What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is best described as a long-range guide (20+ years) to the city’s future. The plan will inform current and future decision makers where we’ve been, where we are today, where we want to go, and how we intend to get there. More specifically, it:

- Defines the city’s biggest assets and challenges for the future;
- Makes recommendations about the type and character of development appropriate in different areas of the city;
- Recommends and prioritizes policies, actions and resources to achieve the visions of the plan;
- Serves as the guide for growth (development and redevelopment);
- Provides recommendations to the city in developing future capital budgets;
- Serves as a guide for future zoning recommendations throughout the city;

One of the most important considerations in reviewing the Plano Tomorrow plan is its broad scope. The Plano Tomorrow plan has 41 policies and over 270 action statements, all of which are intended to work together to improve Plano for the future, balancing the diverse needs and desires of our varied and dynamic community. These policy categories include a range of subjects including: land use, transportation, housing, economic development, quality of life, and the environment. It is necessary to look at the policies and supportive maps in concert with one another to realize the full nature of the plan.

Why does the City of Plano need a Comprehensive Plan?

As Oliver Wendell Holmes said, “Greatness is not where we stand, but in what direction we are moving”. The Plano Tomorrow plan provides the city’s direction to ensure Plano remains attractive and vibrant moving into the future. Comprehensive plans link the numerous efforts, services, and programs that the city provides and illustrate how each aspect contributes to the long term vision of the city.

Does the City currently have a Comprehensive Plan?

Yes. Our current plan was adopted in 1986 and is nearly 30 years old.

What is the history of Plano’s Comprehensive Plan?

To respond to the rapid growth in the 1960s, the city developed its first Comprehensive Plan in 1963. This plan laid the foundation for the city of Plano today by establishing residential neighborhoods and locations for future roadway development. After the creation of Legacy Business Park in the early 1980s, the city developed its second Comprehensive Plan in 1986 which set the stage for Plano to transition from primarily a residential community to an employment center. By 2010, there were almost 140,000 jobs in Plano and the city had a population of 260,000 residents. However, remaining undeveloped land became sparse in Plano and the city had to shift focus to redevelopment and infill opportunities. To successfully manage the transition into a mature city, the city developed its third Comprehensive Plan, Plano Tomorrow, in 2015.
The Plano Tomorrow plan is based on the visions of the community and required a thorough public outreach campaign along with several detailed work sessions with the Plano Tomorrow Advisory Committee. Over the 26-month period, nearly 4,000 individuals provided input that shaped policies and actions through surveys, open houses, and on-site meetings. With thousands of residents and business owners participating, the Plano Tomorrow Public Outreach Campaign has been the most successful initiative of any update to the city’s Comprehensive Plan.

To promote citizen involvement with the plan, the city sent public survey announcements to 82,000 residents through utility bills and delivered over 5,200 announcements to apartments; made 40,000 calls through a telephone calling service for a telephone town hall meeting; attended several neighborhood meetings including the HOA and Neighborhood Association’s Quarterly Breakfast; held “Take the Case” workshops with schools, neighborhoods associations, and the Plano Chamber of Commerce; hosted a booth at the 2013 International Festival and Plano Balloon Festival; ran an announcement in the Dallas Morning News; hosted four open house meetings at libraries across the city; hosted two public hearings with the Planning & Zoning Commission; and had over 25 public work sessions and workshops with the Plano Tomorrow Advisory Committee. In addition to posting meeting announcements on the project website, an active electronic newsletter is distributed with nearly 1,500 subscribers to provide updates on the process of the plan. (Public Outreach Process link)

The Plano Tomorrow Future Land Use Map identifies 91% of the land in Plano as follows:

- “Neighborhood” or “Neighborhood Center”, which state single-family uses are the preferred residential land use type (55%), or
- “Open Space Network”, “Social Network”, “Employment Center”, or “Expressway Corridor”, which state residential uses are generally inappropriate (36%).

The Plano Tomorrow Growth and Change Map also illustrates 81% of the land will be conserved and enhanced in its current form, which includes all single-family residential neighborhoods, parks, and open spaces. Redevelopment is primary targeted along the US 75 corridor, identified four-corner retail developments, and the DART rail corridor.

The plan also establishes a Neighborhood Conservation (link) policy that is intended to preserve the suburban form that contributes to the overall character and livability of the neighborhoods.

The Future Land Use Map reflects the land use characteristics that the community desires to see in a specific area of the city in the future and is intended to serve as a guide for zoning recommendations. The Zoning Map regulates land uses, densities, setbacks, and other design criteria related to a specific site and is the regulatory policy for zoning change requests. Developments that do not conform to the Zoning Map require rezoning and public hearings. The Future Land Use Map does not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries.

What is the vision for Plano Tomorrow?
Plano is a global leader, excelling in exceptional education, abounding with world-class businesses and vibrant neighborhoods.

What are the five pillar visions for Plano Tomorrow?
- **Built Environment Vision**
  Plano is a vibrant city with attractive and walkable neighborhoods, distinct mixed-use urban centers with active nightlife, strong commercial corridors, and a multimodal transportation system that includes a variety of transit options.

- **Social Environment Vision**
  Plano provides a strong sense of community and high standard of living for its citizens through sustaining strong local partnerships and programs that ensure superior services, diverse cultural amenities, and quality educational opportunities.

- **Natural Environment Vision**
  Plano is a healthy and sustainable city, whose policies and investments focus on building and site efficiency, protecting and restoring natural resources, and improving the resiliency of the community.

- **Economic Environment Vision**
  Plano has a diverse and resilient economic base with a variety of businesses and employment opportunities for a well-educated and highly-skilled resident population.

- **Regionalism Vision**
  Plano is a leader and an innovator in the Dallas-Fort Worth region by working with other communities to address population growth, transportation demand, air quality and water conservation measures, and educational opportunities.

What is the difference between the Future Land Use Map and the Zoning Map?

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What does the plan preserve Plano’s suburban character?
The Plano Tomorrow Regional Growth Policy states: “Plano will accommodate regional population growth in identified areas while preserving the suburban character of the community.” The Plano Tomorrow Future Land Use Map identifies 91% of the land in Plano as follows:

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How was the plan created? How did citizens participate?
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Where can I find the Plano Tomorrow plan?
The Plano Tomorrow plan is a fully web-based plan and can be found at www.planotomorrow.org. This format is the first of its kind, replacing the 20th century printed document format. The plan is more visual, interactive, and accessible as elements are presented through a series of videos and graphics that can be viewed on your smartphones, tablets, and web-enabled computers.

How is the Plano Tomorrow plan implemented?
During review of land development projects, the Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council will consider conformance with the Plano Tomorrow plan as one of the criteria for approval. Maps and policies will provide guidance to city leaders not only in decisions and directives for land use development, but also with the provision and delivery of city services, and prioritization of Community Investment Projects (CIP).

Desired programs, projects and facility enhancements will be assessed with the vision policies and infrastructure maps of the Plano Tomorrow plan. Those consistent with plan recommendations may be included in the Community Investment Program budget or in future bond elections.

The plan also anticipates that specific regulatory documents will be developed for consistency with the Plan’s policies and actions. The development of a Community Design Assessment for Mixed-Use Developments (link) is currently underway to ensure a standard of quality for mixed-use projects. Additional design standards for residential and commercial properties are also anticipated as part of Plano Tomorrow’s recommendations.

How can citizens continue to participate in the planning of Plano’s future after the Plano Tomorrow plan is adopted?
Residents can learn about the current status of these actions on policy pages and voice their opinion by providing comments in the public feedback sections. The action statements along with these citizen comments will be used to inform City Council during the budget process and will be tied to continued long-range planning efforts and development review policy adjustments. The Plano Tomorrow Plan is a living document and will be reviewed and updated as actions are achieved and conditions change.

Plano Tomorrow visions, policies and actions will only become a reality through community interaction and support. Together citizens, staff, and city leaders will achieve the plan’s vision of Plano as a city of excellence, today, and well into the future.

Please contact the planning staff with any questions at 972-941-7151 or at planotomorrow@plano.gov