



City Currents

Spring 2015



From the Mayor's Desk

As the months of my term as your Mayor wind down, I want to take this one last opportunity to say thank you for your involvement and support in the big decisions we faced over the past four years. Thank you for reaching out to us, for attending City Council meetings and for your interest in making West U the best community possible. Every decision this council made was made with that end in mind and your input has been instrumental in every one of those decisions.



Our time on the Council is coming to an end, but just like you each of us will remain engaged citizens. Our incoming Mayor and Council members will have their own big decisions to make and to take the best course, they will need the same engagement you showed us. I personally look forward to assisting and supporting them in any way possible. I ask that you please continue your participation as well. It is how our city will stay not only viable, but will thrive no matter how tough the issues.

From Council Member Ed Heathcott

In May 2015, I will be completing my second term on the West University City Council. Not having staggered terms, the other three Council members will also be completing their terms. The reason is term limits.



I do not believe limiting a Council member to a total of four years of service (two terms) before leaving office is in the best interest of the citizens of West University. My opinion is based on my having served a total of 12 years on city councils in two different cities.

I also strongly believe staggered terms would be advisable, bringing continuity both to understanding of city government and of actions taken by prior councils.

Many of the issues coming before Council are complex. Freshman Council members, although many times experienced in the business world, do not initially have the knowledge of government management, both legal and regulatory, to deal effectively with city issues.

I can assure you the decisions made by the current West U Council in our second term were much better formed because of our two years of prior service. In my prior city service, decisions made in my fourth term were better because of the experience of my first three terms.

The most significant short-coming in two terms (four years) of service is the temptation to delay difficult issues and leave them for the next Council. It is Council's responsibility, not the responsibility of City Staff, to form long term thinking.

In the next few years, West U will have a Charter Review Commission as required by law. This Commission is the only authority having the power to recommend a change in the City's Charter, which in turn must be approved by City Council and then voted on by city residents. I believe it is in the best interest of the citizens to have experienced Council members. The next time this issue is discussed, please consider three or four terms of service as well as the institution of mandatory staggered terms.

Notice of The May 9, 2015 General Election

Registered voters of West University Place are encouraged to vote on May 9, 2015, in the general election to elect a Mayor and four Council Members.

When to vote on Election Day

Polling place will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Where to vote on Election Day

City Hall, 3800 University Boulevard

Candidates on the Ballot for Mayor

Two-year term – Vote for none or one

- Susan Sample

Candidates on the Ballot for Council

Two-year term – Vote for none, one, two, three or four

- Burt Ballanfant
- Brennan Reilly
- Philip J. Snyder
- Sonny Brandtner
- Mardi Turner
- Steven Segal
- Bob Kelly
- Bruce Beneke

Important Dates

April 9: Last Day to Register to Vote and Change Address.

This is the last day to register to vote or make a change of address that will be effective for this election. Contact the Harris County Clerk's Office.

April 24: Deadline to Submit Application for Ballot by Mail (in person by 5:30 p.m.)

Application for Ballot by Mail must be received in person no later than the close of business.

April 30: Deadline to Submit Application for Ballot by Mail (by mail by 5:30 p.m.)

Application for Ballot by Mail must be received by mail no later than the close of business.

April 27 – May 5: Early Voting

Monday – Friday by personal appearance in the City Hall Council Chambers (3800 University Boulevard). Hours of Early Voting are:

April 27 – May 5: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

May 4 – May 5: 7 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Please contact City Secretary Thelma Lenz at (713) 662-58813 or at tlenz@westutx.gov for more information or if you would like to obtain this and other information in Spanish.

Por favor, póngase en contacto con Secretaría del Ayuntamiento Thelma Lenz en (713) 662-58813 o al tlenz@westutx.gov si tiene más preguntas o inquietudes.

City Council Proceeds with Public Works Maintenance Facility Relocation

At a recent City Council meeting, the West U City Council instructed the City Manager to move forward with the relocation of the Public Works Maintenance Facility. City Council also discussed the results of a recently implemented city survey of the Facility Master Planning project and property exchange with West University Baptist Church.

“We are satisfied with the citizen survey results presented at last night’s City Council workshop,” said West U Mayor Bob Fry. “These results validate the course we are on and we are now ready to move forward.”

The Public Works Maintenance Facility will be relocated from the northeast corner of Milton at College to the former West U RecycleExpress location at 5004 Dincans Street. Based on the resident input, the current maintenance facility will be demolished, and the lot is being considered by West U and the West University Baptist Church as part of a possible property exchange. The cost of a new maintenance facility is estimated to be \$2 million, which would equal approximately \$1.32 more in the average monthly tax bill for a West U resident. The West U City Council approved the architectural design contract of the Dincans Public Works Maintenance Facility and added the animal shelter portion to the project, which was previously funded in 2014, but put on hold until 2015.

City Survey Results

- 49.3 percent of the respondents prefer City Council to proceed with the previously discussed property exchange with West University Baptist Church and the relocation of the West U Public Works Maintenance Facility. By contrast, 35.5 percent of the respondents opposed this option.
- 40.8 percent of the respondents opposed no action from the City Council on this issue, recognizing that the West University Baptist Church would proceed with its initial plan to build on their current property. By contrast, 28.7 percent of the respondents supported no action from the City Council.
- The respondents who have followed the municipal land use issue very closely are more likely to oppose City Council to exchange the property and relocate the maintenance facility. By contrast, those who have paid attention to the municipal land use issue somewhat closely, only a little, or not at all are more likely to oppose City Council not to take action.
- Out of 1300 randomly mailed surveys to West U registered voters, 578 entries were completed for a response rate of 45.8 percent. According to the Hobby Center, this is a statistically sound sample representative of all West U households.

The survey can be accessed in its entirety by visiting www.westutx.gov.

Parks and Recreation

Friends of West U Parks



Close to 700 people attended the 24th annual Park Lovers' Ball on February 7, themed "Deeply Rooted", raising over \$441,000! Setting the scene, charming folk duo Issac and Adele performed while people entered the Omni Hotel ballroom area. Friends and neighbors enjoyed the live music while sipping on cocktails, taking part in the Whiskey Toss and Wine Pull, placing their bids in the Silent Auction and getting their names on the Big Board. There was a lot of "winning" to be had as there were more than 150 fabulous packages and items in the Silent Auction, a new grab bag station and 10 bigger ticket packages available on the Big Board. Attendees were also sure to purchase their "blinky rings" for the must play Heads or Tails game sponsored by Claudette Toomey of Taylor Real Estate.

This year's Park Lovers' Ball Co-chairs, Michele and Charles Still, Adrienne and William Vanderbloemen, and Christi and John Young left no detail of the evening overlooked. The décor was over the top. The Live Auction kept the excitement alive in the ballroom with a Houston Texans experience, a one week stay at a ski-in ski-out Vail home, an autographed J.J. Watt jersey with sideline experience package, and dinner for 14 with Megan and Brian Cushing at Tiny's No. 5. One of the most exciting items of the evening was an amazing Southern Africa photographic safari donated by West U

resident Tamsyn Fricker of Travel Artistry Africa.

The rest of the evening was spent dancing to tunes spun by DJ SeeBass. The ballroom was full of laughter, socializing and conversations with friends new and old. A grand time was had by all who attended thanks to the hard work and

passion of the event Chairs and their leadership committee.

The Honorary Chairs for the evening were Sue and Gary Hanna. 15 years ago the Hanna's moved to Houston. Getting involved in the Friends of West University Place Parks Fund, Inc., while being an invaluable asset to West U by supporting the parks that make the neighborhood so great, helped the Hanna's get to know the people in the community, easing their transition into calling Houston their home. Sue has been involved with the organization since 2000, chaired the Park Lovers' Ball in 2006, and West University parks have exceeded her expectations, becoming the source of many of her dearest friendships and memories. The Hanna's are fond of

not only the organization, but the people involved that make it great. Sue remains active on the Friends of West University Place Parks Fund Advisory Board.

Michele and Charles Still, Adrienne and William Vanderbloemen, and Christi and John Young would like to thank all who attended Park Lovers' Ball 2015. They would also like to thank returning and new sponsors and supporters, Mary Margaret and Russ Schulze, Tudor, Pickering, Holt & Co, Andrea and John T. Young, Jr., BB&T, CenterPoint Energy, Sue and Gary Hanna, Marvin/Nickerson/Still/Vanderbloemen/Young Families, and Molly and Phil Scioli, to name just a few of the generous supporters.

The date is set for October 3 and 4 for the annual Fathers & Flashlights campout on the fields surrounding West University Elementary School. Event Co-chairs, Kelly and Sean Butler, Kristine and Joaquin Martinez, and Kara and Curt Schaefer are busy planning another memorable campout for fathers and their children.



Party on The Patio Concert Series

**Fridays; June 5, 12, 19, 26; 7 – 9 pm;
Colonial Park Pool Deck, 4130 Byron**

Bring your lawn chairs and blankets, sit back and enjoy a fantastic lineup of some of Houston's best-known bands! The concert admission is complimentary, but if you wish to swim, regular pool admission is required.

June 5: The Chromatics (80's)

June 12: Yelba's Variety Band (Current Hits)

June 19: The Fab Five (Beatles/60's)

June 26: Grady Gaines and the Texas Upsetters (Soul)

The Party on the Patio Concert Series is sponsored by Frost Bank and benefits the Friends of West University Parks Fund, Inc.



Piranhas Swim Team Starts May 11, 2015

West U Piranhas begin their 2015 season with practices Monday through Thursday from 4 – 7 p.m., May 11 – May 28 at the Recreation Center Pool. Lap lane availability during this time will be extremely limited, if available at all. Practices in June are 7 – 9 a.m. and lap lanes will not be available during this timeframe. Registration for swim team begins April 1, with tryouts on May 8 from 6 – 7 p.m. Additional swim team information can be found at www.westupiranhas.com.

Summer Registration Dates

West U Summer programs are here! Are you looking to continue your favorite programs that you have participated in within 30 days, this summer? Then take advantage of priority registration which starts April 7 at 5 a.m. at the West University Recreation Center, 4210 Bellaire Blvd. *(Priority registration is not available online.) If you are looking to try something new and you are a resident, then register as early as April 14 both at the Rec Center and online! If you don't live in West U, but you still want to try our amazing programs, then come on over, we'd love to have you! Registration for non-residents starts shortly after, on April 16. Check out all our programs in advance by browsing through our website www.westutx.gov/reg.

Music Under the Stars: Classical Concert Series

Each concert is an informal event designed for newcomers and symphony enthusiasts alike. The evening begins at 7 p.m. Remember to bring a blanket and picnic basket for an evening of classical music in the park. You will be entertained by some of the finest classical ensembles in the Houston area as shown below. For more information call (713) 662-7420 or go to www.westutx.gov.

Location: Colonial Park under the Pavilion

Time: 7 – 9 p.m.

Performances by:

April 10 – River Oaks Chamber Orchestra

April 17 – Zeger Strings

April 24 – Cadenza String Quartet

Calling All Active Adults

Are you 55 years or older? Are you looking for some fun and exciting things to do in your own community? Do you have a skill or a talent that you would like to offer Senior Services? If you answered yes to any of these questions - or if you would like to learn more about everything offered at the West University Place Community Building (6104 Auden Street) visit www.westutx.gov/senior-services to view the *Hi Neighbor* Newsletter in its entirety.



Colonial Park Pool Opening



It's time to celebrate the sun once again! Colonial Park Pool Members are welcome to join us for a special members only 2015 Summer Season kickoff party on Saturday, April 25 from 10 a.m. – 7 p.m. and Sunday, April 26 from 12 noon – 7 p.m. Games and entertainment always make a day at the pool even better. Don't have a membership yet? Just purchase one at the door to get into the party!

**Colonial Park Pool opens to the general public on Saturday, May 2.
Don't forget your swim suit!**

Mom's Spa Day

All West U mothers are invited to come get a little R & R before their special day at Colonial Park Pool on Saturday, May 9 from 9 – 11 a.m.! Come out to enjoy a kid-free day by the pool complete with massages, breakfast and mimosas. Each mother will get the opportunity to win raffle prizes and all will leave with their own Mother's Day gift courtesy of the West U Parks and Recreation Department. The event is limited to the first 60 registrants. Priority registration for Colonial Park Pool Members (2015 Membership holders only) begins April 1. Open registration begins April 15. Event is \$10 for non-members. For information about registering for this event, please call (713) 662-7420 or go to www.westutx.gov/events. **Note:** Colonial Park Pool will open to the public at noon after the event

Ice Cream Social

Colonial Park Pool members are invited to enjoy the end of the 2014 – 2015 school year at Colonial Park Pool on May 29th from 5 – 7 p.m. Celebrate with music and complimentary sundaes after your last day of school. This event is exclusive to Colonial Park Pool Members (2015 Membership holders only) members, no exceptions.

Calling all West U dads!

Head out to Colonial Park Pool on June 21 from 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. for your very own Father's Day party. Enjoy a morning at the pool with other West U dads complete with games, beer and food. No registration is required. Event is complimentary to Colonial Park Pool Members (2015 Membership holders only) members and \$10 for non-member residents.

Safety and Public Works

The Effects of Low Vegetation Over City Streets

Did you know that care and maintenance of the trees is the responsibility of the property owner? Did you also know that you may be held liable for damage to vehicles (of legal height) caused by vegetation that hangs to low or extends into the roadway?



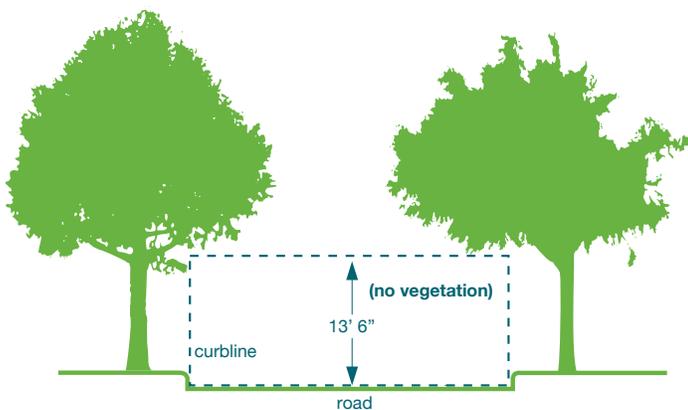
Due to vegetation overhanging the road the sweeper cannot sweep the area along the curb. Please ensure that vegetation around your home does not extend into or hang to low over the streets

The City's Code requires a roadway clearance height of 13'-6" from curb to curb (see diagram below). This ensures adequate clearance for all types of vehicles from fire trucks, ambulances to garbage trucks and the street sweeper.

Please be aware that over the next few months the City will be contacting homeowners to remove vegetation that is either too low, or extends into the roadway. Additionally, the City is no longer sweeping streets where the vegetation extends or hangs to low over the road. This prevents unnecessary damage to the street sweeper, cost to the taxpayer and days missed sweeping due to repairs.

This spring, please ensure that your trees are pruned to the required height of 13'-6" over the roadway and do not extend past the curb into the street.

If you have any questions concerning road clearance, please contact the West U Public Works Department Traffic Control at (713) 662-5839.



Minimum Road Clearance

Police Department

As spring approaches and the weather warms up, most of us find ourselves wanting to get out of the house and get active. For most, this means a leisurely walk around the neighborhood or even a nice long bike ride to stretch out those winter legs.

The following are a few tips and reminders to help keep us all safe and within the law while sharing the road with motorists:

- Wear bright/light colored clothing and reflective materials to enhance visibility.
- Always wear your helmet and other safety apparel.
- Auto cyclist and Auto Pedestrian accidents occur much more frequently than you may think. Increasing your level of visibility can greatly reduce this risk.
- When cycling at night, bikes are required by law to have forward facing head lamps and red tail lamps. These items can be found at your local bike shop and are easy to install and well worth the investment.
- Carry a flashlight when walking at night.
- Cross the street in well-lit areas at night.
- Stand clear of buses, hedges, parked cars, or other obstacles before crossing so drivers can see you.



Be Smart, Alert and Obey the Law: Avoid Dangerous Behaviors

- State law requires that we always walk on the sidewalk where one is available. In locations where there are no sidewalks, always walk facing traffic or consider an alternate route.
- Cyclists are subject to the same laws as motorists while using the roadway. Always stay as far right as possible and make sure to stop at stop signs as well.
- Be alert to engine noise or backup lights on cars when in parking lots, crossing driveways and near on-street parking spaces.
- Don't wear headphones or talk on a cell phone at any time you find yourself on the roadway.

Be Careful at Crossings: Look Before You Go

- Cross streets at marked crosswalks or intersections, when possible.
- Look left, right, and left again before crossing a street.
- Watch for turning vehicles. Make sure the driver sees you and will stop for you.
- Look across ALL lanes you must cross and visually clear each lane before proceeding. Even if one motorist stops, do not presume drivers in other lanes can see you and will stop for you.
- Never assume vehicles will stop. Make eye contact with drivers; don't just look at the vehicle. If a driver is on a cell phone, he or she may not be paying enough attention to drive safely.

Always carry your phone with you during these times and call immediately to report any unsafe or suspicious activity you observe.

Grade Your Recycling and Waste Reduction Effort

Across the country communities are setting Zero Waste goals, while West U is holding steady with a recycling rate of 25-27 percent, well below the national average of 34 percent. A rate of 27 percent indicates that residents are recycling 27 percent of their household waste and sending the rest to a landfill. But did you know that more than 60 percent of your household waste is actually recyclable? and if recycled would earn every-one an “A”? Your choices make a difference. Be mindful when shopping, when you discard, and when you prepare your trash and recycling for curbside pick up. Reducing trash improves the health of the planet, saves natural resources, extends the life of landfills and saves all of us money. Help your household earn an “A” grade. Start small and work from there. Individual responsibility is the key. How would you grade your effort?

Which picture best reflects your recycling effort? (yard waste excluded)	Your Recycling Grade	Comments / Information
	A	<p>GRADING CRITERIUM: Trash is minimal and recycling is substantially larger. An awesome effort that sets a great example. Thank you.</p> <p>FACT: Food waste makes up 14 percent of household trash.</p> <p>WASTE REDUCTION TIP: Eat leftovers, compost your fruit and vegetable waste, and plan your meals to make full use of what you have on hand.</p>
	B	<p>GRADING CRITERIUM: Recycling greater than trash pile. Definitely headed in the right direction and having a positive impact on the environment, but you can do even better.</p> <p>FACT: Packaging makes up 30 percent of household waste.</p> <p>WASTE REDUCTION TIP: Select products with minimal packaging, buy from bulk bins, eliminate or cut back on single use items (like water bottles and plastic bags) and consume mindfully.</p>
	C	<p>GRADING CRITERIUM: Recycling and trash about the same size. You got the message, but need to tweak your effort. You can do it; it just takes more focus.</p> <p>FACT: Paper, junk mail, catalogs and paperboard (cereal boxes etc.) and cardboard make up 27 percent of household waste.</p> <p>WASTE REDUCTION TIP: Keep recyclable plastics, paper products and metal out of your trash. Maintain and repair durable products; borrow, rent and share items used infrequently; purchase products with recycled content.</p>
	D	<p>GRADING CRITERIUM: Recycling smaller than trash. We know you can do better. Start by reviewing your curbside recycling guidelines at the City's website or Earth 911. com's "recycle search" where you can learn where to recycle more than 350 different materials.</p> <p>FACT: The recyclables in the U.S. waste stream are worth \$7 billion, if recycled.</p> <p>WASTE REDUCTION TIP: None of the following should be in your trash: newspapers, junk mail, cartons, cereal boxes, metal cans, plastic bottles and containers, glass bottles and jars, lids and more. Recycle them curbside.</p>
	F	<p>GRADING CRITERIUM: NO recycling. Would you tolerate an “F” from your child? Your Recycling Board is eager to help you bring up your “recycling grade”. Just ask us how</p> <p>FACT: Over 91 percent of West U residents recycle. The “A” and “B” residents are actually subsidizing “F’s” trash collection.</p> <p>WASTE REDUCTION TIP: Resolve to recycle more and waste less. Start small and make sure all useful items you no longer want are donated, sold or passed along for reuse. Recycling in West U is easy. All recyclable plastic, paper and metals can go in the blue bin. Paper bags and cardboard boxes are also acceptable to hold curbside recycling.</p>

City Currents

A Newsletter for the citizens of
City of West University Place

Spring 2015



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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Mayor Pro-Tem Susan Sample
Ed Heathcott
Joan Johnson
Dick Yehle

CITY MANAGER Michael Ross
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City Currents is a quarterly publication and is printed on recycled paper.

For questions and comments about *City Currents*, contact Maura Leon Barber at (713) 662-5384 or mleon@westutx.gov.

National Flood Insurance Program changes coming in April 2015

Over the past several years, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) has undergone several changes. In 2012, the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act (BW12) was implemented to make the NFIP more financially and structurally sound. The purpose of the legislation was to change the way the NFIP operates and to raise rates to reflect true flood risk. As implementation moved forward, constituent concerns over flood insurance premium increases prompted legislative efforts to modify some of the BW-12 reforms. The NFIP is in the process of implementing congressionally mandated reforms required by the Homeowner Flood Affordability Act of 2014 (HFIAA) that repeal and modify BW12. Effective April 1, 2015, a number of NFIP program changes will be introduced, including:

- An increase in the Reserve Fund Assessment to help cover costs when claims exceed the annual premium collected by the NFIP.
- Implementation of an annual surcharge on all new and renewed policies based on the occupancy type of the insured building.
- An additional deductible option of \$10,000 which must apply to both building and contents.
- An increase in the Federal Policy Fee of \$1 for most policies.
- Rate increases for most policies are capped at 15 percent. The annual surcharge and Federal Policy Fee are not included in the rate calculation and could result in the total amount charged a policyholder increasing by more than 18 percent.

More information and guidance can be located at FEMA's website fema.gov and by using the search feature for WYO Bulletin (W-14053) and the Flood Insurance Manual.

2015 Holiday Schedule Curbside Trash & Recycling Collection

In 2015, the City is making some adjustments to your holiday trash and recycling collection:

Friday, April 3, Good Friday

No curbside trash or recycling will be collected this day. Recycling normally scheduled for Friday will be collected on Wednesday April 1. Please hold your trash to your next regularly scheduled day. There are no service changes to Monday, Tuesday or Thursday collection days.

Monday, May 25, Memorial Day

No curbside trash or recycling collection on Monday. Recycling normally scheduled for Monday will be collected on Wednesday, May 27. Please hold your trash to your next regularly scheduled day. There are no service changes to Tuesday, Thursday or Friday collection days.

Friday July 3, Fourth of July Observance

No curbside trash or recycling collection on Friday. Recycling normally scheduled for Friday will be collected on Wednesday, July 1. Please hold your trash to your next regularly scheduled day. There are no service changes to Monday, Tuesday or Thursday collection days.

For more information on Holiday Collection changes for the remainder of the year, please visit www.westutx.gov/trash and click the link for the Holiday schedule or contact Public Works at 713-662-5839.