

THE MAYOR |

Why are they leaving the Center of the Universe?



EARLIER THIS YEAR AS the announcements of corporate relocations to Plano continued to cascade, I was struck by a news story featuring an interview with a commuter who lives in The Colony. He commented about the traffic in Plano as he tried to get back home from work in Dallas. It is my hope—with the arrival of 20,000 plus positions coming to Legacy West and Granite

Park business parks from Toyota, Liberty Mutual, FedEx Office, JPMorgan Chase, Fannie Mae, Hilti and now Coca-Cola regional headquarters—that there is an opportunity for him to live, work and play in Plano.

Through deliberate and thoughtful decisions, we have chosen to be the economic nexus of North Texas. We will continue to vigorously compete for any business that can and will add value to our community. We know the economical benefits they bring. Not to mention the families and individuals that add to the rich tapestry of our community. Plano 3.0 is big, bustling, vibrant and successful, a city we can all be proud of. Yet with this success comes traffic—and as we drive through these two bustling employment centers, we may all, unfortunately, have to expect additional drive time. However, the City of Plano is working to help ease traffic concerns and maximize our mobility.

As regional leaders, Plano led the collaboration effort back in June of 2015 when we convened a meeting of the major stakeholders in the area. This meeting included city staff, North Texas Tollway Authority (NTTA), Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), Collin County officials, North Texas Council of Governments and business partners. We had a clear goal to maximize mobility through collaboration. We have made great strides and have plenty more to come.

After budgeting over \$120 million over the past two years on our streets and thoroughfares, this year's budget proposes an additional \$80 million in fiscal 2016/17 to fund street construction and improvements, such as at intersections, corridors, turn lanes and traffic signals.

There will be an expansion of President George Bush Turnpike (PGBT) between the Dallas

North Tollway and U.S. 75 in late 2016.

There will be additional lanes added on U.S. 75 north of Spring Creek in the spring of 2017.

Construction is well on the way to widen the North Dallas Tollway with completion expected in 2018.

There will be interchange improvements at PGBT and U.S. 75 in early 2019.

NTTA will expand Sam Rayburn Tollway west and east of Dallas North Tollway in 2020 and 2022 respectively.

We will employ Intelligent Transportation Systems to allow us to utilize technology that enhances safety and the overall management and use of the transportation networks.

We will continue to communicate in real time more effectively through social media, website and mobile apps.

Plano also plans to leverage one of our most valuable assets, DART. As the only city in Collin County with DART, we view it as a competitive advantage.

There will be a new express bus route on Spring Creek connecting the business parks to Parker Road Station for a prompt east-west connection in March of 2017.

An express bus will run from downtown Dallas directly to the new business campuses, such as Toyota and Liberty Mutual, in March of 2017.

Expect to potentially see innovative last mile services and car sharing—a model of car rental, such as electric cars, where people rent cars for short periods of time.

We will explore adding circular bus routes within the business districts.

Years away, we are open to Bus Rapid Transit, which is a vehicle that is similar to a light rail, except it operates on rubber tires.

We are having earnest discussions about completing a 12th Street Station and Shiloh Station to connect Plano to our neighbors and DFW airport.

Plano is a proactive city and a city of the future. We will continually seek innovative measures to enhance means of mobility for our citizens. That said, I'd like to offer one final thought to my commuter friend from The Colony...Plano is a welcoming city, so consider the easiest and most obvious solution: Come join us in the City of Excellence! 📍

Harry LaRosiliere
Mayor of Plano