



Upon Reflection, How Did We Do in 2020?

By Mayor Bob Higley

January marks a new year for West U, Texas, the country, and our planet. After the challenges of 2020, many of us are eager to turn the page and jump into a New Year. Yet, we shouldn't forget that, despite the pandemic that swept the world last year, 2020 was still filled with progress for West U.

Over the past year, your City Council continued to work hard to address the current and future needs of our community, including:

- Addressing public safety issues, such as mitigating the impact of COVID-19 and moving forward with the Virtual Gate security camera system
- Practicing responsible financial stewardship by lowering property taxes for the average West U homeowner, and avoiding increases in water, sewer, and solid waste fees
- Improving our city's infrastructure, which included approving the 2020 bond program to develop long-term solutions that will serve West U for generations to come
- Protecting our quality of life by updating the city's noise and light ordinances, along with addressing other issues that impact our homeowners on a daily basis

Like many of our homeowners, West U City management is taking a moment at the beginning of 2021 to look back on whether the City was true to the stated mission, on an objective and subjective basis. This reflection serves as a check-up and check-in on our direction and effectiveness.

Flying High, Under the Radar

Initiated in 1972, West U has long embraced a recycling program, underscoring the importance of green spaces and environmental responsibility to our community. Following the completion of a water reclamation study last year, West U is moving forward with the implementation of a project that will help us conserve our region's water supply and reduce our impact on the Buffalo Bayou watershed. This wastewater reclamation program will divert and treat wastewater for safe, non-potable uses outside of the city, reaffirming West U's longstanding commitment to environmental stewardship and our pursuit of innovative measures to address the needs of our community. We look forward to announcing more about this project in the coming months.

Investing in Our Future

This City Council has consistently prioritized investing in West U's future infrastructure, and I am proud to announce the recent approval of two engineering contracts that represent another significant step in that investment. Design work will begin in the next month on planned drainage system improvements to our streets that are most affected by heavy rains. These improvements should significantly lower water levels in our streets during moderate and heavy rains, as well as during extreme weather events, such as Hurricane Harvey. The design work will



be completed in 1½ to 2 years, at which time your City Council will consider the issuance of approximately \$55 million to construct these planned improvements. For more information on this work, please visit <https://westutx.gov/projects>.

‘Just the Facts, Ma’am’

Another priority for this City Council, which is being carried over from last year into our own New Year’s resolutions, is enhancing our communications and community engagement capabilities. This year, I look forward to being able to share with all of our homeowners the work that I am fortunate enough to witness each day.

Toward this end, the City recently added a new full-time staff member dedicated to communications. We will continue to roll out improvements to our City website, our social media pages, and our in-person and virtual programming in order to better connect the City with our residents.

The citizens of West U are what make our city special. City management and staff continue to work diligently to ensure that our service model engages with as many homeowners as possible.

Asked & Answered

This City Council has reaffirmed our community’s values by unanimously voting to adopt Martin Luther King Jr. Day as an official City holiday. Our City Council encourages all to reflect on Dr. King’s positive message, both on the January 18 holiday and throughout the year. The challenges of the pandemic have shown West U residents that we can all work together in support of our common dreams and goals.

West U Needs You!

We are fortunate to live in “the best small town in America.” This title is earned “24/7/365,” by each of us. As we each reflect on ourselves and who we will be in 2021, let us resolve to continue working together. West U needs you!