

Many residents know that intersections west of Auden Street flood during heavy rains, and some westside lots flooded during Hurricane Harvey. The City is evaluating an infrastructure solution that balances scale with fiscal burden—a decision that may prove the most consequential in West U’s century-long history. The plan under study would install a new drainage system along College Street from Bissonnet Street to Bellaire Boulevard, discharging through a new trunkline along the railroad to Brays Bayou. While this could end lot flooding and intersection ponding, without state or federal aid, it could exceed \$200 million, doubling city taxes for two decades and raising residents’ overall property tax bills by roughly 8-10%. Most of the costs involve the trunkline, and construction could span 10 years.

Smaller-scale alternatives could replace the undersized two-year-capacity pipe around College Street, but, without a trunkline, these alternatives would require Harris County’s cooperation for water egress through Kilmarnock or Poor Farm ditches, which could be uncertain prospects themselves. At this stage, residents hold the greatest power to shape their city’s future. The Council seeks your voice, so review the West Side Drainage Improvement Project materials online and share your views. Representative government works best when citizens make themselves heard.