

Quality of Life – Part I Recap Plano Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan

On April 21, 2014, the Planning & Zoning Commission completed a work session for Part I of the Quality of Life component for the Plano Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan. The Commission was provided a summary document that contained descriptions of each topic along with three policy recommendations to consider. The policy options included the city's current policy, as well as alternative options to discuss and potential outcomes of each option were included for the Commission's consideration. The Commission recommended the following eight policy statements on the Quality of Life – Part I component.

Quality of Life Vision

Plano should build upon relationships with nonprofits organizations, private enterprises, and the county to enhance the standard of living for its citizens. Plano should enhance services that mitigate a public health or safety concern to accommodate a growing, diverse population.

City Services – Emergency Management

Plano should evaluate its outreach, planning, mitigation, and training initiatives and expand initiatives as necessary to provide more education to the public and better prepare city staff during emergencies.

City Services – Public Safety

Plano should enhance its present high quality public safety and public outreach when it is cost effective. Major public safety investments should be considered only if it is an immediate public safety or health threat.

City Services – Property Standards

Plano should leverage technology to increase the frequency of proactive inspections around the city and continue to actively engage the community to garner increased participation and awareness.

City Services – Facilities

Plano should regularly review facility guidelines to assist with prioritizing projects. Plano should also engage the public and all city staff to identify the needs and desires of the community.

Social Services – Homelessness and Poverty Prevention

Plano should increase efforts to partner with private enterprises, nonprofit organizations, Collin County, Plano ISD, and any other entity, to provide homeless and poverty prevention services to the community. Plano should support the expansion of these existing services, but should not consider expanding services provided directly through the city.

Social Services – Human Care and Health Access

Plano should increase efforts to partner with private enterprises, nonprofits organizations, Collin County, and any other entity, such as Plano ISD, to provide health and human services to the community. Plano should support the expansion of these existing services, but should not consider expanding public services provided directly through the city.

Social Services – Healthy Food Access

Plano should acknowledge that affordable healthy food access is a concern by supporting county and nonprofit organization's programs. Plano shouldn't initiate any new programs, but should assist Collin County and nonprofit organization's affordable healthy food programs. Plano should remove barriers for healthy food access such as community gardens and farmers markets.

Exhibit

Quality of Life – Part I Summary Document

QUALITY OF LIFE - PART I

Quality of life is the general well-being of individuals and societies. Standard indicators of quality of life include, but are not limited to: wealth and employment, the built environment, physical and mental health, education, recreation and leisure, and social belonging. Plano provides and supports a number of city and social services that are intended to increase the standard of living for its citizens.

Plano's quality of life and city services became a well-known commodity by 1985. The city's superior school district, state of the art city facilities, and low crime rates contributed to the city's rapid population growth and corporate recruitment. Today, the city still provides exceptional city services and has received several accolades including these most recent designations:

- 2014 Third Best Run City in the U.S. (USA Today)
- 2013 Third Safest City in the U.S. With a Population Over 200,000 (Law/Street)
- 2013 Third Best City to Raise a Family in the U.S. (Homes.com)
- 2013 Top 100 Best Places to Live in the U.S. (Livability)
- 2013 No. 1 Best Place to Live in the U.S. (AreaVibes)

However, as Plano's population diversifies, the city will be faced with new challenges that must be addressed in order for the city to maintain a high quality of life for its residents and businesses. These challenges include: public health and safety, education, recreation, poverty, homelessness, and other basic human care needs. Today, many social services are provided by Collin County or nonprofit organizations. However, as the population of Collin County increases, more demand will be placed on these entities to continue to provide quality services for Plano's citizens.

The Quality of Life component of Plano Tomorrow will be divided into two separate work sessions as illustrated below. The first Quality of Life work session for April 21st will cover city and social services. On May 5th, the second Quality of Life work session will cover parks and recreation, active living and citizen well-being, libraries, and educational opportunities.

APRIL 21 WORK SESSION

Quality of Life - Part I

- City Services
 - Emergency Management/ Disaster Planning
 - Public Safety – Police and Fire
 - Property Standards
 - Facilities
- Social Services
 - Homeless and Poverty Prevention
 - Human Care and Health Access
 - Healthy Food Access

MAY 5 WORK SESSION

Quality of Life - Part II

- Parks and Recreation
 - Parks and Trails
 - Recreation Facilities
- Active Living and Citizen Well-Being
- Libraries
- Educational Opportunities
 - Independent School Districts
 - Higher Education

QUALITY OF LIFE – PART I VISION

Below are three broad quality of life statements that should be considered as a guiding vision for the subsequent topics:

1. Plano should create a higher standard of living for its citizens by expanding city services and social services to accommodate a growing, diverse population.

Pro – This would ensure that Plano is planning services to meet the future population demand.

Con – There would be additional costs and staff needed to expand services that are not already provided by the city.

2. Plano should maintain its current standard of living and expand city or social services that mitigate a public health or safety concern.

Pro – Plano may still meet the demands of most citizens by maintaining the current levels of service.

Con – As Plano’s population continues to diversity, it is likely that there will be different quality of life aspects desired by the population, which may not be classified as a health or safety threat.

3. Plano should only provide city and/or social services that are a threat to public health or safety.

Pro – There would be less costs and staff needed for city and social services.

Con – A number of consequences could arise including increased crime, less fire protection, decreased citizen involvement, more property maintenance issues, and fewer social services for the disadvantaged.

4. **Recommended policy (combination of Options 1 and 2)-** Plano should build upon relationships with nonprofits organizations, private enterprises, and the county to enhance the standard of living for its citizens. Plano should expand services that mitigate a public health or safety concern to accommodate a growing, diverse population.

CITY SERVICES | EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Current Comprehensive Plan Strategies

- Complete the city's Hazard Mitigation Action Plan to eliminate and reduce negative effects of all disasters.
- Update Plano's Emergency Management Plan to improve preparedness response and recovery efforts from a disaster.
- Mitigate damages from potential man-made and natural hazards through use of Plano's Hazard Mitigation Action Plan.
- Define and regularly update Plano's role and responsibility in the overall network of "Homeland Security".
- Update Plano's Emergency Management Plan to improve preparedness, response, and recovery efforts from a disaster.

Every year, natural and man-made disasters have a significant impact on the community. Though droughts, tornados, severe thunderstorms, floods, and fires are common disasters seen in Plano today, the city has to plan for all types of emergencies including chemical and nuclear attacks, civil disruptions, and disease outbreaks. Through the city's Hazard Mitigation Action Plan and Emergency Management Plan, which are reviewed yearly, a level of order is established to help mitigate, plan for, and respond to disasters in the city. The City of Plano's Department of Emergency Management (DEM) provides an all-hazards approach to emergency management and homeland security services including:

- Emergency management and homeland security planning and policy
- Emergency management and homeland security grant administration
- The citywide emergency training and exercise program
- Public preparedness and education
- Enhancement of city response and recovery capabilities

All Plano employees are required to take two courses through U.S. Department of Homeland Security regarding the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and other preparedness efforts. Departments also participate with the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) to ensure the city is able to continue performance of essential functions during an emergency. Along with training city staff, it is important for the department to educate the public. Plano has established a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), made up of residents and businesses, to better prepare neighborhoods and places of business for emergency or disaster situations. In addition, educational material such as disaster preparedness and hazard descriptions can be found online.

New emergency training requirements typically follow national disasters. For example, after the September 11th attacks, the national focus turned to terrorism and how to plan and mitigate this threat. Training for new risks is essential for the city to ensure the health and safety of the citizens.

As the city continues to grow and become more diverse in age and ethnicity, the Emergency Management Department faces a number of new challenges including community outreach to minority groups, assisting the elderly during emergency events, and training for new national and regional threats.

Options for Consideration:

1. Plano should expand its outreach, planning, mitigation, and training initiatives to provide more education to the public and to better prepare city staff during emergencies.

Pro – By expanding emergency management initiatives, the city will be better prepared to mitigate, plan-for, and respond to disasters.

Con – Additional costs and staff time will be required to expand outreach, training, planning, and mitigation initiatives.

2. Plano should expand its public outreach initiatives to provide more education to the public. However, Plano should only expand emergency management initiatives required by state or federal mandate or that pose an immediate public safety or health threat.

Pro – Plano may not need to expand services or provide new services that are not already provided by the city.

Con – Emergency management cannot forecast every type of disaster that is possible in Plano. Without training and planning beyond what is mandated, the city may be in a worse position to mitigate, plan-for, and respond to every type of disaster.

3. Plano should maintain its current level of community outreach programs and only expand training initiatives which are required by state or federal mandate.

Pro – There would be fewer costs needed for emergency management.

Con – Without additional community outreach programs to target Plano's changing demographics, the public may not be prepared for a disaster. In addition, without training beyond what is mandated, the city may be in a worse position to mitigate, plan-for, and respond to every type of disaster.

4. **Recommended policy (combination of Options 1 and 2)-** Plano should evaluate its outreach, planning, mitigation, and training initiatives and expand these initiatives as necessary to provide more education to the public and to better prepare city staff during emergencies.

Current Comprehensive Plan Strategies

- Continue neighborhood police, crime prevention, and public awareness programs to supplement safety in residential environments.
- Provide police protective services that make Plano a safe place to live and work.
- Maintain a level of operational readiness that will provide a timely and appropriate response for fire suppression, EMS and other emergencies.
- Where possible, involve citizens directly through Neighborhood Crime Watch units and other programs aimed at improving safety and awareness of potentially threatening situations.
- Regularly monitor response effectiveness for fire suppression, EMS and other emergencies, and if necessary, identify adjustments to operations and resources that could improve performance levels.
- Maintain a response time of seven minutes or less to 90% of all fire and emergency calls.
- Identify and utilize policing methods that proactively address crime and its root causes by working in concert with various civic organizations, neighborhood groups and the public.

Plano's reputation as a safe and secure community is a result of an organized system that includes Fire, Police, and 911/Public Safety Communications Departments. Public safety is an exceptional quality of life aspect in Plano today and the city is consistently recognized on the national, state, and local levels as a safe city. As the city ages and becomes more diverse, it will face new challenges that will directly impact the city's public safety. Listed below are nine potential issues that could affect all three divisions of public safety.

1. Dated and Ineffective Technology
 - Having the most up-to-date technology is vital for public safety. Technology rapidly evolves and it is important to have the most efficient and effective tools available.
2. Need for Staff
 - As Plano's population continues to increase, additional staff will be needed in order to provide adequate services.
3. Training Opportunities
 - Training for new and innovative methods is necessary for departments to implement safer and more efficient lifesaving techniques.
4. Better Communication
 - Communication between departments will continue to be an important aspect of public safety as these three divisions are all housed in different locations.
5. Sharing Services
 - A growing concept in the Metroplex is the sharing of city services. Residents and visitors do not know where city boundaries lie; they only expect that a service will

be available during an emergency. Plano should continue to explore the possibility of sharing services with neighboring cities to reduce costs and increase service for a growing Metroplex.

6. Ethnic and Racial Diversity
 - As the community becomes more diverse, it will be important for the Fire and Police Departments to increase the ethnic and racial diversity to represent the makeup of the community. Both the Fire and Police Departments have made outreach efforts to recruit individuals of different ethnicities and increase the department's diversity. Understanding different cultures and being able to communicate is imperative for all public safety departments.
7. Community Outreach
 - Both Fire and Police Departments currently have several community outreach programs that play a significant role in the city's quality of life. Strengthening ties to the community, including personal interaction, enhances safety and builds trust.
8. Aging Facilities
 - Many of the Fire and Police facilities were constructed during the 1980s and 1990s to accommodate Plano's population boom. As these facilities age together, it will be important to identify the remodel or expansion needs and stagger the improvements throughout a period of time.
9. Performance
 - All three divisions will continue to be measured by their performance. This includes crime statistics, response times, traffic safety, and quality of service. The Fire and Police Departments update their strategic plans every five years to identify new issues and goals for the departments. These two departments also provide annual reports to measure their performance.

Options for Consideration:

1. Plano should expand its public safety measures and public outreach initiatives to improve performance. Plano should expand both cost and non-cost related potential issues as needed.

Pro – By improving potential issues, Plano may continue to be one of the safest cities in the United States.

Con – There will be additional costs needed to expand programs and staff size for these three public safety divisions.

2. **Recommended policy:** Plano should expand its public safety and public outreach initiatives which are not cost-prohibited. Plano should only address cost-related improvements if it is an immediate public safety or health threat.

Pro – Plano would expand its community outreach programs and improve public awareness. In addition, there would be fewer costs needed for public safety.

Con – Plano may not have the most efficient and effective resources to improve public safety in the community. Additional demand may also be placed on the existing staff to expand public outreach initiatives.

3. Plano should maintain its current public safety and public outreach measures and only address issues that are an immediate public health or safety threat.

Pro – There would be fewer costs needed for public safety.

Con – Plano may need to improve or increase non-emergency issues, including community outreach programs, in order to enhance safety and build community trust.

Current Comprehensive Plan Strategies

- None

The Property Standards Department inspects residential, commercial, and industrial districts for compliance with city codes, state statutes, and federal regulations. The major issues impacting Plano neighborhoods today are high grass and weeds, improper disposal of trash and debris, overgrown foliage, fence conditions, open storage, deteriorating exterior paint, fascia, and soffit, foundation problems, inoperable windows, and vehicles parked on non-paved surfaces. There are a number of challenges facing Plano today that may increase property maintenance issues. As “empty nesters” begin to age and are less able to maintain their homes, maintenance issues may begin to increase due to physical and financial strains. In addition, as water usage becomes more restricted and the cost of water increases, more home repairs may be needed as foundations shift due to decreased watering. Lastly, Plano is an aging and mature city. A majority of Plano’s infrastructure, retail buildings, and homes were constructed over 30 years ago and it is common for an aging community to face an increase in building and property maintenance issues. If common violations were to rise in Plano, the city could be faced with more challenges handling the increased volume.

Property violations effect real estate, property values, and even crime. In 1982, social scientists James Wilson and George Kelling introduced the concept of the Broken Window Theory. This theory states that maintaining an environment in a well-ordered condition may stop further vandalism or property violations escalating into more serious conditions. For example, consider a building with a few broken windows. If the windows are not repaired, the tendency is for vandals to break a few more windows. Eventually, they may even break into the building, and if it's unoccupied, perhaps become squatters. An analogy of the “broken window” could be high grass and weeds. First the grass gets a little taller and is not maintained. Then the fencing starts leaning around the home. Eventually, the house begins to look abandoned and becomes an eyesore for the neighborhood.

Property Standards inspectors are assigned neighborhood units to canvass and inspect. However, each inspector is assigned to multiple blocks, which can make it difficult to detect every violation. Additional staff will be needed in order to reduce the number of neighborhood units per inspector and increase activity around the city. An alternative approach to adding staff to address increasing property violations is to grow community engagement initiatives. This can be done by actively working with neighborhood associations, HOAs, crime watch groups, and faith based organizations. The collaborative work between these groups to reduce common property maintenance issues could have a positive effect on Plano’s quality of life.

Options for Consideration:

1. **Recommended policy - Plano should increase the frequency of proactive inspections around the city and continue to actively engage the community to garner increased participation and awareness.**

Pro – By increasing the frequency of proactive inspections and engaging the community, the extent of property violations may decrease.

Con – There will be additional costs needed to increase the frequency of proactive inspections.

2. Plano should maintain the current level of proactive inspection activity around the city and increase activity to engage the community for increased participation and awareness.

Pro – There would be fewer costs needed for the city and property violations may decrease with more community engagement and awareness.

Con – By maintaining the current level of proactive inspections, growing violations due to the community's age may put more strain on the existing staff. Additional demand may also be placed on the existing staff to expand public outreach initiatives.

3. Plano should maintain the current level of proactive inspections. No additional resources should be spent on increasing community participation and awareness.

Pro – There would be fewer costs needed for the city.

Con –Plano's image and well-being could decline if maintenance violations increase beyond what the staff could handle.

Current Comprehensive Plan Strategies

- Monitor and evaluate growth in Plano's population and employment and changes in population characteristics to determine their impact on service and facility requirements.
- Conduct periodic evaluations of the changing demographics, market trends, and regional influences and determine their potential impacts on infrastructure and facilities.
- Maintain the Master Facilities Plan as the interdepartmental guide to coordinate the planning, development and redevelopment of City of Plano facilities in concert with changing community needs and expectations. Coordinate the Community Investment Program (CIP) process with the objectives in the Master Facilities Plan.
- Regularly meet with City departments and other local government entities to ensure development and redevelopment within the City can be supported with the necessary facilities and services.
- Review current efforts to inform citizens about public facilities and services and develop a comprehensive promotional program.
- Use five-year service plans as a guide to the provision of municipal services specific to city departments.
- Provide for appropriately located and functional public facilities in response to the diminishing availability of appropriate sites for both public and private development.
- Establish a framework for upgrading and/or redeveloping city facilities over time.
- Develop a comprehensive program for updating, renovating, and if necessary, replacing municipal facilities over time. This should include a comprehensive inventory of these facilities, dates of construction and "life expectancy".
- Establish a process for identifying alternative resources for funding facility improvements and municipal services.
- Evaluate current facilities in terms of hosting regional and national events which could attract visitors to the city and determine the costs required to complete the necessary improvements. Analyze the benefits derived from the proposed improvements and develop an operations plan to mitigate disruption of service during events.

Plano Tomorrow Environment P&Z Direction from March 17th Work Session

- Renewable Energy – Municipal Buildings: Plano should make significant investments in renewable energy for municipal buildings. Plano's focus shouldn't solely rely on cost-effective environmental improvements, but should also focus on building investments that have a significant impact on citizen health and the natural environment.

The city's Facility Management Division, which is a division within the Engineering Department, manages over 70 city facilities including: libraries, recreation centers, civic centers, museums, fire and police facilities, and other maintenance facilities.

In 1994, a Master Facilities Plan was written as a part of the city's effort to keep pace with growth and maintain a high level of service delivery. The plan was also intended to account for the various non-fiscal factors that are critical to facilities planning. The Facilities Planning Committee was responsible for the creation and maintenance of the Master Facilities Plan and was also charged with evaluating and making recommendations to management about facility needs. The Community Investment Program (CIP) budget process also coordinated with the objectives in the Master Facilities Plan.

The Master Facilities Plan presented seven factors that were used to identify and prioritize facilities projects. These included:

1. Economics
2. Quality
3. Site Selection
4. Design and Planning Considerations
5. Sustainability
6. Determining Facility Priorities
7. Balance and Equity

In 2011, the Master Facilities Plan was updated by the Facilities Planning Committee. This plan has been beneficial for the past 20 years because it prioritized new facilities and regulated site selection, design considerations, and other new construction guidelines. However, very few new municipal buildings have been constructed since 2011 because Plano is nearing build-out. The city must now shift its focus towards remodeling or expanding existing buildings to ensure they are up to date and provide the services that are desired by the community.

Options for Consideration:

1. **Recommended policy - Plano should regularly review facility guidelines to assist with prioritizing projects. Plano should also engage the public and all city staff to identify the needs and desires of the community.**

Pro – Engaging the community and staff will assist the city in ensuring its facilities are providing appropriate services. In addition, having regularly updated guidelines will assist departments in determining when a facility should be replaced or expanded.

Con – There will be additional time and possibly additional costs needed for city staff to contribute to community and employee outreach.

2. Plano should regularly review facility guidelines to assist with prioritizing projects. Plano should evaluate any concerns from the staff or the public, but should not engage the public to identify the facility needs.

Pro – Concerns from the staff or the public are considered with facility replacements or expansions.

Con – Without engaging the citizens or employees and only responding to complaints, the city may not be providing the appropriate services.

3. Plano should not review facility guidelines and should not engage the public. Priority of facility projects should be based on public health and safety issues only.

Pro – No additional staff time would be needed and a clear priority is established.

Con – If the city does not take any citizen or employees concerns into consideration, it may not be providing the appropriate services. In addition, the city's overall quality of life could decrease if the city only replaces or expands facilities that have a public health or safety issue.

SOCIAL SERVICES | HOMELESS AND POVERTY PREVENTION

Current Comprehensive Plan Strategies

- None

Homeless Prevention

Homelessness is a growing national problem that affects adults and youth all over the Dallas-Fort Worth region. In 2013, there were approximately 420 homeless individuals in Collin County according to the Dallas Morning News. This figure was determined by the annual homeless count survey conducted by several Collin County cities including Allen, Frisco, McKinney, and Plano. In addition, five school districts in Collin County reported a total of 1,812 homeless children were enrolled in school, which were not represented in the homeless county survey. This figure was based on who was at school the actual day of the count, so this figure fluctuates. Since 2010, Plano ISD has experienced a 50% increase in homeless students and the most recent count indicates a total of 431 identified students. Identified students are those who the school district knows are homeless. However, there are generally 4 to 5 times as many who are unidentified homeless students. Most families fear informing schools and government agencies that they are homeless because of CPS or INS intervention. Of these students, 12 have unidentified residences (living in parks, cars, etc.), 14 are unaccompanied (no parents or guardians), 109 are living in hotels/motels, 108 are at shelters, 179 are doubled-up (family, friends paying for one room), and 6 are refugees. Plano, the county's largest city, is participating in a number of activities to assist with homelessness including:

- Participation in the Collin County Homeless Coalition
- Participation in the Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance
- Providing funds for rent and utility assistance as well as on-going case management
- Providing federal and local grants to support several Collin County homeless shelters
- City Homelessness Prevention Program

The 2010-2014 Plano Consolidated Plan, which was included in the readings, is a plan that is required by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in order to receive federal housing and community development funding. This plan identifies four specific priorities for homeless and homeless prevention including:

1. Support and assist with the creation of an additional shelter, supportive services, and transitional housing for homeless and under-housed.
2. Support to organizations that engage in public services for Plano residents, especially special needs populations, including but not limited to: low income elderly, persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS, and at-risk youth.
3. Assist homeless supportive services across the entire spectrum of need, from homelessness to self-sufficiency, with the continued emphasis on homelessness prevention.
4. Support the efforts of the Plano Housing Authority (PHA) to maintain affordable housing developments and issue Housing Choice Vouchers.

A challenge that Plano faces for the future is the space to accommodate the homeless population. Today, there are limited shelter options for the homeless population in Collin County. In addition, shelters in Collin County are highly specialized towards a specific

demographic (families, children, teens, women, domestic violence victims) and are not inclusive of all homeless. Only one shelter in Collin County is open to all individuals, which is the Samaritan Inn located in McKinney. The City of Plano currently provides federal grants to the Samaritan Inn to house Plano residents. The Samaritan Inn has 160 beds and has turned away an average of 50 people per week for several years, according to Cara Mendelsohn, Community Outreach Coordinator. Finally, federal funds have been declining over the years and it will continue to be more difficult for states, counties, cities, and non-profits to obtain funding that will address the nation's homeless issue. Since 2010, Collin County has seen a 138 percent increase in the homeless counted. If the homeless population continues to increase and federal funding continues to decrease, shelter capacity may become more of a challenge for Plano.

Poverty Prevention

According to the American Community Survey (2010-2012), Plano has a poverty rate of 7.9%. In comparison, this number is well below the state (18.1%) and national (15.7%) averages. In 2014, 30 schools in PISD had over 30% of their children on free/reduced lunches, which is a 50% increase since 2011. In addition, there were 14 schools with over 60% on free/reduced lunches, which is a 100% increase since 2011. These schools are primarily elementary schools. The City of Plano supports the reduction of households living in poverty by providing financial assistance to agencies from the Community Development Block Grant Program, HOME Investment Partnership Program, and the Buffington Community Services Grants. Additional antipoverty services in Plano include:

- The Plano Housing Authority provides their residents a Family Self Sufficiency Program and their voucher holders a homeownership program.
- The Plano ISD Education Foundation offers a Family Literacy Program.

These services and the city's support and participation will provide households living in poverty an opportunity to obtain needed services, support and opportunities to help them pull themselves out of poverty.

In addition, Plano is one of few cities in the Dallas-Fort Worth region that operate a day labor center. The Plano Day Labor Center was opened in 1994 to abate an unsafe public nuisance which was created by people standing on the streets looking for temporary employment. However, an indirect benefit of the Plano Day Labor Center is that it has assisted individuals to find jobs for the last 20 years. The Center serves the community by providing an organized, safe venue for contractors and homeowners to engage temporary labor placement. There are between 150 and 350 workers seeking work each day, with availability ranging from unskilled manual labor to specialties such as landscaping, restaurant work, cleaning, and construction trades. In 2013, Plano had a placement rate of 42%, which has increased from previous years.

Options Continued on Next Page

Options for Consideration:

1. Plano should take the lead on homeless and poverty prevention and consider providing services which wouldn't solely rely on Collin County or nonprofit organizations.

Pro – By exploring the possibility of funding additional homeless and poverty prevention initiatives, it better ensures that Plano citizens will have services that may not always be available with Collin County or nonprofit organizations.

Con – There would be additional costs and staff needed to expand any services that are not already provided by the city.

2. **Recommended policy** - Plano should increase efforts to partner with nonprofit organizations, Collin County, Plano ISD, and any other entity, to provide homeless and poverty prevention services to the community. Plano should support the expansion of these existing services, but should not consider expanding services provided directly through the city.

Pro – A number of nonprofit organizations provide homeless and poverty assistance for today's population and the city could support these entities (financial and regulatory) in order to expand their services to accommodate growing population.

Con –The nonprofit organizations provide homeless and poverty assistance to residents all across the county. As the county's population continues to increase and federal funding continues to decrease, Plano residents may find it more difficult to receive these limited services.

3. Plano should continue existing efforts with nonprofit organizations and Collin County to provide homeless and poverty prevention services to the community. Plano should not support expansion of these existing services and should not consider expanding services provided directly through the city.

Pro – There would be fewer costs needed to maintain the homeless and poverty prevention services currently provided by the city.

Con – If the city does not provide support to the county or nonprofit organizations and does not invest to provide its own services, then residents may find it difficult to receive the services they need.

SOCIAL SERVICES | HUMAN CARE AND HEALTH ACCESS

Current Comprehensive Plan Strategies

- None

Citizens with chronic diseases who are elderly or poor usually have the highest healthcare and social program costs. Poverty drastically impacts a person's access to healthcare, and lack of healthcare can cause or exacerbate a person's poverty (e.g. mental health issues, major medical expenses, etc.). According to the County Health Rankings that were provided in the readings, Collin County has approximately 19% uninsured adults and 10% uninsured children. Approximately 11% of the County's population could not see a doctor due to the cost. Plano relies heavily on private and nonprofit organizations to provide human care and health services for the uninsured, the poor, and the elderly. These institutions will provide assistance for mental illness, substance abuse, intellectual delays, health and wellness services, infectious disease management, behavioral health counseling, clothing and hygiene assistance, reading programs, grief support programs, and dental programs.

Though these institutions provide a significant amount of services, residents in Collin County may still struggle to find nearby medical providers. There are eleven medically underserved areas in Collin County according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Medically Underserved Areas (MUAs) are areas or populations having: too few primary care providers, high infant mortality, high poverty and/or high elderly population. These areas are identified at the Census Tract level and include Census Tract 319, which encompasses east Plano along E. George Bush Turnpike and Central Expressway, including the Douglass Community. Individuals located in MUAs typically rely on public transportation to access health and human care facilities, which is difficult when the facilities are located in areas not assessable by public transit.

Currently, the city's Environmental Health Department manages animal control, disease control, food safety, hazardous materials, mosquito control, sewer systems, smoking ordinance information, public health education, swimming pools, and the stormwater program. This department also worked with Collin County last year to provide flu shots to the public. The city also provides grants to several nonprofit health institutions such as Plano Children's Medical Clinic and Collin County Adult Clinic to provide preventive and regular physical and mental health services to Plano residents. As Plano's population continues to age and become more diverse, more demand will be placed on these private and nonprofit organizations to provide health services for Plano's residents.

Options Continued on Next Page

Options for Consideration:

1. Plano should take the lead on public health and human services and consider providing services which wouldn't solely rely on Collin County or nonprofit organizations.

Pro – By exploring the possibility of funding targeted health and human services, it better ensures that Plano citizens will have services that may not always be available with Collin County or nonprofit organizations.

Con – There would be additional costs and staff needed to expand any social services that are not already provided by the city.

2. **Recommended policy** - Plano should increase efforts to partner with nonprofits organizations, Collin County, and any other entity, such as Plano ISD, to provide health and human services to the community. Plano should support the expansion of these existing services, but should not consider expanding public services provided directly through the city.

Pro – Collin County and the nonprofit organizations provide adequate health and human services for today's population and the city could support these entities (financial and regulatory) in order to expand their services to accommodate growing population.

Con – Collin County and the nonprofit organizations provide health resources to residents all across the county and as the county's population continues to increase, Plano residents may find it more difficult to receive these limited services.

3. Plano should continue existing efforts with nonprofit organizations and Collin County to provide health services to the community. Plano should not support expansion of these existing health services and should not consider expanding public services provided directly through the city.

Pro – There would be fewer costs needed to maintain the health services that are currently provided by the city.

Con – If the city does not provide support to the county or nonprofit organizations and does not invest to provide its own health services, then residents may find it difficult to receive the health services they need.

SOCIAL SERVICES | HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS

Current Comprehensive Plan Strategies

- None

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), more than 23 million people in America live in food deserts. The USDA defines food deserts as “urban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food”. This lack of access contributes to a poor diet and can lead to higher levels of obesity and other diet-related illness, such as diabetes and heart disease. The County Health Rankings that were provided in the readings indicated that Collin County has approximately 2% of the population who are low-income and do not live close to a grocery store. In comparison, Denton County has 4%, Dallas County has 8%, and Tarrant County has 8%. Though Plano doesn’t face the same challenges of food access as some of the larger cities in the United States, it does face health issues such as heart disease and diabetes. Without affordable fresh food options, adults and children face fundamental challenges to making the healthy food choices that are essential for nutritious, balanced diets.

Urban gardens and farmer’s markets have been a growing solution to address affordable healthy food access. Cities across the United States are promoting healthy foods by encouraging neighborhoods to create community gardens, using public land for community gardens, and reducing regulations for farmer’s markets. In addition, government entities have begun working directly with local farmers to provide fresh and healthy food for employees and residents. For example, the Texas Department of State Health Services has a Farm to Work program that allows employees to order farm fresh local produce which is delivered directly to the workplace from the local farmers. Cities have also assisted local farmers by connecting them to hunger-relief organizations, community institutions, homeless shelters, schools, restaurants, and retail food markets. There are several ways in which cities today are working to provide affordable healthy and fresh food options to their communities.

The city currently provides grants to assist organizations in providing meals to those in need through supporting agencies such as Collin County Committee on Aging (Meals On Wheels).

Options for Consideration:

1. Plano should make affordable healthy food access a priority for the city by exploring ways to promote affordable healthy food programs.

Pro – By exploring ways to promote affordable healthy food programs, it can assist in addressing the health issues of obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.

Con – There may be additional costs and staff time to create new affordable healthy food programs.

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2. **Recommended policy with addition** - Plano should acknowledge that affordable healthy food access is a concern by supporting county and nonprofit organization's programs. Plano shouldn't initiate any new programs, but should assist Collin County and nonprofit organization's affordable healthy food programs. Plano should also evaluate zoning regulations to remove obstacles for healthy food access such as community gardens and farmers markets.

Pro – The city would still participate in affordable healthy food programs to address health issues.

Con – Few healthy food programs exist today in the region and it may take time to identify funding and personnel to establish these programs.

3. Plano shouldn't include any affordable healthy food goals in Plano Tomorrow and should not assist Collin County or nonprofit organizations affordable healthy food programs.

Pro – There would be no costs for affordable healthy food initiatives. Affordable healthy food programs may still be provided by the county or nonprofit organizations.

Con – If the city does not provide support to Collin County or nonprofit organizations and does not invest in new affordable healthy food programs, then health issues of obesity, heart disease, and diabetes may increase, specifically with individuals living in poverty.