studies have shown otherwise. Local governments have not been putting their feet down to insist on smart growth strategies. Developers have small incentives to redevelop older urban neighborhoods and instead are turning toward open land rather than remain within the smart growth boundaries (Rein, 2009). Smart growth boundaries are those areas to which existing and planned infrastructure extends so that growth can remain relatively compact (Maryland Department of Planning, 2010). Maryland’s smart growth approach is “to ease traffic jams and air and water pollution and preserve farmland, development would be focused into dense, urban settlements near train and bus stations. The state would stop subsidizing sprawl and instead direct
money for roads, sewer lines, and other investments to urban areas,” (Rein, 2009). Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government called Maryland’s smart growth one of the ten most innovative policies in 1997, when it was implemented (Rein, 2009). However, in the decade since, the smart growth policies have “not made a dent” in impeding sprawl (Rein, 2009). Also, in the decade since the idea was passed, there have been the same number of single-family homes built on open land outside the smart growth boundaries as there were in the decade prior (Rein, 2009). Only 5% of capital spending has been on transportation investments to reduce sprawl. Of the $1.1 billion annual transportation budget for roads and public transit, only 60% went to areas inside the smart growth boundaries (Rein, 2009).

Critics, like those from the Smart Growth Center, say the smart growth laws and policies were too weak (Rein, 2009). The Smart Growth Center, which is a non-partisan center for research and leadership in smart growth at the University of Maryland, has the purpose of bringing diverse resources together to look at issues relating to land use, the environment, public health, transportation, housing and community development (National Center for Smart Growth, 2010). Gerrit Knaap, the smart growth center’s executive director and author of the Maryland study, agrees by saying that the incentives were politically attractive because individuals could choose to ignore them. To be successful, Maryland would need to adopt more regulatory policies, like Washington and Oregon, with strict development boundaries. As it is, developers get a bigger and better payoff by developing identical homes on open land than dense mixed-use development (Rein, 2009). This example was meant to show both sides of the coin
and show that an idea is only as good as its implementation. While the concept has great potential, it may not always live up to the hype.

Smart growth can be a very positive initiative in many communities. However, it can be seen from the example that the strategies need to be more closely enforced to make it successful to curb continued outward expansion onto open land. In order for it to be successful, smart growth policies must restrict development to those areas around where there is existing infrastructure or concrete plans to build infrastructure. Smart growth is a broad concept and there are many ways to implement it. Transit-oriented development is one of these methods and is introduced in the following paragraphs.

**Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)**

Transit-oriented development is the exciting, new, fast growing trend in creating vibrant, liveable communities. Also known as transit-oriented design, or TOD, it is the creation of compact, walkable communities centered around high quality train systems. This makes it possible to live a higher quality life without complete dependence on a car for mobility and survival. (transitorienteddevelopment.org, 2010)

Peter Calthorpe, a renowned urban planner and authority on TOD and new urbanism, says while roads and transportation systems have always provided the fundamental structure for human habitat in cities, it is time to balance our hyperextended highway system and road network with other types of mobility (Calthorpe, 2001, p.58). The notion of TOD is that by clustering jobs, services and housing together around transit stations, that it will provide convenient alternatives to the car. The land uses must be more than clustered, though. There must be interconnected neighborhoods and districts designed for the pedestrians as well as the car (Calthorpe, 2001, p.110).
TOD is associated with mixed-use buildings, that is, structures that have multiple uses in them while being located around public transit stations. A common example would be a building that has retail or a restaurant on the ground floor, which is easily accessible to pedestrians, with office space, apartments and/or condominiums on the higher floors (Oregon Transportation and Growth Management Program, 2010). Mixed-use development is concentrated densely within walking distance, often a half-mile or less, from transit stations. The idea behind TOD is that it is best located nearby and densely around transit stations to boost transit ridership, which minimizes vehicle traffic in a region. It provides a mixture of transportation, shopping and housing choices. It also provides value for both new and existing residents while creating a stronger sense of place, much like historic downtowns prior to the advent of the automobile (reconnectingamerica.org, 2007). Simply put, urban development supports public transit, suburban development does not due to lack of density. For a TOD to be successful there needs to be a focus on narrowing streets rather than widening them. The goal is not to accommodate more cars, but discourage them. Adding sidewalks or widening them is important to accommodate more pedestrians. Having buildings fronted along these sidewalks with small setbacks allows the pedestrians to feel more welcome into the buildings as well as making them more easily accessible. Parking should not be found in endless landscapes of asphalt but, instead, fewer spots should be available and those that are available should be placed along streets, behind buildings, or in garages (Markus, 2010). TOD is successful because of its proximity to public transit and its pedestrian-oriented features, as well.
There are many reasons why TOD is beneficial to an area and how it can help the area. TOD is politically attractive because the public is usually in favor of them. They facilitate in meeting transit ridership targets and the stations for which the TOD is centered around become prominent places where the public gathers. Building a TOD is a huge aid in reducing sprawl and helps with the management of growth (Markus, 2010).

Figure 2-2. An example of a mixed use building with a small setback using retail on the
ground/sidewalk level and apartments above.
http://www.themeiergroup.com/images/mixeduse/big_mixd_ashley_1.jpg

The placement of TOD around transit stations is essential and also a crucial
element of their existence, hence the “transit-oriented” part of the acronym. However, according to Henry Markus who is certified through the American Institute of Certified Planners and intimately familiar with TOD in the Portland, Oregon area, TOD is most effective when placed around light rail or metro stations. The reason for this is once a light rail or metro station is built and operational, the station is unlikely to move and its operation is unlikely to cease. In contrast, a TOD based around a bus station would be
questionable because bus routes are far more likely to change, particular stops could get fewer buses coming through on a daily basis or the bus stops could cease in operation altogether. Light rail and metro are based on a track that has been carefully thought out to hit points of higher populations. The track is expensive to put in place and is very difficult to move without high investment and affecting other areas. Buses, on the other hand, are free to drive about on any street and are not held to a particular consistent route. Light rail and metro typically provide transportation for more people than do buses since a bus can only be so big, whereas a train can have several cars (Markus, 2010).

Figure 2-3. An example of a proposed TOD in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia where they are hoping to create 10 to 20-story buildings around their preexisting light rail station thus enhancing the towns density and walkability. The red indicates the highest density and closest proximity to the light rail station. http://www.skyscraperlife.com/queensland-main-forum/15016-milton-transit-oriented-development-tod.html

The more uses that are located within a TOD, the more options the residents and other pedestrians will have. For example, hypothetically, one can live in a TOD with mixed-use buildings that only include restaurants and apartments so when the residents
need to go buy new clothes they will still need to get in their cars to drive to a mall or other shop to make their purchases. The more uses that a TOD can feasibly incorporate into their community, the more attractive and marketable the area will be for both existing and prospective residents. Walkability is a key function of TOD because once at a destination via public transit, it allows people to still be able to get around and accomplish their goals and tasks without a car. With more uses, it further encourages the community’s walkability creating a more integrated and social atmosphere (Markus, 2010).

A common misconception with TOD is that a lot of people in the U.S. do not like density (Markus, 2010). It is not density people do not like, but the poor designs, traffic impact, and lack of public space typically associated with it (Markus, 2010). It is important in many of these cases for designers and developers to be sensitive and thoughtful when constructing these projects. Creating adequate public space for people to be able to enjoy green space in an urban environment is important so people do not feel trapped amongst blocks of cement and asphalt. Citizen participation is an important way for residents to get their ideas heard and have a voice in their community to influence their future neighborhoods. Not only should citizens come forward to be heard, but the developers should inquire before making hasty decisions (Markus, 2010). This is important for Tysons because people need to know that denser development can be very positive for the community and this can be aided by their participation and input at public meetings so a desirable living environment is achieved.

Sometimes it may be hard for developers to justify building TOD rather than continue outward development due to higher costs and more difficulty in financing the
project. The reason costs are higher for a TOD is that there is more infrastructure associated with denser development. This means that buildings are larger and taller in comparison to typical sprawl development. Additionally, there are more streets in tighter blocks and more pedestrian amenities that need to be accounted for. However, the benefits for developing the TOD far exceed the initial investment. Congestion may still be heavy within the TOD because the automobile cannot be completely eradicated but regional traffic is calmed, pollution becomes lower, and commuting costs such as gasoline expenditures decrease dramatically (Markus, 2010).

Aside from some of the benefits of TOD that have already been mentioned, there are other incentives that apply. Some of these incentives are inherent with a TOD such as not needing to rely on a car as much. Examples of these include the lower cost of construction in relation to the land. Less land is required by developers because parking lots need not be as large (Livable Places, Inc., 2003). Another incentive for developers is that with the density and tall buildings that are a fundamental part of TOD, they get greater economies of scale from their development. This means that, generally, with each additional floor they build, the average cost of each goes down (Livable Places, Inc., 2003).

Other incentives of TOD are put in place by the municipalities in which they lie. For example, the city of Los Angeles, California, grants a 35% affordable housing density bonus by right for developments within 1,500 feet of a major transit stop (Livable Places, Inc., 2003). In Austin, Texas, if developers provide good streetscapes and affordable housing, they are allowed to build taller buildings than the city would
otherwise permit (Hawley, 2009). This is advantageous to TOD because it allows denser development in close proximity to the transit station.

Robert Cervero discusses how TOD can be further enhanced. He names incentives that should be issued to develop in close proximity to the transit stations. Several are similar to those that were named in Los Angeles and Austin but include density bonuses, ease of pedestrian circulation, complementary public improvements and an absence of physical constraints such as large medians and parking lots (Cervero, 1998, p.98). To help reduce cars in TOD, there must be a reduction in mandatory parking supplies. The removal of free parking and making people pay to park is one way to encourage people to use transit and not their personal vehicle (Cervero, 1998, p.98). With the implementation of clustered development with many uses, incentives for development near transit stations and encouraging people to remove themselves from their cars, transit and development go together like “a hand in a glove” (Cervero, 1998, p.99)

The downside of TOD is that when it is located in an area of high traffic congestion, it does not necessarily eliminate the traffic burden. As long as there is freeway capacity available, people will use it (Calthorpe, 2001, p.220). The best thing transit can do is give people a viable alternative to their car. This point is backed up by Cervero who says that islands of TOD in a sea of freeway-oriented suburbs will do little to change people’s way of travel. Meaning that people will still choose to use their car rather than use the transit (Cervero, 1998, p.4). A way to help mitigate this problem is to ensure that TOD and its associated transit is well coordinated across a metropolis (Cervero, 1998, p.4).
Transit-oriented development is beneficial to communities in that it concentrates development around transit stations so people can have an alternative mode of transportation other than their car. By having many land uses within the confined area of a TOD it allows people to accomplish a day’s tasks without the use of their car. TOD is often built around light rail or metro stations because those generally have higher ridership rates than bus stations and therefore serve more people that have jobs within the TOD. Strong incentives such as density bonuses for developers help ensure that development will be highly concentrated around the transit station. Limited parking, that must be paid for, is one way to help cut back on the number of cars that come into a TOD. While TOD is not going to completely reduce traffic, it is designed for people to have an alternative to their car. If a person does not want to deal with traffic congestion, they have another viable option.

Mixed-Use Development

Mixed-use development is a key aspect of TOD. It is the placement of compatible uses within close proximity of each other to create a dense environment in which people can walk to a variety of their daily needs. Mixed-use development can come in both vertical form where restaurants or retail can be found on the ground floor, and apartments in the floors above, or mixed-use can be found in horizontal form where there could be a corner store amongst a neighborhood of townhomes (Oregon Transportation and Growth Management Program, 2010). In larger cities with high populations and density a mixture of vertical and horizontal mixed-uses can be found.

In 1976 the Urban Land Institute defined mixed-use development as having three major attributes. Those attributes are:

- Having three or more significant revenue producing uses
• Significant functional and physical integration of project components
• Development in conformance with a coherent plan (Witherspoon, 1976).

This assessment of mixed-use development came at a time during the 1970s when
mixed-use was becoming integrated into urban contexts as historic preservation was
becoming important to many people (Witherspoon, 1976).

The terms “compatible uses” and “functional and physical integration” can seem
rather vague when discussing mixed-use development. However, they are thought of as
those that mesh well together and can help a resident accomplish what they would
typically do in a day, without the use of an automobile. Some compatible uses that can
be found next to or near each other in a mixed-use development include but are not
limited to: retail, restaurants/bars, offices, apartments/condominiums, and hotels. On the
other hand, incompatible uses would be those that are auto or truck-dependent. Some
of these uses include heavy industry, distribution centers, automobile sales lots, and
drive up or drive through facilities. All of these uses require or are highly reliant upon the
use of a vehicle. Additionally, commercial uses are commonly thought to be
incompatible since many are “big box” structures that require the coming and going of
trucks for delivery of their goods (Oregon Transportation and Growth Management
Program, 2010).

The main idea in mixed-use development is to revert back to the pre-automobile
ways. Prior to the early 20th century, almost all urban areas were “mixed” because
people relied primarily on walking to get to where they were going and other options
were often limited, as is the case in some present day cities, as well (City of Virginia
Beach, 2004). The advent of the automobile encouraged a segregation of uses because
it was cheaper to build in a sprawling fashion as one’s car could take them anywhere.
Towards the end of the 20th century it became evident that segregated land uses are not an ideal use of the land. Ideas such as new urbanism, neo-traditional development, or smart growth, all incorporate elements of mixed-use development (City of Virginia Beach, 2004).

Figure 2-4. An example from New York City of a CVS convenience store alongside shops and eateries with apartments above, allowing pedestrians to easily transition from sidewalk to shop.

Mixed-use development includes other aspects aside from simply putting multiple land uses within a confined area. Mixed-use development encourages pedestrian activity. This can be a big aid in crime prevention, allowing pedestrians to serve as constant witnesses over a neighborhood for more hours of the day, which discourages crime (Oregon Transportation and Growth Management Program, 2010). It is also important to have attractive buildings and designs with minimal setbacks so the building
entrances flow right off the sidewalks to make pedestrians feel welcome (City of Virginia Beach, 2004).

Pedestrian amenities must be accounted for in mixed-use development to encourage people to be out and about. Types of amenities that can be incorporated include outdoor dining areas, public art, benches, fountains, plentiful street lighting for nighttime pedestrians, etc. (City of Virginia Beach, 2004). The availability of wireless internet is also a benefit to people because it allows people to handle business outside of their offices. The inclusion of these types of amenities goes a long way in getting people out of their cars to enjoy the community.

Another way to stimulate the public is by having building facades that are not too long. It is best to keep the sidewalk frontages to a reasonable length. Often it is a good idea to have them be fifty feet or less. This creates modules of change to keep pedestrians interested in the urban atmosphere rather than long, mundane building facades. This can be done by using contrasting building materials, colors or textures. Variations in roofline, building height, and the use of awnings can be helpful to create a contrast. It is also important to use transparent windows so pedestrians can see both in and out, as opposed to opaque or mirrored windows. (City of Virginia Beach, 2004).

Mixed-use development is certainly a buzz phrase this day and age with a larger focus being moved toward the city center from the suburbs. The ability to live, work and play all within one community and being able to comfortably walk to all necessary destinations is a quality to be cherished (Pace, 2010). It cuts back on commuting times and the associated time that is wasted, transportation costs are reduced, and it creates a more social atmosphere in communities.
The Swiss architect Le Corbusier developed the thought of “living, working and playing” all within an urban environment with the creation of the Athen Charter in 1932, to which he heavily contributed (Corbusier, 1973, Rubin 2009). He sought ideals within urban settings that helped change the perception of cities by creating this blueprint to remake postwar industrial cities throughout the world by making them more efficient, rational and hygienic. The Athens Charter essentially became a condensed version of core urban planning ideas and principles. The idea of being able to live, work and play all within a city was also thought of a good method to cope with poverty in the urban core (Corbusier, 1973, Rubin, 2009). This means that one can work, shop and enjoy the outdoors in open space and plazas all within a community.
Mixed-use development can potentially have its disadvantages, as well. In a building containing both retail and apartments, the landlord may be a great retail manager but unsure of how to deal with his apartments’ tenants. Additionally, many developers have shared parking for many uses. If a tenant has a car, they may be sharing their parking spaces with people that are at the nearby movie theater and the idea is that they will be using the space at different times so there will always be floating spaces that are free, but this is not always the case (Pace, 2010). Mixed-use principles date back centuries, if not millenia, and we can continue to use its walkable characteristics in modern development.

In summary, mixed-use development is that which incorporates three or more revenue producing uses. Those uses can be any mixture or combination of restaurants, retail, hotels, apartments, offices, theater, or any other suitable land use that blends well with others. Mixed-use development discourages those uses that are auto or truck dependent, such as “big box” development like Walmart or drive through facilities. Mixed-use can considerably cut back on the number of vehicle trips that are made, which aids in reducing congestion and helps save people time. It is particularly well used in TOD areas where transit brings people to a community so there is little need for a car in order to fulfill one’s daily tasks.

This review of the literature was intended to address the topics that are the most common in this research. Transit-oriented development and mixed-use in particular are both strategies that can greatly benefit Tysons Corner and therefore it became
important to know, in detail, what those concepts entail. Smart growth is a broad term but deals with smarter planning strategies by focusing on density. It involves less focus on personal vehicles and is against the sprawl movement, which is what Tysons Corner is trying to achieve. Edge city is an important term to know because it hits the nail on the head in terms of defining Tysons Corner as a commuting destination with abundant office and retail space. The term edge city gives Tysons Corner context and shows that it is not the only example of its kind but also that its issues need to be tackled. With the knowledge of these terms and concepts, the research can now be more fully understood.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this research includes case studies and interviews. These two methods were selected because they help find what development strategies and amenities should be used in Tysons Corner’s redevelopment. The case studies are a strong method to aid this process because they take examples of other cities in different contexts and analyze how they successfully, or not, implemented new development. The goal in the case study cities was to concentrate development more densely around public transportation hubs to discourage use of personal vehicles. The cities were selected because they are areas of large populations, which is pertinent because Tysons Corner is trying to increase its population. Additionally, and most importantly, the cities have implemented public transit rail systems. This allows them to be compared to one another to gauge their success. Specific reasons for the selection of the particular cities are discussed further on.

The second method used was interviews. By interviewing, it was possible to gauge the opinions and reaction of locals that are familiar with and travel to Tysons Corner on a regular basis. The interviewees have various backgrounds and knowledge of Tysons Corner, which is beneficial to get a wider array of views to see what they think should or should not be done to Tysons Corner during its redevelopment process. Both methods go a long way in identifying key elements that have been successful in previous examples and what people want to see in Tysons Corner.

Case Studies

Case studies are used in most all subjects to help new matters learn from the experiences of the old. According to case study expert Robert Yin, “The case study
method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events,” (Yin, 2009, p.4). Case studies are most commonly used as a research method among the social sciences; in this case, its application is to benefit the redevelopment of a community. Yin highlights five components that are key to a case study research method. They are:

- a study’s question
- its propositions, if any
- its units of analysis
- the logic linking the data to the propositions
- and the criteria for interpreting the findings (Yin, 2009, p.35).

The boundaries for each case must be defined. In other words, in looking at each case study it is important to know why that case was selected and what is to be learned from it. Some studies do not have a legitimate purpose or reason for being selected. An example of this would be a survey where the goal is just to gauge opinions, reactions, etc. For a case study, however, this is not the situation and specific objectives must be clear. Additionally, a case study’s purpose is to develop or test a theory (Yin, 2009, p.35). In this example, the concepts that were discussed previously in the literature review are examined in the contexts of the case studies that are covered to test if these development strategies were successful and if not, why.

After reviewing case studies for a topic, the ideas need to be brought back to the topic at hand. One must go through steps to ensure the findings are properly used. First, one must think through the key issues that were brought up in the cases in both theory and the larger environment. Next, identifying appropriate strategies for the resolution of the topic is necessary. Weighing the pros and cons of some of the options and strategies presented in the case studies is important to show how they can be
applied to the topic. Last is to look into a rationale for the best resolution using the findings from the cases (Landsberger, 1996).

Case studies are not always the most desirable form of research. Reasons for this include the investigator being sloppy in his research and not covering the case study in full. This would present a misrepresentation of the case study since not all the facts would be revealed. Using a case study as a research method allows the investigator to sway the facts the way he/she may want or have the facts be deliberately altered to give a biased view (Yin, 2009, p.14). Another negativity about case studies is that it is difficult to generalize an entire topic from a single case and that from a single or few case studies there can be no grounds for reliability (Soy, 1996). It is for this reason that this research paper covers several case studies in different regions to give a broader perspective on the issues. Case studies are important to Tysons Corner because redevelopment projects for walkable communities are something that has occurred nationwide. Elements from those can be insightfully analyzed to know how to approach Tysons’ issues.

**How Case Studies are Applied to Tysons Corner**

Sprawl is a phenomenon that has occurred since the advent of the automobile and strengthened since. Urban sprawl, which is interchangeable with suburban sprawl, took off post-World War II with the creation of the Interstate Highway System, which allowed people to easily and efficiently go further distances. The Federal Housing Administration and Veterans Administration loan programs provided mortgages for millions of homes, many of which were suburban subdivisions since land was cheaper and housing was more attractive than those in urbanized inner cities (Duany, 2001). Sprawl has become a major issue for many cities throughout the United States and has resulted in
increased pollution, congestion, and commuting times. Some of these cities have chosen to mitigate these issues by enacting ordinances or new development techniques in attempts to contain their growth and curb outward expansion.

In order to better understand some of the methods that can be used in Tysons Corner, case studies have been selected to learn from successes and failures of other communities. The purpose of case studies are to “bring us to an understanding of a complex issue or object and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research,” (Soy, 1996). In other words, case studies are beneficial to facilitate learning and look to other contexts as examples to aid in research and conclusions for the research topic.

To get a better idea of what Tysons Corner is getting itself into, three case studies have been selected. The first case study will be that of Portland, Oregon. This case was selected because Portland stands out nationwide as being one of the leaders in the smart growth movement. With its urban growth boundary and successful public transit systems, it can be looked to for guidance with newer projects such as those that will take place in Tysons Corner.

The second case study will take a look at Los Angeles. The purpose in this study is to show that not all large-scale transit projects, that intended on generating denser development and greater ridership, are successful. Los Angeles struggled with its rail system. It failed to remove people from their cars and make use of the public transportation. The reasons why this occurred and how it can be avoided will be analyzed to circumvent such scenarios in the case of Tysons Corner.
Arlington, Virginia, will be the third case study. Arlington will serve as a very important study because the similarities to Tysons Corner are vast. Tysons Corner will run along the same metro system as Arlington, that serves the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. Arlington became the booming suburb of Washington that it is today with high transit ridership and strong walkability, due to the advent of the metro.

The case studies will provide insight to various strategies that each community came up to help their communities’ problems. It will be important to see what types of amenities were provided to residents and pedestrians as incentives to live in denser development and utilize public transit. Some questions that may be answered from these case studies include:

- Are people in certain areas more or less likely to use public transit and enjoy denser development?
- What aspects of development were or were not considered while undergoing construction?
- Were proper studies done prior to these developments and growth management strategies to see if people would adhere to them?
- What demographics were targeted?
- Are the contexts and spatial environments of each case study similar enough or too different to reasonably compare?
- What can be drawn from each of the case studies to most positively benefit Tysons Corner?

Much can be learned from case studies as they provide qualitative data to aid in the research and analysis of the project or issue at hand. For the reasons given above, the three case studies that were selected should do exactly that. They will provide information that will be useful while looking at Tysons Corner since all of the case studies have completed redevelopment projects and transit systems. They have
undergone the test of time so results in density and effectiveness of transit-oriented development can be examined. It will be a huge help in assisting decisions on what should be incorporated in the redevelopment of Tysons Corner in order to create a successful walkable community with mass transit widely available.

Interviews

In addition to case studies, interviews were conducted to see how different people feel about the looming Tysons Corner redevelopment and the potential that the area has. The interviews spanned from neighbors in McLean, Virginia to a district supervisor of Fairfax County in order to gauge their feelings and recommendations that they may see fit for the future of their community.

Interviewing is a helpful tool in attaining information on particular subjects because it allows the interviewer to guide the discussion and have the questions answered that he/she desires. It focuses in on the important information without needing to read through extensive text to arrive at a useable bit of information. It also allows the interviewer to ask follow up questions if further information is needed that is not provided or requires a more in depth response than the initial question received (Valenzuela and Shrivastava). Interviews are far more personal than reading documents or books produced by an author. They allow the interviewer to read into the true feelings that the respondent has on the topic by reading their reactions and tone, which is not discernable through text. The interviews were conducted based on a convenience sample to demonstrate the opinions of people with various backgrounds.

The first interview conducted was with Mr. John Gilreath, the geographic information systems (GIS) supervisor for the City of Gainesville. He was selected because, having been coworkers, I knew his interest and knowledge of cities,
particularly Tysons Corner. He was informative in his discussion because, as a GIS professional, he is a spatial analyst and is aware of functional and efficient city designs. Not only was his GIS knowledge and spatial awareness helpful but he is also a native of Arlington, Virginia, the site of one of the case studies and neighboring town of Tysons Corner. He lived there for most of his life, allowing him to be familiar with the current layout of Tysons and why it is in desperate need of redevelopment. He knows how much the arrival of the new metro line will benefit this area.

The second interview was with Mr. John Foust, the supervisor for the Dranesville district of Fairfax County, Virginia. He was selected on recommendation from a good friend and neighbor who has sat on community boards with him. Before attaining the position as supervisor he served on various boards and commissions expressing his interest in the community. As supervisor, it is his job to look out for his constituents and community, which borders Tysons Corner. It is a district supervisor’s job to oversee certain projects and community improvements to make sure they are occurring to the liking of his constituents. For example, the supervisor may be in favor of a mass transit system coming to Tysons Corner, but if it is done in a manner in which will cause unsightliness, congestion, and noise pollution to a neighborhood in his jurisdiction, he would likely oppose it if it affects enough people. He also collaborates and makes decisions with the eight other district supervisors of Fairfax County to help it become a desirable place for its residents.

The third interview was with Mr. Philip Howell, a lifelong resident of McLean. Mr. Howell has been a good friend for many years and was selected due to his knowledge of Tysons Corner and current employment there. Living in McLean, within a few miles of
Tysons Corner, has allowed him to see changes that have taken place over the years and witness the large urban conglomeration it has become. He has worked in Tysons Corner for the past three years at an upscale restaurant and can attest to the difficulty that exists to navigate the area. He will also tell you that the only pedestrians that come to eat at the restaurant are those coming from their hotel rooms that sit atop the restaurant, for there is no walking to the restaurant from anywhere else.

This methodology will provide strong support for a better understanding of the topic. They are intended to help answer the research question, what types of development and amenities are necessary to help create a pedestrian friendly Tysons Corner? The findings will combine first-hand knowledge of the area via the interviews with lessons learned from other development projects to create suggestions of what can best fit Tysons Corner.
CHAPTER 4
CASE STUDIES

The following case studies are meant to give examples that Tysons Corner can learn from both in their successes and failures. The four case studies will be evaluated one at a time. Each will begin with a history of the community followed by what triggered the need for mass transit and redevelopment. The development process will then be examined to see what procedures and difficulties needed to be overcome to make it work. Lastly, the results of the redevelopment will be analyzed to see if the community met its goals with the projects and attempt to answer the questions that were outlined in the methodology. By doing so, a firm understanding of the communities should be achieved with thoughts and ideas of how those strategies can be applied to Tysons Corner.

Portland, Oregon

History

The town of Portland first got its name when two men named Asa Lovejoy and Francis Pettygrove grew fond of the vast, mountain ringed, timber-rich environment for which they saw great beauty and potential. When it came time to declare a name for their establishment along the Willamette River, they both had the same idea to name it after their hometowns: Boston, Massachusetts for Lovejoy and Portland, Maine for Pettygrove. They flipped a coin to see what this new settlement should be called and Pettygrove won, thus the origin of the name of Portland, Oregon (National Association of Scientific Materials Managers).

Since its founding, Portland has functioned as a port city, utilizing its deep water along the Willamette River to allow imports and exports all over the Pacific. During the
late nineteenth to early twentieth century Portland saw a large influx of people as a result of the need for labor in the timber industry, train-rail building, and ship workers. It has continued to grow as a cultural center, catering to the arts, and has attracted many due to its geography and mild climate. The 2006 U.S. Census Bureau estimate for the population of Portland proper is well over a half-million. Over two million people live within the Portland region, which covers a four county area including three in Oregon and one in Washington (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

Portland’s Urban Growth Boundary

By the early 1970s Oregon was realizing its growth and wanted to enact a measure that would slow the increasing sprawl and protect and preserve the state’s natural beauty. To do so, the Oregon legislature passed an urban growth boundary law that would apply to all 241 municipalities in the state. The legislature was prompted by Oregon Governor Tom McCall on January 8, 1973, who is said to have given one of the most quoted speeches in Oregon’s political history. He called for the urban growth boundary by saying:

There is a shameless threat to our environment and to the whole quality of life – the unfettered despoiling of the land . . . Sagebrush subdivisions, coastal condomania, and the ravenous rampage of suburbia in the Willamette Valley all threaten to mock Oregon’s status as the environmental model for the nation . . . The interests of Oregon for today and in the future must be protected from grasping wastrels of the land. (Abbott, 2002, p.207)

The purpose was for each municipality to draw a line surrounding their community beyond which urbanization could spread no further, separating urban land from rural land and protecting forests and farms (U.S. Bureau of Census Data on Urbanized Areas, 2007). Urban growth boundaries (UGB) are beneficial for several reasons:

- UGBs act as motivation to develop and redevelop land and buildings in the urban core.
The UGB acts as assurance for businesses and local governments on where to place infrastructure such as water, sewer and electric lines for future use since they know they will be in the urban core and not an ambiguous place in the suburbs.

The UGB functions to create efficiency for how the infrastructure is built. Instead of spending more money to create even more roads and infrastructure in the suburbs to sprawl out, funding can be focused on improving the existing infrastructure in the core (Metro Regional Government, 2010).

Portland’s UGB was first established in 1979. In the decade prior to the UGB, the city was adding new population at a rate of 2,448 people per square mile. In the decade after the UGB was in place the city grew at a rate of 3,744 people per square mile, a 53% increase (U.S. Bureau of Census Data on Urbanized Areas, 2007). The added density helps prevent sprawl. The Metro Council is the body that is responsible for managing Portland’s UGB and the line is reevaluated every five years to make sure the land supply of Portland meets its growth. Since 1979, the UGB has been moved about three dozen times. The UGB was never intended to be static, as that would be unrealistic with a constantly growing population, but the idea was to contain the people. Of the three dozen boundary extensions, the majority have been just 20 acres or less, however, on a handful of occasions the boundary has grown substantially. Of the largest two extensions, the UGB grew by 3,500 acres in 1998 to accommodate 23,000 housing units and 14,000 jobs. In 2002 it grew 18,867 acres to accommodate 38,657 housing units; 2,671 of those acres were to create room for additional jobs. Much of the land in the expansion areas is also used to create town centers and green space (Metro Regional Government, 2010).

**Portland’s Wise Investment**

Outside the UGB’s specific framework, it was also intended to function in mutual support with a strong public transit system. The Land Conservation and Development
Commission (LCDC), a seven-member council that was created with the bill in 1973, adopted a transportation rule that “requires local jurisdictions in the Portland metropolitan area to plan land uses and facilities in such a way as to achieve a 10% reduction in vehicle miles traveled per capita over the next twenty years,” (Abbott, 2002, p.215). If it was not for Portland’s forward thinking in regards to growth and transportation, it could have ended up like many other cities throughout the U.S. that are congested with vehicles. However, Portland made a bold move in the 1980s by opting for light rail linking the three counties in the Portland region to the downtown, realizing it could offer strong development potential, rather than cross-suburban road improvements (Abbott, 2002, p.215).

Figure 4-1. The map shows the Portland metropolitan area and the surrounding urban growth boundary, beyond which development cannot occur. The area outside the boundary is reserved for agriculture, forestry, and other similar uses. The city of Portland lies in the center of the map, with the smaller cities within Portland’s metropolitan area being the ones shown. http://www.esri.com/news/arcnews/summer08articles/summer08 gifs/p39p2-lg.jpg
Portland’s light rail system, known as the Metropolitan Area Express, or MAX, began with its east side line in 1986. A north-south line was not created until 2001. It is unclear why it took so long for this to go through, perhaps simply an antispending sentiment. The light rail in Portland is critical to sustainable planning because it links Portland with the smaller towns surrounding it within its metropolitan area, reducing the need for vehicle commuting as a means of transportation (Abbott, 2002, p.216). MAX is overseen by TriMet, which covers all of the Portland area’s public transit, covering 570 square miles. TriMet has greater ridership than any other metropolitan area in the U.S. of its size. Between the MAX light rail and bus systems, they eliminate 210,400 daily car trips, or 66 million per year and ridership has continued to increase over its 21-year history (TriMet, 2009).

Further Planning

The Metro Council, to continue their efforts at keeping Portland compact, created the Regional Urban Growth Goals and Objectives in 1991. Broadly, their goals were to emphasize compact growth, mixed uses, improved transit, and strengthening of existing centers. They came up with the “Region 2040 Growth Concept” with the idea that they would plan to accommodate up to a million more residents in the four counties of the metropolitan area over a 50-year span beginning in 1994. This, along with an Urban Growth Management Functional Plan adopted in 1996, provided the following plan:

- housing and job targets for each of the area’s 24 cities and incorporated portions that will require higher overall densities
- requirements for minimum development densities for new housing averaging 80% of the zoned maximum
- exclusion of “big box” retailing from industrial zones
- minimum and maximum parking ratios for new development
require that the Metro Council develop specific goals for affordable housing

- a provision for UGB expansion if enough communities demonstrate that the targets will not work (Abbott, 2002, p.217).

Portland is able to pride itself on a level of public participation that seems to far exceed those of other communities because its residents truly have strong feelings about their community. These strong feelings are derived from Portland’s sense of place. It is important for every city to have a sense of place in order to draw people to that location. A sense of place is often related to its geography and how the community fits into its context but it can be brought about by any other number of intangible aspects. A quote from Abbott shows that a place does not need a landmark building to give it character but, instead, can rely on the personality of the town or its distinguishing culture.

Unlike Houston or Seattle, it lacks a single spectacular Astrodome or Space Needle to symbolize the emergence of a regional capital. It has no famous neighborhoods to match the instant imagery of Georgetown or the French Quarter. Instead, its sense of place is based on its everyday environment… The sense of Portland as a very specific place is the product of public action as well as geographical accident. (Abbott, 1983, p.2)

In the 1990s, residents realized that the UGB around Portland was being moved and the city continued to grow. Public discussion brought up the possibility of freezing the UGB indefinitely, showing how Portland residents are different than other communities that cherish their ability to sprawl and develop endless subdivisions. More than 2,500 individuals testified about the UGB with only 45 wanting to get rid of it altogether in favor of an open market on suburban land. The others wanted to limit the amount it can grow or freeze the boundary completely to encourage even further density (Abbott, 2002, p.219).
This is not to say that the urban growth boundary does not come without its negativities. Some of these include effects on drainage and runoff and reduced amount of green space in the urban cores but Portland seems to balance these things well with abundant park space along its riverfront and throughout. Data from the late 1990s indicates that the UGB continues to work well the way it is currently functioning. From 1994 to 1998 new residential development density increased from five units per acre to eight units per acre, which exceeds the Region 2040 goal (Abbott, 2002, p.221).

Portland Review

Although an urban growth boundary has been beneficial for Portland in limiting outward expansion, it is not feasible for Tysons Corner as there is already unending development that spreads throughout the Washington, D.C. region. However, ideas from Portland that are helpful include their investment in the Metropolitan Area Express system. Portland thought money would be better spent on light rail rather than road widening for an ever increasing population. This had proven worthwhile as its ridership continues to increase each year. Similarly, the Washington, D.C. area is expanding a metro line through Tysons, linking suburban towns and edge cities to the urban core. By linking the most populated areas by light rail, it can severely reduce vehicle use and help Tysons Corner become a more pedestrian friendly, sustainable city. Tysons also has similar development goals that Portland is trying to achieve such as creating higher overall density, providing affordable housing (more difficult in denser areas since land is at a premium), and the creation of maximum parking ratios to limit the number of spots. Tysons and Portland, while contextually different, could have much in common if the objectives are properly managed.
Los Angeles, California

History and Context

Los Angeles and southern California, in many people’s minds, are synonymous with urban sprawl. The footprint of the city is enormous and seems only to be contained by the Pacific Ocean to the west and San Gabriel Mountains to the north and east. Los Angeles County is barely over 4,000 square miles, roughly half of which is urbanized (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Since California became a U.S. territory in 1848, people flocked to the Los Angeles area due to its climate. It is now one of the most populous cities in the United States and continues to rapidly grow and expand. Los Angeles has tried public transit and transit-oriented development for several years but it has never caught on and received the welcoming that it has in other cities. The purpose in this case study is to see what Los Angeles has done with development, why their systems are not getting strong ridership numbers, and attempt to learn lessons from the city to avoid mistakes in Tysons Corner.

For many years Los Angeles has realized its traffic congestion problem. Its only been within the past several years that something has been attempted to curb the problem. Throughout the Los Angeles region, hundreds of dense condominium and apartment developments have been constructed near transit stations and billions of dollars have been spent. Everywhere from Pasadena, South Pasadena, downtown L.A. and Long Beach these projects have been ramped up in hopes to remove people from their vehicles. A particularly strong area in this movement has been along the Hollywood, North Hollywood and Mid-Wilshire Boulevard areas where there are large populations that were seen as ideal candidates to utilize public transportation (Bernstein and Vara-Orta, 2007).
Attempts at Smart Growth

Despite the efforts, Los Angeles has not been successful in cutting back on vehicular traffic. In fact, in much of the TOD there has not been a significant reduction in vehicle use and there is even speculation that more vehicles have come to these areas, attracted by new coffee shops and other stores that were geared towards pedestrians. The argument against it is that it simply is not convenient enough for the masses. It either takes too long to get where people want to go or does not go where they want to go at all. The reason for this is that the Metro system in Los Angeles was based off of two assumptions that have since been proven untrue. The assumptions were that traffic was generated by commuting trips and most people work downtown. Neither is fully accurate. (Bernstein and Vara-Orta, 2007).

The other issue is that nowadays people are driving so much, not only for commuting purposes, but also to run errands, take their children to school and other similar activities. What makes matters worse is that much of the TOD that Los Angeles tried to implement are mostly focused on housing. While this is important to have people living near transit centers, it is also vital to create job centers within the TOD in order to make them successful and keep people there. As it stands, in the L.A. area, there are tens of thousands of people living within a quarter mile of transit stations that they only occasionally use because for almost all jobs, shopping, schools, and other day to day activities, they are still using their personal vehicles. (Bernstein and Vara-Orta, 2007).

If anything can come of this, it shows people are becoming increasingly interested in living in more urban environments as many apartment and condominium developments in TOD are filling up with tenants. This, however, does not mean they are discontinuing use of their cars. In fact, since more people are moving into denser
developments and still using their car, it may actually be adding to the congestion. It
seems that Los Angeles would need to completely restructure its city to end its issue.
While this is the same route that Tysons Corner will be taking, L.A. is a much larger
area with millions more people. They will need to provide incentives for their residents to
utilize the public transportation but in order to do that it seems that more companies will
first need to move into the TOD so jobs can be available within the reach of the transit
system. The unfortunate thing is that some companies seem to be doing the opposite of
that. One man moved to a new apartment building in South Pasadena in order to take
advantage of Metro’s gold line to commute to his job downtown. Shortly after doing so
the company relocated outside of town and the person now drives to work each day
(Bernstein and Vara-Orta, 2007).

L.A. Live

L.A. Live is one example of new development that Los Angeles is adding to the
city. It is an extreme example, as it is such a huge project, but is meant to show the
magnitude of mixed-use that Los Angeles is using to benefit its community. L.A. Live is
a large entertainment district in downtown Los Angeles near the Staples Center, a large
venue that is used for professional sports, concerts and other shows. The project is
meant to create an abundance of options for tourists including shops, restaurants, the
Nokia Theater, a Grammy museum, and an ESPN Zone to revitalize the downtown. The
president and chief executive officer of Anschutz Entertainment Group (AEG), the
company responsible for the development, Tim Leiweke, says the focus on
entertainment in the district is to solve the economy in the downtown. He says that keys
to doing so are focusing on long term planning and hosting events to draw tourism
(Powell, 2010).
L.A. Live is a four million square foot megacenter costing billions of dollars to change the image from the homelessness and lawlessness that has plagued downtown Los Angeles for years. It is trying to draw in locals and tourists to create a more active urban center. It also hopes that, upon completion, it will spur additional development to the downtown for further rejuvenation (Powell, 2010). However, the fresh development and bright attractions are not necessarily the correct solution to mitigate the problems of downtown L.A.

The first problem is the residential units that are being placed at the top levels of the 54-story Ritz Carleton hotel. With only 224 luxury condominiums, starting shy of two million dollars, it does not allow much versatility in the income levels that are able to live and inhabit the development (Palmeri, 2008). Another problem is that with its glitzy style and bright lights it does not blend well with the surrounding architecture and neighborhoods. The style that the buildings were given has no architectural taste to give a sense of being in Los Angeles. In other words, people dropped in the development could be in any city in the country and not realize they are in L.A. This shows that the development is lacking a sense of place. A community needs a sense of place in order to make its residents and visitors have pride and a desire to be there, and this, L.A. Live lacks (Hawthorne, 2008).

There is also no strong transportation system feeding L.A. Live that is highly utilized. This leaves people to drive to the destination where congestion continues to be a problem (Bernstein and Vara-Orta, 2007). Adding density and not solving the transportation problem only makes congestion worse, especially when there are attractions that draw numbers of people. Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa
recently visited Washington, D.C. to push for federal support of a 30/10 program. This would provide funding for 12 major transit projects to occur in Los Angeles in the next 10 to 30 years (Dolce, 2010). However, with the lack of success L.A. has had so far with ridership rates on public transit and TOD, it needs to make sure it spends its money in a way that will benefit the city and its residents without being a waste.

Figure 4-2. The L.A. Live development at night. A fancy, but characterless, entertainment district that lacks a sense of place. http://www.businessweek.com/the_thread/hotproperty/archives/LA%20LIVE.JPG

Los Angeles Review

This case study is meant to describe what to avoid in Tysons Corner. Los Angeles built their light rail system based on the two assumptions: that traffic was mostly generated by commuters and most people work downtown. These days, people are running errands and doing other tasks that require the use of their car, aside from solely commuting. Since Tysons Corner is such a major shopping destination, it is important to
realize that not everyone is there to work and will be coming from all different areas. The Los Angeles area also failed to locate jobs in their TOD. Because of this, they became popular places to live but very few of those residents actually use the public transit because they still need to use their cars to get to their jobs and other destinations. Tysons Corner has many companies and jobs but it is important to realize that they need to be in close enough proximity to the metro stations that the metro system is realistic and convenient to use. Additionally, the L.A. Live development may be highly marketable but, architecturally, it does not fit into the area. Tysons Corner needs to note such examples and create interesting development, yet allow it to blend and fit in with surrounding styles.

**Arlington, Virginia**

The case study of Arlington is nearly ideal for this research topic because Arlington is not only in the same metropolitan area as Tysons Corner but the metro line that will run through Tysons is a spur off the existing one that runs through Arlington. The city of Arlington, specifically the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor spanning five metro stations, was able to successfully develop and grow into a walkable community because of the density around the stations. Tysons Corner hopes to emulate many of the characteristics that began benefitting Arlington three decades ago.

Prior to the metro line coming through Arlington, the Pentagon had long been the major employment center within Arlington. The rest of the city was primarily low-lying residences and there was a lack of density, despite its ideal location directly across the Potomac River from downtown Washington, D.C. In the 1970s the Washington metropolitan area began the development of its light rail, or metro, system, which began service to Arlington in 1979. When the recommendation came to put a series of metro
stops in close proximity to each other, critics thought it seemed ridiculous to spend the money. However, the idea was that in the five-stop span of the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor each stop would be within a short (quarter-mile or less) walk from any resident, employee or shopper within that corridor. It has proven successful as it spurred huge amounts of concentrated development and density that is prosperous and still growing.

**Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor**

From east to west the five metro stations along the Orange Line in the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor consist of Rosslyn, Courthouse, Clarendon, Virginia Square, and Ballston. In 2005, the Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning was asked to conduct research of the character and intensity of development along this corridor. It provided data and analyses of the five metro station areas and the land uses and development taking place around each one (Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning, 2005). The station areas take up land ranging from 140 acres to 275 acres. Combined, the five stations of the corridor contain 58.6 million square feet of all development, both existing and that which is currently under construction. Comparatively, Tysons Corner has just shy of 45 million square feet of office, residential, commercial and retail but after redevelopment hopes to expand that to about 115 million square feet. However, the total land difference between the two is 1,000 acres for Arlington versus 1,700 acres for Tysons Corner (Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning, 2005 and Tysons Land Use Task Force, 2008). The following paragraphs will outline the intensities of each of the five metro stops and how the land is being used. The study is analyzed in a bulls-eye pattern, with the metro station being the center of each station area and radii of 1,000 feet (one-fifth of a mile) and 1,600 feet.
(one-third of a mile) are the different segments, in all five cases the highest intensity development is within the 1,000 radius.

Figure 4-4. Here is an image of the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor. It is clear to see the distinction of development and density around the metro stops compared to the surrounding areas. The purpose of the increased development in this “bulls-eye” fashion is to allow more people to live and work around the metro stations so they can achieve higher ridership and less reliance on vehicles. Shown are the Rosslyn and Courthouse stops with downtown Washington, D.C. in the background. http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/arlington.htm

**Rosslyn**

The first metro station area along the corridor going from east to west is that of Rosslyn. Rosslyn has a very urban feel and has the highest intensity of the five stations. It is the headquarters of major cooperations and is home to many other large businesses such as Northrop Grumman, Deloitte, and BAE Systems. The majority of the area within 1,000 feet, or one-fifth of a mile, of the metro station is zoned C-O and is
primarily office and hotel space at an intensity of 3.8 floor-area ratio, or FAR\(^1\). However, if the office and hotel space is also residences, the FAR can go up to 4.8. As of 1996, the district has allowed the FARs to exceed 4.8 FAR restriction if the developer provides certain amenities such as open space, enhanced retail, and/or pedestrian and mass transit circulation systems. If one or more of these amenities are included on the property, a building could be permitted to go up to a FAR of 10.0. As of the study, only two parcels went up to a 10 FAR (Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning, 2005).

Within 1,600 feet, or one-third of a mile, of the metro station the land is substantially medium to high density residential at an intensity of 3.24 FAR. In total, the average FAR for the Rosslyn metro station area is 1.78. The total development includes 18.3 million square feet over 236 acres, giving it the highest proportion of square footage amongst the five station areas along the corridor. The two dominant uses in the area are office space and residential, covering 45\% and 43\% of the land respectively (Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning, 2005).

**Courthouse**

The next metro station along the line is Courthouse. As the name implies, the station area contains the Arlington County government offices. Within 1,600 feet of the metro station the primary use is residential. The intensity varies from medium, which is 32-72 dwelling units per acre (du/ac) to low, which is one to 15 du/ac. As development moves closer to the metro station, however, the intensity increases. Within 1,000 feet of

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\(^1\) The FAR is a number based off the percentage of land that the square footage of a building occupies. For example, if there is a five-story building with 5,000 square feet per floor occupying a 10,000 square foot lot, the FAR would be 2.5 because the total square footage of the building is 2.5 times the size of the lot.
the station the use becomes primarily residences and office space. Here, just like Rosslyn, the buildings are permitted for a 3.8 FAR for office and hotel but if residences are included in the development, they are permitted to go up to 4.8.

Overall, the Courthouse metro station area covers 198 acres and includes 12.5 million square feet of development. It has an overall intensity of a 1.45 FAR with residential use covering 65% of the land. It is interesting to note that of the five metro station areas, Courthouse has the most balanced division of residences ranging from low, low-medium, high-medium, and high intensities. Several of the other station areas contain large amounts of low residential use (Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning, 2005).

Clarendon

The majority of the land within 1,000 feet of the Clarendon metro station is zoned as a special district, called the Clarendon Revitalization District. This area is meant to promote development near the metro station, limit building heights, and create a smooth transition between the station area’s commercial and residential development and the older, surrounding neighborhoods. The area within the 1,000 foot radius of the station is zoned for medium density mixed-use and high intensity office-apartment-hotel buildings, although almost all the buildings do not reach their maximum intensities. Within the 1,600 foot radius of the station the transition continues and consists of more progressively lower density residential areas the further away you get. This area is primarily townhomes and retail development at a low intensity. The Market Common project is taking place and consists of mixed-use retail and residential. The project will have a FAR of 1.8 and has also given significant green space to Arlington County to be used as a park (Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning, 2005).
Due primarily to the amount of lower intensity residential use in the Clarendon area, which covers 66% of the total 171 acres of the station area, the overall FAR is 0.6, making it less than half that of both Rosslyn and Courthouse. The residential usage is mostly between one and ten du/ac (Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning, 2005). However, Clarendon does have a rich nightlife, allowing parts of it to feel more like a twenty-four urban center than that of a quiet suburban neighborhood.

Virginia Square

Next down the line is the Virginia Square metro station. It is characterized by having education and institutional facilities, which include satellite campuses for George Mason University, Virginia Tech, and the University of Virginia. Virginia Square lies linearly, like the Clarendon station, along Wilson Boulevard. Within the 1,600 foot radius north of Wilson, the area is similar to that of Clarendon in that large redevelopment projects are taking place in a mixed-use district. The district which also is the site of some of the educational facilities was planned for high office-apartment-hotel use at an intensity of 3.0 FAR and up to 4.3 if the buildings contain residences. Another area of this district provides the gateway between Clarendon and Virginia Square and is set up for FARs of 4.0 to 5.0. Provisions are made for affordable housing, street level retail and pedestrian amenities. In contrast, the district within the Virginia Square station area south of Wilson Blvd. is low density residential consisting of areas between one to ten du/ac and 11 to 15 du/ac (Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning, 2005).

The Virginia Square area is designed around the purpose of being used by pedestrians and students, which many times are one in the same. Between the affordable housing and pedestrian amenities, it is a good location for students or businessmen to access all their needs within a walking distance. The Virginia Square
metro station area covers 143 acres of land and contains 6.3 million square feet of development. The overall intensity is a FAR of 1.02. Similar to the other metro station areas in the corridor thus far, residential use consumes the majority of development and covers 62% of the Virginia Square area (Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning, 2005).

**Ballston**

The last of the five stops traveling east to west along the corridor is Ballston. Ballston is unique because it functions as a downtown-style area that is lively and has an abundance of uses. It integrates very high intensity residential with employment centers to help create this feel. The bulk of the development is within a “bowtie” shaped area surrounding Fairfax Drive and Glebe Road. Within the bowtie the use is primarily office-apartment-hotel with a FAR of 2.5. Apartments are at a density of 115 du/ac and hotel at 180 du/ac. The Ballston mall is also in this area and has a FAR of 2.63, showing that not all malls are in sprawl development. The area directly adjacent to and surrounding the metro stop was approved for high intensity development in 1978. It consists of residential and office uses ranging from 3.0 to 6.0 FARs (Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning, 2005).

The Ballston metro station area covers the most land of the five stations at 275 acres. It has the second most development space at 16.9 million square feet of which 53% is residential and 39% is office space, as the main uses (Fairfax County Department of Planning and Zoning, 2005). The Ballston area attracts many young professionals due to the abundance of employment, accessibility and amenities the area offers. It is a vibrant community and perhaps the most “city-like” of the five areas.
Arlington in Review

This case study was more in depth because of the similarities that exist between what Arlington was able to create and what Tysons Corner would like to become. The Arlington County government lobbied hard for an underground rail with the goal of concentrating high and mid-density redevelopment around the transit stations that is most dense at the center around the stations and tapers down to the existing neighborhoods. The intention was to create high quality pedestrian friendly environments while protecting and preserving the existing neighborhoods. It created “urban villages”, or little pods, that were outlined as each station area. Each one had its own vision that included residential, retail and desired public improvements. At each station, the focus was put on an area within a quarter mile radius of it because that is what is seen as a feasible walk for most people to utilize the public transit (Arlington County Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development, Planning Division, 2008).

Unlike Tysons Corner, which is already filled with large buildings prior to its redevelopment, Arlington was 89% low density residential. It wanted to create the corridor but maintain its existing neighborhoods. It was the remaining 11% of the county’s land area that was redeveloped into these urban centers (Arlington County Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development, Planning Division, 2008). It has remained successful thirty years after the advent of the metro and is continuing to grow and attract new business and is functioning much the same way that Tysons Corner hopes to after its completion.
CHAPTER 5
TYSONS CORNER

History

To understand how Tysons Corner became what it is today one must take a step back and look at its history and evolution. Prior to the Civil War, the area was known as Peach Grove. It was not until a Maryland native named William Tyson came along, bought up a large tract of land and served as Peach Grove’s postmaster that it became known as Tysons Crossroads and later Tysons Corner (Senese, 2004). During World War II, Tysons Corner was nothing more than a country store at the intersection of Routes 123 and 7, running north-south and east-west respectively. In an interview with a local landowner and longtime resident of the Tysons Corner area, named John Tilghman Hazel, Jr., Garreau discovered this country store was known in 1939 as the Tysons Inn or, more commonly, “the beer joint” (Garreau, 1991, p.349). The area where the edge city of Tysons Corner now sits was consumed by apple orchards and dairy farms. From its relatively high vantage point, one could see the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. ten miles to the east and the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains twenty-five miles to the west (Garreau, 1991, p.350).

In the 1930s Hazel’s father was able to accumulate land that the family used for subsistence farming that amounted to 110 acres in McLean that was “in the next county, Fairfax”. It was seemingly so far away from the bustle of downtown Washington during that time, but perceptions change and Fairfax County is now seen as being close in to Washington. During Hazel’s education and career he became a lawyer and later a developer earning himself a personal fortune of $100 million by the late 1980s for his
land clearing and development over the course of a couple decades, including the land his family once owned (Garreau, 1991, p.351).

![Figure 5-1](http://lh5.ggpht.com/_vN46g4NVjSQ/SrL5NPteWvl/AAAAAAAABH0/d8C0vpo8f_8/tysons.jpg)

Figure 5-1. The image shows the extent of development that once existed in Tysons Corner. This is the "beer joint" located near the intersection of Routes 123 and 7.

What initially got Tysons Corner development off the ground was the advent of defense contractors locating in Fairfax County during the 1950s due to the close proximity to downtown Washington with far lower land rents. In 1952 an electronics-warfare company called Melpar, Inc. built a brand new facility ten miles outside Washington, D.C. It was nicely designed with a brick façade, meant to fit in more with the suburban look than an urban environment. Once this large and successful business established itself in Northern Virginia, other defense contractors started buying land in Tysons Corner and elsewhere to take advantage of being near the nation’s capital but only pay a fraction of the cost for land (Garreau, 1991, p.374). Companies such as MITRE and Braddock-Dunn-McDonald were some of these defense oriented companies
that moved in on the virgin land in and around Tysons Corner. These companies were at the cutting edge of technology and capitalism for their time. The difference between Tysons Corner and Silicon Valley at the time was that the Pentagon served exclusively as these companies’ only customer due to their line of businesses but both areas were highly profitable and successful (Ensmenger, 2009).

With the increasing advent of large businesses coming to Tysons and an influx of employees on a daily basis, commercial/retail business became necessary as a convenience to the employees of the area and also would be highly lucrative for the investor who initiated the business. Ted Lerner, a lifetime resident of the Washington, D.C., area, started Lerner Enterprises in 1952 after his wife lent him $300 to start the company. He purchased real estate in large quantities, growing his business over time. He became responsible for the opening of Tysons Corner Center, the largest enclosed, climate controlled mall in the region and one of the largest in the country, which opened to the public in 1968 (Forbes, 2009). The completion of Tysons Corner Center could not have been timed better as the Capital Beltway was also just being completed, which allowed for even better access to what was quickly becoming Fairfax County, and the region’s, most highly developed and developable land.

Planning for the Capital Beltway was first considered in 1950 and was included in the 1956 Interstate Highway System as part of the Federal Aid Highway Act, which included a total of 41,000 miles of highway throughout the U.S. It is a 63.8 mile loop that forms a circle around Washington, D.C. The first segment opened in 1957 and the last segment was open to vehicular traffic in 1964 (Kozel, 2007). The beltway was part of the National Defense Interstate Highway System so it skirted downtown Washington,
D.C. by more than ten miles around so it would be a safe travel route in the event of a nuclear blast. However, this ten mile distance allowed the Capital Beltway to coincide with a growing Tysons Corner.

Highway engineers saw no significance in the way the new highway would cut across two little farm-to-market roads, Routes 7 and 123, just east of their corners… It didn’t register on them that the resultant triangle would instantly become a place easily driven to from any direction in the region… The only reason the triangle got created the way it did…was that the engineers located their superhighway along the most geometric curve they could lay down to a point five miles distant where the Potomac narrowed. (Garreau, 1991, p.377)

From this point forward, Tysons’ development gathered strength with the advent of further business. In 1988, the Tysons Galleria was developed by Ted Lerner with the purpose of creating a more upscale mall with department stores like Saks Fifth Avenue and Nieman Marcus, located across the street from the Tysons Corner Center. It is now owned by General Growth Properties and has continued to flourish as “the Rodeo Drive of the East Coast”, according to a 2002 issue of National Geographic (Garelik, 2002). Fortune 500 companies have been placing their headquarters in Tysons Corner for the past couple decades. Currently, Capital One, Freddie Mac, Gannett, and SAIC all call Tysons Corner home. Several other Fortune 500 companies and other big technology firms are located on the corridor between Tysons Corner and Dulles Airport, fourteen miles to the west (Fairfax County Economic Development Authority, 2010). With the arrival of Freddie Mac and the Gannett Corporation, they alone added two million square feet of office space to Tysons (Garelik, 2002). To give a further impression of the scale of the buildings and magnitude of the development that has taken place at Tysons Corner one must look at the internet boom of the 1990s. During the ‘90s huge companies like America Online took off nearby to Tysons Corner and were very
successful. The transition from dominantly government contractors in Tysons Corner beginning in the '50s to a movement toward booming technology companies, Fortune 500 businesses, top law firms, and other successful entities has made Tysons Corner what it is today. To support these businesses, commercial and retail activity has taken off as is evidenced by the two enormous malls, the Galleria as the most upscale in the Washington, D.C. region and Tysons Corner Center as one of the largest in the country (Garelik, 2002). Additionally, there are strip malls, auto dealerships and high-end restaurants to support the volume of employees that come to work in Tysons everyday. Paul Ceruzzi, the Curator of the National Air and Space Museum, says that Tysons Corner “is both a literal and figurative crossroads: federal support of scientific research, the shift of government activities to private contractors, local politics of land use, and the postwar movement from central cities to suburbs” (Ceruzzi, 2008). It is these characteristics that have defined Tysons Corner and led it to become a monster suburb of Washington, D.C.

Problems with Tysons Corner

“Think there’s no such thing as too much parking? Take a look at Tysons Corner, where there’s more parking than jobs, more parking than office space, more parking than in downtown Washington,” says Amy Gardner of the Washington Post (Gardner, 2008). Tysons Corner is a 1,700 acre plot of land sitting on the highest natural point in Northern Virginia but has become completely covered by asphalt and concrete, going back to the 1950s when intense development first started. Today, Tysons Corner has only 29% tree canopy coverage and has an impervious surface coverage of 53% (American Forests, 2002). These numbers, however, seem very generous when you look at Tysons Corner’s sea of parking lots.
The reliance on the automobile is far greater in Tysons Corner than it is in other cities. Comparatively, Washington, D.C. has twice as many jobs and less than one-third as many parking spots as Tysons Corner; 167,000 parking spots in Tysons versus 50,000 in downtown Washington (Gardner, 2008). There are over 120,000 people that work in Tysons Corner but just roughly 17,000 that live there, making Tysons the opposite of a bedroom community. This gives an idea of how many people commute to and from Tysons each day (Pollard, 2008).

Due to the number of parking lots and other impervious surface in the area, Tysons is a major contributor to untreated stormwater runoff. Two of the Potomac River’s tributaries, Pimmit Run and Scotts Run, flow through Tysons Corner. Not only is Tysons Corner over 50% covered by impervious surface, but 70% of Tysons lacks stormwater management (Gardner, 2008, Pollard, 2008). This allows the runoff to flow...
untreated into these streams and because of the elevation and lay of that land, those streams flow straight downhill and into the Potomac River.

Figure 5-3. This picture shows a vast parking lot outside the Tysons Galleria Mall. In 2009, Tysons Corner has 167,000 parking spaces covering 40 million square feet. That is more spaces than there are employees in the area.

The main issue with Tysons, however, and the reason it necessitates redevelopment is for its lack of walkability, or ability for a pedestrian to walk to a destination as their primary means of getting from point A to point B. It is difficult for pedestrians to safely cross streets in Tysons Corner. The amount of parking is directly linked with its status as one of the most successful shopping districts in the country (Gardner, 2008). Also with many parking lots and cars comes many streets and wide boulevards to allow cars access to the malls and office buildings. The developers seemed to think that there needed to be enough parking spots for each person to drive their own car everyday and because of this “Tysons today is (in) shambles because its
office buildings are surrounded by parking and clogged arteries,” says Clark Tyler, chairman of the Fairfax County task force preparing for Tysons redevelopment (Gardner, 2008).

Tysons Corner simply has no infrastructure that has allowed for pedestrian travel within the community. Bill Richbourg, a mortgage banker who lives in Maryland but works in Tysons Corner said, “It’s almost impossible to walk here. Nobody could get here any other way,” (Gardner, 2008). Sidewalks are few and far between, public transportation is limited to a couple buses that have low ridership, and pedestrian amenities are almost nonexistent. “In Tysons Corner each building is surrounded by an apron of parking, suburban style hedgerows and wide, car-friendly traffic lanes… Virtually every destination has its own parking area and nearly every trip is taken in a car, even to the lunch spot a block away,” (Gardner, 2008). It is such a popular place to drive to for a few reasons: the first is that there is abundant parking. As mentioned earlier, there are more parking spots than are necessary given the amount of retail, commercial and office space. Secondly, parking is free, meaning there is no incentive for people to not drive. Thirdly, there are extremely limited alternatives for people unwilling to drive to Tysons Corner. It is the only realistic way of getting around for most people (Gardner, 2008).

Aside from pedestrian amenities such as sidewalks, walking streets, and mixed-use buildings that Tysons Corner is lacking, the area also lacks housing for its workforce. With less than one-sixth of its working populations actually living in Tysons Corner, it is yet another reason why so many vehicles exist in the vicinity. There are many high paying jobs within Tysons and the existing housing is limited and expensive.
However, it is also important to consider the blue collar jobs and other employees of Tysons Corner, such as those in the mall foodcourts, and be able to provide affordable housing for them. “(People) are eager to live in urban centers where they can shop and dine as well… Tysons is in transition. It can’t realize the opportunity to create a great place when there’s a giant parking lot wherever you look.” (Gardner, 2008).

**How TOD Will Be Applied: The Silver Line**

“How do you accommodate growth in a way that doesn’t exacerbate the problems created by the way we’ve grown until now?” asks the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova. Tysons Corner acts as the downtown for Fairfax County whose population is approaching 1.2 million and it is crucial that the region not become further congested with traffic (Rein, 2009).

If edge cities define sprawl, Tysons Corner, VA certainly defines the edge city. Tysons currently has roughly 45 million square feet of office, commercial, retail, and
residential space; well within the parameters of an edge city outlined by Garreau (Rein, 2009). However, there are plans to almost triple this amount of space by 2050, which is the intended completion year for this massive redevelopment project. Tysons Corner has an impervious surface area that covers over half of its 1,700 acres. The plans are to lessen the percentage of cars that come into Tysons on a daily basis by increasing residential capacity and providing a successful mass transit system in the form of a new metro line of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (Tysons Land Use Task Force, 2008).

The Silver Line is actually an extension of the current Orange Line, which extends from downtown Washington; through Arlington, VA; and ends west of Washington in Vienna, VA. The new Silver Line will be built as a spur off of the Orange Line, separating at the East Falls Church station. The purpose of the new line is meant to connect downtown Washington with Dulles Airport to the west (Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, 2010).

Tysons Corner lies between the East Falls Church station and Dulles Airport so naturally the new metro line will run through Tysons. The plan for this incoming metro line inspired government officials and developers to finally take the initiative to redevelop Tysons Corner into a more walkable community focused around mass transit. The Silver Line will have four metro stations running through Tysons Corner, around which transit-oriented development will be concentrated.

The Tysons Land Use Task Force is a group of 36 members comprised of people who represent residents, businesses, major employers, and community organizations within Tysons Corner. Their job is to hold meetings, which began in 2006, to receive
input and make recommendations for a collective decision for the new comprehensive plan of Tysons (Tysons Land Use Task Force, 2008). Their main objective, as stated in their vision, is as follows:

The Tysons of tomorrow will be a place people seek out to live, work, and play. By 2050, Tysons will be transformed into a world-class downtown destination known for great shopping, a prestigious office location and residential address featuring a diversity of housing choices, people-oriented streets, a variety of open spaces, arts and civic uses, and convenient transit. It will become the second downtown for the Greater Washington Region, and a model of green redevelopment for other urban centers in Fairfax County. (Tysons Land Use Task Force, 2008)

Figure 5-5. A map of the Washington, D.C. metro system including the new Silver Line. http://urbantysons.files.wordpress.com/2008/12/741px-wmata_silver_line_proposed_map.png
This vision is based around the creation of eight new districts in Tysons Corner. Four of the new districts will be the TOD surrounding each of the metro stops, which are Tysons East, Tysons Central 123, Tysons Central 7, and Tysons West. The other four districts will act as transition zones between the TOD and the surrounding communities (Tysons Land Use Task Force, 2008). The idea is for residents of Tysons to use each of these districts and they will flow seamlessly together. In having the community set up in this fashion and each district having its own character, it will make Tysons a 24-hour urban center, rather than the daily commute that it currently is (Tysons Land Use Task Force, 2008).

Current visions of the four TOD districts have the Tysons West district becoming an arts and entertainment center. It would be complete with vibrant restaurants and bars but still contain a mix of residential, office, hotel and retail use. However, the district would be geared toward a nightlife destination. The vision for Tysons Central 7 indicates that it may become a business center with a “signature” address for those corporate headquarters that would locate there. The district may also hold a public square, which would help it to establish an identity. Tysons Central 123 is in the heart of where the two malls in Tysons Corner are currently located. The district would remain primarily a retail center, drawing people from all over the region but now with even better accessibility. Lastly, the Tysons East district would act as a gateway to Tysons for those coming from downtown Washington. Attention in this district is focused on green space including a park around Scotts Run. There will also be mixed-use residential and office space but not as intensive as in the other districts (Tysons Land Use Task Force, 2008).
Figure 5-6. Here is a map showing the eight districts. The four districts that do not contain the metro stations act as buffers to the outside areas and will be serviced by bus circulator routes to bring people to the metro.

http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/tysonscorner/districts.htm

In creating a denser and more walkable Tysons Corner, many old buildings will be razed and new ones will take their place to help with the overall flow and connectivity of the community. The goal for all new buildings in Tysons is to have them be LEED certified gold (Pollard, 2008). LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. This means that Tysons aims to have an all around greener community with more concentrated density as well as environmentally friendly buildings. In order to obtain the LEED certified gold rating, which is the second highest, the building must score between 39 and 51 points. The point system is based on energy saving, water efficiency, carbon dioxide emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, stewardship of resources and sensitivity of their impacts (U.S. Green Building Council, 2010).
Issues with New Development

Despite the idealisms of having TOD, green building designs, increased density and added transit alternatives, the redevelopment of Tysons Corner also has its issues. The first of these issues is sheer cost. With transportation alone, the expenditures are expected to be at or above $15 billion. These costs include $2.6 billion for the first phase of the Silver Line out to Reston, which includes Tysons Corner. For now that is the only hard figure that is known but billions more will need to be allocated to the addition of sidewalks, creating a grided street system, and new road interchanges (Rein, 2009). The redevelopment of Tysons Corner is heavily relying on the cooperation of private developers to help in the creation of the street grid system since many of the streets will need to bisect their land. Without their help it would cost the government
more money than it can afford. It is the hope that the private developers will spend the extra money to help the community come together and that it will be beneficial and attractive to their buildings once the investment is made (Rein, 2009).

The second, and probably most important, issue concerns the metro as it passes through Tysons Corner. Since the conception of Tysons Corner having a metro line running through it in the early 2000s, the issue was brought up whether the metro line would pass through Tysons underground in a tunnel or above ground on an elevated rail (MacGillis, 2006). To most, it would seem obvious to place the new rail underground in order to preserve the land above it for development. However, of the $2.6 billion that this stretch of the metro line is costing, $900 million of it will be funded by a federal grant if it meets proper cost-efficiency ratings (MacGillis, 2006). The majority of the residents around the Tysons Corner region have expressed their interest in a below ground option for the rail. Government officials such as Virginia Governor Timothy Kaine expressed initial interest in having a tunnel through Tysons Corner. It came to be found, though, that digging a tunnel through Tysons Corner was far more costly than having an elevated rail run through it, up to $800 million more, which did not meet the cost-efficiency rating necessary to qualify for the $900 million in federal funding. Even experimenting with other options, such as a large bore tunnel digger that was pioneered in Spain, only brought the cost down to $200 to $500 million more than an elevated rail (MacGillis, 2006). When two of the project’s top sponsors, Representatives Thomas Davis and Frank Wolf, informed Governor Kaine that the tunnel would mean extra costs and further delays in the rail line’s construction, Kaine changed his mind and became against the tunnel and the continued efforts to make it
work (MacGillis, 2006). In big projects like this, it always seems to come down to politics rather than what is best for the community. Debates about the tunnel had already postponed initial rail construction since 2005 until construction finally began in 2009. Not only would a tunnel option provide clean space above ground for development without the eyesore of an elevated rail but studies have shown that an elevated rail would need to be repaired or updated twice as soon as a tunnel would, roughly 50 years compared to 100, indicating that the tunnel may, in fact, save money in the long run (MacGillis, 2006). Instead, an elevated rail will go through Tysons at an average elevation of 35-feet above ground with the exception of a 2,400 foot tunnel between the stops of Tysons Central 123 and Tysons Central 7. The reason for this tunnel is that there was no other option since the elevation rises sharply enough (up to the highest point in Northern Virginia) between the two stops that an elevated rail was not feasible and a tunnel was the only option. According to the the West Group, the largest landowner in Tysons, they said an elevated track will make it that much more difficult to put in a street grid system and develop close to the streets (MacGillis, 2006).

Another issue with Tysons Corner is the way it is laid out. Some other walkable communities, such as the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor in Arlington, Virginia, are successful because the development is in a linear fashion, allowing the metro to follow that line or have the development follow the rail. In Tysons, there is already abundant development and it is in more of a 1,700 acre square than a line. Therefore, the metro will have difficulty accessing the entirety of Tysons, which makes it unrealistic for everyone to access by foot (Marginal Revolution, 2009). The idea in Tysons Corner’s redevelopment is that 95% of development will be within a half-mile of the metro or 600 feet of
shuttle/circulator routes (Davis, 2009). The four buffer districts that Tysons has visioned are not in ideal proximity to the metro stations for pedestrians but can be accessed using the circulator.

Beginning with a few government contractors, Tysons Corner blossomed into a hugely developed area. Particularly with such easy accessibility by major roadways, cars have come to dominate the landscape. Unfortunately, with so many cars, Tysons Corner has needed to accommodate them by creating vast areas of wide streets and parking lots. Because of this, little focus has been placed on any other form of transportation into and within Tysons. The Silver Line will be the first big step to remedy the car congestion problem. Around each of the Silver Line’s four metro stations in Tysons Corner, pods of transit-oriented development will be placed to form tight, dense and compact residential and business space in close proximity to the stations so as many people as possible can take advantage of metro accessibility. Its goal to almost triple its total square footage to 115 million square feet is ambitious but feasible with the TOD. This development will allow much further ease of movement for pedestrians who currently use their cars to go everywhere in Tysons Corner. With the plans that are laid out, a car will not be necessary. Fewer cars means less congestion and more opportunities for pedestrians to move about.

**Interviews**

Three interviews that were conducted come from three people in different industries with different knowledge of Tysons Corner. While they are all familiar with the area and its layout, they have varying knowledge of the redevelopment that will be taking place and how it can benefit the community. Nonetheless, they each have their own opinions of what they would like to see in a new Tysons Corner. From their views
on the new metro line through the area to what they envision in an ideal pedestrian-friendly community, they each have recommendations that reflect on what other members of the local society would like to see. The following are the responses received from the interviews and the opinions and recommendations that the respondents had about Tysons Corner.

**Mr. John Gilreath**

The first interview that took place with Mr. John Gilreath. He was in agreement that Tysons Corner has potential to better itself and become a more sustainable community and he had an abundance of ideas that he felt would create a more pedestrian friendly Tysons Corner. He began by stating the importance of walkable communities as it allows the opportunity for jobs to move back to the city centers; fuel prices are rising; and that there is a mounting economic, social and environmental awareness that is increasing amongst people. When asked about what he thought are some key elements that are helpful or necessary to make a community pedestrian friendly he listed the following:

- clearly designated crosswalks: The inclusion of hard rules for vehicles so they are required to stop for pedestrians
- centralized amenities such as outdoor cafes, benches, etc
- offerings of goods and services
- minimal setbacks
- wide sidewalks
- strategic stormwater so pedestrians are not concerned with walking through puddles or other hazards that may be presented

Next he was asked about parking availability and how it should be organized in a pedestrian friendly community, specifically Tysons Corner. Should there be little to no
parking so people are forced to use transit? Should there only be street and underground parking? He responded by saying that it is important to diversify the customer base and therefore parking still needs to be made available because, despite efforts, there will still be those that will drive to get to Tysons, due to lack of transit where they are coming from or simply the refusal to use it. There also needs to be parking and space available for delivery trucks, which bring the goods and products to the stores. He said, however, that underground parking and streetside parking is probably the best idea because it limits the amount of parking so people are encouraged to use public transportation. It also would help to cut back on the eyesore that is the sea of parking lots within Tysons Corner. “People will always find an excuse to drive,” he adds. “People in Tysons commute from all over and bus routes are not always feasible.”

As a geographic information systems (GIS) professional he then discussed how the technology could be used to analyze Tysons Corner and what planners and developers will use it for in looking at the area. Some reasons he gave for the importance of GIS are looking at current zoning and placement of infrastructure and buildings. This includes how the area can be rezoned and allow the uses to blend and mesh well to create a mixed, social community. It can analyze placements of sidewalks and their widths in higher pedestrian traffic areas, easements, and right of ways. GIS is also helpful to look at cost-friction analyses to gauge the best way, or path of least obstruction to get from point A to point B for pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

Mr. Gilreath believes that walkable communities, like Tysons Corner aims to be, should include aspects to encourage its use by pedestrians. Some of these include
walking streets, closed off to cars, so people can use it as a pathway and as a location to eat and shop. Examples he cited that would act as good examples include Denver and its 16th Street Mall, a 16-block strip of over 300 shops and 50 restaurants with tram service for pedestrians to enjoy (Denver.com, 2010). Another example is Quincy Market, in the heart of downtown Boston. Quincy Market is a walking street that is partially enclosed and includes many shops and restaurants. What makes Quincy Market different, however, is that it has been there for almost two centuries making it far older than Tysons Corner or Denver, but showing that it has lasted the test of time as a popular and highly used area.

Other amenities that Mr. Gilreath feels should be included in walkable communities are wireless internet, courtyards within buildings, and unobstructed bikepaths. The wireless internet is beneficial because the outdoors then can become anyone’s office, providing a more social environment as people can be out and about. According to Gilreath, courtyards within buildings are not only nice for the building’s inhabitants, be it an office or apartments, but it also maximizes the property’s use, creating smaller setbacks and allowing easier access for pedestrians.

Lastly, he was asked his opinion on the Silver Line of the metro that will be coming through Tysons Corner and whether he felt it should be above or below ground. He responded that during these times with a struggling economy and tight budget it is better to have it above ground. Also given the history of large projects such as the “big dig” in Boston, which was meant to ease traffic on downtown streets by building a tunnel under it for vehicle traffic and their light rail line that are passing through, he would not
want to see another project that went far past its deadline and billions of dollars over budget.

**Supervisor John Foust**

As a district supervisor within Fairfax County, Virginia, Mr. Foust represents and oversees the people in the Fairfax County government. He is by far the most knowledgeable on the looming redevelopment in Tysons Corner of the three interviewees. He is the supervisor for the Dranesville district which lies adjacent to the Providence and Hunter Mill districts, in which Tysons Corner sits. Because of the proximity of his district to Tysons Corner and the redevelopment that will be taking place, Mr. Foust has a vested interest in looking out for his constituents and helping them see what they would like in a redeveloped Tysons at public meetings. He says the Dranesville district is a very active community and expresses their opinions and concerns for what they want.

Mr. Foust was very glad that Tysons Corner will be getting the metro line but very disappointed that it will not be underground all the way through Tysons. He would like to have seen it go underground despite the higher costs due to the ease of planning that could take place and without worrying about working around the elevated rail. He believes that even further analyses should have taken place to explore the tunnel option.

In addition to sidewalks being constructed for better walkability, Tysons Corner also has visions to construct pedestrian flyovers and an underground tunnel, which will be used to cross the major boulevards. Unlike crosswalks, these methods of crossing the boulevards will allow continual pedestrian flow. Along the same lines, narrower streets will be constructed for slower traffic so sidewalks can be wider, as part of the
gridded street system that will be created, according to Mr. Foust. The gridded street system will be one of the biggest projects of Tysons’ redevelopment. They will need to rely on cooperation from all the private developers to build the streets in the gridded pattern according to the plan since it would be too costly and difficult to coordinate amongst all the developers, if it were left to the government to handle.

Other developments Mr. Foust would like to see incorporated in Tysons include:

- a possible network of bike lanes. They are not expected to be utilized by a large number but would be available for those who want to.
- more parking but have it be in garages, not continuous ground level asphalt. More parking will undeniably be needed as Tysons Corner expands its office, commercial, and residential capacities. However, it can maintain the current parking footprint, by land area, and add more spaces by creating parking garages.
- creating maximum parking space requirements rather than minimum standards to limit the total number of spaces. There do not need to be more parking spaces than cars in Tysons Corner, which is currently the case.
- affordable and mixed-income housing should be between 12-15% of the total housing to accommodate those in lower paying jobs, which is currently not accounted for in Tysons Corner’s housing
- stream restoration of Scotts Run due to ongoing untreated runoff from Tysons’ abundant impervious surface cover. This hopefully will be mitigated by an increased number of parking garages and more green space planned in Tysons.

As a 25-year resident of McLean he cares about his community and says it is a seven-day-a-week job to keep up with everything going on within it. He is very concerned with how Tysons Corner and its redevelopment will impact his surrounding neighborhoods. Similarly, he would not like to see all infrastructure investments be placed within Tysons. He believes it is beneficial to invest in the infrastructure in the surrounding communities, as well, to maintain a level of consistency between them.
Mr. Philip Howell

Mr. Howell has grown up and spent his entire life in McLean, Virginia. As McLean is a neighboring community to Tysons Corner it has allowed him to experience Tysons first hand and see why its redevelopment is necessary. He has spoken over the years in complaint of the congestion that Tysons Corner has. The frustrating thing is that the congestion is not just during morning and evening commutes, he has said. One can run into traffic at anytime during the day. The leading cause for the traffic even during off times, he believes, is due to Tysons’ lack of walkability. Each day at lunch, every employee within the area will get in their car to go somewhere to eat because there is no accessibility for pedestrians to get to restaurants, delis, or other stores. Also, since Tysons Corner is a shopping mecca for a large region, people come from all over to enjoy the abundance of retail choices and use their vehicles at all hours of the day to do so.

To cope with Tysons Corner’s congestion issue, Mr. Howell believes that the metro line running through Tysons will be absolutely crucial. It will go a long way in removing people from their cars if it can be made accessible and convenient to a large enough portion of the population that comes into Tysons everyday. Other things Mr. Howell would like to see in a redone Tysons Corner, some of which are in the vision produced by the Tysons Land Use Task Force, include:

- “Sidewalks, plain and simple,” he says.
- Walking bridges crossing major boulevards like Route 123 and International Drive.
- A more organized, or gridded, street pattern.

Mr. Howell seems to be aware of some of the aspects that are necessary to make Tysons Corner pedestrian friendly. Since his ideas match some of those outlined
by the Tysons Land Use Task Force, it also shows that the task force took residents’ suggestions, which is very important to ensure that the community is content with the outcome.

He was then asked his opinions on the new metro line coming in. When questioned about the issue of the metro being above or below ground as it travels through Tysons, Mr. Howell adamantly agreed that it should have been developed below ground and it would be well worth the investment. His reasons for his opinion are that it would keep the above ground area cleaner in appearance and allow easier means of development without working around the rail.

Mr. Howell now lives in Arlington, Virginia, and commutes into Tysons Corner almost everyday to work at an upscale steakhouse. The drive is not particularly far but traffic is often an issue. Where does he hit the traffic? Right in Tysons Corner, of course. He says his commute is smooth until he reaches Tysons where the progress is then frequently slowed to a crawl until he is able to reach his destination. It was then asked if he would use the metro upon completion to travel between Arlington and Tysons Corner. His response is that he would use it occasionally. He said that it would be difficult to remove himself from his car since that is what he has relied on for transportation since he was able to drive. He did say that it would be a nice option and he would one day like to be car free. He just does not see it being realistic for him soon. Mr. Howell does not mind sitting in his car in small traffic congestion. Additionally, his community of Shirlington in Arlington does not have its own metro stop and he would need to drive a few miles to get to one anyway. Mr. Howell may be in the majority; being
those who are in favor of the metro but will not necessarily use it as their primary source of transportation.

The three interviews provide strong insight from three different perspectives. In the Tysons Corner area there is a strong sentiment towards placing the metro underground but some are in support of sticking to the budget and getting the project underway by having an above ground rail, the way it is being developed. However, all agree that public transportation will highly benefit Tysons Corner and the surrounding area. The interviewees agree that it will be nice to not worry about a car in Tysons Corner as the only reasonable method of transit. The interviewees provided suggestions that would make pedestrian travel easier if they are implemented. If these opinions are a common sentiment, Tysons Corner can feed off the public opinion and develop itself into a very successful walkable community.
CHAPTER 6
DISCUSSION

The literature review topics involved in this thesis were chosen because they tie into one another and can be applied to Tysons Corner. They are:

- Edge city
- Smart growth
- Transit-Oriented Development
- Mixed-Use

Edge city is a concept that was included to give Tysons Corner context from which to generalize its type of development. Edge cities are those denser suburban areas with taller buildings that sprout on the outside of traditional urban cores. In Tysons, development occurred with little planning put into its future. It formed at the intersection of main roads and has rapidly grown since. It is consumed by an overabundance of asphalt in the form of parking lots and streets and needs further attention to be placed on public transportation and pedestrians to minimize the role of congestion on the area.

An edge city is defined as one with at least five million square feet of leasable office space, six hundred thousand square feet of retail, a population that increases at 9 A.M. on workdays, it is a single end destination and was in no way urban thirty years ago. Tysons Corner easily fits these definitions as it functions as a single end destination with many shopping choices and jobs. Tysons currently has 45 million square feet of total space that is broken down to 25.6 million square feet of office space, 4.1 million square feet of retail, 2.5 million square feet of hotel space, and the remaining 12 million square feet are commercial and residential. With goals of expanding to 113
million square feet in the next few decades, Tysons Corner will be one of the largest edge cities in the United States; even larger than many big city downtowns.

Smart growth is one way that Tysons Corner can prevent its continuance as an autocentric suburban region. It focuses on compact development, the preservation of green space, having multiple transportation options, encouraging community involvement, and creating a strong sense of place. These are all goals that Tysons Corner hopes to achieve during its redevelopment process. Smart growth in many urban areas means a refocus on a blighted city center. However, Tysons Corner does not have the concern of blight and therefore may make it more simple to handle redevelopment as crime and lack of jobs are not an issue.

Transit-oriented development is a smart growth strategy. It focuses on creating dense development around transportation hubs. In the case of Tysons Corner, TOD will be built around each of the four metro stops that run through. To be successful, the TOD will incorporate residential, retail, restaurants and office space so people need not travel far to accomplish things they would typically do in a normal day. The TOD will be structured in a manner that places the densest and tallest buildings closest to the metro stations and will gradually lessen at further distances. According to Calthorpe, transit is necessary to give people an alternative to congested highways. It is not a means to eliminate auto traffic (Calthorpe, 2001, p.220). Tysons Corner is surrounded by major interchanges with highways like Routes 123 and 7, the Capital Beltway and Interstate 66 that pass through it. Calthorpe says that transit does not necessarily fix highway congestion for the simple reason that if freeway capacity is available, people will use it (Calthorpe, 2001, p.220). That could be a downside to Tysons Corner and its hopes to
minimize traffic but at the very least people will have a strong alternative mode of transit with the Silver Line.

Mixed-use development is the type of development that will be used in the TOD and throughout other parts of Tysons Corner. Mixed means that multiple types of uses area all in the same building or in very close proximity to one another. A building can have a restaurant or retail on the ground floor with apartments and condominiums above. This development allows pedestrians easy access to many of their favorite destinations without the necessity of driving to multiple places. In mixed-use development, building setbacks are normally at a minimum so pedestrians can flow right from sidewalks into the shops or restaurants.

Some mixed-use development currently exists in Tysons Corner, but it is limited. The mixed-use that is there consists of restaurants on the ground floor of hotels. For example, Flemings Steakhouse lies below a Courtyard Marriot hotel. The Ritz-Carleton is attached to the Tysons Galleria mall. These examples, however, are not mixed-use in their true meaning from Witherspoon. The building setbacks are still great and contain an abundance of parking surrounding them so vehicles are necessary to get to each of these locations. In recent years, mixed-use development has become increasingly popular as a form in TOD (Witherspoon, 1976). That is one way Tysons Corner will have an impact on becoming more pedestrian friendly as developers incorporate mixed-use around Tysons’ transit stations.

The case studies were specifically chosen to show examples of national leaders in public transit with the examples of Portland, Oregon and Arlington, Virginia. The Los Angeles case study was intended to show a public transit project that has lacked
success in achieving high ridership and cutting down on the number of personal vehicles that are driven daily. Lessons learned from each of these case studies can be applied to Tysons Corner as it is also aspiring to be a national leader as its redevelopment will be one of the largest in the country.

Portland, Oregon is a national leader in sustainable cities with its urban growth boundary to protect the region’s natural beauty and its high-use MAX light rail system. It incorporates elements of transit-oriented development and mixed-use around its light rail, which reaches to small towns in the metropolitan area to connect them to Portland’s urban core. Tysons Corner hopes to achieve high ridership on its metro system in the same manner. Portland has also set goals for itself in its “Region 2040 Plan”, which are similar goals to what Tysons hopes to accomplish during its redevelopment. Some of these goals include housing and job target goals, affordable housing, and maximum parking spaces to decrease the number of cars.

Los Angeles is a city that attempted to create a highly used public transportation system but came up short. They developed light rail to link edge cities to the downtown. It came to be found that most people did not work downtown nor close to the transit stations because the TOD that were developed did not include many jobs. Most people work outside the light rail’s reach and therefore still rely on their cars. Congestion remains an increasing problem in Los Angeles and Tysons Corner hopes to avoid many of these mistakes.

Arlington, Virginia has been a highly successful pedestrian friendly community since the metro line was built there three decades ago. Along the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor there are a total of five stations that are all within a half-mile of each other to
allow residents and employees to never be outside of a short walk to a metro station. Pods of dense transit-oriented development incorporating mixed-use have been constructed around each of the stations and is very much in the same form that Tysons Corner hopes to emulate during its redevelopment. Higher floor area ratios are placed closer to the stations with decreasing density as distance increases from the station. This achieves maximum use directly next to the station while tapering off to blend in with surrounding neighborhoods.

Tysons Corner has abundant potential to create a successful pedestrian friendly community. With billions of dollars being put into the project, the overseeing body of supervisors needs to make sure that investments are being spent according to the vision and that both government and private investors and developers are collaborating well with one another. The money going towards redevelopment includes but is not limited to metro’s new Silver Line, a new road system, sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities, razing buildings and building new ones. Not all of the money has been allocated to the complete redevelopment, as it is projected to continue until the year 2050. However, it is estimated that $15 billion will be spent on transportation alone, including the metro line and new grid road system (Rein, 2009).

The characteristics of edge cities that are described closely pertain to Tysons Corner. Tysons is denser than surrounding areas and contains taller buildings but is still connected to surrounding areas with less dense development. There are main access points and arteries to Tysons such as Route 123, Route 7, the Capital Beltway, and Interstate 66. However, like other edge cities, there was no thought put into Tysons Corner’s future and therefore there is a level of difficulty to get around as development
has continued. Pedestrian accessibility to the region and within it is almost impossible and therefore needs to be accounted for if traffic congestion is to decrease and ease of movement within is to increase.

Tysons Corner will be developed with pods of dense development around each of the four metro stops in the form of transit-oriented developments with 95% of development lying within either a half mile of the metro stop or 600 feet of a circulator, which takes people to the metro stops or other destinations. When Arlington developed its metro and surrounding development, it did so with the bulk of development coming within a quarter mile of the metro stations. It would be wise for Tysons Corner to have condensed its development to do the same in order to have shorter walking distances for its residents and employees. However, the problem with Tysons is that it is already well established and difficult for all buildings to lie within a short walk of the metro. This is due to Tysons’ current development being in a square configuration rather than a linear pattern that would follow the metro line like the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor was able to accomplish when the metro line was built there.

Tysons Corner can successfully decrease its traffic and increase its walkability and ease of movement within the community. Lessons from the literature review topics of edge city, smart growth, transit-oriented development, and mixed-use as well as lessons from the three case studies in Portland, Los Angeles, and Arlington will all need to be considered. The Silver Line and the creation of districts within Tysons Corner will create a unique location that can rival some of the best walkable urban places in the country, upon its completion. With billions of dollars being invested in the
redevelopment, Tysons cannot afford to not get all the logistics right. In the following chapter, specific recommendations will be named to aid in Tysons Corner’s success.
CHAPTER 7
RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter I will distinguish my recommendations from those given by the Tysons Land Use Task Force. The Tysons Land Use Task Force has held meetings since 2005 to receive input from the public on what is sought in a redeveloped Tysons Corner. The task force has provided good insight regarding aspects of what to include to make Tysons Corner a more pedestrian friendly community. However, my personal recommendations based off the research in this thesis stand separate from many of the ideas of the task force. Combined, I believe the success that Tysons Corner can achieve will be large and the stated goals of creating TOD around the metro stations and providing pedestrian amenities will be realized.

Ideas of the Tysons Land Use Task Force

In September of 2008 the Tysons Land Use Task Force presented its recommendations for the redevelopment of Tysons Corner to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, among them was Mr. John Foust. The board unanimously approved the recommendations and they were then referred to the Fairfax County Planning Commission to develop a comprehensive plan for Tysons Corner (Tysons Land Use Task Force, 2008).

Specific aspects the Tysons Land Use Task Force recommends that are being included in the comprehensive plan drafts include the establishment of eight distinct districts in the new Tysons Corner. Four of those districts will be TOD districts where the new Silver Line metro stations are located. The remaining four will act as buffers to surrounding neighborhoods and will be serviced by a bus circulator route to take people from home to the metro or vice versa. This ensures that all patrons are within easy
reach of transit (Fairfax County Planning Commission, 2010). Each district will have its own unique character. Similar to the bulls eye pattern in Arlington, Tysons Corner will be set up in a tier system. Tier one will be located closest to the metro station and have the highest density with building heights being permitted up to 400 feet. The system goes down to tier six, which will allow building heights up to 50 feet and will help blend the intensity of the TOD with surrounding communities (Fairfax County Planning Commission, 2010). The tallest buildings with the greatest FARs built closest to the metro station allows the maximum amount of people to live in very close proximity to a metro station.

A gridded street pattern is in the comprehensive plan and will be largely important for helping create better traffic flow and form within a more urbanized Tysons Corner. Each block within Tysons Corner is to be no more than 400 to 600 feet on a side to allow easier pedestrian travel with a smaller block size. If a block is to be longer than 600 feet, the development must include a pedestrian connection midway along the block (Fairfax County Planning Commission, 2010). The inclusion of bicycle lanes and parking will provide another option of transportation (Fairfax County Planning Commission, 2010).

Parking is something that is being completely redone in Tysons Corner when redevelopment gets underway. As of 2009, Tysons Corner had 167,000 parking spots covering 40 million square feet. The reason for this is mostly due to lack of pedestrian mobility, which necessitated many parking spots at each specific location and building. Rather than simply reducing the number of parking spots, the Tysons Land Use Task Force is creating ratios that give maximum parking allowances depending on land
usage and distance from a metro station (Fairfax County Planning Commission, 2010). For example, within one-eighth of a mile of a metro station there is a maximum of 1.0 parking spot per hotel unit. There is a maximum of 1.6 parking spots for each 1,000 square feet of office space. The largest form of dwelling, which is a townhouse, has a maximum of 2.2 parking spots. As distance becomes greater from the metro station, parking ratios increase by roughly .2 parking spots per land use for each additional quarter mile distance away. This method keeps the fewest number of cars near the metro station. The plan is to continually evaluate this system of maximum parking spaces to see if it works once it begins implementation with construction. There is currently no plan for changing parking ratios at retail sites (Fairfax County Planning Commission, 2010).

Affordable housing is in the plan to be included at a rate of 20% of the total housing. This exceeds the county policy of just 12% and is meant to account for those people making 60 to 120% of the area median income (Fairfax County Planning Commission, 2010).

Open space is expected to double with the addition of 160 acres of parkland. The land is meant to be enjoyed by residents and visitors and will be used for events like farmer’s markets and fairs (Fairfax County Planning Commission, 2010).

The ideas from the Tysons Land Use Task Force that are being drafted in a comprehensive plan for Tysons Corner are good ones that seem to have undergone thorough study to determine the best approach. These ideas such as the tier system of building heights, maximum parking allowances and others will not only increase density but decrease the number of vehicles. A gridded street system with reasonably sized
blocks will allow ease of movement for pedestrians. These implementations can be combined with my ideas from the analysis of the research that went into this paper to give further goals to create a more pedestrian friendly Tysons Corner.

**My Recommendations**

It seems that what occurred in Portland, Oregon during the 1980s is finally going to take place in Tysons Corner; that being an investment in public transportation rather than further investment in road widening, to decrease congestion. What occurred in Portland has made it one of the greenest cities in the U.S. and a national example. It is not possible for Tysons Corner to have an urban growth boundary the way Portland does because Tysons is surrounded by existing development that spreads for miles and miles over the entire Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. However, Tysons Corner will be similar to Portland in that attention will be focused more on public transportation with the metro stations hitting the major locations of interest. Portland has seen great success with its MAX light rail system. Weekday trips are up to 107,000 per day and continually rising. Portland is the 24th largest metropolitan area in the U.S. but has the 7th highest transit ridership per capita. Along certain routes, 26% of the commuters opt for the MAX rather than their personal vehicle (TriMet, 2009). It seems with the Silver Line coming through Tysons Corner, connecting it with much of the rest of the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, Tysons should realistically look to have 10 to 15% of its commuters arrive via metro. This would mean that at its current number of 120,000 employees, between 12,000 and 18,000 would be using the metro on a daily basis.

On that note, having an above ground rail, instead of running below all of Tysons Corner could prove to be a mistake. It may be realized years down the road how an
above ground rail is unsightly and makes future development difficult. The additional cost in a subsurface rail is worth the additional cost if it means a better future and longevity of Tysons. The reasons the metro line will be above ground through the majority of Tysons Corner are political. Virginia Governor Tim Kaine would only support the decisions that were approved for $900 million in federal funding and the underground tunnel did not qualify. These planning decisions go beyond politics and the extended future and plans of Tysons need to be well thought out. If planning is not done properly the first time and governments or developers take the cheap way out, billions of dollars may need to be spent in the future when a couple hundred million more would be needed during initial investment; a cheap option by comparison.

Tysons Corner will benefit by having wide walking streets, closed off to vehicles. These walking streets can incorporate cafes, retail, restaurants/bars, wireless internet access and benches for businessmen and shoppers alike to be able to enjoy their environment. In order for this to happen strong mixed-use elements need to be incorporated. These elements include both vertical and horizontal mixed-use, meaning multiple uses on different floors of the same building and various uses as one travels down the road. Building setbacks need to be at a minimum to allow better, more convenient, pedestrian access.

To handle Tysons Corner’s issue of widespread impervious surface, there needs to be a focus on on-street parking and garages. Having garages can maintain the current footprint but hold more cars because of its multiple parking levels. Tysons Corner does not need to have a parking spot for each resident, shopper, and employee. Instead, there needs to be an overlap of parking uses. Also, charging for parking by
providing meters or paying by ticket in garages will help decrease the number of vehicles and encourage metro use. This should be applied to both temporary visitors such as shoppers as well as everyday employees and residents.

Another thing that needs to be avoided is the way in which L.A. Live was designed. The architectural style and design of Tysons Corner's new development must mesh and blend with current and surrounding styles. The new buildings need to fit in with the environment so that it becomes a homogenous urban setting. This does not mean that the architecture needs to be mundane, rather it should express the attitude that Tysons Corner wants to convey while being subtle, creating a stronger sense of place for residents to enjoy.

“Big box” development should be permitted in Tysons Corner. However, this form must be kept to the fringes of the new development and could provide an acting buffer between Tysons and the surrounding neighborhoods where the building density is at a minimum. It should be kept because Tysons Corner has several very successful big box structures, showing that they have their place in Tysons Corner. The reason they need to remain on the fringe of the redevelopment is that big box form encourages car travel due to their large parking lots. Having it on the fringe Tysons Corner would keep cars away from the TOD that is trying to cut back on vehicular traffic.

If many of these elements are realized, Tysons Corner will become a very desirable place for people to live, work and play, with a stronger emphasis on living. The issue with Tysons Corner is creating incentives for people to move there. If affordable housing is created, it will allow people with lower paying jobs to live in Tysons Corner. As it is they have to travel extremely far distances to reach work due to the high cost of
living in the nearby vicinity. Other employees of Tysons Corner may be difficult to move to Tysons as they are content living in well-to-do suburban neighborhoods, for the most part. Tysons Corner may want to cater towards young professionals, which is the main demographic that live near the metro stations in Arlington. Young professionals could also aid in the culture of Tysons Corner, as they would help to enhance the nightlife, making the area into more of a 24-hour urban scene.

The community’s potential for redevelopment and limitless options makes it a painter’s canvas. Anything can be done with it as development unfolds over the next few decades. It is with strong hopes that all the investment pays off in a way that makes Tysons Corner live up to the hype it is receiving. There is no question that it will become denser and that the Silver Line will be utilized by the region’s residents. The question becomes, however, to what extent the transit and walkable amenities will be used. When the metro reaches out and hits other edge cities like Reston and Dulles, Tysons Corner will become that much more easily accessible to a broader range of people. Allowing more people to use the public transportation furthers the number of car-free pedestrians within Tysons.

Many communities around the country that attempt to have denser development or TOD try to increase density into an area that is not attractive. In many cases an area can become attractive simply by the abundance of jobs that area may offer. Like the cases in the city of Los Angeles, high-density apartments and condominiums were built around public transit stations but neglected to locate jobs in those locations. The area may be attractive to live in but provides no alternative modes of transportation to arrive at jobs. Without jobs in the TOD, people have no incentive to get out of their vehicles.
and instead must commute to other locations to work by car, making the dense residential TOD useless. It is important for communities to have a draw. They need to attract people to make them want to be there. While Tysons Corner does not have amusement parks or famous landmarks, it does have an abundance of jobs for all experience levels, which is an attraction and encouragement for many. From janitors to Fortune 500 executives, the companies within Tysons Corner offer employment opportunities for all sorts. Additionally, the two malls, which are among the largest in the nation, offer shopping for all income levels to a wide region. Tysons Corner is fortunate that density need not be forced and can become more of a bedroom community than a commuter’s nightmare naturally, once the TOD is built. There does not need to be a specific density of a TOD to make it successful. Anywhere that is busy enough to cause traffic congestion is busy enough to support a public transit system. However it is the location of jobs within development around the transit stations that become successful in removing people from their cars and getting them to use the transit.

Conclusions

Tysons Corner can and will become a leader in walkable communities across the U.S. if it adheres to the visions that the Tysons Land Use Task Force has laid out, in accordance with what locals want. The recommendations found from the research of this paper could also be very beneficial. Its plans to implement transit-oriented development pods around the four metro stops will make it a dense, livable, and more accessible community. The TOD will consist of mixed-use development and pedestrian amenities that will discourage the use of personal vehicles. However, once development gets underway, Tysons cannot cut corners in its development by taking the cheaper route when the long-term plan needs to be realized to be successful. For example, the
money saving strategy of having an elevated rail through Tysons Corner rather than below ground may prove to be a huge planning mistake. By learning from the successes and shortcomings of other redevelopment projects such as those discussed in Portland, Los Angeles and Arlington, Tysons has the foundations it needs to thrive as a walkable community. Some aspects that can be learned include a strong public transportation system, which is being accomplished in the form of the Silver Line; dense development, which is planned to occur in the form of the eight districts in Tysons, four of which will be around the transit stops; reduced parking availability; additional housing for all income levels; and a strong job base to support the residents and local economy. Its total redevelopment will not be complete until 2050 so it is important that developers not lose sight of long-term goals so it can continue to prosper far past that time.

Upon completion it will be one of the largest redevelopment projects in the country and will be looked to as an example for future communities. Its metro line opening in 2013 will provide access to hundreds of thousands of people throughout the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area that come into Tysons Corner. The hope is that people will not only think that the metro and transit-oriented development is a good idea, but that it will be utilized. It is fearful that many may take the approach of Mr. Howell in that they like the idea but will still choose their personal vehicle over public transportation, despite its availability. In the coming years, large amounts of investment and development will be put into Tysons Corner. With high density, pedestrian amenities, wide sidewalks, strong mixed-use elements, and increased residential for all income levels, it can take on the characteristics of a lively downtown center with day and night activity.
Future research opportunities can take place by analyzing the impact the metro has on Tysons Corner once the first phase of the Silver Line is complete and open to the public in 2013, which is to extend out to Reston. How many people ride the Silver Line on a daily basis? How many of those are commuters to Tysons Corner? How much new development has taken place? And is the development adhering to the vision of the Tysons Corner TOD districts? If these questions can be answered with future research, it would provide evidence to gauge the success of Tysons Corner’s redevelopment. These research questions could also be addressed again when the last phase of the metro line is complete out to Loudoun County, past Dulles Airport, and incrementally until Tysons’ full redevelopment is achieved.
APPENDIX
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD: CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent

Protocol Title: Creating a Pedestrian Friendly Tysons Corner

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

Purpose of the research study:

The purpose of this study is to analyze the redevelopment of Tysons Corner, Virginia as it relates to a new metro line running through the community. Tysons Corner will be evaluated to see how it can become pedestrian friendly and what elements and amenities must be accounted for in order for this to happen.

What you will be asked to do in the study:

You will be asked to hold a phone and/or personal interview during which you will be asked questions based on your knowledge of Tysons Corner, what you would like to see changed, and what could make it a better community.

Time required:

30-60 minutes

Risks and Benefits:

There are no risks associated with participating in this interview. There are no direct benefits. Some indirect benefits include the sharing of knowledge and understand of the future of Tysons Corner and how people may be affected by alternative modes of transportation.

Compensation:

Participants will not be compensated for their participation in the interview.

Confidentiality:

Your name may be used in the study. The researcher will be the only one using the information that you share. Any information that you provide will not be given to or shared with anyone else.

Approved by
University of Florida
Institutional Review Board 02
Protocol # 2010-U-0339
For Use Through 04-05-2011
Voluntary participation:

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating.

Right to withdraw from the study:

You have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime without consequence.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:

Ryan Wing, Master of Arts in Urban and Regional Planning Candidate, 571-216-0921

Dr. Joseli Macedo, Ph.D. AICP, Professor of Urban and Regional Planning, 352-392-0997 ext. 461

Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:

IRB02 Office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250; phone 392-0433.

Agreement:

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description.

Participant: ___________________________ Date: ______________

Principal Investigator: ____________________ Date: ______________

Approved by
University of Florida
Institutional Review Board 02
Protocol # 2010-U-0339
For Use Through 04-05-2011
Questions for Interviewees

1. Do you think walkable/pedestrian friendly cities and communities are becoming increasingly important?

2. What are some elements that make a community pedestrian friendly?

3. Is it better to have no parking lots available or only street and underground parking to deter the use of cars?

4. How can GIS be helpful in analyzing a walkable community?

5. Do you think it will be difficult for people in certain areas to give up their cars that they have relied on forever as their main form of transportation?

6. How familiar are you with Tysons Corner’s development?

7. What new aspects would be important for Tysons Corner? (i.e. higher density, development closer to the streets, bike lanes, etc.)

8. Should the Tysons metro line be above or below ground?

9. What would you personally like to see changed in Tysons Corner during its redevelopment?

10. Will you use the metro upon completion to commute into Tysons Corner as your main mode of transportation?

11. Why will there be a delay/such a long process in Tysons Corner’s full redevelopment?

12. What can we realistically expect from a redeveloped Tysons Corner? Will it be more functional?

13. How will development be concentrated around the metro stops?
LIST OF REFERENCES


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ryan Wing was born in 1986 in Kailua, Hawaii. He spent the majority of his life growing up and living in McLean, Virginia but also lived near Stuttgart, Germany for three and a half years. Upon returning to McLean in 1999, he graduated from Langley High School in 2004. In 2008, Ryan earned his Bachelor of Arts in geography from the University of Florida (UF). He went straight into graduate school beginning in the fall of 2008 to pursue a degree in urban and regional planning at UF. Over the six years Ryan has spent at UF, he has become a die-hard Gator fan and college sports enthusiast.

Ryan enjoys traveling and has been to over twenty countries, mostly in Europe and the Caribbean. He has also traveled extensively in the United States, which inspired him to pursue the fields of geography and urban planning. With his education in urban planning, Ryan is interested in working toward creating walkable communities in urban environments throughout the United States to decrease people’s reliance on personal vehicles.