



March 21, 2006

Re: **District 1 Neighborhood Roundtable Meeting (January 26, 2006)  
Response to Issues and Comments**

Greetings:

Thank you very much for your attendance at the District 1 Neighborhood Roundtable meeting held on Thursday, January 26, 2006 at Plano Centre. On behalf of City Council, we applaud your interest and involvement in our community. We value your comments and look forward to working with you in maintaining a strong city and excellent quality of life.

At the roundtable meeting, we presented to you several topics to initiate discussion based on feedback we've received from other Roundtable meetings over the past several years. We discovered property standards, with special interest regarding rental properties, are of great importance to you. Traffic safety remains of major concern to our citizens. Vehicle burglaries, creek pollution and coyotes were also among the issues brought to our attention at the meeting.

The following is a synopsis of the above issues as well as additional information pertinent to the District 1 area:

**Traffic Mobility and Safety**

Some of the most important issues facing Plano today relate to traffic. Traffic mobility and safety are valid concerns among our citizenry and are priorities with City Council and staff.

Over the past four years, mobility and safety has improved due to close collaboration between departments responsible for the design, operation, maintenance, and enforcement of roads. Safety-related programs are reviewed annually to ensure that the needs of changing demographics and traffic patterns throughout Plano are met.

- **Traffic Signal Timing** - Managing traffic flow on major arterial roads and across city limit boundaries is accomplished via an ongoing program that retimes traffic signals in response to changing traffic volumes/patterns. Using state-of-the-art technology, 200 traffic signals are monitored throughout the City and timing plans are changed when needed to minimize vehicle stops and delay. Last fall, staff began upgrading all traffic signals with new traffic control technology. The new equipment will increase the flow and safety of traffic by reducing even further the number of stops drivers make. Staff has also started using advanced technologies that are better at changing a traffic signal when a car is present.

Pat Evans  
Mayor

Scott Johnson  
Mayor Pro tem

Sally Magnuson  
Deputy Mayor Pro Tem

Shep Stahel  
Place 1

Loretta Ellerbe  
Place 3

Harry LaRosiliere  
Place 5

Jean Callison  
Place 7

Thomas H. Muehlenbeck  
City Manager

The equipment allows the signal to operate when road maintenance and other construction would cause the signal to fail. Through use of these advanced technologies, traffic monitoring cameras, and coordination with police patrols, quick and effective response to traffic collisions, significant travel-time savings, and improved air quality are attained.

- **Traffic Mobility Improvements** – The evaluation of traffic congestion at intersections and along road segments is performed annually throughout Plano to determine ways to improve traffic flow and safety. Each year the city allocates \$500,000 for the construction of additional left and right-turn lanes, construction of pedestrian ramps, minor sidewalk modifications, and improving traffic lane lines.

- **Specific Areas of Concern** –

**Tolling of 121** – The cities of Allen, Frisco, McKinney and Plano, along with Collin County, support the NTTA proposal to TxDOT to allow the NTTA to construct, maintain and operate SH 121 as a toll road.

**Parker and Avenue K Intersection** - This year this intersection will be modified as part of a construction project that adds additional east/west lanes to Parker Road from K Avenue to P Avenue. As the project nears completion, staff will refresh the entire intersection pavement markings and will also consider installing red light running cameras to further improve safety at the intersection.

**Speed Buttons on Parker Road** – The City will replace the damaged buttons.

**Stop signs at 15<sup>th</sup> and Avenue R** – City staff reviewed this intersection and found the existing speed humps keep traffic speeds low and the view to approaching traffic (on 15<sup>th</sup> Street) is excellent. A check of traffic collision history over the past five years found two collisions resulting from drivers failing to comply with the posted stop signs on R Avenue. Based on this information, it is not recommended to also stop traffic on 15th Street because it serves as the neighborhood collector road and should provide uninterrupted flow where possible.

**Noise Buffers along US 75** – As part of the initial environmental assessment for US 75 (performed in 2003-04), traffic noise was considered in the assessment but was determined not to be at a level as to warrant barriers and thus they were not included in the project.

### **Traffic Enforcement**

The highest public safety priority in the City of Plano is traffic safety. The Plano Police Department utilizes a three-pronged approach to addressing this problem: strict enforcement, education and awareness, and partnership with the community.

- **Enforcement** – This aspect of our traffic safety effort includes high visibility patrol, which also aims to curtail crime. In 2004, the Plano Police Department conducted 61,656 traffic contacts that resulted in some form of enforcement action. From those contacts 26,972 speeding citations were issued (up 11.5% from 2003) and 4,038 red light citations were issued (down 23.8% from 2003). As a result of the Police Department's enforcement actions in 2004, the number of red light collisions within the City of Plano dropped more than 13% from 2003.

To further reduce collisions, the Police Department recently implemented the use of cameras to monitor and cite red light runners. Implementation and operational costs will be offset through the collection of civil penalties assessed to persons photographed running red lights. The goal of this program is to increase traffic safety by decreasing the rate of injury accidents at intersections.

It should be noted that since the year 2000, the Plano Police Department has participated in a Texas Department of Transportation STEP (Selective Traffic Enforcement Program) grant to increase their enforcement efforts. This grant has allowed the Plano Police Department to increase its enforcement of red light violations by utilizing state funds to pay additional officers to work intersections throughout the City. Officers focus on the intersections with the highest rates of collisions. In November 2003, the Police Department began participating in a new STEP grant that allows them to continue to focus on red light violations while also enforcing speed limits throughout the City as well.

In addition, the Police Department also participates in the Texas Department of Transportation's "Click it or Ticket" campaign. The purpose of this campaign is to increase the use of safety belts. The campaign consists of public service announcements and high intensity enforcement during the Memorial Day and Thanksgiving holiday periods.

On January 1, 2006, the police department began a pilot program to tow uninsured vehicles under certain circumstances. Drivers are required to maintain financial responsibility for vehicles they operate on Texas roadways. Uninsured motorists are involved in many accidents each year. There is a cost associated with these uninsured motorists for those that comply with the financial responsibility requirements. According to the Texas DPS, one in five drivers in Texas does not have insurance. In 2004, 13,661 citations were issued for no insurance. Of those, 780 were issued at accident scenes. Through September 2005, 10,461 citations have already been issued for no insurance, 582 at accident scenes. Due to the frequency and concern for drivers not maintaining proof of financial responsibility as required by law we have developed a policy to tow the uninsured vehicles when they are encountered. Uninsured vehicles that are involved in accidents and vehicles that are known to have been operated in the past uninsured and are still being operated uninsured, will be impounded. The owner will be required to present proof of financial responsibility before the vehicle will be released from the impound lot.

- **Education and Awareness** – The Police Department's Traffic Unit spearheads the efforts to increase the awareness of drivers in the City of Plano. The Traffic Unit conducts numerous seminars and classes regarding traffic safety. Additionally, the unit has developed an educational video titled "In a Blink of an Eye", which addresses the dangers of red light running. During the spring season of every year, the Traffic Unit partners with the high schools to educate students on the dangers of drinking and driving. Recently, two traffic officers became certified as Child Safety Seat Inspectors. These two officers now provide inspection and instruction of child safety seats to citizens. The Police Department also periodically distributes traffic safety information to Plano residents via their utility bills. The Police Department also employs three speed trailers that are deployed in problem areas throughout the city to make drivers aware of their speed, in an attempt at voluntary compliance with speed laws.
- **Community Partnership** – In order to maximize our responsiveness to the traffic safety problems of the City of Plano, we must create an atmosphere of cooperation with our citizens. The Police Department actively seeks input of motorists who travel the streets of Plano through the use of their web site and a telephone reporting system. Motorists can report dangerous drivers and red light runners by calling (972) 941-LITE (5483), or by sending a message to the Police Department utilizing the department's web page at [www.planopolice.org](http://www.planopolice.org). Furthermore, citizens can report dangerous areas and request extra enforcement through the use of a Special Enforcement Request (SER). An SER can be completed by contacting the Traffic Unit at (972) 208-8055, through the web page at [www.planopolice.org/contact/ser.htm](http://www.planopolice.org/contact/ser.htm) or by stopping in at the main station at 909 14<sup>th</sup> Street or the Joint Use Facility at 7501A Independence Parkway.

➤ **Specific Areas of Concern –**

**Speeding around Williams High School & Racing cars in Ridgewood area** – Both concerns have been forwarded to the Patrol Division, Neighborhood Police Officer Unit and Traffic Unit of the Plano Police Department. In addition, during the spring season of every year, the Traffic Unit partners with the high schools to educate students on the dangers of driving.

**Crime**

The Police Department continues to maintain a low crime rate. Our success in maintaining a low crime rate is directly tied to the cooperative efforts of our citizens.

➤ **Specific Areas of Concern –**

**Burglary of Vehicles (Briarwood and Armstrong area)** - In comparing statistics for the months of November 2005 through January 2006, it is clear that the Briarwood and Overglen area has experienced a dramatic increase in Burglaries of Vehicles (BMV's) in this three-month period. In one night there were eight BMV's. The 14 offenses occurred on six nights. This analysis has been brought to the attention of the Patrol Officers and Neighborhood Police Officers that work in this area so that they may focus their resources on the problem.

Citizens can protect themselves by parking their vehicles in the garage or locking their vehicles and removing all valuables. Leave nothing in sight and report any suspicious activity to the Police. Learn more about the "Lock, Take & Hide" program by contacting the Crime Prevention Unit of the Police Department at 972-941-2431.

**Gangs and Graffiti (18<sup>th</sup> Street and Redbud Lane)** - Gangs are present everywhere in our society. Fortunately, Plano has very few gang problems compared to many of our neighboring cities. In addition to the Patrol Officers, Neighborhood Police Officers (NPO) and School Liaison Officers are trained in detection of gang activity as well. Graffiti is a nuisance crime that detracts from the beauty of the entire city. Prosecution of a graffiti case requires an officer to catch the offender in the act, a citizen to witness and direct an officer to the offender and/or a confession by the offender. In addition to prosecution, immediate abatement is necessary. Abatement of graffiti from public buildings is done by the Public Works Department while abatement from private property is initiated by the Property Standards Department. Please report all graffiti to the Plano Police Department by calling 972-424-5678.

**DART Parker Road Station needs Additional Policing** - This concern has been forwarded to the Patrol Division and the Neighborhood Police Officer (NPO) Division of the Plano Police Department. In addition, DART police officers are assigned to routinely patrol this area as well.

**Extra Patrol when Children Walk Home from School** - Beat officers and traffic officers are aware of school hours and attempt to be in or near school zones during those times. If officers are not assigned to calls, they are often in these areas. Crossing guards are also valuable assets in providing safety for our children before and after school.

**Crime Watch** – An excellent crime prevention tool available to you is participation in your neighborhood Crime Watch Program. Crime Watch Bulletins are provided by Crime Watch Program coordinators to the program participants. The bulletins can also be accessed under the “Crime Watch Information” tab at [www.planopolice.org](http://www.planopolice.org). The Crime Prevention Unit of the Police Department is very active with these groups. If you would like to join your neighborhood’s program or would like to begin a Crime Watch Program in your area, please contact the Crime Prevention Unit at (972) 941-2431. A Crime Prevention officer will be happy to assist you with any questions you may have.

**Delay in Crime Watch Information Reaching Residents** - There are occasions when it may take several days for an officer’s report of an offense to be entered into the Police Records System. The Records Division prioritizes entry into the system based on the seriousness of the crime. The more serious the crime, the more quickly the report is processed. Once a report has been successfully entered into the Police Records System a copy is sent to the Crime Prevention Unit (CPU). A CPU officer reviews the report and determines what notifications need to be made. Crime Watch notifications are usually made the day that the CPU officer receives the report. In 2005, 283 Crime Watch notifications were sent out.

Upgrades are soon expected in the Police Department’s Records System that will allow officers to directly enter reports into the reporting system from the field. This system upgrade will greatly enhance the ability of the Police Department to disseminate information more quickly.

### **Infrastructure Construction, Repair and Maintenance**

The City has an aggressive construction, rehabilitation and maintenance program to keep roads, brick screening walls and drainage systems operating at their optimum. Staff makes great effort to coordinate these projects (City crews, utilities, and private contractors) to prevent undue delay and congestion to motorists. The inspection team in both the Engineering and Public Works Departments are assigned to ensure that contractors are providing the City of Plano with the highest quality of work delivered and that it is within the City’s construction standards.

#### ➤ **Current and Upcoming Street Repairs in the District 1 Area:**

- Park Blvd, Shiloh Rd and San Gabriel Dr.
  - Plano Parkway, K Ave to Los Rios Blvd
  - Neighborhood street and alley pavement repair in the Los Rios area and in the Village North subdivision off Parker Road
- **Wastewater Sewer Improvements** --- Public Works is planning to upgrade the City’s wastewater mains and replace all sewer services to each home along several streets in the Royal Oaks subdivision.
- **Street Signage** - The City has begun the process of replacing all residential street name signs with larger aluminum signs using six-inch letters and four-inch block numbers. This effort is scheduled to last six years. The area in the City that is targeted in 2006 is the entire area of the City east of Central Expressway.
- **Street Sweeping** - The City of Plano street sweeping program involves the monthly sweeping of all major thoroughfares. The City policy is not to sweep residential streets due to issues relative to vehicles parked on the street, pedestrian traffic, and mailbox locations along the curbs. However, requests for additional sweeping needed on major thoroughfares can be made through the Public Works administration office at 972-769-4140.

- **Water Issues** – Drought information for the City of Plano is available at [www.planotx.org/water](http://www.planotx.org/water). The City of Plano provides a water conservation program that educates and offers ways for homeowners to conserve. To learn more about the programs being offered, please contact the Water Conservation Coordinator at 972-769-4328.

**Notification of Road Construction** – Citizens can now be notified of road construction sites in Plano by subscribing to the Road Construction listserv on our web site. To do so, go to [http://www.planotx.org/email\\_lists.html](http://www.planotx.org/email_lists.html). This information is also routinely aired on Plano Television Network, channel A30.

### **Zoning and Development Activity**

Please be assured the City of Plano is committed to protecting the rights of neighborhoods, as well as developers, to pursue their interests within the established legal framework of procedures and standards. Historically, the City of Plano has been development-friendly. Non-residential development helps fund City streets, water and sewer facilities, parks, police and fire stations, schools and other public improvements that citizens value as important to a good quality of life. However, development-friendly does not equal lower standards or the waiving of requirements. City Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission have adopted very stringent development policies. All projects are subject to the same high standards.

The City of Plano has always sought a balance between the interests of homeowners and the business community. We encourage developers and neighborhoods to openly communicate and seek ways to ensure beneficial and compatible development.

Although state and federal legislation and court precedents define many of the practices in our planning policies and regulations, the Planning Department is committed to keep all citizens informed of potential development projects within the City. For example, notices for zoning cases are mailed 15 days prior to the first hearing instead of the 10 days required by state law, and homeowners associations (those registered with the City) within 1500 feet of zoning cases receive written notice by mail. A complete list of all zoning cases, site plans and plats submitted for review are posted on the Planning Department page of the City's web site at [www.planoplanning.org](http://www.planoplanning.org), aired on Plano cable channels A-30 and B-58, and are available in the public libraries.

Although not required by state law, applicants for zoning cases in Plano must place a zoning sign on the property notifying the public of the pending zoning action. The City gives a small sign to the applicant for specific use permit requests. For larger tracts of land, the applicant must contract with a sign company to have a large wooden sign erected on the property. All of the signs give the Planning Department's phone number, (972) 941-7151, so that citizens may call to get more information about the proposed zoning action. Homeowner comments are welcomed and encouraged in the development review process to help us achieve a well-developed community.

- **Land Studies, Preliminary Site Plans and/or Final Site Plans** – For a list of rezoning requests, site plans, plats and other development-related items that are up for review, please go to <http://www.planoplanning.org/DevRev/pzcomm/Review%20list/Rev-list.pdf>. This list is updated every two weeks.
- **Vacant and Underused Commercial Buildings** – In 2002, the cities of Carrollton, Richardson, and Plano jointly produced a report entitled "Retail Study of Underperforming and Vacant Retail Areas." This study explored a number of issues relating to the retail industry, the local economy, and the opportunities for improving current conditions. Upon completion of the study, each city had the responsibility of identifying and implementing those recommendations that were most applicable to its needs. Plano began by trying to reduce the amount of existing retail tracts of land that remain for future development. The City Council

passed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance that give it the authority to review and approve requests to convert vacant properties from retail to residential uses such as patio homes and town houses. The Planning and Zoning Commission is currently considering new policies to use when evaluating zoning requests to convert leftover commercial tracts for residential uses. Competition in today's retail market often requires larger stores with a wide product ranges serving larger market areas than in the past. Many of Plano's existing retail centers have become vacant or underutilized due to this change in marketing strategy. In some cases, it may be possible to redevelop or reorganize older centers to meet new retailing requirements and stay in scale with surrounding neighborhoods. These projects will require attention to various details. The alternative to these redevelopment efforts may be empty structures that are obsolete for today's retail needs. The Plano Economic Development Board (PEDB) has business recruitment and retention program that offers financial incentives to a wide range of commercial users including manufacturers, retailers, and office facilities. PEDB's efforts have contributed to the leasing of new space at Park Boulevard and Preston Road, Plano Parkway and Coit Road, Downtown Plano, and the Research/Technology Crossroads Business Park in southeast Plano.

- **Small Business Incubator** – The city has investigated establishing a small business incubator program in the past. To set up an incubator storefront, that provides office space as well as other services to start-up companies, requires a substantial amount of funding, which has not been available. However, the Collin County Community College district's Small Business Development Center provides all of the benefits of an incubator. They can help with training, formulating business plans and acquiring loans for small businesses. The Center can be reached at (972) 985-3770 or <http://www.ccccd.edu/bc/buscomm.html>.
- **Revitalization** - The City recognizes the need to maintain our older neighborhoods. In order to prevent deterioration in our neighborhoods, we schedule infrastructure repair and replacement each year so that streets and utilities are kept in good condition. We also have a proactive code enforcement program through our Property Standards Division. Property Standards works with property owners to keep their homes free of trash and debris, junk vehicles, high grass and weeds, and other property code violations. We believe that code enforcement is very important to maintaining our older areas, and we try to address problems in their incipient stage rather than letting them grow into the large areas of deterioration which exist in many other cities.
- **Grants and Programs Available to Aging Neighborhoods** – The City has a housing rehabilitation program, in which the City will make a low-interest loan to families with limited income (for example, a family of four making less than \$53,200 would qualify) to help them repair their home. The amount of repayment required depends on the family's income level. We also operate the Neighborhood Planning program, where we assign an Urban Planner to work with a neighborhood to develop a work plan to address the neighborhood's issues. Usually the resulting plan includes things that the City will accomplish, and things that the residents will accomplish, to solve the problems. For more information on these programs, please visit [www.planoplanning.org/neighserv/index.htm](http://www.planoplanning.org/neighserv/index.htm).

## **Property Standards**

Property maintenance violations in the City of Plano are addressed using a sound proactive approach. Twelve (12) Property Standards Specialists proactively inspect their assigned areas as well as respond to citizen concerns received in reference to Code and Zoning Ordinance violations. These codes and ordinances include, but are not limited to, parking on unimproved surfaces, junked motor vehicles, low tree limbs and branches, trash and debris, high grass and weeds, open storage of goods, equipment or materials, substandard structures, and fence maintenance. As needed, work schedules are rearranged to address activity that may be occurring outside regular business hours such as non-permitted garage sales, parking on unimproved surfaces, and illegal home occupation activities.

When a concern is received by the Property Standards Department, the call is assigned to the appropriate Specialist, who then inspects the property within 48 business hours. Callers may choose to remain anonymous however, if the caller leaves their name and telephone number, the Specialist will contact the caller after the initial inspection is completed to provide a status update of action(s) taken.

When most violations are observed, the property owner and/or occupant are notified by mail. A notice of violation letter is issued, noting the violation and the timeframe in which the property owner should come into compliance. Some violations, including high grass/weeds and trash/debris require only one annual notice and the property owner may not receive additional notifications prior to immediate abatement of these violations. If a property owner chooses not to comply with the request to bring the property into compliance, the City may contract to have the work completed at the owner's expense and/or a notice to appear before municipal court may be issued.

The department responds to overcrowding concerns by applying occupancy limitations defined in the 2003 International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) that was adopted by the City of Plano in 2004. The IPMC establishes minimum room widths, ceiling heights, areas used for sleeping purposes and other requirements. For example, every bedroom occupied by one person shall contain at least 70 square feet of floor area, and every bedroom occupied by more than one person shall contain at least 50 square feet of floor area for each occupant.

A multi-family rental registration and inspection pilot program is underway to assist in ensuring the safety and viability of the city's rental communities. All multi-family dwelling complexes that are twenty years old and older with five or more rental units must register with the City on or before April 30, 2006. The program will begin a systematic process to begin registration and inspection of the City's residential rental dwelling units. An expanded program is expected to follow the pilot through the gradual phase in of all rental properties, including single-family rental dwellings.

Property Standards view code education and awareness as vital components to our desired effectiveness. Educational materials regarding code requirements and ordinance regulations are disseminated through the distribution of brochures, water utility bill inserts and speaking at Neighborhood Association meetings and other community functions.

Please contact (972) 941-7124 or [www.planotx.org/prop\\_stds](http://www.planotx.org/prop_stds) should you have any questions or further concerns relating to property standards in Plano.

## **Parks**

**Oak Point Park and Nature Preserve** is Plano's largest park at 801 acres. Existing improvements include a 1000 seat amphitheater and special events facility near Spring Creek Parkway and the Community College.

The next phase of improvements will include:

- Trail connection to Bob Woodruff Park
- Nature Trails
- Equestrian Area
- Picnic Areas
- Lake overlook and fishing pier on 18 acre lake (Bob Woodruff Lake is 11 acres)
- Acres and acres of open space!
- Spectacular Visitor and Retreat Center with:
  - o Classrooms
  - o Community meeting spaces
  - o Outdoor pavilion
  - o Catering kitchen
  - o Facilities will accommodate community gatherings, weddings, business retreats, recreation classes, school groups and many other activities.

Construction will begin before the end of 2006 and be complete in 2007.

There are several additional parks and facilities located in and around the City's District 1 area. Please visit [http://www.planoparks.org/sub\\_parks/city\\_maps7.htm](http://www.planoparks.org/sub_parks/city_maps7.htm) to view an informative, interactive map of the parks and facilities available to you. You may also wish to visit [http://www.planoparks.org/sub\\_help/construction\\_projects.htm](http://www.planoparks.org/sub_help/construction_projects.htm) to become apprised of current and planned construction projects for new and existing parks in the area. The Parks Department also offers many recreational courses for our citizens throughout the year. For more information and to view a course schedule, please select the Leisure Courses tab on the main web page at <http://www.planoparks.org>.

## **Public Information**

To contact City of Plano staff for further information and/or to generally keep abreast of the activities in our city, below is a list of various access methods that are available to you.

- **Internet** - As stated previously, the City of Plano's main web site address is [www.planotx.org](http://www.planotx.org). To reach a particular staff member by phone, you may go directly to [www.planotx.org/telecom/directory.pdf](http://www.planotx.org/telecom/directory.pdf). For City staff email addresses, go directly to [www.planotx.org/ctystaff.html](http://www.planotx.org/ctystaff.html). The City web site provides valuable information about the services of each department. Functions of the City's site include viewing City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission agendas, submitting code enforcement concerns, and making online water bill payments.
- **Publications** - Municipal information can be found on a daily basis at [www.planocitynews.com](http://www.planocitynews.com). This is the City's new initiative to provide more timely information in an electronic format.
- **Cable TV** - Information regarding upcoming City activities and events is broadcasted on Plano's cable channel - A30.
- **Public Library** - Information on upcoming City Council Meetings, as well as Planning and Zoning cases, is available at all Plano public libraries.

- **Water Bill Inserts** - Another method the City uses to inform citizens of community events, activities, and resources is through water bill inserts. In total, there are 36 different reports, flyers and letters mailed each year with the utility bill.
- **Current Studies** - It was suggested during one of our previous Roundtables that the City provide information on our web site regarding current studies in which we are involved. This excellent suggestion has been implemented. You may find the link entitled *Current On-Going Studies* on the front page of our web site.
- **Email Newsletters** - The City of Plano is currently offering several auto subscriptions to newsletters which interested citizens can subscribe to via email, including **Emergency Alerts**. You may view and subscribe to these newsletters at [www.planotx.org/email\\_lists.html](http://www.planotx.org/email_lists.html).

### **Other Topics of Interest**

- **Information Packet to New Residents** – The City's Customer and Utility Services Department delivers a packet of important information to new customers initiating water service. The packet contains information about City services, local events and other pertinent items of interest.
- **Adopt-a-Creek Volunteer Program** - Due to the unending migration of litter into our community, city staff relies heavily on volunteer groups and individuals to help keep highways (Adopt-A-Highway) and creeks (Adopt-A-Creek) clean and litter free. In reality, our goal, through our environmental education efforts, is to prevent littering from occurring in the first place.

The Adopt-a-Creek volunteer program, gives businesses, organizations, families and individuals the opportunity to make an impact on keeping our city beautiful and improving our local water quality. This program is a joint effort by the Water Education Office, the Department of Public Works and the Parks & Recreation Department.

The volunteer(s) agree to adopt a section of a creek and to take action, on a volunteer basis, to control the stream bank litter problem by organizing a general bank side cleanup at least four times per year. The City of Plano provides litter sticks and trash bags and with pre-notification will arrange for the pickup of the litter collected at the site. The City of Plano will print and erect the Adopt-a-Creek signs at appropriate public locations near the adopted creek section.

A \$35 participation fee is charged for the year. A \$15 renewable participation fee is charged if the business or organization would like to continue adopting the creek for another year. The funds raised through the fees are used to purchase new litter sticks and litter bags. Litter sticks and trash bags are available at Parkway Service Center, 4120 West Plano Parkway. It is preferable that you pre-arrange pick up of these items so availability can be assured.

If you have questions about water conservation, water quality or the Adopt-a-Creek program, please visit [www.planoenvironmentalwaste.com](http://www.planoenvironmentalwaste.com) and/or call the Water Education Coordinator, Lorrie Reeves at 972-964-4328.

- **Coyotes** - The issue of Coyotes killing pets was brought forth at our meeting. The majority of concerns between domestic and wild animals can be controlled by the use of a leash for pets. However, staff of the Plano Independent School District Outdoor Learning Center provided the following helpful hints to protect pets from predators:

Do's

- Keep small dogs and cats inside at night.
- Keep the covers secured on your trash receptacles.
- Keep your dogs and cats on leashes (as required by city ordinance).
- Contact Animal Services if you spot a coyote in your neighborhood.
- Try to consider that they were here first.

Don'ts

- Feed your pets on the back porch.
- Offer a hungry coyote “dinner on a string” by walking your small dog in wooded areas.
- Approach, chase, make noises at, chunk rocks or otherwise taunt a wandering coyote.
- Approach a coyote if it appears trapped, injured, or sick. Contact Animal Services.
- Ever try to touch a coyote.

Written by Jim Dunlap & Tammy Welch, Living Material Center

These hints and other useful information can be viewed by going to the City's Animal Services web page [www.planotx.org/animal](http://www.planotx.org/animal). As a side note, the City of Plano provides a Dog Park (Jack Carter Dog Park at 6500 Roundrock Trail) that is designed to allow dog owners a place for their pets to exercise off leash.

- **Continued Community Outreach** - City Council is continually seeking and implementing new ways to better connect with citizens. Through working with homeowners associations, Council receives valuable input concerning issues specific to each development.

Quarterly Neighborhood Roundtable meetings also serve as a means to focus on a portion of the City at a time, allowing residents and business owners in a targeted area to share their specific interests and concerns. The Neighborhood Roundtable meetings are advertised on the City's web site, in area newspapers, on cable TV, by email to HOA presidents and Crime Watch Area Coordinators, and by individual post card notices sent to each residence in the targeted area. While the meetings are designed to focus on issues involving the targeted district, everyone is welcome to attend and participate.

In addition, a Multicultural Outreach Roundtable has been formed which seeks input and makes recommendations to the City Council on methods, practices, programs, and other means by which the City of Plano can effectively serve the entire community and meet the objectives of local government. The mission of the roundtable is to partner with City Council and the citizens of Plano encouraging understanding and participation in the government process while meeting the needs and desires of its diverse citizens.

A third outreach program that City Council and I recommend is the Plano Citizens Academy. This academy, open to residents of Plano 18 years and older, is a 10 session program that provides an educational and entertaining overview of all city service departments.

For more information on the above Community Outreach programs, please visit [www.planotx.org/outreach](http://www.planotx.org/outreach) or call 972-941-7747.

On behalf of City Council, I would like to again thank you for taking part in the Neighborhood Roundtable session held on January 26th. It is only through feedback such as yours that we can continue to be the All-America City that attracted so many of us here.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pat Evans". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "P".

Pat Evans  
Mayor