

City Currents

Spring 2023



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Buffalo Speedway Project

The Buffalo Speedway Project is substantially complete! While this project has been disruptive to the city, it is important to note the accomplishments of the following major milestones associated with this project:

- Installation of a new waterline from Amherst Street to Bissonnet Street on the east side of Buffalo Speedway
- Installation of new storm sewer boxes running from Poor Farm Ditch behind Saint Vincent de Paul Catholic Church to Bissonnet Street
- Replacement of the roadway surface
- Replacement paving of all driveway aprons, curbs, and pedestrian ramps
- Installation of new traffic poles and traffic signals
- Placement of brick pavers at crosswalks and logos at all three signalized intersections.
- The last remaining “punch list” tasks will include sod replacement, irrigation repair, and final site dress-up of all yards along Buffalo Speedway.

As the project nears final completion, residents should continue to exercise caution around the construction site, plan travel routes accordingly, and expect delays. City staff is working with the contractor to mitigate impacts whenever possible.

If you have any questions regarding the Buffalo Speedway Project or final restoration efforts, please contact Capital Project Manager Eduardo Barreto at 713-662-5848 or via email at ebarreto@westutx.gov

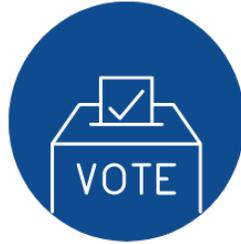


Resident Resources

May General Election

On Saturday, May 6, registered voters of West University Place will be able to vote to elect a Mayor and four City Council Members.

Check your registration and/or register to vote! In Harris County, you can register to vote if you:



- ▶ Are a resident of Harris County
- ▶ Will at least be 18 year old on Election Day
- ▶ Have not been declared partially/completely mentally incapacitated without the right to vote by a final judgement of court;
- ▶ Have not been finally convicted of a felony (fully discharged from the sentence)

If you qualify to register, visit www.harrisvotes.com/voter/first-time-voters and apply before the deadline or to confirm your registration status if you've already applied.

You can also use the Harris Votes website to find your sample ballot, find a voting center, and watch a tutorial on how to use the voting machines.

Last but not least, don't forget your ID!

Important dates regarding this election:

- Last day to register to vote Thursday, April 6
- First day to vote by personal appearance Monday, April 24
- Last day to apply for a ballot by mail Tuesday, April 25
- Last day of early in-person voting Tuesday, May 2

For more information visit the City's website at www.westutx.gov or contact City Secretary Thelma Gilliam at tgilliam@westutx.gov or at 713-662-5813.

Spring into Sustainability

Will you be spring cleaning this year? Before you do, make a plan for what to do with your no-longer-needed items. Donating clothes, toys, and even home décor prevents them from ending up in landfills.

Furthermore, using eco-friendly cleaners is another option to consider. Using a mixture of items you likely have on hand such as baking soda, white vinegar, lemon, and water can get the job done.

Solid-Waste Service Discount for Seniors and Disabled Persons

The City reduces the cost of solid-waste pickup for customers who are over 65 or disabled. To obtain this discount, senior residents are required to provide a copy of their driver's license or some other valid identification as age verification.

Residents who receive a disability exemption for property tax rate purposes will also qualify to receive the discounted rate, as long as appropriate documentation is provided.

For assistance, contact Utility Billing at 713-662-5824 or by email at billinghelp@westutx.gov.

Point & Pay Payment System and Electronic Statements Reminder



It's never too late to sign up for Point & Pay, a faster and easier way to pay your utility bill! To sign up for this system, visit the City's website at www.westutx.gov/pay.

Current Point & Pay customers should remember to regularly check their email inboxes (and their spam folders) for e-statements, and report any billing concerns immediately.

For assistance, please contact Utility Billing at 713-662-5824 or by email at billinghelp@westutx.gov.

FEMA Risk Rating Method 2.0

The City of West University Place wants to remind you to take time to review your home's flood insurance coverage to ensure that it is up to date. FEMA's new Risk Rating 2.0 for flood insurance aims to bring structures to their actuarial rates based on individual risk. This program may have a direct impact on your flood insurance premiums. The City of West University Place works hard to protect its residents by participating in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS). The CRS is a voluntary, federal program that rewards communities for implementing higher standards in exchange for discounts on flood insurance premiums for citizens.



For more information, contact your flood insurance provider or visit www.westutx.gov/floodinsurance. For assistance from the Public Works Department, you may call 713-662-5839, email pwinfo@westutx.gov, or visit the Public Works offices located at 3826 Amherst St.

Public Safety

QR Code Safety

QR codes are everywhere and are easy to use. By pointing your smartphone's camera at a QR code you can order food at a restaurant, pay for parking, be directed to a website, and much more. However, as we are getting more accustomed to this technology, so are criminals. By scanning a bogus QR code you could be led to a malicious website that allows hackers to commit attacks on your phone and steal your personal information. The good news is that there are several ways you can spot and avoid QR code scams:

- Be alert to where the QR code sends you. If the website does not look legitimate do not provide any personal information.
- Inspect the QR code sticker before scanning it. Make sure a bogus sticker hasn't been placed over the original sticker.
- Avoid using a QR code to pay a bill. There are many other payment methods that are less susceptible to fraud.
- Never click on suspicious hyperlinks or download attachments, especially anything sent by strangers.

Prevent Mulch and Vegetation Fires

It's that time of year to spruce up landscaping and clear out dead vegetation. It also means adding new mulch to your flower beds but, be aware, materials in mulch can be combustible and can ignite small fires. These fires can also quickly spread when next to flammable building materials such as wood or vinyl.

Mulch that is piled more than a few inches can build up heat under the surface and start a spontaneous fire. These fires start more frequently when the weather is hot and when the ground has been dry for an extended period of time.

To help prevent an incident, keep an 18-inch" border between mulch and any combustible materials on a structure. When possible, use river rock, pea gravel, or crushed rock for a border next to a structure and around outdoor grills. Avoid placing mulch near or around electrical lighting or decor.

The West U Fire Department responds to several mulch fires every year on both commercial and residential properties. If you see a smoldering mulch bed, call 9-1-1. This allows firefighters to respond quickly to put out the fire and also to confirm that the fire is completely extinguished.



When to Call Animal Control

Residents should be aware of the protocols surrounding animals and when to contact the city's animal control division.

Reasons for contacting the city include:

- Nuisance barking dogs
- Animal bites
- Dogs off leash
- Lost or found pets
- Dogs in park
- Registration of animals

Responsibility of property owners:

- Removal of deceased or injured animals on their property
- Pest control services
- Removal of feral cats. The city does not pick up or shelter cats. Instead, residents are encouraged to make arrangements with a humane agency or borrow a trap from the city to assist with removing feral cats.
- Residents in need of assistance with snakes owls, opossums, skunks, or squirrels should contact the Texas Wildlife Center at 713-468-8972.

For more information residents can visit the City's website www.westutx.gov/police or contact the non-emergency line at 713-668-0330.

Under Texas Penal Code 42.92, a defendant who has deprived an animal of food or water, abandoned an animal, transported an animal cruelly, injured someone else's animal, or overworked an animal may be charged with a Class A misdemeanor, which may result in a fine of up to \$4,000, a year in jail, or both.

Parks and Recreation

Easter Spring Festival

The Easter Bunny is coming to West U! The Parks and Recreation Department will host its annual Easter Spring Festival on Saturday, April 1, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on the athletic fields next to the Recreation Center at 4210 Bellaire Blvd. Make a plan to attend the fun, and don't forget to get a photo with Easter Bunny and his friend Wally the Walrus! This event is free for West U residents.

Outdoor Event Series

On Friday, March 31, and Friday, April 21, there will be special performances at the Colonial Park Pavilion from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. These events are free, and will be fun for the whole family! For more information, visit www.westutx.gov/parks.

Colonial Park Pool Summer Hours

The 2023 pool season will officially begin in May! Memberships are on sale now, and it is highly encouraged to purchase your membership before the pool officially opens. To purchase your membership, visit www.westutx.gov/colonial.

- Members Only Pool Party – Saturday, May 6, noon to 6 p.m.
- Opening Day – Sunday, May 7, noon to 6 p.m.

Ordinance Feedback

In October 2021, an ordinance went into effect prohibiting commercial activities and concessions in West U parks without authorization. Since that time professional coaches and instructors must have a permit to conduct business in West University Place. A trial period of the current process is underway and will end on May 31. To provide feedback, please send your comments to Administrative Coordinator Charlotte Herling at cherling@westutx.gov.

Now Hiring: Customer Service Team Members, Lifeguards, and Swim Instructors

The West University Recreation Center and Colonial Park Pool staff is now accepting applications for part time Customer Service Team Members, Lifeguards, and Swim Instructors. The Parks & Recreation Department offers competitive pay, flexible schedules, and a fun atmosphere! Certifications are necessary for some positions and quality customer service is a must for all. For more information visit, www.westutx.gov/jobs.

Fun Over 50

www.westutx.gov/seniors | 713-662-5896

Cooking with Chef Ellen

Chef Ellen has created a unique concept for those who want flavorful meals in a hurry. This 90-minute class will show you how to get out of the kitchen quickly with meals you'll love. The class will be held at the Community Building on Thursday, March 2 at 5p.m., and is limited to 12 participants, so early registration is encouraged.

Nurse Lecture

RN Danielle Riley will host two free events providing information and tips for senior citizens. On Thursday, March 2, she will discuss the current epidemic of loneliness and isolation, and then on Thursday, April 6, she will speak on the topic of driving over 65. Both events are free, and will take place at the Community Building at 11 a.m.

Whistle Stop Café and Arbor Gate Nursery

Calling all plant lovers! Join West U Senior Services on Friday, March 10, for a day at Arbor Gate Nursery in Tomball. The group will leave from the Community Building at 9:30 a.m., and the cost is \$6 plus lunch on your own.

Medicare 101

Are you or someone you care about turning 65 soon? This free presentation will show you how to navigate the Medicare system. This important topic will be discussed at the Community Building on Saturday, March 11, at 10:30 a.m.

Ask the Expert

Anchor Hospice will be at the Community Building on Thursday, March 16, to provide educational information you may have missed out on for a loved one requiring additional help. This free presentation will start at 1 p.m.

Technology Help

If you are needing help with using your Apple phone, a free course will be available at the Community Building on Thursday, March 23, at 1 p.m.

Antique Rose Emporium

Join the group for a day trip to Brenham for lunch and to peruse the local antique shops. The group will leave the Community Building on Tuesday, April 4 at 9 a.m. and the cost is \$7 plus lunch on your own.

West U Senior Services has a variety of exercise classes available at the Community Building. Try a sample class to see if it will be a good fit for you! A full list of offerings is available in the Hi, Neighbor newsletter on the City's website.

Friends of West U Parks



A Park for All Seasons

"A Park for All Seasons" Park Lovers' Ball was held on Saturday, February 11, at the elegant Four Seasons Houston Hotel downtown, and the event was a resounding success! Event Co-Chairs Whitney and Marc Walsh and Mitra and Josh Woody created a memorable evening for gala attendees.

The event featured the popular whiskey blackjack game and wine pull, silent and live auctions, heads or tails game, the inaugural putting green game, and dinner and dancing to the tunes of Adrian Michael and the Greenway Band. Park Lovers' Ball honored longtime Friends supporter Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital.



We are thankful for our many underwriters and sponsors

Summer:

Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital
Mandy Rochelle Designs
Wells Fargo

Winter:

Burke Family Foundation
Kirkland & Ellis
Whitney & Mark Walsh/Mitra & Josh Woody

Fall:

Frost Bank
Jane & Harry Pefanis
John O. Peterson Charitable Trust Fund.

Branches of Friendship:

Blackbuck Resources
Blackmur, Borland, Camp, Craig & McCarthy Families
Casey, Davison, Greenburg & Hays Families
Amanda & Scott Commons

Kimberly Eads
Lindsay & James Gregory
Veronica & John Griffin
The Hamilton Family
Lori and Rob Hendricks, Emily and Justin Leitch,
Diana and Alejandro Madero, Ashley and John Pope,
and Britt and Kyle McQuire
Samantha and Jeffrey Holy
Jordan and Andrew Jewett
Christina and Matthew Kuhl
Locke Lord LLP
Loverin, McDowell, Pritchard, Pittman and
Torsch Families
Sami and Jud Morrison/Christine and Owen Parker
Sara and Brian Smith
Supporter of West University Parks
Walker, Harris and Baldrige Families
Woods, Goodman, Spansel, Calva and Boyden Families
Stephanie and Gabriel Zamora

Magnolia

Julia and Stephen Jacobson
IBC
Karen and Michael Brisch
Kelly and Blake Hill
Laura and George Turley
Jenifer & Bob Shults

For a complete listing of underwriters and sponsors please visit the Friends website at westuparks.org. Without these generous donors Friends could not achieve its fundraising goals to keep our parks and green spaces beautiful, safe and well maintained.



2023 Fathers & Flashlights

The 2023 Fathers & Flashlights event will be held on November 4-5, 2023. Friends of West U Parks will continue its tradition of hosting this popular event on the fields surrounding West U Elementary School. Be sure you are signed up to receive Friends emails for notifications on registration and sponsorship opportunities. The campout registration is open to those zoned to attend West University Elementary School. For more information email fathersandflashlights@westuparks.org. The event co-chairs are Kelly Beth and Charlie Hapgood, Katy and Chris Turner and Megan and Nick Nicodemus.

While Fathers & Flashlights and Park Lovers' Ball are the largest Friends fundraising events, there are also other ways to support parks and greenspaces year around. These include business and community partnerships, memorials, honorariums, pavers, benches and tree sales.

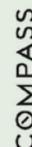
To receive Friends information or to update your email address with us, please visit www.westuparks.org and sign up for emails from Friends. Questions? Please call 713-662-7430 or email diamond@westutx.gov.

Party on the Patio Summer 2023 Series

Thank you to our returning generous sponsor from the 2021 and 2022 summer concert series! Mary Frances A. DuMay, Real Estate Advisor, The Anderson DuMay Team at Compass Real Estate, West U resident and longtime Friends of West U Parks supporter is back as our 2023 sponsor and she and her team have some fun surprises in store for concert attendees. The concerts are scheduled for June 2, 9, 16 and 23 from 7:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. at the Colonial Park Pool Deck, 4130 Byron Street. The concerts are free to West U residents. Mark your calendars and get ready to kick back and enjoy these fun summer neighborhood concerts.



Mary Frances
Anderson DuMay
Sales Agent
713.724.0577
@andersondumayteam



Public Works

Law Street Water Line Project

Residents on the 4100 and 4200 blocks of Law Street currently receive their water from the City of Houston. Since 2021, the City of West University Place has been working with the City of Houston on planning the installation of a new water line that will connect these homes to the West U water distribution system. In December of 2022, the City of Houston approved the design plans, and West U staff are moving forward with soliciting formal bids for construction. The project is slated to begin in Spring 2023.

Residents are encouraged to sign up for alerts about this project by visiting, www.westutx.gov/lawstreet.

Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements

The City of West University Place's Wastewater Treatment Plant has been in operation since 1982. Major mechanical equipment is nearing the end of its useful life and is in need of replacement. This project will provide upgrades to the equipment, and will also construct an elevated office building, provide a flood-resilient facility, and improve the efficiency of the wastewater treatment process to ensure compliance with regulatory standards. Design is at 90% completion, and construction is anticipated to begin mid 2023.

For more information, visit www.westutx.gov/wwtp.

East Side Drainage Improvements

As one project ends, another begins... With the completion of the Buffalo Speedway Project in sight, the City continues to make drainage improvements a priority. In 2021, the city completed a City Wide Drainage modeling study and a preliminary report. Both studies recommended improvements to the drainage system east of Buffalo Speedway.

The improvements will be separated into two packages:

Package 1 includes paving and drainage upgrades along University Boulevard from Buffalo Speedway to Kirby Drive.

Package 2 includes paving and drainage upgrades along Wakeforest Avenue from Plumb Street to Pemberton Street, Rice Blvd. from Wakeforest to Kirby Dr., and Duke Street from Buffalo Speedway to Wakeforest.



For more information about this project, and to sign up for important construction alerts, scan the QR code to visit the City's website.

Save the Date!

Public Works Week is May 21 – 27

For more information, visit www.westutx.gov/publicworks

If It Isn't Rain, It Doesn't Go in the Drain – Prevent Illicit Discharge

An illicit discharge (illegal dumping) is any discharge into a storm drain that is not composed entirely of storm water. Examples include dumping of automotive fluids, pet waste, household hazardous waste, grass clippings, leaves, and industrial waste. Anything other than the water that falls from the sky is an illicit discharge, and it is illegal. The only exceptions are discharges from dechlorinated swimming pools, residential car washing, and fire protection water.

Common sources of illicit discharges:

- Sanitary wastewater
- Household cleaners
- Pesticides
- Chlorinated pool water
- Motor oil
- Paints
- Weed killers
- Laundry wastewater

How Can You Help?

Stormwater picks up anything in its path as it travels across yards, driveways, streets, and down into the storm drain. Do your part, put waste in its place and save the drain for the rain.

- Never sweep or blow leaves into a storm drain (this is against City ordinances, as well).
- Dispose of used motor oil, leftover paint, cleaners, and other household chemicals at an authorized Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facility.
- Follow directions on pesticides and fertilizers, and avoid using them when rain is forecasted.
- Pick up pet waste and dispose of it properly to keep bacteria and parasites out of waterways.

Report an Illicit Discharge

If you see someone putting anything into the storm drain, this is an illegal act and you should report it. Call 713-662-5839 or email pwinfo@westutx.gov to report illegal dumping. All reports are anonymous.

For further information regarding illicit discharge visit www.westutx.gov/stormwater or contact West University Place Public Works Manager, Edward Orozco at 713-662-5858 or email eorozco@westutx.gov.

West U Recycling and Solid Waste Reduction Board

Food Waste: Can't we Just Throw it in the Trash?

Many people throw food scraps in the trash, but landfills already account for 15% of methane emissions and landfilled food waste increases the production of greenhouse gases. Preventing food scraps from being landfilled also creates a valuable commodity – compost – which conserves water, restores nutrients to our soil, stores carbon, and reduces methane emissions.

How Does Curbside Composting Work?

Composting can be done commercially after your food waste is picked up curbside. If you participate in a composting service, peels, pits, stems, bones, eggshells, spoiled food, and other waste generated from food preparation go into your compost bucket and are picked up curbside. A composting partner facility then uses the food waste to produce compost and mulch which consumers like us (and farmers!) purchase to improve the health of our yards and gardens and to reduce our environmental footprint.

Our Progress

To increase West U's recycling rate (34% for the year ending 2021), we need to further reduce solid waste. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a recycling rate goal of 50% by 2030 and since most West U residents already recycle, diverting food waste from landfills is the best way to accomplish this. Most residents who participated in West U's short-term food waste drop-off pilot program in 2020 have continued to compost their food waste curbside and prefer curbside pickup for the ease of participation. This is a great opportunity for West U to expand composting and thus reduce solid waste, which is why the City encourages residents to participate in curbside composting.

Busting Composting Myths:

Myth #1:

It smells and attracts bugs and rodents.

Compost buckets have lids with specific airtight seals (such as Gamma lids) purposely designed to prevent smells from escaping and attracting pests. Keep your compost bucket outside or in your garage with a compostable bag inside and the lid on tight. You will not get any smells or extra critters if it's always fully closed.

Myth #2:

I don't waste food, so I wouldn't have anything to collect.

You would be surprised how many pits, bones, peels, eggshells, nutshells, and vegetable pieces you have in your daily food prep! You can keep a small bin in your kitchen and empty it to your outside bucket as needed. You could also put scraps in a container in your freezer or fridge during the week, and then empty them into the bucket before pickup.

Myth #3:

It's too time consuming.

Yes, there is an adjustment period just like anything else that is new. However, once you figure out your ideal system and get your family in the habit of separating food waste, it becomes a fast and easy part of your routine. There are resources to help, too!

We encourage you to participate in curbside composting with a local composting vendor if you aren't doing so already. Your efforts can help West U dispose of food waste more sustainably.

Don't forget to download the West U Collects app!

- Do you want to know your trash, recycling and yard waste collection schedule?
- Do you want to know what you can recycle or where you can recycle it?
- Want to receive changes in the collection due to holidays?

Then don't delay and download West U Collects app and enter your address. Visit www.westutx.gov/westucollects for all the details.



Environmental Impacts of U.S. Food Waste:



What resources go into a year of food loss and waste in the U.S.?

*excluding impacts of waste management, such as landfill methane emissions



Greenhouse gas emissions of more than 42 coal-fired power plants



The **amount of fertilizer** used in the U.S. to grow all plant-based foods for U.S. human consumption



Enough water and energy to supply more than 50 million homes



An **area of agricultural land** equal to California and New York

Learn more : www.epa.gov/land-research/farm-kitchen-environmental-impacts-us-food-waste

City Currents

Spring 2023



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

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A Newsletter for the Residents of the City of West University Place

City of West U Officials

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor Susan Sample
Mayor Pro Tem John Montgomery
John P. Barnes
Melanie Bell
Shannon Carroll

CITY MANAGER

Dave Beach
dbeach@westutx.gov

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

For questions and comments about *City Currents*, contact Communications Coordinator Bianca Cuccerre at bcuccerre@westutx.gov or 713-662-5350.

Design by Minor Design

Meeting Reminder for City Council, Boards and Commissions

City Council *currently available in person and via Zoom

Meetings are the second and fourth Monday of each month
Starting at 6:30 p.m.

Building and Standards Commission

Meetings are the first Thursday of each month
Starting at 6:00 p.m.

Zoning and Planning Commission

Meetings are the second Thursday of each month
Starting at 6:15 p.m.

Zoning Board of Adjustment

Meetings are the fourth Thursday of each month
Starting at 6:30 p.m.

Recycling and Solid Waste Reduction Board

Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month
Starting at 6:00 p.m.

Parks and Recreation Board

Meetings are typically held the first Wednesday of each month
Starting at 6:30 p.m.

Senior Services Board

Meetings are the second Thursday of each month
Starting at 2:00 p.m.

For more information on how to attend these meetings, please visit www.westutx.gov/agendacenter or call the City Secretary's Office at 713-662-5813.

Save the Date!



Paper Shredding, E-Waste, Mattress Collection, and Household Metal Recycling Event
Saturday, May 6 • 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.
3826 Milton St.
www.westutx.gov/specialevents

Make the Switch to Direct Link!

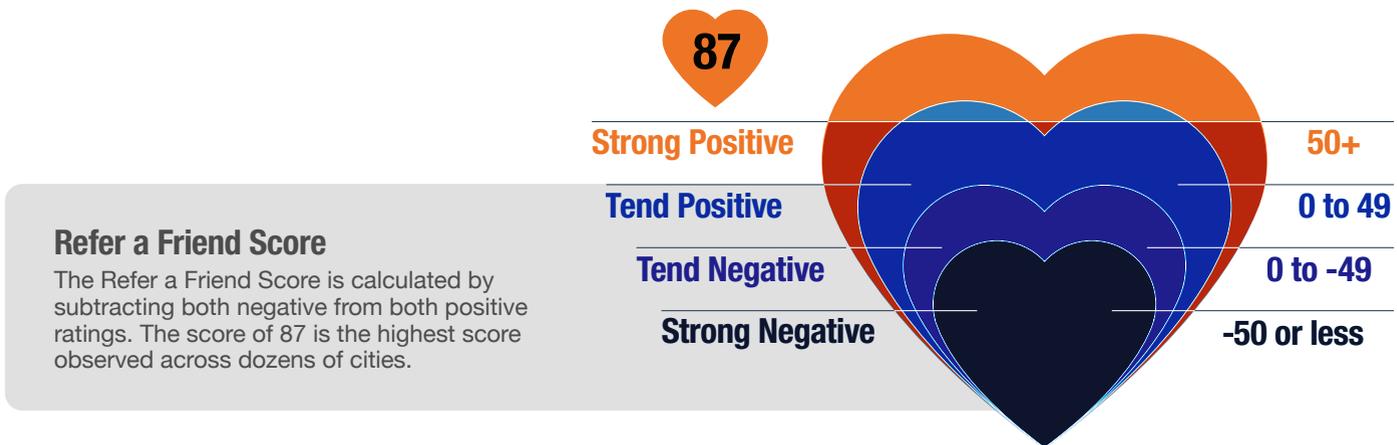
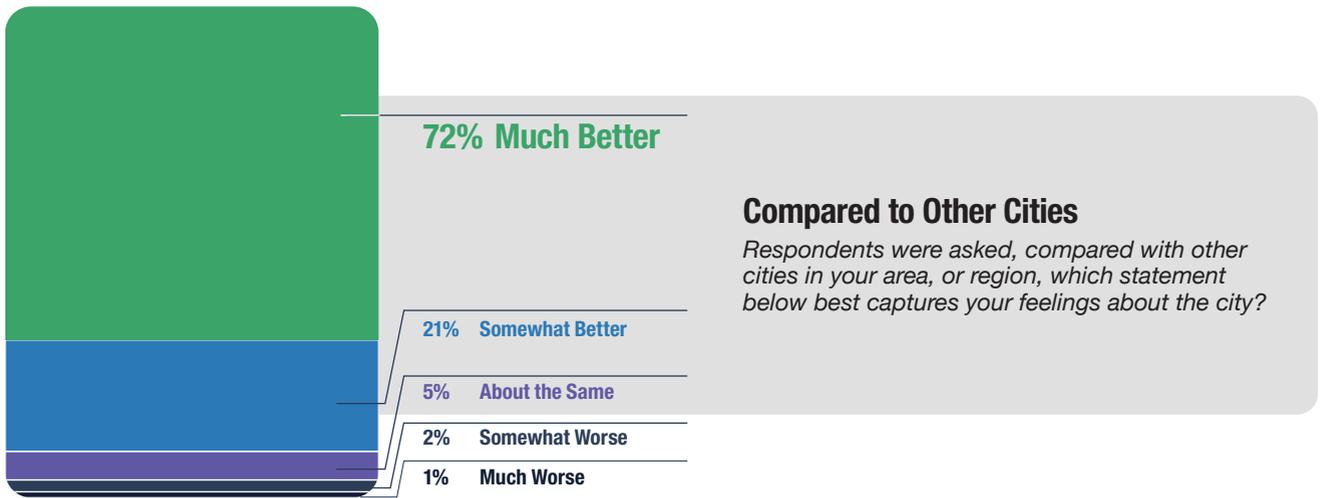
Have you made the switch to Direct Link? This alarm monitoring system was created exclusively for West U residents and has a wide variety of benefits to take advantage of today! With services starting at just \$35/month you can receive emergency response from the City's very own Police, Fire, and EMS departments. To learn more about the benefits and the peace of mind Direct Link can offer you, and to sign up for service, visit www.westutx.gov/directlink.



2022 CITIZEN SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

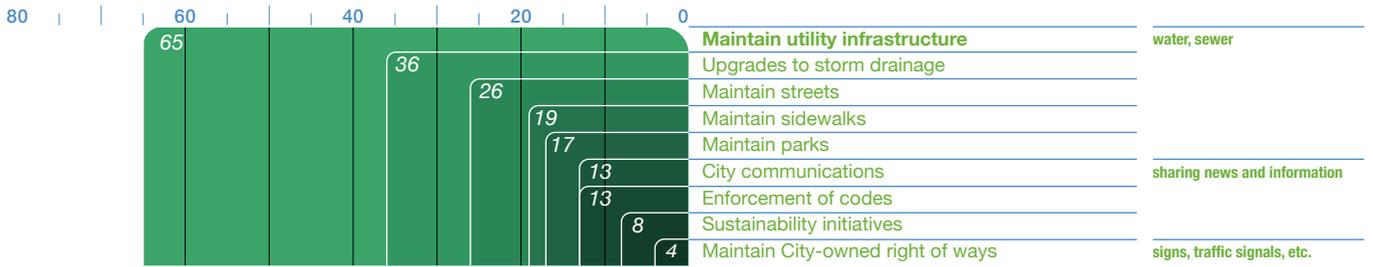
The City recently completed a citizen satisfaction survey to obtain feedback from residents regarding City facilities, events, programming, safety, operations, communications, and employee contact. The results will assist staff and city leaders in understanding the community's needs, priorities, and concerns.

The full results are available to view through an interactive dashboard online at www.westutx.gov/2022survey.



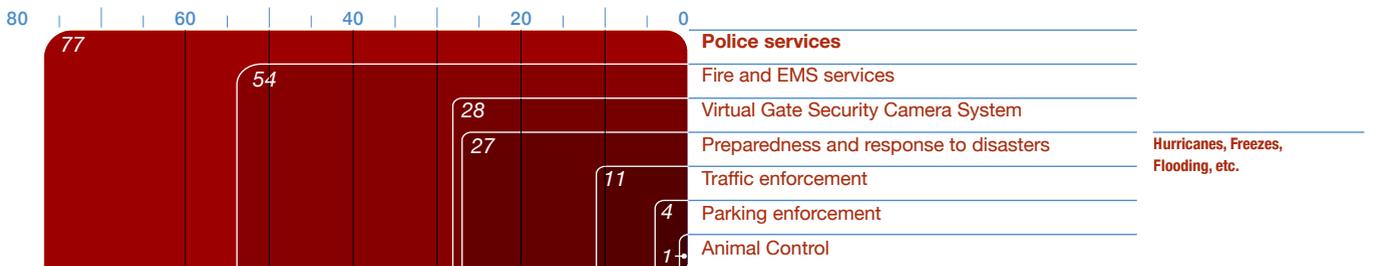
Most Important Operations the City Provides

Respondents were asked, which two are most important to you for the city to prioritize as we consider the annual budget?



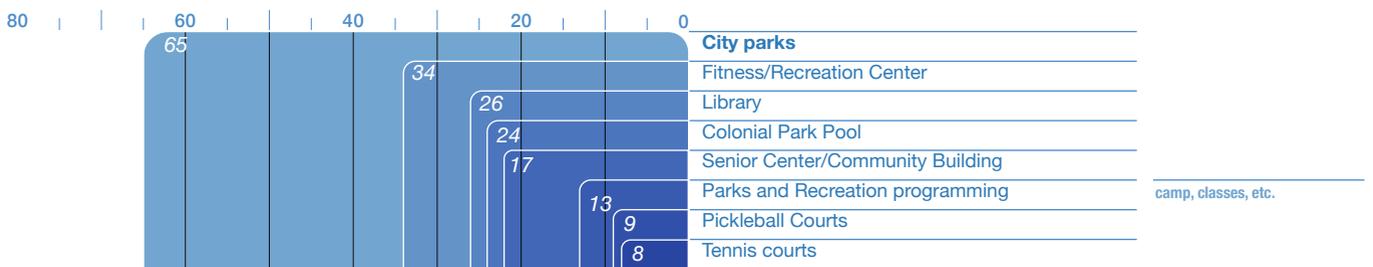
Most Important Safety & Security Issues

Respondents were asked, which two are the most important to you for the city to prioritize as we consider the annual budget?



Most Important Facilities

Respondents were asked, which two are most important to you for the city to provide in our effort to make West U a better place to live?



Most Important Benefits

Respondents were asked, which two are most important to you that add value to the quality of life in West U? These are items not directly provided by the city.

