

Regionalism Recap Plano Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan

On March 3, 2014, the Planning & Zoning Commission completed a work session for the regionalism component of the Plano Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan. At the work session, the Commission was provided a summary document, which 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. Each option included potential outcomes to better understand the effects of the policy decisions. The regionalism summary document provided to the Commission is included with this document as Exhibit A.1. The Commission recommended six policy statements on regionalism briefly summarized below.

Population Growth

Plano should develop a policy on new growth which would identify where it should occur.

Regional Transportation

Plano will be open to the expansion of existing roadway and expressway systems within the city to improve traffic flow. The city will work with neighboring communities to facilitate bicycle trail connections and encourage expansion of regional mass transit to non-member cities.

Air Quality

Plano will lead by example in the Dallas-Fort Worth region in regards to developing polices and creating programs to improve air quality. The city will research and seek placement of alternative fuel dispensing sites and replace all gasoline motors with those that are hybrids and or use alternative fuels. Plano will strengthen idling polices and implement ideas to improve traffic flow on major thoroughfares. The city will support private investment efforts for alternative fuel sites.

Water Preservation

Plano will assume regional leadership regarding water issues and will organize meetings with the North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD) to develop solutions to restructure fees and policies to encourage more efficient water use and conservation. Plano will continue water restrictions even after conditions improve to conserve water resources. The city will have a strict enforcement policy in place for restriction violators. The city will require all developers to submit plans for storm water mitigation and develop regulations consistent with those found in the International Storm Water Management Manual.

Consistency with Neighboring Cities

Plano should consider how it could team up with neighboring cities to provide municipal services.

Education

Plano will assist UT-Dallas with obtaining Tier I status through funding and providing opportunities for research activities. Plano will partner with local school districts to sponsor youth city council, mentoring programs and support for civic government course work.

Exhibit B.1: Regionalism Summary text, policy options, pro and con statements

Exhibit A.1
Regionalism Summary Document

REGIONALISM

Plano's role in the Dallas-Fort Worth region

The City of Plano is located in the northeast quadrant of the Dallas-Fort Worth region in Collin County. There were an estimated 266,600 people in the city as of January 1, 2014 and the city could attain a population of nearly 300,000 should residential development increase in density. Plano is known as a first tier suburb, situated between the new growth north of the Sam Rayburn Tollway and the cities of Dallas and Richardson to the south. Carrollton and The Colony border Plano to the west and Murphy and Parker are to the east. There is no unincorporated area of Collin or Denton County that the city could annex into its corporate limits.

Plano is known in the Dallas-Fort Worth region as a leader and innovator in municipal services and as an employment center for the North Dallas area. There are a wide range of employment opportunities in Plano with over 147,000 jobs in the city. There is enough undeveloped land to accommodate 200,000 jobs. Most of Plano's jobs are with major corporate headquarters, technology development, and health care. Plano is known as a health care center with four hospitals and numerous medical and dental facilities.

Regional issues

Many issues face the Dallas-Fort Worth region. The issues which will be addressed in Plano Tomorrow include population growth, regional transportation, air quality, water preservation, consistency with neighboring cities and education. A brief summary of each issue is provided along with the policy option recommended by the Planning & Zoning Commission at March 3, 2014 work session.

POPULATION

Current Comprehensive Plan Strategies:

- Conduct periodic evaluations of the changing demographics, market trends, and regional influences and determine their political impacts on infrastructure and facilities.
- Monitor and evaluate growth in Plano's population and employment and change in population characteristics to determine their impact on services and facility requirements.

Dallas-Fort Worth is expected to add another 2.5 million people to the area by 2030. Most of the population growth will go to the fringe of the region where little development exists today. However, some of that new growth will need to be accommodated by existing cities. Less than 8% of the city's land is undeveloped and 87% of this land is zoned for nonresidential uses. Land use policies recommend this land should be preserved for future employment and economic development opportunities.

Additional population growth in Plano could be accommodated through redevelopment of existing retail centers and increased housing density in existing residential neighborhoods along with the creation of new urban centers. Currently identified new urban center locations include the Park Boulevard and Parker Road intersection, Collin Creek Mall site, and the Parker Road DART light rail station.

Options for Consideration

1. Current policies allow Plano to accommodate regional population growth. Retail zoning allows single-family development and undeveloped land policies consider rezoning request for residential development if adjacent to existing housing along with higher density residential development in potential urban center sites.

Pro: New housing opportunities would attract young adults and families to Plano. Additional population could serve as new customers for the abundance of retail found in in the city.

Con: More people coming to Plano may cause overcrowding of existing public schools and city facilities. Residential development in areas not zoned for housing may require utility upgrades to accommodate the development.

2. **Recommended policy** – Plano should develop a policy on new growth which would identify where it should occur.

Pro: A growth policy would help the city to enjoy the benefits of population growth while limiting expenditures on new infrastructure. This policy would also help in terms of planning services to accommodate an increase in population.

Con: A growth policy could limit opportunities and possibly discourage innovative ideas for new housing that might be desired in the future.

3. Plano has reached its optimum population size and can only accommodate a small amount of the projected growth for the Dallas-Fort Worth region. While there will be changes in terms of the composition of the population, Plano should not actively encourage new residential growth.

Pro: Discouraging new growth could possibly increase Plano's residential and commercial property values and lead to redevelopment. This would allow the city to use resources for maintenance and renovation of public facilities and infrastructure.

Con: A no growth policy could be a detriment for the city and encourage developers to look at other communities for opportunities. This could also decrease Plano's attractiveness to younger adults. There are regional implications as well. Lack of housing opportunities in Plano could push people to newer cities further north, thus increasing traffic on local expressways and contributing to air quality issues.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION

Current Comprehensive Plan Strategies:

- Continue to work with adjacent cities and regional agencies to develop land use patterns that promote enhanced regional mobility.
- Work closely with federal, state, and regional agencies to provide for a range of transportation options to meet the changing needs of Plano residents.
- Maintain a close working relationship with Dallas Area Rapid Transit and monitor its development plans and programs to ensure Plano's transportation needs are properly understood and addressed.
- Develop and maintain a system of bicycle routes and recreation trails for destination and recreational use that lead to cultural attractions and employment areas, mass transit facilities and residential neighborhoods.
- Participate in the development and implementation of NCTCOG's Regional Transportation Plan and other regional coordination programs.

Increased population in the Dallas-Fort Worth region will require upgrades and improvements along with additional services for transportation. This could impact Plano in several ways including mass transit, bicycle, and the regional roadway network. Plano is a member of the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) and the city's transportation planning efforts must be consistent with plans developed by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) – the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Dallas-Fort Worth region along with Collin County. Also, major expressways are situated around and through Plano and are controlled by the North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). These facilities connect Plano with the Dallas-Fort Worth region and the national transportation system.

Options for Consideration

1. **Recommended Policy – Plano will be open to the expansion of existing roadway and expressway systems within the city to improve traffic flow. The city will work with neighboring communities to facilitate bicycle trail connections and encourage expansion of regional mass transit to non-member cities.**

Pros: This would provide the necessary links for completion of the Regional Bicycle Network and the potential development of an urban center at the Parker Road DART station.

Con: The expansions could come at a price by way of loss of commercial and residential properties to accommodate the bicycle connections and the roadway improvements. The addition of more cities in to a regional mass transit agency such as DART could decrease Plano's influence in terms of obtaining funding for projects and services desired by the community.

2. Plano should be selective as to which regional transportation improvement projects it should participate in. The city should prioritize which improvement projects would best serve its residents and work with regional transportation providers and neighboring cities to come up with innovative solutions to mitigate damage to the city's tax base to accommodate transportation expansion projects.

Pro: This action preserves the city's tax base as there are few opportunities for expansion of existing transportation facilities as the city will need to make the best and most efficient use of what is already built.

Con: Limiting project participation and facility expansion could deteriorate current relationships and cooperation with neighboring cities and possibly inhibit the construction of projects which could improve transportation and air quality for the area.

3. Plano should focus on transportation projects that would serve the city's needs. Examples of projects include implementation of Bus Rapid Transit (dedicated lanes for buses with limited stops) and complete streets (remove traffic lane for vehicle travel and use only for bicycles or buses or combination of both).

Pro: Mitigation of traffic congestion on local roadways would focus on finding innovative ideas to improve the system within existing right-of-way thus protecting Plano's tax base.

Con: The policy option ignores the fact that Plano is part of the Dallas-Fort Worth region and is already a participant in a regional mass transit system. A quality transportation system is important collaboration of all cities in the region for the efficient and safe movement of goods and people throughout the Dallas-Fort area.

AIR QUALITY

Current Comprehensive Plan Strategies:

- Monitor federal legislation regarding air quality through regional efforts with the North Central; Texas Council of Governments.
- Promote multi-jurisdictional efforts aimed at providing for adequate long term energy supplies to serve the region and protect its natural environment.
- Promote multi-jurisdictional efforts to meet EPA standards for air and water quality.
- Evaluate alternative transportation options for the Metroplex along with other cities and counties in the region to improve air quality.

A big issue resulting from transportation is air quality. The Dallas-Fort Worth region is a non-attainment zone for ozone pollution due to mobile source emissions. The problem is most severe during the summer months, when the temperatures are very warm. The wind blows pollution from areas south of the Dallas-Fort Worth region to combine with emissions in and around Plano to cause unhealthy ozone levels. Adding to the problem is smoke from wildfires outside of the Dallas-Fort Worth area due to lack of rainfall and hot dry conditions. These issues exacerbate degradation of the air quality during the warm summer months.

Options for Consideration

1. Plano will work with other cities in the Dallas-Fort Worth region to develop solutions to mitigate the impacts of poor air quality. City leadership and staff will join others from local jurisdictions and transportation agencies to develop ideas and actions to address the problem.

Pro: Plano demonstrates a willingness to address the issue on a regional level through discussion with other jurisdictions and regional transportation providers.

Con: Local cities such as Plano need to do more than just participate in regional efforts to improve air quality. Each community needs to take responsibility for air quality improvement through the development of local and local policies and programs. No change or further deterioration in ozone pollution could lead to sanctions from the federal government through withholding funds to pay for regional transportation projects which could improve the situation.

2. Plano should limit participation in regional efforts to resolve air quality issues. Programs and policies chosen by the city must be cost effective and allow Plano to receive the most benefit from its investment.

Pro: This policy would help Plano contribute something towards the effort, yet keep in line with leveling resources to provide city services.

Con: While the policies listed in this option would reduce Plano's role in air quality mitigation, it must be remembered this is a regional issue which requires action both at the regional and local level. Minimal effort based on affordability could reduce Plano's leadership role and influence in the region.

3. **Recommended Policy** – Plano will lead by example in the Dallas-Fort Worth region in regards to developing polices and creating programs to improve air quality. The city will research and seek placement of alternative fuel dispensing sites and replace all gasoline motors with those that are hybrids and or use alternative fuels. Plano will strengthen idling polices and implement ideas to improve traffic flow on major thoroughfares. The city will support private investment efforts for alternative fuel sites.

Pro: These actions would help Plano to be a regional leader in addressing air quality issues above and beyond what the region would expect from local jurisdictions.

Con: The policy option could be an expensive proposition for Plano to consider. The city may have to revamp its funding priorities to have money available for improving air quality over providing the variety of municipal services it does today. Plano would need to convince residents that having cleaner air would improve quality of life over the provision of lower priority city services.

WATER PRESERVATION

Current Comprehensive Plan Strategies:

- Promote multi-jurisdictional efforts to meet EPA standards for air and water quality.
- Work with water supply systems to ensure alternative sources of water in emergency situations.
- Continue participation in the development and implementation of the NCTCOG's Integrated Storm Water Manual

Water is another significant issue for the Dallas-Fort Worth region as the result of climate change. Most of the region is in a moderate stage of drought which could worsen as the dry weather pattern is expected to persist for several years to come. The nation and region are experiencing extreme episodes of cold and hot temperatures with erratic rainfall – either too much or too little precipitation. Many of the water reservoirs in the Dallas-Fort Worth region are well below capacity and the situation is worsening each month due to minimal rain fall and increased evaporation. Conservation of water resources is difficult in the Dallas-Fort Worth region as current policies from regional water providers have the “take-or pay” system. This is where regional water providers determine the maximum amount of water used by cities and each community must purchase this set amount and pay the full price for the water, whether it is used or not.

Much of the Dallas-Fort Worth region's water consumption is used for landscaping. Many of the area cities, including Plano, have imposed water restrictions in terms of frequency and timing of irrigation use and have programs for area residents that offers suggestions for alternative plant choices for landscaping that is drought tolerant and native to the area. Another regional water issue impacting Plano is storm water mitigation. Developers may provide plans to local cities regarding mitigation of impacts of storm water runoff from the project.

Options for Consideration

1. Plano will lift current restrictions on landscape irrigation and use all of the water it purchases from the North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD). The city will allow developers to participate in storm water management on a voluntary basis.

Pro: This action will help Plano recover the cost of water purchased from the NTMWD and allows for flexibility with developers regarding voluntary participation in mitigation of storm water runoff. The city's image will be enhanced by greener and healthy landscaping.

Con: The city will need to consider the political ramifications of pursuing this policy. The consequences could be bad publicity and a tarnished image of being a “selfish city” and could lead to diminished regional water resources. Lack of storm water mitigation may cause erosion damage to creek banks and possible property damage both in Plano and in cities located downstream.

2. Plano will work with member cities of NTMWD to ensure consistent restrictions for water usage for landscape irrigation and discuss possible solutions to the “take-or-pay” system for water usage. Plano will participate in discussions with other communities in the

region and the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) regarding storm water management. Plano will encourage residents to work with the Sustainability Department and attend the Live Green Expo to learn ways to reduce water usage.

Pro: These suggestions attempt to get the city, residents, businesses, and developers to think about conserving water and mitigating storm water damage.

Con: The actions outlined in the policy option lack strength of enforcement to reduce water usage for irrigation and curtail damage due to storm water runoff.

- 3. Recommended Policy – Plano will assume regional leadership regarding water issues and will organize meetings with the North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD) to develop solutions to restructure fees and policies to encourage more efficient water use and conservation. Plano will continue water restrictions even after conditions improve to conserve water resources. The city will have a strict enforcement policy in place for restriction violators. The city will require all developers to submit plans for storm water mitigation and develop regulations consistent with those found in the International Storm Water Management Manual.**

Pro: These actions demonstrate a commitment to conserving water and mitigating damage from storm water runoff and erosion.

Con: There are costs associated with these policy actions. There could be a compromise in city services as the budget will need to be adjusted to account for less revenue from water consumption and providing additional staff to enforce water restriction violations. Having mandatory storm water regulations when other cities do not may discourage the development community and limit future development opportunities.

CONSISTENCY WITH NEIGHBORING CITIES

Current Comprehensive Plan Strategies:

- Consider opportunities of sharing facilities and service delivery with other entities that could improve efficiency without compromising the quality Plano residents expect.

Plano works with neighboring cities to ensure consistency with land use policies and transportation plans. An example is the policy of the cities of Allen, Frisco, and Plano to require a 1,200 foot setback of residential development along the Sam Rayburn Tollway corridor. This policy is meant to protect residential areas from noise, traffic, and glare from the expressway. It is good practice to have consistent land use activities in areas where cities share common boundaries. Other planning issues are roadways and bicycle trails. Plano and neighboring cities try to have consistency in terms of roadway design to ensure efficient traffic flow in the region. Plano is working with the cities of Allen and Richardson to provide bicycle trail connections.

Options for Consideration

1. Plano will meet with neighboring cities to discuss future land use and transportation plans to ensure consistency in terms of transportation facilities and compatible land uses near adjoining boundaries.

Pro: Having similar land use activities at the boundaries of adjoining cities mitigates potential problems among the residents in each community in regards to future development plans. Retaining standards for roadway widths, pavement materials, and maintenance from city to city contributes to efficient traffic flow.

Con: A common urban design issue in the Dallas-Fort Worth region is many cities have similar appearances and very little to distinguish one community from another. Unique street signs, entry way features, and street furniture are a few suggestions to address this issue.

2. **Recommended Policy – Plano should consider how it could team up with neighboring cities to provide municipal services.**

Pro: A mutual aid agreement with Plano and neighboring cities is a current example of regional cooperation. Sometimes first responders from other cities are closer to an incident and can provide a faster response than someone from Plano. Also, shared use of city facilities helps growing neighboring cities to gain time and resources to provide similar services to their community.

Con: There are some concerns in regards to sharing facilities, services, or participating in mutual aid agreements with neighboring cities. While Plano is responding to an emergency call in another city, the equipment is not available to provide service to a resident in need of assistance. More people from other cities using the libraries, parks, and recreation centers can cause overcrowding at Plano facilities. Neighboring cities may not see a reason to construct similar facilities as the service need is being met in Plano.

3. Plano will join resources with neighboring cities in the provision of municipal services.

Pro: This action will reduce duplication of services by multiple jurisdictions, improve efficiency of service delivery, and could reduce the amount of financial resources necessary to provide public services. This would be a positive situation for both Plano and residents due to less revenue required to provide city services and the possibility of reduced property taxes.

Con: Shared services could lead to more competition with residents from other cities to use facilities and timeliness in seeking response for assistance in addressing issues. Cities sharing services will need to provide focused training for staff so they can become familiar with all communities within the service area. This could result in additional expenditures required to pay for the training and lag time in getting everyone familiarized with the service area.

EDUCATION

Current Comprehensive Plan Strategies

- Meet regularly with colleges, universities, and the public school districts to discuss employment trends and the development of programs to improve and enhance job skills of local residents.

Quality education is a concern of the Dallas-Fort Worth region. Good schools and research institutions attract major employers to the area. There is a wide disparity of quality education offered by public and private school districts. The organization of public education in the state of Texas makes it difficult for cities to intervene as school districts are independent from cities and have their own boards and administrators. Plano has a strong public education system in place with service from the Frisco, Lewisville, and Plano Independent School Districts (ISDs). Most of the city is served by Plano ISD which is a considered a good district; however, there are disparities between schools within the district in terms of quality.

Another education issue for the Dallas-Fort Worth region is a lack of a Tier I university, a major public national institution with a reputation for academic excellence with strong investments for research activities. The University of Texas (UT) is a Tier I institution and has two campuses in the region at Arlington and at Dallas. Texas Woman's University (TWU) and The University of North Texas (UNT) are located in Denton at the far north edge of the region. All four institutions compete with numerous public universities in Texas for state funding. Though UT-Arlington and UT-Dallas are a part of the University of Texas system, both campuses are at more of a disadvantage compared with TWU and UNT. The Arlington and Dallas campuses are considered a branch of the UT system and do not have the same priority in receiving state dollars to enhance programs and status as the flagship campus in Austin. Tier I status is an important issue to Plano and neighboring cities as they are situated near UNT, TWU, and UT-Dallas. These cities must contend with the lack of a Tier I university when trying to attract major companies to the area.

Plano does have two institutions of higher education located within the city. Southern Methodist University (SMU) is a private school located in Dallas with a campus in the Legacy Business Park and is known for strong programs in business and the liberal arts. Collin College has two campuses in Plano and provides an affordable option for students wishing to receive their first two years of higher education, vocational training, and an opportunity to learn skills for new jobs in the ever changing economy.

Options for Consideration

1. Plano will meet with staff from Collin College, Frisco ISD and Plano ISD on an annual basis each year to share information and discuss demographic and development trends. The city will also inform local school districts of development and zoning cases which could impact capacity issues at affected schools and impact the local tax base.

Pro: The meetings provide a way for city, college and schools to form relationships which may prove of value in the future. Sharing information about upcoming projects impacting attendance

issues at local schools helps the district to plan for ways to accommodate the additional students.

2. Plano and local public school districts should work to increase ties with each other. The city and the schools should consider sharing facilities such as using an elementary campus for a community center in a residential neighborhood. A position for a liaison between the schools and the city should be created. Plano will join with other regional cities to help local state universities to achieve Tier I status.

Pro: Partnerships with Plano and the Plano ISD have been successful with the placement of local parks near schools and the sharing of natatoriums at Haggard Middle School and Williams High School. Healthy cities usually have a strong school system. Unified efforts of the city and local schools working together can address the issues brought on by changing demographics and aging infrastructure. The presence of a Tier I university in the Dallas-Fort Worth region would help attract major companies to the area seeking partnerships with research universities for product development.

Con: A possible issue with increased involvement with local school districts that the risk of the city may become involved with controversial political matters it cannot resolve. The lack of a Tier I university has become an issue for the Dallas-Fort Worth region. No support to change this situation will make it difficult for the region to seek businesses which desire this amenity.

3. **Recommended Policy – Plano will assist UT-Dallas with obtaining Tier I status through funding and providing opportunities for research activities. Plano will partner with local school districts to sponsor youth city council, mentoring programs and support for civic government course work.**

Pro: This is a way for the city to become more engaged with local school districts and take an active role in helping UT-Dallas to achieve Tier I status. Good schools and strong universities attract businesses and residents and could encourage future growth of Plano.

Con: Finding dollars and topics to fund research projects for UT-Dallas could be difficult. The city may need to make decisions on prioritizing municipal services in order to find money to support the Tier I goal.