

## **Planning for Success**

By Mayor Susan Sample

### **Strategic Planning**

Over three nights in June, your City Council engaged in a strategic planning process, supported by a professional consultant and City staff. This process allowed Council to discuss many of the issues that West U residents expressed concern about during the election campaign, as we knocked on doors and engaged with neighbors on social media. Among the myriad of topics that we covered were environmental stewardship, fiscal responsibility, vital infrastructure, drainage, and public safety.

This process allows our Council to identify its priorities for both the short- and long-term development of West U. Although we would certainly like to address all of the community's needs in the next 12 months, establishing these priorities allows us to focus the City's resources on those issues that are most vital to residents. While every concern may not make it to our final agenda for the next year, this process allows for all of them to be discussed, ensuring that residents are heard and that our Council is able to establish a consensus-driven agenda that represents the entire West U community.

In addition to establishing a formal agenda, this process allowed the current group of City Council members to join together for the first time. We all have different reasons for choosing to pursue public service, and we bring diverse skills and experience to the table. Establishing a joint vision and strategic plan for the City will help to ensure that we serve a productive term on behalf of all residents.

### **Public Meetings**

Among the topics discussed during this process was the one that has been ever-present for more than a year, COVID-19. The pandemic presented a number of challenges to our community, including in City operations; however, as more individuals have been vaccinated and infection rates have decreased, we have an opportunity to reflect on lessons learned, and to ultimately help define what the "new normal" will look like for West U. This may include the expanded use of technology for more accessible operations, among other possibilities. I look forward to announcing more along these lines in the coming months.

Aligning with these goals, at this City Council's first meeting, we decided to open Council meetings to in-person attendance, after more than a year of virtual meetings. These meetings will

---

be held in a hybrid format – for now, residents will be able to choose to participate in City Council meetings either virtually, through Zoom, or in person at City Hall.

At the City Council meeting on July 12, we will hold our final discussion on our planning process and will formally adopt the City’s official strategic plan, establishing a road map for West U covering the next year. I hope to see many of you there on July 12.