



January 3, 2006

Re: **District 2 Neighborhood Roundtable Meeting (November 10, 2005)  
Response to Issues and Comments**

Greetings:

Thank you very much for your attendance at the District 2 Neighborhood Roundtable meeting held on Thursday, November 10, 2005 at the Plano Sports Authority StarCenter. 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, we presented to you several topics to initiate discussion based on feedback we've received from other Roundtable meetings over the past several years. We discovered property standards, with special interest regarding rental properties, are of great importance to you. Traffic and traffic safety remain of major concern to our citizens. Minor crime and water conservation were also among the issues brought to our attention at the meeting.

The following is a synopsis of the above issues as well as additional information pertinent to the District 2 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, 200 traffic signals are monitored throughout the City and timing plans are changed when needed to minimize vehicle stops and delay. Last fall, staff began upgrading all traffic signals with new traffic control technology. The new equipment will increase 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.

Pat Evans  
Mayor

Ken Lambert  
Mayor Pro tem

Scott Johnson  
Deputy Mayor Pro tem

Shep Stahel  
Place 1

Loretta Ellerbe  
Place 3

Sally Magnuson  
Place 4

Harry LaRosiliere  
Place 5

Jean Callison  
Place 7

Thomas H. Muehlenbeck  
City Manager

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 Mobility Improvements** – The evaluation of traffic congestion at intersections and along road segments is performed annually throughout Plano to determine ways to improve traffic flow and safety. Each year the city allocates \$500,000 for the construction of additional left and right-turn lanes, construction of pedestrian ramps, minor sidewalk modifications, and improving traffic lane lines.

### **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 2004, the Plano Police Department conducted 61,656 traffic contacts that resulted in some form of enforcement action. From those contacts 26,972 speeding citations were issued (up 11.5% from 2003) and 4,038 red light citations were issued (down 23.8% from 2003). As a result of the Police Department's enforcement actions in 2004, the number of red light collisions within the City of Plano dropped more than 13% from 2003.

To further reduce collisions, the Police Department, in a joint effort with the Cities of Richardson and Frisco, is preparing to implement 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. Cameras will be utilized to monitor intersections selected through a needs assessment that will include consideration of the rate of injury accidents at particular intersections. The target date for implementation of the cameras is early 2006.

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 will begin 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 2004, 13,661 citations were issued for no insurance. Of those, 780 were issued at accident scenes. Through September 2005, 10,461 citations have already been issued for no insurance, 582 at accident scenes. 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](http://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 [www.planopolice.org/contact/ser.htm](http://www.planopolice.org/contact/ser.htm) or by stopping in at the main station at 909 14<sup>th</sup> Street or the Joint Use Facility at 7501A Independence Parkway.

### **Crime**

The Police Department continues to maintain a low crime rate. Part 1 (major) offenses occurring in 2004 were down 11.4% compared to 2003. Our success in maintaining a low crime rate is directly tied to the cooperative efforts of our citizens.

- **Property Crime** – In comparing YTD 2004 percentages to the year ending September 2005, Burglary, Theft and Vehicle Theft were actually down slightly in District 2 even though the population increased by 2%. Burglaries were down 5%, Theft was down 6.5% and Vehicle Thefts were down almost 10%. From time to time the City may experience unexpected spikes in the number of property crimes. When these spikes occur, the Patrol Division and the Criminal Investigation Division coordinate enforcement and surveillance efforts in an attempt to identify, apprehend, and deter these types of violations. Our Crime Analysis Unit identifies the time, day of the week, and locations most frequently victimized in order for us to deploy our resources more effectively. Strategies such as surveillance, baiting, bicycle patrol, and saturation patrol have proven to be effective. Additionally, we have found a large number of these offenses involve unsecured vehicles and property left in vehicles. Citizens can reduce their risk of being victimized by criminals by locking their vehicles and removing valuables from plain view.

The majority of residential burglaries in the City of Plano are the result of open garage doors. Often these offenses occur during the day while the owner is doing yard work or other chores. Because these are crimes of opportunity, they are easily prevented and deterred. The Police

Department has taken efforts to educate citizens as to the risk of leaving property unattended in a vehicle, as well as leaving garage doors unsecured through the use of utility bill inserts. Additionally, officers patrolling alleys routinely contact residents who have left their garage doors open. Citizens interested in learning more about protecting themselves from criminal acts can contact the Crime Prevention Unit at (972) 941-2431 or (972) 208-8045.

- **Nuisance Crime** - Offenses such as barking dogs, loud music, and parties impact neighborhoods and individuals' enjoyment of their homes. The Police Department is committed to ensuring all residents are free from disturbances that interfere with this enjoyment. In order for a police officer to take enforcement action, the officer must witness the offense or obtain information from a witness that observed the violation. The witness to the offense may be required to testify in court. Also, citizens can contact the Municipal Court directly and swear out a complaint against individuals for committing nuisance violations. When reporting a nuisance violation, the Police Department encourages callers to provide the location of the offender as well as their own name, address, and phone number.

Regarding the noise of emergency helicopters, the City of Plano has no regulatory control on flight paths of aircraft. This issue is regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration. However, emergency response helicopters are generally approved to fly paths that are the most direct route to reach a scene and/or hospital.

- **Street Lighting** – The city installs street lights at intersections of residential streets and at mid block, approximately 600 feet apart. As neighborhoods mature and trees grow, the lighting is sometimes blocked. In these cases, the City encourages homeowners to trim their trees. However, the City's Engineering Department will go out and evaluate areas to determine if coterie is met and will also meet with homeowners to suggest additional lighting is installed on a cost sharing basis. Please feel free to contact the Engineering Department at (972) 941-7152 for questions concerning neighborhood lighting.
- **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](http://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.

### **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.

- **Current and Upcoming Street Repairs in the District 2 Area:**
  - Coit Road between 15<sup>th</sup> Street and north to McDermott Drive
  - Winding Hollow Drive between Plano Pkwy and Park Blvd.
- **Screening Walls** - The City of Plano maintains 70+ miles of brick and concrete screening walls throughout the City. The Public Works Department has a contract for the repair of these screening walls. The contract work for this year involves the replacement of 500 brick panel

sections throughout different areas of the City. The City's contractor will be working on this project beginning January 2006 and will be completed sometime during summer of 2006. If you have a question or concern about a particular screening wall, please contact the Public Works Department at (972)769-4140.

- **Street Signage** - The City has begun the process of replacing all residential street name signs with nine inch aluminum signs with larger letters and block numbers. This effort is scheduled to last six years. The City began this six year process starting in November 2004.
- **Street Sweeping** - The City of Plano street sweeping program involves the monthly sweeping of all major thoroughfares. The City does not have the resources to sweep residential streets at this time.
- **Water Issues** - The City of Plano purchases its potable water from the North Texas Municipal Water District. The rate being paid by the City is 97.0 cents per 1,000 gallons and is the lowest wholesale treated water rate in the State of Texas. The City of Plano also has 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.
- **Verizon** - The *Verizon Fiber to the Premises Project* is scheduled throughout the City and should be completed within 9 months. The City has required Verizon to notify all homeowners by door hanger and to place larger signs throughout the neighborhood with telephone numbers advising the residents of the work taking place.

### **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 15 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](http://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://www.planoplanning.org/DevRev/pzcomm/Review%20list/Rev-list.pdf>. This list is updated every two weeks.
- **Buffers and Mixed Use Developments** - Plano's current zoning regulations contain measures to provide separation and buffers between commercial development and residential areas. Along the Dallas North Tollway and SH 121, the zoning districts require additional setbacks, wider landscaped edges, brick, stone and glass façade materials, and screening regulations for loading docks. Within the interior of the city, where residential areas are more likely to directly abut commercial properties without a street separation, "big box" regulations are in place with additional restrictions, including a specific use permit, on stores greater than 80,000 square feet in size.

Plano has two successful mixed-use developments, Legacy Town Center and Downtown Plano, which include hotels, shops, restaurants, offices, apartments and townhouses in a dense, pedestrian oriented environment. Mixed-use developments are most likely to be successful in areas that have superior roadway access or a rail station and a built-in consumer base of employees and residents. Plano may have additional mixed-use developments in a limited number of locations. However, many residents find the higher residential densities, less convenient parking and parking garages commonly found in mixed-use developments to be objectionable. Many retailers, including those that usually build in the "big box" format, are now designing multi-level stores that can be located in mixed-use developments. It is likely that most retailers will continue to build in locations that allow surface parking and one-story stores until consumer acceptance of different store designs increases.

- **Vacant and Underused Retail 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 recently 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 Plano Economic Development Board recently developed criteria for providing financial incentives to attract new businesses to empty buildings. It has also commissioned a study that will identify gaps in Plano's current group of retailers and indicate specific types of retailers that the city should target for recruitment. 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.
- **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 [www.planoplanning.org/neighserv/index.htm](http://www.planoplanning.org/neighserv/index.htm).

### **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 be occurring outside regular business hours such as non-permitted garage sales, parking on unimproved surfaces, and illegal home occupation activities.

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

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.

A multi-family rental registration and inspection pilot program is in the process of being implemented to assist in ensuring the safety and viability of the city's rental communities. An expanded rental registration and inspection program is expected to follow the pilot through the gradual phase in of all rental properties, including single-family rental dwellings.

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](http://www.planotx.org/prop_stds) should you have any questions or further concerns relating to property standards in Plano.

## **Parks**

There are several parks and facilities located in and around the City's District 2 area. Please visit [http://www.planoparks.org/sub\\_parks/city\\_maps7.htm](http://www.planoparks.org/sub_parks/city_maps7.htm) to view an informative, interactive map of the parks and facilities available to you. You may also wish to visit [http://www.planoparks.org/sub\\_help/construction\\_projects.htm](http://www.planoparks.org/sub_help/construction_projects.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 at <http://www.planoparks.org>.

A specific comment made at our meeting relating to the Parks and Recreation Department is addressed below:

- **Landscaping in Medians** - The City has planted trees in the medians of six lane roadways throughout the city. There are a few medians that do not have trees yet, pending development of the road to the full 6 lanes. Shrubs and ground covers in medians are expensive to install and very expensive to maintain. At this point in time we do not plan to add additional landscaping to the medians that already have trees. If there is a specific location that you believe needs additional landscaping or if you would like to discuss this issue in more detail you can contact the City's Urban Forester, Renee Burke-Brown, at [reneeb@plano.gov](mailto:reneeb@plano.gov) or at (972) 941-7168.

## **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 web site address is [www.planotx.org](http://www.planotx.org). To reach a particular staff member by phone, you may go directly to [www.planotx.org/telecom/directory.pdf](http://www.planotx.org/telecom/directory.pdf). For City staff email addresses, go directly to [www.planotx.org/ctystaff.html](http://www.planotx.org/ctystaff.html). 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.
- **Publications** - Municipal information can be found on a daily basis at [www.planocitynews.com](http://www.planocitynews.com). 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 channels - A30 and B58.
- **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. You may view and subscribe to these newsletters at [www.planotx.org/email\\_lists.html](http://www.planotx.org/email_lists.html).

### **Other Topics of Interest**

- **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.

For more information on the above Community Outreach programs, please visit [www.planotx.org/outreach](http://www.planotx.org/outreach) or call (972) 941-7747.

On behalf of City Council, I would like to again thank you for taking part in the Neighborhood Roundtable session held on November 10th. 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