

January 10, 2000

Re: **East Plano Neighborhood Meeting (November 11, 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 Plano Centre. We learned much from your comments and questions. 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 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.

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. In the East Plano area, a traffic signal is planned to be installed at Rigsbee and 14th in the near future.

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 speed bumps in areas. If you would like more information, please call Mr. Antoine Langston, Engineering Department, at (972) 941-7151.

Zoning and Development Activity

The Plano Economic Development Board is developing programs to attract new businesses to eastern Plano, including a major medical facility. However, a recently built hospital at SH 121 and US 75 could impact the market for this type of facility. Of interest to you may be the following new development in the East Plano area:

- ◆ Storage/Wholesale Warehouse and Retail Building - Avenue K and Legacy
- ◆ Winn-Dixie Grocery Store – Southwest corner Parker and Jupiter
- ◆ Single Family Subdivision – East of Morton Vale and south of Norwood
- ◆ East Plano Retail Center – East side of U.S. 75, north of Abuelos Restaurant
- ◆ Office Building – Avenue K and Pecan Lane
- ◆ Convenience Store/Retail Center – Spring Creek and Split Trail Road
- ◆ Various Office/Warehouse Buildings - Avenue N and Precision

Another concern expressed during our meeting was the lack of barrier walls between developments. The Zoning Ordinance requires screening walls and/or living screens between new industrial development and residential development when a street does not separate the two uses. However, there are several areas in the city where older industrial plants are next to residential areas and no screening is in place. The city randomly monitors these plants to make certain they comply with limitations on noise, odors, dust and other problems.

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.

Housing Issues

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.

With respect to aging apartments, our Neighborhood Services division operates a housing rehabilitation program. The City has funding available to make low-interest loans to owners of small apartment complexes (up to about 20 units) to help them rehabilitate their units.

The City is also improving its ability to address maintenance of private properties, especially where health and safety are critical issues. Building Inspections is currently conducting research to develop an annual inspection program for all dwelling units in Plano. A specially appointed committee is working with the Building Inspections Department to develop this inspection program.

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 in early 1999 to all homeowner association presidents soliciting their input on ways we might better improve communications and input with homeowner associations.

Infrastructure Construction, Repair and Maintenance

The City's Capital Improvement Program is proactive in keeping the streets in good condition. Below is a listing of current or planned activity in the East Plano area:

Shiloh Road - Park to Royal Oaks. Construction of two lanes from E. Park to Oleander. Construction of screening wall and other improvements along limits of the project. Project is planned to be completed February, 2000. The extension of Shiloh Road to Parker is planned to be completed by June, 2006.

Exchange Drive - Located north of Park, south of Parker between Archerwood and U.S. 75. Roadway, sanitary sewer and storm improvements. Project has been completed.

Los Rios -

Parker to Jupiter. Four lane divided roadway, with water, sanitary sewer and storm improvements. Project is in conjunction with a Park Project. Schematic design is underway.

From 14th Street to Country Club Drive. Rebuild bridge out of the floodplain.

Jupiter - Spring Creek to Chaparral. Widen road to six lanes. Design phase will start this fiscal year.

18th Place and 20th Street - Both streets from Avenue K will have paving replaced and some utility work done.

J Place - Plano Parkway to 10th. Replace water, sewer, paving and drainage. Project to begin in early 2000.

With regard to road repair safety, the City has been looking at current construction sites to see if additional barricading is needed. All Public Works and Engineering roadway projects require the contractor to meet and conform to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. If you feel additional lighting or barricading is needed at a particular location, please call the Engineering Department at (972) 941-7152. Field inspection will respond and implement appropriate intervention to enhance the safety of motorists and pedestrians.

Parks and Open Space

The following park projects are planned in the East Plano area:

Oak Point Center - 87,000 square foot recreation center including racquetball courts, gymnasium, climbing wall, weight room, exercise rooms, classrooms, game room, gymnastics room, 50 meter indoor pool with leisure pool elements and an outdoor leisure pool. Scheduled to open early in 2000. Located at Jupiter Road and Spring Creek Parkway.

Oak Point Park and Nature Preserve - 660+ acre park and nature preserve to include three lakes ranging in size from 7 to 29 acres, recreational trails, equestrian trails, picnic pavilions, group camping facilities, retreat center, special events area, nature preserve and interpretive area. Construction of improvements is expected to begin in 3 - 5 years. Located along Rowlett Creek from Parker Road to Highway 5.

Cottonwood Creek Greenbelt - Construction of a 10 foot wide recreational trail will begin in November and is expected to be completed in late spring. The trail will run from Park Blvd. south to Los Robles Dr.

Shawnee Park - Renovation and enhancement of the park to include addition of a park entrance on Parker Road, expansion of the pond, additional picnic areas, additional trees, and additional parking. Plans will begin being prepared later this budget year pending successful acquisition of additional park land from the adjacent church. This acquisition is needed to facilitate the planned entrance onto Parker Road.

Willowcreek Park - Erosion repairs and tree planting on the east side of Roanoke Drive are planned for the summer of 2000.

Unnamed Neighborhood Park in Timberbrook Estates - 8.5 acre neighborhood park within the Timberbrook Estates development to include a picnic shelter, playground, 2 neighborhood backstops, benches, picnic tables, trees and irrigation system. Development will take place in conjunction with the adjacent elementary school which is expected in 2 - 3 years.

Chaparral Road Athletic Site - 119+ acre athletic facility to include up to 18 lighted athletic fields with parking and associated improvements. Not expected to be developed within the next 5 years. Located at Chaparral Road approximately ½ mile east of Jupiter Road.

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 will be 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 is expected to 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.

SPECIFIC TOPICS OF CONCERN

Sewage Odor - Admittedly there are days when odors emanate from the sewage plant on Los Rios. This plant is owned and operated by the North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD). NTMWD is currently expanding the plant at a cost of approximately \$16 million. Expected to be completed by the end of June 2000, this expansion will minimize the odor problem, but it will probably never completely disappear. Both the City of Plano and NTMWD are sensitive to the odor problem. Currently the City is adding chemicals to its interceptor line to reduce the formation of odors; NTMWD has done likewise. It is hoped that upon completion of the plant expansion the odors will be so minimal and infrequent as to not excite the senses of residents.

Cell Towers - Several years ago, the City Council established a Telecommunications Ad-hoc Committee to study various issues regarding telecommunications and telecommunications facilities (towers and antennas) within the city of Plano. From the recommendations of the committee and telecommunications providers, City staff prepared a draft ordinance. This draft was presented in July to the Homeowners Focus Group and the Plano Homeowners Council for comments, and was forwarded to the Planning and Zoning Commission for formal recommendation. The Planning and Zoning Commission considered the ordinance in August, and City Council adopted the ordinance in September.

The ordinance creates minimum separation distances between towers and setbacks from residential areas. The ordinance encourages the installation of "stealth" facilities, such as less obtrusive antennas located on water towers, parking lot and ballfield lighting, flagpoles and within church steeples. It prohibits the installation of "non-stealth" facilities in residential areas. And, the ordinance accommodates new wireless technologies such as local residential and commercial wireless Internet service.

Noise Ordinance - Revisions to the noise ordinance were adopted at the December 13th City Council meeting. Basically, the revisions prohibit the operation of power equipment, including construction equipment, within 150 feet of a residential area between the hours of 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. With regard to boomboxes, the noise ordinance prohibits the operation of radios or similar devices in a manner as to unreasonably disturb or interfere with the peace, comfort, and repose of neighboring persons of ordinary sensibilities. Disturbing the peace complaints are addressed by the Police Department, however any citizen may also file a complaint with Municipal Court. As an added note, noise made by trains is exempt from this ordinance due to safety reasons.

Maintenance of Creeks - The Drainage Division of the Public Works Department maintains approximately 107 miles of drainage ways. Twenty-three miles of these drainage ways are improved with reinforced concrete or gabions (rock in wire baskets). These improved sections are inspected each year and repaired as necessary. These drainage ways are inventoried annually, and in response to the erosion of some sections of natural channels, the City has improved these by installing gabion baskets. The eighty-four miles of natural channels receive a herbicide treatment and are cleaned as necessary. The City also mows these drainage ways and other easements.

Transition from Growth to Maintenance Mode - The transition has already begun. Over the past four years, the City has spent almost \$14 million in pavement, sidewalk and screening wall repairs. The majority of these repairs have been in the areas near Central Expressway. In fiscal year 1999-2000, approximately \$7.5 million will be expended for the maintenance of the City's aging infrastructure.

Being at 90% build-out, the City of Plano has begun the planning process for the development of a strategy for the maintenance of its entire infrastructure. This process involves meetings with each City Department to explore anticipated effects of maturity on various aspects of the City, the changes in City services that will be required, and changes in the Department's organizational structure. After completion of departmental meetings, recommendations with regard to a strategy to prepare for this transition will be prepared and presented to City Council. Components of the

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strategy will address the City's street, drainage, traffic control, water, sewage, solid waste, recreational, and emergency systems. One facet of the strategy will include the exploration of a water conservation program in the City of Plano. City staff anticipates the transition recommendations will be made to City Council by May, 2000.

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,

Rick Neudorff
Deputy Mayor Pro tem

RN/cp