

**MESSAGE FROM THE
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
DAVID W. HIGHTOWER**

The future of Greater West Houston remains bright, one of only a handful of such areas across the nation. Our population and employment growth continues, commercial activity is rebounding and residential growth is improving across the communities. Against this backdrop, we must remain mindful of the breath of infrastructure demands this growth presents. The West Houston Association continues to play a leadership role in helping shape and plan for the future of Greater West Houston.

The West Houston Association remained actively engaged on a number of fronts in 2011 pursuing our goal of continually being a strong advocate on public policy issues that impact and support growth in Greater West Houston. This is a report on those activities.

TRANSPORTATION

■ **Transportation Funding**—Following our policy statement supporting options for increasing the funding for area projects, the Association supported Legislative action approving \$ 3 billion in Proposition 12 funding and their selection of US 290 and US 249 as potential private sector projects.

■ **Grand Parkway**—In numerous appearances before the Texas Transportation Commission and the Texas House Transportation Committee, the Association strongly supported TxDOT primacy of the Grand Parkway Segment E which promised an immediate infusion of \$350 million for

construction. This culminated in the long awaited start of construction in September, 2011 and the fast-tracking of Segments F and G of the Parkway. The Association's goal remains supporting the most rapid, financially sound implementation possible for all segments.

- **US 290/Hempstead Toll Road**—The Association supported the allocations of funds to the US 290 projects at Loop 610 and the recent allocations of Proposition 12 funding to segments flanking Beltway 8. In addition the Association has supported the commuter rail in the corridor through the study process. We have remained supportive of efforts by Harris County as they work through the difficult economics of the Hempstead Toll Road. We are encouraging a process that we believe will rationalize the design and the funding of the toll road and the mainlanes of US 290.
- **Greater West Houston Subregional Transportation Study**—The Association is a principal stakeholder along with the Energy Corridor, City of Houston, Memorial City and Westchase of this HGAC/federal government funded evaluation of the transportation needs of the “urban core” of Greater West Houston. The goal of the study is to identify actionable projects and take a long view of future needs and options.

2010 QUALITY GROWTH PARTNERS



EDUCATION

The Association is continuing to work with the University of Houston and Houston Community College to expand higher education opportunities in Greater West Houston. The University has been encouraged to offer additional degree programs at the current Cinco Ranch Campus and look to expand or relocate the facility to a higher visibility location with a primary mission to support energy industry human resource needs and engineering in general. The Association has supported the HCC's Northwest College program expansion and encourages expanded facilities to accommodate expected enrollment advances.

INFRASTRUCTURE & DEVELOPMENT REGULATION

Rehabilitating Infrastructure—the Association has remained active with the ReBuild Houston drainage and street rehabilitation program—closely monitoring the City's implementation and program planning for project improvements. In addition, the Association is preparing to work with Harris County as it organizes to answer funding issues related to its own aging infrastructure. Both initiatives were identified in the Association's *West Houston Plan 2050: Envisioning Greater West Houston at Mid-Century*.

Development Ordinances—City of Houston ordinances related to development are continually monitored by the Association—the latest being efforts calling for development buffering and height feathering. The Association, joining others in the development community, participated in the public discourse over the major activity centers needs and urged a more reasonable approach.

Flood Control—through its development community members, the Association is active with Harris County Flood Control in planning to accommodate future development in northwest Harris County between US 290 and Interstate 10 while preserving existing and expanded conservation areas.



QUALITY PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

Enhancing residential and commercial development standards throughout Greater West Houston is the aim of the new QPD program of the Association. Developments meeting higher development standards will be awarded this distinction and promoted. We are now actively reviewing a half dozen applications and announcements will be made in the near future.

DEMOGRAPHIC & EMPLOYMENT FORECASTING

The Association published its first Greater West Houston Demographic and Economic Profile utilizing 2010 Census Data and new 2050 forecasts for jobs and population. This profile was widely distributed to elected and appoint officials in the Houston Region. Further demographic updates are planned in the near future.

ISSUE FORUMS—on topics of utmost importance to its members. In 2011 the Association hosted Houston District Engineer Delvin Dennis; Mayor Annise Parker; Harris County Judge Ed Emmett; Fort Bend County Judge Robert Hebert; Waller County Judge Glenn Beckendorff.

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