

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
Work Session Minutes
October 4, 2010

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

James Duggan, Chairman
Craig Perry, 1st Vice Chair
Christopher Caso, 2nd Vice Chair
David Downs
Jim Norton
Tracey Dry
Doug Hazelbaker
Michael Coleman

STAFF PRESENT

Phyllis Jarrell, Director of Planning
Tina Firgens, Planning Manager
Steve Sims, Sr. Planner
Eric Hill, Planner
Bester Munyaradzi, Planner
Paige Mims, Assistant City Attorney

Chairman Duggan called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

1. Discussion and direction regarding issues related to the proposed Comprehensive Plan update.

Steve Sims, Sr. Planner, gave a brief summary of the purpose of this discussion. Mr. Sims stated that the City of Plano has arranged for two public meetings to gather feedback on issues related to the Comprehensive Plan. The meetings will take place starting at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 27, 2010, at the Oak Point Recreation Center and on Tuesday, November 9, 2010, at the Tom Muehlenbeck Recreation Center. The meetings will be facilitated by Paris Rutherford, Catalyst Consulting, and will include opportunities for feedback from residents.

Issues and Topics

Mr. Sims stated that staff has identified three key issues (land use, housing, and transportation) which will be integrated into the presentation by the facilitator and discussed during the public meetings. The following is a list of the issues with brief synopsis of the key points for each issue. These issues and opportunities will be explored in more detail as the plan update continues. Staff requested that the Commission review and inform staff of additional issues and points which should be added or deleted from the list.

Land Use

- Undeveloped land - 8.6% of the land in Plano is undeveloped. Current policies call for land along the major expressway corridors to develop under current zoning regulations. Consideration should be given to determine if present policies which apply to the city's major corridors should be retained, modified, or replaced due to evolving economic conditions and existing development. This discussion will continue with the Commission as a companion item regarding polices for undeveloped land on this same meeting agenda.
- Infill - This is the development of undeveloped land surrounded by existing residential neighborhoods and commercial areas and one of the future opportunities for development in Plano. This could potentially result in denser residential development which may not have a traditional neighborhood school or park in the middle due to less land available to construct the project.
- Redevelopment - Redevelopment will increasingly become the primary opportunity for new housing and commercial development in the city. This is another development opportunity for Plano to add housing and increase density. Current regulations need to be examined to determine how they would impact redevelopment activities. The city may need to consider incentives to encourage redevelopment.
- Urban centers - The Urban Centers Study identified three potential sites at Park Boulevard and Preston Road, Collin Creek Mall, and Parker Road Station where urban centers should be built. As we plan for the future, other urban center locations will emerge.

Transportation

- Local roadway system - As growth continues north and east of Plano, coupled with further development of employment centers in the city and around the Dallas-Fort Worth region, traffic flow will increase on the city's roadway system. Most of Plano's thoroughfares are completed and there are limited opportunities to expand the roadway system to accommodate additional vehicles. Additional opportunities may need to be identified to maximize the existing roadway system.
- Freight rail - The Burlington Northern, Cottonbelt, and Kansas City Southern railways provide freight rail access to Plano and Dallas. Existing industrial sites along the Kansas City Southern and Cottonbelt tracks are utilized by businesses transporting goods. As these corridors are considered for commuter rail use, provisions will need to be made to accommodate freight rail for industrial purposes. Also, depending on industrial business trends, access to freight rail could be less of a necessity.
- Mass transit - DART operates bus and light rail service in Plano. Consideration will need to be given to what services may be required in the future and opportunities for east-west transit service may need to be further expanded. Additionally, as gasoline prices increase in the future, increased demand in mass transit ridership will occur.

- Bicycle transportation - The city of Plano has an extensive bicycle trail system in place. More signage is required particularly along street routes, and additional improvements may be needed to ensure safer crossings of major thoroughfares. More thought should be given to improvements of the existing system with access to major destination sites within the city which would increase use of the trails. Additionally, bicycles could become a primary alternate mode of transportation within the city.
- Connectivity - Plano's roadway system and mass transit routes are interconnected with the Dallas-Fort Worth region. Bicycle routes still require more work for connection with other trails in neighboring cities. As more people move into Plano and the Dallas-Fort Worth region, consideration should be given to connectivity issues. Additionally, improved accessibility from residential and business areas to mass transit and bicycle trails should be expanded.

Housing

- Changing demographics - With every census, Plano's population becomes more diverse and the number of people aging in place continues to grow. There are still plenty of young families with school age children in Plano. The number of empty nester households and single person households is growing much faster, however. Garden apartments and single-family detached homes are still the predominant housing choice available in the city. A wider variety of housing types will be needed to accommodate a changing population.
- Affordable housing - Compared to most urban regions in the United States, housing in the Dallas-Fort Worth area is affordable. However, on average, Plano's housing is about 1.5 times higher than the region. Affordable housing is becoming an issue for Plano as service workers have to commute into the city from other communities for their jobs, as they cannot afford to live near employment. Consideration should be given as to what can be done to provide affordable housing options for all of Plano's workforce.
- Housing density - Current policy states that multiple garden apartment complexes located next to each other should have no more than 500 units, and multifamily communities exceeding 500 should be separated by 1,500 feet, with the exception of urban centers. Redevelopment of existing retail corners and requests for multifamily projects along major transportation corridors will require a reassessment of this policy as demand for housing increases.
- Seniors aging in place - Most housing opportunities for seniors in Plano are for people at the lower or upper income ranges while limited housing options are available for people with moderate incomes. This means most seniors will age in place and will need assistance with maintenance of their homes and household care. Opportunities will need to be identified regarding how assistance can be provided to help seniors with these issues so that residential structures and neighborhoods continue to be maintained.

- Aging structures - By 2030 most of Plano's housing stock, office buildings, and retail areas will be over 40 years old. Much of the water, sewer, and roadway system, along with city facilities, will be 50 years old. Ideas will be needed on what can be done to help Plano remain an attractive and viable city for future generations. Additionally, identifying financial resources and programming for maintenance and repair of aging infrastructure should continue to be addressed.

The Commission had questions regarding the amount of public turnout for past public meetings, how the public would be notified of the scheduled meetings, if the larger land owners would be notified, what the next step would be after the public meetings are held, and what companies use the freight rail; they also offered suggestions for receiving public responses. The Commission concerned with the issues identified by staff, and directed staff to move forward with the public meetings.

After much discussion, Mr. Sims introduced the next work session item.

2. Discussion and direction regarding policies for undeveloped land in Plano.

Mr. Sims stated that the purpose of the agenda item is to begin discussion on policies regarding undeveloped land in Plano. The first exercise in August 2010, identified the amount and location of remaining undeveloped land in the city. The focus of this second exercise is to familiarize the Commission with undeveloped land policies mentioned in the Comprehensive Plan. Many were adopted by the Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council from 2004 through 2009. It is time to review the policies and begin the discussion to determine if these policies are still appropriate, and if not, how they should be revised to address present and future land use issues which may result from potential rezoning requests.

Undeveloped Land Statistics

Mr. Sims presented information regarding undeveloped land in Plano at the Planning & Zoning Commission's August 2, 2010, meeting. Mr. Sims stated that there are 4,535.5 acres of undeveloped land remaining in Plano, 9.8% of all land within the city. Once land within the 100 year flood plain has been removed from the total, there are 3,979.7 acres (8.6%) available for development. Nonresidential zoning comprises 85.7% (3,410.7 acres) of the undeveloped usable land in Plano. Residential zoned land and properties currently zoned for agriculture, for which the Land Use Plan recommends for residential use, total 569.0 acres (14.3%).

Most of the nonresidential zoned land is found along the major expressway corridors while the residential zoned land is situated in small tracts spread throughout the city. The largest concentrations of land recommended for residential use currently zoned Agricultural is found along Park Boulevard at Custer Road (Haggard Farm) and at the Parker Road and Jupiter Road intersection (Moore Farm).

Undeveloped Land Policies

Policy recommendations for the use of undeveloped land in Plano can be found in the Comprehensive Plan. These policies are located within the Land Use and Economic Development Elements along with the Housing Density, Infill Housing, Mixed Use, and

Rezoning to Meet Demand policy statements. The following information summarizes each of these various land use policies, including the intended purpose, reasons that led to the formation of the policies, the date the policy was adopted, and additional information for the Commission to consider as each of these policies is evaluated.

Land Use Element

Intent

The Land Use Element includes a policy recommendation (page 13) that the City needs to retain an adequate supply of undeveloped nonresidential land for future economic development opportunities, including not supporting rezoning properties for residential uses in prime economic development areas of the city. Additionally, the policy includes that accommodating immediate development opportunities is not an adequate reason alone for rezoning nonresidential properties for residential purposes. The intent of this policy is to ensure land located along the expressway corridors, and within Legacy Business Park and the Research Technology Crossroads is developed in accordance with existing zoning regulations.

Reason created

The policy recommendation was put in place to protect land in the major expressway corridors, Legacy Business Park, and the Research Technology Crossroads to take advantage of future nonresidential development opportunities which would increase the tax base.

Approval date

January 2008

Do these reasons still exist today?

Demand for new residential development was strong in Plano during 2007 despite the small amount of undeveloped land zoned for housing. Developers began approaching the city with requests to rezone land to allow for residential development in prime economic development areas of Plano. One of the first requests was the rezoning of land in the Legacy Business Park at Spring Creek Parkway and Tennyson Parkway for a single-family residential development. Most interest in rezoning land for housing dissipated in late 2008 when the recession started.

However, this issue is still relevant today as evidenced by the recently approved rezoning of 70 acres of land in the Research Technology Crossroads for residential development. The demand to rezone land for housing could pick up again when the economy improves.

Economic Development Element

Intent

The intent of the policy recommendation, "Preserving land for future economic development" (pages 10 and 11) of the Economic Development Element, is the same as found in the Land Use Element. The city should preserve land along the expressway corridors and within employment centers to provide for future economic development

opportunities, which could increase the number of jobs for Plano residents and revenue for municipal services. Additionally, the policy on pages 11 and 12 explains the difference between mixed use and multi-use development projects along with recommendations for minimum land area of 50 acres for urban centers. The problem of over abundance of retail zoning, along with the struggles of existing neighborhood retail centers, is also addressed.

Reason created

The policy recommendations were created to protect undeveloped land along the major expressway corridors, within the Legacy Business Park and the Research Technology Crossroads areas of the city to allow these areas to develop under current zoning regulations and provide economic development opportunities.

Approval date

February 2008

Do these reasons still exist today?

Decisions regarding how to develop the remaining approximate 4,000 acres in Plano are still a major issue for the city. Struggling retail centers at the major thoroughfare corners have become more prevalent since the update of the Economic Development Element. Retailers desire greater visibility and believe this attribute is lacking at the interior major thoroughfare intersections. They prefer to locate along the major expressway corridors where visibility is much higher and they can attract more customers. Additionally, Plano is experiencing a loss of retail businesses to newer shopping centers in neighboring cities to the north. New ideas for the redevelopment of the retail corners could add more residents to Plano and increase the number of potential customers for existing businesses. The preservation of undeveloped land in the economic corridors will help Plano retain existing businesses through increasing visibility and allowing for expansion of operations, as well as attract new companies to the city.

Housing Density Policy Statement

Intent

The policy statement provides guidance regarding the development of high density housing within Plano.

Reason created

The policy statement was created to limit the concentration of multifamily units throughout the city while at the same time allowing much higher densities for apartments within urban centers.

Approval date

March 2005

Do these reasons still exist today?

Multifamily development has been a long standing issue in Plano. The last big push for multifamily development came in 1997 and 1998 when permits for almost 5,500 units

were issued during the two year time period. A Multifamily Task Force was created by the City Council in 1998 to study the issue. The Task Force recommended that no more than 500 units be constructed at one location, and developments up to 500 units must be separated by 1,500 feet. The recommendation was incorporated in the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

In 2005, the Housing Density Policy Statement was created to uphold the policy regarding the concentration of multifamily units, and grant an exception for urban centers. Urban centers need a large number of housing units to support retail businesses within the development and to provide the desired live/work/play environment. The issue still remains as there are three potential sites recommended for urban centers with the city - Preston Road at Park Boulevard, Parker Road Transit Station, and the Collin Creek Mall.

Current zoning and future plans could support an additional 2,685 multifamily units for future development. The units in question are spread throughout Plano, specifically within from the Legacy Town Center and Granite Properties areas, Dallas North Tollway at Parker Road, downtown Plano, and President George Bush Turnpike at Renner Road.

Multifamily development is likely to recover first coming out of the recession and several developers have already approached the city to consider projects in the expressway corridors. The Commission needs to begin considering if multifamily would be desirable within the expressway corridors or should land in these corridors continue to be protected for uses allowed under current nonresidential zoning designations.

Infill Housing Policy Statement

Intent

There are two policy statements within the Infill Housing document. The first policy statement serves as a guide to decision makers to determine if current zoning or requests to rezone small tracts of land to allow for infill housing are appropriate. The second policy statement establishes criteria for consideration of rezoning land to allow for the development of alternative residential neighborhoods.

Reason created

Infill housing is seen as a future development opportunity for Plano. There are many small vacant lots around the city surrounded by existing development, which for some reason were not developed. Some of these properties are currently zoned to allow housing while other properties would need to be rezoned for residential development. The neighborhoods created by these projects would be much smaller than the traditional one square mile neighborhood grids, with a park and school in the middle, surrounded by low density housing, with higher density housing and retail at the thoroughfare intersections.

Approval date

February 2006

Do these reasons still exist today?

Guidelines for consideration of rezoning for residential uses and the creation of the alternative neighborhood concepts are still needed today and in the future, given the remaining smaller properties throughout the city available for development, as well as for the redevelopment of underperforming retail centers.

Mixed Use Policy Statement

Intent

The intent of the policy statement is to define mixed use development and its role within the City of Plano, as well as address how this development form can be used to create large scale projects like urban centers and smaller scale mixed use projects.

Reason created

Mixed use is a popular concept and most recent trend for development projects. Many proposals call for multiple uses on the same site; however, these proposals do not vertically integrate the uses nor are they conducive to pedestrian access and circulation. A question arose amongst the Commission in 2008 as to what constitutes mixed use development; therefore, this policy statement was written to address the issue and provide framework for developers, the Commission and Council, and staff when evaluating mixed use development requests.

Approval date

February 2009

Do these reasons still exist today?

The Urban Centers Study was completed in 2006 and identified three potential sites as urban centers: Preston Road at Park Boulevard, Collin Creek Mall, and the Parker Road Transit Station. None of these sites have been developed/redeveloped yet as urban centers; however, the possibility still exists in the future given these locations within the city and the opportunity to facilitate transit oriented development. Additional locations for mixed use projects could be considered along the expressway corridors.

The mixed use concept is still popular today due to successful projects such as Legacy Town Center and Eastside Village in downtown Plano. When the economy recovers, developers are likely to approach the city about mixed use proposals for consideration since multifamily residential is likely to recover first from the current recession. The mixed use policy statement helps decision makers to evaluate project proposals, determine if they are appropriate for the location under consideration, and if the project will be economically viable. Additionally, this policy statement assists with furthering other comprehensive planning policies, such as alternative neighborhood formats, as discussed within the Economic Development Element and Infill Housing Policy Statement.

Rezoning to Meet Demand Policy Statement

Intent

This policy was adopted to provide guidance regarding requests to rezone nonresidentially zoned properties and address the impact on economic development.

Reason created

The policy statement followed a time in the late 1990s and early 2000s when the City of Plano rezoned large amounts of land along the major expressway corridors and created the Research Technology Crossroads. The policy statement was written when 25% of the city's land area was undeveloped, and there were concerns there may be too much land zoned for retail, office, and industrial uses. However, the policy stated that changing the zoning to allow for residential uses may not always be appropriate and presented criteria to consider before making decisions and taking action.

Approval date

August 2004

Do these reasons still exist today?

This is still a major issue for consideration today; however, much has changed since the policy was written in 2004. Only 8.6% of the city remains as usable undeveloped land, and 86% of the undeveloped land is zoned for nonresidential uses. Given the limited land zoned for residential use, staff anticipates that the city will continue to see requests from developers to rezone land for residential uses given the quality of infrastructure, municipal services, schools, and employment opportunities that the city as a whole provides.

Additional Reference Materials

Sections of the Land Use and the Economic Development Elements as it pertains to undeveloped land, along with the Housing Density, Infill Housing, Mixed use, and Rezoning to Meet Demand policy statements are attached with this staff report for your information. If the Commission requires additional information to review the context of the policy recommendations, the full text of the Land Use and Economic Development Elements can be accessed at the following link:

<http://plano.gov/Departments/Planning/planningdocuments/Pages/ComprehensivePlan.aspx>

Phyllis Jarrell, Director of Planning, stated that there is a common theme amongst many of the policies and that is preserving land for economic development within the city's major corridors and employment centers. Additionally, she stated that having undeveloped land is an asset and resource for the city, and that the land does not need to be developed all at once. Plano has been able to maintain a healthy economic, nonresidential tax base and the city has been fortunate in that regard.

The Commission had questions regarding percentages of land zoned multifamily and the number of units that could be developed; how does Plano compare to other cities

regarding the ratios of land zoned retail, light industrial, residential, etc.; and the amount of actual square footage of buildings that could be built on the undeveloped properties.

Additional comments included:

- Would like to maintain a housing balance;
- Consider redevelopment of retail corners for housing;
- Additional urban centers within corridors may be appropriate;
- Would the city have the financial resources to provide services for additional residents;
- Possibly consider higher densities along major thoroughfares;
- Having vacant land is beneficial for attracting economic development; and
- Land that has gone through several economic cycles may be indicative of why the land has not developed.

There being no further questions or discussion, Chairman Duggan adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Planning & Zoning Commissioner

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