

September Essentials Mayor's Article

Busy Seasons Ahead

We are entering a time of busy seasons for our community – budget, hurricane, and back-to-school seasons. Each of these brings with it a new air of excitement and anticipation! On the budget side of things, it is important to be on the lookout for upcoming 2024 budget and 2023 tax rate announcements.

Also, our peak hurricane and tropical storm season is upon us – this means we need to be extra weather aware over the next few weeks. Make sure you are signed up to receive emergency notifications from the City through the West U READY system. If you haven't yet done so, you can sign up to receive these notifications at: <https://westutx.gov/1404/West-U-READY>. While our weather forecasts have gotten better at predicting hurricanes and tropical storms, their intensity and precise landfall locations are difficult to predict, so be sure that you have backup plans for you and your family!

Ah, the first few days of a new school year... a time for young people to make new friends, share what they did over the summer, and learn new things – what could be more exciting? To build upon this “first day of school” experience, West U is excited to host our very first National Night Out block party on Tuesday, October 3! National Night Out is a community event where you can meet your neighbors, along with our dedicated West U public safety officials. You can read more about this exciting new event further below.

Strengthening Our Sidewalk Service

At our July 10 City Council meeting, the City Council voted to support a grant application to the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO). This grant would help support our continued commitment to building a pedestrian-friendly community. Altogether, the project for this grant will commit up to \$800,000 toward our Sidewalk Rehabilitation and Replacement project – and will include a 50% match (\$400,000) from METRO!

The project area prioritizes key activity centers for senior citizens and for those with disabilities within West U, including our Senior Services and the West University Recreation Center, as well as the METRO bus stops along our city's periphery. Below is a proposed project area for which sidewalks will be addressed.



(This map is attached in the email and can be enlarged for the article)

We want to thank our partners at METRO, the Houston-Galveston Area Council, and the Federal Transit Administration for making this project a reality for our pedestrian-friendly community. We had originally planned to move from east to west to address sidewalks outlined in our Sidewalk Assessment Survey, but this opportunity allows us to address sidewalks that connect to our recreation facilities earlier than planned. Rest assured that we will continue to address the remaining sidewalk areas following this project's completion. If you want to know more about the Sidewalk Assessment Survey, please check out our interactive map at: <https://sidewalk-repair-status-westutx.hub.arcgis.com>

Save the Date for National Night Out

National Night Out is an annual event that epitomizes the spirit of community collaboration. Did you know that Texas has its own unique National Night Out date? While this event is traditionally held on the first Tuesday in August across the U.S., we Texans celebrate it in the cooler month of October. This event brings neighbors together to strengthen relationships with members of local law enforcement and emergency services. National Night Out reminds us that we are not just residents of West U – we are members of a tight-knit community. Join us at Colonial Park for our own National Night Out on Tuesday, October 3, from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

This event will showcase a display of emergency vehicles and provide an up-close look at the tools and equipment that our city's first responders use daily to keep our community safe. Families will be able to take photos alongside these first responders, and to also play an array of outdoor games. To keep the evening cool, refreshing snow cones will be available for everyone to enjoy!

Participating in National Night Out sends a powerful message that we care about each other's well-being. By coming together, we can create a safer environment and deter crime through community awareness.

Saying Goodbye to Summer

As the brutal summer heat begins to recede, West U is going full speed ahead into an exciting and cooler fall! Your involvement in both the 2024 budget process and this year's National Night Out celebration is essential for shaping our community's present and future. Together, we can ensure that West U remains self-sufficient, and that it continues to serve as a benchmark for urban cities around the nation.