

Group upset over Plano Tomorrow campaign

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With only about 7 percent of Plano's remaining land undeveloped, city staff held a series of public meetings to receive resident input on how to best update the city's comprehensive plan to direct future development.

A group of about 200 residents, according to Jim Dillavou, one of the group's leaders, has taken issue with the results of the survey and proposed changes to the comprehensive plan, spurring them to write letters to Plano City Council members, gather petition signatures and speak to the Plano Planning and Zoning Commission during its meetings.

"After reviewing the available information concerning the Plano Tomorrow study, it's my opinion that the study is flawed," said Plano resident Beth Carruth at the Dec. 15 planning and zoning meeting. "The draft Plano Tomorrow report, as it currently stands, does not spend enough time focusing on what is important to the citizens in Plano and how zoning should support those priorities."

Many of the group's concerns center on the future land use plans proposed in the Plano Tomorrow study, which was used to help develop potential changes to the city's comprehensive plan. Main issues Carruth and Dillavou discussed have to do with the city's focus on creating more urban density through multi-family residential and urban mixed-use zoning, which they say will negatively impact the city through increased congestion and overcrowding at schools.

While the group said that the Plano Tomorrow survey did not reach enough residents, Plano Senior Planner Steve Sims previously said the survey and subsequent open house meetings that made up one of the city's most successful outreach programs. The city began getting feedback to update its nearly 28-year-old comprehensive plan in 2010 and was able to receive input from about 2,000 residents, he said.

According to city staff reports, expected population growth is one of the most pressing issues facing the city. Many of the future land use strategies proposed in the documents include using zoning to create mixed-use developments on undeveloped land, and allow for office, retail and residential in close proximity. However, Plano Planning Director Christina Day said that the city is working to provide a variety of development styles with available land that will fit into the context and character of the city.



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“I think part of the challenge is as the land becomes more valuable ... the economics drive the density,” Day said. “The regional growth pattern that we have, we want to encourage efficient land use of the land we have left. ... It’s a balancing act, we realize Plano is not just going to be urban centers or just neighborhoods ... it really needs to be a healthy blend of those things.”

A final draft of the comprehensive plan updates are not expected to go before the City Council for final approval and adoption until the spring. Carruth, Dillavou and others plan to continue to email city staff and speak up at meetings until then.

“Whatever plan is used, be it Plano Tomorrow or, hopefully, a more representative, more thought-out future plan, should address how its policies promote the advancement of our schools,” Carruth said at the meeting.