

Plano Planning News

City of Plano Planning Department | www.planoplanning.org



Winter 2007 | 1520 K Avenue, Suite 250, Plano, Texas 75074 | Phone: 972.941.7151



Overview

Plano Planning News is a quarterly publication of the Planning Department of the City of Plano. It informs the public of various activities occurring within the divisions of Development Review, Long Range Planning, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Neighborhood Services.

The Planning Department supports the following boards and commissions:

- > Planning and Zoning Commission
- > Community Relations Commission
- > Heritage Commission
- > Plano Transition and Revitalization Commission

Highlights

A PROFESSIONAL, A MENTOR, A FRIEND: BOB BUFFINGTON REMEMBERED

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UPDATES TO THE CITY OF PLANO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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A PROFESSIONAL, A MENTOR, A FRIEND: BOB BUFFINGTON REMEMBERED



For Lynn Woodall, he was a "guiding light for those who were lucky enough to know him." For Terrie Monroe, he was someone who "taught me that the most effective way to lead is by setting the example." And for Jeff Zimmerman, he was "my mentor, my rock and my hero."

All across the City of Plano, Bob Buffington, Plano's Neighborhood Services Manager, is being remembered with tears, smiles and gratitude. The man who served the citizens of Plano and who helped shape the Plano community for the past 30 years died September 22 while undergoing a diagnostic coronary procedure.

Tributes to Mr. Buffington are pouring in from all over the City. "With his kind and gentle ways, he has taught me that the most effective way to lead is by setting the

example," said Terrie Monroe, who worked with Mr. Buffington as Community Development Coordinator for the past six years. "His example was to always speak kindly of people, never let personal feelings get in the way when making decisions and always give the customer the benefit of the doubt."

"Bob hired me 22 years ago," reflected Executive Director Frank Turner. "On the day of the interview, Bob picked me up at the then Harvey Hotel and drove me down 16th Street to city hall. It was an interesting day riding around Plano and talking with Bob. Plano was a little stark compared to the hills and trees of Knoxville (TN), but I could see the City was growing and striving for quality development. However, it was Bob that convinced me to come to Plano. His warmth, friendliness and sincerity told me this was the place for me."

Making Plano "the place for me" is part of the bountiful legacy Mr. Buffington leaves behind. Following his graduation from Oklahoma State University and a stint in the U. S. Army, he obtained a master's degree in Urban Planning from the University of Tennessee. He began his career of municipal service working for the City of Garland in 1973. Then, in December 1976 he became the first city planner for the City of Plano, helping to shape and guide the City's growth and development for the next 30 years.

"The first few years in Plano were challenging," said Mr. Turner. "A zoning moratorium was declared by City Council immediately after I accepted the job. This was followed by a complete rewrite of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Council and Planning & Zoning meetings routinely lasted till after midnight. Bob was always there offering me support and friendship."

"Bob is probably the person most responsible for planning as we know it in the City of Plano today," said Mr. Jeff Zimmerman, Long Range Planning Manager. "The Planning Department started as a one-person operation in late 1970. When Bob turned it over to Frank Turner in the mid-1980s, it had grown to seven persons and was well on its way to becoming the highly recognized department that it is today. Bob established the basic framework for long-range planning, zoning and development review that is still utilized today."

Mr. Buffington's work in the planning arena transitioned into community development, which drew him to serve in the capacity of Community Development Director. Community development evolved into the Neighborhood Services Division, where he most recently served as Neighborhood Services Manager.

Mr. Buffington was responsible, in part, for overseeing administration of Community Development Block Grant monies and other federal and local funds. Since 1985 Plano has received over \$19.5 million in federal funds, which have gone towards housing and social services assistance. Working with agencies such as the Samaritan Inn, Collin County Children's Advocacy Center, Assistance Center of Collin County and Plano Area Habitat for Humanity, Mr. Buffington was a familiar and respected face in the Plano community.

"Bob was a dear friend to CCSSA, the Collin County community, and to all who knew him. He will be greatly, greatly missed," said Shirletta Best, Collin County Social Services Association Secretary.

Under his watch, Neighborhood Services was the lead agency in developing "Homeward Bound: A Plan to End Chronic Homelessness in Collin County". Innovative and effective Neighborhood Action Plans were developed to breathe new life into preservation of our aging neighborhoods, teaming residents and the City together to solve problems and enrich the quality of life, one block at a time. The on-going plans remain a vital process to our community as our neighborhood infrastructure continues to age.

Neighborhood Services also facilitates operation of the Plano Day Labor Center, created in 1994 to provide a safe location for both workers and employers to meet. The Center facilitates up to 250 workers who daily seek work from an average of 80 to 100 short-term jobs. In 2005, Mr. Buffington and his staff played a vital role in assisting the City in locating and obtaining transitional housing for hundreds of sheltered Hurricane Katrina evacuees registered in the City of Plano.

In 2004, Plano received the prestigious Audrey Nelson Community Development Achievement Award (the National Community Development Association), recognizing "exemplary uses of Community Development Block Grant funds which address families, homes and neighborhoods." Mr. Buffington was especially proud of this accolade as it represented the combined partnering of the community and City. "It involved a combination of federal and local funds, and drew from a variety of public, private, non-profit and community resources to accomplish the goal of revitalizing our neighborhoods," he said at the time.

Of all of Mr. Buffington's accomplishments in life, none matched the love and enjoyment he received from being with his family. Married to Chris Blair in July 1974, he was the proud parent of Kevin, Amy and Tara. An avid history buff and reader, his love of working with youth as a scoutmaster and soccer coach was only surpassed by his service to his church.

Bob's Christian principles were reflected in every area of his life. Integrity, ethics, a caring gentle man who truly never met a stranger...we'll miss you Bob and thank you for passing through our lives.

The mission of Neighborhood Services is to preserve Plano's neighborhoods. To accomplish this, we work with residents and Home Owners' Associations in preparing neighborhood plans to address their concerns. We provide low-cost rehabilitation loans to homeowners to help maintain their homes, and we provide financial assistance to help families who are purchasing their first home. In addition, the Division provides staff support for the Community Relations Commission, and is responsible for the Community Development Block Grant and Community Services Grants.

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Parks and Recreation Element Update

In June 2006, the City Council approved the updated Parks and Recreation Element. There were several reasons for the update, including the element was last updated in 2000; several new park facilities have been completed; and the element needs to reflect current trends and issues facing the City's park system. The document was also revised to match the current format of the Comprehensive Plan, which has fewer details and is more of a general guide for decision makers regarding issues facing Parks and Recreation facilities.

Highlights from the Updated Element



The City of Plano has many different park facilities to provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities. The parks serve as community gathering places for City residents; and views of open space areas such as linear parks provide visual relief from the urban environment. Plano's nature preserves at Arbor Hills and Oak Point are a glimpse of how the City may have appeared before agricultural and urban development.

Several trends and issues are examined in the Parks and Recreation Element. The first is changing demographics. The City's population is becoming more diverse. The percentage of people who are minorities increased from over 8% to almost 35% between 1980 and 2005. Also, the City's population is getting older. The percentage of people age 45 and over increased from 13% in 1980 to 33% in 2005.

These changes have prompted the Parks and Recreation Department to offer different recreational activities never before seen in Plano such as cricket, lacrosse and rugby. Demographic trends have also impacted the department's plans for future facilities. Today's older adult population no longer wishes to have a facility separate from the general population. They want to exercise with people of all ages. In response, plans for a new senior center were eliminated in favor of expansion of the existing facilities at Carpenter Park Recreation Center.

Another issue presented in the Parks and Recreation Element is the provision of services in light of leveling revenues. The City's growth is slowing down. There is not as much money as in past years generated from permits and fees for new construction. Though Plano's park system is mostly developed; there are plans to expand the system by an additional 260 acres. The Parks and Recreation Department will have to balance expansion plans and maintenance of existing facilities when determining future budgets. Using park facilities to host major events could serve as a possible source of generating additional funds to offset diminishing revenues.

Land Use and Transportation Elements Update

Work on the 2006-2007 update to the Land Use and Transportation Elements began in August. Together, these two elements are the driving force behind Plano's Comprehensive Plan. They guide urban development within the City. Changes in policies addressing land use and transportation trends, and issues can be enacted in a short-time frame are the primary reason behind the Comprehensive Plan's recommendation of updating these elements every two years.

Public input is an essential part of the work of updating these elements. The first step in this process was to discuss a preliminary list of issues with the Planning & Zoning Commission. Three public meetings were held to gather feedback on the issues list. A meeting with the Plano Homeowners Council and two additional public meetings were used to gather feedback. The preliminary issues list was also sent to the Plano Developers Council to gather comments.

Division team members returned to the Planning & Zoning Commission in November with a report on the feedback received at the public meetings. For the most part, there was general agreement regarding issues facing the City during the current update. Several key issues were identified for the commission to discuss in more detail at future work sessions. The key issues are:

- Demand for housing versus preservation of land for economic development
- Changing land-use needs
- Traffic Impact Analysis
- Travel Demand Management
- Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) 2030 Plan
- Impact of regional traffic patterns on Plano

During the first few months of 2007, the commission will discuss the key issues listed above, and the first draft will be written. During this time, division team members will meet with planners from surrounding cities to discuss consistency of Plano's plan with those of its neighbors. Another round of public meetings to gather feedback on the final draft will be held in the spring. The project is expected to go before the Planning & Zoning Commission for public hearing in May and the City Council in June. The project should be completed by the end of next summer.

The Long Range Planning Division is the primary staff group for future planning, demographics and heritage preservation. The Division provides primary staff support to the Plano Transition and Revitalization Commission and the Heritage Commission and also reports to the City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission on various matters. It is our responsibility to help the City's decision makers define and reach future expectations, while preserving key components of Plano's past.

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The addition was designed to imitate an original "lean-to" portion of the building shown in historic photographs. The original structure was removed many years ago. It was important to the City to design the new addition to be historically compatible with the building. The Interurban is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, a Recorded Texas Historical Landmark and a City-designated Heritage Resource. Plans for the addition were approved by the Texas Historical Commission to ensure the addition would not impact the structure's National Register status.

"This addition will give us the ability to become a respected research facility on the interurban railway systems of North Texas," said Russ Kissick, Co-Director of The Plano Conservancy for Historic Preservation, which contracts with the City to operate the museum. The plan is to have the storage area not just serve as storage, but as an archive for historians to conduct research.

Dana Conklin, Special Events Manager for the City, oversees the museum for the Parks and Recreation Department. Museum staff will be able to begin moving into the new space within the month.

The museum is in Downtown Plano's Haggard Park at 901 E. 15th Street. For information about the museum, its hours of operation and special tours, call 972-941-2117 or 972-941-7263, or visit www.plano.gov/Departments/parksandrecreation/Parks_Facilities.



The Heritage Commission is a seven-member board appointed by the City Council. It is responsible for reviewing any proposed exterior alterations, demolition or new construction affecting designated resources or districts. If the proposed improvements are consistent with design guidelines, the Heritage Commission may grant a Certificate of Appropriateness. By preserving and maintaining visual character, the city ensures future generations will enjoy the benefits of Plano's rich architectural heritage.

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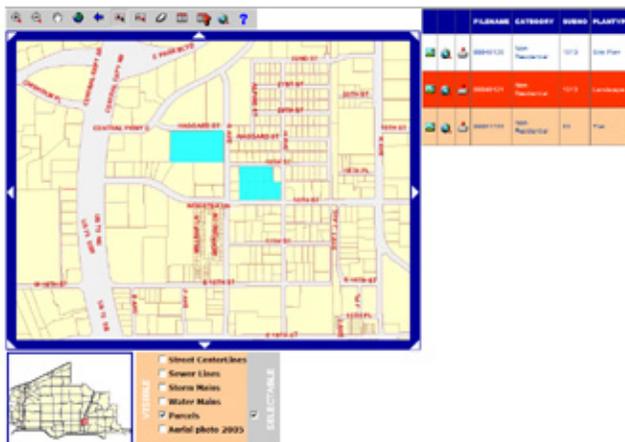


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The GIS Division's mission is to map, coordinate and disseminate geographically-based information that describe the characteristics of the City of Plano for the citizens of Plano, developers, staff and other information systems located within the city.