

City Currents

Fall 2024

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And More Helpful Information About Your City!



West U PD Circa 1985

Closing Our Centennial Year in Style!

This year, West U officially turned 100 years old! Thank you for joining our celebrations throughout 2024 as we have celebrated this momentous occasion. While turning 100 is an exciting event, the city continues to invest in critical infrastructure to prepare for many years to come.

Upcoming Community Engagement Opportunities

As Phase II of the Facilities Master Plan and urban planning concepts takes shape, we welcome all West U residents to attend the following town hall meetings to learn more about the current progress on these Phase II projects and to share additional feedback:

- **November 12** – There will be two separate town hall meetings on this date regarding:
 - o The design for a new Community Building, Senior Center, and Library
 - o Possible renovations to update the Recreation Center
- **March 4, 2025** – At this meeting, we will continue to discuss the design of the new Community Building, Senior Center, and Library.

As part of this public engagement process, the City has already hosted three town hall events, two City Council workshops, and an online survey to solicit feedback. If you could not make it to one of these events, you can view the presentations on www.westutx.gov/fmp.

East Side Drainage Improvements – One Down and One to Go!

University Boulevard from Buffalo Speedway to Kirby Drive is now open in both directions! This opening marks the end of Package One of the East Side Street and Drainage Improvement Project.

- **Package One** began construction in April 2023 and was completed in June 2024. These improvements installed larger storm sewer pipes underneath the roadway to improve the overall drainage system in this area.
- **Package Two** began in May and is split into three sections:
 - o Section One: 2800–3100 blocks of Duke Street
 - o Section Two: 2600 and 2700 blocks of Rice Boulevard
 - o Section Three: 5800–6400 blocks of Wakeforest Avenue
- Work under Package Two will include new streets and drainage systems in sections 1 and 3, as well as new streets, improved storm drainage inlets, and a new water line in section 2.

For more updates on this project, please visit www.Westutx.gov/projects.

City Receives Excellence Award in Water Innovation Strategies

The City's Public Works Department recently received an award from the Houston-Galveston Area Council's (H-GAC's) Water Innovation Strategies of Excellence (WISE) Awards! This West U department was named winner of the Program Performance Category for the Sanitary Sewer Overflow Prevention Program.

Here are some facts about this award-winning West U program:

- Starting in 2018, the City implemented projects that decreased the influx of extraneous water into the sanitary sewer network.
- In 2018, West U's Wastewater Treatment Plant recorded approximately 418 million gallons of water flow. By comparison, in 2023, this plant recorded just 291 million gallons of water flow!
- Decreasing our total water inflow saves the City operating costs and also extends the useful life of the plant's equipment.
- Our Public Works projects addressed the detrimental effects caused by inflow and infiltration (I&I).
- These I&I projects focused on providing annual maintenance, lining manholes, sweeping streets, cleaning sanitary sewer lines, plugging abandoned sewer lines, and improving our supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system.





Mayor Susan Sample

From the Mayor's Desk

Three Concepts, One Huge Impact

Phase II of the Facilities Master Plan and Civic Center Urban Planning

My past articles have focused on the Facilities Master Plan and the improvements underway with the construction of the new Public Works Maintenance Facility (Phase I) and the design of our new senior center, library, and community building (Phase II). Today, I am going to focus on a portion of Phase II and the possible improvements to West U's Civic Center that will make this area more accessible and usable for our community's families.

The urban planning improvements to the Civic Center evolved after the approval of the Facilities Master Plan, which focused solely on buildings and considered the Civic Center as a whole. As we all can appreciate, land in West U is a precious commodity, and so it's imperative to ensure that this limited space is being used in the best manner possible for the community. This is why Phase I relocates the Public Works Maintenance Facility to City-owned property outside of West U, leaving its current space to be repurposed for community use.

Over the last four months, the City's consultant has developed three concepts (West U Green, West U Commons, and West U Town Square) for consideration by the City Council and the community. The robust feedback that we have already received on these distinct urban planning concepts will help us shape our Civic Center not only now, but also for generations to come. Some of the top suggestions we received from our neighbors included:

- **Consolidating the new buildings to create more green space**
- **Adding more trees in our community**
- **Providing more efficient parking space**
- **Improving pedestrian safety and mobility.**

The final urban planning concept will more than likely encapsulate elements from each of the three planning concepts that will collectively address the needs and desires of our community when it comes to our civic space, senior center, library, and community building. The specific design for these buildings is underway through the remainder of 2024, with another town hall engagement opportunity on the buildings' design scheduled for November 12th.

The ability to reimagine these three facilities and our Civic Center is truly a great opportunity. I am proud of our community's participation in this process, and I look forward to seeing you at future meetings. Your voice matters, and we do not want to just present you with a finished product – we want to work with you to co-create these spaces that will reflect the needs and aspirations of our West U residents.

Community input is most effective in the early stages of the design process, so please continue to fill out comment cards, attend public meetings, and submit suggestions to the City's dedicated email inbox at FMP@westutx.gov.

Reassessing Our Recreation Center

Parks & Recreation Maintenance, which is located at the Recreation Center, will move to the new Public Works Maintenance Facility once it is completed in the fall of 2025. The space currently being used by Parks & Recreation Maintenance will be repurposed to ensure that this building will continue to meet the needs of our community.

This fall, the City will begin looking at the Recreation Center to see if there are any other changes needed for this facility. Some suggestions that I have heard over the years, for example, include adding a large weight room and more space for cardio workouts.

This is a perfect time to hear from our community! To kick off this process, the City will hold a town hall meeting on the same night as the Civic Center town hall meeting (November 12). The Recreation Center discussion will be its very own event – this way, you can attend one or both of the meetings.

Building a Better West U

These are exciting times. Opportunities like this do not come around often. There is no better time like today to get involved and let your voice be heard in the design process that will change our Civic Center; imagine new homes for our senior services, library, and community building; and update our Recreation Center.

I look forward to seeing you at these meetings!



*Mayor Pro Tem
John Montgomery*

A Message from Mayor Pro Tem John Montgomery

Time To Talk Turkey On Debt

Harold B. Schlesinger, West U's first mayor, who served from 1925–1933, left a complicated legacy. On one hand, Mayor Schlesinger is credited with having led the development of critical city infrastructure, including streets, sewerage, drinking water, storm drainage, police and fire departments, and the West University Independent School District. Without these building blocks, our incipient city might not have survived a later annexation request by Houston in 1939.

On the other hand, the cost of this infrastructure buildout fantastically exceeded West U's ability to pay. By 1933, the City of West University Place was on the edge of insolvency. The combination of high operating cost per capita, a 26% tax delinquency rate, and steep bond interest created a massive cash flow shortage. The ensuing financial crisis cost Mayor Schlesinger his position, leaving his successor, Mayor Ralph G. Hyett, to clean up the mess.

Mayor Hyett immediately invited unpaid West U vendors to a meeting at the Rice Hotel, where he offered 50 cents on the dollar, take it or leave it. Most were happy to be paid anything at all. Even the vendor who made West U's only firehose at the time received pennies on the dollar. Despite this negotiating success with West U's general creditors, Mayor Hyett hit a wall with the bond market.

In May of 1933, Mayor Hyett was summoned, Corleone-style, to a come-to-Jesus meeting with bond holders at the Second National Bank. Led by the Equitable Insurance Company, bondholders offered Mayor Hyett a deal he couldn't refuse: there would be no discount or forgiveness of bond principal. We can surmise that the coffee at this meeting was tepid at best. As a small concession, West U would receive a 50% interest rate reduction and an extension of payment terms for past principal due.

A humble beginning for our City indeed, but lesson learned.

Fast forward 100 years, and mayors Schlesinger and Hyett wouldn't believe their eyes. Modern-day West U is an exemplary model of City services and financial discipline. As an example, West U's Police Department utilizes cutting-edge Virtual Gate camera technology. Our finances are copacetic, too, with S&P granting West U their highest AAA municipal bond issuer rating. It would seem, then, that the prioritization of infrastructure investment, balanced by sound fiscal policy, has been a legacy embraced by decades of successive City Councils.

We should keep it that way.

Once again, we find ourselves at an infrastructure crossroads. For too long, portions of West U have had to endure inadequate storm water drainage, particularly on the west side. Some of our streets and sidewalks are due to be replaced, and our water system needs upgrading to meet current and future needs. Additionally, some of our important City buildings that were built in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s have outlived their useful life by decades.

This future investment won't come cheap. City Council is exploring ways to potentially finance the updating of this infrastructure, including the use of cash on hand, grants, and public debt. As for the public debt portion, proposed investments identified in the five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) may require the sale of bonds totaling approximately \$310 million, including the following estimated costs:

- **\$21 Million for facilities construction and renovation**
- **\$203 Million for west-side drainage improvements**
- **\$9 Million for street and sidewalk replacements**
- **\$22 Million for civic center urban planning improvements**
- **\$55 Million for water system upgrades (financed by water rates)**

But, wait, there's more. To eliminate restrictions on recent and future drainage projects, an estimated \$50 million of bonds may be needed for the acquisition of 200 acre-feet of stormwater detention to comply with Harris County Flood Control District requirements.

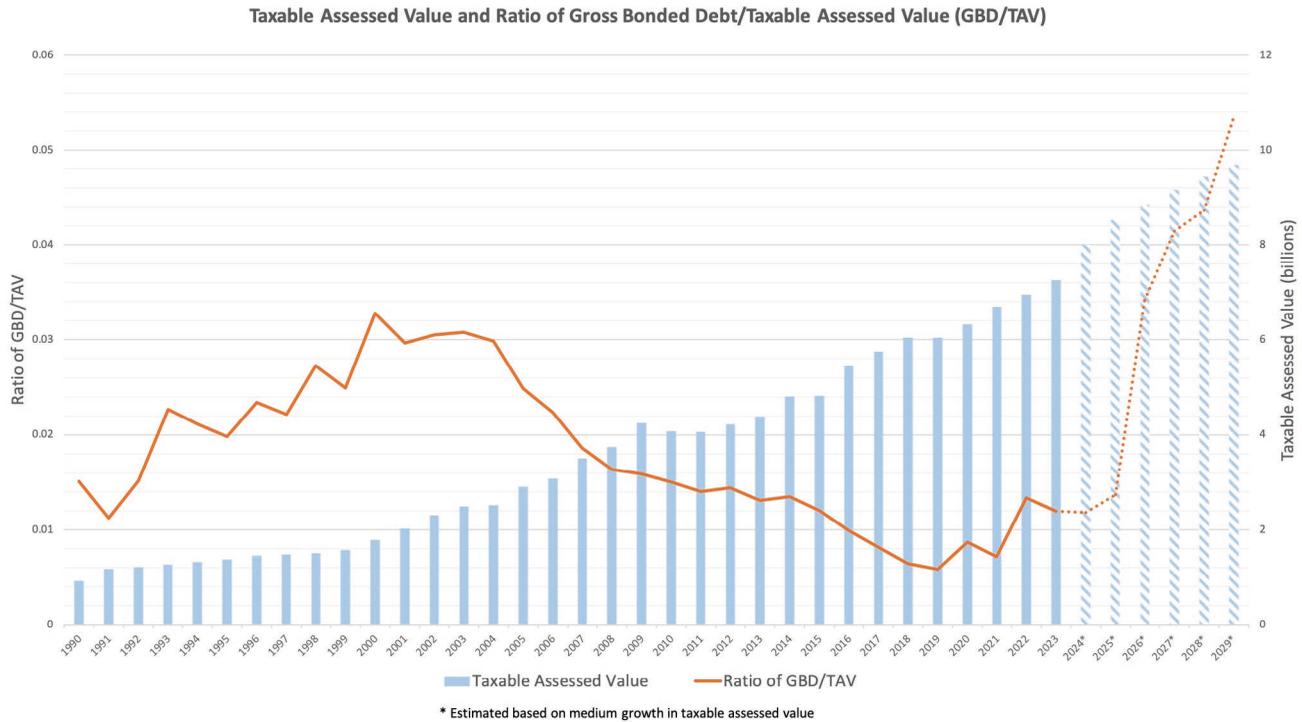
Are you sitting down? That's a total of \$360 million in potential new bond issuance over the next five years. Yes, Virginia, that's a lot of dough!

Article continues on page 4

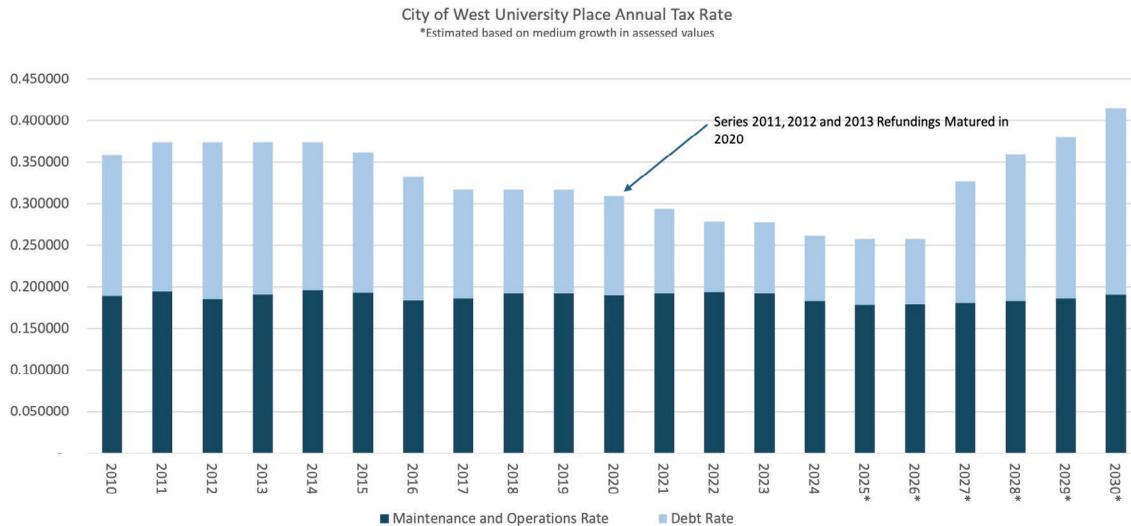
A Message from Mayor Pro Tem John Montgomery

Continued from page 3

For historical context, the chart below shows debt issued by the City of West University Place during times of high investment in infrastructure. As a percentage of taxable property value, the amount of debt proposed in the CIP today would ultimately exceed the recent historical range, topping 5.35% by 2029.



City staff has done an outstanding job budgeting and modeling the potential impact of this proposed financing on our debt service tax rate under a variety of ad-valorem growth scenarios. Under the City's medium growth forecast, we could expect an estimated 187% increase in the debt service portion of our tax rate by 2030. Keep in mind that the debt service rate is only one part of our total tax rate, with the other portion made up of maintenance and operations. Over the same time frame and growth forecast, our estimated total tax rate would rise by 59%.



Like you, I have long supported the idea of lower taxes, without compromising our high level of City services. I am loath to reverse that trend, but infrastructure investments are needed if we are to maintain our best-in-class standard of service. Exactly how much is a matter for residents to decide. Given the scope of bond financing at hand, City Council would be well served to put elements of this plan to the test in a future bond election so that residents can have the final word.

While there is a five-year plan in place for these projects, nothing is ever a done deal until City Council authorizes funding for each piece. Further, project costs are only estimates, so they may change considerably as the City works with our engineering firm to come up with the best solution. Please reach out and share your thoughts on this plan with City Council now. We are in this together.

Thank you for the continued honor of serving you on City Council.

The author would like to credit West U historian, Richard Cunningham, for his research, along with Janice Holt Lang for her 1985 University of Houston thesis entitled "Suburban Pioneers: The Origin of West University Place, 1919-1939."

Resident Resources

Fall Sustainability

As we await the cooler weather that accompanies the fall season, this is the time to prepare your household's fall sustainability initiatives.

- As the weather cools off, consider walking or biking to and from school 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 yard waste collection day. All yard waste is required to be bagged in either Kraft paper bags or compostable bags. For more information, visit www.westutx.gov/yardwaste.
- 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 for food waste disposal at www.westutx.gov/foodwaste.

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.

Trash or Treasure Candy Wrapper Recycling

Help keep candy wrappers out of landfill this Halloween, and year-round! The West University Place Public Works Department has partnered with Rubicon to divert empty candy wrappers from landfills. Bring your clean, empty wrappers to the Public Works Administration Office to join the movement!



Pumpkin Collection for Yard Waste

West U's Public Works Department will collect whole (uncarved and undecorated) pumpkins with yard waste from November 1 - December 1. For more information, please contact Public Works at 713-662-5839 or by email at pwinfo@westutx.gov.



Issue Reporting Made Simple

The Click West U mobile app offers many benefits to those who live, work, or do business in West University Place. Through the Click West U mobile app or website feature, residents can submit service requests, track their requests, and receive updates.

By utilizing Click West U, these issues go directly to the appropriate department and notify staff. No need to come to City Hall or to search for phone numbers to report an issue, just complete your request on the app in the palm of your hand at your convenience.

To download this app, visit the app store on your mobile device and search "Click West U". The related website feature can be found on the homepage of the West University Place website under "Service Request".

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 28

Trash, recycling, and yard waste normally collected on Thursday will be collected on Wednesday, November 27.

Friday, November 29

Collection will be per the normal Friday schedule.

H2Online - A Solution to Water Monitoring

The City is thrilled to provide a service, H2Online, which enables residents to monitor their water usage. With the ability to set usage limits, receive alerts, and track usage trends, residents can stay informed in real-time and detect water leaks early on. By being more mindful of water consumption, residents can work toward conservation efforts.

For more details and to sign up, visit, www.westutx.gov/billing.

Centennial Merchandise

Show your West U pride year-round by shopping at the online West U Centennial merchandise store! Browse through T-shirts, hoodies, polos, cups, and more to order West U gear for the entire family.

Have you purchased your copy of the Centennial Celebration coffee table book? Copies are \$10 and are available for purchase at City Hall.

For more information, please visit www.westutx.gov/centennial.



Resident Resources

Flood Hazard Awareness

West University Place has seen its fair share of flooding in recent years, so now is a good time to make sure you're prepared for the next flood.



Maintain flood insurance on your home. Don't delay - there is a 30-day waiting period before a new policy takes effect. Basic homeowner's insurance does not cover damage from floods.



Check with the Building Department to see if a permit is needed before you make any major enhancements or repairs to your home.



Consider permanent flood protection measures such as marking your fuse or breaker box to show the circuits to the floodable areas.



Protect your home's foundation by making sure your downspouts drain away from your house.



Keep trash out of ditches and streams, and avoid dumping pollutants in the sewers. Debris can clog our waterways and cause back ups that increase the flooding risk.



If you encounter flooded roads, remember to Turn Around, Don't Drown.®



Make an emergency supplies kit and prepare a family evacuation plan. Sign up for West U READY to make sure you receive emergency notifications in the event there is an emergency that poses an immediate risk to health, life, or property, and follow the City on its various social media platforms to get weather warnings and safety information.

West University Tree Trust Program

The West University Place Tree Trust program was established as a means to ensure the regeneration and diversity of the city's urban forest. The Tree Trust is funded by payments from residents and contractors who remove trees for the construction of homes, garages, pools, or other structures when they do not have enough space on their lot for the minimum required replacement plantings.

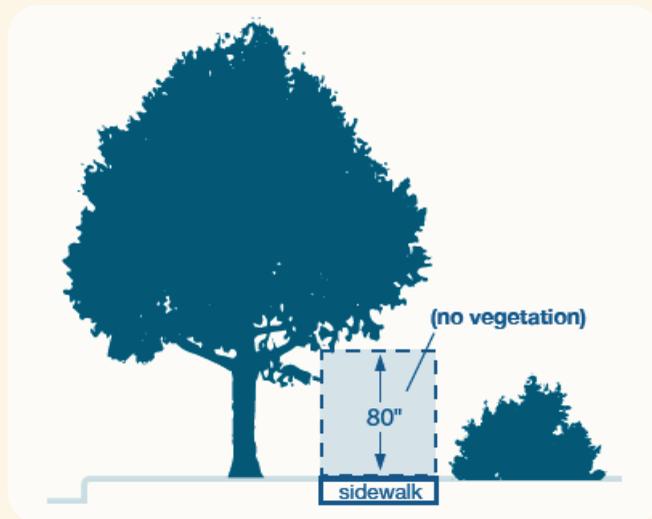
Each fall, residents may apply for a tree, at no direct cost, to be planted in the public realm adjacent to their property (such as the street right of way or front/corner side building setback). Trees are typically planted during December and/or January. Trees are planted on a first come basis depending on the amount of funds available in the account. Applications are being accepted through November 28.

For more information, please visit www.westutx.gov/treetrust.

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 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.

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.



Public Safety

 West University Place Police Department

 West University Place Fire Department

National Night Out Block Party

West University Place first responders are thrilled to announce the second annual National Night Out Block Party, celebrating community unity and safety. This year's event is set for Tuesday, October 1, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Colonial Park West End Decks.

This event promises an evening of community engagement and entertainment, giving residents a unique chance to connect with their local heroes. Attendees can look forward to an impressive display of emergency vehicles and an up-close look at the daily tools and equipment that first responders use to ensure community safety.

Families will enjoy various outdoor games, and will also have the opportunity to take photos with first responders, making it a fun and educational experience for all ages. Adding to the festive atmosphere, refreshing snow cones will be available for everyone to enjoy and Chick-Fil-A will be available for purchase.

This National Night Out Block Party aims to foster a sense of community and to promote safety awareness. It's a fantastic event that brings residents together, offering a blend of fun interaction and a shared commitment to a safe community.

Volunteer opportunities will be available for this event! If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Officer Katie Wilson at 713-668-0330.



Heater and Fireplace Safety

It's time to switch gears from battling the summer heat and to begin preparing for cooler temperatures. While these cooler temperatures may not be as brisk as in other regions, it's still a good idea to get your home ready for this seasonal shift in weather.

Consider scheduling a professional tune-up for your central heating system. Technicians can inspect for any issues like leaks or worn-out parts. For portable heaters or space heaters, give them a once-over to ensure that they are clean and functioning correctly.

Before lighting up your fireplace, residents should inspect their fireplaces and chimneys for any debris or blockages. Clear out any ash or soot buildup, and ensure that the chimney flue is open and clear. If you have a wood-burning fireplace, consider having the chimney professionally cleaned to prevent potential fire hazards. For gas fireplaces, check for leaks or malfunctions in the gas line.

Take a moment to test your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Ensure that they have fresh batteries and that the detectors are working correctly. Dust and debris can accumulate on detectors over time, so give them a quick cleaning to ensure optimal performance. With detectors in proper working order, you can rest easy knowing that your home is protected.

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.

No middlemen

Only \$35/month

Simple billing



Parks and Recreation

Harris-Galveston Subsidence District Awards West U Parks with Water Conservation Grant

The Harris-Galveston Subsidence District's (HGSD) Water Conservation Grant Program has awarded the City of West University Place (COWUP) with up to \$59,025 in grant funds to replace 19 irrigation systems with EPA Water Sense-labeled smart systems. These new systems will allow for efficient and effective irrigation throughout the city parks, buildings, and medians saving an estimated 35% of annual water use.

In June of 2021, City Council approved the creation of a Sustainability task force, which identified financially responsible environmental stewardship strategies, initiatives, and programs. The sustainability report to Council in January of 2022 recommended to consider smart irrigation systems for both residential and municipal water use. The parks and recreation department, in alignment with the task force's mission, implemented smart irrigation systems with innovative features including a flow sensor that can detect leaks, immediately notifying the appropriate contact and will automatically shut off to prevent water loss. "Sustainability is a huge goal of ours, we want to be an example for our residents and other cities," said Susan White, Director of Parks & Recreation.



Full Moon Fest

The Parks and Recreation Department will host its annual Full Moon Fest on Friday, October 25, starting at 5:30 p.m. at Colonial Park. Join us for an evening of pumpkin decorating, face painting, and the family-favorite costume contest! This costume contest will be open to various age groups, so make sure the whole family comes in their spookiest attire.

Don't forget to stay after the event to enjoy the Movie in the Park!



Movies in the Park



On two Friday evenings in October, grab your picnic blankets or lawn chairs, and take the family to Colonial Park to enjoy an outdoor movie shown on a huge inflatable screen! These events are free, and refreshments will be available for purchase. The movies listed below will begin at 7 p.m.

Friday, October 18 – Wonka

Friday, October 25 – Kung Fu Panda 4

West U Halloween Dash and Kids' Fun Run Presented by King & Spalding

Lace up your running and walking shoes and get ready for the 13th annual West U Halloween Dash and Kids Fun Run! Taking place on Saturday, October 26, the Halloween 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. Registration is now available online at www.westutx.gov/funrun.



Winter Registration

Does your child want to try a new activity? The West U Parks and Recreation Department has the perfect place for children to enjoy their special interests! For a complete listing of class descriptions, dates, and times, please visit www.westutx.gov/reg or call 713-662-7420.

- Resident registration will begin on Wednesday, December 4.
- Non-resident registration will begin on Wednesday, December 11.

Update to Parks and Open Space Master Plan

During the 2024 budget process, the City Council identified an update to the current Parks and Open Space Master Plan as a goal to be completed this year. The current master plan was completed in 2015 with staff, the Parks and Recreation Board, and White Oak Studio. This update will be conducted by Parks and Recreation staff, and will be advised by the Parks and Recreation Board.

If you would like to attend the public meetings to learn more about this process, the Parks and Recreation Board typically holds these meetings on the first Wednesday of each month.

Fun Over 50

713-662-5895 | www.westutx.gov/seniors

Indoor Pickleball Lessons

With help from instructor Eugene Leong, learn how to play this fun game that is sweeping the nation! Classes are two hours per week for three weeks. The cost per session is \$130. Choose the Friday class that most suits you.

Session 1
Beginner
Aug 30, Sept 6 & 13

Session 2
Advanced Beginner
Sept 20, 27 & Oct 4

Session 3
Intermediate
Oct 18, 25 & Nov 1

Session 4
Beginner
Nov 8, 15, 22

Wine Down Wednesdays

Wine and yoga make a great combination. Bring your plastic wine glass and join instructor Hannah Abney to get loose during these classes, which will feature standard but longer-held poses. These Wednesdays classes will meet on September 11, October 9, and November 13 at 3:30 p.m. The cost will be \$9 per class.

Cinderella at the Houston Grand Opera

Goodness triumphs in Gioachino Rossini's frothy and delightful rendition of Cinderella. Join friends and neighbors for a trip to this matinee performance with well-priced tickets. The group will meet at the Community Building on Sunday, October 27 at 1 p.m. The cost of each ticket will be \$37.

Annual Thanksgiving Lunch

Back by popular demand, Boy Scout Troop 266 will host this lovely Thanksgiving Day meal on Thursday, November 28, at the Community Building. Lunch will be served at 11:30 a.m. Please RSVP by Thursday, November 14.

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 and on the City's website.

Friends of West U Parks

 Friends of West University Parks Fund

 FriendsOfWestUParks

Thank you to our friend and neighbor!

Thank you Mary Frances A. DuMay, Compass Real Estate Advisor, for generously sponsoring the popular 2024 Party on the Patio Summer Concert Series for the fourth consecutive year!

She has already committed to sponsoring concerts through 2026. These concerts are always a popular neighborhood event each summer. Mary Frances is also an active member of the Friends Board of Directors.



Mary Frances A. DuMay
713-724-0577



Congratulations to Friends Star Citizens Sarah & Travis Covington and Jordan & Andrew Jewett for co-chairing the 2024 Park Lovers' Ball, which **netted** \$437,000 for West U parks!

The Star Citizen Awards were presented by Mayor Susan Sample to these deserving and hardworking recipients at the Friends Appreciation and Awards Luncheon held on May 8. Since its inception, Friends of West University Parks Fund (Friends) has raised \$9 million and another \$8.5 million in in-kind donations. We could not achieve such success without the wonderful volunteers and donors who are the backbone of the organization.

2024 Fathers & Flashlights Campout

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



The highly anticipated 2024 Fathers & Flashlights campout event will be held on November 2 - 3.

A big shout-out to: Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital has stepped up again for West U Parks by committing to be our top exclusive Camp Founder Sponsor for this campout event. They have been generous and loyal supporters of Friends since 2015.



Sponsorship and underwriting opportunities are available!



Camper registration will begin at 8 a.m. on Tuesday, September 10 for returning campers and for eligible underwriters and sponsors. Open registration for new campers will begin at noon on Thursday, September 12. To register as a camper, you must be zoned to attend West University Elementary School OR be an eligible underwriter or sponsor. Be sure that you are signed up to receive Friends email alerts about camper registration and other Friends activities at www.westuparks.org.

For more information, please contact Friends Executive Director Donna LaMond at DLaMond@WestUTX.gov or call 713-662-7430, or visit the Friends website at www.westuparks.org.

2025 Park Lovers' Ball

Kristen Browning, Jordan Jewett, and Liz Scofield are proud and excited to have the opportunity to Chair the 2025 Park Lovers' Ball on behalf of Friends of West University Parks

Friends of West University Parks provides funding for a large portion of all West U park renovations and preservation efforts, and this would not be possible without the wonderful support of the community at large. Please save the date for the 2025 Park Lovers' Ball: February 8 at The Post Oak Hotel. More details will be coming soon. We look forward to seeing you there, and we thank you in advance for your support!

Fundraising Year-Round

Friends fundraising continues year-round with business partnerships, memorials and honorariums, pavers, benches, and tree sales. For more information on Friends and their fundraising events, please visit www.westuparks.org or contact Friends Executive Director Donna LaMond at DLaMond@WestUTX.gov or 713-662-7430.

Public Works

East Side Paving and Drainage Improvement Project – Package 2

Package 2 of the East Side Paving and Drainage Improvements Project has been ongoing, and this important infrastructure project aims to enhance the quality of the roadways and improve the drainage system.

The project consists of installing new waterlines and reinforced concrete pipe (RCP), along with replacing the roadway, and all driveway aprons.

Temporary road closures and detours will be necessary during this time, and we ask residents to exercise caution around the construction site. Access to homes will be maintained whenever possible. However, there may be temporary disruptions.

City staff are working with the contractor to mitigate construction impacts whenever possible.

If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact Capital Project Manager Eduardo Barreto at 713-662-5848 or via email at ebarreto@westutx.gov.

Buffalo Speedway Esplanades

Great progress has been made by the contractor, Landscape Art, on the Buffalo Speedway Esplanades Project. This project includes beautification enhancements to two medians at the entry/exit points of the city, one at Bissonnet Street and the other at W. Holcombe Boulevard. The contractor has finished installing the new pavers, irrigation system, custom planters, and landscaping with anticipation of completing the project by the end of October.

Crews will continue to restore areas damaged by the project and site cleanup. Residents are encouraged to continue to be patient during this construction project and to abide by all traffic safety laws.

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 other 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.

Additionally, manholes can overflow into parks, yards, streets, and storm drains, allowing these oils to contaminate local waters, including drinking water. 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. Some cities also charge businesses for sewer-pipe repairs and spill cleanups if they can attribute the blockage to a particular business. Some cities also add a surcharge to wastewater bills if a business exceeds a specified discharge limit. These expenses can be significant.

Communities spend billions of dollars every year unclogging or replacing grease-blocked pipes, repairing pump stations, and cleaning up costly and illegal wastewater spills. Excessive amounts of fats, oils, and grease in the sewer system can affect local wastewater rates.

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



Save the Date!

Biannual Recycling Event

Saturday, November 2

9am to Noon — 3826 Milton St.

West U Recycling and Solid Waste Reduction Board

Yard Waste Collection Reminders

Use the following bags and procedures for the collection of grass and small limbs or garden trimmings:

- 1 Brown Paper Bags (also known as Kraft Bags)** – These bags can be purchased at various stores such as Lowe’s, Home Depot, Randalls, H-E-B, and Bering’s, to name a few local options. Depending on the store, 30-gallon bags could be purchased in a 5 or 12-pack, and will vary in price up to approximately \$13.
- 2 “BioBag” Compostable Bags** – BioBags must have the recycle/compostable symbol on them and be without bag ties. These bags come in various sizes from 35-gallon bags to 55-gallon bags, and will vary in price up to approximately \$26.
- 3 Tree Trimmings** – For easy pick up, tree trimmings should be placed curbside and tied together with twine or yarn. Limbs should be approximately 4 feet long and no more than 3 inches in diameter.



Common reasons your yard waste is not collected:

- Your yard waste exceeds 40 pounds.
- Yard waste bags have been placed in a container.
- Food waste has contaminated your yard waste bag.
- Trash is visible in your yard waste bag.
- Your yard waste was set out on the curb after collection.
- Your yard waste has not been placed in the correct bag.

Yard waste should be placed curbside no earlier than 6 p.m. the day before your scheduled collection and no later than 8 a.m. the day of collection. There is no limit on the number of bags/yard waste to be placed curbside for pick up. For more information regarding West U’s solid waste, recycling, and yard waste collection procedures, please visit www.westutx.gov/yardwaste.

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/westcollects for all the details.



City Currents

Fall 2024



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
Clay Brett
Shannon Carroll
Matt Hart

CITY MANAGER

Dave Beach
dbeach@westutx.gov

CITY SECRETARY

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

For questions and comments about *City Currents*, contact Communications Manager 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 6:30 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!

Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony at Friends Park
Monday, December 2, at 5:30 p.m.