

# City Currents

Winter 2024 - 2025



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## City Council Adopts \$52.6 Million 2025 Operating Budget Focused on Public Safety, Service Delivery and Infrastructure Improvements

At its September 23 regular meeting, the City Council approved the city's annual budget that continues to deliver on the community's priorities of public safety, superior service, and infrastructure improvements. Additionally, the Council adopted the 2024 property tax rate which remains one of the lowest rates in Harris County at \$.241930 / \$100 assessed value. For a breakdown of the 2025 budget and how West U's tax rate compares to other cities, please see the Budget at a Glance on Page 4.

2025 will be a historic year for West U facilities. The Facilities Master Plan is in full swing with construction for the new Public Works Facility planned throughout 2025. Also, be on the lookout for more information regarding Phase II (Community Building, Senior Center, and Library) and improvements to the Civic Center.

### So, what projects will you see in 2025?

- Joggers can look forward to improvements to the track around the Recreation Center! An improved surface area will enhance the durability and quality of the jogging track.
- Throughout the next year, City Council will also consider a variety of improvements to the city's water systems. Improvements could include expanding existing waterlines, improving pump room capacities at the Wakeforest and Milton Water Plants, and options to rehabilitate the Wakeforest elevated storage tank. These enhancements will help build resiliency and ensure environmental requirements if critical components ever go offline due to routine maintenance or during severe weather events.
- A high priority for City Council in 2025 is the implementation of an online permitting software. The goal with this software is to streamline the permitting process and allow residents and contractors to view the status of their permits in real time. Be on the lookout for more information while this software is still under development!



# From the Mayor's Desk

## Setting the Record Straight on Debt and Planning

Throughout 2024, we have discussed a lot about the City's Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and the Facilities Master Plan. The goal of these two programs is to align West U's annual budget cycle with anticipated future expenses. The key word here is anticipated – not set in stone. By planning for large capital projects, we can adjust our budget strategy each fiscal year to support community projects. By carefully planning for long-term expenses, the City can manage its cash reserves, fund balances, and reduce debt to lower the impact on West U's overall tax rate.

## What a CIP Does for West U

First, it is important to remember that only the first year of the capital improvement plan is subject to funding. Our CIP is an outlook over the next five or more years and looks at what funding sources are anticipated for upcoming projects. Once the projects get closer to the current fiscal year, decisions can start being made. When it comes to projects identified in years outside of the first year, their timing could be moved up or pushed further out depending on the economy, market conditions, and other factors.

Decisions can include: Should we schedule a bond election to issue debt? Should we apply for grant funding? Do we use cash on hand in reserve funds? The answers to these questions have important timelines in order to make decisions, hold public hearings, and allow for our City Council to take required action. Additionally, the CIP helps keep the timeline for these discussions on our radar.

A well-managed capital improvement plan helps emphasize the importance of strategic planning for major projects. From large infrastructure projects (like the West Side Drainage Improvement Project) to projects that will enhance our city facilities, the CIP helps establish West U's financial north star. Over the next couple of months, the City Council will consider options to identify projects 8 or 10-years out instead of the typical 5-years.

## Planning for the Facilities Master Plan

A subset of the Five-Year CIP is the Facilities Master Plan, which evaluates the City's current facilities to ensure that they are meeting our community's current and future needs, and that they are in their optimal location for the next 50 years. Many of our facilities in the Civic Center, for instance, are 50–70 years old and need major investments.

Other elements that have come out of the Facilities Master Plan study are proposed improvements to the City's right-of-way areas around our Civic Center, which would include adding more green spaces, trees, pedestrian safety improvements, traffic calming measures, and more efficient parking layouts.

These improvements are examples of the many positives that come from planning ahead and taking time to consider things.

To learn more about the Facilities Master Plan, please visit [www.westutx.gov/fmp](http://www.westutx.gov/fmp).

## Planning and Implementing

I understand the initial reaction to seeing the 5-Year CIP may be sticker shock, I am going to be honest that was my first impression many years ago when I first became involved in government. I understand the importance of this document and how it helps us plan for the future to ensure that our infrastructure doesn't fall into disrepair as you read about in so many other cities.

The CIP is a dynamic planning document that will change with the times, whether that be due to the economy or the needs of our community. There are some saying we are driving off financial cliff, but in actuality we are being very prudent in making sound financial decisions to address our community's infrastructure needs before they become critical issues and we are left with no room for discussion, only action. This Council's goal is, and has always been, to put our community as a whole first, to be good stewards of our community's tax dollars, and to ensure West U remains the gem that we all know it is.

**I look forward to seeing you around the neighborhood and at future meetings.**



*Mayor Susan Sample*

# A Message from Council Member Clay Brett

## A Council That Listens

West U is a special place in so many ways: lifelong friendships among its residents, along with its walkability, low crime rate, extensive parks and trees, and a plethora of recreational activities for seniors and children alike. It feels like one of the last urban communities in America where its residents are truly safe on the streets and regularly congregate together.

Over the past 18 months of my service on your City Council, however, one other amazing characteristic has emerged that makes me truly proud to live here and serve you:

You are governed by a City Council that earnestly listens to you.

Providing direction to the City is a constant process that occurs more frequently than elections. At each meeting and town hall event, we receive input from residents on the business of our Council. If you've attended these meetings, you have heard my fellow Councilmembers and myself hold dialogues with the residents who have joined the conversation. Below are some great examples of this during my term:



*Council Member  
Clay Brett*

- Resident input on the location of the West U Fire Department led Council to direct the City to study plans that would leave our Fire Department where it currently sits. Council's direction upends a Facilities Master Plan published and approved by successive Councils for eight years. The public record indicates that the ultimate location of the Fire Department will balance the delivery of fire services to our residents, along with capital and operating costs, the critical needs of our Fire Department (which are currently not being met), and localized resident reception.
- Flooding concerns from residents west of Auden Street, including feedback following the recent Hurricane Beryl, led the Council to prioritize the West Side Drainage Improvement Project at the top of West U's Capital Improvement Plan. In response, to kick off this improvement project, we have initiated design work on the mitigation system and purchased right-of-way areas to Brays Bayou.
- There is an ongoing discussion regarding the timing and funding of equipment replacement at the wastewater treatment facility, including a false perception that our wastewater treatment service is somehow at immediate risk. In this discussion, citizens have informed both sides of the debate, and those citizens have had the benefit of hearing from the City's internal and external experts who expressed the view that no such risk exists. In the interest of the long-term health of our wastewater system, Council voted to move forward by rebidding the equipment replacement package in the near future, and will proceed with maintenance over several years.

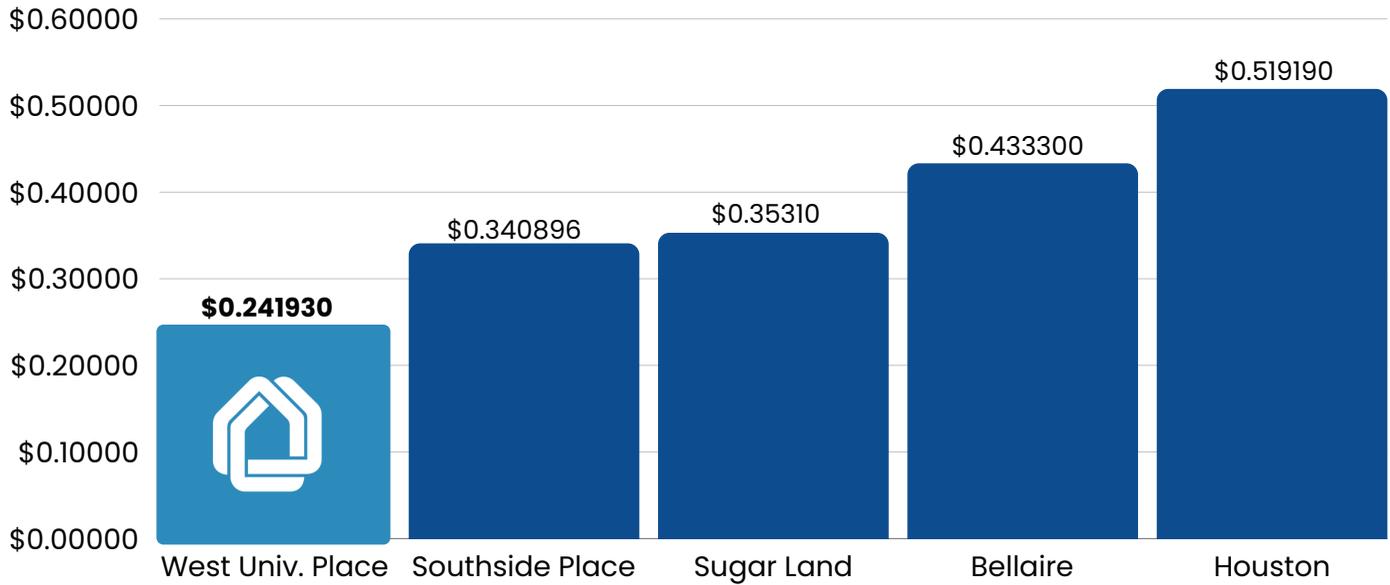
There are myriad other examples of ongoing dialogue involving our West U residents, such as the work of our Boards and Commissions, as well as our Charter Review Committee; the improvements urgently required in our permit process; and the inclusion of a green screen on Virginia Court during Poor Farm Ditch repairs, all of which are the product of direct citizen input.

Difficult conversations are ongoing, many of which were written about on this page. We will not always agree, but, in a non-partisan government, we have a beautiful way of achieving compromises. One thing will always be true with your current City Council: you will be part of this conversation, and your voice will be heard.

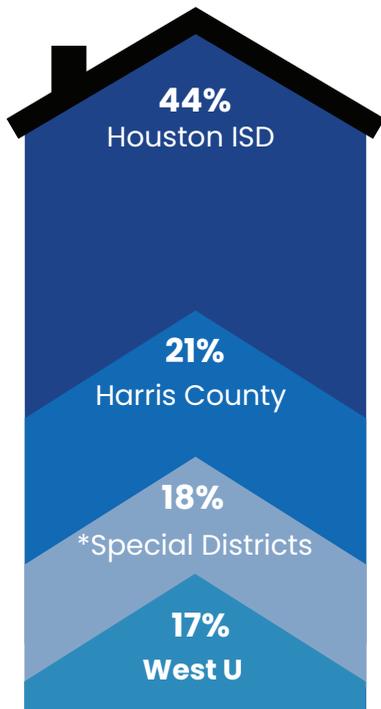
# Budget at a Glance

## How Does West U Compare?

The City of West University Place is proud to have one of the lowest property tax rates in Harris County.



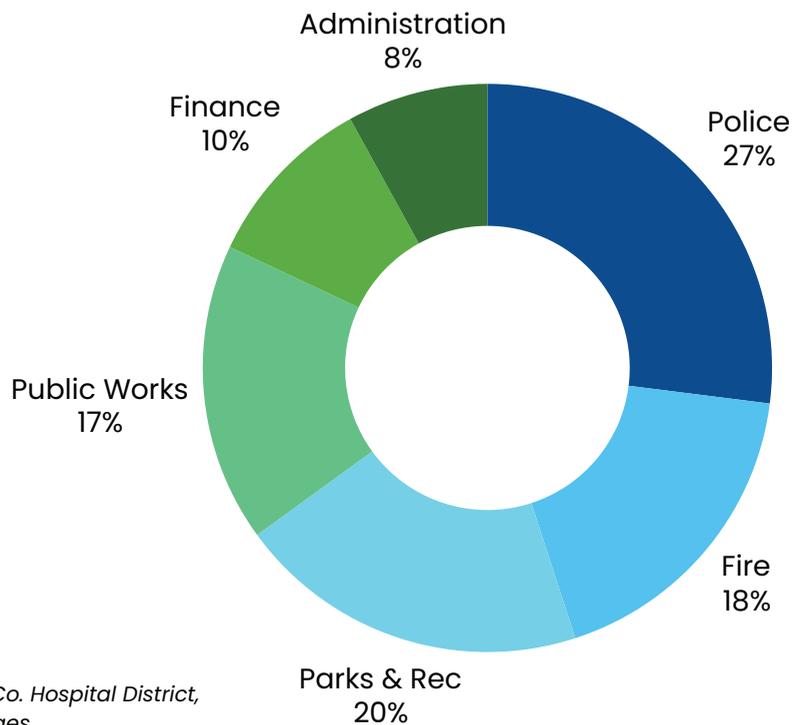
## Where Do Property Taxes Go?



\*Harris Co. Flood Control District, Port of Houston, Harris Co. Hospital District, Harris Co. Dept. of Education, Houston Community Colleges

## Expenditures By Department

Total General Fund Budget - \$26,194,635



# Resident Resources

## Make Sustainability Your New Year's Resolution

As we approach the new year, it's the perfect time to reflect on our lifestyle choices and how they impact the planet. We can make a difference by adopting eco-friendly resolutions. Incremental changes can lead to more significant lifestyle adjustments that help preserve our planet for future generations. Consider making these small changes:

- **Reduce your shower time**

Conserving water is crucial. The simple act of reducing your shower time by 2 – 3 minutes will save you big time! Finding ways to use less water will help conserve this precious resource and save money on your water bill.

- **Drive less**

Instead of driving to the Rec Center, walk or bike as a warm-up before your workout.

- **Utilize reusable products**

Take an audit of the number of plastics you use and begin swapping out these items with reusable products. Lessen the burden on landfills by making this easy eco-friendly change.

## 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.

### Christmas Holiday

Tuesday, December 24 – Trash, recycling, and yard waste normally collected on Tuesday will be collected per the normal schedule.

Wednesday, December 25 – The collection schedule will not be affected by this holiday.

### New Year's Day

Wednesday, January 1 – The collection schedule will not be affected by this holiday.

### Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Monday, January 20 – Trash, recycling, and yard waste normally collected on Monday will be collected on Wednesday, January 22.

## Christmas Tree Recycling

Each year, West U's Public Works Department collects live Christmas trees with yard waste and takes them to a local composter to be recycled as mulch. To participate in this initiative, remove all decorations, lights, foreign objects, and stands from your tree and place them out during your yard waste collection day. Trees that are flocked or that have foreign objects still attached to them will be collected with normal household trash and disposed of in the landfill.



The collection will begin December 26 and run through January 10.

## String Light Recycling

In conjunction with the Houston Zoo, West U will be accepting holiday string lights for recycling at the following locations starting December 2 through January 10.

- **City Hall** - 3800 University Blvd.
- **Public Works Administration Office** - 3826 Amherst St.
- **West University Place Recreation Center** - 4210 Bellaire Blvd.

## 2025 Water, Sewer, and Solid Waste Rate Increase



The adoption of the 2025 budget included a 3% increase on all solid waste rates, increasing the over 65 and disabled rates to \$19.02 and the regular rates to \$37.47 before sales tax. In addition, water and sewer rates increased 7% and 3% respectively, thus increasing the average household using 9,600 gallons by \$6.19 per month. Since West U bills in arrears, these new rates will be reflected on your February 2025 utility statement.

If you are over 65 or disabled you may be eligible for the Senior & Disabled Solid-Waste Discount. 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 other valid identification as age verification. Residents who get a disability exemption for property tax purposes qualify to receive the discounted rate as well, as long as appropriate documentation is provided. For assistance, contact Utility Billing at 713-662-5824 or [billinghelp@westutx.gov](mailto:billinghelp@westutx.gov)

## Delivering Flood Insurance Relief to West U Residents

The City of West University Place has achieved a significant milestone by earning a FEMA Community Rating System (CRS) grade of 6. This accomplishment is noteworthy as it translates to a 20% discount on flood insurance premiums within the City of West University Place after April 1, 2025. The CRS program encourages communities to implement floodplain management practices that exceed federal requirements, thereby enhancing local resilience against flooding.

West U's proactive measures, including improved drainage systems, public education initiatives, and robust emergency preparedness plans, have played a crucial role in securing this grade. This discount not only alleviates financial burdens for homeowners but also underscores the city's commitment to fostering a safer living environment.

# Resident Resources

## May 3, 2025, General Election

On Saturday, May 3, 2025, registered voters of West University Place will vote to elect a mayor and four Council members.

If you are interested in serving your community by serving on West U's City Council, you must be:

- At least 21 years of age
- A resident of, and have resided in, the city for at least 12 months immediately preceding the election
- Qualified to vote in the city

The mayor and Council members are elected from the city at large for two-year terms and can serve three consecutive terms. Important dates for this election are:

**First day to apply for a ballot by mail** - Wednesday, January 1

**First day to file for a place on the ballot** - Wednesday, January 15\*

**Last Day to file for a place on the ballot** - Friday, February 14, at 5 p.m.

**Last day to register to vote** - Thursday, April 3

**First day to early vote by personal appearance** - Monday, April 21

**Last day to apply for a ballot by mail** - Tuesday, April 22

**Last day of early voting by personal appearance** - Tuesday, April 29

**Last day to receive a ballot by mail** - Saturday, May 3, at 7 p.m.

**\*Applications may be filed in one of the following ways:**

- In person, with the City Secretary's office at City Hall (3800 University Blvd.).
- By mail. An application submitted by mail is considered to be filed at the time of its receipt in the City Secretary's office.
- By fax 713-662-5305 or email to [tgilliam@westutx.gov](mailto:tgilliam@westutx.gov). The application must be notarized prior to filing via fax or email.

Please contact City Secretary Thelma Gilliam at [tgilliam@westutx.gov](mailto:tgilliam@westutx.gov) or at 713-662-5813 if you have any questions or for more information; or visit the City's website at [www.westutx.gov](http://www.westutx.gov).

## West U Court Proceedings

Starting January 1, the West University Municipal Court will hold all court proceedings in person. You must contact the court at least five to seven days before your appearance date to schedule your in-person hearing.

Additionally, the court has streamlined its citation process with new, user-friendly forms available on the website. These updated resources make it easier to resolve citations efficiently.

For more information about the West U Municipal Court, visit [www.westutx.gov/court](http://www.westutx.gov/court).



## 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.

## See Something, Say Something

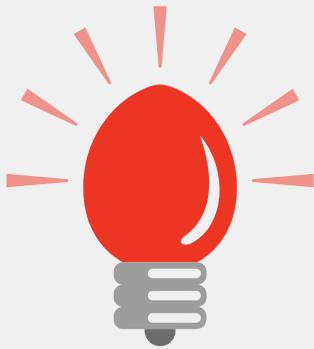
One of the most effective ways you can contribute to neighborhood safety is by reporting suspicious activity. Many crimes can be prevented or quickly resolved because someone noticed something unusual and took the time to report it.

Suspicious activity can take many forms. It might be a person loitering in a neighborhood, a vehicle cruising the streets repeatedly without a clear purpose, or an unattended package in a public place. No matter how small or insignificant something may seem, it could be a crucial piece of information for law enforcement.

Reporting suspicious activity helps the police act swiftly to prevent potential crimes before they happen. It also allows officers to gather important information that could lead to the arrest of individuals who may be involved in criminal behavior.

When reporting suspicious activity, try to provide as much detail as possible, such as descriptions of people, vehicles, and the location. You don't have to investigate or confront anyone yourself; your safety is the top priority. Instead, trust your instincts and reach out to the West University Place Police Department. Contact the non-emergency line at 713-668-0330, or, if a crime is actively happening, call 911.

Remember, you are the eyes and ears of the community. By staying vigilant and reporting anything that doesn't seem right, you are playing a vital role in keeping your community safe. Let's work together to create a safer environment for everyone.



## Lit Without the Glitch: Holiday Light Safety Reminders

Christmas lights add a festive sparkle to the holiday season, but they also pose potential fire risks if not used properly. To ensure safety, start by inspecting all lights before installation, and check for frayed wires, broken bulbs, or loose connections. Use only lights that are UL-listed for outdoor use. Avoid overloading electrical outlets by plugging multiple strands of lights into a single socket. Instead, use power strips with built-in circuit breakers. Never use cords through doorways or windows where they can be pinched and keep them away from heat sources. For outdoor displays, ensure that all connections are securely covered to prevent water from causing short circuits.

Be sure to always turn off holiday lights when leaving the house or going to bed; using timers can help ensure that they are not left on too long.

## 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](http://www.westutx.gov/directlink).

No middlemen

Only \$35/month

Simple billing



## Bingo With Badges

Join West University Place first responders for a night of fun! This complimentary event is set for Friday, January 31, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the West University Place Community Building, located at 6104 Auden. Registration is required and will be available online Thursday, January 9.

For more information and to register, visit [www.westutx.gov/wupdevents](http://www.westutx.gov/wupdevents).

# Parks and Recreation

## Updates to 2025 Memberships and Fees

The Parks and Recreation Department staff collaborates annually with the Parks and Recreation Board's Fee Committee during the budget process to provide recommendations for the upcoming fee schedule. This year, the committee's objective was to enhance consistency in market pricing. To achieve this, a thorough review of all fees and benchmarking against similar organizations was conducted.

Effective January 1, 2025, Parks & Recreation membership fees will be increasing. Please visit [www.westutx.gov/parks25fees](http://www.westutx.gov/parks25fees) to see information regarding the new membership fees.

## Polar Bear Pool Party

On New Year's Day, the Colonial Pool will be open for swimming for those who are brave enough to endure the cold weather and chilly water! Join us on Wednesday, January 1, from 1 - 3 p.m., for the fourth annual Polar Bear Pool Party. Colonial Pool members will get in free. For residents who don't yet have their memberships for 2025, the event fee will be \$8, and, for non-resident guests, it will be \$14 (West U residents must accompany guests).

This is a great time to purchase your 2025 membership ahead of the season! For those who aren't made of Polar Bear material, you can enjoy eating poolside treats while watching your family and friends take a chilly dip in the water. For more information on this fun event, visit [www.westutx.gov/events](http://www.westutx.gov/events) or call the Recreation Center at 713-662-7420.

## Summer Camp Registration

Does your child need summer plans? The Parks and Recreation Department has the perfect camp for every child! Space is limited, so be sure to mark your calendar for registration day. To view a complete listing of camp descriptions, dates and times, please visit [www.westutx.gov/reg](http://www.westutx.gov/reg) or call 713-662-7420.

Resident registration will begin on **Wednesday, February 5**.  
Non-resident registration will begin on **Wednesday, February 12**.

## West U Piranhas Tryouts

Registration for the West U Piranhas swim team begins on Sunday, March 16 for returning swimmers, Sunday, March 23 for new West U resident swimmers, and Sunday, March 30 for new non-resident swimmers.

For more information, visit [www.westupiranhas.swimtopia.com](http://www.westupiranhas.swimtopia.com).

## Now Hiring!

### Customer Service Team Members, Lifeguards, and Swim Instructors

The West University Recreation Center and Colonial Park Pool staff are 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 work atmosphere! Certifications are necessary for some positions and quality customer service is a must for all.

For more information, visit [www.westutx.gov/jobs](http://www.westutx.gov/jobs).

## Fun Over 50

713-662-5896 | [www.westutx.gov/seniors](http://www.westutx.gov/seniors)

### Evening Tai Chi

Build strength through the gentle movements of Tai Chi. Participants will improve their mental focus and balance by performing basic exercises that aim to reduce the chance of falls. This eight-week course will begin on Thursday, January 16 at 5 p.m. and cost \$40.

### Christmas Concert

On Sunday, December 15, make plans to attend this annual family favorite event featuring the Concert Band with Conductor Chuck Throckmorton. The show will start at 2 p.m. and will be free to attend.

### Beginner Mah Jongg Lessons

Learn the fundamentals of the game of Mah Jongg in these weekly, two-hour group classes. This program is great for beginners or for players seeking a refresher course. The next class begins on Wednesday, January 15 and will be held at 10 a.m. in the Community Building. This eight-week class is \$116.

### Parkinson's Boxing

Join instructor Aaron Frank for these innovative and non-contact boxing/fitness classes. These classes are held on Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m. and cost \$132 for six sessions.

### Houston Double Decker Bus Tour

Join the group on Wednesday, December 11, to see the historical highlights of Houston during this 75-minute bus tour. Cruise past historical landmarks and enjoy the audio commentary and fun facts from the tour guide. The bus will depart from the Community Building at 9 a.m., and the cost will be \$43.

### AARP Tax Help

Make your free appointment to receive assistance in preparing your taxes for the upcoming filing season. Appointments begin in February, and you must schedule your appointment with Senior Services. For more information and to schedule your appointment, please call 713-662-5895.

### Tour of Minute Maid Park and Lunch Trip

Put on your team jerseys and come out to the ballpark for an exclusive "All-Star" docent-led tour on February 4 or February 5. The group will see the Upper Deck, Gallagher Club, Bank of America Suite, Press Box, Hall of Fame Alley, the Club House, Barring Cages, and much more! After the tour, the group will have lunch at Treebeards (The Church). Walking shoes are recommended. The group will depart from the Community Building at 9:30 a.m., and the cost to attend will be \$27.

### Thursday Evening Classes

Thursday evening programs are designed for active adults who enjoy activities after 5 p.m. Multiple options exist from tai chi, to cha-cha line dancing, garden clubs, and more. See the full list of programs online at [www.westutx.gov/seniors](http://www.westutx.gov/seniors).

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 listing 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

## Park Lovers' Ball: February 8, 2025

The elegant and glitzy Post Oak Hotel will be the setting for "A Starry Night," the next annual Park Lovers' Ball. Co-Chairs Kristen and Scott Browning, Jordan and Andrew Jewett, and Liz and Crosby Scofield have all the wheels in motion to create a memorable evening for gala goers. The evening will include gala festivities such as the big board, silent and live auctions, and dinner and dancing to the tunes of the Texas Unlimited Band, plus some special surprises that are sure to add to the fun and fundraising.



Secure your tables and seats for this gala using the QR Code! Don't miss out! We also have an array of sponsorship opportunities available. For more information, please contact Friends Executive Director Donna LaMond at [DLaMond@WestUTX.gov](mailto:DLaMond@WestUTX.gov). Park Lovers' Ball table sales and seats can also be purchased via the Friends website at [westuparks.org](http://westuparks.org).



The auction team is curating a great auction for gala attendees. If you have an experience or another great item to add to the auction lineup, we are still accepting auction donations.



## Fathers & Flashlights Campout

Thank you to the 2024 Fathers & Flashlights Camp Founder and Title Sponsor - Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital!

The event co-chairs, Kelly Beth and Charlie Hapgood, Katy and Chris Turner and Megan and Nick Nicodemus couldn't be more pleased with the success of the popular neighborhood campout held in early November. In spite of the stormy weather, everyone had a great time. Thank you to Tri Sports for partnering with Friends of West U Parks and especially to West University Elementary School for their incredible support each year.

"On behalf of Friends of West U Parks, we are so happy to be able to host this great family fundraising event for our community each year. Everyone enjoys it so much!" exclaims Friends Executive Director Donna LaMond.

## A Big Shout-Out and Thank You To Our Generous Underwriters and Sponsors

Butler-Cohen Design Build • Heidi Dugan/Greenwood King Properties • Kristine Martinez/Martha Turner Sotheby's International Realty • Neurosurgical Group Of Texas: Dr. Jonathan Sellin & Dr. William Steele • Benjamin Roberts Law, PLLC • Rachael And John Montgomery • Laura Mayer/Martha Turner Sotheby's International Realty • J S Lopez Law Firm • The Androphy Family • The Goff Family • The Kuhl Family • The Polky Family • The Malani Family • The Morrison Family • The Shukla Family • The Turner Family • Phillip Williams & Andrea Alexander • Supporter Of West U Parks • Avenu Fitness • Cammarata Shisler & Taylor Pediatric Dentistry Group • Children's Therafun, LLC • Dentini Pediatric Dentistry • Friends From Lafayette Street • Melanie Austin Interiors • Reliant • Rockin' Pets, Rollin' Vets • The Sterling Group • Studio 3 - The Salon

Please visit the Friends website to see the complete listing of our generous supporters at [westuparks.org](http://westuparks.org).

## 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](http://www.westuparks.org) or contact Friends Executive Director Donna LaMond at [DLaMond@WestUTX.gov](mailto:DLaMond@WestUTX.gov) or 713-662-7430.



# Public Works

## East Side Paving and Drainage Improvement Project Package 2

The progress on the East Side Paving and Drainage Improvement Project is impressive, with significant milestones achieved in Package 2.

The contractor, TB Construction, has completed Phase 1 of the project, which involved the installation of 60-inch reinforced concrete pipes, junction boxes, inlets, and roadway along Duke Street from Buffalo Speedway to Wakeforest Avenue.

Simultaneously, crews have wrapped up work on Section 2, which included the installation of a new waterline, additional junction boxes, and the reconstruction of the roadway on Rice Boulevard from Wakeforest Avenue to Kirby Drive. With these two sections now complete, the focus has shifted to Phase 3, where crews are actively removing the existing roadway and upsizing the storm sewer pipes at the 5800–6400 blocks of Wakeforest Avenue. The expected time frame for completion of this project is the summer of 2026.

While the progress for this project is commendable, City officials acknowledge the potential disruptions caused by ongoing construction. Residents are urged to exercise patience during this period and to adhere to all traffic safety laws. The City is working closely with TB Construction and project engineers to minimize disruptions and address any issues.

For more information about the East Side Paving and Drainage Improvement Project, residents can visit the project's webpage at [www.westutx.gov/eastside](http://www.westutx.gov/eastside). Those with specific questions or concerns are encouraged to contact Capital Project Manager Eduardo Barreto at 713-662-5848 or via email at [ebarreto@westutx.gov](mailto:ebarreto@westutx.gov).

## Winterizing Your Irrigation System

One of the important lessons learned from Winter Storm Uri in 2021 was how vulnerable the Gulf Coast is to cold and freezing temperatures. Now is a good time to review some basics of your irrigation system around your home. Please remember that private irrigation systems are the responsibility of the property owner, and the City of West University Place cannot work on private systems.

A simple precaution to prevent costly repairs and the wasting of water is to turn off your irrigation system at the backflow preventer and to make sure that irrigation lines are properly insulated. Additionally, be sure to drain your system and turn off your sprinkler system at the control panel. Systems that remain charged or with water in the piping can burst from the expansion of frozen water. Remember to plan ahead and wrap all exposed pipes and outdoor faucets.

Most systems can be turned off by rotating the irrigation valve handle clockwise to the closed position. The handle will be perpendicular to the pipe when closed. If your irrigation system has a separate isolation valve in the ground near the backflow preventer, it is a good idea to close that as well.

If you are unsure of how to drain your irrigation system, please consult your irrigation service provider for further information. You may also search for "how-to" videos online on how to winterize your irrigation system.

OPEN



CLOSED



## Water Heater Maintenance

Water heaters are one of those appliances that we rely on every day but don't think about until they don't work. Whether gas or electric, water heaters are generally very dependable and quiet. They can last for a decade or more, and, with this simple three-step annual maintenance plan, you can extend the life of your water heater even further and save money in the process.

### Dial Down the Temperature:

- Go to the temperature setting dial on your water heater (this will be a knob on the gas valve or a thermostat behind an electric water heater panel).
- Dial the temperature setting down, so it is between 115°F to 120°F.
- This lowered setting will protect the tank from overheating and will reduce the energy used to heat the water.
- Dialing down the temperature will help you save money on energy costs.

### Test the Temperature and Pressure (T&P) Relief Valve:

- To test the T&P valve, simply lift up on the lever part way, then let go and allow it to rapidly snap back.
- You should hear a gurgling sound as the valve allows some water to be released into the drain tube.
- If the T&P valve did nothing however, then it is bad and needs to be replaced by a state-licensed plumber.
- This device, although simple in design, will protect you and your family from the devastation that can be caused should the water heater's T&P valve fail to function as designed.

### Do a Mini-Flush:

- Place a bucket under the drain valve, which can be found near the bottom of the tank.
- Some drain valves have a handle. Others have a short handle-less stem with a slot for a flat head screwdriver.
- Turn the valve counterclockwise to release a few gallons of water into the bucket. A full tank flush is best, but this takes a while.
- Close the valve by turning it clockwise and empty the bucket.
- Performing a mini-flush will extend the life of the water heater.

# West U Recycling and Solid Waste Reduction Board

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## Tips for an Eco-Friendly Holiday Season

The holiday season is a time of joy, but it can also be a season of excess. Between gift-giving, decorating, and festive meals, the environmental impact can be significant. However, with a few simple changes, you can make your holidays greener and more sustainable. Here are some tips to help you celebrate in a way that is kind to the planet.

### 1 Give Experiences, Not Things

One of the best ways to reduce waste during the holidays is to give experiences instead of physical gifts. Consider gifting a spa day, tickets to a theatrical or sporting event, music lessons, or a special dinner at a local restaurant. Not only are these gifts memorable, but they also have a lower environmental impact compared to material items.

### 2 Shop Sustainably

If you're set on giving physical gifts, look for unique treasures at antique and thrift stores, or even at yard sales. These pre-loved items reduce the demand for new products and add a touch of history and character to your gift. Shopping locally is another great option - consider handmade crafts from local artisans or fresh produce from a farmer's market.

### 3 Thoughtful Gifting

Sometimes, less is more. Focus on giving one thoughtful, meaningful gift rather than many. Handmade gifts, such as home-baked goodies packaged in reusable containers, are a personal and eco-friendly option. Additionally, donating to a charity in honor or memory of a loved one is a gift that can make a positive impact far beyond the holiday season.

### 4 Eco-Friendly Wrapping and Post-Holiday Recycling

Gift wrapping is often a source of unnecessary waste. Opt for 100% recyclable wrapping paper or, better yet, reuse gift packaging from previous years. Old greeting cards can be transformed into charming gift tags. For a creative family activity, make your own cards and gift tags. After the holidays, remember to recycle paper greeting cards and envelopes (remove any foil) or send them to St. Jude's Ranch for Children, where they will be repurposed.

### 5 Green Decorations

For your holiday decorations, switch to LED string lights, which use less energy and last longer than traditional lights. If you have old or broken holiday lights, be sure to recycle them properly.

### 6 Composting

Composting your food waste is another great way to reduce your environmental footprint during and after the holidays. Sign up for curbside composting to deal with all the waste from holiday meals. More information about curbside composting is available on the City's website at [www.westutx.gov/foodwaste](http://www.westutx.gov/foodwaste).

### 7 Involve the Kids

Teach children the value of giving without material waste. Encourage them to create coupons for volunteering their time - these coupons could be for helping with chores, cooking dinner, babysitting, or many other volunteer activities. Not only is this a sustainable gift, but it also fosters a spirit of giving and responsibility.

By incorporating these simple tips into your holiday traditions, you can enjoy the season while also caring for the environment. A green holiday is not only possible but can also be more meaningful and rewarding for you and your loved ones.

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](http://www.westutx.gov/westucollects) for all the details.



# City Currents

Winter 2024 - 2025



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](mailto: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](mailto:bcuccerre@westutx.gov) or 713-662-5350.

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## 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](http://www.westutx.gov/agendacenter) or call the City Secretary's Office at 713-662-5813.



## Save the Date!

Mayor's State of the City Address  
Wednesday, January 29 at 6:00 p.m.