

Members of the Land Use & Transportation Task Force,

Good evening. My name is Richard Cheston and my wife and I reside at 6309 Buffalo Ridge Road. I am the Vice President of the Buffalo Hill Citizens Association. Our president could not be here tonight, so I am speaking for the association which includes residential properties directly bordering Seven Corners: Buffalo Ridge Road, Castle Road, Hazleton Street, Nicholson Street, Sleepy Hollow Road, and Faber Drive.

We agree that transportation in Seven Corners is a serious issue, one that will likely be exacerbated with the addition of an elementary school to its existing congested infrastructure.

The Buffalo Hill Citizens Association vehemently objects to 3 of the transportation options identified by Kittelson and Associates and strongly urges the Land Use Task Force to eliminate them from further consideration. These 3 options are:

- No. 2 Split Diamond with Couplet,
- No. 3 Single Point Interchange, and
- No. 6 Jug Handle Configuration.

Each of these options would result in the destruction of homes and change the character of our neighborhood. We also believe the cost of implementing them would be prohibitive. The Kittelson and Associates study fails to adequately identify all the impacts on surrounding communities of each option. We do not support their recommendation to invest further study and taxpayer resources in alternatives 2 and 6.

Specifically,

No. 2 Split Diamond with Couplet is objectionable for two reasons. First, this option would divide Leesburg Pike into two one-way roads coming from Falls Church City while crossing through the Seven Corners intersection and then rejoining before the Sears building. As designed, the proposed Leesburg Pike going east will extend Castle Place through the backyards of 4 homes on Buffalo Ridge Road, likely resulting in their destruction, and then through 6245 Leesburg Pike, the property Fairfax County Public Schools' recently bought for \$9.3 million and plans to open as an elementary school next fall. If the County is making a \$22 million investment in a new school, can the County really support destroying that investment in 15-20 years for a road?

Second, by terminating Wilson Boulevard in front of the current Eden Center and connecting Wilson by bridge to Castle Road, option 2 would turn Castle Road and Nicholson Street into major thoroughfares that connect Sleepy Hollow Road traffic to Wilson Blvd and Leesburg Pike going west. Would the Roosevelt Boulevard extension continue as a 4 lane road? Castle and Nicholson currently are narrow and have two lanes with no sidewalks. Even if widened, VDOT would not allow a large volume of traffic to use the existing Castle and Nicholson intersection.

More residential impacts are likely to homes on Castle Road which are not apparent from the Kittelson study.

I would also note that the Split Diamond with Couplet proposal appears to be the most expensive because it includes 3 new bridges over Rte. 50—two would cut through the Seven Corners Shopping Center plus a bridge for the new Leesburg Pike going east. It also includes a new road that would cut through the Willston Apartments. We are particularly concerned that this alternative was supported in County staff discussions as the only option likely eligible for Federal funding.

No. 3 Single Point Interchange is the most objectionable option because it would create a new road that goes through the top of the Buffalo Hill neighborhood by cutting through homes on Buffalo Ridge Road, Hazelton Street, Castle Road, and Nicholson Street to connect with Sleepy Hollow Road. Besides creating another hazardous steep road, it is unclear that the benefits to traffic movement would outweigh the costs of destroying numerous residences in our neighborhood and commercial buildings on Leesburg Pike. This new road would fundamentally change the character of the neighborhood because it would be the major artery for connecting Sleepy Hollow Road to Leesburg Pike. (We support the Task Force's decision to remove this alternative from further consideration.)

No. 6 Jug Handle Configuration is objectionable because it would create a new road connecting Rte. 50 east of the Seven Corners intersection with Rte 50 west of the Seven Corners intersection. This road would result in the destruction of at least 4 homes (which are only 10 years old and among the most recent residential construction in the area) on Buffalo Ridge Road, 1 home on Castle Road, the 2 office buildings on Castle Place and commercial buildings on the west side of Sleepy Hollow Road. This new road is not connected to the proposed new bridge over Rte 50. In particular, it is unclear to us what benefit in traffic movement is gained by extending this road beyond its intersection with Castle Road, which already provides access to the Seven Corners Shopping Center, the Seven Corners transit center, and Rte 50 going east. In addition, the Jug Handle's new access road to the Seven Corners shopping center would go down a steep hill/dropoff where no supporting land exists. Please recognize that pedestrians will use any and all roadways, and the topography of this proposal would require significant modification to be safely usable. How this alternative will accommodate buses leaving the transit center is unclear.

We concur with comments made by Chairman Thillmann that option No. 5 (Four Corners) merits serious consideration as the least costly option and one that will not destroy the residential communities surrounding Seven Corners. (We believe that modifying some of the proposed future land use options would be preferable if this alternative's ramp configurations are not optimum.)

Similarly, some aspects of the design of option No. 4 (Two Half Diamond Interchanges) such as creating a loop or mini-beltway have merit, but it is unclear why 2 new bridges across Rte. 50 are needed to relieve congestion. (This may become clearer from the ongoing 2040 traffic volume analysis.) One of the key benefits of either Option 4 or 5 is that they use Castle Place and existing interchanges at Sleepy Hollow, at Castle Road, and at Leesburg Pike rather than adding new intersections to an already congested area.

Regarding option No. 1 (Diverging Diamond interchange), several heavily used roads (Hillwood Avenue, Wilson Boulevard and Sleepy Hollow Road) would be terminated before they reach the Seven Corners intersection. This would likely force traffic into areas that do not currently experience it, such as South Street. Another result would be the addition of yet another intersection with a traffic light just to the east of the Castle Road intersection, as well as loss of connectivity for the Seven Corners transit center which is not consistent with the vision for our area. (We agree with the Task Force's decision to remove this option from active consideration as well.)

Our association supports a sustainable future for Seven Corners that is mixed-use, mixed income, walkable, and transit-oriented. We also believe that the substantial infrastructure investments that have recently been made in the Seven Corners area, such as the transit center and new elementary school, should not be negated by this Task Force's recommendations.

If a new hybrid interchange option is developed, we urge the Task Force and its consultants to follow this principle from the Task Force's draft Vision statement: "Encourage high quality design and sustainable development that **limits adverse impacts on the environment and the community.**" (Emphasis added.) We also ask that the consultants consider your land use guiding principle to "Retain or create compatible transitions at the edges to stable residential neighborhoods" rather than destroying such neighborhoods in the name of progress (*Seven Corners Guiding Principles-C3 Transition/Edge Space*).