

# Haggard Farm development stirs emotions

Thousands of multifamily residential units could be built on property

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More details emerged Tuesday night about the potential development of a large portion of the Haggard Farm in west Plano.

In the 90-minute work session held by the city planning and zoning commission, discussion centered around which areas of the 285-acre property were best suited for residential development and which areas should be devoted to other uses.

The issue of putting residential development on the property has been controversial, with several neighboring homeowners associations saying a large number of multifamily apartment units would result in nearby schools becoming overcrowded and the quality of education dropping.

"I could see residential in all five or six components, but I think it would be different types," Commissioner Nathan Barbera said. "The residential you might see [on the west side] might be different than what you see on [the east side] thanks to its proximity to the tollway. Whether it is a high rise development ... or urban mixed-use for residential and retail."

Developers have said they are hoping to develop the land in a similar fashion to what is being built at City Line in Richardson. The property would have a mix of retail and office space, as well as townhomes and multifamily units. Developers are asking to be allowed to build up to 3,090 multifamily units, but Rutledge Haggard said that number is the maximum that would be allowed, not the number he thinks will actually be built. Instead, he said the units would only be built if there is a demand for them.

"We don't want to be a detriment to the people around us," Haggard said. "One of our fears is the number of students we would generate with the residential component. ... It would be a detriment to what we want to do. As far as the residential component, we think that with the amount of office space that is available to build, that we need to have housing adjacent to it. We need to let the people work and play and live in this community."

Part of the work session was spent discussing the impact Toyota's relocation to the city could have on Plano, and how the Haggard property could attract future companies looking to call Plano home.

“We have been very fortunate this week to have Toyota announce they are coming to Plano,” Haggard said. “What we need to do going forward is make a place and be ready for whoever the next person is that comes. We have to have the development and zoning there and all the needs that they have – the residential component, the commercial component and the office component.”

Commission Chairman Richard Grady said the development of the Haggard property is a key piece to the future of west Plano due to its location near the Dallas North Tollway and State Highway 121.

“It is a very strategic asset located where it is, considering the corporations that are looking at, or may not have been looking at before but are now looking at, relocating to Plano because of Toyota’s announcement that echoed all across the United States and the world,” he said. “I think it is a great piece of land.”

Several dozen residents who live near the property said they feel the proposed development would ruin the suburban nature of their subdivisions.

“We vehemently disagree with [the Haggards'] request for zoning flexibilities that would allow for an urban mixed-use development next to our suburban properties and the more than 1,000 homeowners in this surrounding area,” said Steve Lavine, a resident of the Avignon Windhaven subdivision. “The development plan being contemplated for Haggard Farm West would result in increased density, increased vehicle traffic and congestion, reduced setbacks, greater height allowances and large commercial superstores and high-density residential that will destroy the livability of the nearby suburban neighborhoods.”

Nancy Moriarty, a member of the Windhaven Farms HOA, said she is worried about the increase in traffic on existing streets, which she said are unable to handle the current traffic load. She also reiterated the concerns about the impact of the development on Plano ISD.

“Many of us purchased our homes and moved to this area because of the exceptional schools,” she said. “The city also cites the exceptional schools in this area when they are promoting Plano. We love the sense of community provided by those neighborhood elementary schools. Many of our area schools have had recent boundary changes and are facing capacity issues right now. This proposal to increase density, with a possibly highly mobile population, could start an ongoing race that will continue this community debate on overcrowding, school boundaries and the impact to academic performance.”

No action was taken at the work session, although commissioners did express a desire to see a concept plan detailing specifically what type of development would go into the property. The commission is expected to hear more about the development at upcoming meetings.