

2007

**City Council
Planning & Zoning
Commission Retreat**



**September 11, 2007
Plano Station**

2007

CITY COUNCIL/PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION RETREAT

SEPTEMBER 11, 2007

PLANO STATION

AGENDA

12:00 noon – Lunch

12:45 pm – Discussion of Planning and Potential Development in the Parker Road DART Station area and along the K Avenue Corridor south to the Bush Turnpike DART Station

2:15 pm – Break

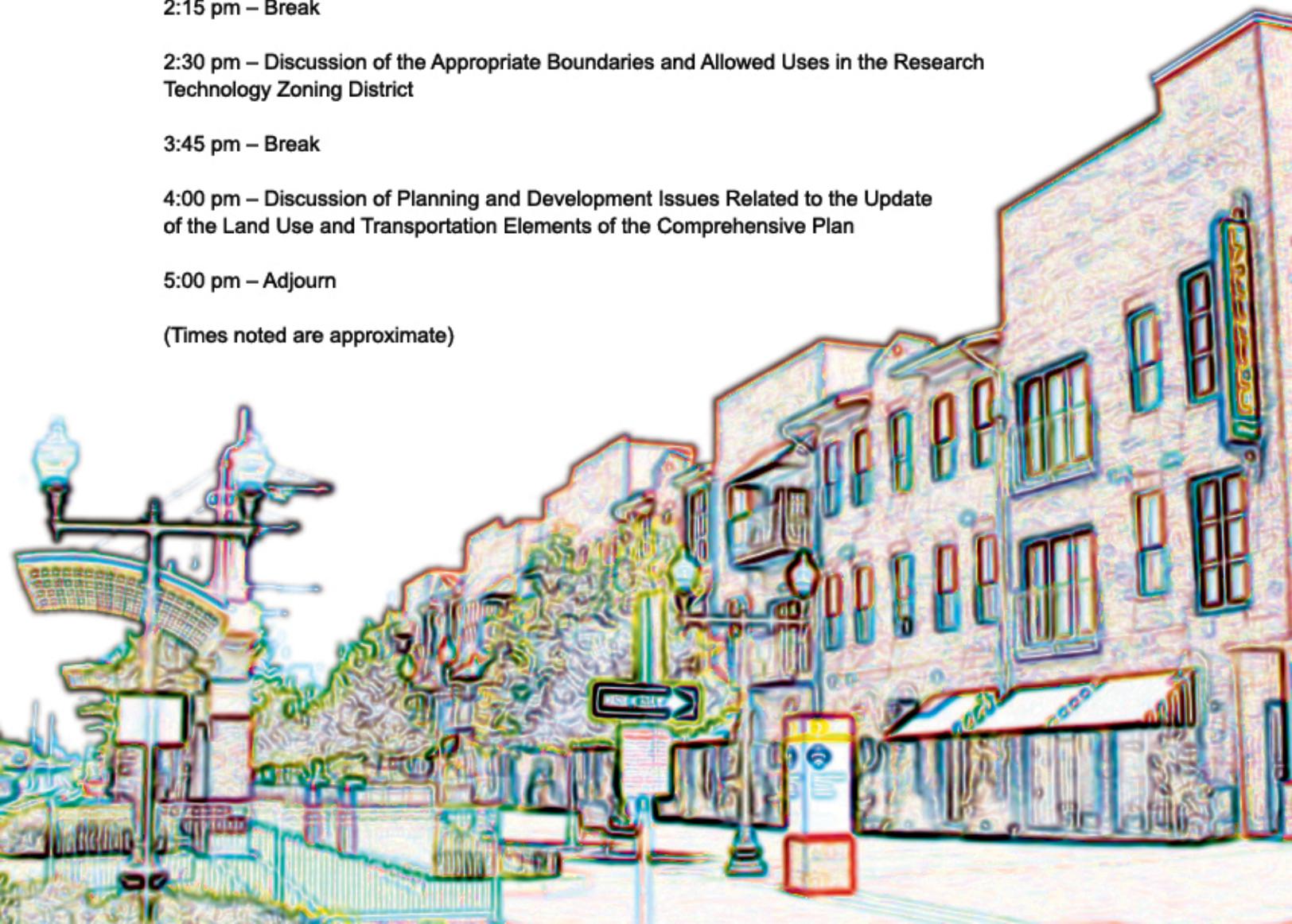
2:30 pm – Discussion of the Appropriate Boundaries and Allowed Uses in the Research Technology Zoning District

3:45 pm – Break

4:00 pm – Discussion of Planning and Development Issues Related to the Update of the Land Use and Transportation Elements of the Comprehensive Plan

5:00 pm – Adjourn

(Times noted are approximate)





This is the fifth annual joint retreat of the City Council and the Planning & Zoning Commission. This year, the agenda shifts from general trends affecting maturing suburban communities to specific local projects and issues. Past retreats have covered broad themes such as changing demographics, challenges for "First-Tier" suburbs, creating a sense of place, and economic revitalization. The topics this year look at how some of these trends are playing out at the local level.

The three agenda topics will focus on the following:

- Development potential around the Parker Road Station and along the K Avenue corridor that connects the three rail stations;
- A reassessment of the Research Technology District's regulations and boundaries; and
- Population growth and other issues to be explored during the updates to the Land Use and Transportation elements of the Comprehensive Plan

Plano's ability to embrace redevelopment, to capitalize on opportunities to create urban centers and transit oriented development, and to recognize and adapt to continued regional population growth and its associated effects will greatly influence the city's future success. The retreat agenda will offer an opportunity to reflect on how Plano can address these challenges.



THE DART RAIL CORRIDOR

The presence of light rail service in Plano offers the city a valuable economic development tool. Across the country, cities are working to take advantage of rail service to promote developments that concentrate housing, jobs and mixed-use development within walking distance of stations. The DART rail corridor has given Plano the opportunity to create the Downtown Plano transit village, which is known nationwide as an excellent example of transit oriented development. Discussion at the retreat will examine the impact of rail stations within three distinct areas in the rail corridor: the Parker Road Station, the K Avenue corridor and the properties owned by the Brownfields Stewardship Fund/10th Street Industries along 10th Street on the west side of the rail line.

Each station has different characteristics that affect its potential for development in the immediate area. At first glance, the Parker Road Station, with undeveloped properties nearby, appears to be a natural candidate for transit oriented development. Its status as the end-of-the-line station, however, with the resulting need for a large number of parking spaces, limits development until rail service is extended northward.

The "zone of influence" for a rail station is typically considered to be a 5 minute or ¼ mile walk. Over time, certain areas within this zone will redevelop and respond to the station access; other areas will be influenced more by different market forces. The proximity of K Avenue to the rail line illustrates this effect, as great changes have occurred near the downtown Plano Station. However, the street resumes its traditional function and appearance as a major commercial corridor in the areas further away from the station.

Moving further south, the Brownfields Stewardship Fund/10th Street Industries properties are the former location of Capital Wire and Cable/US Brass operations. Although located at the confluence of the DART Red Line and the Cottonbelt Line, the properties, for a variety of reasons, may not be the site of a future rail station. However, the Brownfields Stewardship Fund is interested in reoccupying or redeveloping its property south of 10th Street. The property contains about 400,000 square feet of space in two buildings.





ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Parker Road Station

- For the foreseeable future, DART will need to maintain, either in surface lots or in garages, a sizable number of parking spaces at the Parker Road Station. The cost of constructing structured parking is a constraint on transit oriented development in the station area.
- Interest in development in the Parker Road station area has been negligible. Two housing developers worked on a plan several years ago, and concluded that a development was not feasible at that time.
- The City could move forward with planning efforts in the station area and establish zoning that would begin to guide any development that might occur. However, the last attempt to rezone the station area, in 2002, was not completed and considered to be premature in the absence of an actual development plan.

K Avenue

- The street's primary function is that of a commercial corridor. The boundaries of the Business Government district already cover the portion of the street most likely to be influenced by the Downtown Plano rail station.
- With the rezoning of the southern end of the street in 2003, zoning has been standardized along the corridor and industrial zoned areas have been eliminated.
- The appearance of the corridor has long been a concern. However, redevelopment of individual properties is starting to improve the streetscape as landscaped edges and plantings are installed. The other option is to undertake a city-funded streetscape program if immediate improvement is desired.

Brownfields Stewardship Fund/10th Street Industries Property

- The site's location presents access and visibility issues with redevelopment. Its proximity to the Douglass Community must also be considered.
- Environmental contamination on the Brownfields Stewardship Fund property has been remediated and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality has cleared the site for commercial and residential occupancy.



RESEARCH TECHNOLOGY DISTRICT ALLOWED USES AND APPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES

The Research Technology (RT) zoning district, created in 1998 at the height of the regional technology-driven economic boom, is intended to be a low-density employment center with primarily office, manufacturing and research and development facilities. Speculative construction of office/warehouse/tech space left a 43% vacancy rate with the economic downturn in 2000. Over the years, in response to concerns by tenants and property owners, City Council approved amendments to the zoning district to allow more dock doors and to redefine manufacturing types to allow a broader range of uses within the district. Vacancies have since been reduced to 26% as new businesses have occupied lease spaces and buildings in the district.

In May, City Council asked the Planning & Zoning Commission to review the district in response to several issues. First, Council voiced concern about the lack of restaurants and service retail uses within the district. The Plano Independent School District has also recently purchased a 23 acre tract of land with the RT district for a future middle school site. Property owners in the far eastern portion of the district, along 14th Street, have long had concerns about the appropriateness of RT zoning for their smaller, more isolated tracts. Finally, residential developers have shown interest in developing single-family subdivisions in the parts of the district adjacent to residential neighborhoods in the City of Richardson.

In three worksessions, the Commission considered several options and heard from property owners and developers in the district. The Commission's recommendations are summarized below:

Restaurant/Retail Uses in RT – As opposed to unilateral text changes to the RT district, consider individual requests from property owners for zoning that include retail and restaurant uses if the properties include frontage on the Bush Turnpike. It is further recommended that the City consider establishing criteria to review such requests for rezoning. These criteria would be used to evaluate a request's ability to support the district's primary purpose of serving as a major employment center anchored by office and manufacturing uses.

District Boundaries – Consider removing the area north of the Cottonbelt Railroad right-of-way, east of Los Rios Boulevard, from the district and rezoning it to Light Commercial (LC) or Light Industrial-1 (LI-1). Do not consider allowing residential development in the area south of the railroad and east of the intersection of Los Rios Boulevard and Plano Parkway. The recent extension of Plano Parkway brings greater visibility and accessibility to the area and should increase marketability of these properties for RT uses.



ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- Most retail stores and restaurants need locations with regional access and visibility and both daytime and nighttime customers to be successful. The portion of the RT district that offers these qualities is the land along the George Bush Turnpike.
- The part of the RT district south of 14th Street, east of Los Rios Boulevard and north of the railroad tracks has smaller tracts of land with fragmented ownership. This part of the district has poorer access and visibility to major thoroughfares and to the George Bush Turnpike. The properties in this area may not lend themselves to development of large floor plate manufacturing and office facilities.
- The City has never contemplated residential development in the RT district. The impact of noise from the police academy's outdoor firing range must be considered, along with other service needs such as additional fire stations, parks, solid waste routes and police patrols.





PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES RELATED TO THE UPDATE OF THE LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION ELEMENTS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This agenda topic offers an opportunity for a free-ranging discussion of issues that are being considered as part of the updates to the Land Use and Transportation elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning & Zoning Commission has held several work sessions on the updates and identified a number of important trends and issues that will affect the future development of the city.

Issues for Consideration

Plano's Share of Regional Population Growth – The Dallas-Fort Worth region is expected to add another 3 million people by 2030. Plano's population, based on present zoning and development trends, is expected to top out in the 265,000 to 270,000 range, although in the mid-1980's this figure was around 365,000. However, rising transportation costs, longer commute times, the presence of mass transit, and access to employment centers make Plano an attractive, close-in alternative. It is likely that the City's ultimate population may near 300,000 regardless of our projections. Is it not better to plan ahead for this growth?

At the 2006 retreat, participants used Lego blocks to indicated areas of the City that could support additional residential and employment uses, up to 300,000 residents and 200,000 employees. We will not repeat this exercise at the retreat, but we will look at some of the areas identified as those with the potential to support population growth.

Residential Development vs. Commercial Development – The City has been overzoned for many years for both retail and office development. In recent years, with an active residential market and dwindling parcels of land zoned for housing, developers have been requesting to rezone commercial land for residential purposes. While many of these requests are in appropriate locations for residential development and can be supported, others are for areas that should be reserved for future economic development. We will spend some time discussing the characteristics of land that is well suited for commercial and office development.