

September 1, 1999

Re: **Far North Plano Neighborhood Meeting (August 5, 1999)
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. At this time, the City has a program to install separate right turn lanes at the approaches to all major intersections. Developers as a requirement of city ordinances build most new roads, including arterial streets, when they subdivide and develop land. Because private land development is a fragmented process, it takes many years to fully develop the planned arterial street system. The City also builds arterial streets. This is a more expensive option because the City pays for right-of-way and improvements with little financial participation by private property owners. Road widening and intersection improvements are also City-initiated projects. City bond programs and funds received from state, county and regional sources are used to pay for these road projects. Project timing and funding are coordinated through the City's Capital Improvement Program.

Traffic signals are essential to managing traffic flow. Most of the city's traffic signals are computer-coordinated with communication among signals accomplished through the TCI network. Signals in some areas of west Plano do not have access to the cable system but are coordinated by computer clocks. The City has entered into a contract with an agency for the purpose of developing and installing a Spread Spectrum Radio System. This system will allow the dependable communication of all signals in the City

of Plano and should be in place by summer 2000. Video cameras are used at a number of intersections in the City to monitor traffic flow. Several new cameras will be installed at intersections in the near future. At this time, however, Texas State law does not permit the use of cameras and photographs for the enforcement of red light violations. When and if this changes, the City will pursue this enforcement option.

Within the next 12 months, traffic signals will be constructed at the following intersections in the Far North Plano area:

- ◆ Coit and McDermott
- ◆ Independence and McDermott
- ◆ Custer and McDermott
- ◆ Independence and Hwy 121
- ◆ Ohio and Hwy 121

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.

Recently, a Traffic Engineer was hired and specifically assigned to oversee the Neighborhood Traffic Management program. This program works with citizens and homeowner associations on specific traffic problems. If you would like more information, please call Mr. Antoine Langston, Engineering Department, at (972) 941-7151.

ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

Of interest to you may be the following new development in the Far North Plano area:

- ◆ Kohl's Department Store - southeast corner of McDermott and Custer
- ◆ Retail center – northwest corner of McDermott and Custer
- ◆ Wal-Mart and Sam's Club – southwest corner of Ohio and Hwy 121
- ◆ Razor Glen Apartment Complex – northeast corner Razor and McDermott
- ◆ Single Family Addition – southeast corner Razor and McDermott
- ◆ Single Family Addition – northwest corner Custer and Hedgcoxe

The City of Plano is committed to protecting the rights of neighborhoods, as well as developers, to pursue their interests within the established legal framework of procedures and standards. The City strives to inform neighborhoods of proposed development and provide the opportunity for neighborhoods to express their desires and concerns to public decision-making bodies. The City of Plano continues to encourage developers and neighborhoods to openly communicate and seek ways to ensure beneficial and compatible development. With this in mind, the City has initiated a new neighborhood planning program. A Planner has been assigned to work directly with residents and property owners in older neighborhoods to address land use, traffic, code enforcement and other concerns.

Information on requested zoning changes within a particular area is sent to nearby homeowner associations. In addition, information on new zoning and development requests is placed on the City's Internet homepage (www.ci.plano.tx.us) and the Plano cable channels (TCI channels A-30 and B-58), and is also available in the public libraries. Although not required by state law, applicants for zoning cases in Plano must place a zoning sign on the property notifying the public of the pending zoning action. The City gives a small sign to the applicant for specific use permit requests. For larger tracts of land, the applicant must contract with a sign company to have a large wooden sign erected on the property. All of the signs give the Planning Department's phone number, so that citizens may call in to get more information about the proposed zoning action.

The City sends written notices 20 days in advance of the public hearing for a zoning case, although state law only requires 10 days advance notice. The City elected to extend this time so that homeowner groups would have more time to learn the details of the case and meet with the property owners to discuss their concerns. The notices are sent to property owners within 200 feet of the affected property, as required by current state law.

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

◆ **Publications**

Public hearing notices and meeting agendas are published in the Plano Star Courier (21) days prior to the meeting date, as required by law. The public hearings are held during the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, which meets on the first and third Mondays of each month.

Information is also carried in the Friday edition of the Dallas Morning News, (Page 2 of the Plano Section, Plano City Briefs).

◆ **Cable TV**

Information on upcoming development and zoning cases are listed on Plano's cable channels - A30 (in Plano) and B58 (in Dallas).

◆ **Public Library**

Information on upcoming development and zoning cases are available at all Plano public libraries.

◆ **Internet**

The City of Plano's web site address is <http://www.ci.plano.tx.us>.

◆ **Training**

The Planning Department sponsors several classes throughout the year on zoning and development issues. These classes are specifically tailored for homeowner association representatives. If you would like more information regarding these classes, please contact the Planning Department, at (972) 941-7151.

APARTMENT COMPLEXES

The City's Comprehensive Plan recommends that a variety of housing types be built to provide for the needs of our citizens. Apartments are an important part of this mix, providing housing for young people just starting their careers as well as many of our elderly citizens. However, the plan recommends that the majority of our housing stock, as appropriate for a suburban community, be single family housing. The plan includes several recommendations for apartments that address location, access and maximum number of units. It does not include a specific ideal percentage of multi-family units; however, our staff estimates that at this time, approximately 27% of our housing stock are multi-family. When all residential land is developed, it is estimated that this percentage will be around 33%. This percentage is far less than the 50% to 60% totals found in some other area suburbs.

Last year the City Council did form a task force of citizens to study issues concerning multi-family development. The task force recommended that no additional land be zoned for multi-family use unless the request is for mixed use, redevelopment or other proposals with special merit. The task force also recommended that the spacing between concentrations of multi-family development be increased. The Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council will be using these recommendations as they consider future requests for multi-family zoning.

PLANNING FOR BUILD-OUT

The city has long been proactive in planning for the public facilities necessary to serve the citizens. We have worked with the school districts to develop joint school and park facilities. The city's comprehensive plan has also guided the location of public facilities and parkland. The present plan includes a chapter on facilities planning, with recommendations on the location of various police, fire, solid waste, and library facilities. The city also has an active facility planning committee composed of staff from several departments that work together to plan for public facilities.

INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRUCTION, REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE

The City's Capital Improvement Program is proactive in keeping the streets in good condition. It was noted at the Roundtable, however, that too many major roads are worked on at once. Last year, the Texas Department of Transportation had four projects under construction at the same time, which is highly unusual. Those projects were Custer, Coit, Spring Creek and Plano Parkway. The timing was due to funding issues as the projects had to be under construction before a certain date or their funding would be lost. The City's street repair and widening programs are somewhat spaced throughout the city, but when adding to the state highway's projects, it does become a mobility concern. We have since reviewed our construction schedules and have changed them to minimize the number of projects under construction in the same area at the same time.

Within the next 12 months, street lighting will be completed on Coit Road from McDermott to Hwy 121 and on Preston Road from Legacy to Hwy 121.

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 earlier this year to all homeowner association presidents soliciting their input on ways we might better improve communications and input with homeowner associations.

Y2K

Y2K is a top priority for the City of Plano and its Information Services Department. The City has had a Y2K Project Team in place for more than 18 months. Currently, the project is on schedule. Updates of the team's progress will be submitted to City Council on a monthly basis. Citizens may also check the project's status by visiting the web site <http://www.ci.plano.tx.us/y2000.htm> or by calling the Y2K Hotline at (972) 941-2100.

URBAN AESTHETICS AND BEAUTIFICATION

- ◆ **Utility Cables** - The City's ordinance requires electrical utilities to be placed underground in residential subdivisions, and along certain major corridors such as Preston Road, SH 190 and the Tollway. However, electrical lines may still be placed aboveground on major thoroughfares such as Hedgcoxe and Coit Road. The major barrier to placing all electrical lines underground is cost. Underground utilities require the placement of a duct bank system that must be designed properly to carry the lines. Underground lines cost an average of 100% to 150% more than placing lines overhead. Utility companies are reluctant to install underground lines unless the additional cost is handled elsewhere.
- ◆ **Ridgeview Water Tanks** - It was suggested to hide or paint the water tanks at Ridgeview. There is a \$200,000 additional cost to paint the tanks green. The dark green color would also require additional maintenance. Therefore, a decision has been made to continue with the existing paint scheme. Once the construction is complete, berm will be restored and landscaping will be further enhanced.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The City's Park Master Plan identifies an additional 660 acres of park land to be acquired in addition to the 3399 acres of existing park land. We are in the process of acquiring two significant greenbelts in the northern part of the city. One will connect Russell Creek Park and Hoblitzelle Park between Custer and Independence north of Hedgcoxe Road. The second will run from south of Hedgcoxe to Hwy 121 between Preston and Coit. This greenbelt is also planned to continue into Frisco in the future. In the next three to five years, the City will also be developing a 700 acre nature preserve at Jupiter and Parker Road.

The City has an ongoing program of planting trees in street medians and in parks throughout the city. Medians in major thoroughfares such as Hedgcoxe and McDermott will eventually be widened to six lanes. Trees are not planted in these medians until widening of the road is completed so that they will not be damaged by road construction. Tree planting in parks will continue on an annual basis. Russell Creek Park will have 300 trees planted this winter. Two neighborhood parks north of McDermott will be developed this winter, which will include the planting of additional trees to the areas.

SCHOOL ISSUES

- ◆ **Anderson Elementary School** - Work will begin in late August on development of the neighborhood park adjacent to Anderson Elementary School. Improvements will include a picnic shelter, sidewalks, trees, practice backstops, turf sprinkler systems and a large playground to accommodate school and neighborhood use. Construction is expected to be complete in December.
- ◆ **Rice Middle School** – City and PISD policy does not provide for crossing guards at middle schools. However, since Rice is currently housing elementary classes, a school crossing guard is being provided for this temporary situation. A school zone has also been established for this area.

PUBLIC SAFETY

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

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

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

- ◆ By this time next year, every patrol vehicle will be equipped with moving radar.

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.

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.

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

JL/cp