

West University Place: A City that Cares

By Mayor Susan Sample

Over the years that I have lived in, and served, West University Place, one thing that has stood out to me has been the way this city embodies the word “community.” Throughout our history, including the COVID pandemic, residents of West U have demonstrated a concern for the wellbeing of their neighbors and the city as a whole, actively participating in local government to ensure that our small town continues to be a great place to live. I wanted to take this opportunity to highlight a few areas where the City is working with residents to implement solutions for our community.

Judson Park Improvements

In February, Council reviewed the design plans for improvements to Judson Park, which were developed with a user group of residents who live near the park. Redevelopment of this site is a recommendation in the City’s Parks and Open Space Master Plan, in order to maintain our parks and connect residents and their families with the outdoors. Improvements to this site will include a gaga ball pit and the addition of pickleball lines on the tennis court. Council, and the community, are especially grateful to the Friends of West U Parks, which has agreed to fully this work, scheduled to be completed by the fall of this year.

Edloe Street Pathway Project

One of this Council’s adopted goals is upholding West U’s quality of life, which includes maintaining and improving walkability throughout the city. As some of you may know, West U used to have over 150 old-growth oleanders planted along the west side of Poor Farm Ditch on Edloe Street. While these unfortunately died during last year’s Winter Freeze, Council chose to use this event as an opportunity to improve public safety and enhance West U’s greenspace.

In line with this, our Parks & Recreation Board worked with a landscape architect to come up with a design for a new pathway along Edloe Street between Albans Road and Georgetown Street. This pathway will utilize recycled materials, incorporate benches and trees for shade, as well as include pet-friendly fountains to turn an inactive space into a true asset for the entire community. As this project goes into construction design, we appreciate everyone who came to speak and participate in the public process, at both Parks Board and Council meetings.

Sustainability Task Force

Among the key concerns Council hears from neighbors and residents is whether the City is doing enough to incorporate sustainable practices. While we have long operated a recycling program, the Rec Center is a designated Silver Level LEED certified building, and we continue to work with the Solid Waste & Recycling Board to promote environmental stewardship, the City is always looking to build on these efforts.

Last year, this Council created West U’s first ever Sustainability Task Force, made up of volunteers from the community, to identify and recommend areas where the City can improve or incorporate sustainable practices. Council received this group’s draft recommendations in March, and look forward to their final report.

Facilities Master Plan

I appreciate everyone showing up at the City's Town Halls this week to learn more about the Facilities Master Plan, an ongoing project to identify the long-term locations and functions of City buildings. This is an important project to look at the future needs of our community, so your voices in this public process have been critical. While we expect to finalize the Master Plan soon, its implementation will be a years-long process, with many more opportunities for residents to provide input.

Community Satisfaction Survey

The City prides itself on a high level of service delivery for residents, one of the things that makes West U the best place to live in the Houston area. However, to ensure it stays that way, we have to regularly measure our performance. That is why this year we will be administering a Community Satisfaction Survey, giving all residents the opportunity to provide feedback on City operations. I look forward to announcing more details about this soon.

In these areas, and many others, Council, staff, and residents can continue to work together on behalf of the entire community. Public feedback, positive, negative, or other, allows us to know where we stand, and where we can improve. This collaborative process helps ensure that West University Place remains a great place to work and live.