

May 31, 2000

Re: **South Central Plano Neighborhood Meeting (April 6, 2000)
Responses to Major Issues and Comments**

Dear

The City Council and I were very pleased with the turnout at our community outreach meeting at Haggard Middle School. 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

Two of the three groups assembled at the Roundtable mentioned traffic as one of the most important issues facing Plano today. 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 throughout the City. At this time, the City has a program to install separate right turn lanes at the approaches to all major intersections. Developers as a requirement of city ordinances build most new roads, including arterial streets, 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. The City also builds arterial streets. 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 has entered 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 summer 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. At this time, however, Texas State law does not permit the use of cameras and photographs for the enforcement of red light violations. When and if this changes, the City will pursue this enforcement option.

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.

A Traffic Engineer is specifically assigned to oversee the City's Neighborhood Traffic Management program. This program works with citizens and homeowner associations on specific traffic problems such as determining the need for speed bumps in areas. If you would like more information, please call Mr. Antoine Langston, Engineering Department, at (972) 941-7151.

Zoning and Development Activity

Of note is the recently approved new zoning category, Corridor Commercial, along U.S. 75. This new zoning will provide for greater uniformity including increased setback ratios for taller buildings from residential districts and the deletion of major warehousing and industrial facilities as permitted uses. Also of note are the approved Residential Adjacency Standards for new development in proximity to residential districts. These regulations are intended to push certain uses or activities farther away from residential areas or require them to mitigate potential problems through design and layout of buildings.

With regard to retail centers, the City is conducting a study of ways to increase the potential for using and re-using under-used and/or vacant centers as well as for undeveloped properties originally planned for retail use. This plan will examine market conditions, zoning, and other factors that may be affecting the use of these properties and recommend ordinance changes and other actions that the City might undertake. Since these properties are privately owned, the City's actions must be aimed at encouraging developers to find more productive uses for these properties. Within the South Central Plano area, a Kroger Store is currently planned for the southwest corner of Custer and Parker.

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 web site 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.

Housing Issues

Apartments - The City Council formed a Multi-Family Dwellings Task Force in February 1998 in response to concerns about the impact of increased apartment development on the community's quality of life. The task force presented their recommendations in the form of a resolution to City Council in August 1998, and Council approved the task force's Multi-Family Guidelines at that meeting. The Multi-Family Guidelines establish policy for rezoning property for multi-family uses, limits the concentration and spacing of multi-family developments, and encourages affordable single-family housing alternatives. Since the adoption of the guidelines, several properties have been rezoned from multi-family to other residential and non-residential uses. The actual amount of land zoned for apartments is less today than it was ten years ago.

Senior Citizen Housing - City staff and the Planning & Zoning Commission have discussed senior housing with Council. The Planning and Zoning Commission is currently reviewing the Zoning Ordinance with regards to senior housing. The current ordinance addresses long-term care and senior independent living (apartments for the elderly) but does not adequately address assisted-living facilities, continuing care facilities and other alternatives for senior housing. It is anticipated draft revisions to the Zoning Ordinance will be completed by the end of this month. A public hearing for consideration of the amendments should occur around mid-June.

Neighborhood Preservation - The City currently offers several programs to assist residents in the preservation of neighborhoods. The first program is the Housing Rehabilitation program that offers assistance to low to moderate income persons for the rehabilitation of their home. The second program is the First-Time Homebuyers program that offers down payment assistance for first-time homebuyers in an effort to increase homeownership levels in neighborhoods. The third program is the Neighborhood Planning Program that is a comprehensive evaluation of a neighborhood by its residents resulting in a long-term plan for neighborhood preservation and improvement. All of these programs focus on partnerships between the City of Plano and the residents of a neighborhood to improve, preserve and enhance our community.

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 was sent early last year to all homeowner association presidents soliciting their input on ways we might better improve communications with homeowner associations.

Infrastructure Construction, Repair and Maintenance

The City's Capital Improvement Program is proactive in keeping the streets in good condition. On April 24, 2000, City Council awarded a contract for the repair of streets, alley, and sidewalks and the construction of barrier-free ramps in the area bounded by Alma Road on the east, Cross Bend and Parker to the south, Custer Road on the west, and Spring Creek Parkway on the north. This \$1.3 million project will replace 20,000 square yards of residential streets and alleys.

Specifically, the widening of Independence, Parker to Spring Creek, should be completed soon and then street lighting will be back in service. Construction will then move north from Spring Creek to Legacy. This section will include the widening to six lanes and the reconstruction of the bridge at Maumelle where traffic will be reduced to one lane each direction until the east side bridge is completed, then two lanes in each direction will be provided. The entire project is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

With regard to road repair safety, the City has been looking at current construction sites to see if additional barricading is needed. All Public Works and Engineering roadway projects require the contractor to meet and conform to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. If you feel additional lighting or barricading is needed at a particular location, please call the Engineering Department at (972) 941-7152. Field inspection will respond and implement appropriate intervention to enhance the safety of motorists and pedestrians.

Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Department attempts to proactively maintain park sites and facilities. Replacement and repair of outdated large equipment is evaluated and the priority needs are placed in the budget. If approved, the replacement is implemented during that fiscal year. Currently, there is a major effort to replace old trashcans with clean, modern receptacles that can eventually be emptied using an automated process. This is a multi-year replacement program due to the quantity and cost. Park benches are maintained or replaced on an as needed basis. Pesticide applications are made at minimum rates in order to be sensitive to the environment. Fire ants are typically controlled with baits and then spot treated on an as needed basis. Service requests for maintenance can be made by calling (972) 941-7263.

The below listed park improvements are planned for the South Central Plano area:

Caddo Park

Construction is underway to make the pedestrian bridge within the park wheelchair accessible. Steps on the bridge are being removed and a ramp is being installed.

Chisholm Trail

Spring Creek Parkway Underpass

Work has begun to improve the trail underpass at Spring Creek Parkway. The bridge and new trail underpass were designed by DART and constructed by the Texas Department of Transportation. The underpass has been closed for several months due to standing water on the trail. The trail is being modified to eliminate the standing

water problem. The east side should be open in June. Trail modifications will eliminate the standing water problem, yet because the trail is within the flood plain it will always go under water during heavy rain. This is true of all trail underpasses in the park system.

Other Repairs and Erosion Control

Work will begin this summer on replacing deteriorating sections of trail and repairing erosion problems along Chisholm Trail. Trail replacements between Cross Bend Drive and Custer Road and erosion improvements at the Parker Road underpass will be included in these projects. Additional Trail replacements and erosion repairs are planned each year for the next three years.

Youth Activities - Oak Point Center, a new recreation center and 50-meter indoor pool, opened on March 18, 2000. The addition of this facility greatly expands the Park and Recreation Department's ability to provide new youth activities. In addition to Oak Point Center, there are three other school-based recreation centers, one stand-alone recreation center, one community center, two indoor pools, one outdoor pool, and one tennis center. Future proposed facilities include another indoor pool, tennis center, one more school-based recreation center, and many additional athletic fields. A major gymnasium/youth sports center is also planned for construction in Carpenter Park by a local nonprofit youth sports organization. The Parks and Recreation Department's "Leisure" brochure lists hundreds of activities for youth every three months. The recreation staff is continually developing new programs targeted for Plano's youth. Resident input on new program and activity ideas is encouraged. Please call (972) 941-7250 to provide suggestions.

Public Safety

Traffic Violations - One of the issues brought forth in our meeting is that the City should take a tougher stance on traffic violations. I wish to assure you, City Council and the Police Department place traffic safety as a high priority. As such, the following efforts have been made:

- ◆ Two additional motorcycle officers were added to the Police Department's Traffic Unit last year.
- ◆ The Police Department has two unmarked vehicles on the street which are used to target aggressive driving.
- ◆ For the period October 1997 through June 1998, 28,000 traffic citations were issued. For the period October 1998 through June 1999, 42,800 traffic citations were issued. This amounts to a 53% increase in citations written.
- ◆ The Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) grant has been renewed for the Police Department this year. Officers working under this grant target the top 20 intersections in the city and cite drivers for hazardous violations occurring at those intersections.

- ◆ Last year, the Police Department was involved in the production of a video related to the hazards of red light running and speeding. This video, entitled, "Heed the Warning" is shown at numerous businesses throughout the city as well as local schools and drivers education facilities. The educational video is also shown on PTN repeatedly. Furthermore, the Plano Police Department presents this video at two classes per month to violators who have received citations for running lights and speeding. These classes are required of those drivers choosing to take deferred adjudication.
- ◆ By this time next year, every patrol vehicle is expected to be equipped with moving radar.

If you have a Special Enforcement Request regarding a hazardous traffic location, please call the Traffic Unit at (972) 964-4236 or go to the Police Department's web site at www.planopolice.org.

Drugs and Crime - 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.

Crime Watch - The Crime Prevention Unit of the Police Department is very active with neighborhood Crime Watch. If you would like to join your neighborhood's Crime Watch 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.

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 (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.

SPECIFIC TOPICS OF CONCERN

Noise Ordinance - Revisions to the noise ordinance were adopted at the December 13th City Council meeting. Basically, the revisions prohibit the operation of power equipment, including construction equipment, within 150 feet of a residential area between the hours of 10 p.m. and 7

a.m. With regard to boomboxes, the noise ordinance prohibits the operation of radios or similar devices in a manner as to unreasonably disturb or interfere with the peace, comfort, and repose of neighboring persons of ordinary sensibilities. Disturbing the peace complaints are addressed by the Police Department, however any citizen may also file a complaint with Municipal Court. As an added note, noise made by trains is exempt from this ordinance due to safety reasons.

Maintenance of Creeks - The Drainage Division of the Public Works Department maintains approximately 107 miles of drainage ways. Twenty-three miles of these drainage ways are improved with reinforced concrete or gabions (rock in wire baskets). These improved sections are inspected each year and repaired as necessary. These drainage ways are inventoried annually, and in response to the erosion of some sections of natural channels, the City has improved these by installing gabion baskets. The eighty-four miles of natural channels receive a herbicide treatment and are cleaned as necessary. The City also mows these drainage ways and other easements.

Transition from Growth to Maintenance Mode - The transition has already begun. Over the past four years, the City has spent almost \$14 million in pavement, sidewalk and screening wall repairs. The majority of these repairs have been in the areas near Central Expressway. In fiscal year 1999-2000, approximately \$7.5 million will be expended for the maintenance of the City's aging infrastructure.

Being at 90% build-out, the City of Plano has begun the planning process for the development of a strategy for the maintenance of its entire infrastructure. This process involves meetings with each City Department to explore anticipated effects of maturity on various aspects of the City, the changes in City services that will be required, and changes in the Department's organizational structure. After completion of departmental meetings, recommendations with regard to a strategy to prepare for this transition will be prepared and presented to City Council. Components of the strategy will address the City's street, drainage, traffic control, water, sewage, solid waste, recreational, and emergency systems. One facet of the strategy will include the exploration of a water conservation program in the City of Plano.

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,

Rick Neudorff
Mayor Pro tem

RN/cp