



City Currents

Fall 2016





Bang for your buck!!

Many of you saw the recent *Houston Chronicle* article published on August 6, 2016, regarding our strength in the real estate market, entitled “Neighborhoods: Wealthy West U still strong despite high-end chill.” Obviously one immediately thinks this is about the old market adage: “Location, Location, Location.” Indeed this holds true, but there is so much more to West U’s benefits than mere proximity to Downtown, The Galleria, the Texas Medical Center, and excellent local educational opportunities.

The current seated City Council lowered the City tax rate by \$.03 per \$100.00 valuation last year; even though your assessed value may have increased, it is still a very reasonable tax rate. Comparatively speaking, this rate is approximately 45% lower than the City of Houston rate, 13% lower than the City of Bellaire rate and 2% greater than the City of Southside Place rate. Also due to forward thinking city management and elected officials, we have been able to extend a superior service offering with low debt and very stable reserves. We enjoy award-winning recreational and senior facilities and programs; we have almost unheard of public safety rapid response times thus creating a secure environment for our residents; and we further provide the highest municipal tax exemption for seniors and disabled citizens in all of Harris County. We are able to attract and retain a very skilled staff, which ensures our services exceed those of both neighboring communities and communities that provide such services privately at a cost outside their tax dollar.

The message is this: As we begin preparation of the 2017 budget, please remember that we will do our utmost to continue these trends in an environment of ever increasing operational costs and will provide West University Place taxpayers the greatest possible value for their tax dollar. In some cases your home is your single largest asset, and it’s worth more because it is in West University Place.



From Mayor
Pro-Tem
Bob Kelly

There are great benefits to living in the City of West University Place, which is recognized as one of the safest cities in Texas. Two of those are the outstanding Police and Fire Departments. Here are a few interesting facts.

The West U Fire Department strives for service excellence with a staff of 23 members who are all dual certified as Firefighter/Paramedics. The City’s Emergency Medical Service (EMS) is second to none with state-of-the-art equipment, training and progressive treatment protocols authorized by the City’s Medical Director, Dr. James McCarthy. EMS crews are provided with the department’s Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance and also with a fire engine that has ALS capabilities. The City was recently awarded an ISO 1 rating, which is the best fire service rating possible, giving its residents access to the least expensive insurance rate possible.

The Fire Department prides itself on providing superior customer service with every interaction and offers numerous community outreach and education programs, such as the AHA Heart Saver CPR/AED training, child safety seat installations, and the Safe-T Clown Program and Inflatable Fire Safety Education House.

The West U Police Department is home to a diverse population of sworn and non-sworn law enforcement personnel. All personnel of various backgrounds share a common goal: protecting and serving. Top officers have taken an active approach to develop and prepare all personnel within their department for leadership.

My family has lived in West U for over 40 years and always appreciates the feeling of security that the West U Police Department and Fire Department provide. The men and women of these departments are indeed dedicated, well-trained professionals who risk their lives every day to protect our families and property.

Water Conservation

Warm, hot, and HOTTER. WOW, this has been a mind-blowing and yard-burning summer!

With temperatures in the high 90s to the low 100s and a stiff afternoon breeze, the water used in your yard is gone, gone, gone! You think to yourself, I just watered my yard today with 600 gallons of water and by the end of the day there is nothing visible. Not a drop in the grass, under the trees or in the garden or yard beds. My tree leaves are drooping and the grass is turning brown — I need to water more tomorrow.

The one question you should be asking is: Am I watering my lawn, trees and shrubs the right way and at the right time? Please consider watering your yard in the early morning or later in the evening, allowing the water to be absorbed by the soil. Use good quality mulch in your yard beds and garden to help with moisture retention and reduce the amount of water needed.

Ensure your sprinkler system is operating properly. Do you know someone whose irrigation system has watered their driveway or street? I bet in all of that time their sidewalk, driveway or street never grew an inch. Be sure to give your system a routine inspection to ensure that all sprinkler heads are pointing in the right direction. Also consider the types of heads being used, because the amount of water needed for grass is different than the amount needed for trees and shrubs. Lastly give some consideration to the type of irrigation system you are using — sometimes a drip or “leaky pipe” system installed under the mulch is more effective than the spray system, depending on the application.

Remember the ultimate goal is soil saturation. You want an irrigation system that saturates the soil and minimizes water runoff. The roots of your flowers, shrubs, trees and grass are much more effective at absorbing water than the leaves and blades of grass.

Water is a precious commodity, and as the Houston metropolitan area continues to grow, the demand on local water resources will increase. Let’s all do our part to conserve — it starts with one drop at a time.

Storm Water Pollution Prevention

What would fish say if they could speak about the world around them? Do you think they would comment about all of the stuff that floats down the storm drains into the bayou and lastly into Galveston Bay?

Well, since fish can’t speak for themselves, it is up to us to do something about the pollution that happens every day, even in West U. Believe it or not, here are some of the items that we have pulled from the City’s storm drains — plastic animal waste bags, license plates, garbage bags, small appliances, pieces of wood, broken tools and equipment, dead animals, grass and leaves from landscapers and residents, and many more things too numerous to list.

Why is this an issue? For one, it not helpful to the environment. Secondly, it clogs up the storm drains, which affects how well they drain during heavy rains. And lastly, it costs the taxpayer money for the City to clean out the system.

So please do your part to help keep your storm drains free and clear of foreign objects. Be careful about how easily debris can get into the system; be sure to place trash, yard waste and recycling out only on your day of collection; and report anybody you see throwing items or blowing grass/leaves into the storm drains at (713) 662-5839.

Let’s all do our part, and together we can ensure that our storm drain system will operate as designed during the next extreme weather event.



Fathers & Flashlights 10th Anniversary Campout

This popular community event was another sellout as campers geared up and pitched tents under the stars when Friends of West University Place Parks Fund, Inc. and the Parks and Recreation Department hosted its annual campout the first weekend in October on the fields surrounding West University Elementary School. The Butler, Martinez and Schaefer Families, along with all of the wonderful volunteers, provided another fun and memorable event. Highlights of the campout included pony rides, putt-putt golf, catch and release fishing, and stargazing, just to name a few. There were some special surprises including a magic show, a raffle for early registration and a raffle for a YETI cooler in celebration of the 10th anniversary of Fathers & Flashlights. Thank you to ALL of our underwriters, sponsors and in-kind donors, plus the many volunteers and staff who made this event possible. Our generous donors included: Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital, Jones Day, Conway MacKenzie, Maggie Garza – Realtor/John Daugherty Realtors & Old Republic Title, Heidi Dugan – Realtor/Greenwood King Properties, Lauren DeFrehn Photography, Kristine Martinez – Realtor/John Daugherty Realtors,

Chick-fil-A Holcombe and Buffalo Speedway, Goode Company Restaurants, Jessica and Jay Adkins, the Davis Family, the Butler Family, the Schaefer Family, Butler Cohen, LLC, Laura Mayer Cyprow – Realtor/John Daugherty Realtors, Village Plumbing and Home Services, Tiny's No. 5, Harper Street Treats and iKids. The event also honored the inaugural chairs Daryl and Aaron Hoover and Jennifer Gatto.

For a complete listing of the generous underwriters and sponsors, and more event highlights, please visit www.westuparks.org. Fathers & Flashlights continues to be a very popular and successful fundraiser for Friends of West U Parks. It is a neighborhood favorite.

26th Annual Park Lovers' Ball

The 26th Annual Park Lovers' Ball Celebration will be held on February 18, 2017, at the Hilton Americas-Houston downtown. Please note the change in venue. Event co-chairs Peyton and Alex Popp and Sami and Jud Morrison are planning a fun and festive evening full of surprises. On behalf of the chairs, Peyton says, "We are co-chairing the Park Lovers' Ball in 2017 because the parks have meant so much to our families since we moved to West U. The parks have provided a place for all of our children to play in a safe and secure environment, and we have met some of our closest friends while spending hours upon hours at the parks. Co-chairing the ball allows us to show our appreciation and to give back to the community, which means so much to our families." The auction team consists of Jessica Newell, Jessica Breitbeil and Kathy Bolks. The underwriting chair is Nancy Kate Prescott.

Look for your invitation to the ball to arrive in the mail in early January. Meanwhile, please visit www.westuparks.org, email DLaMond@westutx.gov, or call (713) 662-7430 for information on becoming an underwriter, sponsor, auction donor or volunteer.

While Fathers & Flashlights and the Park Lovers' Ball are the largest Friends fundraising events, there are other opportunities for involvement. Friends fundraising continues year round with the stork program to announce the birth of a baby, business partnerships, memorials and honorariums, pavers, benches and tree sales. For more information, please visit www.westuparks.org or call (713) 662-7430.



The Morrison Family



The Popp Family

Special Events

Movies in the Park

Grab your picnic blankets or lawn chairs, bring the family, and enjoy an outdoor movie shown on a huge inflatable screen! The movie is complimentary and refreshments will be available for purchase.

Dates: October 14 & October 21

Time: 7:00 pm

Location: Colonial Park Pavilion, 4130 Byron Street

Minions, Rated PG, October 14

Ever since the dawn of time, the Minions have lived to serve the most despicable of masters. From T. Rex to Napoleon, the easily distracted tribe has helped the biggest and the baddest of villains. Now, join protective leader Kevin, teenage rebel Stuart and lovable little Bob on a global road trip where they'll earn a shot to work for a new boss — the world's first female super-villain — and try to save all of Minionkind...from annihilation.

Hotel Transylvania 2, Rated PG, October 21

The Drac Pack is back for an all-new monster comedy adventure in Sony Pictures Animation's *Hotel Transylvania 2*! Everything seems to be changing for the better at Hotel Transylvania. Dracula's rigid monster-only hotel policy has finally relaxed, opening up its doors to human guests. But behind closed coffins, Drac is worried that his adorable half-human, half-vampire grandson, Dennis, isn't showing signs of being a vampire. So while Mavis is busy visiting her human in-laws with Johnny — and is in for a major culture shock of her own — “Vampa” Drac enlists his friends Frank, Murray, Wayne and Griffin to put Dennis through a “monster-in-training” boot camp. But little do they know that Drac's grumpy and very old, old, old school dad, Vlad, is about to pay a family visit to the hotel. And when Vlad finds out that his great-grandson is not a pure blood, and humans are now welcome at Hotel Transylvania — things are going to get batty!

Full Moon Fest

Join us for an evening of pumpkin decorating, costume contests, face painting and more. The West University Place Parks & Recreation Department will host their fourth annual Full Moon Fest at 5:30 pm on Friday, October 21, at the Colonial Park Pavilion, located at 4130 Byron. The costume contest will be for different age groups, so make sure the whole family comes in their spookiest attire.

Stay after the event and enjoy the featured movie *Hotel Transylvania 2* as part of the Movies in the Park series; showing begins at 7:00 pm!

West U Halloween Dash and Kids Fun Run

Register now for the sixth annual West U Halloween Dash and Kids Fun Run on Saturday, October 29. The Dash is a chip-timed 5K race through the beautiful tree-lined streets of West U. The Fun Run is a non-competitive one-mile run or walk. All Fun Run finishers will receive a medal. Proceeds from the event benefit the West U Parks and Recreation Department. Register at www.westutx.gov/FunRun.

Swim with Santa

Anyone can get a picture with Santa on a sleigh, in the mall or even in the snow, but not too many people can get a picture with Santa underwater! Join us on Saturday, November 5, from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm at the West U Rec Center to have your picture taken with Santa and his elves. The fee is only \$10 with preregistration and \$20 on the day of the event. For more information on how to register for this event, contact the West U Recreation Center at (713) 662-7420.

Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony

Come one, come all! Get into the holiday spirit with the 28th Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony when the City of West U heralds the season by lighting the Christmas Tree. Join us with your camera in front of the Community Building, 6104 Auden, on Monday, December 5. Activities will start at 5:30 pm and the Tree Lighting ceremony will start at 6:00 pm. Santa will be available for photos at the end of the ceremony!

Winter/Spring 2016 Class Registration

Discover a new craft or polish a skill for great benefits without investing a lot of time or money. Most Winter/Spring classes begin in January. These include dance, tennis, Pilates, yoga, youth swimming, gymnastics, CPR and so much more!

***Priority Registration** (for those currently enrolled in classes within the past 30 days before this date)

Tuesday, November 29

*online registration is not available

Resident Registration

Tuesday, December 6

Non-Resident Registration

Thursday, December 8

Complete your registration online when it's available at www.westutx.gov/reg or come by the Recreation Center, 4210 Bellaire, to sign up. Visa, MasterCard, Discover, personal checks and cash are accepted. To view a copy of the fall “West U at Your Leisure” guide, visit www.westutx.gov/parks or call (713) 662-7420 for more information.

Safety and Public Works

How to Avoid a Special Collection Fee Notice When Placing Yard Waste Curbside.

Want to avoid a special collection fee notice for issues with your yard waste? Follow these simple steps when putting out your yard waste recycling for collection:

- Ensure all yard waste material is bagged in either kraft paper bags or compostable plastic bags. Non-compostable bags are not accepted and will be subject to a minimum special collection fee of \$50.
- Don't know what a kraft paper bag and/or compostable plastic bag looks like?

When purchasing yard waste bags, look for the following types of bags and/or the logos of certified compostable bags:



- When setting out limbs for collection, ensure limbs are no larger than three inches (3") in diameter and are properly bound/stacked in bundles no more than four feet (4') long, four feet (4') in width and no higher than three feet (3') high. (*Remember: Limbs should be set out no sooner than three (3) days before the scheduled collection day.*)
- Ensure that your yard waste is placed out on the correct day and at the correct time. A good way to remember: Yard waste is collected on the same day as recycling and should be set out no sooner than 6:00 pm the day before or no later than 8:00 am the day of collection.
- Ensure yard waste is not mixed with any trash, recyclables or other non-yard waste materials.

Please visit our website at www.westutx.gov/greenwaste for more information. For questions, feel free to call Public Works at (713) 662-5839 or email us at pwinfo@westutx.gov.

Holiday Season Safety

The City of West University Place Police Department would like to remind residents of several ways they can assist the department in keeping themselves and their property safe throughout the holiday season. The season usually begins and ends with shopping. Crowded shopping malls and dimly lit parking lots are common areas where criminal activity takes place. Protect yourself by always trying to park as close to the store entrance as possible, and if doing so at night, make sure the area in which you park has adequate lighting. By eliminating distance and darkness, you increase a criminal's chances of being detected in the act of a crime and decrease the odds of your becoming a victim. Additional safety practices include having your keys ready in your hand prior to getting to your car and walking along with or close to other people in the parking lot. There is safety in numbers as criminals are more likely to select a victim who is alone rather than selecting someone from a crowd.

Another concern you should always be aware of is being followed home or to another destination after making your purchases or cash withdrawals. When traveling from shopping malls, jewelry stores, banks or any other place of this nature, please make sure you always remain aware of your surroundings. When nearing your final destination, make it a habit to check your rear view mirror, looking for vehicles that appear to be following you or for people waiting in the area that you do not recognize. In either of these situations, circle the block or head off in a random direction to see if they follow and either confirm or dispel your suspicions.

If in fact the vehicle in question does appear to be following you, call 911 and drive directly to the nearest police station or a densely populated, well-lit area. Stay on the phone with the 911 operator and provide them with the information requested until an officer has arrived. The information they will be asking for is your current location and direction of travel, a description of the vehicle you suspect is following you and a description of the person(s) inside the vehicle. They will also need a description of your vehicle and what you look like to limit the amount of confusion once police contact is made.

In the event that you find yourself in a situation where you feel suspicious of or personally threatened by the actions or presence of someone else, there is no harm in placing a call and having an officer come check out the situation. Please do not hesitate in calling the police immediately during these situations.

The West University Place Police Department is committed to the safety and well-being of our community. Please assist us in this effort by REPORTING IMMEDIATELY any suspicious activity you observe to (713) 668-0330, or in the case of an emergency, DIAL 911.

What is a Knox HomeBox?

The Knox Rapid Entry System is a secure emergency access program developed for property owners and first responders. The West University Place Fire Department has utilized the Knox Rapid Entry System for the past 15+ years to prevent costly entry damage while protecting lives and property. Knox HomeBox is the latest product offering and is designed specifically for residential use; it offers a more discreet key box and a streamlined ordering process.

Prices start at \$159 and you order directly from Knox at knoxhomebox.com or 1-855-GET-KNOX. Once you receive your Knox HomeBox or if you have questions about the ordering process, please contact Fire Marshal James Novak at (713) 662-5837 for further instructions.



Trash, Recycling and Yard Waste Collection Schedule During Observed Holidays

Do you know what to do when a City-observed holiday falls on the same day as your trash, recycling and yard waste collection day? The following is a quick guide to the alternate collection schedule during observed holidays throughout the year.

When a holiday falls on a:	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Monday	HOLIDAY Only recycling and yard waste will be collected on Wednesday of this week. Trash needs to be held until Thursday, your next regular collection day.	Normal Collection	Monday's Recycling and Yard Waste Collection Only	Normal Collection	Normal Collection
Tuesday	Normal Collection	HOLIDAY Trash, recycling and yard waste will be collected on Wednesday.	Tuesday's Trash, Recycling and Yard Waste Collection	Normal Collection	Normal Collection
Wednesday	Normal Collection	Normal Collection	HOLIDAY There are no services scheduled on Wednesdays	Normal Collection	Normal Collection
Thursday	Normal Collection	Normal Collection	Thursday's Trash, Recycling and Yard Waste Collection	HOLIDAY Trash (including bulk trash), recycling and yard waste will be collected on Wednesday.	Normal Collection
Friday*	Normal Collection	Normal Collection	Friday's Recycling and Yard Waste Collection Only	Normal Collection	HOLIDAY Only recycling and yard waste will be collected on Wednesday of this week. Trash needs to be held until Tuesday of the following week, your next regular collection day. Bulk trash will need to be held until the following Friday.

* schedule subject to change for Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's holiday

This schedule may change with little to no notice. Ensure you sign up to stay up-to-date on important information, news and notifications from the City. Visit www.westutx.gov and click on the "Notifications" tab to sign up.

For more information about the holiday collection schedule, please visit www.westutx.gov/holiday. For questions, call our Public Works Department at (713) 662-5839 or email pwinfo@westutx.gov.

How to Properly Dispose of "Sharps"

"Sharps" are defined as syringes with needles, pen needles, lancets and other sharp medical instruments.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality ("TCEQ") has issued guidelines to assist you in legally and safely disposing of these items.

The TCEQ guidelines are found at www.tceq.texas.gov/publications/gi/gi-418.html and as follows:

Never put loose sharps, including needles, even if recapped, in household garbage. You should use a hard plastic or metal container with a tightly secured lid to hold the loose sharps. The easiest containers to use are milk jugs, laundry detergent containers or bleach bottles with a screw top. Do not use a see-through container, such as a water or soft drink bottle, as it is not thick enough. Also do not use glass containers of any size to dispose of sharps. You should prominently label the container as containing sharps,

needles, etc., and should also mark the container with the words "DO NOT RECYCLE." Put the items in the container with the sharp end first and keep the container top closed when it is not actively being used. The container should be placed in a location that is not accessible to children and pets.

Once the container is full, you should secure the top/lid and reinforce it with heavy duct tape. Once the container is sealed, it can now safely be discarded with the household garbage. There is also a special red "sharps" container. Make sure the opening on the red "sharps" container is firmly closed and locked before placing it with the household garbage. Never place any of these containers in the recycling bin. The labeling or red color is designed to prevent this from occurring.

For further information, you can contact the Coalition for Safe Community Needle Disposal at 1-800-643-1643. Their website with more information can be found at www.safeneedledisposal.org

In addition, you may find the following websites helpful:

www.epa.gov/rcra/community-options-safe-needle-disposal

www.epa.gov/rcra/protect-yourself-protect-others-safe-options-home-needle-disposal



City Currents

A Newsletter for the citizens of
City of West University Place

Fall 2016



City of West University Place
3800 University Blvd.
West University Place, TX 77005

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CITY OF WEST U OFFICIALS

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GENERAL INFORMATION (713) 668-4441

CITY WEBSITE www.westutx.gov

City Currents is a quarterly publication and is printed on recycled paper.

For questions and comments about *City Currents*, contact Anna Evelyn at (713) 662-5812 or aevelyn@westutx.gov.

Design by Minor Design

Pet Etiquette

Help keep your dog and our City safe by keeping your dog on a leash or in an enclosure at all times. Besides being the law, using a leash prevents your dog from running into traffic or accosting other pets, and it keeps other people safe from unwelcome interactions with your dog. Even in your front yard, the dog must be on a leash.

While out walking, please be sure to clean up after your pet to avoid spreading disease and waste. You are also required to register your pet with the city's Animal Control Officer. The cost is \$20 for a lifetime registration. Bring a copy of the pet's rabies vaccination papers to the Public Works Building, 3826 Amherst, and fill out the registration form available there.

You will receive a tag to keep as proof of registration. Your pet should wear the tag along with the rabies tag. Doing this will help Animal Control identify your pets should they leave your yard or become lost. Periodically make sure that all enclosures where your pets are kept are secure. For more information or to ask questions, please contact the Animal Control Officer at (713) 662-5831.

Tree Trust Planting 2016

The City will be planting trees from the Tree Trust once again this fall and winter. Residents who wish to apply to receive a tree can stop by Development Services at 3826 Amherst and fill out an application or download the application from the City's website. Trees from the Tree Trust may only be planted in the street right of way. Please consider available planting space when selecting the type of tree to request. Tree species that mature into large trees will not be planted beneath the canopy of an existing healthy tree or overhead utility lines. Also consider visibility triangles at street intersections and at sidewalk and driveway intersections.

Applicants who have the required growth space and are approved will receive a 30 gallon tree at no cost. The tree will be approximately 10 feet tall and two inches (2") in caliper. Larger trees may be purchased at the rates included on the Tree Trust application. The trees will be planted, staked, mulched and fertilized by the City. The applicant will be responsible for maintenance after planting.

The Tree Trust was established as a means to ensure the regeneration and diversity of the City's Urban Forest. The Tree Trust is funded by residents and contractors who remove trees for the construction of homes, garages, pools or other structures and do not have enough space on their lot to plant the minimum required replacement plantings. Contact Craig Koehl, Urban Forester, at (713) 662-5313 or ckoehl@westutx.gov if you have questions or would like additional information. Applications will be accepted until October 14, 2016, and tree planting is planned for December 2016.

Save the date!

Fall Shredding Event
Saturday, November 5, 2016
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

www.westutx.gov/specialevents