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Re: **East Plano Neighborhood Meeting (January 21, 1999)
Responses to Major Issues and Comments**

Dear

The City Council and I were very pleased with the turnout at our community outreach meeting at the Douglass Center. We learned much from your comments and questions. We apologize for the delay in getting back to you, however we wished to take the time necessary to ensure we brought you the most comprehensive and up-to-date information available. We look forward to working with you to build a stronger city and a better quality of life. Following is a synopsis of the issues discussed as well as some additional information on each topic.

TRAFFIC

Many comments made during the meeting concerned traffic. Rapid growth has increased traffic congestion, and transportation improvements must be balanced between development and need. Traffic flow is being improved through new road construction, intersection improvements and signalization. At this time, the City has a program to install separate right turn lanes at the approaches to all major intersections. Most new roads, including arterial streets, are built by developers as a requirement of city ordinances when they subdivide and develop land. Because private land development is a fragmented process, it takes many years to fully develop the planned arterial street system. Arterial streets are also built by the City. This is a more expensive option because the City pays for right-of-way and improvements with little financial participation by private property owners. Road widening and intersection improvements are also City-initiated projects. City bond programs and funds received from state, county and regional sources are used to pay for these road projects. Project timing and funding are coordinated through the City's Capital Improvement Program.

Traffic signals are essential to managing traffic flow. Most of the city's traffic signals are computer-coordinated with communication among signals accomplished through the TCI network. Signals in some areas of west Plano do not have access to the cable system but are coordinated by computer clocks. The City is in the bidding process at this time to enter into a contract with an agency for the purpose of developing and installing a Spread Spectrum Radio System. This system will allow the dependable communication of all signals in the City of Plano and should be in place by early 2000. Video cameras are used at a number of intersections in the City to monitor traffic flow. Several new cameras will be installed at intersections in the near future. However the use of cameras and photographs for the enforcement of red light violations is not permitted by

Texas State law at this time. When and if this changes, the City will pursue this enforcement option.

Citizens frequently request traffic signals to improve movement in and out of neighborhoods and shopping areas. Traffic signals do improve access, but at a cost to the efficiency of the arterial street system. The City uses criteria based on the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) to determine when a traffic signal is needed at a particular location. Intersections are routinely monitored and signals are installed when the criteria are met. A review of these criteria is currently underway to determine if they should be changed to allow more intersections to qualify for signalization.

Cut-through and speeding traffic within residential areas are both major problems. As traffic congestion builds, people look for alternative routes, often through a neighborhood. The City is actively working with neighborhoods to find solutions to these problems. Education and enforcement are sometimes effective; physical changes to the streets are also a useful tool (i.e., speed humps, which slow traffic and discourage cut-through trips).

Recently, a Traffic Engineer has been hired and specifically assigned to oversee the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program, which works with citizens and homeowners associations on specific traffic problems. If you would like more information on Plano's Neighborhood Traffic Management Program, please call Mr. Antoine Langston, Engineering Department, at (972) 941-7151.

HOUSING ISSUES

Apartment Complexes

Apartment units are inspected whenever complaints are received, and when warranted, the owners are given written notice of non-compliance. Owners are then provided 30 days in which to comply. Cases of non-compliance are referred to the Building Standards Commission for disposition. Municipal court citations may also be served. We are currently conducting research to develop an annual inspection program for all dwelling units in Plano. With respect to aging apartments, funding will be available to the City next year for housing rehabilitation, including apartments, at an interest rate lower than that charged by financial institutions.

Single Family

Habitat for Humanity has completed one house and another is under construction. Casa Dallas has one home currently under construction and another in the permit process. The City purchased the lots for both organizations. City Council has made funds available for the purchase of additional vacant lots in the Douglass area and the area east of the Municipal Center. City staff continues to work with organizations to build homes on the lots. As with aging apartments, funding will be available to the City next year for housing rehabilitation.

ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

- ◆ Performing Arts Center Status Report
Initial planning is currently in progress for the Performing Arts Center. The facility will be located in downtown Plano, adjacent to PISD's Cox Administration Building. At the City Council meeting held on April 5, 1999, the hiring of Theatre Projects Consultants, Inc. was authorized to provide consulting services for the facility. These services include determining facility type and size, preparing a building program, developing facility concepts, assisting in the selection of the design team, and developing the pre-schematic design. The consultant's work is expected to be complete in 6 months. Soon, the City will begin the selection process for the design architect. It is anticipated that the architect will be hired by mid-summer.

The City of Plano has utilized various programs to manage the extraordinary growth we have experienced for the last 30 years. For example, developers may not create subdivisions that do not have basic public facilities such as water and sanitary sewer lines, street access and storm drainage facilities. City policy require developers pay the lion's share of the cost for basic infrastructure improvements through direct construction, water and sewer impact fees and neighborhood park fees. These fees, in addition to capital improvement bonds, have allowed the City to also build the necessary public facilities such as libraries and fire stations to serve the new growth.

There were concerns expressed during our meeting about the number of empty shopping centers in our city. Several factors have contributed to the number of empty shopping centers in Plano. The city still suffers from the overbuilding of the mid-1980's, when many neighborhood centers were built by developers without regard to demand or need. The nature of retailing has also changed dramatically since many of our older centers were built, with retailers now preferring the "big box" store located on a regional highway, rather than locations in traditional neighborhood locations. The city has been fortunate that alternative users, such as churches, the school district and the post office, have retrofitted several of the larger empty stores. The City, through Economic Development Board, works with prospective users to fill empty space. Several of our development regulations have also been changed to allow developers to defer parking and more easily sell individual lots within a shopping center.

The Plano Economic Development Board is developing programs to attract new businesses to eastern Plano, including a major medical facility. However, a recently built hospital at SH 121 and US 75 could impact the market for this type of facility. Of interest to you may be the following new development along US 75 and to the east:

- ◆ Home Depot Expo - southwest corner of US 75 and Plano Parkway
- ◆ Gateway Computers - northeast corner of US 75 and 13th/14th Connector
- ◆ Rooms to Go - east of US 75, north of Republic Drive
- ◆ Best Buy - will move from west side to east side of US 75, south of Parker Road
- ◆ Abuelo's Mexican Restaurant - east of US 75, north of Joe's Crab Shack
- ◆ New Office/Warehouse - southeast corner of Avenue G and Central Parkway East
- ◆ New Shopping Center - southwest corner of Jupiter and Parker Road
- ◆ Various Office/Warehouse Buildings - Avenue N/Precision Drive area

Another concern expressed during our meeting was the lack of barrier walls between developments. The Zoning Ordinance requires screening walls and/or living screens between new industrial development and residential development when a street does not separate the two uses. However, there are several areas in the city where older industrial plants are next to residential areas and no screening is in place. The city randomly monitors these plants to make certain they comply with limitations on noise, odors, dust and other problems.

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. The City strives to inform neighborhoods of proposed development and provide the opportunity for neighborhoods to express their desires and concerns to public decision-making bodies. The City of Plano continues to encourage developers and neighborhoods to openly communicate and seek ways to ensure beneficial and compatible development. With this in mind, the City has initiated a new neighborhood planning program. A Planner has been assigned to work directly with residents and property owners in older neighborhoods to address land use, traffic, code enforcement and other concerns.

Information on requested zoning changes within a particular area is sent to nearby homeowner associations. In addition, information on new zoning and development requests is placed on the City's Internet homepage (www.ci.plano.tx.us) and the Plano cable channels (TCI channels A-30 and B-58), and is also 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, so that citizens may call in to get more information about the proposed zoning action.

The City sends written notices 20 days in advance of the public hearing for a zoning case, although state law only requires 10 days advance notice. The City elected to extend this time so that homeowner groups would have more time to learn the details of the case and meet with the

property owners to discuss their concerns. The notices are sent to property owners within 200 feet of the affected property, as required by current state law.

Below is a list of various media and access information you may find useful in keeping abreast of development activity in our city.

◆ **Publications**

Public hearing notices and meeting agendas are published in the Plano Star Courier (21) days prior to the meeting date, as required by law. The public hearings are held during the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, which meets on the first and third Mondays of each month.

Information is also carried in the Friday edition of the Dallas Morning News, (Page 2 of the Plano Section, Plano City Briefs).

◆ **Cable TV**

Information on upcoming development and zoning cases are listed on Plano's cable channels - A30 (in Plano) and B58 (in Dallas).

◆ **Public Library**

Information on upcoming development and zoning cases are available at all Plano public libraries.

◆ **Internet**

The City of Plano's website address is <http://www.ci.plano.tx.us>.

◆ **Training**

The Planning Department sponsors several classes throughout the year on zoning and development issues. These classes are specifically tailored for homeowner association representatives. If you would like more information regarding these classes, please contact the Planning Department, at (972) 941-7151.

INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRUCTION, REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE

The City's Capital Improvement Program is proactive in keeping the streets in good condition. The City's street repair and widening programs are somewhat spaced throughout the city, when adding the state highways' projects (Spring Creek, Plano Parkway, and Custer Road), it does become a mobility concern. We are trying to keep lane closures to a minimum. To continue our proactive approach, we cannot wait until the state completes its projects. The City is moving forward to keep projects on schedule.

The City's design standards fifteen years ago are not what they are today. We feel this is part of the reason why the city is experiencing pavement failures on certain roadways. Age of the

infrastructure and increased traffic volumes are also contributing to the failures. The standards today are improved and we believe will provide a better product.

There were several specific questions and concerns regarding infrastructure:

◆ **Expansion of Parker Road**

Expansion of Parker Road east of Avenue K was included in the last bond program and will be completely reconstructed as a six-lane road within the next few years.

◆ **Signal Light at Jupiter and Chaparral Road**

The City will be constructing a new traffic signal at the intersection of Jupiter Road and Chaparral Road during calendar year 1999.

◆ **Trash in Streets and Alleys**

The City provides street sweeping along major thoroughfares once per month. Residential streets and alleys are not swept.

◆ **Sidewalks**

Several years ago the City surveyed Douglass Community residents, as additional easements will be necessary for the installation of sidewalks. Many obstructions will have to be removed to install sidewalks. Community support in this effort was lacking and the issue died.

Replacement of the sidewalks on Avenue P is scheduled to be completed by this summer.

Of sidewalks already in existence, the City has made more than 18 miles of repairs in the East Plano area over the past five years.

◆ **Length of Time Required to Repair Streets**

Contractors are given a specific number of working days to complete street work. Rain and private utility company delays do not count against the contractor's deadline. This past year there were delays due to concrete shortages.

◆ **Streetlights on Avenue G and in Wyatt North**

City staff will review the sites and install additional lighting should existing streetlights not meet recommended criteria.

◆ **Drainage on Williamsburg**

The City's Street Division has investigated and necessary repairs should be completed within 60 days.

◆ **Downtown Issues**

The brick street intersections downtown will be completely reworked with bricks within the next few months.

DART Rail will have a downtown stop just north of 15th Place across from the Municipal Center.

All repairs at Haggard Park have been completed.

HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATIONS

Council is continuing to work with homeowners' councils in neighborhoods in order to obtain input from citizens. Additionally, City Council is continually seeking and implementing new ways to better connect with the citizens. A letter has been sent to all homeowner association presidents soliciting their input on ways we may better improve communications and input with homeowner associations.

Y2K

Y2K is a top priority for the City of Plano and its Information Services Department. The City has had a Y2K Project Team in place for more than 14 months. Currently, the project is on schedule. Updates of the team's progress will be submitted to City Council on a monthly basis. Citizens may also check the project's status by visiting the website <http://www.ci.plano.tx.us/y2000.htm>.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND ANIMAL SERVICES

◆ **Rodent Control**

Pesticide licenses held by City Health Department staff restrict all pest control activities to City buildings and/or property. All pesticide applications must be under strict supervision. To report rats in your area or for more information on rodent control, please call the Health Department at (972) 941-7143.

◆ **Mosquitoes**

The Health Department maintains a current log of locations throughout the city, which are conducive to harboring and breeding mosquitoes. Each site is inspected annually and treated with larvacide to reduce mosquito larvae. Citizens may report mosquito activities by calling the Health Department at (972) 941-7143. Complaints will be investigated and addresses placed on a list for spraying.

◆ **Lattimore Concrete**

City staff has worked with Lattimore Concrete to reduce noise and air pollution. Staff recommended improvements that have been completed include: 1) construction of an eight foot concrete barrier on the north and west boundary; 2) installation of a water recycling system; 3) switched from a horn signaling system to a revolving light system to summon trucks; and 4) increased street cleaning activity. City staff will continue to work with Lattimore Concrete to improve operations and ensure compliance.

◆ **Noise Ordinance**

An Ad Hoc Committee has been established to review current performance standards of our noise ordinance. The ultimate goal of the committee is to propose a new noise ordinance for consideration and adoption by the end of September 1999. Please feel free to contact the Health Department at the above listed number to provide input or for more information.

◆ **Animal Services Hours**

A staff member answers Animal Services phones at (972) 941-7205 on Mondays from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. and Tuesday through Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. On Sunday, all calls are answered through the automated system. The automated voice mail is checked every 30 minutes by the Animal Services Officer on duty. If an emergency, the caller should press 0 as directed and the call is placed directly to a police operator who will dispatch the animal related call to the Animal Services Officer on duty. After hours, seven days a week from 11:00 p.m. - 6:30 a.m., a police operator will relay emergency animal calls to the Animal Services Officer on emergency call.

PARKS AND RECREATION

The following Parks and Recreation projects are underway in east Plano:

◆ **Douglas Community Center**

A new addition to the Douglass Community Center, including a gymnasium and additional parking, is planned to begin construction later this year with completion of the building projected in June 2000. The total project budget is \$1.6 million.

◆ **Oak Point Center**

Oak Point Center, a new recreation center with a 50-meter indoor pool, is under construction. Oak Point Park and Nature Preserve in northeast Plano is a 500 acre park that will also include hike and bike trails, equestrian trails, lakes, picnic areas, and a nature preserve.

◆ **Bob Woodruff Park**

Bob Woodruff Park is currently under renovation.

◆ **Shawnee Park**

The Parks and Recreation Department is currently working on plans to improve Shawnee Park and make it more visible and accessible. The extension of Sherwood Drive is under study, however no further action will be taken without additional public input. A multi-use ball court is being considered near the pavilion as improvements are made. The Parks Division has removed debris from the creek in the park.

CRIME - DRUGS

Reports from the Police Department indicate that gang activity in our city continues to be stable and not a growing problem. The Police Department's gang unit continually monitors activity and responds appropriately to any significant problems. The greater danger to the youth in our community is alcohol and drugs, not gangs. As you've read in the papers, Plano has not ignored the drug threat to our youth and community. A major blow in the national war on drugs was delivered this past year in Plano. The Plano Police Department, in conjunction with the US Attorney's Office, used a little known federal statute to attempt to link the delivery of illegal drugs to deaths due to overdoses. This was the first time the statute was used in a case of this magnitude. A federal grand jury returned 36 indictments against 29 individuals involved in conspiracy to deliver and distribute heroin in Plano. Of the 29 arrested, 18 pled guilty and ten of the eleven who went to trial were convicted. Since Plano's drug crisis first surfaced, the community has taken a serious proactive approach to its resolution.

A Police Department program having a positive effect in the east Plano area is the Neighborhood Police Officer (NPO) program. The NPO Unit provides designated neighborhoods with the services of police officers that concentrate their efforts in accordance with the general philosophy of community oriented policing and problem oriented policing. The specific selection of a neighborhood for assignment of a NPO is based on a variety of factors including, but not limited to, crime trends, calls for service statistics, visual blight and renovation/revitalization needs. Neighborhood Police Officers are assigned to a neighborhood on a semi-permanent basis and strive to become familiar with the community and its residents. They provide residents with a central source of assistance for both law enforcement and non-law enforcement type problems.

It is the goal of the NPO Unit to form a partnership with the residents of the community in order to reduce crime and fear of crime as well as to enhance quality of life in the community. Officers assigned to the NPO Unit receive specialized training, equipment and scheduling flexibility to fulfill this goal and are encouraged to be innovative and proactive in problem solving and crime prevention.

The current Plano Police Department NPO Unit is composed of eight police officers and is supervised by a police sergeant. Six officers are assigned to specific neighborhoods (all of which are east of US 75) and the remaining two officers are assigned to perform Directed Problem Solving Projects throughout the city. For more information about the NPO Unit, please contact Sergeant Joe Parks at (972) 941-2527.

The City of Plano continues to be one of the safest cities in the state of Texas and the United States with populations over 100,000 in which to live. Since the 1990 census, the City of Plano has experienced a 70% increase in population. During this same period of time, major crime

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(homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, theft, auto theft) have increased by only 18%. But more importantly with the explosive population growth, the rate of major crime per thousand citizens has actually decreased 28% since 1990. Most recently, Plano was ranked as one of the top 25 safest cities in the U.S. with population over 75,000.

Your City Council places public safety (police and fire) as a high priority and continues to allocate resources to this area during budgetary considerations to ensure we maintain a safe, secure environment for our community.

Again, on behalf of the City Council, thank you for taking part in the Neighborhood Roundtable session. 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.

Best regards,

John Longstreet
Mayor

JL/cp