



September 22, 2006

**Re: District 4 Neighborhood Roundtable Meeting (August 24, 2006)
Response to Issues and Comments**

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

Lee Dunlap
Place 8

Thomas H. Muehlenbeck
City Manager

Greetings:

Thank you very much for your attendance at the District 4 Neighborhood Roundtable meeting held on Thursday, August 24, 2006 at the W.O. Haggard Library. 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, staff provided briefings on both the upcoming budget and the current water restrictions. For more details, please log on to <http://www.plano.gov/Departments/Budget/> for budget information and <http://www.plano.gov/Departments/Water/Water+Quality+Education/2006+Drought+Information/> for water restriction information. Discussion questions listing topics which may be of concern to you were distributed asking for your feedback. We discovered that traffic safety with special interest regarding crosswalks, are of great importance to you. Property standards remain a concern to our citizens, along with construction issues. Pet owner responsibility, air quality and immigration issues were also among the issues brought to our attention through the discussion questions.

The following is a synopsis of the above issues as well as additional information pertinent to the District 4 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, 204 traffic signals are coordinated during peak travel times throughout the City. Timing plans are changed throughout the day to minimize overall vehicle stops and delay. Last fall, staff completed upgrading all traffic signals with new traffic control technology. The new equipment increases 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. 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 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 2005, the Plano Police Department conducted 61,141 traffic contacts that resulted in some form of enforcement action. From those contacts 25,543 speeding citations were issued and 4881 red light citations were issued.

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 2005, 14,715 citations were issued for no insurance. Of those, 780 were issued at accident scenes. Through May 2006, 6391 citations have already been issued for no insurance. 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 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 <https://forms.plano.gov/police/ser.htm> or by stopping in at the main station at 909 14th Street or the Joint Use Facility at 7501A Independence Parkway.

Specific Areas of Concern

Traffic Enforcement at Harrington Elementary – Traffic issues are addressed through a combination of enforcement and education. Officers monitor areas of concern for problems and then take action, issuing citations or warnings as appropriate. All elementary schools are locations we monitor closely and are priorities for Patrol and Traffic officers. This location has

been entered into our Special Enforcement Request database and will be assigned to the beat Patrol officers and Traffic officers for follow up.

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.

- **Criminal activity in the general area** – Below are the crime statistics for District 4. We would ask that every citizen act as the eyes and ears for the police. Report suspicious activity to the police immediately and protect yourself and your property by following some simple rules. Lock doors, do not leave valuables in plain view and be aware of your surroundings.

July 1, 2005 - June 30, 2006	Offenses for District 4	Offenses Citywide	Percentage
Murder	0	4	0%
Rape	13	52	25%
Robbery	20	137	15%
Aggravated Assault	126	584	22%
Burglary	274	1,308	21%
Larceny/Theft	1,305	6,540	20%
MVT	100	528	19%
Population	60,531	252,950	24%

- **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. 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.

Specific Areas of Concern

What is being done about illegal aliens?

Enforcement authority for Immigration law is a federal issue, and rests with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Local agencies do not have authority to enforce these laws, however the Plano Police Department has always worked closely with ICE when we encounter someone we suspect is an illegal alien that has been arrested for a Class B misdemeanor or above. In these situations we contact ICE, and they can determine if an immigration hold on the person is appropriate. This relationship ensures a timely and efficient review of the immigration status of persons arrested by Plano PD, and the appropriate referral of the person to the criminal court system and/or the federal immigration system. There has been a designated liaison from ICE working with Plano PD for a number of years.

Why is the fine connected with running a red light via a "Red Light Camera" so much lower than the fine connected with violating water restrictions? Who sets the fines and can they be changed?

There is a \$75 civil penalty in connection with the Red Light Camera violations. This is not a fine, it is a civil penalty administered by the Police Department. The municipal court has no involvement in the Red Light Camera program or its fines and fees. A citizen may appeal an adverse ruling by the administrative hearing officer for review by the Municipal Judge, but the civil penalties and fees are set by city ordinance.

The fine and court costs for the offense of running a red light total \$195. The fine and court costs for the first violation of the water restriction ordinance total \$157. The penalty range for violations of the Drought Contingency Plan was set by the City Council as a fine of not less than \$1 nor more than \$2,000, plus court costs.

The Chief Municipal Judge sets the fines for violations of city ordinances and state laws after giving consideration to the maximum fine that could be imposed and to the danger the violation imposes to citizens. The fine for a red light violation is set at \$100 or 50% of the state imposed maximum \$200 fine due to the imminent threat running a red light poses. The fine for a first offense of the water restriction also is set at \$100 because of the higher maximum fine that could be imposed. Fines, but not court costs, may be changed by the judge presiding over a trial or by the jury deciding the case.

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.

- **Water Issues** – The City of Plano declared Stage 3 of its Drought Contingency Plan on June 19, 2006. Information on the drought is available at <http://www.plano.gov/Departments/Water/Water+Quality+Education/2006+Drought+Information/> 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. This information is also routinely aired on Plano Television Network, channel A30.

Specific Areas of Concern

When will the roadwork on Alma be completed?

The progress and daily activity scheduling of workers is the responsibility of the contractor. The contractor has indicated they should be completed with the pavement replacement soon and ready for the asphalt and concrete overlays beginning the week of September 18.

Why do some street construction projects take so much longer than others?

As we bid each project there are a certain number of days allocated to the contractor to complete the project. Some contractors are more aggressive in completing the work but on almost all projects there are periods of time when little work is taking place. If the contractor exceeds the allocated time he is assessed penalties.

What are the procedures for getting a screening wall's height increased?

The city only requires screening walls when lots back to major thoroughfares and where commercial and multi-family back to single-family subdivisions. Screening walls are limited to a minimum 6 feet in height and a maximum of 8 feet in height. Walls taller than 8 feet are not as stable and wind loads become a greater factor to deal with. The city has for many years encouraged developers to provide landscape screens instead of brick or concrete walls. The shrubs will grow taller than 8 feet and will provide better screening over the long term. Landscape screens are also not as expensive for the city to maintain over the long run.

Screening walls are installed by developers when a residential or commercial project is built, and must meet height requirements of 6/8 feet. The city does not have a program to come back in and raise the height of screening walls after construction.

More street lights are needed on some streets, such as Springbrook Drive.

The city has standard street light spacing such as at intersections and on 600 foot spacing or mid block. We have plans to reconstruct Springbrook next year and we will look at the street lighting to bring it up to standard. A quick look indicates there are already lights at most intersections but some may need to be added in curves or on long sections.

How are ordinances regarding noise from construction and times and days when construction can and cannot be done enforced?

Complaints about violations of this ordinance are handled by contacting the workers and advising them of the ordinance requirements. Citations are issued as necessary to gain compliance and officers will monitor the work sites to ensure compliance.

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 20 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, 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://pdf.plano.gov/planning/DEVREV/Revlist.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 a 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 <http://www.plano.gov/Departments/Neighborhood+Services/rehab.htm> .

Specific Areas of Concern

Can there be a moratorium imposed on residential construction in Plano?

The state legislature has passed laws governing the ability of cities to place moratoriums on both residential and commercial development. These laws require that evidence of a shortage of essential public facilities be presented before a moratorium can be enacted. A moratorium can only apply to areas of the city where a shortage of public facilities can be proven. Developers who already have subdivisions plans in the “pipeline” can proceed with these developments, regardless of the institution of a moratorium.

Many citizens have asked if development can be stopped because of the current drought. The city’s water system has been planned to accommodate a population of 265,000 to 270,000 (we are at 252,000 now) and is more than adequate to provide for the health and safety needs of citizens and businesses. Plano has a fairly high per capita water use compared to other area cities; a large percentage of this use is devoted to landscape irrigation. This is the area where the city can most effectively conserve water. There are no plans at this time to curtail or delay development projects in Plano. However, developers of both residential and commercial projects have been given the option to delay the installation of required landscaping until the drought eases. Given the role of new housing and commercial development in supporting the region’s economy, it is unlikely that any city is going to be the first to prohibit new development if sufficient water for fire suppression and health and safety needs can be met.

What is the percentage of land that is still available for new businesses or corporations in Plano now and into 2007?

The Planning Department estimates that about 72% of the city’s land that is zoned for commercial and office uses is developed. About 96% of the land zoned for residential uses has been developed. The city still has an abundance of land left for new businesses and corporations. Plano is still very attractive to residential builders, and the recent trend has been to rezone some of the commercial and office land for new housing. There are certain areas where this type of rezoning is appropriate, but the city is trying to maintain its major corridors and corporate office parks for future economic development purposes.

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 occur outside regular business hours such as non-permitted garage sales, parking on unimproved surfaces, and home occupation activities that do not comply with zoning regulations.

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

Assigned employee districts enable staff to proactively and reactively respond to concerns within their designated areas. Deliberate efforts are made to educate our citizenry regarding rules and regulations that govern public nuisance and property maintenance matters. In many instances a notice, with a reasonably established time period, may be required prior to further enforcement action to address a particular concern. 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.

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 should you have any questions or further concerns relating to property maintenance in Plano.

Parks

There are many parks and facilities located in and around the City's District 4 area. Please visit http://www.plano.gov/Departments/parksandrecreation/Parks_Facilities/locator_map.htm to view an informative, interactive map of the parks and facilities available to you. You may also wish to visit http://www.plano.gov/Departments/ParksandRecreation/Help+Center/construction_proj.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 <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.plano.gov . To reach a particular staff member by phone or by email, you may go directly to

http://pdf.plano.gov/staff_directory.pdf . 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. For answers to frequently asked questions log on to <http://bbs.plano.gov>

- **Publications** - Municipal information can be found on a daily basis at <http://www.plano.gov/news/> . 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 http://www.plano.gov/online/email_lists.htm

Health Department

Plano is growing and so is our rodent population. New construction, weather and property maintenance are just three conditions that contribute to this population boom. New construction drives rodents away from their natural habitats to seek new shelters in storm drain systems, residential and business properties.

- **Weather** determines the activity of rodents. Mild weather means more breeding. Dry weather will cause storm drains and creeks to dry out driving rodents to seek water in swimming pools, birdbaths and outdoor pet water bowls.
- **Property Maintenance** can attract or repel rodents. Residents should stack firewood or lumber at least twelve inches off the ground and keep yards and alleyways free of rubbish and trash. Residents should never leave pet food out for extended periods of time. Homeowners should always practice good property maintenance
- **Elimination** of food, water and shelter sources can help control rodent infestation. Rats and mice will eat almost anything, preferring grains. Seal trash and garbage in metal, thick rubber or plastic containers. Residents should: keep lids on recycling and garbage carts closed at all times, never leave pet food out for extended periods of time, eliminate water sources by

repairing leaky faucets and not over-watering yards and landscaping. Attic items should be stored in rodent-proof containers instead of cardboard boxes and trim trees away from house to discourage attic entry.

For existing rodent populations, baits and traps can be used. These products may be purchased at feed, garden and "do-it-yourself" pest control stores. Always follow label directions for usage and disposal of unused portions. When using baits, bait boxes should be used to help prevent poisoning of children and pets. A professional pest control service may be most advantageous in controlling rodents. The City of Plano Health Department is not licensed to perform rodent extermination on private property.

For questions and assistance on rodent issues, contact the Plano Health Department at (972) 941-7143.

Specific Areas of Concern

How are pet owners who do not clean up after their pets being handled?

If a citizen sees someone not picking up after their pet, they can file a Nuisance by Waste complaint with Animal Services. We can then visit with the owner of the pet and explain the ordinance to them. We cannot issue citations for this offense unless we see the violation.

Can notices be sent in the water bill to remind pet owners to clean up after their pets?

Animal Services has a flyer that we can include in the water bills and will reserve a spot.

Are there any credits that the city or citizens can get by recycling?

While there are no credits for recycling, citizens may reduce their monthly refuse fee if they can reduce the amount of trash generated and switch to a 65-gallon refuse container. Recycling all items accepted in Plano's residential recycling program (aluminum, steel & tin cans, aerosol cans, newspaper, office paper, junk mail, cardboard, boxboard (like cereal boxes), and glass).

Air Quality-especially in winter with the use of fireplaces and polluting the air with wood-burning stoves.

The Health Department has developed an Outdoor Air Quality program to increase awareness about air quality issues and motivate the public to take personal responsibility and action. Our goal is to improve overall air quality and reduce harmful ozone levels in our community. Some strategies and activities we have sponsored include the following:

- annual poster contests in PISD schools
- promote industry partnering with Texas Emissions Reduction Program (TERP)
- provide educational programs for schools, community groups, homeowners associations and civic groups
- organized ride share programs
- brown bag lunches to provide educational materials to city employees

The following information on wood burning stoves is provided to address the issue mentioned at the meeting. Additional information is available on the EPA web site at <http://www.epa.gov/woodstoves/basic.html>

Woodstoves

The traditional pot-bellied stove is a thing of the past - today's woodstove models feature improved safety and efficiency. They produce almost no smoke, minimal ash, and require less firewood, they can be sized to heat a family room, a small cottage, or a full-sized home. The best choices are appliances labeled by the Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada (ULC) or another testing and certification body for safety. They should also be certified to be low-emission according to EPA standards. While older uncertified stoves and fireplaces release 40 to 60 grams of smoke per hour; new EPA-certified stoves produce only 2 to 5 grams of smoke per hour.

EPA certified woodstoves burn more cleanly and efficiently, save you money, reduce the risk of fire, and improve air quality inside and outside your home.

Talk with experienced woodstove retailers who know the performance characteristics of the products they sell. When visiting local retailers, take along a floor plan of your home. Knowledgeable retailers can help you find a woodstove that is well suited to the space you want to heat.

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 <http://www.plano.gov/departments/environmental+services/> and/or call the Water Education Coordinator, Lorrie Reeves at 972-769-4328.

- **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.

Further information on these outreach programs can be found by visiting <http://www.plano.gov/departments/community+outreach> or by calling (972) 941-7747 for roundtable information and (972) 941-7307 for academy information.

On behalf of City Council, I would like to again thank you for taking part in the Neighborhood Roundtable session held on August 24th. 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,



Pat Evans
Mayor