

October 7, 1998

Re: Plano Neighborhood Meeting (August 13, 1998)
Responses to Major Issues and Comments

Dear

The City Council and I were very pleased with the turnout at our community outreach meeting at the Maribelle Davis Library. 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.

TRAFFIC

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

Traffic signals are essential to managing traffic flow. Most of the city's traffic signals are computer-coordinated with communication among signals accomplished through the TCI network. Signals in some areas of west Plano do not have access to the cable system but are coordinated by computer clocks. The City 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

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would like more information on Plano's neighborhood traffic management program, please call Mr. Antoine Langston, Engineering Department, at 972/461-7151.

SCHOOL ZONES - CROSSING GUARDS

School crossing locations are initiated by citizens who reside in a specific area directly to the affected school principal. These locations must meet pre-established criteria through our City Traffic Department. Once the criteria are met, we notify the City's Risk Management office and they initiate a search for crossing guards. As indicated, the process begins with the request from a citizen. If a citizen/parent would like to request a crossing guard or signed school crossing, they need to take their request to the principal at the school for which the cross walk would service. If the principal agrees, then they will contact PISD, who will then initiate the request and coordination with the City Engineering Department.

Several questions were asked concerning the development of a school zone and installation of warning lights at Bethany Elementary School. City staff is continuing to work with parents and the principal of Bethany Elementary School to extend the school zone on Micarta Drive and install flashing lights at both ends of the zone. Staff is also working with neighbors to help them with their speed and cut through traffic problems through the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program.

MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING - APARTMENT COMPLEXES

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.

Since 1987 when the current comprehensive plan was adopted, there has been a net decrease across the city in land zoned for multi-family development. The amount of land zoned multi-family has been offset by land re-zoned for multi-family to single family and other uses. The vast majority of recent multi-family development is occurring on properties that were zoned in the early 1980's. Policies presented to Council by the Multi-Family Dwellings Task Force will make future re-zoning to multi-family more difficult to justify.

As part of its review, the Multi-Family Dwellings Task Force also learned the current yield of school children per apartment unit is significantly less than for single family. Therefore, the approximate yield of school children per acre is approximately the same for both single and multi-family development.

ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

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

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.

COMMUNICATIONS - 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) 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 the 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.

INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRUCTION, REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE

The City's Capital Improvement Program is proactive in keeping the streets in good condition. The City's street repair and widening programs are somewhat spaced throughout the city, when adding the state highways' projects (Spring Creek, Plano Parkway, and Custer Road), it does become a mobility concern. We are trying to keep lane closures to a minimum. To continue our proactive approach, we cannot wait until the state completes its projects. CIP is a three-year program with projects planned in 1988-99. The City is moving forward to keep projects on schedule.

The City's design standards fifteen years ago are not what they are today. We feel this is part of the reason why the city is experiencing pavement failures on certain roadways. Age of the infrastructure and increased traffic volumes are also contributing to the failures. The standards today are improved and we believe will provide a better product.

PISD RELATED ISSUES

During the meeting, several questions were raised concerning items that are related to PISD. I, and the other members of Council, brought these issues to the attention of the Board of Trustees in our recent joint retreat. We would encourage you to directly contact PISD Administration or members of the Board of Trustees for PISD related issues.

On August 27, 1998, members of the City Council and PISD Board Members met in a retreat to discuss items of mutual interest. While a variety of issues were discussed, two areas focused on development issues and formalized methods of improved communication between the two bodies. As a result, the City Council and School Board Members agreed to continue having the joint dinner meetings twice a year which would include City Council, School Board, Chamber of Commerce, legislative representatives, Collin County representatives, and Collin County Community College. Further, it was decided a smaller joint meeting of representatives of the City Council and School Board Members would meet to set the agenda for the semi-annual meetings. Both entities feel this process will further enhance and improve communications between the two entities on key matters.

CITY WATER SUPPLY - RESTRICTIONS

Our water supply comes from the North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD) and is supplied from three area lakes. The primary lake in this system is Lake Lavon. Supplemental water can also be delivered from Lake Cooper in East Texas and Lake Texoma.

NTMWD's current capacity to treat raw waters and distribute this water to member cities is 420 million gallons per day (mgd). The NTMWD water treatment plant in Wylie, just east of Plano, and can be expanded to 920 mgd. The District's peak day this summer was 388 mgd of water treated and transported to member cities. It would take an extended period of drought to affect the District's supply of raw water because of the multiple sources of raw water.

The water distribution system has been in a constant state of expansion and improvement since the late 1960's. Just since 1992 over 22 million dollars has been spent to expand this system.

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Plans are underway for extensive expansion of the distribution system that will cost over 20 million dollars over the next three years.

On August 10, 1998, the City Council authorized fast-tracking several large water distribution projects that will add 80 million gallons per day of new pumping capacity and 26 millions gallons of water storage in the system. The current water distribution pumping expansion will be complete in late September 1998 and will add 20 millions gallons per day of water pumping capacity. In fact, this expansion was due to be completed in June of this year but was delayed due to the late delivery of pumps and motors from the manufacture. This is the first step in the current expansion program that will provide the necessary water for our customers. The City's current capacity is 114 to 116 million gallons per day.

HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATIONS

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

CRIME - DRUGS

Reports from the Police Department indicate that gang activity in our city continues to be stable and not a growing problem. The Police Department's gang unit continually monitors activity and responds appropriately to any significant problems. The greater danger to the youth in our community is alcohol and drugs, not gangs. As you've read in the papers, Plano has not ignored the drug threat to our youth and community. A major blow in the national war on drugs was delivered 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.

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. As of August 1990, the city of Plano has had a 45% increase in population. During this same period of time, major crime (homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, theft, auto theft) have increased by only 20%. But more importantly with the explosive population growth, the rate of major crime per thousand citizens has actually decreased 13% since 1990.

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.

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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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