

August 11, 1998

Re: Far West Plano Neighborhood Meeting (June 11, 1998)  
Responses to Major Issues and Comments

Dear

The City Council and I were very pleased with the large turnout at our community outreach meeting at Presbyterian Hospital. We learned much from your comments and questions. 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.

#### **GOVERNANCE**

During the meeting, several questions were raised about the current city council structure, specifically as it relates to "districts." The Plano City Charter provides for the election of a mayor and seven council members. The mayor and three of the council seats are elected at large. The remaining four council seats are tied to four geographic districts of approximately equal population size. A person elected to a district seat must reside in that district but is elected by voters citywide. The current council structure was created in 1993 through a charter amendment election. A charter review commission recommended the new structure believing it ensured geographic representation while maintaining accountability to all voters. In accordance with the district ordinance resulting from the charter election, the districts were redrawn within the past two years, and a councilmember designated from the new "far west" Plano district was elected just this past May. Pat Evans is that representative, and we anticipate that this newly formed district will provide for many of the concerns relative to representation.

Additionally, the City Council is continually seeking and implementing new ways to better connect with the citizens. Since the meeting at Presbyterian, we have scheduled six additional neighborhood roundtables throughout the city, including a return to far west Plano, tentatively scheduled for October 1999.

## TRAFFIC

Many comments made during the meeting concerned traffic. Rapid growth has increased traffic congestion, and transportation improvements have lagged behind traffic growth. Traffic flow is being improved through new road construction, intersection improvements and signalization. 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. A list of the major projects scheduled west of Preston Road is provided below.

- Park Boulevard from Plano Parkway to Marsh Lane – Construction of a six-lane thoroughfare, scheduled to begin in November 1998 and be completed in November 1999. Completion of this roadway will ease capacity problems in this area. Traffic signal coordination can be fine-tuned following completion of the project.
- Parker Road, Sleepy Hollow to Preston Road - The third lane on Parker Road from Sleepy Hollow to Preston Road is now under construction, and should be open by mid-August. The intersection of Parker Road and Sleepy Hollow was previously studied for a signal, but did not meet the required criteria. A new street connection to Parker Road, opposite Silver Creek Drive, is currently under construction just east of Sleepy Hollow. This intersection will be signalized when completed and after meeting volume requirements.
- Parkwood Extension north of Park Blvd - Construction will take place as the adjacent property develops, and will be paid for by the property owner. The timing is unknown at this time.
- Plano Parkway widening from Preston Road to the Tollway - Construction should be completed in September 1998. Completion of this roadway will ease capacity problems in this area. Traffic signal coordination can be fine-tuned following completion of the project.
- Preston/Park intersection improvements - Design of at-grade improvements is now underway. Plans should be completed by the end of 1998. Construction is scheduled to begin in early 1999, with completion by late summer 1999. The signal light at Highland Drive and Preston Road will be installed in October 1998.
- SH 190/President George Bush Freeway - Construction from Midway Road to Alma Road is scheduled for completion by December 1999.
- Spring Creek Parkway from the Tollway to Midway Road - Construction of one side of Spring Creek Parkway and four lanes of Midway Road is scheduled to begin in November 1998 and be completed within eight to ten months.
- Spring Creek Parkway from Midway Road to SH 121 – Construction of a six-lane divided thoroughfare should begin in spring 1999 and be completed in summer 2000.

- Willowbend Drive north of Parker Road – The construction of Willow Bend Drive, north of Parker Road, is scheduled to begin in early 1999 and be completed before school starts in August 1999.

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 plans to improve signal system communication through the use of radio-based technology. This improvement should be in place by early 2000.

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 and traffic islands, which slow traffic and discourage cut-through trips). If you would like more information on Plano's neighborhood traffic management program, please call Mr. Antoine Langston, Engineering Department, at 972/461-7151.

### **ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY**

West Plano has changed greatly over the last ten years. Subdivisions, retail centers, offices and medical facilities have developed rapidly throughout the area. Development activity is often upsetting to established neighborhoods, and as information can sometimes be difficult to obtain, this can lead to inaccurate information being circulated. On the other hand, when communications are strong among developers, neighborhoods and the City, most issues are successfully resolved. Projects such as the Walmart at Park Boulevard and Preston Road, the Cinemark Theatre and the Tom Thumb Grocery at Parker Road and the Tollway are prime examples of the benefits of good communication.

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 will continue to encourage developers and neighborhoods to openly communicate and seek ways to ensure beneficial and compatible development.

### **Ways to stay informed:**

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](http://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.

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 Mr. John Lettelier, Planning Department, at 972/461-7151.

- ◆ When in doubt, please feel free to call the Planning Department (planning, development, and zoning) at 972/461-7151, or the Engineering Department (street construction, traffic questions) at 972/461-7152.

**OTHER ISSUES**

**Tollway Corridor Status**

In 1995, the City began working with property owners and homeowner groups on both sides of the Tollway to devise new zoning districts for the Tollway corridor. The existing zoning was a

mixture of districts allowing uses from high-rise office and retail centers to building materials sales and major automotive repair. The new districts reduced the overall range of allowed uses and increased setbacks and screening requirements for loading docks, service and storage areas. Most importantly, the new zoning increased setbacks for taller buildings from the residential areas that abut both the east and west sides of the Tollway. City Council approved the new districts in April 1996.

A special set of thoroughfare standards was also approved at that same time. These standards require more distance between driveways, additional distance from exit and entrance ramps, and deceleration lanes for each driveway along the Tollway frontage roads. The City recently adopted Design Guidelines and Streetscape Plans addressing building orientation, screening of service and loading areas, and the treatment of landscaping along streets.

### Apartment Development

The vast majority of current multi-family development is taking place on land zoned in the early 1980s. This is particularly true of development in the Preston Road corridor. From January 1987 through December 1997, there was actually a decrease in land zoned for multi-family use. Current policies, including those recommended by the Multi-family Development Task Force, are aimed at reducing the concentrations of apartments in any one location. An exception to the limitation on concentration is recommended only for mixed-use or "new urbanism" projects which combine housing, employment, shopping, and other services into a unified development. On August 3, 1998, Council adopted the report of the Multi-family Dwellings Task Force, and directed appropriate boards, commissions and staff to prepare any necessary document or procedure changes to implement the report's recommendations.

The key aspects of the report were:

- A policy recommending no single- or multi-family development within 1200 feet of SH 212
- A policy reducing the total number of units in one area to 500 and increasing the separation between developments to 1500 feet
- A program for informing the school districts when any zoning changes may increase the yield of school age children
- A program for inspecting residential units to address health, safety and long-term structural viability
- A policy limiting new multi-family zoning to special mixed-use development projects involving employment, shopping, and residences, or in situations where multi-family is the only viable use for a particular tract of land

Apartments in Plano are built in compliance with the 1997 Uniform Building Code. Prior to the issuance of a permit, the plans go through a comprehensive review process conducted by experienced staff. Throughout construction, the project is inspected at critical intervals to insure quality work. Plano codes impose a higher building standard than other do some other area communities, including residential sprinkler systems and additional soundproofing between units. Additionally, our zoning requirements do not allow as great a density of units as is allowed in other cities. The result is a quality product with pleasing landscaping and amenities

such as pools and health clubs. By comparing rental rates of apartments in Plano to those in other communities, one can see that these are indeed at the upper end of the rental spectrum.

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.

### Library Development

The City is currently in the preliminary planning stages for a new 30,000 square foot library to be constructed at the southwest corner of Windhaven Parkway and Communications Parkway. Construction should take place within the next four years.

The new Maribelle Davis Library, located at 7501 Independence Parkway at Caravan Drive, will celebrate its official opening on August 17, 1998.

### Parks and Recreation

An indoor/outdoor pool at the Windhaven Park/Plano West Senior High School site is planned for development within the next four to six years. Final location and design of the facility will be planned when funding is available in the next bond election for the pool project. Opportunities for community input will be provided at the appropriate time. The concept for the future pool is for an indoor facility that can have shared use with the Plano West Senior High swim team, City of Plano Swimmers, and the general public. Outdoor leisure pool elements will also be considered for inclusion in the project.

A new lighted tennis center is planned at Windhaven Park in the next four to six years. Planning for the tennis center may coincide with the plans for the new swimming pool.

Plans for improvements at Indian Creek Park have been developed, and the project is currently out to bid. The project will include additional walkways and improved turf areas on the slopes. Construction should be completed by the end of this year.

There are new greenbelt/trail areas planned near Midway Road and future Spring Creek Parkway. A new neighborhood park with playground and practice areas near Midway Road and McKamy Road will be completed this year, and another school-based recreation center is planned at Shepton High School. Other new parks and recreation services that are planned within the next four to six years include approximately 17 additional baseball and softball fields to be developed in existing parks on Preston Meadow Drive and on Hedgcoxe Road.

### Tollway Mall

Taubman Centers, Inc. is currently discussing with city staff plans to develop a shopping mall at the northwest corner of Park Boulevard and the Dallas North Tollway. The proposed mall would

contain 1.5 million square feet of space anchored by four or more major department stores. An opening date has not been established.

### Road Conditions

There are sections of Plano Parkway between Preston Road and the Tollway which have deteriorated. These sections are scheduled to be replaced as part of the Plano Parkway widening project, which will be completed late this summer. The section of Plano Parkway east of Preston Road to Alma Drive, which is being widened by TxDOT, will also have the deteriorated pavement sections repaired as part of that project.

### Safety at Arbor Hills Nature Preserve

The Plano Police Department and the Parks and Recreation Department have on-going discussions about park safety and security issues. Requests for police resources to specifically patrol park areas (including the Arbor Hills Nature Preserve) have been included in the proposed FY 1998-99 budget. Police patrols would interact with park staff and citizens on issues as they arise. Additional lighting and safety measures will be considered in the development of the next bond election.

### Gang Activity

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 recently right here 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. Since Plano's drug crisis first surfaced, the community has taken a serious proactive approach to its resolution.

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

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