



has continued to deteriorate which culminated in a recent failure of a section of the Ditch along the west side.

The District informed Council that due to its current condition and the availability of potential funding (County, State, and Federal) the project would start again, and in early 2023 a project engineer would be hired to complete the remaining design work and prepare documents for construction.

The replacement of this section of Poor Farm Ditch has been a topic of discussion since 2002 and the only thing that has changed in the last 20 years is the continued deterioration of this section of the Ditch. A complete failure of this section of the Ditch would affect approximately 1/3 of West U and could lead to flooding during a major storm event. Unfortunately, due to inactivity over the years to complete improvements to this critical piece of drainage infrastructure, the options available for moving forward have narrowed to the District's 90% completed design.

The City Council will continue to work for our residents and to ensure the District honors its commitment to designing elements around the main channel improvements that will consider our community's concerns.

#### **POOR FARM DITCH NORTH – University Blvd. to Bissonnet St.**

In December 2022, the City Council approved a study to determine the feasibility of changing Poor Farm Ditch (Ditch) from its current open channel design to an enclosed drainage system (basically pipes underground) that would allow the space above to be used for public purposes.

The idea of enclosing the Ditch and making use of the space above has been an off and on again discussion in our community for over 15 years. It typically comes up during the election cycle when candidates for Council hear from some in our community about enclosing the Ditch. This idea was even included in the City's 2015 adopted Parks & Open Space Master Plan, which went through an extensive public engagement process.

Unfortunately to date, the discussion on this idea has been hypothetical in nature, with discussion centered on what "may" or "could" be possible and "guesstimates" on the cost.

This feasibility study will provide Council and our community with information to make an informed decision. Does it work from a drainage standpoint, if so can it be constructed in the existing channel, and lastly what would be the estimated cost of this endeavor? If the concept of enclosing the Ditch doesn't work from a drainage or constructability standpoint, then this idea would cease to be a topic of discussion in our community. If this concept does work, then we will all be equipped with the same information, which will allow our community to have an informed discussion and make a sound decision on whether the community actually wants to enclose this portion of the Ditch.

There is a lot of incorrect information circulating regarding this study and that the Council has approved enclosing the Ditch, drainage will be made worse, etc. When in actuality we are only at the very beginning of this discussion and the outcome of this study will determine the next steps we take as a community.

#### **WORKING FOR WEST U!**

We will have a lot of projects underway this year, from improvements to facilities, our sewer system, and drainage to the day to day maintenance and services of our City that are not as visible as the Buffalo

Speedway project. All of the these projects and services have one thing in common, ensuring West U remains one of the most, if not the most desirable places to live, which is the number one goal of your City Council and staff.

In January, the City Council will be receiving the results of our citizen satisfaction survey, and I look forward to sharing those results with you in February.

Wishing you all a wonderful 2023!