

City Currents

Fall 2023



IN THIS ISSUE:

Centennial Celebrations

Pg. 4

National Night Out

Pg. 7

Project Updates

Pg. 10

And More Helpful Information About Your City!



Two Projects Down – And One Restarted

The City Completes Two Projects for Residents as Harris County Restarts One

Three major projects that will provide benefits to the community for years to come.

Projects Completed:

Welcome to the West U Water System, Law Street!

- As of June 30, the last 24 homes in the city were connected to West U's water service. Previously, homes along the 4100 and 4200 blocks of Law Street were receiving their water directly from the City of Houston, and this long-awaited project ensures that all West U residents are on the city's water system.
- Since the 4100 and 4200 blocks of Law Street are adjacent to the City of Houston right-of-way, any work in front of these homes previously had to go through the City of Houston permitting and approval. Over the last year, however, City staff has worked diligently to get everything approved and work underway so that these homes could finally be connected to West U's water service.
- City Council, staff, and, most importantly, the residents on these blocks are excited to see this project reach this impactful milestone.

Edloe Street Pathway is Now Open for Walking

- There is a new pathway in town – and its name is the Edloe Street Pathway, which runs along the east side of Edloe St. from Albans St. to Rice Blvd. As a result of the damage that Winter Storm Uri caused to the vegetation in this area in 2021, the community, along with City Council and staff, sought ideas for repurposing this space for mobility and aesthetic enhancements, and the idea of a pathway was born.
- This new installment provides the longest contiguous pathway in West U, and offers a valuable connection for the residents in the 3700 blocks and to the east of Poor Farm Ditch to get to the City Center with minimal street crossings.
- Some features along the pathway are benches for resting, a drinking fountain with a pet station, a pet waste and refuse station, landscaping, and a pervious recycled-material pathway.
- Currently, on the new pathway, there is a CenterPoint power pole in the middle of the pathway, but there is a plan to get this pole relocated. The City and CenterPoint are waiting for cooler weather to come our way before putting this plan to action, since the pole relocation would affect 80 to 100 homes with an outage of up to 6 hours. Residents in the impacted area will be notified prior to the scheduled outage for this relocation.

Article continued on page 5



From the Mayor's Desk



Mayor Susan Sample

A Win for West U

Funding Secured for Poor Farm Ditch Improvements

By Mayor Susan Sample

After two decades of hard work, Poor Farm Ditch will finally receive the improvements needed to safely manage stormwater runoff during severe weather events. Yes, you read that correctly! In 2002, the cities of West University Place and Southside Place worked together in a collaborative effort to enhance the condition and functionality of the channel. Subsequently, the Harris County Flood Control District and an engineering firm were engaged to assist in the endeavor.

Due to other county projects taking priority, and the urgency of repairing damages caused by Hurricane Harvey in 2017, the project lost momentum and became stagnant. In 2021, thanks to the tireless efforts of our City Council, and local, county, and state officials, the project resurfaced and, once again, became a high priority.

Over the years, being involved with this project as a member of our City Council and as mayor, I have been fortunate to serve with present and past City Council members who have had the same vision – and we had partners at the local, county, and state levels who also saw the value in improving the Ditch. The City could not have accomplished this enormous feat without the assistance and cooperation of Texas State Senator Joan Huffman, Texas State Senator John Whitmire, Texas Representative Ann Johnson, Texas Congresswoman Lizzie Fletcher, Southside Place Mayor Andy Chan, Harris County Commissioner Rodney Ellis, and the Harris County Flood Control District.

This project is proof of what can be achieved when entities large and small work together. It also signifies West U's commitment to infrastructure improvement and serves as a testament to the City's dedication to the safety and well-being of its residents.

This project includes a construction price tag of \$33.1 million. With funding secured from the county (\$4.5 million), state (\$16.9 million), and federal (\$8.9 million) levels, the contribution from West U and Southside Place will be \$150,000 each.

What to expect:

- Throughout the remainder of this year, West U and Southside Place will establish an interlocal agreement with Harris County. This agreement will permit the cities to fund the remaining design work. In early 2024, with the project design approximately 90% complete, a public engagement process will enable residents to learn more about the project and the construction process, and to have their questions answered directly by the engineers.
- Construction is expected to begin in early 2025, but this time frame is dependent on the release of the federal and state funding.
- As more details are finalized, the City will create a project webpage to keep residents informed (similar to what was done for the Buffalo Speedway and Eastside Drainage projects).

While I would love to see construction work on the Poor Farm Ditch project begin tomorrow, there are still a lot of details to be worked out, and so the schedule above is tentative at best. As the details are firmed up, the City will release additional information to keep West U residents up to date on the replacement of this critical piece of our regional drainage system.



A Message from Mayor Pro Tem John Montgomery

Home Rule is Where the Heart Is

By John Montgomery

In the fall of 1923, Rice University engineering professor, Jack Rafferty, was unsettled by the sight of a copperhead gliding across his front porch. The snake, like many of Jack's neighbors, had been forced to higher ground by the recent heavy rains. Back inside, his wife Rena observed that high flood waters in the area made the homes look like a community of houseboats. If the Raffertys were going to stay in the area, something needed to be done about storm drainage. Jack and Rena called an emergency meeting of neighbors at their home, where the attendees decided incorporation of a new city was their best shot at holding their ground.

In December of that same year, 30 area residents gathered in a garage in the 6600 block of Westchester St., and voted to incorporate a city called West University Place. A few weeks later, in January 1924, Harris County Judge Chester H. Bryan certified the incorporation of the city. The new city's total population was 250 persons. A new 100' x 200' lot sold for \$1,000.

Beyond drainage issues, the West U founders also came together to solve other major infrastructure and quality of life challenges that included public safety, street pavement, education, and sidewalks. Incorporation gave our incipient City the right to sell tax-supported bonds to fund new infrastructure priorities. The goal in those days was to grow enough critical infrastructure until such time that Houston would annex the city, giving West U a needed connection to utilities and "big city" services.

This coveted marriage proposal from Houston never transpired. Strapped by early growing pains, Houston feared stretching its infrastructure too far, too fast, so it initially told West U to take a hike. Finally, in 1939, 15 years after West U's incorporation, Houston came calling. Would West U like to be annexed after all? This time, it was West U's chance to give Houston the proverbial digitus impudicus. In the years after Houston's initial rejection, the little city of West University Place had learned to do things more efficiently on its own.

Were there challenges? Big time. By the early 1930s, West U's ambitious infrastructure buildout had left the City broke. R.G. Hyett, West U's second mayor, was forced to organize a bailout from debt holders for the City to survive. In addition to these early financial challenges, West U needed significant technical advice, and so turned to friends at the Texas State Legislature for help. Multiple West U mayors made frequent road trips to the State Capitol, successfully seeding roots of partnership still evident today. Austin's \$16.9 million commitment to help fund Poor Farm Ditch repairs is recent evidence of this enduring partnership. In December 1940, West University Place adopted its own home rule charter, giving our city the right of self-determination when it comes to passing local legislation.

Present-day West U is a model city, renowned for its financial stewardship, resident involvement, infrastructure, and quality of life. Beyond its enviable infrastructure, West U also leverages strong zoning, ordinances, and codes designed to protect the character of our city and our quality of life.

West U is still facing challenges, however. On June 14th, Governor Abbott signed House Bill 2127 passed by the Texas Legislator, and called the Texas Regulatory Consistency Act. You may have heard it referred to as the "Preemption bill" in the news, and as the "Death Star bill" by its opponents. This legislation is broad and contains controlling aspects that will affect our city. Perhaps the most onerous of these new terms is the provision that a city may not adopt a rule regulating conduct in a field of regulation occupied by another state law.

This new legislation has the potential to limit our City's ability to sustain the unique set of local laws that help ensure our high standards for quality of life, including limiting West U's ability to:

- 1) Design and enforce its own noise ordinance
- 2) Design and implement our own traffic safety rules
- 3) Regulate the keeping of farmyard animals
- 4) Restrict short-term property rentals
- 5) Enforce our unique and residentially focused building and zoning codes

Vague elements of this new legislation will make it difficult for cities to clearly understand their right to enforce current laws. Further, the State Legislature provided an attorney's fee provision in the bill to encourage persons to challenge city ordinances based on possible preemption, virtually ensuring years of lawsuits that cities will have to navigate with significant financial exposure.

As the city's history above makes clear, West U has had a century-long record of deciding how we want to be governed locally. Your City Council, of which I am honored to be a member, has survived the decades by establishing rules to craft the type of city in which, they, themselves, would want to live. If West U is to retain the unique characteristics with which we take pride, we need to retain control of our own destiny.

The City of Houston has joined other Texas cities in recently filing suit to challenge the State constitutionality of this new legislation. West U is evaluating the potential cost and merit of joining an existing suit, or possibly filing our own amicus brief. At issue is whether the State of Texas can usurp our constitutionally protected right to adopt and operate under a home rule charter. It's a valuable right, and one that is worth fighting to keep.

The author would like to credit the history above to Janice Holt Lang's excellent 1985 University of Houston Master's thesis entitled, "Suburban Pioneers: The Origin of West University Place, 1919 - 1939."

A Century in the Making

West University Place will turn **THE BIG 100** in 2024!
Planning for a historic centennial celebration is underway.

Save the Dates!

Logo Unveiling in conjunction with the annual Christmas Tree Lighting

Monday, December 4, 2023
Friends Park at 5:30 p.m.

Make sure you don't miss the chance to witness the unveiling of the City's Centennial logo for the very first time! Afterward, you can take home a special commemorative ornament to add a piece of history to your Christmas tree.

Founders' Day Social

Thursday, January 18, 2024
City Hall at 6:00 p.m.

Join us as we celebrate a momentous occasion, the Founders' Day event, honoring the visionaries and trailblazers who laid the foundation for a thriving community.

The event will be a grand affair, filled with fellowship, nostalgia, and the opening of the time capsule!

Whether you are a long-time resident or new to the community, the Founders' Day event promises to be an unforgettable experience that will honor the past, celebrate the present achievements, and set sights on a future filled with boundless possibilities.

Centennial Celebration Festival

Saturday, May 4, 2024
Colonial Park at 4:00 p.m.

Be part of a once-in-a-lifetime experience at the Centennial Celebration Festival! We are thrilled to bring the community together for this historic event commemorating 100 years of achievements and progress. Prepare to be entertained!

So mark your calendars to be at the Centennial Celebration Festival for a night that will go down in history.

Stay tuned for more details!

Sponsorship Opportunities

By contributing, you are supporting the planning of these community events. Join the historical moment and complete your sponsorship pledge! Sponsorship availability will close on November 1 at 5:30 p.m.

For more information about the Centennial Celebration please visit www.westutx.gov/centennial.

Project Restarted:

Elected Officials Secure Funding to Construct Improvements to Poor Farm Ditch

- Replacement of the Poor Farm Ditch between University Blvd. and Bellaire Blvd. has been discussed for over two decades, with a plan of action finally at hand.
- Over the last couple of months, your elected officials – U.S. Congresswoman Lizzie Fletcher, State Senator Joan Huffman, and State Senator John Whitmire, State Representative Ann Johnson, Southside Place Mayor Andy Chan, Harris County Commissioner Rodney Ellis, the Harris County Flood Control District, and most notably, West U Mayor Susan Sample – have worked to keep this project a priority and to secure the necessary funding to complete this crucial project for the improvement of our regional drainage system.
- Agreements on this project will be finalized this year, with design work planned to be completed next year and construction estimated to begin in 2025. This is a very tentative timeline, and more information will be release as it becomes available. Additional information about this project can be found in the Mayor’s article on page 2.

Resident Resources

Upcoming City Observed Holidays

On the following days, City offices will be closed and there will be a modified curbside trash, recycling, and yard waste collection schedule. Emergency services will still be available.

Thanksgiving Holiday Thursday, November 23

No collection

Friday, November 24

Collection per the normal Friday schedule

Trick or Trash Candy Wrapper Recycling

Help keep candy wrappers out of landfills this Halloween! The West University Place Public Works Department has partnered with Rubicon to divert empty candy wrappers from local landfills. Bring your clean and empty candy wrappers to the Public Works Administration office from October 23 to November 10.

Pumpkin Collection for Yard Waste

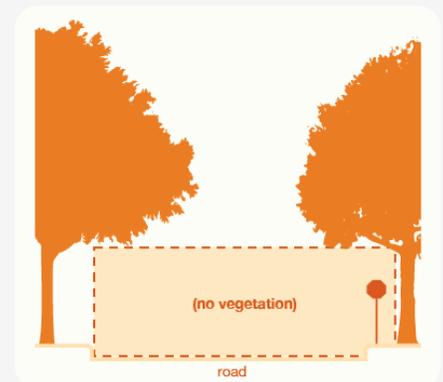
The West University Place Public Works Department will be collecting whole (uncarved and undecorated) pumpkins with yard waste from November 1 to December 1. For more information contact Public Works at 713-662-5839, or by email at pwinfo@westutx.gov.

Resident’s Responsibility for Tree & Vegetation in the City’s Right of Way

Residents are responsible for the care and maintenance of all trees, shrubs, and vegetation in the City’s right of ways. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact the Public Works Department at 713-662-5839, or by email at pwinfo@westutx.gov.

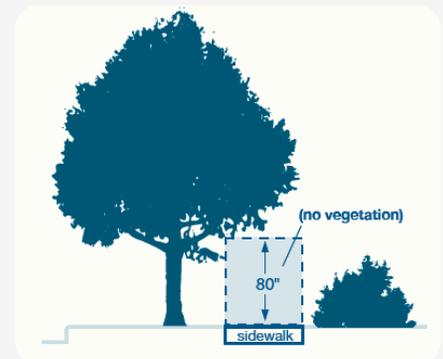
Clearance over Streets

The city requires that vegetation over the roadway be maintained at a minimum height of 13 feet 6 inches, extending from curb to curb. This ensures adequate clearance for all types of vehicles (including fire trucks, ambulances, garbage trucks, and street sweepers) that are on the road daily to provide essential City services. Property owners may be held liable for any damages to vehicles caused by low-hanging tree limbs or vegetation over these roadways.



Clearance over Sidewalks

The city requires that all vegetation over sidewalks be maintained at a minimum height of at least 80 inches (6 feet 8 inches). This ensures adequate clearance for pedestrians utilizing the sidewalks.



Resident Resources

Make Fall the Season for Sustainability

As we await the cooler fall weather, use this time to turn a new leaf by focusing on autumn sustainability opportunities:

- Now that school is back in session, consider walking or biking home on some days to avoid idling in the car rider line.
- Participate in the City's yard waste program by bagging fallen leaves and placing them at the curb on your regularly scheduled recycling day. All yard waste is required to be bagged in either kraft paper bags or compostable plastic bags. For more information visit, www.westutx.gov/recycle.
- When decorating your home for the season, opt for natural alternatives such as pumpkins, gourds, and pinecones instead of plastic or synthetic decorations.
- Fall brings an array of festive meals and gatherings. Minimize food waste by planning meals ahead, storing leftovers properly, and participating in a food waste diversion program that prevents food waste from going to a landfill. Learn more about the City's vetted vendors at www.westutx.gov/foodwaste.



By incorporating these sustainability practices into your fall routines, we can celebrate the season while also nurturing the environment. Remember, every small step towards sustainability counts and these steps collectively make a significant impact on building a greener future for generations to come.

Is a Permit Required?

Any item meeting the following Zoning Code Definition of a "structure" requires a permit in order to be installed. A structure is defined as anything made by humans that: (i) is not readily portable; (ii) is usually left in one location for an indefinite period of time, or (iii) requires either a permanent or fixed location on, or in, the ground for its use.

While not all-encompassing, this helpful list below should provide general guidelines as to the types of items that would require a permit:

- New Fencing
- New Generators
- New Solar Panels
- New Decks or Patios
- New Outdoor Kitchens
- Artificial Turf

When in doubt, contact Development Services at 713-662-5833 or via email at inspections@westutx.gov.

Pet Etiquette



If you are a pet owner, or thinking about adding four furry legs to your family, below are the pet laws found under West U's code of ordinances. By following these laws you can protect yourself, your pets, and your community.

Cat and Dog Registration (Sec. 14-80)

You are required to register your pet with the City's Animal Control Officer. The cost is \$20 for a lifetime registration. Bring a copy of your pet's rabies vaccination papers to the Public Works Administration Office located at 3826 Amherst St. and fill out the required form.

Dogs at Large (Sec. 14-78)

Dogs must be on a leash unless they are in your fenced yard.

Barking Dogs Prohibited (Sec. 14-82)

It is unlawful for any person to own, harbor, keep or possess any dog which, by loud or unusual barking or howling causing a disturbance of the peace and quiet of the neighborhood.

Disposal of Dog Droppings (Sec. 14-77)

Dog owners are required to clean up after their dogs when taking them out in public. Don't forget the waste bags when you leave your house for a walk! The city also provides waste bags and trash cans to dispose of waste while you're out on your walk.

Sign up for West U Notifications!

Sign up for NotifyMe to stay current with everything happening in West U! This service allows you to customize what notifications you receive, such as community news, parks and recreation happenings, and even agenda packets for the City Council and Commission meetings. Pick between text message and email notifications, or both! Sign up by visiting www.westutx.gov/notifyme.

To sign up for emergency notifications visit: www.westutx.gov/westuready.

FEMA Risk Rating 2.0

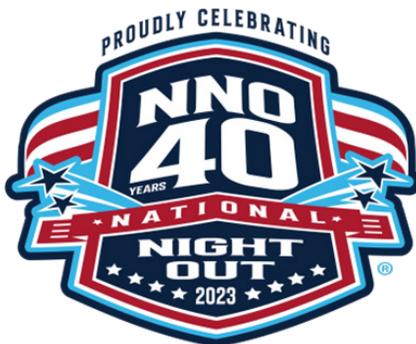
The City of West University Place wants to remind you to take time to review your home's flood insurance coverage to ensure that it is up to date. FEMA's new Risk Rating 2.0 for flood insurance aims to bring structures to their actuarial rates based on individual risk. This program may have a direct 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

A Block Party for the Community – National Night Out

West University Place first responders are proud to present their first National Night Out Block Party, an event that celebrates unity and safety within the community. Join us on Tuesday, October 3rd from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. at the Colonial Park West End Deck. This event promises an evening of community engagement, entertainment, and a chance to interact with your local heroes. The event will showcase a display of emergency vehicles and provide an up-close look at the tools and equipment that first responders use daily to keep the community safe. Families will be able to enjoy an array of outdoor games and take photos alongside the first responders themselves. Refreshing snow cones will be available for everyone to enjoy. Don't miss out on this fantastic event, which will combine fun, interaction, and a commitment to safety at West U's first National Night Out Block Party.



Direct Link – Home Alarm Monitoring Exclusive for West U Residents

Tragedy can strike when you least expect it, so it is important to do what you can to protect your home. A good security system can provide you with peace of mind, but a great one will help you sleep well at night. The Direct Link home alarm service connects you directly with the West University Place dispatch center, instead of with a third-party center. To sign up for services or for more information visit, www.westutx.gov/directlink.

With Direct Link, you can enjoy features that include:

No contract

No middlemen

Only \$35/month

Simple billing

Mobile app (at an additional cost)



Five Safety Tips for Fall

Ensuring home safety is crucial and it all starts with you. Within 30 seconds, a small fire can escalate into a rapidly spreading fire in a home. It is important to regularly check your equipment for early detection, fire suppression, and quick escape measures.

- 1 Replace batteries in smoke detectors:** It's always a good idea to change your batteries in your smoke detectors when Daylight Savings Time begins and ends. Additionally, you should test your detectors once a month. Even if your detectors are wired into your electrical system, they should have a battery backup in case you lose power.
- 2 Fire extinguisher:** Make sure you have a Class ABC (multi-purpose) fire extinguisher in your kitchen and garage. A residential fire extinguisher can be purchased at any local home improvement store. Check the gauge on the top of the extinguisher and make sure it is still in the green charged section. Once you use the extinguisher it will need to be replaced.
- 3 Check your heating system:** You should check your heating system before the first cold snap arrives. It should be inspected, cleaned, and serviced by a certified HVAC contractor. If you use space heaters, ensure that you have at least 3 feet of clear space around them. Ensure that they are plugged directly into the wall and not an extension cord, as this can overload the cord and become a fire hazard.
- 4 Fireplace safety:** If you have a fireplace, it should also be serviced. You can hire a professional chimney sweep and have it inspected and cleaned. Always keep flammable objects at least 3 feet from the opening and be sure to have a mesh metal screen installed around it.
- 5 Home fire safety and escape plan:** Fire drills should also be practiced at home. You and your family should have a plan for exiting your home if a fire starts. If you have a two-story home, you should have a safety ladder available to exit the second-floor space. Ensure that you have a designated meeting place outside where everyone knows to gather in case of such an emergency, that way, when the fire department arrives, they can communicate with the household members to ensure that all occupants have made it safely out of the home.



Parks and Recreation

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! Movie screenings are free of charge and take place at Colonial Park, located at 4130 Byron. Each show begins at 7 p.m.

Friday, October 20
DC League of Super Pets

Friday, October 27
Mummies

Full Moon Fest

Friday, October 27

Full Moon Fest returns to Colonial Park on Friday, October 27, at 5:30 p.m. Join us for an evening of pumpkin decorating, face painting, and costume contests. The costume contest will be open to different age groups, so make sure the whole family comes in their spookiest attire. Preregistration is required to participate in the costume contest. Stay after the event for the showing of Mummies, the show begins at 7 p.m.!



King & Spalding's West U Halloween Dash & Kids Fun Run

Sat, Oct 28 - Community Building 6104 Auden St.

Register now for the 12th annual West U Halloween Dash and Kids Fun Run. 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 will benefit the West U Parks and Recreation Department. You can register now at www.westutx.gov/funrun.

Mark Your Calendars for Winter Registration

Does your child want to try a new activity? West U's Parks and Recreation Department has something to offer for every child's interest! To view the complete list of class offerings, dates, and times, please visit www.westutx.gov/reg.

- Resident registration - Wednesday, November 29
- Non-resident registration - Wednesday, December 6

Wier Park Improvements

On Monday, July 10, the West University Place City Council unanimously approved the design concept for the upgrades and improvements to Wier Park. The approved concept proposes increasing the usable area of the park by 6,500 square feet and refreshing the existing amenities. This expansion will provide more seating, extend the artificial turf, and offer more green space.

The Parks and Recreation Board and staff have been working in conjunction with Burditt Landscape Architects and a citizen user group on improvement recommendations. Parks and Recreation Board Chair Will Bertron and Parks and Recreation Director Susan White met with the Friends of West U Parks Fund members on July 12 to review the concept in preparation for an official funding request at their September 2023 meeting.

What to expect:

- Construction is estimated to cost between \$865,000 - \$1 million.
- A tentative project start date could be in January.
- Construction would take three months minimum from start to finish.
- Staff has recommended construction be completed continuously in lieu of phasing to limit interruptions to park users.

The Friends of West University Parks Fund, (Friends) is a volunteer based 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to raising funds for development and improvement of parks and green spaces in the City of West University Place. Visit www.westuparks.org for more information on Friends and all of the wonderful initiatives they have for West U's parks.

For more information about this project visit, www.westutx.gov/parkprojects, or contact Susan White, Parks and Recreation Director at 713-662-5894.

Fun Over 50

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

West U Transportation for Senior Residents

West U Senior Services provides transportation to residents for appointments with doctors, dentists, beauty shops, drug stores, banks, and the post office by appointment only, schedule permitting. Participants must have the cognitive and physical ability to get to and from the vehicle and their appointment site on their own. If not, a caretaker must be present. Grocery shopping transportation is provided on Thursdays. To schedule an appointment, call the Senior Services office at 713-662-5895.

Beginner Mah Jongg Lessons:

Wed, Sept 13 - Nov 1

Learn the fundamentals of Mah Jongg in this two-hour, group-setting class with instructor Paula Doughty. This course is perfect for brand-new players or for those who are looking for a refresher course. This class will meet at the Community Building for 8 weeks at 10 a.m., and will cost \$66. A current Mah Jongg card is required for participation. Interested in an evening class? Contact Senior Services to learn more!

Advanced Beginner Indoor Pickleball Lessons: Fri, Oct 27 - Nov 10

Building upon previous classes, this course includes consistent rallies, basic strategies, and partner play. These three two-hour sessions will be held at the Community Building at 11 a.m., and will cost \$130.

Glenwood Cemetery Tour and Lunch:

Wed, Oct 11

Make plans to attend this 90-minute guided walking tour of the historic Houston Glenwood Cemetery. Learn about these stunning grounds and the residents who occupy them. Lunch is on your own and will follow at Chatters Café. The cost to attend is \$21, and pre-registration is required. The group will depart from the Community Building at 10 a.m.

Maritime Museum Tour:

Wednesday, October 25

Come join us for a docent-led tour of the Maritime Museum's exhibits and history. The cost to attend is \$7, and pre-registration is required. The group will depart from the Community Building at 10 a.m.

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 or on the City's website.



Thank you to our friend and neighbor, Mary Frances A. DuMay, Compass Real Estate Advisor, for generously sponsoring the popular Party on the Patio Summer Concert Series for the third consecutive year. Mary Frances is also an active member of the Friends board of directors. These concerts are always a popular neighborhood event each summer.



Mary Frances
Anderson DuMay
Sales Agent
713.724.0577
@andersondumayteam

COMPASS

Congratulations to Friends Star Citizens Mitra & Josh Woody and Whitney & Marc Walsh for co-chairing the 2023 Park Lovers' Ball, which netted \$300,000 – and also to Katie & Chris Hill and Sarah & Mark Knysh for co-chairing the popular Fathers & Flashlights event in 2021 and 2022, which together netted \$206,000 for West U Parks.

The Star Citizen awards were presented to these deserving and hardworking recipients at the May 17 Friends Appreciation and Awards Luncheon. Since its inception, Friends has raised \$9 million and another \$8.5 million of in-kind donations. We could not achieve such success without the wonderful volunteers and donors who are the backbone of this organization.



2023 Fathers & Flashlights Campout!

Event Chairs: Kelly Beth & Charlie Haggood, Megan & Nick Nicodemus and Katy & Chris Turner

This year's highly anticipated Fathers & Flashlights campout event will be held on November 4 and 5. Camper registration will begin at 8 a.m. on Thursday, September 14 for returning campers and eligible underwriters and sponsors. Open registration for new campers will begin at noon on Friday, September 15. To register as a camper, you must be zoned to attend West University Elementary School, or you must be an eligible underwriter or sponsor. Be sure you are signed up to receive Friends email alerts about camper registration and other Friends activities at www.westuparks.org.



Scan this QR Code to see available sponsorship and underwriting opportunities. For more information, please contact Donna LaMond at diamond@westutx.gov or 713-662-7430.

SAVE THE DATE: Park Lovers' Ball 2024

Jordan Jewett and Sarah Covington are both proud and excited to have the opportunity to Co-Chair next year's 2024 Park Lovers' Ball on behalf of Friends of West University Parks.



Jordan and Sarah are both native Houstonians who have watched West University grow into the wonderful community it has become over the past 30 years. After attending Lamar High School, Jordan and Sarah went off to college, and then both landed back in West University to start their families. Both women agree that among the biggest values of West University are the city's wonderful parks and community involvement. Jordan is married to Andrew Jewett and together they have two adorable children, Molly (6) and Andrew Jr. (3). Sarah and her husband Travis Covington have two precious girls, Carter (7) and Ellie (5).

Jordan and Sarah say they are honored to co-chair the 2024 Park Lovers' Ball, as it is a wonderful opportunity to get the entire community together to further improve our parks and green spaces. Friends of West University Parks provides funding for a large portion of all City park renovations and preservation efforts, and this would not be possible without the strong support of the community at large. Please save this date for Park Lovers' Ball 2024: February 10 at The Post Oak Hotel. The theme is: "Blame It All on My Roots" - so please show up in boots for our black-tie affair! We look forward to seeing you there and thank you in advance for your support.



Friends fundraising continues year around with business partnerships, memorials and honorariums, pavers, benches, and tree sales. For more information on our fundraising events and Friends activities, please visit westuparks.org or contact Friends Executive Director Donna LaMond at diamond@westutx.gov or 713-662-7430.

Public Works

Keeping Fats, Oils, and Grease Out of the Sewer System

Fats, oils, and grease that are commonly derived from meat food scraps, cooking oil, shortening, lard, butter and margarine, gravy, and food products such as mayonnaise, salad dressings, and sour cream can be harmful to the City's sewer system.

When these items are poured down kitchen drains, they accumulate inside sewer pipes. As this residue builds up, it restricts the flow in the pipe and can cause untreated wastewater to back up into homes and businesses, resulting in high costs for cleanup and restoration.

Manholes can overflow into parks, yards, streets, and storm drains, allowing these oils to contaminate local waters. Exposure to untreated wastewater is a public-health hazard.

Restaurants, cafeterias, and fast-food establishments spend thousands of dollars on plumbing emergencies each year to deal with grease blockages and to pump out grease traps and interceptors.

Communities spend billions of dollars every year unclogging or replacing grease-blocked pipes, repairing pump stations, and cleaning up costly and illegal wastewater spills.

Keeping fats, oils, and grease out of the sewer system benefits everyone in the community.



West Side Drainage Improvements

As of June 2023, Cobb, Fendley & Associates Inc. has successfully finalized their Preliminary Engineering Report, while Halff Engineering is completing additional modeling work, contributing to the project's advancement. Furthermore, the design contract will be awarded this year. Stay tuned for further updates as we continue to work diligently for the betterment of our West Side community.

Manhole Lining Maintenance

In 2022, the city initiated a comprehensive capital project aimed at sealing and reinforcing the sanitary sewer manholes citywide. This undertaking extends the overall longevity and durability of the sanitary sewer infrastructure. As part of the project, a total of 145 manholes throughout the city underwent lining to seal rainwater infiltrating into the sanitary sewer system and to bolster their structural integrity. This project is estimated to be completed in 2024.

East Side Drainage Improvements

The installation of the new 60-inch storm sewer system and paving on the northeast side of University Blvd., between the 2800 – 3100 blocks, has been completed by Conrad Construction, the contractor.

Currently, the crew is working hard to finish the remaining 60-inch storm sewer piping and paving between the 2600-2700 blocks of University Blvd.

As of August, the project phasing has been altered to expedite progress. The Contractor has mobilized an additional paving crew within the Phase Two work area of the project. This paving crew will simultaneously pave the southeast side of University Blvd between the 2900-3100 blocks. Tentatively scheduled for December 2023, Phase One crews will move to complete the remainder of Phase Two of the project which will entail paving in the 2600 – 2900 blocks of University Blvd.



West U Recycling and Solid Waste Reduction Board

Recycling Guidelines

Curbside Household Recycling

Place all items in your BLUE BIN, cardboard box, or paper bag. NO PLASTIC BAGS. Need an additional blue bin? Stop by Public Works, 3826 Amherst Street, 7:30 am–5:30 pm.



For additional information regarding acceptable and unacceptable items, scan the provided QR code.

YARD WASTE

What's included: leaves, grass clippings, and small tree and hedge trimmings bagged in kraft paper or compostable plastic bags. Larger items may be stacked no greater than two 4' x 4' x 3' piles with limbs no greater than 3" in diameter.

ONLY USE:

KRAFT PAPER BAGS — OR — **COMPOSTABLE PLASTIC BAGS**

ITEMS ACCEPTED



CANS

Empty and rinse
Empty Aerosol Cans



CARTONS

Food and Beverage Cartons
Empty and replace cap



GLASS

Bottles and Jars
Empty and rinse
No caps or tops
No Pyrex or leaded glass



PAPER

Mixed Paper, Newspaper, Magazines, Cereal Boxes, and Flattened Cardboard



PLASTIC

Kitchen, Laundry, Bath: Bottles and Containers
Empty and replace cap

Items Not Accepted



Do not bag recyclables in plastic bags
No garbage



No plastic bags or thin film
Recycle at retail store bins: Randall's, Kroger, HEB



No food or liquid
Empty all containers



No Styrofoam



No clothing or linens
Use donation programs



No tanglers
No hoses, wires, chains, or electronic cords

Save the Date: Saturday, November 4 — 9 a.m. to Noon — 3826 Milton St.
Paper Shredding, E-Waste, Mattress Collection, and Household Metal Recycling Event

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?
- Do you want to receive notification about changes in the collection schedule 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.



City Currents

Fall 2023



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

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
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HOUSTON, TX
PERMIT NO. 134

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
Clay Brett
Shannon Carroll
Matt Hart

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!

Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony

Monday, December 4 at Friends Park
5:30pm – 7:30pm

