

# Plano Planning News

City of Plano Planning Department | [www.planoplanning.org](http://www.planoplanning.org)



Fall 2006 | 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

### **Upward and Onward: Legacy Town Center Expands North**

In the 1990s, Legacy Business Park approached the City with an interest in creating a unique style of development, an urban town center. Legacy and the City of Plano partnered to create a development in a style new to Plano on the east side of the Dallas North Tollway at Legacy Drive. According to [www.shopsatlegacy.com](http://www.shopsatlegacy.com), "the creation of Legacy Town Center represents the first instance of the town center concept being applied to an existing business development."

### **URBAN CENTERS STUDY: TRADITIONAL APPROACH TO CURRENT CHALLENGES**

Many modern day suburbs like Plano are turning to traditional forms of development to address present day challenges. Plano, like most suburbs in the Metroplex and the country, has been designed to accommodate the automobile. In doing so, social interaction and community pride have sometimes taken a "back seat." In today's fast-paced world, how often does one have the opportunity to leisurely stroll down a sidewalk, window shop or dine at an outdoor café?

### **THE CITY MAKES GOOD USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS**

The Neighborhood Services Division works in conjunction with the Community Relations Commission to prepare recommendations for the use of federal funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). On an annual basis, Plano receives funds from the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) and the HOME Investment Partnerships Grant program (HOME). Following approval by the City Council, the Division forwarded its Annual Performance Report to HUD describing how the City utilized those funds in 2005-06.

### **LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVE HERITAGE GRANTS**

The Plano Heritage Commission is charged each year with recommending funding for Heritage Preservation Grants to City Council. This year, two grants totaling \$554,089 were recommended. Grants are available to non-profit, tax-exempt organizations, as defined by state law, which actively engaged in projects related to preserving Plano's historical physical environment. Activities may include preserving or maintaining a historic building, maintaining and preserving historical archives and/or artifacts, history museums, advocacy or promoting heritage preservation in Plano.

### **City of Plano Unveils New Interactive Mapping Web site Design [www.planogis.org](http://www.planogis.org)**

The Geographic Information System (GIS) Division of Plano's Planning Department creates and maintains a number of digital maps for the City. Recently they launched a redesigned Web page with interactive maps. These maps, which are available at [www.planoplanning.org](http://www.planoplanning.org), enhance the ability to obtain data on various City zoning locations and definitions, the Community Investment Program (CIP), Home Owner Associations boundaries and contact links and City facility locations such as schools, libraries, fire stations and more.

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## Upward and Onward: Legacy Town Center Expands North



In the 1990s, Legacy Business Park approached the City with an interest in creating a unique style of development, an urban town center. Legacy and the City of Plano partnered to create a development in a style new to Plano on the east side of the Dallas North Tollway at Legacy Drive. According to [www.shopsatlegacy.com](http://www.shopsatlegacy.com), "the creation of Legacy Town Center represents the first instance of the town center concept being applied to an existing business development. The lead architect and planner of the 150-acre center is world-renowned new urbanist Andres Duany, chosen for his expertise in planning and his commitment to lifestyle flexibility." Beginning with office towers, Robb & Stucky furniture, a 400-room full-service hotel and 384 Post apartments south of Legacy Drive, Legacy Town Center has now blossomed into 75 acres of vibrant, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented center.

Within this first 75-acre development south of Legacy, there are now 1,039 multifamily residential units managed by Columbus Realty Partners. Over half the parking is provided within garages eliminating vast parking areas and contributing to the walkable nature of the development. Private amenities include a courtyard swimming pool and multiple patios with fountains. Residents and businesses enjoy Bishop Park with a walking trail and pond with fountain which provides an oasis of nature within the dense activity center. K. Hovnanian townhouses are complete and add a for-sale component to the residential options in the Town Center.



Continuing the success of the south block, Legacy Town Center is now expanding north of Legacy Drive with an additional 75-acres development. Improvements to Baccus Cemetery are complete, including a wrought iron and stone fence and parking. Bishop Road has been adorned with bronze sculptures of a Texas longhorn cattle drive complete with vaqueros. The cowhands drive their herd north on Bishop amidst a dry creek and landscaped median.

The northern shops opened with Fox Sports Grill in a 124,500 square foot center earlier this year. Plans for the continued expansion of the shops are approved and construction is underway. The next phase includes more than 230,000 square feet of retail and office space running north from Legacy Drive along the Dallas North Tollway, west of Baccus Cemetery. An eight-story office building is planned north of the retail with a hotel, parking garages and additional services north of the cemetery. In addition, 56 new K. Hovnanian townhouses are available north of the Fox Sports Grill building. Staff is also reviewing plans for additional 370 apartment homes north of the townhouses.

Development Review is responsible for all current planning activities within the City of Plano. Planners within the department review plans and make recommendations to the Planning and Zoning Commission. Ultimately, the division ensures development occurs in a guided, orderly fashion and that it adheres to current guidelines set by the City.



## URBAN CENTERS STUDY: TRADITIONAL APPROACH TO CURRENT CHALLENGES



Many modern day suburbs like Plano are turning to traditional forms of development to address present day challenges. Plano, like most suburbs in the Metroplex and the country, has been designed to accommodate the automobile. In doing so, social interaction and community pride have sometimes taken a "back seat." In today's fast-paced world, how often does one have the opportunity to leisurely stroll down a sidewalk, window shop or dine at an outdoor café? If you live in Plano, Legacy Center and Downtown Plano make it possible for you to slow down and enjoy these types of activities.

Is there the potential to create more opportunities for such activities? In June of this year, the Plano City Council adopted a report answering this and other questions – the Urban Centers Study. This document is the culmination of more than a year's worth of field trips, extensive research, "brainstorming" and deliberation by the Plano Transition and Revitalization Commission (TRC). Very few stones were unturned by the time Chairperson Russ Kissick stepped to the podium and asked the City Council to adopt the Urban Centers Study to guide future decisions on this form of development.

You may be wondering what an urban center is and may have a number of other questions about this study. Below are some of those questions along with major findings from the study.

1. What is an Urban Center? – An urban center is a form of development integrating housing, employment, shopping and recreation into a compact, pedestrian-oriented setting.

2. Is any development combining housing with shopping an urban center? – No, TRC considers such developments to be urban centers only when housing, shopping and related facilities are clearly designed to serve each other in an environment where the pedestrian takes precedent over the automobile. A development with a shopping center separated from residences by a five-acre parking lot is clearly focused on accommodating automobile usage. The pedestrian activity occurs when one travels to and from a parked car to a store or a residence.

3. How do urban centers benefit Plano? - Some of the benefits offered by urban center development are:

- Urban centers result in more efficient use of public infrastructure and delivery of public services, and lower the City's per capita costs for providing them.
- High quality compact developments can increase Plano's tax base.
- The housing component of urban centers can increase Plano's population and help support local businesses.
- Urban centers can become "24/7" neighborhoods, where eyes and ears are often available to help deter crime.
- Urban centers can serve as gathering places for special events and provide information opportunities for social interaction often missing in our daily lives.
- Urban centers are one of the few manmade environments creating an emotional connection between us and our surroundings. This in turn fosters community pride.

4. Won't more urban centers change the suburban character of Plano and the lifestyle to which I have become accustomed? – No, Plano's basic suburban development pattern would remain in place. Urban Centers are appropriate for only few carefully chosen sites. The design of urban centers requires proper coordination with surrounding development. This may include height gradients, limitations on points of vehicular access and similar requirements.

5. Does the report recommend any potential urban center locations? – Yes, the Urban Centers Study suggests the City and property owners give consideration to the following locations for future urban center development:

- Park Boulevard/Preston Road Intersection – The four corners of this intersection may be appropriate for redevelopment /reorganization into an urban center in the future.
- Collin Creek Corridor – The area bounded by Park Boulevard, U.S. 75, President George Bush Turnpike and Alma Drive, including the Chisholm Trail greenbelt may present a unique urban center opportunity.
- Parker Road Station Area – DART's light rail station at Parker Road could eventually become an impetus for urban center development on the surrounding property.

6. When is all this going to happen? No timeframe has been specified for the conversion of any of these areas to urban centers. Urban centers may never occur on these sites, but this study does recognize the potential and outlines a strategy for implementation if the opportunity presents itself.

The Urban Center Study is on the City's Web site. Go to [www.planoplanning.org](http://www.planoplanning.org) and click "Urban Centers Report."

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.

## THE CITY MAKES GOOD USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS



The Neighborhood Services Division works in conjunction with the Community Relations Commission to prepare recommendations for the use of federal funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). On an annual basis, Plano receives funds from the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) and the HOME Investment Partnerships Grant program (HOME). Following approval by the City Council, the Division forwarded its Annual Performance Report to HUD describing how the City utilized those funds in 2005-06.

### PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Below are the goals established by the City of Plano, a comparison of accomplishments to those goals and a description of the activities involved.

**Goal 1:** Increase the supply of affordable single-family housing for the City's extremely low, very low and low-income households.

	2005-06 Goal	2005-06 Actual
New Infill Housing	8	4
Acquisition/Rehabilitation	5	3
First-Time homebuyers	8	18

Plano Area Habitat for Humanity (PAHH) received \$125,000 in HOME funds and constructed three new homes that have been occupied by qualified residents. PAHH currently has nine houses in progress; several of which are awaiting the completion of paperwork in order to become homes for new residents. Christ United Methodist Church received \$37,500 in HOME funds to construct one affordable infill house. The home was completed and sold to a low-income homebuyer. When PAHH's new homes are occupied, this program will have provided 14 new homes for low and moderate income households.

The Plano Housing Corporation, a private nonprofit organization, spent \$122,841 in HOME funds to purchase and rehabilitate three houses. The three of these houses were sold to first-time homebuyers.

Using \$115,467, the First-Time Homebuyers Program assisted 18 families in purchasing their first homes. The original goal of eight units was based on the amount of 2005-06 funding allocated. The actual accomplishments utilized remaining funds from previous years.

**Goal 2:** Increase the supply of affordable rental housing for the City's extremely and very low-income households.

HUD's Section 8 housing program provides rental assistance to qualified applicants to locate in existing housing units. The Plano Housing Authority was awarded 169 additional Section 8 rental units to house evacuees from Hurricane Katrina. The PHA also administered 275 unit subsidies which were transferred from other jurisdictions, as well as the 742 units already authorized. This represented an increase of 236 units over the previous year.

**Goal 3:** Preserve existing affordable housing stock.



The following objectives were planned:

- Rehabilitate 23 single-family dwelling units
- Reconstruct one dilapidated dwelling unit
- Repair 177 elderly housing units
- Develop non-federal funding sources to begin a reconstruction program for elderly residents

The housing rehabilitation program utilized \$920,738 to rehabilitate 14 single-family homes of the anticipated 23 homes, but the City was able to complete 26 emergency home repairs. The planned home reconstruction is currently underway, but is not yet completed. Despite the City's best efforts to promote the program, it did not receive enough requests from qualified applicants seeking housing rehabilitation assistance. If you know of someone who could use our help, please ask them to contact the City at 972-941-7151.

Plano Community Homes completed repairs to 177 elderly housing units, including installation of heat pumps, water line repairs, painting and handrail replacement.

**Goal 4:** Expand the continuum of housing and services for a variety of special needs populations, including persons who are homeless and at risk of homelessness.

**Provide funding to agencies and programs providing assistance to the homeless**  
Using money from the CDBG grant, the Samaritan Inn, a homeless shelter in McKinney, provided childcare vouchers and transportation for 66 residents from Plano. Collin Intervention to Youth completed some shelter repairs and provided drug counseling for 221 youths. Hope's Door provided rent and utility payments for four battered spouses and their children. LifePath Systems helped 28 people pay for short-term rent and utility expenses. The Homeless Prevention Program helped 18 families avoid homelessness with rent and utility assistance. A total of \$68,425 was spent for this purpose. The City also collaborated with the Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance in preparing a Continuum of Care grant to fund the Plan to End Chronic Homelessness.

**Provide funding to agencies and programs providing assistance to the elderly**  
A number of local agencies used funds provided by the Plano's CDBG grant to assist our elderly residents with special needs. Collin County Committee on Aging provided evening meals for 112 indigent elderly clients. The Geriatric Wellness Center met healthcare needs for 1,370 senior citizens. Dental Health Programs provided dental services to 177 people, some of whom were elderly. In addition, Plano Community Home repaired 177 units of senior housing (noted above). A total of \$205,506 was spent to assist the elderly.

**Provide funding to agencies and programs assisting HIV and AIDS patients**  
AIDS Service of North Texas spent \$24,000 for food and hygiene products, and the cost of medical expenses, for 18 AIDS and HIV-positive residents.

**Goal 5:** Provide funding to organizations that address the economic and social service needs of low-income households.

Plano made federal funds available to local nonprofit organizations to address a broad range of issues affecting low-income households including:

- Provided \$73,399 to various agencies serving at-risk youth and abused children including specific programs such as mentoring, tutoring and drug counseling.
- Contributed \$38,445 to agencies providing literacy training, pre-schooling for low-income children, and mentoring and tutoring.
- Provided \$41,077 to agencies administering dental services to low-income persons, geriatric wellness and AIDS healthcare.
- Contributed \$18,814 to a local agency assisting low-income and homeless persons with their transportation needs and providing emergency rental and utility payment assistance.

### SUMMARY

This year's performance report can be summarized as follows:

• Despite its position as a major economic center in the region and its very high standard of living, many Plano residents need special attention and assistance not available through typical sources.

• There are many private, nonprofit organizations in the Plano area continuing to provide valuable services to residents with special needs and limited resources.

• 14 low- and moderate-income households will own new homes in Plano, and another 18 households were able to become homeowners for the first time.

• Many other households will have safe and functional housing to live in as result of rental and housing rehabilitation assistance.

• Numerous low- and moderate-income persons of all ages were given counseling, medical treatment, emergency assistance, shelter and educational assistance who might have otherwise been neglected were it not for Plano's willingness to distribute these funds to local service agencies.



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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## LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVE HERITAGE GRANTS

The Plano Heritage Commission is charged each year with recommending funding for Heritage Preservation Grants to City Council. This year, two grants totaling \$554,089 were recommended. Grants are available to non-profit, tax-exempt organizations, as defined by state law, which actively engaged in projects related to preserving Plano's historical physical environment. Activities may include preserving or maintaining a historic building, maintaining and preserving historical archives and/or artifacts, history museums, advocacy or promoting heritage preservation in Plano. The Heritage Preservation Grants are funded primarily by revenues generated by hotel/motel taxes.

The Heritage Farmstead Museum received a grant in the amount of \$378,381. The Heritage Farmstead Association collects, preserves and interprets late 19th through 20th century Blackland Prairie history, while making appropriate use of the authentically restored Farrell-Wilson Farmstead. Funding will support personnel, promotion, maintenance, security, insurance and utilities to support and enhance this designated historic site. Additionally, the Heritage Farmstead Association will again host the Blackland Prairie Festival in April 2007 and will assist the Plano African American Museum with repairs to the Thornton House. From the funds recommended to this organization, \$10,000 will be used for administration of the Blackland Prairie Festival and \$21,921 will be used for museum planning and/or repairs for the Thornton House.



The Thornton House, built between 1896 and 1901, is a typical example of a 19th century, 1.5-story, vernacular wood frame farmhouse common to Plano and North Texas. John Thornton bought the property in 1909 and was a successful share-cropper who was both a farmer and real estate investor by the turn of the century. It is believed Mr. Thornton was the first African American in Plano, and possibly Collin County, to own property. Mr. Thornton was a prominent citizen of Plano and revered the area now known as the Douglass Community.

The Plano African American Museum, Inc., working with the Heritage Farmstead Museum, is restoring the house for use as a museum. The new grant will restore the interior of the house. A previous grant was awarded for restoration of the exterior. This is an example of how heritage grants are used.

The Plano Conservancy for Historic Preservation, which received \$175,708, is dedicated to promoting civic pride in the past, increasing preservation awareness through education and public outreach, and providing financial assistance to protect and preserve our heritage resources for this and future generations. Funding will be used for personnel, promotion, operating expenses, improvements to the Plano Interurban Railway Museum, educational programming and heritage tourism marketing. This building was recently added to the National Register.

To find out more about these non-profit organizations, contact them at:

Heritage Farmstead Museum  
[www.heritagefarmstead.org](http://www.heritagefarmstead.org)  
972-881-0140

Plano Conservancy for Historic Preservation  
[www.planoconservancy.org](http://www.planoconservancy.org)  
972-941-2117

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.

