

August 18, 2015

Ms. Christina Day, Director Planning & Zoning
Mr. Doug Bender, Chairman
Plano Planning and Zoning Commission
P.O. Box 860358
Plano, TX 75086-0358

By email to: dougabender@me.com, chrisd@plano.gov

Cc: committee@planofuture.org

Re: Amendments to the Plano Tomorrow Plan (the "Plan"), regarding the land use policies, action statements and definitions

Dear Chairman Bender and fellow Commissioners:

I would like to acknowledge that there have been several changes to the Land Use Definitions in the Plan and thank you for making those changes. I support the efforts of PlanoFuture.org to amend the Plan to keep Plano as suburban environment. I believe the Plan still has a number of broad statements in land use policies, actions statements and maps that also need to be amended. The key points are summarized as follows:

1. Citizens believe they are not receiving adequate notice of zoning changes and the Plan should recommend a process to adopt improvements to online information including sufficient notice, adequate meeting materials and explanations of proposed zoning changes. Materials and proposed changes should be posted at least one week before a meeting for specific zoning requests and at least one month in advance for changes to zoning regulations affecting multiple properties.
2. The Plan states that changes should be made to zoning regulations to be consistent with the Plan. We believe the Plan should specify the specific zoning changes that will be recommended as a result of its adoption so the Citizens can better understand the implications of the Plan.
3. The Plan should re-visit the interim amendments to current comprehensive plan the adopted in 2011-2014 for mixed use and mid-rise developments to address concerns that we have about how the interim amendments are being applied. To this point they have not been included in the Plan, but the city is now proposing to make selected amendments, with modifications part of the zoning code. When adopted, Citizens did not understand the broad implications of these interim amendments and the City's intent to widely apply them to many diverse developments.
4. All new development connections –pedestrian and vehicle – to existing neighborhoods should be required to be approved by affected neighborhoods.
5. With the exception of Legacy Town Center, Legacy West and Downtown Plano, the Plan should recommend that the City maintain the existing zoning standard of dedicated open-space of a minimum of 300 square feet of open space for each bedroom in a multi-family development and require that at least 50% of that open space should be green space. Without adequate green-space for all new developments, existing neighborhood parks and other public facilities will be overburdened. The 5% minimum for open space in the mixed use regulations is wholly inadequate.
6. The Plan should require the required 1200-foot setback from expressway centerlines for all residential development be enforced in order to protect the health, safety and quality of life of residents. Delete the word "generally" as it is too weak.

7. Proposals to add residential to existing commercial space in Neighborhood Centers and Regional Centers should include a process to involve existing residents within 2500 feet of the project. Residential in Neighborhood Centers should have a density limit of 10 units per acre and height limits.
8. Compact Complete Centers (CCC) should limit residential use to 60% of total square footage, and a significant percentage of commercial space should be developed before the residential is permitted. This will avoid a false promise of mixed-use. A detailed plan should have to be filed before any potential CCC area is actually approved as a CCC. The Plan should explain why these areas were identified as CCC.
9. The plan should require a review and upgrade to fire safety and building codes to address increased dangers of high-density development and to ensure dense developments use quality materials and methods. Safety and aesthetic standards should ensure higher quality and safety when high density zoning (greater than 22 units per acre or more than three stories) is allowed.
10. The Plan should amend the Transit Corridor requirement that residential should be within one-half mile walking distance of a station to state “a station or a planned station when the station’s construction is imminent.”
11. The Plan should define what is meant by the promise of “more housing choices” in the Plan. It appears to us that as used in the Plan, these words are synonymous with “more dense multi-family housing”
12. Traffic, crowding and maintaining high quality schools should be explicit requirements to be evaluated in developing and re-developing land in Plano.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[address]

Plano, TX ____