

# City of Plano

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

### INFILL HOUSING

#### POLICY STATEMENT 4.0

#### TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| <b>PART A – General Guidelines for Infill Housing</b>                       | <b>PS4-1</b> |
| Description   | PS4-1        |
| Background  | PS4-2        |
| Definition of Infill Housing  | PS4-2        |
| Historical Perspective  | PS4-2        |
| Changing Demographics   | PS4-2        |
| Analysis  | PS4-2        |
| Lack of Guidance for Infill Housing   | PS4-2        |
| Land Available for Residential Development                                  | PS4-2        |
| Tri-City Retail Study Recommendations and Infill Housing                    | PS4-2        |
| Benefits of Infill Housing  | PS4-3        |
| Policy Statements   | PS4-3        |
| <b>PART B – Guidelines for Reviewing Alternative Neighborhood Proposals</b> | <b>PS4-4</b> |
| Description   | PS4-4        |
| Background  | PS4-4        |
| Typical Neighborhood Format   | PS4-4        |
| Alternative Neighborhood Format   | PS4-4        |
| Analysis  | PS4-4        |
| Unit Count  | PS4-4        |
| Relationship to Surrounding Land Uses                                       | PS4-5        |
| Accessibility/Visibility  | PS4-5        |
| Potential for Development of a Property as Currently Zoned                  | PS4-5        |
| Special Needs Housing   | PS4-5        |
| Policy Statements   | PS4-6        |



*Village at Legacy – Example of Infill Housing Development*

## Infill Housing Policy Statement 4.0

The Housing Element of the Comprehensive plan states that infill housing will be the primary source for residential development in Plano in future years. This policy statement provides guidance for decision makers, developers, the public and staff.

The Infill Housing Policy Statement is divided into two sections. Part A includes a set of general guidelines that will apply to all infill housing projects under consideration in any area of the city. Part B includes additional considerations for residential development that falls outside of Plano's typical residential neighborhood format.

### Part A – General Guidelines for Infill Housing

#### *Description:*

Part A of the policy statement establishes policies to guide decision makers determining when zoning

or rezoning of land for infill sites in general is appropriate. This section of the policy statement addresses the following objective and strategy statements found in the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan:

- ▶ **Objective A.1** Provide a variety of housing options for prospective Plano residents.
- ▶ **Objective C.1** Continue to expand Plano's housing stock even as the availability of land decreases.
- ▶ **Objective C.2** Create new housing opportunities that complement and support existing residential development.
- ▶ **Strategy C.2** Evaluate policies and ordinances to ensure that they do not discourage appropriate opportunities for infill housing and redevelopment.

***Background:******Definition of Infill Housing***

Infill is defined as development that occurs on a vacant tract or redevelopment of an existing site surrounded by other improved properties. The development can be for non-residential or residential land uses. Infill housing is an example of a residential use that could be developed on an infill tract of land and the subject of this policy statement.

***Historical Perspective***

There are a variety of housing options available in Plano, ranging from traditional single-family detached homes to townhouses to garden apartments to denser townhouses and apartments found in the city's two urban centers: Eastside Village in downtown Plano and the Legacy Town Center. Despite the choices available to residents of the city, single-family detached units and garden apartments far outnumber other options. They have been the primary components of residential development and residential neighborhoods in Plano over the years.

***Changing Demographics***

Plano's population is changing. The median age of Plano residents increased from 31 to over 34 years between the 1990 and 2000 Censuses. The percentage of people age 45 years and over increased from 20 percent to 28 percent during that same time period. It is expected that some long time residents of Plano are or will be seeking smaller homes that require less maintenance. Yet, they do not want to leave their social network and places of familiarity.

Plano's population is also becoming more diverse. The percentage of people who identified themselves as a minority race or ethnicity increased from almost 15 percent to over 27 percent between 1990 and 2000. The minority population itself is much more diverse with strong representation of people who are African American or Black, Asian and Hispanic.

The Dallas Fort Worth Metroplex region is expected to add another 4.1 million people in the next 25 years. Plano's proximity to the new growth areas along with educational and employment opportunities and cultural amenities make the city an attractive place to live in the Metroplex.

More varieties of housing options in Plano's typical residential neighborhoods are needed to meet the housing demands of an aging and more diverse population along with the region's increased growth. Infill housing could help meet these housing needs.

***Analysis:******Lack of Guidance for Infill Housing***

Some zoning requests for infill housing projects have met with success while others have failed. The city does not have any guidelines or policies to assist with the review of infill housing zoning requests. This policy statement attempts to address that.

***Land Available for Residential Development***

The amount of land available in Plano for new residential development is decreasing. The Land Use Absorption Table on page 2-7 in the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan notes that less than five percent of vacant land zoned for residential development remains. Most of the vacant tracts of land that remain tend to be small (under 20 acres) and that for one reason or another have not been developed. Some tracts are zoned for non-residential uses while others have zoning that allows for residential development. This is the reason that infill housing is the primary component of future residential development in Plano.

***Tri-City Retail Study Recommendations and Infill Housing***

The Tri-City Retail Study completed by the cities of Carrollton, Plano and Richardson in 2002 noted that excessive retail zoning was a contributing factor to vacant and underproductive retail centers and the lack of development of many retail zoned properties. Some tracts zoned for non-residential

uses have remained undeveloped for many years. Plano has three times the retail per capita for the nation and it is unlikely that many of these tracts will be developed for commercial purposes. As part of its implementation of the recommendations of the study, the City of Plano amended the Zoning Ordinance to allow residential development within Retail zoning districts by Specific Use Permits (SUPs). This amendment has met with some success and has allowed for residential development to take place on vacant infill tracts.

### ***Benefits of Infill Housing***

Infill Housing could provide several benefits for people who live and work in Plano. The city is an employment center in the North Dallas region and a net importer of workers. Infill housing could provide residential opportunities for workers with jobs in the city, thus reducing commuting distances and time.

Infill housing could serve the new residents to the region who want to live close to employment and cultural opportunities. Additional housing will lead to more potential customers for the existing retail and office space, thus increasing sales tax revenues.

There are many Plano residents who desire a smaller home with less maintenance, yet want to remain in proximity to family, friends and familiar places. Independent living facilities for adults age 55 years and older are in great demand in Plano along with long term care housing. Infill housing could be used to meet these market demands for additional housing options in the city.

### ***Policy Statements***

The guidelines offered below are intended to assist with the consideration of rezoning proposals for residential infill projects. These guidelines cannot address all of the issues relating to a particular site and should not be considered the sole determinants of zoning decisions. However, they do provide a framework for evaluating infill proposals.

1. Adjacent or in close proximity to existing residential development.

The best tracts of land for infill housing are located next to existing residential developments. The residents of the new development would be able to take advantage of the amenities found in many of the neighborhoods in the city. They would be close to parks and schools on the interior areas of the neighborhood and to the service businesses located at the intersections of the major thoroughfares. Infill housing projects should add to the variety of housing options found in the existing residential neighborhoods throughout the city.

2. Site and configuration to support housing.

Infill housing areas need to be large enough to make a project viable. A site should have a minimum of 3.0 acres and generally be free of factors that could make development difficult such as steep grades and location within a floodplain.

3. Access to existing utilities.

One of the benefits of infill development is the use of existing infrastructure surrounding the property rather than the extension of expensive new lines into undeveloped areas. Some sites may have public utilities in place sized to serve only non-residential uses and may require some upgrades to accommodate residential development. The most common deficiency is sanitary sewer capacity.

4. Positive impact on future economic development.

The reduction of non-residential uses could have a positive impact on a larger scale. There will be one less shopping center or office complex that could be left vacant due to lack of market demand for such uses. Owner occupied housing units will contribute to the city's tax base and provide potential customers for existing retail centers.

Land located along Plano's major transportation corridors such as U.S. 75, the President George Bush Turnpike, the Dallas North Tollway and State

Highway 121 are the city's last prime locations for economic development and should be reserved for non-residential uses. Major employment centers such as Legacy in northwest Plano and the Research/Technology Crossroads in southeast Plano are also considered to be prime components of the city's economic development program.

#### 5. Proximity to Parks.

Additional preference should be given to those locations that have a neighborhood park within a half mile of the proposed development.

## Part B – Guidelines for Reviewing Alternative Neighborhood Proposals

### *Description:*

Part B of the policy statement provides additional considerations for requests for rezoning or specific use permits (SUP's) for infill housing in locations that would not be part of Plano's typical neighborhood format. It addresses the following objective and strategy statements:

- ▶ **Objective B.2** Ensure that alternative neighborhood formats provide functional and appropriate environments for residential uses and activities.
- ▶ **Strategy B.2** Establish criteria for housing developed in alternative neighborhood formats. Use these criteria when evaluating rezoning requests.

### *Background:*

#### *Typical Neighborhood Format*

The Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan addresses the fact that not all of Plano's residential development can occur in a typical neighborhood setting. This neighborhood setting is characterized by a land area of approximately one square mile bounded by six-lane divided thoroughfares with school and parks site near the center, low-density housing on the interior, medium- and high-density

housing along the edges, and office and retail operations at the intersections of the major thoroughfares where they serve other neighborhoods, as well. (Table 1 of the Housing Element details the typical neighborhood concept.) So far, most of Plano's infill housing has occurred within its existing neighborhoods. For example, a 15 acre retail tract at the northeast corner of Custer Road and Legacy Drive was recently rezoned for patio homes. Since this development is occurring within a defined neighborhood bounded by four major thoroughfares, it will become part of a typical neighborhood environment.

### *Alternative Neighborhood Format*

When residential development occurs in a location outside of a typical Plano neighborhood, the Housing Element indicates that it becomes part of an "alternative neighborhood format." As noted on Page 5-5 of the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan, much of the land needed for future residential development is unlikely to be found within Plano's typical neighborhoods. Sites outside of these settings should not be automatically accepted or excluded. An analysis follows which reviews issues and concerns relating to the creation of alternative neighborhoods, along with a set of guidelines to employ when evaluating requests for residential uses in locations outside of typical neighborhood settings. The guidelines are intended to ensure that residential developments occurring outside of the typical neighborhood format can still provide high quality living environments.

### *Analysis:*

The following factors were used to develop guidelines evaluating rezoning or specific use permit requests for residential uses in alternative neighborhood formats:

#### *Unit Count*

Alternative neighborhood projects should have enough units to create a viable living environment. A small isolated group of homes or apartment units does not create a sense of belonging for its

residents nor does it facilitate the efficient provision of city services. An example would be varying a typical residential solid waste route to pick up trash at two residences within a commercial corridor. A small unit count is also unlikely to generate enough return on investment to make the project economically viable. Infill projects will typically need to be medium-(5-12 units per acre) or higher-(12+ units per acre) density housing to create enough units on these smaller leftover sites. Typical low-density housing developments (1-5 units per acre), built on small infill tracts, will not be economically viable. Any single-family developments, attached or detached, with common areas, recreational facilities, and special landscaping will require homeowners associations to maintain these amenities. These associations must have enough members for financial support over time. It is important that zoning changes for infill development result in successful projects.

#### ***Relationship to Surrounding Land Uses***

An alternative neighborhood should be considered as an option for some but not all properties that have been previously planned or zoned for non-residential uses. Such developments should not be construed as mere afterthoughts. For example, it would be inappropriate to use a left-over tract of land in the middle of an industrial park for a housing project; however, housing incorporated into a well-planned mixed use development could be viewed differently. Pedestrian friendly environments which combine opportunities to live, work, and play in the same location are more appropriate than other types of residential development when located outside of the typical neighborhood environment.

#### ***Accessibility/Visibility***

Alternative neighborhoods should have access to a major or secondary thoroughfare as do typical Plano neighborhoods. Residential neighborhoods may not require the same level of exposure that some commercial uses do, but they should not be isolated from a city's major travel routes.

#### ***Potential for Development of a Property as Currently Zoned***

A property should not be rezoned to provide for residential development simply because a developer may be interested in it for that purpose. There should be strong evidence that non-residential development is unlikely to occur or would be unsuccessful due to market saturation and related conditions. An examination of recent development activity such as requests for building permits and occupancy in the area and the relative success of other developments should provide insight into the potential success of utilizing a property as it is currently zoned.

Major concerns should be raised when considering requests to convert properties in major economic development corridors to residential use. These corridors include U.S. 75, the Dallas North Tollway, the President George Bush Turnpike and State Highway 121, three of which currently operate as regional expressways while the fourth is planned to become an expressway. Perhaps State Highway 121 should be considered less of a near term candidate for residential use than the other corridors as it has not had the opportunity to function as an operational expressway. The traffic noise generated by these expressways may also make properties along them bad candidates for residential development.

Mixed use developments that include residential and non-residential uses in a pedestrian oriented environment may be appropriate for these major corridors. Also, undeveloped properties within these corridors lacking access to frontage roads may be candidates for residential development as well.

#### ***Special Needs Housing***

Alternative neighborhoods may be appropriate for providing housing for those with special needs such as the elderly and persons with disabilities. The elderly component of Plano's population continues to increase and opportunities for providing housing in typical neighborhoods that meets its

needs are becoming more limited. A well designed retirement housing complex with special facilities and services can create a very suitable environment for its residents. The Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan highlights the importance of continuing to find ways to increase the supply of housing for those with special needs and the use of alternative neighborhood formats is consistent with that intent. It also notes that special needs housing can benefit from having medical offices, pharmacies, shopping centers, and other service providers within walking distance. Therefore, certain non-residential districts may be well suited for special needs housing.

### ***Policy Statements***

The guidelines offered below should not be used as exact determinants of the appropriateness for creating alternative neighborhood settings in specific locations. Instead, they should be used as a starting point for considering individual requests.

Specific locations may sometimes present a unique set of issues and opportunities for residential development that cannot be fully addressed by these guidelines. In such cases, those special conditions should be clearly identified and evaluated.

The individual guidelines are as follows:

1. Townhouse (SF-A) and Patio Home (PH) projects or combination of projects should be able to provide a minimum of 25 units to create a substantial development as opposed to an isolated project with a few homes surrounded by non-residential uses. Housing for retirees or other persons with special needs should include a minimum of 50 units which could be built in phases to provide necessary services to accommodate the need of elderly tenants.
2. Alternative neighborhood development should not be within or immediately adjacent to a Light Industrial district (LI-1 or LI-2)

unless separated by a Type “E” or larger thoroughfare (as defined in the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan).

3. Alternative neighborhood development should be adjacent to a Type “E” or larger thoroughfare (as defined in the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan.)
4. There should be evidence of market saturation in the area that a non-residential property is located. This does not necessarily require an actual market analysis. Instead, evidence can include review of recent permit and occupancy data along with existing vacant or under utilized commercial buildings and/or an ample supply of undeveloped properties with similar zoning in the area. The area of consideration may vary depending on whether the property is part of a neighborhood-, community-, or region-serving development.
5. Alternative neighborhood development is generally inappropriate along expressways and in the major development corridors (U.S. 75, the Dallas North Tollway, the President George Bush Turnpike, and State Highway 121). Consideration may be given to mixed use proposals that will integrate residential and non-residential uses into a pedestrian oriented environment. Additional consideration may be given to sites that cannot be accessed from frontage roads. Residential development within 500 feet of the main lanes of an expressway should be arranged as carefully as possible to reduce the effects of traffic noise. Until State Highway 121 has been constructed as an expressway and there has been an opportunity to observe its potential to develop as currently zoned, zoning changes for residential development should be avoided.

Preference should be given to residential development that can be integrated into existing pedestrian oriented urban centers such as Downtown Plano or Legacy Town Center or other appropriate locations. Urban centers are more than just mixed use developments. They are typically 50 acres or more and provide opportunities for residence, work, shopping, and entertainment in a pedestrian setting. Urban centers are probably not going to develop within a typical neighborhood setting. They are more appropriate for alternative neighborhood formats.

6. Additional preference may be given to residential developments for persons with special needs as highlighted in the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan. Even greater preference should be given when such developments are within walking distance of medical offices, pharmacies, and/or grocery stores.