



City Currents

Summer 2017



Welcome to the Summertime, Neighbors!



West University Place has been recognized as one of the most prosperous and well-educated communities in the country, possessing an extraordinary quality of life and livability. Overall you are one of the most “tech savvy” populations ever, and therefore I wanted to be assured that you are aware of an exceptional resource available at the touch of your fingertips.

The program is called “Click West U” and has been available to residents since 2012. You can access it directly by just pulling up the City website (www.westutx.gov) and selecting the button/icon on the home page to enter a concern or submit a request for service. There is also a list of Frequently Asked Questions that may give you an answer without needing to create a service request.

In addition, the City has an app for you! The Click West U mobile app can be downloaded free of charge by searching for “GORquest” (all one word) in the Apple App store or Android Market. Once you download it to the iPhone, Android or tablet, open the application, select an issue, take a picture, and tap submit. The phone or tablet records the GPS coordinates that give an exact location and sends the request directly to the appropriate employee. Other web-enabled mobile devices can browse the City website and use the mobile version of Click West U to submit requests.

Click West U should not be used for emergencies or events in progress that require an immediate response. For non-emergency events that require immediate attention, call (713) 662-0330. In the event of an emergency, dial 911.

After entering a request online or via mobile app, you will receive a message indicating the expected turnaround time for a response from the service request. A tracking number will also be provided to easily check the status of the request online or by calling in. The appropriate City staff member will review the request and follow up with you directly, if necessary. Staff will log all contacts in the system and you will be notified of the solution to ensure the issue has reached a satisfactory resolution. Google Map functionality will help pinpoint the exact location of the issue, and multiple language options are available.

Please take a moment and log, don't blog! Stick with the Click!

Wishing you and your families the absolute greatest summer ever!

From Council Member Kellye Burke



“What time does the pool open?” is something I'm asked every day, all summer long. Colonial Park Pool is a mainstay of my children's summer experience. Not only do they love swimming, playing and seeing friends, but their time at Colonial Park Pool creates joyful and lasting childhood memories.

Like all of you, we chose to live in West U for its outstanding quality of life, and in summer particularly, our little city really does pull out all the stops. At Colonial Park Pool alone, we have daily swimming, Party on the Patio and Dive-In Movies. Or you can forgo the outdoors and swim laps at the Rec Center. Residents — from our youngest to our oldest — have an incredible choice of summer classes, everything from learning how to play chess to training for a triathlon. And who doesn't love a parade, especially when it involves children on tricked out tricycles and Grandpa in an Uncle Sam hat? Our annual Independence Day Bike Parade every July 4th is a must for everyone. It's so fun to have a quintessential small town parade right in the middle of America's fourth largest city.

And even when we are away on trips or vacation, the City of West U staff and our neighbors still take care of us. If you do plan

to be away this summer, you can take advantage of the Vacation House Watch program through the West U Police Department. Simply stop by the Police Station and fill out a card or complete the online form. Patrol officers will conduct periodic checks of your home while you are away. As always, make arrangements to have your newspapers and mail picked up or held so that your home looks lived in, and tell your neighbors when you'll be leaving and returning.

Finally, even though we have weekly mosquito spraying, your neighbors will thank you for keeping an eye out for any standing water on your property (pet watering bowls, fountains, overwatering puddles) where mosquitoes can flourish.

Summer is a great time of year for sun, fun, family and friends; enjoy all the bounty of events and the wonderful season here in West U!

Helpful links

Colonial Park Pool
www.westutx.gov/colonial

Activities & Events
www.westutx.gov/parks

Vacation House Watch
www.westutx.gov/229/House-Watch

Mosquito Control
www.westutx.gov/271/Mosquito-Control

Low-Hanging Vegetation and Sight Obstructions Cause Problems for West U Drivers and City Vehicles!

West U is known for many natural attributes, especially for having an abundance of trees and shrubs throughout the neighborhood. While such abundance is aesthetically and environmentally pleasing, it is also a GROWING problem that has adverse effects on motorists and pedestrians, as well as on City services ranging from public safety, trash/recycling collection and street sweeping.

Many property owners are unaware that they can be held liable for damage caused by vegetation hanging too low or extending into the roadway. Additionally, property owners can also be held liable for contributing to accidents when vegetation obscures a regulatory sign (such as a stop sign) or interferes with or blocks a driver's visibility.

Regulatory Sign Obstruction

Traffic control devices (regulatory signs, warning signs, traffic signals, etc.) must be completely and continuously visible to motorists at all times.

One of the biggest problems we experience in West U is vegetation obstructing stop and yield signs. Signs can be blocked by vegetation a few feet or 200 feet (one to four homes) away from the sign. This happens when trees or shrubs grow past the curb or hang too low over the street. So if you live within four lots of any regulatory signs, please ensure that your vegetation does not grow too low or extend into the roadway.

Below are before and after photos of a stop sign sight visibility obstruction:

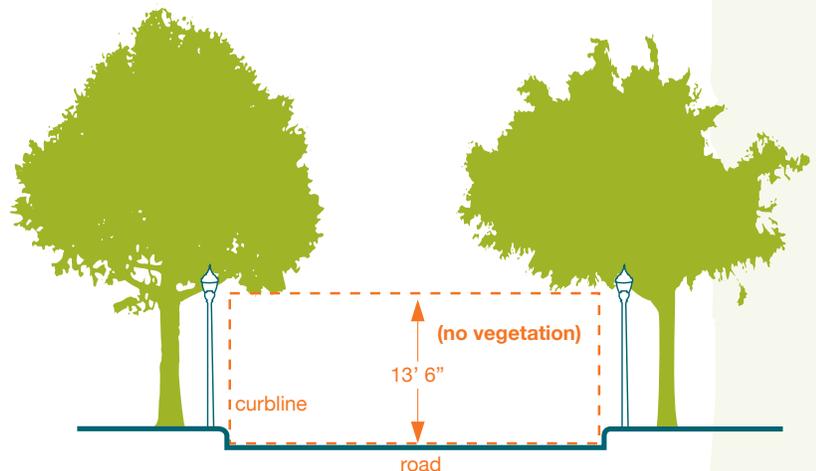


Clearance Over Roadways

The City requires vegetation over the roadway be maintained at a minimum height of 13'-6" extending from curb to curb (see the diagram to the right). This ensures adequate clearance for all types of vehicles (fire trucks, ambulances, garbage trucks, street sweeper, etc.) that are on the road daily providing essential City services or simply passing through.

A good rule of thumb when determining if you need to trim your trees is to look at the streetlights. If the limbs are below the top of the light, then they need to be trimmed. The top of the light is approximately 15 feet above the street.

If you have any questions concerning road or sign clearance related to tree height, please contact the West U Public Works Department at (713) 662-5839.



The care and maintenance of all trees in the public right-of-way is the responsibility of the property owner.

Friends of West U Parks

October 21 – 22 is the weekend for the next highly anticipated family campout known throughout our community and beyond as Fathers & Flashlights. Since its inaugural year in 2007, the campout has been instrumental in raising funds for the continued improvement and development of West U parks. Campers can look forward to fun activities such as live catch and release fishing, pony rides, an obstacle course and much more, thanks to Friends underwriters, sponsors and in-kind donors who make this event possible. Alison and Gary Moorhead, Julia and Carl Williams and Mitra and Josh Woody are the Father & Flashlights co-chairs for 2017. “We are excited to have these amazing couples on board to co-chair one of the neighborhood’s most popular events,” says Friends Executive Director Donna LaMond. Registration for the campout will be online only. To be eligible to participate in the event as a camper, you must live in the area zoned for West University Elementary School, or be an underwriter or sponsor at qualifying levels. Returning 2016 camper registration will begin in August; the date will be announced soon. New camper registration will also be online at a later date. Registration details will be emailed out and also made available on the Friends website, www.westuparks.org. To receive any Fathers & Flashlights and other Friends emails, please visit the Friends website and sign up to receive the newsletter. If you have received emails in the past from Friends and your email address has changed, please call the Friends office at (713) 662-7430 or email Donna LaMond at DLaMond@WestUTX.gov.



Previous co-chairs hand off the torch to new co-chairs for 2017 and 2018

Left to right: Kara Schaefer, Mitra Woody, Julia Williams, Alison Moorhead, Kelly Butler and Kristine Martinez



Star Citizen Award honorees and Friends board members

Friends Star Citizen Awards were presented at the May 10 Friends board meeting and annual appreciation luncheon held at Cyclone Anaya’s in Rice Village. Awards were presented to Sami and Jud Morrison and Peyton and Alex Popp for co-chairing Park Lovers’ Ball 2017 held last February, which raised over \$364,000 for our parks. Star Citizen Awards were also presented to Kelly and Sean Butler, Kristine and Joaquin Martinez, and Kara and Curt Schaefer for co-chairing Fathers & Flashlights in 2015 and 2016, which collectively raised \$234,000 for West U parks. A surprise Star Citizen Award was also presented to Anna Stewart for her above and beyond efforts on behalf of Friends for the past four-plus years. Mayor Susan Sample presented the awards.

Park Lovers’ Ball 2018 — Mark your calendars for Saturday, February 10, 2018, as we celebrate 27 years of the ball. It will be held at the Hilton Americas-Houston and the event chairs are Jennifer and Dan Blum and Jennifer and William Swallen.

Friends fundraising continues year round with the stork program to announce new arrivals, community and business partnerships, memorials and honorariums, pavers, benches and tree sales. For more information, please visit the Friends website, www.westuparks.org, call (713) 662-7430 or stop by the Friends of West U Parks office located in the West U Recreation Center, 4210 Bellaire Blvd.

Fall 2017 Class Registration

Discover a new craft or polish a skill for great benefits without investing a lot of time or money. Most fall classes begin in September. They include dance, tennis, pilates, yoga, swimming, gymnastics, CPR and so much more!

*Priority Registration

(for those currently enrolled in classes within the past 30 days)

Tuesday, July 25 – Monday, July 31

*online registration is not available

Resident Registration

Tuesday, August 1

Non-Resident Registration

Thursday, August 3

Complete your registration online 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.

Facility Maintenance

The West University Place Recreation Center will be closed from August 25 through September 4 for annual maintenance.

West U Recreation Center swimming pool users may use the UTHealth Auxiliary Enterprises Recreation Center swimming pool, located at 7779 Knight Road in Houston, during the closure per our exchange agreement. You must show your valid West U Rec Center Membership Card for entry. Log onto www.uthouston.edu/recreation-center or call (713) 500-8420 for hours and updated pool schedule information. Please note this exchange is for pool and locker room use only and is not valid for weight room, cardio room, racquetball membership or other areas of use.

During the closure, residents may call or visit Colonial Park Pool to sign up for classes, make tennis/racquetball/pavilion reservations, purchase memberships or get general Parks and Recreation information. Recreation Center staff will be temporarily relocated on-site at Colonial Park Pool, 4130 Byron, to conduct day-to-day business during the closure week.

The West University Place Recreation Center will resume its normal operational schedule at noon on September 4.

For more information, please visit www.westutx.gov or call:

- West U Recreation Center: (713) 662-7420 (this number will be rolled over to Colonial Park Pool during the closure week)
- Colonial Park Pool: (713) 662-7460

Independence Day Bike Parade

Families and kids of all ages are invited to participate in the Independence Day Bike Parade on Tuesday, July 4. Decorate bicycles, tricycles and wagons! The parade lines up on University Boulevard in front of West U Elementary at 8:45 am. The parade begins promptly at 9 am, proceeding west on University, turning south on Academy, then heading west on Byron and ending at Colonial Park, 4130 Byron Street. The West U Rotary Club will be serving up delicious hamburger and hotdog plates as a fundraiser benefiting the Challenger League. There will be plenty of food, fun and festivities for everyone to enjoy. Games take place from 9:15 am 12 pm at Colonial Park Pool. For more information, contact the Parks & Recreation Department at (713) 662-7420.

Members Only Dive-In Movie

Relax poolside while watching the movie *Moana* at Colonial Park Pool this summer. The pool will close at 7 pm on Friday, July 14, and reopen at 7:30 pm for the Colonial Park Pool Members Only Dive-In Movie. Admission is complimentary, but a current Colonial Park Pool membership must be shown for entry into the facility. Like other Dive-In Movies, the whole family can enjoy the movie from either the grass or the pool, but unlike other Dive-In Movies, members have it all to themselves. If you don't have a Colonial Park Pool Membership, you can still purchase the 2017 season pass at Colonial Park Pool or the Recreation Center!

Dive-In Movie Series

Join us at Colonial Park Pool from 7:30 – 9:30 pm on July 28 and August 11 for this year's Friday night Dive-In Movie Series. Enjoy a family-friendly movie from the grass or pool and grab a snack at the concessions stand. Admission to the movie will be complimentary, but if you or your children would like to enjoy the movie from the pool, regular pool admission fees do apply. For more information about scheduled movies, fees and event details, please visit www.westutx.gov/events or call Colonial Park Pool at (713) 662-7460 or the West U Recreation Center at (713) 662-7420.

West U Halloween Dash and Kids Fun Run presented by Texas Orthopedic Hospital

Register now for the 7th annual West U Halloween Dash and Kids Fun Run on Saturday, October 28. The Dash is a chip-timed 5K race through the beautiful, tree-lined streets of West U. The Kids 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. You can register at www.westutx.gov/funrun.

Events to Look Forward to

Movies in the Park

Colonial Park Pavilion, 4130 Byron, at 7 pm

October 13

October 20 (Following Full Moon Fest!)

TRASH, RECYCLING AND YARD WASTE – When Can I Place Items Out for Pickup?

In order to avoid special collection fees (min. \$50) and to ensure collection of items placed curbside, please have your items at the curb between the following times:

- No sooner than 6 pm the day before scheduled collection
- No later than 8 am the day of collection

Please note — tree limbs and branches may be placed curbside three (3) days prior to your collection day, but no sooner. These are the only items that can be placed curbside outside of the hours listed above.

If you are not sure of your collection schedule, here are a few ways to find out.

- Download our new “West U Collects” app for your Apple or Android device. Visit www.westutx.gov/westucollects for more details.
- Visit www.westutx.gov/trash

Do you still have questions? Please contact our Public Works Department at (713) 662-5839 or email us at pwinfo@westutx.gov.

No Knock List

Commercial solicitors are required to register with the City of West University Place before they can legally go door-to-door.

The City allows residents who do not want commercial solicitors to come to their door to add their address to a do-not-disturb “No Knock” list that is provided to all registered solicitors. Solicitors will only receive the house number and street, and if they seek business at any of the addresses on this list, they may be subject to citation or arrest.

If your address is on the No Knock list and a solicitor comes to your residence, contact the West University Place Police Department so that we can take the appropriate action.

The No Knock list is by no means going to prevent every solicitor from coming to your house, but what it will do is give the Police Department the tools needed to enforce your request to keep them off of your property. It is the resident’s responsibility to ensure that the department has updated address and resident contact information. If you have moved to another address within West U, you must sign up again.

You can download the form to update your information or register by going to the following link: www.westutx.gov/238/No-Knock

Once you have completed the form, print it, sign it, and return it to the Police Department in person or via mail to:

No Knock
3800 University Boulevard
West University Place, TX 77005

We must have the signed original. Once the form is on file with the Police Department, we can take action.

Other Privacy Options

If you do not want to join the No Knock list but still wish to prevent commercial solicitors from bothering you at your home, or if you want to reinforce your desire not to be disturbed, you may post a sign meeting these criteria:

- The sign says “No Solicitors.”
- It is plainly legible by persons with normal eyesight standing at the principal entrance to the residence.
- It is affixed within 12 inches of the doorbell, door knob or latches of the outer door (or gate) at the principal entrance.

Just a Reminder to Check Your House and Yard for Water Leaks

Summer is here and now is a good time to give your house and yard a thorough review to find and fix any leaks. Water usage in West U hits its peak from June through September, and water leaks or irrigation systems that are not programmed correctly will cost you money and waste water.

House Leaks – Some leaks are obvious and others not so obvious. One that seems to go unnoticed the longest is a leak in your toilet between the reservoir and the bowl. Sometimes you will hear the tank refill or a water-running sound, but other times the leak is so subtle you don't hear anything. If you think your tank may be leaking, a good way to test your toilet is with food coloring. Red food coloring is usually the best but any dark color will work. Use the following steps to test your toilet:

1. Remove the cover from the back of the toilet to expose the reservoir.
2. Mix in enough of the food coloring to create dark-colored water in the reservoir.
3. Do not flush the toilet for 15 minutes.
4. If the color shows in the toilet bowl before it is flushed, there is a leak between the tank and bowl. Contact a plumber unless you are handy at do-it-yourself projects. YouTube is a good reference for videos on replacing the components of a toilet tank.

Irrigation System Leak – Improper programming or leaks in your system may also go unnoticed for a long time. Unnecessary watering or leaks will cost you a lot of money over time and will waste huge amounts of water. Use the following steps to check your irrigation system for leaks or unnecessary watering:

1. Check each sprinkler head to be sure no water is seeping from it when the system is not operating. If water is seeping out when the system is off, one of your automatic valves is not functioning properly.
2. Run each zone and walk along the system looking for water coming from anywhere other than a sprinkler head. If water is coming from anywhere other than a head, you could have a broken pipe in your system.
3. Check your system for overwatering. If you notice water pooling in your yard or flowing into the street, you may have your system programmed improperly and the system may be running longer than it needs to water your yard.

If you suspect a leak or that your system may be improperly programmed, please contact a qualified technician to make repairs or for help with programming your system properly.

The City of West U wants to thank you for doing your part to help conserve water and wishes you a safe and wonderful summer!

For more information on water conservation, please visit www.westutx.gov/345/water-conservation

Curbside Yard Waste Disposal Guide

In order for yard waste to be collected curbside, grass and leaves need to be bagged in either kraft paper bags or compostable plastic bags.

The following bags are acceptable:



Compostable Plastic Bags

Kraft Paper Bags

Bags shown as examples only

It is important to note that a wide variety of bags are marketed as lawn and leaf bags or biodegradable yard bags. These types of bags are NOT ACCEPTABLE as they are NOT compostable.

Here are a few examples of unacceptable bags:



Please ensure when you are purchasing compostable plastic bags, that the package states "Compostable" and/or has one of the following logos:



When placing limbs curbside for collection, ensure they are no larger than three inches (3") in diameter and are properly bound/stacked no more than four feet (4') long, four feet (4') in width and no higher than three feet (3') high. (Remember: Limbs should be placed 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. Yard waste is collected on the same day as recycling.

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

City Currents

A Newsletter for the citizens of
City of West University Place

Summer 2017



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

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
HOUSTON, TX
PERMIT NO. 134

CITY OF WEST U OFFICIALS

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS Mayor Susan Sample
Mayor Pro-Tem Wayne J. Franklin
Kellye Burke
Bob Higley
Mardi Turner

CITY MANAGER Chris Peifer
cpeifer@westutx.gov

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

Too Much Junk Mail? Too Much Junk Mail!

When you receive your mail, do you imagine yourself as a hamster on an exercise wheel while you sort through it? And if your mail is like every other household's, most of it is junk! Estimates indicate that the average American household receives 848 pieces of junk mail annually, the equivalent of approximately 41 pounds and equal to one and a half trees. In addition, you spend about 70 hours a year dealing with junk mail. For our particular community, these numbers are probably gross underestimates.

What's junk mail? It's everything in your mailbox you didn't ask for and don't want — including credit card offers, catalogs, flyers, coupons, phone books and other items.

What's the environmental impact of junk mail?

- More than 100 million trees are lost for all US households combined, the equivalent of Rocky Mountain National Park being deforested three times per year.
- 5.6 million pounds of catalogs and direct mail advertisements are sent to landfills annually.
- The US spends approximately \$370 million annually to dispose of junk mail that isn't recycled.
- Mostly because of deforestation, junk mail manufacturing creates as much greenhouse gas emissions as 3.7 million cars.

Let's go back to the hamster (or one of us) on the exercise wheel. Think about the time it takes to sort through junk mail and the privacy concerns related to sharing your name, address and buying habits. You receive mailings that could put your identity at risk if they end up in the wrong hands. All of this is in addition to the clutter while you sort and clip off address labels, if this is your concern. Or maybe you're more concerned about the environmental impact. Whatever your motivation, there are solutions to this. Yes, recycling junk mail is definitely better than sending it to the landfill, but reducing the amount sent to your household is the optimal solution.

Here are some quick ways to reduce your incoming junk mail:

1. Go to www.ecocycle.org/junkmail (How to Stop Junk Mail in 6 Easy Steps). The site provides links to mail preference services, credit card solicitations, telephone books, charities, promo products and direct marketers. The services provided are free and keep you off lists for five years. This site also includes suggestions on how to keep off junk mail lists.
2. The following companies charge fees to provide this service for you: Paper Karma, www.paperkarma.com, and 41 Pounds, www.41pounds.org. 41Pounds charges \$35 for five years. Ten dollars of this fee is donated to community environmental projects.