URBAN DESIGN
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INTRODUCTION

Urban design is the process of ordering a community's natural and man-made features to establish its visual image and identity, while creating a development pattern which makes the community understandable to residents and visitors. The urban design element of the Comprehensive Plan provides a foundation for developing an effective and positive urban design program and process in Plano. It integrates urban design considerations into Plano's growth and development processes. The major urban design proposals are summarized below.

MAJOR PROPOSALS

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Establish a conceptual framework that defines the key components of Plano's current urban design and future prospects. This framework can also be used to evaluate the impacts of proposed public and private development on the overall form of the community.

URBAN DESIGN PROCESS

Establish an ongoing process that integrates urban design into the various facets of the community's growth and development. To be effective, this process should incorporate the following:

- Studies and Plans
- Review Procedures
- Capital Improvements Programming
- Coordination

Each of the above components are vital, and the success of Plano's urban design process depends on effective implementation of each.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Initiate a series of special projects and programs to focus community attention on urban design, while improving the community's image and identity. Examples of these special projects include:

- Spring Creekwalk - Create a mixed-use, joint public/private development project to provide a major activity center and design component.

- Scenic Drives - Develop special scenic drives to provide visibility and emphasis to Plano's natural features.

- Streetscape Fixture Plan - Develop a comprehensive proposal for paving, signage, lighting, sidewalks, street furniture, and other streetscape fixtures along Plano's major thoroughfares.

The remainder of this chapter is organized into five sections. First, conditions, trends, and issues which affect urban design in Plano are presented. Second, the conceptual framework of formsetting elements is introduced. Third, a series of goals, objectives, and policies is presented. Fourth is a list of recommendations for projects and programs to implement the policies. Fifth is a list of special opportunities that should be part of Plano's urban design efforts.
CONDITIONS/TRENDS/ISSUES

Over the years, several factors have characterized or influenced Plano's urban design status, including:

- Lack of Identity - Despite Plano's reputation for high quality development, it has yet to clearly distinguish itself visually from surrounding communities. For instance, a traveler on Central Expressway finds few immediately recognizable features that indicate arrival from Dallas and Richardson into Plano. In addition, there are no reinforcing features that make it clear to a traveler when he/she is in Plano. Instead, Plano is often viewed as an extension of Dallas.

This does not mean that Plano should totally separate itself from Dallas' influence. As the central city, Dallas will continue to set the pace for growth and development in the metropolitan area. However, Plano is already emerging as an economic force in the northern Metroplex, and it should establish an image and identity commensurate with that role.

- Sameness - More than 85% of Plano's development has occurred in the 70's and 80's. As a result, the types and styles of structures in Plano offer little variety or contrast. In cities where development was more gradual and over a longer period of time, there are recognizable differences in the types and styles of development.

The character and image of a community actually benefits from the contrast created by several periods and styles of development. Therefore, certain areas or locations are more readily distinguished from others, and more recognizable landmarks and focal points result.

Plano, on the other hand, does not have the variety or distinction that comes from several eras of development. Therefore, efforts should be made to encourage variety and distinction in the future.

- Difficult Transitions - Plano lacks natural features such as extensive tree cover and changes in topography which can define the separation, or transition, between land uses. As a result, Plano's transitions have taken the form of screening walls and have created a "barrier" effect between uses. This is most apparent along many of Plano's major thoroughfares where screening walls extend almost continuously, broken only by crossing streets and retail corners.

Over the next few years, it will be imperative for Plano to find alternatives to masonry screening walls and ways to "soften" the impact of existing walls (see Figure 1). Although buffer treatments such as screening walls are often necessary, they should not dominate or hide other design elements such as Plano's neighborhoods, which are often displayed as rows of rooftops behind a series of walls.

- Rate of Growth - Plano's rapid growth in the past two decades (see Figure 2) has required a commitment of time and funds to meet infrastructure requirements, sometimes at the expense of aesthetics. The public and private sectors have both made major investments in streets and utilities in order to ensure the provision of essential services to Plano residents and businesses. Although the economy has slowed in the last two years, the demand for critical services and facilities has not lessened while resources have been greatly reduced.
Rapid growth has given little opportunity to evaluate the impacts of public and private development on the City's urban design picture. Attention has focused on specific projects and on ensuring their success individually. However, these individual projects have a cumulative effect on the overall urban design of the community.

- Lack of Coordination - Plano's urban design objectives have not been clearly defined, nor has there been an established process for dealing with urban design issues. As was noted in the discussion of rapid growth, there has been no regular review or monitoring of the importance of individual developments on the overall form of the community. As a result of this fragmentation, the impacts of individual efforts are often diluted or negated.

If Plano is to have a successful urban design program, it must establish a well-defined process and vehicle for coordinating urban design activities. Consideration should be given to establishment of a joint public/private entity to monitor and coordinate the community's urban design efforts.
The prospects for developing a strong urban design program in Plano are very good. There is growing public interest in urban design which is reflected by the following:

- Public and private efforts to preserve and restore historically significant structures in Plano;
- Individual efforts by developers to create distinctive, high quality projects;
- Efforts by homeowner organizations to improve the aesthetics of individual subdivisions or neighborhoods; and
- Acceptance and implementation of the recently adopted "Retail Corner Guidelines" by developers and the decision making bodies of the City.

In addition, residents are regularly voicing their concerns at public meetings regarding the aesthetics and design of individual projects, and their impacts on adjacent areas. This growing interest and concern should be viewed as an opportunity to make urban design an integral part of the community's growth and development.

Legend

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<td>Medium</td>
<td>1968</td>
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<td>Light</td>
<td>1986</td>
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<tr>
<td>Light</td>
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Note: Map Indicates Approximate Developed Area Of The City During The Years Noted.

Plano's Growth Pattern

FIGURE 2
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The following section is divided into two parts. The first defines and reviews the various formsetting elements that make up a community’s urban design picture. It provides examples, existing and prospective, for each type of element in Plano. It also provides an overview of how the various elements fit together to establish the image and identity of a community.

The second part is an urban design concept plan for Plano. It discusses the importance of the various formsetting elements as they relate to Plano. It also provides an understanding of how these elements can be linked to the City’s growth and development processes.

FORMSETTING ELEMENTS

Plano’s formsetting elements are the key to understanding how its image and identity are established, maintained, and developed over the years. These critical components of urban design are discussed in the following sections.

PLACE

A place is an area or location that is distinct from others within a city. The distinction may result from a particular type of activity or function, an architectural or development style, or the intensity of the development. Included are centers, districts, and neighborhoods that are clearly differentiated from others in the community (see Figure 3). The character and quality of a city’s places establish its image and identity.

Existing places in Plano include:
- Central Plano, including the downtown area and Collin Creek Mall, etc.
- The Legacy Development

Place – Willow Bend

FIGURE 3

- Willow Bend
- Park Boulevard/Preston Road
- Hospital/Medical Area
- East Plano Industrial Area
- Plano Parkway Corporate Center

Prospective places in Plano include:
- Chase Oaks
- Collin County Community College/Civic Center
- DART Terminals
- Spring Creekwalk

LINKAGE

A linkage is a connection between places, including paths and corridors. Paths are the basic routes of travel or movement between places such as streets, sidewalks, transit lines, and hike and bike trails. Corridors are heavily traveled linkages with development along either side that is integrally associated with their identity.

Corridors are significant linkages in Plano because of the large number of regional thoroughfares passing through and along the perimeter of the City, including three expressways and the Tollway. Corridors provide an excellent opportunity to establish and strengthen Plano’s image and identity.
Plano's hike and bike trail system is an excellent use of paths as a design component. They have the potential to provide a complete pedestrian linkage within the community, and to establish a system of open space windows that break up the man-made environment (see Figure 4).

Existing linkages in Plano include:

- U.S. 75/S.H. 5
- Plano Parkway
- Preston Road
- Chisholm Trail Hike and Bike Path
- Bluebonnet Trail Hike and Bike Path

Prospective linkages in Plano include:

- S.H. 190
- S.H. 121
- Tollway
- Rowlett Creek Regional Park
- Spring Creekwalk

LANDMARK/FOCAL POINT

A landmark is a distinctive object or closely associated group of objects that establishes a point of reference, and is often used to describe routes of travel within a region, community, or neighborhood.

Linkage - Chisholm Trail

FIGURE 4
According to Lynch's **IMAGE OF THE CITY**, landmarks can take many forms including natural and man-made features. Examples are lakes, mountains, trees, buildings, towers, bridges, and signs. Landmarks and focal points should be well known to residents and easily identified by visitors and travelers. Landmarks reinforce (see Figure 5).

Landmarks and focal points have varying levels of impact and significance. For example, a high-rise building may be a readily identifiable landmark to an entire region, while a small neighborhood park can serve the purpose for the residential area that surrounds it.

Existing landmarks/focal points in Plano include:

- Republic Bank Tower
- Willow Bend Entrance Lakes
- Gleneagles Golf Course
- Bob Woodruff Park
- Big Lake Park
- Haggard Park
- Interurban Station
- High Point Park/Clark Field
- Neighborhood Parks and Parks
- Plano High School
- Plano East High School
- ARCO
- Frito-Lay
- Collin Creek Mall
- Pitman Office Towers
- Preston/Park Office Buildings

**Legend**

- Existing Landmark/Focal Point
- Prospective Landmark/Focal Point
- Prospective Entryway

**Landmarks And Entryways**

**FIGURE 5**

4-7
Prospective landmarks/focal points in Plano include:

- Spring Creekwalk
- Collin County Community College
- Plano West Senior High School
- Rowlett Creek Park
- West Plano Community Park
- EDS & J.C. Penney’s Headquarters
- Civic Center

ENTRYWAY
An entryway is an identifiable characteristic or feature that establishes a sense of arrival into a community or place. Entryways are particularly important because they are the initial identification to a visitor or traveler that he has crossed from one community into another. They establish an immediate image or impression of a community for other design elements to maintain or reinforce as one continues through the community. These can be elaborate approaches, such as arches or monuments, or simple signage and landscape treatments. In any event, entryways symbolize or mark entry into a particular community or place.

Plano lacks existing entryways. The only features that remotely mark Plano’s entries are small signs (see Figure 5).

Prospective Plano entryways include:

- U.S. 75/S.H. 190
- U.S. 75/Legacy Drive
- Tollway/Plano Parkway
- Tollway/S.H. 121
- Preston Road/Plano Parkway
- Preston Road/S.H. 121
- Shiloh Road/S.H. 190
- Spring Creek Parkway/S.H. 121

EDGE
An edge is an identifiable break between places or different types of development. Edges may be abrupt separations or boundaries such as bridges, thoroughfares, and creeks. They may take the form of transitions and buffers providing a more gradual break between uses and areas (see Figure 6).

Edges are described as "soft" or "hard" depending on the severity of the break or separation. Plano’s neighborhoods are often defined by

![Diagram of edge treatments](image-url)
hard edges in the form of masonry screening walls lining its major thoroughfares. Hard edges are often a viable treatment where the difference in uses and/or limited area of separation requires a strong boundary. However, continuous use of hard edges such as screening walls along a major thoroughfare may hide or dominate other key design elements.

Existing edges in Plano include:

- U.S. 75
- Preston Road
- Rowlett Creek Floodplain
- Spring Creek Floodplain
- White Rock Creek Floodplain
- Screening Walls
  - Separations between residential and non-residential uses
  - Separations between multi-family and single-family residential uses
- Southern Pacific Railroad
- St. Louis Southwestern Railroad
- Santa Fe Railroad

Prospective edges in Plano include:

- S.H. 190
- S.H. 121
- Tollway
- St. Louis, San Francisco & Texas Railroad

STREETSCAPE FIXTURE
A streetscape fixture is a special detail that is part of the overall character of a city, and within the immediate view of pedestrians and passengers of vehicles. Streetscape fixtures are often overlooked in the design process. However, they play a major role in the image of a community because they are often more visible to travelers and passersby than other design elements. Streetscape fixtures include lighting, signage, street furniture, curbs, paving, striping, bridge abutments, utility lines and sidewalks (see Figure 7).

Not only can the proper use of streetscape fixtures have a positive visual impact, but the lack of attention to such details can detract from other design elements as well. Therefore, an urban design program must address fixtures as a major formsetting component.

OVERVIEW - RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FORMSETTING ELEMENTS
The image and identity of a community depends on the strength of its individual design elements, and on their organization and integration into the overall form of the city. The elements must be arranged to complement and support each other (see Figure 8). The general relationship of these formsetting elements is as follows:
Places are the principal elements or starting points of an urban design system. Whether place refers to a community as a whole or to a smaller unit such as a neighborhood, it identifies areas or locations that can be distinguished from others by their own characteristics or attributes.

Linkages connect places. They provide visual as well as physical access between places. The design and treatment of development and other features along a linkage should relate to the places to which it is connected.

Edges define and designate places. They physically and/or visually separate one place from another, or they provide a transition between two places that prevents one from overwhelming the other or detracting from it.

Entryways expose places by providing an immediate recognition of access. Entryways should attract or encourage one to enter a specific place.

Landmarks and focal points give places visual and symbolic interest. A focal point provides a vivid image of a place.

Streetscape fixtures accent linkages and provide them with continuity. Effective use of streetscape fixtures is necessary to heighten the impact of good edge treatment or development along a corridor. They can also add definition and interest to places.
URBAN DESIGN CONCEPT PLAN

Plano is rapidly emerging as a major economic center which draws upon the talents of its residents, and upon the quality of services and facilities as its primary marketing resource. It is the vibrancy of the community and its excellence as one of the State's finest educational districts, as the recipient of national recognition for parks and open space development, and as the location of several major corporate business parks which make Plano a superior place to work, learn, play, and live.

Plano's future development pattern will be shaped by physical constraints typical of the metropolitan area and by its suburban origin. Plano's form will be shaped by the development of several business centers linked by commercial/office corridors following regional thoroughfares. Due to their strategic location along these transportation routes, some centers will be dominant and of significant regional importance. Together, the major corridors and centers will establish the primary physical form of the City, and therefore should be the major concern of Plano's urban design process. The attention given to the design of Plano's business areas will improve its economic competitiveness within the region, and will provide the framework to present a distinct image to the nation. These primary corridors will further establish the identity of special districts, places, and neighborhoods.

Entryways into Plano are an integral part of the urban design plan for the City. Entries will increase awareness of the City's boundaries and will project a positive image and identity. Opportunities exist to create enhanced entryways at the crossings of several thoroughfares throughout the City, such as the future S.H. 190/Dallas North Tollway intersection. Many intersections in the City are less prominent, but are significant nonetheless for possible enhancement. Entryways represent a major opportunity for the City to set a good example in urban design for others.

Plano is unified by a comprehensively planned system of major thoroughfares. Office, retail and higher density residential uses are typically located at the intersections of major thoroughfares and form neighborhood service centers (see Figure 9). Because of their high visibility and impact on adjacent uses, attention should be given to enhancement of the aesthetics and image of these areas. Guidelines, policies, and review procedures will ensure the quality of these developments.

Neighborhood Service Centers

FIGURE 9
The thoroughfare system often defines residential "cells" or neighborhoods. Typically these cells are bordered by stark screening walls and have poorly defined, unattractive entryways. The urban design process should be directed to building a positive image of the cells as neighborhoods. The placement and design of parks and schools should be used to reinforce this objective by providing focal points and common activity centers for neighborhoods.

Hike and bike trails and linear park systems also provide important linkages in the community. Many park sites share multi-purpose facilities with the Plano Independent School system. Educational facilities and recreational centers, linked by linear parks and trails, create an efficient use of land and, more importantly, a bond between neighborhoods. Protection and enhancement of the natural qualities of linear parks are important since they are a tool for educating children about the environment. The hike and bike trails tie neighborhoods to community park facilities and major business centers. They provide residents with greater opportunity for exercise and leisure, and they contribute to Plano's image as a livable community devoted to its quality of life.

Each thoroughfare in Plano provides both vehicular and visual linkages. The aesthetic quality of thoroughfares contributes to the community's image. The treatment of thoroughfare edges and the street fixtures along them should be an important consideration.

Focal points and landmarks contribute to a sense of place in a regional and local setting. They help establish geographical orientation within the community. Important landmarks such as historic buildings and districts should be preserved as a part of the City's urban design plan. The creation of new landmarks should be encouraged through private development, and all new public buildings should be considered important opportunities.

Special activity areas like Spring Creekwalk which promote regional recognition and interest will distinguish Plano from other cities. These places or activity centers may be characterized by special architectural features, high intensity use, or a particular function. Such places include business centers, special districts, or neighborhoods which are clearly unique from others.

Each element of the Urban Design Concept is in many ways interrelated to and dependent upon the successful implementation of the others. The following goals, objectives, policies and recommendations are intended to transform urban design concepts and ideas into reality by means of careful and thorough consideration of future development. As a result of using an urban design process in planning, review, capital improvements, education and coordination, the City of Plano will continue to be highly recognized by the region and nation.
GOALS/OBJECTIVES/POLICIES

GOALS

- Reinforce Plano's image and identity as a center in the northern Metroplex, and as a community of excellence in business, residence, leisure, and education through urban design.

- Create an attractive and recognizable physical environment that complements the functional organization of the City.

- Integrate urban design concepts into the ongoing public and private development processes.

OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

STUDIES AND PLANS

OBJECTIVE 1.100 THE URBAN DESIGN PROCESS SHOULD RESULT IN PLANS, GUIDELINES, AND ACTIONS THAT REFINE AND COMPLEMENT THE POLICIES AND PLANS OF THE LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION ELEMENTS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

POLICY 1.101 Prepare a series of flexible design studies and guidelines for incorporation into the Urban Design Process for:

a. Significant areas or locations, such as districts and corridors; and
b. Major land use or development types such as residential, industrial, office, commercial, and retail.

POLICY 1.102 Urban design studies and guidelines should recognize impacts on the economic and functional aspects of public and private development as well as visual considerations.

POLICY 1.103 Affected property owners and/or residents should be given active involvement in the development of urban design studies and guidelines.

POLICY 1.104 Urban design studies and guidelines should be routinely monitored and evaluated with formal updates every three years.

REVIEW PROCEDURES

OBJECTIVE 2.100 URBAN DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD BE PART OF THE REVIEW OF ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH ADOPTED STUDIES AND GUIDELINES.

POLICY 2.101 All zoning cases should be evaluated for their compatibility with adopted studies and guidelines. Where appropriate, use Planned Development zoning to ensure conformance to adopted studies and guidelines.

POLICY 2.102 All development requests should be evaluated for their compatibility with adopted studies and guidelines. Reviews should include recommendations for bringing requests into conformance with the appropriate studies or guidelines.

POLICY 2.103 The urban design process should provide opportunity and assistance to developers, businesses, and community organizations to prepare and implement innovative plans and enhancements in accordance with adopted studies and guidelines.

POLICY 2.104 The PD and PRD provisions of the Zoning Ordinance should provide the ability to grant exceptions from regulations where appropriate and where they meet stated urban design goals and objectives.
POLICY 2.105 Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances should be routinely evaluated to ensure that they provide adequate flexibility to meet stated urban design goals and objectives.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMMING

OBJECTIVE 3.100 THE CITY'S CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS SHOULD COMPLEMENT AND REINFORCE THE CITY'S STATED URBAN DESIGN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.

POLICY 3.101 The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) should be reviewed to identify those projects with potential impact on the City's urban design goals and objectives.

POLICY 3.102 Projects with high potential impact should be reviewed in detail, and a report outlining the issues and opportunities of specific projects should be provided to the City Council annually.

POLICY 3.103 Proposals from consultants preparing plans for City projects should state how a particular plan addresses the City's urban design goals and objectives.

EDUCATION AND RECOGNITION

OBJECTIVE 4.100 ACTIVELY PROMOTE THE SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPORTANCE OF URBAN DESIGN IN THE OVERALL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY.

POLICY 4.101 Develop and maintain an urban design database reflecting up-to-date programs and activities from across the country.

POLICY 4.102 Publish annual reports of Plano's urban design activities and accomplishments.

POLICY 4.103 Award individuals and groups for projects that exemplify good design and meet the urban design goals and objectives of the City.

COORDINATION

OBJECTIVE 5.100 PROVIDE FOR A COORDINATED EFFORT OF THE VARIOUS PARTICIPANTS IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT TO MEET THE CITY'S STATED URBAN DESIGN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.

POLICY 5.101 Establish a forum for the sharing of ideas and information on Plano's development activities and urban design considerations.

POLICY 5.102 Review and evaluate each year's activities and accomplishments, and prepare a program for the upcoming year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section of the urban design element proposes key activities and programs that are needed to implement the conceptual framework, goals, objectives, and policies. These proposals include generalized applications as well as those intended for specific locations or functions. As a whole, these recommendations should be viewed as an effort to establish an ongoing urban design process.

STUDIES AND PLANS

- Inventory and evaluate Plano's formsetting elements. Prepare a plan for the improvement and reinforcement of existing places, linkages, landmarks/focal points, entryways, and edges. Also, identify potential formsetting elements and develop a plan to ensure they are incorporated into future public and private development.
- Develop a comprehensive streetscape fixture plan for Plano's major thoroughfares. As key linkages in Plano's urban design concept, its major thoroughfares require special attention to ensure they are treated with consistency and in a manner that is complementary to the places they connect.

A part of the study should be evaluating the potential for placing utility lines underground (see Figure 10). Such an undertaking must balance aesthetic objectives against economic feasibility.

- Prepare a district plan for Downtown Plano and the government center. Downtown Plano, although not large and dominant like many central business districts (CBDs), still represents an important opportunity to preserve Plano's heritage while providing a focus for activity and development. The potential of Downtown Plano is strengthened when coupled with the City's governmental offices which are currently located in the CBD. A detailed study is needed to evaluate the economic and design possibilities of preserving Downtown Plano and integrating it with the government center.

- Prepare a design study for the U.S. 75 corridor including Avenue K (see Figure 11). The U.S. 75 corridor is the last of five major corridors requiring evaluation and the establishment of development guidelines. The completion of the current widening project will place increased development demands along U.S. 75. It will be essential that the City have proposals in place to assist the public and private sector as they prepare for development or redevelopment within the corridor.

REVIEW PROCEDURES

- Require the submission of general screening and streetscape plans with all residential subdivision plats. The issue of edge treatments in Plano is becoming increasingly more critical. In many instances, the simple erection of a masonry screening wall is not the answer to dealing with the transition between residences and major thoroughfares. By requiring the submission of screening and streetscape plans, there will be opportunities to consider alternative screening measures and to develop proposals that are both attractive and economically feasible.
* Continue tax incentives for historic landmarks. Currently, property owners who go through the process of obtaining Historic ("H") designation for their properties may qualify for abatement from city and school taxes. This is an important inducement, as well as a commitment by local government entities to preserve historic properties. This program should be expanded to also include the abatement of county and college district taxes.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMMING

* Develop Spring Creekwalk as a major place and activity center in Plano. The City, working jointly with property owners, should continue its efforts to establish a unique development on 160 acres of land west of U.S. 75, north of Collin Creek Mall, east of Alma Drive, and south of Park Boulevard and Chisholm Place. The project should include a combination of special water features, terraces, walkways and open spaces in conjunction with high- and mid-rise offices, retail uses, and condominiums to create a vibrant place for economic and social activity (see Figure 12).

Such a development can become a key to Plano's efforts to establish and maintain its individual image and identity. Spring Creekwalk should be viewed as an integral part of the City's overall urban design strategy.

* Develop special scenic drives, one in east Plano and one in far west Plano, which parallel proposed parks and provide visibility to Plano's major natural features. The City should take special care to accent its natural features and to give them prominence and visibility.
The ridge line in far west Plano and the Rowlett Creek floodplain offer unique opportunities to preserve areas of environmental significance, while incorporating them into proposed plans for thoroughfare development.

EDUCATION, RECOGNITION AND COORDINATION

- Establish an Urban Design Roundtable to oversee the enhancement of urban design in Plano. The Roundtable should include representatives from the City Council, Planning & Zoning Commission, Parks and Recreation Board, Keep Plano Beautiful Committee, Median Beautification Committee, Historic Landmark Committee, Developers Council, Homeowners Council, and Chamber of Commerce. It should meet regularly to monitor and evaluate the impact of public and private development on Plano’s urban design objectives. The Roundtable should also regularly monitor and evaluate design standards, guidelines, and procedures in the City’s review process to ensure they continue to meet urban design goals and objectives. Finally, the Roundtable should develop educational materials for the purpose of increasing public awareness and understanding of urban design and its importance in the overall growth and development of the community.

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Plano has a number of areas and features that offer special opportunities for enhancing the City’s image and identity. Urban design activities should focus on these areas in order to achieve the most effective use of time and funds.

MAJOR CORRIDORS

Plano is unique in that five major regional transportation arteries serve or will serve it. The corridors which include these arteries deserve special treatment because of their high visibility to residents and visitors alike. Plano’s image and identity will be established in the minds of many who live and work in the area by what they see as they travel these main corridors.

These critical corridors include State Highway 121, the Dallas North Tollway, State Highway 190/Plano Parkway, Preston Road, and U.S. Highway 75. Special attention should be given to public and private improvements within these corridors to ensure they are treated in accordance with the impact of these arteries on Plano and the surrounding communities.
FLOODPLAINS

Plano’s natural features are generally limited to its creeks and flood plains (see Figure 13). The most extensive of these are Rowlett Creek in east Plano and White Rock Creek in west Plano. The floodplains of these creeks contain the largest areas of tree cover and changes in topography. The City has acquired a major portion of the Rowlett Creek floodplain and has located the municipal golf course on part of it. Plans are underway for expansion of Plano’s parks system into the remainder of the floodplain. The majority of the White Rock Creek floodplain is in private ownership, including the Gleneagles Country Club.

Public and private efforts should continue to ensure that the natural features of these two floodplains are preserved and incorporated into development plans. Areas of tree cover and other natural features should be preserved and made visible and accessible wherever possible.

PARKS

Because of the vastness of Plano’s parks system and its multitude of facilities, it has a major impact on the image and identity of the community. Facilities such as Bob Woodruff Park impart a major visual influence in addition to serving recreational needs. The development of Plano’s parks from neighborhood, to community, to large city parks should be viewed as an opportunity to provide focal points and to establish identity for Plano’s individual places and for the City as a whole.

CIVIC BUILDINGS

Public facilities represent a major part of existing and proposed development in Plano. Facilities such as schools, colleges, libraries, fire stations, and municipal buildings are a highly visible part of the community. The design and treatment of civic buildings can have a major impact on the overall urban design of the City. Civic buildings should be viewed as opportunities to set important design precedents, and to encourage similar efforts in the private sector.

Preservation Of Floodplains

FIGURE 13
HISTORIC STRUCTURES/AREAS

The Plano CBD and its immediate area contains the majority of Plano’s historic residential and non-residential structures (see Figure 14). There are a few other scattered historical sites, such as the Ammie Wilson house (Heritage Farm) in west Plano, that offer a glimpse into Plano’s past. Efforts to preserve these vital parts of Plano’s history should continue. New development in proximity to historic structures should treat the existing properties with sensitivity.

Plano’s historic areas and structures represent an important link in the urban design evolution of Plano. They represent an opportunity to not only preserve the past, but to provide landmarks and focal points for future development.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Plano’s major thoroughfare system has resulted in a series of one-mile-square neighborhoods that have become the basis for development in Plano. These neighborhood units, noted for their high quality subdivisions, should be considered an integral part of any urban design effort. In particular, ways should be found to make them more visible to travelers of Plano’s major thoroughfares, rather than hiding them behind screening walls. In addition, the layout and design of future neighborhoods should be viewed as an opportunity to develop special places within the overall form of the community.

Historic Sites In Downtown Area

FIGURE 14

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