

Plano Park Neighborhood Action Plan



Proudly presented by the residents of the Plano Park Neighborhood
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Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

The Plano Park Neighborhood was selected to participate in the Neighborhood Planning Program because of the challenges facing the area and a demonstrated interest on the part of the residents to improve their neighborhood. In a series of meetings, the Neighborhood Planning Team identified needs and desires of residents with regard to their neighborhood. The team then developed five goals and supporting objectives that help to define what the residents of Plano Park are trying to achieve. The goals contained in the Plano Park Neighborhood Action Plan are:

1. Create a positive community image and instill community pride. Maintain and preserve the quality of existing residential properties through the encouragement of rehabilitation and code compliance.
2. Assure safe and efficient mobility for cars, trucks and pedestrians while protecting the stability of the neighborhood.
3. Preserve neighborhood trees as part of the resources that contribute to the character and beauty of the neighborhood.
4. Continue to maintain Schell Park and Santa Fe Trail.
5. Celebrate the diversity of the neighborhood while creating a unified feeling and identity for the neighborhood.

To help achieve the stated goals, this plan establishes a series of objectives that offer specific plans of action and identifies the parties responsible for implementation.

Background

Purpose

The Plano Park Neighborhood Action Plan was developed by members of the Plano Park Neighborhood working in conjunction with the City of Plano Neighborhood Planning Program to define a vision for the future of the neighborhood. The Plan utilizes a strategic planning methodology to accomplish this vision through direct revitalization efforts and targeted action plans. The plan is based on the City of Plano Neighborhood Planning program initiated in 1998.

The Planning Process

The Plano Park Neighborhood was selected to participate in the Neighborhood Planning Program because of the challenges facing the area and a demonstrated interest by the residents to improve their neighborhood. The planning effort began in July 2002 and meetings were held biweekly through December 2002 to identify community issues and review the plan's progress.

Community outreach was very important to the planning process; efforts included direct mailings, an e-mail distribution list, hand distribution of flyers and a neighborhood opinion survey. Meeting notices were mailed to lot owners and targeted stakeholders. Neighborhood surveys (please see Appendix A), in both English and Spanish, were distributed to every home, school and church in the neighborhood. Flyers were distributed by members of the Planning Team as well as by the local Boy Scouts.

In a series of meetings the Plano Park Neighborhood Planning team met with representatives from City departments to formulate action strategies. Information gathered in these meetings and through the survey was used to help formulate the goals and the proposed strategies contained in this plan.

Vision

Residents of Plano Park envision a neighborhood that is **safe, beautiful and clean**. They see a neighborhood that is inviting for families, with good schools and vibrant parks.

The vision for Plano Park includes neat and tidy homes. Streets are **tree lined** and there is no evidence of trash or graffiti. **Traffic** travels through the neighborhood in a safe and respectful manner.

The **parks are clean and safe**, and children can walk safely to them. Kids have sufficient recreational activities and their energies are directed in a positive way.

There is a desire among residents to **promote the diversity** of their neighborhood. People of many different cultures and several generations live together harmoniously.

The Plano Park Neighborhood would also like to ensure that their **neighborhood is woven into the fabric of downtown Plano** and provided with a safe connection to regional transportation options such as the Parker Road DART light rail station.

The vision for Plano Park is one of a **close-knit community** where neighbors help neighbors with an active neighborhood association where people volunteer their time and resources to help improve the neighborhood. Members are informed and active in local issues, they help each other out because they know and care for each other, and they are committed to their community.

Neighborhood Description

Land Use and Zoning

The Plano Park Neighborhood is located about a mile northeast of Plano's historic downtown. The neighborhood is bounded on the north by Jasmine Lane, on the south by Park Boulevard, on the west by N Avenue and on the east by Jupiter Road (please see location map to the right). The neighborhood includes over 400 homes as well as Faith Lutheran Church and School, Memorial Elementary School, and Bowman Middle School. The entire Plano Park neighborhood is zoned for single-family residential use (SF-7).



Residential Population and Demographics

Census data for the Plano Park neighborhood indicate that the area is relatively stable. Over the past 20 years the number of people living in the neighborhood has remained constant at around 1,100 and housing occupancy rates have remained at 97%. Homeownership data from the 2000 census shows that

***Neighborhood
Description
(Continued)***

81% of the homes in the neighborhood are owner occupied with the remaining 19% being rentals; this compares favorably with citywide percentages (69% owner occupied, 31% renter occupied).

However, there are some definitive changes occurring in the area; the 2000 U.S. Census shows that the neighborhood is home to a more diverse group of people than ever before. While the number of people living in the neighborhood has remained constant, the groups of people living in the neighborhood have changed over the past 20 years.

The age structure of the neighborhood, mirroring national trends, is shifting (figure 1). There are fewer children in the neighborhood than there were ten and twenty years ago and more people 55 and over. Also, there are a greater number of people from different races and ethnicities; today the neighborhood is 65% white, 27% Hispanic, 5% black, 1% Asian and 2% other.

The 2000 U.S. Census indicates that the annual median household income for Plano Park was \$64,404 and 8% of households in the neighborhood were below the poverty level (this number is higher than the city wide poverty level of 4% and is up significantly from the 1990 census when the poverty level in the neighborhood was 5%).

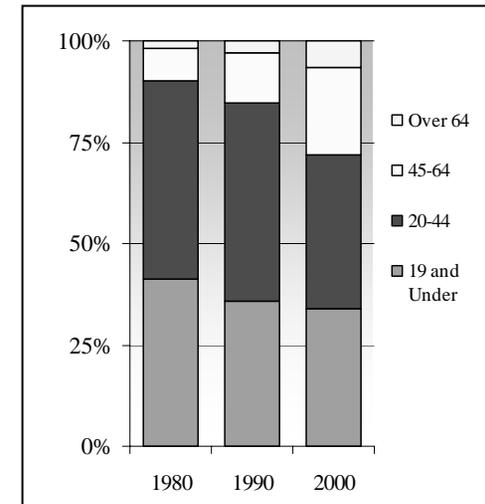


Figure 1: Plano Park age distribution presented as a percent of the total neighborhood population for 1980, 1990 and 2000.

Neighborhood Maintenance

The condition of the physical environment sends a message about how well people care for the area; this tends to be either a message of improvement or decline. According to the “Broken Window Theory,” just one broken window, left untouched for a substantial period of time, sends the message that no one cares about the home and even the block. The same theory applies to any area left in disrepair; apathy encourages littering, poorly maintained yards, graffiti and eventually more serious crimes. A proactive approach is essential as small eyesores can grow to become much larger problems.

Homes in Plano Park were mostly built during the 1960s and early 1970s and many have been well maintained. However, there are some scattered problems with graffiti, trash, and poorly maintained yards.

There are also some infrastructure problems that need to be addressed. Some streets in the area need to be patched or repaved, as do some sidewalks and alleys. Other areas do not drain properly resulting in pools of standing water.

Goal: Create a positive community image and instill community pride. Maintain and preserve the quality of the existing residential properties through the encouragement of rehabilitation and code compliance.



Figure 2: The alley between Kathy Court and Hawthorne Lane is in extreme disrepair making it impassable at times.

***Neighborhood
Maintenance
(Continued)***

Objective: Reduce the number of code violations in the neighborhood by educating residents concerning the most common code violations and advocating strict enforcement of city codes.

Objective: Improve compliance with city codes by encouraging residents to report violations to City departments.

Objective: Ensure that all residents know how to properly utilize City services by distributing educational materials in both English and Spanish.

Objective: Encourage home maintenance by educating residents about the City of Plano Housing Rehabilitation Program.

Objective: Improve compliance with bulk trash requirements by posting signs in the



Figure 3: Bulk trash items are often left on the curb for days or even weeks at a time creating dangerous and unsightly conditions.



Figure 4: Residents are often unaware of city ordinance requirements

neighborhood
to remind
residents when
bulk trash
collection day
is coming up.

Transportation

Auto Related

There are a few areas in the Plano Park neighborhood where roads are poor condition; this is especially true of P Avenue which carries a large amount of the neighborhood traffic. Scheduled repaving of P Avenue will improve automobile travel in the neighborhood. Beyond this, several other locations in the streets and alleys are in need of repair.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

It is important for a neighborhood to be pedestrian friendly as this adds to the overall livability of an area. Children should be able to walk or ride their bikes safely to and from schools and parks, elderly should be able to walk to and from mass transit and families should be able to walk comfortably around their neighborhood. Some of the many benefits of a pedestrian friendly environment include a feeling of community and connection to the neighborhood, less automobile traffic, and safer streets.

In Plano Park, pedestrian facilities, with a few exceptions, are good; the neighborhood has a continuous network of sidewalks and is located in close proximity to the City of Plano's trail network. A few problems exist where sidewalks are not level and where the concrete has crumbled. Also, some areas are not well lighted, creating a feeling that the area is unsafe.

***Transportation
(Continued)***

Goal: Assure safe and efficient mobility for cars, trucks and pedestrians while protecting the stability of the neighborhood.

Objective: Protect the stability and residential character of the neighborhood by working with the City of Plano Safe Streets program to minimize the speed and volume of cut-through traffic.

Objective: Ensure streets, alleys and sidewalks are continuous, well maintained and unobstructed by surveying existing conditions and working with City of Plano Engineering and Public Works to address these concerns (see Appendix B).

Objective: Ensure that streets and sidewalks are well lit by evaluating dark areas on Kathy Court, Magnolia Lane cul-de-sac and R Avenue where it crosses the creek. Install additional lighting where necessary.

Objective: Ensure that residents have a safe pedestrian route to the Parker Road DART light rail station by improving the intersection at K Avenue and Park Boulevard and completing the sidewalk along the north side of Park Boulevard between K Avenue and the DART rail line.



Figure 5: Sidewalks along N Avenue are obstructed by mailboxes, making it hard to get around the neighborhood.

Preservation of Neighborhood Trees

Trees are major capital assets in cities and neighborhoods across the United States. Just as streets, sidewalks, public buildings and recreational facilities are a part of a community's infrastructure, so are neighborhood trees. Trees -- and, collectively, the urban forest -- are important assets that require care and maintenance the same as other property.

Goal: To preserve neighborhood trees as part of the resources that contribute to the character and beauty of the neighborhood.

Objective: Develop a strategy for preserving neighborhood trees by consulting with the City of Plano Urban Forester.

Objective: Educate residents on tree maintenance and preservation by having the City of Plano Urban Forester attend a neighborhood meeting.

Objective: Maintain the existing tree canopy by replacing dead or dying trees. Obtain funding to offset the cost of buying trees by participating in the Keep Plano Beautiful Beatification Matching Grant Program or Plano Parks Foundation Matching grant program.



Figure 6: Tree lined street in the Plano Park neighborhood.

Area Parks

The Plano Park neighborhood is well served by two City parks—Schell Park and Santa Fe Trail. These parks are well utilized and highly valued by the Plano Park residents. Residents feel that overall the parks are well maintained and only cited problems with stream maintenance and the presence of coyotes as concerns.

Goal: Continue to maintain Schell Park and Santa Fe Trail.

Objective: Reduce accumulation of trash in the stream along the Santa Fe Trail from R Avenue to P Avenue by clearing out underbrush from the banks.

Objective: Reduce the presence of coyotes in the neighborhood and area parks by educating residents about what attracts them.



Figure 7: Residents enjoy using Schell Park on a regular basis.

Neighborhood Identity

The Plano Park neighborhood lacks a positive identity, and some might say that it lacks an identity at all; many residents do not even know that their neighborhood has a name. Residents are proud of the diversity and history in their neighborhood and would like to develop a clear, recognizable identity.

Goal: Celebrate the diversity of the neighborhood while creating a unified feeling and identity for the neighborhood.

Objective: Improve recognition of the neighborhood name and boundaries by installing street sign toppers (see figure 8).

Objective: Celebrate the diversity of the neighborhood and encourage neighbors to get to know one another with an annual block party.

Objective: Welcome new residents to the neighborhood with a welcome packet informing them about the neighborhood and area services.

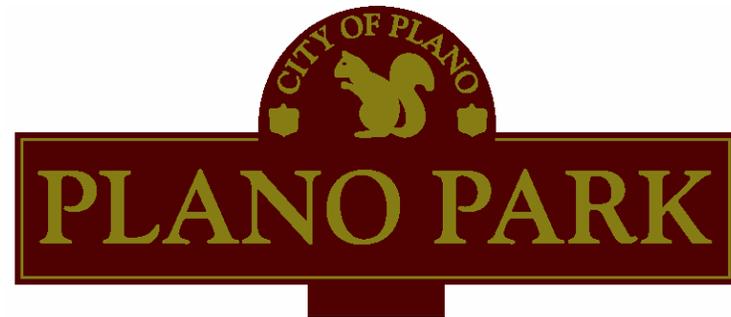


Figure 8: Example of the proposed Plano Park sign topper.

Plano Park Neighborhood Action Plan: Implementation Matrix

Neighborhood Maintenance	Responsible Parties	Cost
<p>Goal: Create a positive community image and instill community pride. Maintain and preserve the quality of the existing residential properties through the encouragement of rehabilitation and code compliance.</p>		
<p>Objective: Reduce the number of code violations in the neighborhood by educating residents concerning the most common code violations and advocating strict enforcement of city codes.</p>	Residents/City of Plano Property Standards and Police Departments	Staff Time
<p>Objective: Improve compliance with city codes by encouraging residents to report violations to City departments.</p>	Residents/City of Plano Property Standards and Police Departments	Staff Time
<p>Objective: Ensure that all residents know how to properly utilize city services by distributing educational materials in both English and Spanish.</p>	Residents/City of Plano	Existing Budgets
<p>Objective: Encourage home maintenance by educating residents about the City of Plano Housing Rehabilitation Program.</p>	City of Plano Neighborhood Services	Staff Time
<p>Objective: Improve compliance with bulk trash requirements by posting signs in the neighborhood to remind residents when bulk trash collection day is coming up.</p>	City of Plano Neighborhood Services/Residents	Signs – existing Neighborhood Planning budget

Transportation	Responsible Parties	Cost
Goal: Assure safe and efficient mobility for cars, trucks and pedestrians while protecting the stability of the neighborhood.		
Objective: Protect the stability and residential character of the neighborhood by working with the City of Plano Safe Streets program to minimize the speed and volume of cut-through traffic.	City of Plano Traffic Engineering (Safe Streets)	Existing Safe Streets Budget
Objective: Ensure streets, alleys and sidewalks are continuous, well maintained and unobstructed by surveying existing conditions and working with City of Plano	City of Plano Engineering and Public Works	Approximately \$1.2 Million (from existing CIP budget)
Objective: Ensure that streets and sidewalks are well lighted by evaluating dark areas on Kathy Court, Magnolia Lane cul-de-sac and R Avenue where it crosses the creek. Install additional lighting in areas that do not meet city standards.	City of Plano Engineering	Staff Time/\$1715 per light
Objective: Ensure that residents have a safe pedestrian route to the Parker Road DART light rail station by improving the intersection at K Avenue and Park Boulevard and completing the sidewalk along the north side of Park Boulevard between K Avenue and the DART rail line.	City of Plano Traffic Engineering	Staff Time/\$8,000-\$10,000 to complete the sidewalk (from existing CIP budget)
Preservation of Neighborhood Trees	Responsible Parties	Cost
Goal: To preserve neighborhood trees as part of the resources that contribute to the character and beauty of the neighborhood.		
Objective: Assemble a strategy for preserving neighborhood trees by consulting with the City of Plano Urban Forester.	Residents/City of Plano Parks Department	Staff Time

Objective: Educate residents on tree maintenance and preservation by having the City of Plano Urban Forester attend a neighborhood meeting.	Residents/City of Plano Parks Department	Staff Time
Objective: Maintain the existing tree canopy by replacing dead or dying trees. Obtain funding to offset the cost of buying trees by participating in the Keep Plano Beautiful Beatification Matching Grant Program or Plano Parks Foundation Matching grant program.	Residents	Existing Budgets
Area Parks		
Area Parks	Responsible Parties	Cost
Goal: Continue to maintain Schell Park and Santa Fe Trail.		
Objective: Reduce accumulation of trash in the stream along the Santa Fe Trail from R Avenue to P Avenue by clearing out underbrush from the banks.	Residents/ City of Plano Parks Maintenance	Staff Time
Objective: Reduce the presence of coyotes in the neighborhood and area parks by educating residents about what attracts them.	Residents/ City of Plano Animal Services	Staff Time
Neighborhood Identity		
Neighborhood Identity	Responsible Parties	Cost
Goal: Celebrate the diversity of the neighborhood while creating a unified feeling and identity for the neighborhood.		
Objective: Improve recognition of the neighborhood name and boundaries by installing sign toppers.	City of Plano Neighborhood Planning	Sign toppers – approximately \$1675 from existing Neighborhood Planning Budget

Objective: Celebrate the diversity of the neighborhood and encourage neighbors to get to know one another with an annual block party.	Residents	N/A
Objective: Welcome new residents to the neighborhood with a welcome packet informing them about the neighborhood and area services.	Residents	N/A