

State of the City of West — January 2021

I want to focus this month on the state of our great city with an update on the State of The City of West.

I am pleased to inform you that in my opinion and our city auditor's option (as stated in the 2019-2020 financial audit) that West is in great shape both financially and economically. We have 5 new subdivisions being developed in various sections of the city, each with various size lots, values and square feet areas. What a housing explosion expected for the coming year! This would represent the largest increase in home sales/building West has ever experienced.

The investments individuals have brought to the downtown area also is phenomenal. Unlike many smaller cities that have lost their downtown area, West is thriving. Please support these businesses that have invested in your city by shopping local.

The interstate corner with 7-Eleven will be joined by McDonalds. With these businesses I feel it will be a catalyst for more businesses to plant in that area. Also, when the elementary school moves and those two blocks become available for commercial businesses, it will only get better.

Speaking of school, the citizens of West proved they are willing to invest in the future education of our younger citizens and the new elementary school is on schedule to be completed 2022. That school will put West ISD in excellent position for educating our young people for years to come. That will pay off in huge dividends as a city is only as good as the school system. Of course, the school is also only as good as the city, so we have a win/win here.

We will be working on the estimated \$12,000,000.00 wastewater treatment expansion this year. It is going to be a multiyear project running into 2023 but it is a must. We need to do this to stay TCEQ compliant and can service the new subdivisions and expected growth in the years to come. With interest rates at the lowest level, we expect a favorable rate. Specialty Finance is working on these figures and the council will have several meetings to go over all the details before we pull the trigger on this much needed project.

The city received the completed 2019 - 2020 financial audit and all the financials are strong. We ended our last fiscal year with a total net position of \$23,735,995. Of that net figure, \$4,939,162 is in general fund and \$18,796,833 in water/sewer fund. We have just under \$4,000,000.00 in debt due to the 2012 and 2015 C of O's and our retirement fund is healthy and stable so as stated before, the City of West is financially health.

Plans are underway with Walker Partners to repair and/or replace several streets; Reagan, Davis, South Marable just to name a few. Unfortunately, this process just takes so long with the study/research, design, bid, then completion of work. As mayor these past 10 years and with all the street work after the explosion, you would think I would be used to the delay, but I am not. I want it done yesterday. We are working on a plan to use the settlement funds to complete some of these projects.

The Marable Street project will be completed in March. We then move to the Playdium Drive project with water, wastewater, and pavement which will be joined during construction to tie West ISD elementary service to our system at the corner of Playdium and Cottonwood Road.

West has not been spared from the COVID 19 virus and we have lost way too many citizens to this deadly pandemic. I have been in touch with county and state officials regarding vaccinations and made sure we are not forgotten. Both the county and state level of government are working to distribute the vaccine as it becomes available. My hope is in the next couple of months all that wish to take the preventative shot will be given the opportunity. We must however not be complacent with having a vaccine and still be sure to wear a face mask, hand wash diligently, and social distance as suggested by the CDC.