

October 9, 2000

Re: **Far West Plano Neighborhood Meeting (August 3, 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 Presbyterian Hospital Plano. 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**

As voiced at the meeting, two of the most important issues facing Plano today are traffic congestion and traffic violations.

**Congestion** - 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. Currently, most of the city's traffic signals are computer-coordinated with communication among signals accomplished through the TCI network. The City has recently 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 will improve the City's ability to use signal-timing patterns that can change as the amount of daily traffic congestion changes. This system should be in place by year-end 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. These criteria were recently revised 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 traffic calming devices in areas. If you would like more information, please call Mr. Antoine Langston, Engineering Department, at (972) 941-7151.

**Violations** - It was also voiced that the City should begin taking 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 new initiatives have been recently implemented:

- ◆ **Two additional motorcycle officers have been approved for fiscal year 2001.** - Motorcycle officers are extremely effective at traffic enforcement and the Department will have a total of nine with the new additions.
- ◆ **Red Light Hotline** – As of October 2, 2000, citizens can call directly to the Traffic Unit at (972) 941-7615 and report motorists running red lights. The Department will identify the registered owner of the vehicle and send them a letter outlining the complaint and explaining the program.
- ◆ **Red Light/Speeding Pledge Card** – The Department is educating citizens by asking them to read a short narrative describing the red light and speeding problems in our community and the consequences of these violations. Citizens are asked to sign a card pledging they will drive courteously and not violate traffic laws.
- ◆ **Warning Signs** – Red warning signs have been placed at the top 10 red light crash intersections in the city, indicating the number of red light citations issued at that particular intersection to date. Additional signs will be placed at all city limit sites in the near future. These signs will be updated quarterly.
- ◆ **Decoy Patrol Car Program** – The Police Department has increased its enforcement and visibility at high accident locations throughout the city. Unmanned patrol cars will

be strategically positioned near these locations. This will allow traffic officers freedom to work enforcement elsewhere and still provide a deterrent effect in high violation areas. Rotated on a regular basis, violators will not know if the intersection they approach is monitored by a manned or unmanned squad car.

### **Zoning and Development Activity**

The City's Comprehensive Plan addresses the appropriate locations for commercial growth. Large concentrations of commercial development are recommended along the major freeways, with smaller neighborhood shopping centers (such as the corner at Parker Road and Midway Road) to be located in residential areas. Right now, the market for retail development is strong along the Dallas North Tollway, as evidenced by the construction of the Shops at Willow Bend regional mall and the Super Target shopping center.

The City of Plano has utilized various programs to manage the extraordinary growth that we have experienced for the last thirty years. For example, developers may not create new residential or commercial additions that do not have basic public facilities such as water and sanitary sewer lines, street access and storm drainage facilities. City policies require that the 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.

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. 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.

Information regarding 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 home page [www.planotx.org](http://www.planotx.org) 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. Notices are also sent to the presidents of

homeowner associations that are within 1500 feet of any request for rezoning. The president of the Plano Homeowners Council receives a notice of all zoning cases that have been requested.

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

- ◆ **Publications**  
Information is 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). Planning & Zoning Commission meetings are broadcast live every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at 7 p.m. Plans are underway to begin live broadcasting of the P & Z Worksessions as well.
- ◆ **Public Library**  
Information on upcoming development and zoning cases is available at all Plano public libraries.
- ◆ **Internet**  
The City of Plano's web site address is <http://www.planotx.org>. A list of new development applications and zoning applications can be found on the City's web page under the "Meetings/Agendas" section. Click on "Tentative Items for Future Meetings" to access this list. The list is available approximately two weeks before the cases are scheduled for the Planning & Zoning Commission agenda.
- ◆ **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. The task force report recommended policies for rezoning property for multi-family uses, limiting the concentration and spacing of developments, and encouraged affordable single-family 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.

Incidentally, the City issued no permits for new apartment units during the first six months of 2000. This reflects a general downturn in the apartment market in the region. Two properties zoned for multi-family were recently developed for patio homes and townhouses instead of apartments.

**Neighborhood Preservation in East Plano** - 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 last year to all homeowner association presidents soliciting their input on ways we might better improve communications with homeowner associations.

It was brought to my attention at this Neighborhood meeting that the past few roundtables have been scheduled in conflict with the Homeowners Council. Neighborhood Roundtable meetings will be scheduled on a day other than the first Thursday of the month, to avoid this conflict in the future.

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

The City's Capital Improvement Program is proactive in keeping the streets in good condition. Proposed street improvements for the Far West Plano area include:

- ◆ **Park Boulevard** - The full intersection at Midway Road was recently opened. The entire project should be completed by the end of the year.
- ◆ **Dallas North Tollway Service Road** – Widening from Plano Parkway to Parker Road. Should be completed in Spring 2001.
- ◆ **Chapel Hill Road** – Construction of the south side from the Tollway to Parkwood. Should be completed in early 2001.
- ◆ **Parker Road** – Widening to six lanes from Midway to east of the Tollway. Should be completed Summer 2001. Beginning January 2001 - widening and extension of Parker Road from Midway Road to Dozier Road. Should be completed in Fall 2001.

- ◆ **Spring Creek** – From S.H. 121 to Midway Road will be constructed as a six lane thoroughfare and completed by Summer 2001.

**Widening of Midway Road** – The adopted land use in the area (retail, residential, office) will generate a significant amount of traffic over the next 10 – 15 years as surrounding land is developed. City planners, having identified a road network to safely accommodate the anticipated traffic volumes, specified which roads would carry successively higher traffic volumes. Midway Road is planned and designed to carry relatively large amounts of traffic to and from the area. If this road is not available to serve in this manner, drivers will use residential roads as short-cuts to their destinations, community traffic congestion and delays will increase to intolerable levels, access to business and retail centers will be difficult, and overall, the area's economic health will suffer. With this in mind, the following is planned for Midway Road.

- ◆ **Midway Road** – From Park Boulevard to Plano Parkway – widening to six lanes to be completed by Summer 2001. Midway Road from International Parkway south to the railroad, including the bridge over the railroad and the missing east side, widening will begin in early 2001 and completed in Summer 2001. Midway Road widening from Plano Parkway to Parker Road will begin Summer 2001 and completed by end of year 2001.

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.

A new web page dedicated to the City of Plano's Capital Improvement Program features a status interactive map. This web page offers citizens information on street closures, status of CIP projects, and City contacts for each project. You can find this information at <http://192.105.235.23/apps/cip/map.htm>.

## **Parks and Recreation**

**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** – I would like to re-emphasize City Council's recent initiatives aimed at reducing red light and speeding violations in our City. City Council is dedicated to resolving these important safety concerns by supporting the Police Department with the following efforts:

- addition of two motorcycle officers this fiscal year;
- launching of a red light hotline;
- creation of a red light/speeding pledge card to educate citizens and gain compliance;
- installation of red light warning signs at the top 10 crash intersections; and
- implementation of a decoy patrol car program.

**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**

**Long Term Master Planning** – The City of Plano has a long tradition of comprehensive planning, dating back to 1963 when the first master plan was adopted. A citizens committee helped formulate the present Comprehensive Plan in 1986. The Land Use and Transportation Chapters of this plan are updated every two years, in recognition of the city's fast paced rate of growth. Community meetings are held to review these updates, which are then adopted by the City Council. The city's long term planning efforts are now turning to issues that will confront Plano as a mature city.

**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.

**Crosswalks** – Studies continue to show that more accidents occur in marked pedestrian crosswalks than unmarked crosswalks. The reason for this occurrence is that pedestrians, with a false sense of security, step out into the path of oncoming vehicles believing the driver will stop for them. Moreover, although Texas State Motor Vehicle Laws require a driver to stop for pedestrians waiting to cross a road at an intersection, they very often do not.

The City typically installs marked crosswalks at locations where there is potential to generate significant levels of pedestrian traffic (school walking routes, major retail and community centers, etc.). Any citizen can request the installation of a marked crosswalk by calling (972) 941-7151.

**Traffic Signals – Windhaven at Communications and Windhaven at Midway**. The installation of a traffic signal requires the fulfillment of specific warrants that consider the amount of peak hour traffic volume, traffic accidents, vehicle approach speeds, and delay. A cursory review of the two intersections indicates that the warrant(s) will not be met. City staff has scheduled a detailed analysis of these intersections and will monitor them and other local intersections on an annual basis. Once warrants are met, the City will move quickly to have signals installed.

This year the City will install or upgrade 17 traffic signals as part of its accelerated traffic signal construction project. The City has implemented procedures to identify and construct signals in a short amount of time. A traffic engineer is being hired this year to specifically oversee the development of an annual listing of high accident locations (HAL), recommend solutions, and program them into the Capital Improvement Program.

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Intersections scheduled to receive traffic signals by the end of the year are Communications Parkway at Parker Road and Park Boulevard at Parkwood Boulevard.

**DART West Plano Transit Center** – City staff will continue their coordination with DART, City leaders, and TxDOT officials planning for this much needed station. Several proposed sites are currently under review and the DART Board should select a site for further development by end of year 2000.

**Outside Mall Design Character** – The Shops at Willow Bend and the attached anchor stores will be built of high quality materials, primarily brick and native stone. The outparcel development will be controlled by the Taubman Company. Mall developers usually have high standards that they apply to outparcel development, since it serves as the front door to the mall itself. The outparcel properties do fall under the City's Tollway Commercial zoning district, and must meet specific building material percentages of brick, native stone or glass for each façade. City staff will also be reviewing façade plans to insure compatibility between the outparcel developments and the mall itself.

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,

Jeran Akers  
Mayor

JA/cp