

Bundle 17 – Neighborhood Conservation

Policies and Actions with Detailed Information

The Plano Tomorrow Policies and Actions were developed through meetings with the Planning & Zoning Commission, City Council, and extensive public outreach. Information on this process can be found here:

- [Public Outreach Process](#)
 - [Advisory Committee Workshops](#)
 - [Adoption Process](#)
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The Built Environment – Neighborhood Conservation

POLICY – Plano will conserve and enhance established residential neighborhoods through city programs, initiatives, and regulations that support neighborhood identity; ensure safe, walkable neighborhoods; and preserve the suburban form that contributes to the overall character and livability of the neighborhoods.

NC1) Establish programs and initiatives that enable home owners to maintain and enhance their property and neighborhood.

Status:

- Recurring and on track

Background:

According to the 2018 American Community Survey, Plano’s housing stock is fairly new with [the median year for construction at 1991](#). As 2035 approaches and new housing opportunities further diminish, a large segment of the city’s housing inventory will be over 25 years old. If the city’s residential areas are not maintained and housing structures are not renovated, the city would become less attractive to future residents. Additionally, home maintenance is important as seniors age in place – [AARP’s Here to Stay Program](#) notes that it can help homeowners to stay safe and healthy, and save money.

The city has taken several steps to address aging neighborhoods through programs such as [Love Where You Live \(LWYL\)](#), [Neighborhood Vitality and Beautification Grants](#) (see action NC2), [The Great Update Rebate](#) (see action NC4), the [Smart Energy Loan Program](#), and the [Housing Rehabilitation Program](#) (see action SHN4). The Property Standards Division of the Neighborhood Services Department also plays a critical role in the care and preservation of Plano’s established neighborhoods through addressing complaints regarding exterior property maintenance issues, such as deteriorating housing and commercial structures, landscaping and debris. Property Standards also offers periodic [property maintenance workshops](#) to teach home maintenance topics including tree trimming, grading and erosion, foundations, electrical, plumbing, and hiring a contractor.

NC2) Implement the recommendations adopted from the Housing Value and Retention Analysis study.

Status:

- In progress
- The [Neighborhood Vitality and Beautification Grant](#) is in its fifth fiscal year. On average, 50 neighborhood projects are funded with the \$300,000 allocated annually. During FY2018-2019, changes were made to the program to encourage more participation from voluntary neighborhood groups, allowing more of these groups to be awarded funding.

Background:

During the last recession, the City of Plano contracted the consulting firm Catalyst to conduct an extensive analysis of the current inventory and condition of the City's housing stock with the objective of developing a strategic operational plan to protect Plano's housing values as the housing stock ages. Studying historical housing data and current neighborhoods, the analysis evaluated factors that impact the change in home values over time, how demographics and other indicators have changed over time, determine what influences loss in home values, and recommend how neighborhood stability may be maintained as the housing stock ages.

The analysis focused on examining the effectiveness of the City of Plano's current neighborhood analytical tools, the current levels of service by department, best practices to ensure neighborhood vitality and stabilization, impacts of ownership type on value and marketability, and implementation strategies that can provide long-term sustainability of Plano's neighborhoods. Based on the analysis, four broad issues were identified:

1. Neighborhood Quality
2. Lack of Diversification of Housing Stock
3. Neighborhood Gateways, and
4. Retail Quality.

To address the broad issues above, the following strategies and initiatives were recommended:

- Identify target areas to diversify housing stock
- Develop a home finance corporation for implementation
- Strengthen and expand existing community outreach and participation programs such as Love Where You Live and Citizens Assisting Plano Police
- Enhance proactive property standards enforcement and outreach
- Implement a rental inspection program for single family housing
- Create an incentive based home reinvestment program
- Create commercial performance based incentive program
- Create a neighborhood vitality program & beautification grant
- Screening walls
- Develop a proactive retail merchandising plan

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- Create executive level partnership from different sectors including municipal government, nonprofit organizations, and the business community
 - Centralized Database and Online Mapping Tool
 - Measure what matters
 - Increase education and awareness of programs available for low income and financially distressed households
 - Enhance trail network to create interconnectivity of neighborhoods and commercial areas
- For more detail, please refer to the [Housing Value Retention Analysis](#).

NC3) Conserve Plano’s established residential neighborhoods to provide opportunities for work force housing.

Status:

- Recurring and on track
- The [Neighborhood Services Department](#) maintains a broad range of programming and partnerships that support the conservation of residential neighborhoods.

Background:

The [2006 City of Plano Workforce Housing Study](#) defines workforce housing as housing that “is affordable to those workers earning between 80% and 120% of the area median income (often these are the service workers essential to any community such as police officers, firefighters, teachers, government and retail workers). This group is distinct from those defined as “low-moderate income” whose salary is at or below 80% of area median income.” It is often difficult for these workers to find housing in Plano at a reasonable cost. According to the [Housing Trends Analysis and Strategic Plan](#), most new housing under construction in the city starts at over \$330,000, approximately one and a half times the median housing value of the Dallas-Fort Worth region. Older neighborhoods typically provide the best opportunities for workforce housing in Plano but may be less attractive due to the costs of renovating properties compared to similarly-priced newer options in surrounding communities.

NC4) Monitor and analyze the Great Update Rebate program and modify to improve effectiveness over time.

Status:

- Recurring and On Track
- The program has had over 700 applicants since its inception in 2014. In [October 2017, Council approved](#) the following program changes:
 1. Maximum CAD value of the home is 85% of the Single family FHA limit, and
 2. Minimum homeowner investment is the lesser of \$20,000 or 10% of CAD value.

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Background:

The [Great Update Rebate program](#) was created to assist Plano homeowners with the financial burden of caring for older homes in the city. More than \$2.5 million has been dedicated to this program since inception (2014), which will be distributed to program participants in the form of a rebate. The program includes certain eligibility requirements including home age, appraised value, and value of improvements. Up to \$5,000 can be rebated per property per 12 months for both interior and exterior improvements.

This popular program won the [2016 City Livability Award from the U.S. Conference of Mayors](#).

NC5) Study current housing options, identify gaps in the housing inventory and formulate recommendations to address deficiencies.

Status:

- In progress
- The [Housing Trends Analysis and Strategic Plan](#) was approved by City Council in November 2018.

Background:

The City of Plano is committed to responding and adapting to the housing needs of its residents. The [Housing Trends Analysis and Strategic Plan](#) was conducted to identify gaps in housing needs by both type and size, with consideration given to the income level needed to obtain various types of housing. The plan helps to:

- 1) understand the housing needs of Plano residents,
- 2) prepare for future growth and redevelopment, and
- 3) guide community investment and sustainable development.

In [August 2019, City Council approved](#) three housing policies based on recommendations within the plan:

- 1) conserve and preserve housing affordability of existing units through dedicated programs,
- 2) accommodate the growing need for home safety modifications, and
- 3) improve the quality of both new and existing housing.

NC6) Review, and modify as necessary, residential zoning standards to allow for a variety of compatible housing options within the same development.

Status:

- In progress
- Backyard Cottages (small residential units on the same lot as a primary dwelling) were added as approved uses [when meeting specific standards](#) in all residential zoning districts [by City Council in 2019](#).

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Background:

Providing more housing type flexibility in appropriate locations can provide benefits such as additional price points and the ability for residents to age in place, while still fitting into the look and feel of a neighborhood. This type of housing is often called "[Missing Middle housing](#)". This subject was discussed by the Committee at the [March 3, 2020, meeting – agenda item 2](#).

NC7) Identify community character within residential areas and enhance stronger neighborhood identity.

Status:

- In progress
- The [BEST Neighborhoods Designation Program](#) will begin its fifth program year in FY2020-2021.

Background:

Enhancing neighborhood identity can help to build [stronger, more connected neighborhoods](#). Plano's Neighborhood Services department assists in this effort through the [BEST Neighborhoods Designation Program – Beautiful, Engaged, Safe, and Thriving](#), which recognizes neighborhoods that have gone above and beyond to create a community that is Beautiful, Engaged, Safe, and Thriving - BEST! Applications are accepted on an annual basis from resident groups who are working collaboratively to create strong neighborhoods that make Plano a desirable place to live, work, and play.

[Eligible neighborhoods](#) must be [registered through the Neighborhood Services Department](#). BEST Neighborhoods are recognized at three levels: Silver, Gold, and Platinum. Neighborhoods that are awarded designations receive a number of benefits based on their award level, including mentorship, a custom, interactive neighborhood map, and designation signs.

An additional program of the BEST Neighborhoods division that helps enhance neighborhood identity is the [Pop-Up Party Trailer](#), which is available for free for registered neighborhood groups holding neighborhood-wide block parties. The trailer will be delivered and picked up for free and includes items such as tables, chairs, umbrellas, coolers, traffic cones, barricades, and yard games.