

KELLER CITIZEN FEBRUARY 9, 2016 10:42 AM

Westlake continues plans for expansion

HIGHLIGHTS

Mayor Laura Wheat looks to the future of her idyllic town

Making its debut this year is Westlake Entrada

Westlake Academy will continue to be a major focus



BY MARTY SABOTA
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WESTLAKE — Mayor Laura Wheat loves serving a town that she calls “truly an oasis amidst an ever-expanding urban landscape.”

Wheat, who was elected mayor in 2008, said that the major issues facing town leaders in 2016 are managing its development, dealing with the increased traffic on major arteries and being financially responsible for Westlake Academy, the town-owned charter school.

“It is a balancing act, to be sure,” the mayor said. “Westlake’s natural beauty and pastoral feel is what attracted many of us to this community, and we want to see as many of those characteristics preserved as possible. I do believe that our newly revised Comprehensive Plan does a great job of establishing the blueprint for future development.”

A major goal for the town is continuing “to work closely with our extraordinary town staff and Town Council to manage growth in a manner consistent with our Comprehensive Plan.”

Maintaining the town’s natural beauty is a priority, Wheat said.

“We have all the benefits of urban living with the hearts of Fort Worth and Dallas minutes away, not to mention all the conveniences that Southlake Town Center has to offer,” Wheat said. “At the same time, we are surrounded by natural beauty; at any given moment, we can gaze on Longhorn cattle, marvel at red-tail hawks and watch wild turkeys cross the road.”

She credited town staff with making the town an idyllic place to live.

“I believe that the level of service our town staff offers is unique to communities in the Fort Worth-Dallas area,” Wheat said.

But there’s always room for improvement, she said.

“Anyone who experiences the intersections of Davis and Dove Road and Davis and Solana boulevards knows that we need to better manage traffic there,” Wheat said. “Stay tuned, as signals are scheduled to be installed in the coming year.”

She said the town needs a gathering place that defines its community.

“At the moment, the only real thing that we all share is a boundary,” Wheat said.

A project to bring the community closer is underway. Work has begun on the Entrada at the northeast corner of Solana and Davis boulevards. It's an upscale live-work-play center with a water feature, an amphitheater, plentiful retail and a mix of single-family detached villas and town homes.

All of Entrada will be of Spanish village design, particularly Catalonian architecture, which city officials say is a unique and a very high-standard design.

"I look forward to the day when Westlake Entrada is complete, and we can come together as neighbors and enjoy a cup of coffee or other beverage of choice," Wheat said.

She said it is important to remember that Westlake owns, and thus is financially responsible for, Westlake Academy, a prestigious and innovative charter school.

"Thus, the school has to remain front and center in our thinking as we seek to manage our growth," the mayor said.

Wheat said she and other city leaders want to maintain their focus on Westlake Academy.

A primary effort will be to "support the administration and faculty in their efforts to continue to strengthen the quality of the international-minded education offered."

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