

Bundle 18 – Redevelopment of Neighborhood Centers

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 – Redevelopment of Neighborhood Centers

POLICY – Plano will encourage investment in and redevelopment of underperforming developments within neighborhood centers to accommodate local commercial, retail, and entertainment uses within walking distance of residents.

RNC1) Conduct a study that identifies retail corner redevelopment opportunities and includes resident input for desired businesses and land use activities.

Status:

- Pending

Background:

Plano, like many communities with numerous neighborhood retail centers and commercial corners, has seen a mix of success and vacancies in its retail development. As noted in an Environmental Protection Agency report [Restructuring the Commercial Strip: A Practical Guide for Planning the Revitalization of Deteriorating Strip Corridors](#), in the last 50 years, commercial strip corridors have accounted for a substantial amount of retail and development activity in the United States, but in many communities, the full hierarchy of commercial development is aging and many sites are losing their attractiveness as development locations. These locations are experiencing disinvestment, resulting in vacant, abandoned, and underused property, such as underperforming gas stations and outdated retail centers. But despite disinvestment, many centers remain key parts of the city's commercial infrastructure and are well positioned for reuse and redevelopment because of the high volumes of traffic that they continue to experience. Others may need to be repurposed as the market changes over time. This report suggests that in order to realign aging retail corners with the forces of market demand, a site should be significantly and deliberately restructured into a form which property owners, developers, and communities will once again invest.

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A city-led study with public input can help identify these redevelopment opportunities. Plano previously participated in [a joint study with the cities of Carrollton and Richardson focusing on underperforming and vacant retail areas](#), however the study is from 2002, and a new study would be appropriate. The [Gibbs Shopping Center Review](#) from 2013 is another example of preliminary work that would be part of a full study with resident input. Resident input will be critical as individual sites are considered.

RNC2) Target specific retail sites around Plano to serve as catalysts for redevelopment.

Status:

- Pending

Background:

Orchestrating strip corridor revitalization requires leadership by local government. Plano's retail corners are often composed of numerous separate parcels, with many individually owned properties. Most often the cost and/or risk is too high for any single property owner or developer to take on assembling these corners for revitalization of the corner. Also, with the future of a prominent part of the neighborhood at issue, stakeholder and resident involvement in the redevelopment process will be critical to making sure the revitalization meets local needs, can receive regulatory approval, and is implementable. Offering the city as a partner, to work with land owners and neighborhoods toward positive change, is a model that may be most productive.

Catalyst redevelopment sites are locations where initial redevelopment that can spur further adjacent redevelopment and continue to energize an area. This can be expected to occur around the Collin Creek redevelopment site as that project redevelops.

RNC3) Provide incentives such as public improvement districts (PIDs), tax increment finance (TIFs) districts, or finance utility upgrades to encourage reinvestment and redevelopment of neighborhood centers.

Status:

- Recurring and on track

Background:

The following is also provided as background for action LU4:

Public Improvement Districts (PIDs) serve as economic stimulators that help revitalize an area, and continue the momentum gained through economic investment. [Chapter 372 of the Texas Local Government Code](#) authorizes the creation of PIDs by cities. The owners of the properties in the defined area can request the City to form a PID through a petition, which may include the establishment of an Advisory Body. Within the Downtown Plano PID, it is another way to carryout special events and festivals, and improve landscaping and beautification efforts within public spaces.

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Plano Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan

Policies and Action Statements Relating to Density, Land Use & Growth Management

CPRC Meeting Date: September 1, 2020

[Tax increment financing](#) (TIF) is an economic development tool permitted by [Texas Tax Code Chapter 311](#) and used to promote investment in a defined area. The TIF has historically been used to finance public improvements in blighted or underdeveloped areas identified as reinvestment zones. If a municipality determines that development or redevelopment would not occur through private investment alone, within a reasonable timeframe, a reinvestment zone may be created after a public hearing process. The public hearing allows an opportunity for property owners to contest inclusion in the reinvestment zone.

Once the zone is created, revenue from the TIF district is divided into two categories: property tax value prior to the formation of the TIF (tax base), and property tax value from new development or redevelopment and investment in the district (tax increment). The difference of these two categories is deposited into a tax increment fund maintained by the city for investment in projects such as property acquisition, public right-of-way construction and repair, infrastructure development, demolition, site preparation, implementing and/or enhancing public utilities, streetscape improvements, and beautification. Investment in these public improvements are important because they serve as a catalyst for private investment and development in the blighted area.

The following is also provided as background for action CD4:

Relocating utilities underground can help create a safe and inviting public realm for all users. In addition to elevating community aesthetics, developing underground utilities [can be more economical in the long term](#) because utilities are protected from extreme weather events and environmental hazards, such as debris, wind, tree branches, which often damage overhead utilities. This, in turn, prevents power outages and physical damages to power lines, which can be costly and hazardous to the public.

The city can also finance utility upgrades to encourage reinvestment and redevelopment through the [Community Investment Program \(CIP\)](#), which is the five-year financial plan for infrastructure and facility projects, focused on expansion or upgrades to existing streets, utilities, parks, trails, and city facilities.

RNC4) Create the Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NMU) zoning district and establish regulations and standards for residential mixed-use development.

Status:

- In progress

Background:

The initial concept for the creation of a neighborhood-scaled district that offered design alternatives to the current retail center development form stemmed from the [Transition and Revitalization Commission's 2008 "Future Dimensions" report](#), which called for nodes that would "provide neighborhood businesses and services within walking distance of people's homes." Eventually the idea was adopted into the 1986-based Comprehensive Plan, which included a recommendation to create a Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NMU) zoning district.

The Neighborhood Mixed-Use (NMU) zoning district concept is intended to regulate the redevelopment of commercial properties adjacent to existing neighborhoods using buildings that are similar in scale to the surrounding neighborhood. With an increased supply of retail development along major highways and thoroughfares, retail investors may pass over properties that are not well located, and typical retail-only zoning leaves property owners with limited use options and thus often is a barrier to reinvestment.

One strategy recommended in the EPA [Restructuring the Commercial Strip](#) report is that mixed-use zoning ordinances should be used to foster the development of both activity-generating uses and a local customer base for those uses. This type of zoning can enable new, appropriate residential investment as an alternate use for retail areas experiencing disinvestment and also support a core base of retail and services. The same market preferences driving the surge in demand for walkable, mixed-use centers are driving demand for a wider range of housing types. Older strips across the United States are a vast supply of underused land that can be made available to meet much of that demand. Restructuring these retail corners with new homes not only captures value for property owners, it can also improve the neighborhoods that flank the sites. It replaces uses and development types that conflict with neighborhood character with ones that enhance and complete the neighborhood along its natural boundary. Two examples of new housing built on underutilized retail sites in Plano are:

- [Redhill Springs](#)
- [Villas of Los Rios](#)

RNC5) Establish design guidelines within the NMU zoning district that provide a direct connection from the neighborhood center to surrounding residential areas.

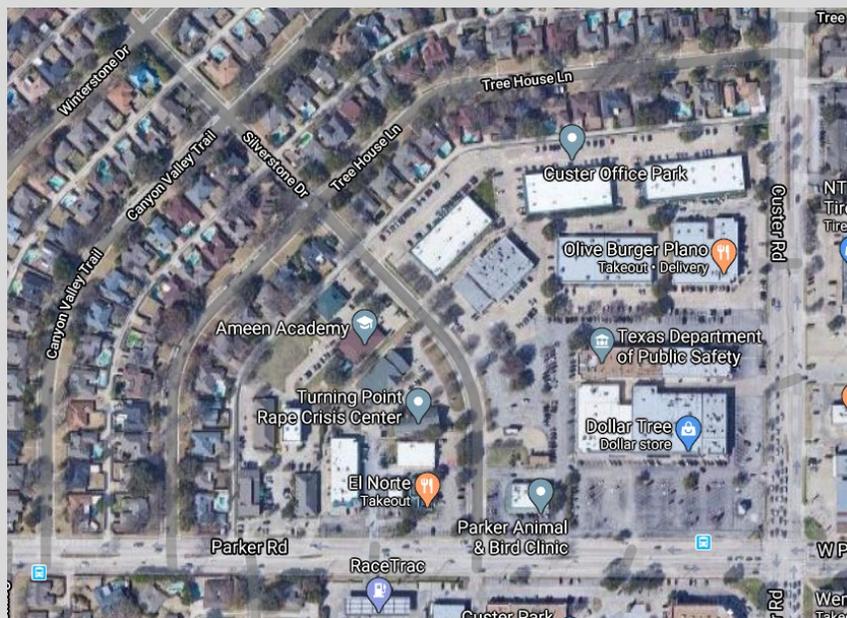
Status:

- In progress
- The draft Neighborhood Business Design (NBD) and Residential Community Design (RCD) zoning districts include language for connectivity to adjacent transportation facilities including sidewalks, trails, and transit stops.

Background:

This action is based around the idea that residents should be able to easily walk or bike to their nearest neighborhood shopping center, either by sidewalks or trails. For many existing neighborhoods in Plano, this may be impractical, as they are designed in a way so that most only have a few entrances and exits or are separated by a masonry screening wall. Additionally, most older shopping centers are not designed to be easily walkable either, as walking across a parking lot is unpleasant. It is unlikely that any direct connections, other than sidewalks along the edge of a neighborhood, will happen in these areas.

But where it is possible, such as in new development and redevelopment, new housing could be designed to allow a connection with the neighborhood shopping center. This is primarily accomplished by having a grid street pattern with short blocks, rather than curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs. Per the description of Neighborhood Center, “when residential is introduced, single-family uses are desired for compatibility with existing adjacent neighborhoods.” These actions work together to call for regulations that encourage any new residential uses to be integrated into the development through neighborhood design and direction connections such as sidewalks, streets, and trails. An example of a location where a shopping center and a neighborhood were built in a way to allow these connections is the northwest corner of Parker and Custer, shown below:



RNC6) Develop a Parker Road Corridor Plan to encourage cooperative redevelopment of retail sites, increase housing options, and identify opportunities.

Status:

- Pending

Background:

Corridor planning can focus on many different characteristics of a corridor, with a focus on transportation, land use, or a functional relationship between the two. For example, corridor planning can address high-crash locations, increasing levels of congestion, freight movements, changing land-use patterns, and the individual or cumulative effects of each on the current or future corridor transportation system. The Institute of Transportation Engineers' (ITE) [Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach](#) notes that corridor planning identifies and provides a link between corridor land-use planning and corridor transportation planning while providing an opportunity to direct future development within the corridor. An important benefit of corridor planning is that it addresses issues prior to reaching the project development stage for transportation improvements within the corridor. With public and stakeholder involvement, corridor plans typically address a long-range vision for the corridor, expected future travel demand and performance of existing and programmed transportation improvements, and short- and long-term needs. See the City of Lewisville's [I-35E Corridor Redevelopment Plan](#) for an example of how corridor plans have been used elsewhere in the region.

Parker Road was specifically targeted for a corridor redevelopment plan due the larger size of the four corner retail sites at the intersections with Custer and Independence, which were originally planned for "Community Commercial" (CC) in the 1986 Comprehensive Plan. CC areas were described as retail centers serving a 3 to 5 mile radius, anchored by discount or junior department stores, and ranging from 15 to 50 acres in size. This is in contrast to the "Neighborhood Commercial" (NC) designation for most other four corner sites in Plano, which serve a 1 to 1½ mile radius, anchored by supermarkets and/or drugstores, and ranging from 10 to 15 acres in size. This volume of retail planned for CC sites on arterial intersections on Parker Road is no longer sustainable at these locations given the current retail market.

Though there has been some reinvestment by property owners at some locations, a few of the corners continue to have issues regarding empty storefronts and lack of improvements. These areas provide an opportunity for redevelopment and the consideration of additional housing opportunities. Parker Road serves as a transportation link supporting several modes including vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and mass transit. These facilities could use improvement to enhance usage and increase safety for all transportation options. Enhancements and improvements of the retail facilities at the major intersections would also improve the overall visual image of the area and serve as an attractive gateway into surrounding residential neighborhoods.