

To Leap or Not to Leap?

Happy New Year! As we know, 2024 is a “Leap Year!” It is also our city’s Centennial year, which makes it a special time for reflection - a time to appreciate the past – and for anticipation – a time to consider the possibilities of our future. Much like leap years, these opportunities do not present themselves every day.

In early December 2023, City Council held our strategic and goal planning session for the current term. It was an opportunity for us to raise ideas, discuss priorities, and select items to be placed on our meeting agendas that could have far-reaching implications for the future.

Some of these suggestions and priorities require small leaps in thinking, effort, and time - some much bigger. I’d like to highlight for your feedback and consideration a few:

- 1) Dog(gone) Park – The idea of a dog park has long been a whisper of discussion. Many of us consider our pets family, yet we continually put the idea of a park for our furry friends on the back burner. Let’s start with a small leap – what about a “pop up” park – a temporary, one-day dog park to see how it goes? An opportunity for the Parks Board, perhaps?
- 2) Sustainability in Action – Forward thinkers in West U have been ahead of their time for (leap) years! As I write this, City Council is considering the purchase of a new garbage truck. Meanwhile, our Recycling Board continues their push for citywide composting. My own family recently began composting, so I’d like to take this opportunity to encourage those of you who haven’t yet made the leap to do so!
- 3) Pedestrian / Biker Safety and Thoroughfares – West U is blessed with wonderful sidewalks, but the recent completion of the Edloe Pathway and accompanying positive feedback have led us to wonder – how can we improve pedestrian safety and walkability throughout all of West U? How can we ensure residents west of Wesleyan, east of Buffalo Speedway, and north of Bissonnet feel the same connectedness to the city center that more centralized residents do? To that end, we will be undergoing a review of walkability and safety, including the consideration of bike lanes, (if only on major streets), in hopes of identifying ways to improve safety and mobility throughout the entire city.
- 4) Poor Farm Ditch (northern section) – With the recent approval in funding and plans underway to repair the southern section of Poor Farm Ditch, City Council will also be approaching Harris Co. Flood Control, (which is overseeing repairs to the southern portion), about the northern portion, (while we have their attention)! When considering the southern portion took nearly 20 years of discussion, we’d like to take the leap now in hopes that the desperately needed repairs of the northern half won’t take another 20!
- 5) Facilities Master Plan – This one may require the biggest leap of all, but if the West U Centennial teaches us anything, it is that our residents and city leaders have always had a unique ability to rise to the challenge! To date, we have held several town halls seeking your input on what the next 100 years should look like for our city. Plans for the new Public Works building are underway, and the footprint for a new Community / Senior Services Building and Fire Station are taking shape. If you haven’t attended a Town Hall or reached out to a city representative to provide your feedback, please do so.

The next 100 years for West U are on the horizon, and like our city's founders, we have the unique opportunity to take a leap and shape the future for the next generation(s)! As elected officials, your City Council has outlined our priorities – let's hear yours!