

## Mayor's Article for Essentials – February 2024

### West U Turns 100!

You know the old saying “you only turn 100 once,” so I am excited to be the Mayor of West U as we celebrate our wonderful city’s centennial year. If you didn’t make it out to our Founders’ Day event in January, I encourage you to join us on Saturday, May 4, for our Centennial Celebration Festival at Colonial Park.

West U’s existence is a tale of determination and perseverance. After the City of Houston declined to annex West U in the 1920s, a group of residents took matters into their own hands to incorporate the city in 1924, giving residents the autonomy to solve their own challenges – which, at the time, included poor drainage, a lack of utility coverage, and underdeveloped basic public services. That pioneering attitude still reverberates through our community today as we remain one of the premier full-service cities in the country.

With that being said, I am excited to share our vision for 2024, along with what we are doing to ensure that West U remains one of the country’s premier communities. In my State of the City Address, I highlighted the following strategic initiatives identified by our City Council:

#### Goals for Public Safety

- Review our incident communication plan to make sure residents receive information on incidents that require action on their part
- Ensure that we have staffing levels that enable a consistent presence of uniformed officers on the streets
- Consider possible benefits to increase cooperation and information sharing with neighboring agencies

#### Goals for Public Works

- Start and/or complete the multiple projects already underway:
  - East-side Street & Drainage Improvement – Packages 1 and 2
  - New Public Works Maintenance Facility
  - Treatment upgrades and floodwater protection for the Wastewater Treatment Plant
  - Replacement of the Milton Street water main
  - Construction design for Westside Street & Drainage Improvements
  - Construction design for improvements to our water system’s infrastructure
  - Completion of repairs to our sidewalks for improved pedestrian mobility
  - Multi-year approach for necessary repairs to certain sections of our streets

#### Goals for Parks & Recreation

- Begin the design phase for our new community building, senior center, and library, which will serve our residents for the next 100 years
- Complete improvements to Wier Park

#### Goals for Government

- Consider the long-term vision for West U over the next 20 years, and improve pedestrian mobility in our city

- Evaluate the feasibility of updating and reformatting our municipal code to make it more user-friendly
- Emphasize our recruitment and retention efforts to keep top talent in our West U staff
- Tap into our seven fantastic citizen boards and commissions for reviewing ways to continue improving West U's quality of life

While these goals and initiatives above represent some of West U's major projects, our City Council and staff are committed to ensuring that the services we know and love are still delivered day to day with that small-hometown feel.

I cannot imagine what our city founders would have thought West U would become in 100 years, or what would eventually become of Houston for that matter. It is exciting to think what the next 100 years will bring and what our community will look like in 2124.

If you look across our city's history, three themes remain consistent about West U: our desire to remain self-sufficient as a full-service city, our dedication to prioritizing drainage projects to protect our homes from flooding events, and our collective efforts to maintain the quality of life that only West U can provide.

Our City Council and staff remain committed to ensuring that West U is a premier city, offering a high quality of life for our residents. Mark your calendars for May 4th, and help us celebrate the 100th anniversary of our beloved city. Together, let's make 2024 a year to remember – one where we build an even stronger and more resilient community for generations to come.