



**STANDING FOR TRUTH:
SEPARATING FACT FROM FICTION
IN WEST U**

Fiction

Citizens were prevented from voting on the new library and community center until a petition delivered to the City placed the project on the ballot.

The City must make a choice between addressing facility needs in its civic center and undertaking infrastructure projects around the City.

The City is facing a debt crisis that will worsen with the approval of a new library and community center.

Investments in City facilities will hurt residents financially.

Fact

This is a false narrative meant to depict the existing Mayor and Council as being unresponsive to residents' voices. No petition was ever delivered to the City. Hearing residents' voices asking for a vote, City Council voted 3-0, with one absent, and one abstaining, to place the library and community center on the ballot as Prop D.

Adopting this fiction as a principle, the candidates spreading this message will lead the City to deteriorate as its needs are not addressed. Like most cities, the City has a track record of undertaking multiple major projects simultaneously, and its infrastructure exists in a constant cycle of decay and renewal that must be sustained through investment. For example, over the last year, the City has completed the Eastside Drainage Project, broken ground on the new Public Works facility, completed a phase of sidewalk repairs, re-opened Weir Park and completed the new exercise track around the rec center.

This is false. The West U debt level is the lowest, relative to its tax base, in modern history, and the City can address all of its infrastructure needs while maintaining its investment grade credit rating.

Municipalities fund their basic facilities and infrastructure through ad valorem taxes, and the projects generally have a beneficial effect on property values, creating wealth for residents and relaxing long-term tax rates. In West U, our unique zoning and neighborhood aesthetic allows distinguishing investments to have a pronounced impact on our residents' property values.

The library and community center satisfy the needs of City residents.

The 2022 Facilities Master Plan, approved by then-Councilman John Barnes, recommended replacement of existing facilities to address (1) significant costs otherwise required to maintain existing facilities and (2) limitations on the technology, materials and programs that can be used in the library. Investments in the library and community center today will offset costly maintenance tomorrow.

This is false. The City will address its facility needs through multiple years of forthcoming town halls, similar to its process on the new library and community center, to gather resident feedback and determine the next steps for the City's buildings, while addressing the needs of our fire and police department facilities.

Ironically, the Facilities Master Plan approved by then-Councilman John Barnes would have led to the demolition of the existing library and community center to place a fire station at Rice and Auden. The existing Mayor and Council voted to leave the fire station in its existing location after receiving a plan from City staff to maintain fire station operations in the civic center during its construction phase.

As a matter of law, any public financing of a City Hall or city administrative facilities must be put to a general vote, and this vote will take place when design plans are advanced in the future.

The estimated costs of addressing the facility needs of the City are regularly published in Council presentations, discussed at public meetings and presently available on the City's website, and have been for many years. These projects will be presented to the residents prior to construction, and final plans may be adopted that avoid any demolition whatsoever.

The City will imminently demolish existing buildings.

The costs of addressing the facility needs of the City are being hidden from residents, and the Council will increase taxes to fund new facilities without resident approval.

The Wastewater Treatment Plant requires urgent repairs, or residents will be put at risk.

This is a false narrative meant to frighten residents. Each professional employee and engineer involved in the project advises the Council to undertake upgrades and improvements over a period of years, which allows the City to select upgrades at attractive opportunities and achieve the lowest cost to the taxpayer. The Wastewater Treatment Plant operates below 50% of its existing capacity, extending the life of its equipment, with complete redundancy to undertake future work without interruption. The City has replaced key equipment at the Wastewater Treatment Plant in the past without disruption to residents.

The City was negligent not to accept a solo bid from ITX to address upgrades to its Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The City rejected the ITX bid to ensure that it was getting the best price for the project, with the benefit of the Plant's excess capacity providing time to get the project right. The Council concluded that the process to obtain the ITX bid may have been flawed. A solo bid does not provide the City with information about market pricing to make an informed decision, and there are many components to Plant upgrades for which a competitive subcontractor market would exist.

The City's rejection of the ITX bid will lead to increased costs to taxpayers.

The Council approved a bid for Phase I of Wastewater Treatment Plant repairs that included a competing bid from ITX for the same work. The City saved over \$1 million in its selected bid relative to the ITX bid. By obtaining bids from competitive markets and offering subcontractors direct bidding opportunities, the Council chose the deferred path to save taxpayers money relative to the initial solo ITX bid.