



# Rezoning Property to Meet Demand

## Policy Statement 2.0

### Description

This policy paper provides guidance when considering requests to rezone properties. It addresses the following objectives as stated in the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan:

- ▶ **Objective A.4** Provide for an economic base that generates jobs for current and future residents and revenue sources for public facilities, infrastructure, and services.
- ▶ **Objective B.3** Provide for a balanced and efficient arrangement of Plano's land resources that accommodates residency, employment, shopping, entertainment, and recreation.
- ▶ **Objective B.4** Ensure land use compatibility by grouping complimentary land use activities and creating transitions between conflicting activities.

This topic is particularly significant because of the ongoing imbalance between residential- and non-residential-zoned land in Plano. More land is zoned for retail, office, and industrial uses than is likely to develop. When zoned land exceeds demand, zoning imbalances occur and some owners of non-residential property may seek rezoning for residential uses. As Plano matures and property owners recognize this imbalance, the likelihood of rezoning requests increases. "Down-zoning" property from non-residential categories to residential categories is not always appropriate and criteria are needed to guide this process.

### Background

Major factors leading to this zoning imbalance include:

### ***Major Corridors***

Major expressways and other heavily traveled regional thoroughfares often present opportunities for a variety of non-residential uses due to their regional accessibility and prominence. Plano currently has four such corridors: Central Expressway (U.S. 75), Preston Road (S.H. 289), the Dallas North Tollway, and President George Bush Turnpike (S.H. 190). S.H. 121 is also planned to become a regional expressway and its zoning reflects that condition. These major corridors are typically zoned for retail, restaurant, entertainment, and office uses. Office developments can often achieve major heights depending on height/setback ratios as measured from nearby residential districts. These major corridors contribute significantly to Plano's economy. They also buffer residential areas from noisy traffic. On the other hand, the existence of these corridors can saturate the market with non-residential properties. This reduces the likelihood of development for many of the non-residential properties away from major corridors.

### ***Major Intersections***

Plano's grid system of major thoroughfares provides for effective and efficient traffic circulation. It creates more than 50 major intersections at approximately one-mile intervals. Up until the mid-1980's, it was common to zone as many as four corners at each intersection for future shopping centers. Although these intersections seem to provide "perfect" locations for retail uses, market saturation has led to undeveloped sites, partially developed sites, and vacant or underused retail buildings. It is often difficult to develop traditional single-family subdivisions on these sites because of their size and shape limitations and the inability to incorporate these developments into established residential neighborhoods.

### ***Disjointed Development Patterns***

Disjointed development patterns often result when retail or office tracts are partially developed and the market will not support completion of original plans. This process often leaves pockets of land that are inappropriate for typical residential development.

#### **Analysis**

The above noted issues must be given serious consideration, but they should not preclude efforts to place residential development in areas previously reserved for non-residential uses. Plano's reputation as an economic center and its accessibility will continue to make the city a desirable place to live. As a result, there may be a greater demand for residential development, while the supply of residentially-zoned property decreases. It is also likely that greater densities will need to be achieved to make the conversion of properties from residential to non-residential zoning categories economically feasible. Otherwise, property owners will continue to hold these properties until a non-residential opportunity occurs. Often, this will mean the newer development will attract tenants away from an existing development and threaten its viability. This process, known as "cannibalization," simply moves businesses around without improving the local economy.

As land supply diminishes, properties once considered undesirable will be given greater consideration for new development. These properties may require rezoning or amendments to existing zoning categories to accommodate changing market conditions. The City of Plano will need to make difficult decisions regarding the long term use of these "left-over" tracts. Without careful consideration many of these properties may remain undeveloped and will be a constant source of apprehension for nearby homeowners, developers, and the city.

## Policy Statements

Below is a policy statement with a series of criteria to guide consideration of requests to rezone properties or amend the use charts of the Zoning Ordinance in regard to underperforming retail properties.

Evaluate requests for text amendments or for rezoning non-residential properties for residential uses based on the following:

1. *A property must be physically appropriate (in terms of size, dimensions and shape) for residential use;*
2. *The area to be rezoned is an extension of a residential neighborhood and is not separated from the neighborhood by a thoroughfare of Type "C" or larger;*
3. *The area is not affected by adverse environmental conditions such as noise, light fumes, or related nuisances;*
4. *The proposed rezoning or text amendment conforms to the objectives and strategies of the Land Use and Housing Elements of the Comprehensive Plan;*
5. *The rezoning would not result in a shortage of land required for neighborhood retail or service uses;*
6. *The rezoning or text amendments would not jeopardize the land areas considered prime for future economic expansion;*
7. *The rezoning or text amendments would not result in residual tracts that are inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan;*
8. *The resulting conversion to residential use would provide for an appropriate transition between residential and non-residential uses; and*
9. *The rezoning or text amendment is clearly consistent with the intent of reducing the overall impact of zoning imbalance on the city's Land Use System.*
10. *Consider the impact that the proposed rezoning would have on existing public service facilities (schools, parks, streets, etc.).*