

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
Work Session
August 21, 2007

Present:

Carolyn Kalchthaler, Chairman
Maggie Armstrong
Michael Coleman
James Duggan, 2nd Vice Chair
Jim Norton
Craig Perry
Janet Stovall
Laura Williamson, 1st Vice Chair

Staff Present:

Phyllis Jarrell, Director of Planning
Jeff Zimmerman, Long Range Planning Manager
Kate Perry, Sr. Planner
Steve Sims, Sr. Planner

Chairman Kalchthaler opened the work session at 6:30 p.m.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 – DISCUSSION AND DIRECTION
RESEARCH/TECHNOLOGY CENTER DISTRICT (RT)**

Kate Perry, Sr. Planner, explained that in May staff presented a status report to the City Council on the RT district. At that time, City Council identified two issues for further consideration, requested that the Planning & Zoning Commission explore these issues in detail, and develop some options for discussion at the September 11 Joint Retreat. The two issues were the availability of restaurants and retail in the district and whether the district boundaries are still appropriate.

Ms. Perry summarized a number of options discussed at the July and August meetings.

1. The city could initiate rezoning for specific locations.
2. The city could rezone land based on appropriate requests from property owners.
3. Allow 10% for restaurant and/or retail uses to occur in advance of the development of the remaining 90% of the property.
4. Permit restaurants by right or by specific use permit without applying the 10% rule. (Continue to apply the 10% rule to retail.) Freestanding restaurants could also be limited to a minimum square footage, with no drive-through facilities.

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5. Remove the properties north of the railroad right-of-way (RR ROW), east of Los Rios Boulevard and rezone to Light Commercial (LC) or Light Industrial-1 (LI-1).
6. Remove the properties located on the south of Plano Parkway, east of Los Rios Boulevard, and rezone them to Single-Family Residence/Attached (SF-A), Patio Home, or another single-family category.

The Commission then received a number of comments from property owners and their representatives. The Commission responded that they do not think residential is appropriate for the area. The property owners also stated that some of the existing uses along 14th Street adjacent to their land interfere with their right and enjoyment of the use of their property. All agreed that the regulations of the zoning district make it difficult for them to sell their property and relocate. However, no consensus was reached on what the appropriate use of the land should be. A developer, Don Johnson, stated no new construction has taken place on the land east of Los Rios Boulevard since the RT zoning district was adopted.

Phyllis Jarrell, Director of Planning, advised a land owner, Darlene Carpenter, that a rezoning request could be submitted for her property to allow for the expansion plans of a neighboring land owner.

The Commission concluded the discussion with the following directives:

1. Take residential uses off the table for consideration in the RT district.
2. Consider additional uses north of the Cottonbelt RR ROW and east of Los Rios Boulevard.
3. Define where restaurants may locate along the President George Bush Turnpike as well as additional land use options within the corridor and criteria for evaluating individual rezoning requests.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 – DISCUSSION AND DIRECTION TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT UPDATE

Steve Sims, Sr. Planner, began the presentation by providing an update on the status of the project. Staff is nearing completion of the first draft text of the Transportation Element. However, additional issues have surfaced during the development of the first draft text. Here is a summation of the issues:

1. Addition of a statement of the City's vision for transportation.
2. Encouraging major employers to participate in Transportation Demand Management Programs (TDM).
3. Development of criteria for prioritization of transportation projects.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Mr. Sims asked the Commission the following questions to stimulate discussion regarding these issues:

1. What are the top three transportation problems in Plano?
2. What are some suggestions on how to address these problems?
3. How can the city maximize efficient use of the existing transportation system?
4. How should transportation improvement projects be prioritized?
5. What criteria should be used to prioritize transportation improvement projects?
6. What are some ideas for incentives to encourage employers to participate in TDM programs?

The Commission voiced concern over traffic signalization, lane closures for construction projects, clarity of signage, blocking of roadways feeding into thoroughfares by traffic waiting at signalized intersections, bus stops on major thoroughfares, and the long distance of bus stops from adjacent land uses. The Commission stated that there is too much parking at retail uses around the city. Ms. Jarrell responded that the surface area for parking at retail centers in Plano exceeds the land area within Legacy Town Center (approximately 2,500 acres).

Possible solutions to traffic problems could include reverse lanes during peak traffic flows, and High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) toll (HOT) lanes on major north/south thoroughfares. The price of using the roadway would increase at peak travel times with the exception of the HOV lanes. Another idea included use of a large parking area in Plano where people could leave their cars and ride share to their final destination. The Commission stated that the main issue is changing people's behavior. TDM is a more cost effective way to accomplish this goal, yet a challenge to get major employers to participate.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the Commission directed staff to move forward with the first draft text of the Transportation Element and include a vision statement, ideas to encourage TDM, and a strategy statement on prioritizing transportation projects.

Chairman Kalchthaler adjourned the work session at 8:40 p.m.

Planning & Zoning Commissioner

xc: Honorable Mayor and City Council
Thomas H. Muehlenbeck, City Manager