

November 12, 2001

Re: **Area 3 Neighborhood Roundtable Meeting (September 13, 2001)  
Responses to Major Issues and Comments**

Dear

The City Council and I were very pleased with the turnout at our community outreach meeting at Parr Library. 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 learned much from your comments and 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, some of the most important issues facing Plano today relate to traffic.

**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.

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. The criterion considers the amount of delay experienced by side street traffic, proximity of other signals, the speed of traffic on the road, and past reported traffic collisions. 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 the Engineering Department at (972) 941-7151.

With regard to the intersection of **Windhaven and Communications**, specifically mentioned during our meeting, staff completed a study at this intersection. Although current morning and evening commute traffic causes temporary congestion, it is not of significant magnitude to warrant the installation of a traffic signal at this time. However staff will continue to monitor this intersection and will consider installing a traffic signal in the future.

The Transportation Division also has an ongoing program that retimes traffic signals in response to changing traffic volumes/patterns. Staff works with adjacent cities to foster uninterrupted traffic flow across city limit boundaries. Using state-of-the-art technology, 160 traffic signals are monitored throughout the city and timing plans are changed when needed to minimize vehicle stops and delay. Through use of traffic monitoring cameras and coordination with police patrols, quick and effective response to incidents involving disabled vehicles or traffic collisions is possible. 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.

By effectively responding to these variable traffic conditions, significant travel timesavings and improved air quality is attained.

**Violations** - It was also voiced that the City should continue to take a tough 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 initiatives have been implemented:

- ◆ **Two additional officers were assigned to the Traffic Unit 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** – Citizens can call directly to the Traffic Unit at (972) 941-LITE 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 have been placed at all city limit sites. These signs are updated quarterly.
- ◆ **Red Light Enforcement Grant** – The Police Department has taken advantage of a state sponsored grant allowing officers to work in an overtime status enforcing signal light violations at the top 20 accident-prone intersections in Plano.
- ◆ **Commercial Vehicle (Rock Haulers/18 Wheelers) Inspections** – The Police Department currently has 12 officers certified as Department of Transportation Commercial Vehicle Inspectors. These officers are allowed to stop commercial vehicles for the purpose of performing safety inspections in areas such as brakes, radar detectors, fire extinguishers and weight limits. Citations are issued when measures are not met. The Department strives to perform commercial vehicle inspection operations at least once per month, focusing on random major thoroughfares throughout the city.
- ◆ **Increased Fines** – Last year, the Plano Municipal Court raised the minimum fine for a red light violation from \$50 to \$100. Effective April 1, 2001, the fine for a red light violation in which an accident was involved was raised from \$100 to the state maximum of \$200. The fine for a minor driving under the influence of alcohol was raised from \$200 to \$500.

### **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. 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 Plano cable 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 and B58. 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. P & Z Worksessions are broadcasted live 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.

**Retail and Multi-Family Housing Issues** –The City's Comprehensive Plan addresses the appropriate locations for both multi-family and 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. Rezoning along the Tollway in 1996 and SH 121 in 2000 preserved much of the land in these corridors for office and employment uses instead of retail development. The cities of Plano, Carrollton and Richardson have undertaken a joint study of aging and underutilized retail centers, a common problem for all three suburbs. We expect this study will indicate areas where there is too much retail zoning to be supported by the market, as well as techniques to assist developers in maintaining viable shopping centers.

In the meantime, the following properties have land studies, preliminary site plans and/or final site plans approved for Area 3.

- ◆ **Roy's Restaurant** – East side of Dallas North Tollway (DNT) between Park Boulevard and Parker Road – restaurant with a private club.
- ◆ **Granite Park** – East side of DNT north of Headquarters Drive; retail development.
- ◆ **Shops at Willow Bend** – East side of DNT between Tennyson Parkway and Legacy Drive – multiple retail shops and restaurants with private clubs.

In addition to the above, several restaurant, retail and office developments have been approved for the pad sites around the Shops at Willow Bend mall.

In 1998, the City Council adopted recommendations of the Multi-Family Task Force that discouraged zoning of additional land for apartments. Since that time, no additional land has been zoned for garden apartment complexes. Several parcels zoned for apartment development have been developed for patio home and for-sale townhouses, as well. Apartment development in the last couple of years has been concentrated in mixed-use developments such as the Plano Transit Village in downtown Plano and the Legacy Town Center.

### **Homeowners Associations**

City Council is continually seeking and implementing new ways to better connect with the citizens. Through working with homeowners' associations, Council receives valuable input concerning issues specific to each neighborhood as well as issues affecting our City as a whole.

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

The city has an aggressive road construction/rehabilitation/maintenance program to keep roads and drainage systems operating at their optimum. Staff takes great effort to coordinate these projects (city crews, utilities, and private contractors) to not cause undue delay and congestion to motorists. Many projects are performed during non-commute traffic periods or during the night to minimize their impact on traffic. Problems involving construction zones and traffic safety signing may be reported to the Public Works Department at 972-941-4140 (after hours call 972-727-1623) or to the Transportation Department by calling 972-941-7151.

With the above in mind, please note the current or upcoming improvements slated in or around Area 3:

- ◆ **Plano Parkway from Park to Midway** - Widening of road from four to six lanes.
- ◆ **Parker from Parkwood to Midway** – Widening of road from four to six lanes.
- ◆ **Parker from Midway to Dozier** – Construction of six lane road.
- ◆ **Pelican Bay between Bermuda Dunes and Myrtle Bay** – Increase height of dam to eliminate flooding.
- ◆ **Marsh from Park to Plano Parkway** – Construction of two lane road.
- ◆ **Midway from Plano Parkway to Parker** – Road widening from four to six lanes.
- ◆ **Spring Creek from SH 121 to Midway** – Complete 6 lane road.
- ◆ **Spring Creek from Midway to Tollway** – Construction of 3 eastbound lanes.
- ◆ **Legacy @ SH 121, Legacy @ Tollway, Parker @ Preston** – Intersection Improvements
- ◆ **Tollway Service Road** – Widen service road from 2 – 3 lanes in each direction

Additionally, a new web page is dedicated to the City of Plano's Capital Improvement Program and 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://www.planogis.org>.

### **Medians**

The City has an on-going program to plant trees in our medians. Typically trees are planted on major thoroughfares whenever the roadway has been widened to its full width. Most major thoroughfares are planned to be six lanes. Planting trees prior to the roadway being widened to its full width would result in the trees being damaged or destroyed during roadway construction. Trees will continue to be planted in medians throughout the City as road development is completed. If you have questions about a specific location, please contact the City's Urban Forester, Renee Burke-Brown, at [reeneb@gwmail.plano.gov](mailto:reeneb@gwmail.plano.gov) or at (972) 941-7168.

## **Public Safety**

**Traffic Violations** – I would like to re-emphasize City Council's 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 traffic officers last 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 city limits;
- participation in state assisted red light enforcement grant; and
- certification of twelve officers as commercial vehicle inspectors.

A particular concern regarding **speeding on West Parker Road** was brought to our attention at the meeting. According to police records, 125 speeding citations have been written in the Parker/Tate vicinity since January 2001, however the focus has been during the after school time period. The Police Department has been asked to concentrate enforcement efforts in the West Parker area during the hours of 7 – 10 p.m. as well.

**Citizens Handicap Parking Patrol** – On March 26, 2001, the Plano Police Department launched a new program to combat illegal handicap parking. The Citizens Handicap Parking Patrol is a cooperative effort between the citizens of Plano and the Plano Police Department, which allows trained volunteers to issue parking citations for handicap parking violations. The volunteers are provided citation books, identification signs for their vehicles, orange vests, and a camera prior to going on patrol. This program brings enforcement to those persons violating the law and helps ensure those in our city who are handicapped will have a place to park. The Plano Police Department will train and supervise those who wish to participate in the program. Should you be interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact Sergeant J. C. Randall at (972) 941-2483.

**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.

As requested, Area 3 crime statistic charts for the Year 2000 and January – July 2001 are listed below:

**Year 2000**

<b>Category</b>	<b>City Wide</b>	<b>Selected Area</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Homicide	5	0	0.0%
Rape	26	3	11.5%
Robbery	116	11	9.5%
Aggravated Assault	518	41	7.9%
Burglary	1475	159	10.8%
Larceny/Theft	5395	471	8.7%
Auto Theft	390	5	1.3%

**January 1 through July 31, 2001**

<b>Category</b>	<b>City Wide</b>	<b>Selected Area</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Homicide	0	0	0
Rape	15	3	20.0
Robbery	70	3	4.3
Aggravated Assault	247	16	6.5
Burglary	848	71	8.4
Larceny/Theft	3394	263	7.7
Auto Theft	320	16	5.0

**Emergency Warning System** – Information about the City of Plano Emergency Warning System is distributed to the community in many ways, including: City Briefs, monthly utility billing inserts, cable TV, and on the City of Plano web site [www.planotx.org](http://www.planotx.org). The Public Safety Communications Department takes advantage of several community events to further educate the public about the warning system. These events include the Balloon Festival, homeowners associations meetings, and police and fire citizen academies. Should you have any questions regarding this system, please contact C. J. Howard, Fire Department Emergency Manager, at (972) 941-7604.

Your City Council places public safety 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.

## **OTHER TOPICS OF CONCERN**

### **Bicycle Issues**

The Planning and Zoning Commission and staff are currently updating the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan. It includes a text and a map relating to "Bicycle Transportation." The plan provides for intra- and inter-city routes. It recommends both on- and off-street routes. Included is a proposal to participate in a regional "Veloweb" connecting several area cities together in a system that minimizes conflicts between bicycles and motor vehicles. This is obviously a long-term program that will require funding from state and federal resources. In the interim, the text recommends that the City undertake an implementation plan to address issues of connectivity, major street crossings, and design criteria to expand and improve the current intra-city system.

The plan also recommends that the City encourage the use of bicycle storage facilities at places of employment, shopping, and DART transit facilities. It further recommends that employers provide shower facilities for employees riding to and from work.

This plan has been approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission and is scheduled for consideration by City Council. Please contact Jeff Zimmerman with the City's Planning Department at (972) 941-7371 for information regarding the status of this plan.

### **Mass Transportation Update**

- ◆ **DART Rail** – Construction is well underway to develop the first light-rail line in Plano, parallel to, and just east of US 75. The crossing gates, the overhead electrical wires, the rock bed, the rail itself and all other components will be installed by the scheduled opening date of 2003.
- ◆ **190T Station** – The City of Plano has worked with DART to develop a station design that achieves a shared facility between the two cities of Plano and Richardson. Although the boarding platform is south of 190, the parking for the facility is located under the main lanes of 190 between the cities. Executive Drive will be extended south to provide direct access from Plano to the parking area. Construction on the station is scheduled to begin very soon. The station is expected to be operational in 2003.
- ◆ **Plano Transit Village** – Or East Side Village, had its first tenants occupy units in September, 2001. Construction is still being finalized on this joint-development project but it will soon be able to lease all 240 apartment units, as well as 15,000 square feet of commercial space. A second transit-oriented development project broke ground in October, 2001 about one block south of the first. Tentatively known as Amicus II, the project will be roughly the same size and character as the first project. This newest project is a result of a less formal role by the City in its development. Other similar projects are possible in the downtown area.

- ◆ **Northwest Plano Transit Center Station** – Located in the Tollway and Spring Creek Parkway area, this development is still in the land acquisition stage. Once this effort is finalized, the design process will begin – most likely in early 2002. Since this facility is bus-only, it is reasonable to expect its scheduled rail opening of 2003 will be met.

DART has began a process to update their systems plan, which has been in effect since 1995. the system plan is the framework for the identification and development of major capital projects, such as rail to DFW Airport and demand-responsive shuttles. Public input opportunities are included in this process. For further information regarding this system plan or any of the points above, please contact Marcos Fernandez in the City's Engineering Department at (972) 941-5333.

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