

# Parks & Open Space Master Plan

City of West University Place  
2015



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## Credits

### Master Plan Task Force

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### Photo Credits

We are pleased to include photos from the 2014 Friends of West U Parks 'Deeply Rooted' Photo Contest.

Cover photo – Jeff Stark

Page 35 – Emory Irvine

Page 38 (Kids Jumping) – Jeff Stark

Page 4 – Katherine Kardesch

# Parks & Open Space Master Plan

City of West University Place  
2015

## Introduction

West University Place last prepared a Parks & Open Space Master Plan in 2000. That document provided guidance during a time of dramatic improvements to the WUP parks system. It is time for an updated look at conditions, issues and opportunities related to outdoor recreation in the community. A volunteer citizen Task Force, aided by City Staff, City Council liaisons and professional consultants, worked for over a year to assess existing parks conditions and the recreation needs and preferences of West U residents. The Task Force conducted public meetings to secure additional citizen input concerning the future direction of outdoor recreation resources in the community.

This report should be considered a planning tool, to be used by current and future West U residents and leaders to make decisions regarding the wise use of monetary and physical resources and providing for outdoor parks and recreation facilities. Factors and conditions will change over time; staff and community leaders must remain in touch with the needs and wishes of West U residents.

*A Look Back*  
Achievements Since 2000



█  
Parks Highlights since 2000

- Redeveloped Colonial Park as a combined neighborhood and community park
- Reinvented Colonial Pool as family aquatics center
- Upgraded all neighborhood parks
- Created Friends Park
- Acquired and redeveloped Recreation Center
- Provided indoor swimming and fitness facilities at Recreation Center
- Improved pedestrian safety and access to parks through significant City investment in sidewalks, streets and lighting
- Added 3 bridges across Poor Farm Ditch
- Made streetscape improvements in the City Center



## Performance of 2000 Master Plan Objectives

### Parks Capital Expenditures Since 2000

- \$20 Million – City of WUP
- \$2.5 Million – Friends of WUP Parks Fund, Inc.

#### **New Parks:**

- Recreation Center
- Colonial Park East End
- Friends Park

#### **Major Renovation Projects:**

(Average \$225,000 per park):

- Colonial Park waterpark, tennis courts
- Wier Park
- Huffington Park
- Community Building and Senior Center
- Scout House
- Judson Park
- Whitt Johnson Park



*A Look at Today*  
Current Conditions  
Issues & Resources



## West University Place Citizen Survey



2014 Parks and Recreation Department Citizen Survey



### Citizen Survey

The 2014 Parks and Recreation Department Citizen Survey was conducted in January/February 2014 to obtain opinions about outdoor recreation and park facilities from all West U residents. Specific questions were included to address City Council's desire to understand public opinion about land acquisition and funding for new parkland. The Survey was conducted online and was publicized widely for several weeks beforehand. The City provided paper copies of the Survey to residents who requested them. A copy of the Survey format is included in the Appendix of this report. About 27% (1,430) of West U households responded, which is considered an excellent rate, more than needed to serve as a statistical representation of the community. Typical response for public recreation surveys is about 12% to 15%. Results of the Survey are summarized on the following pages. The Survey confirmed that West U residents are avid park users – 56% use parks at least once a month.

### Public Meetings

Community involvement was crucial to ensuring that the Master Plan represents the concerns and priorities of West U residents. Two Town Hall meetings and one public presentation to City Council were held between the Fall 2014 and early 2015. Each was widely publicized beforehand. City officials and the consultant explained the process and draft recommendations, and attendees asked questions, expressed opinions and made suggestions. The Task Force used that input, along with the Survey results, to shape the recommendations included in this report.

### Citizen Task Force

The Parks Staff and professional team prepared the Master Plan, guided by a volunteer citizen Task Force. The citizen members served as liaisons to the community and provided another level of public input to the planning process.

## Survey Results

The Citizen Survey indicated the following opinions about various outdoor recreation activities, with the percentage of respondents who expressed a preference for each. It remains vitally important to West U residents to be able to walk safely to their parks. Following that were several activities indicating that passive recreation activities are most important to residents in their local parks.

- Parks within safe walking distance (70%)
- Shaded seating / benches (51%)
- Open, unstructured green spaces (45%)
- Walking paths in parks (42%)
- Playgrounds (48%)
- Linear parks with trails (37%)
- Picnic tables (32%)
- Native plant habitat area (28%)
- Open air pavilion (25%)
- Community garden (23%)
- Tennis courts (20%)
- Outdoor areas for personal fitness (19%)
- Outdoor exercise equipment (14%)
- Basketball courts (15%)
- Outdoor classroom (10%)



**Citizen Survey – Park Acquisition**

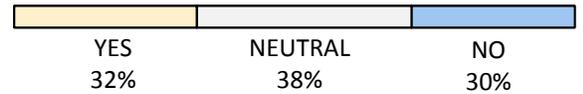
Acquisition of land for a new public park has been an important topic of consideration for West U for several years. The Survey included several questions to help City Council gauge public opinion about new parks and possible methods to fund acquisition and development. Survey results reflect the divided opinion within West U on the issue of acquisition of new property for parks.



**PARK ACQUISITION**

**West U should acquire and develop land for a park between Buffalo Speedway and Edloe.**

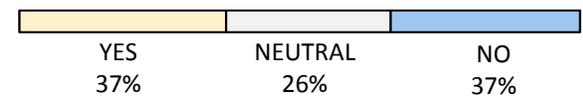
- **Balanced Response:**



**PARK ACQUISITION**

**I would support a new park near my home.**

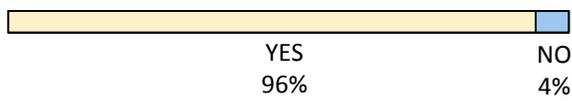
- **Balanced Response:**



Citizen Survey – Funding

**PARK ACQUISITION & DEVELOPMENT FUNDING**  
Preferences for Funding Methods:

**Private Funding**



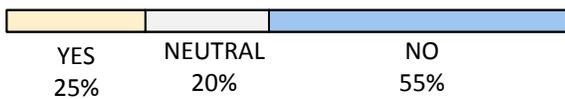
**Revenue Bonds with Increased Taxes:**



**Corporate Sponsorship:**

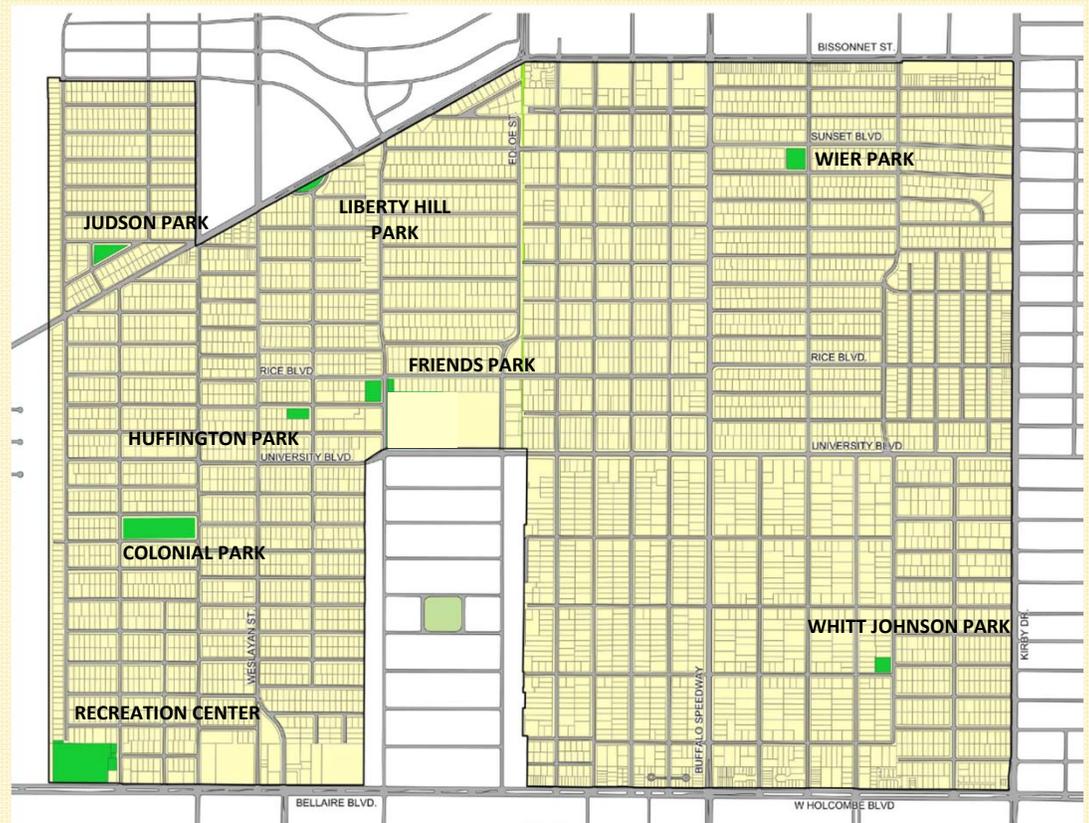


**I would support a tax increase to acquire and develop a new park:**



## Existing Parks

West University Place has eight outdoor park properties distributed throughout the city. Planning for the future outdoor recreation needs of the community must begin with a clear understanding of the existing parks and the outdoor recreation opportunities they offer. A brief description is included on the following pages. For a detailed history of each park, refer to History of the Park System and Recreation Facilities: 1924 – 2014 available on the City website.



## Colonial Park

Neighborhood Park / Community Park 3.16 Acres

Dedicated 1932

Expanded 1990 - 2000

### Facility Inventory

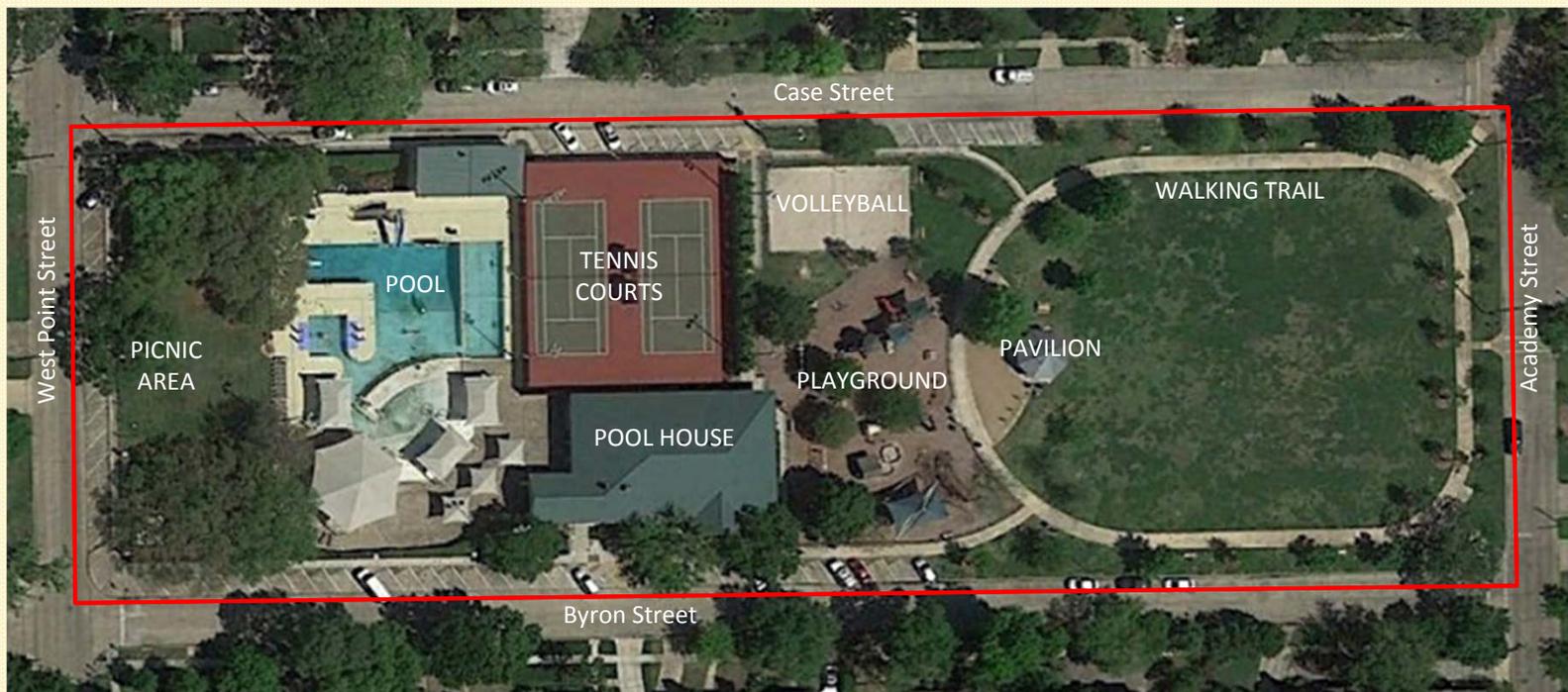
- Recreation Pool
- 2 Tennis Courts
- Playground (ages 2-5, 5-12)
- Pavilion
- Sand Volleyball Court
- Concrete walking trail
- Parking (52 spaces)
- Open play lawn
- Picnic area

### Redevelopment Projects:

- 2000: Playground, lawn, pavilion and path
- 2009 - 2010: Pool, Pool House, Tennis Courts
- 2013: Play features added/replaced
- 2014: East end lawn and site furnishings

### Assessment Comments

- Functions well as two parks,
- Picnic area west of pool inaccessible for public use during off-season.

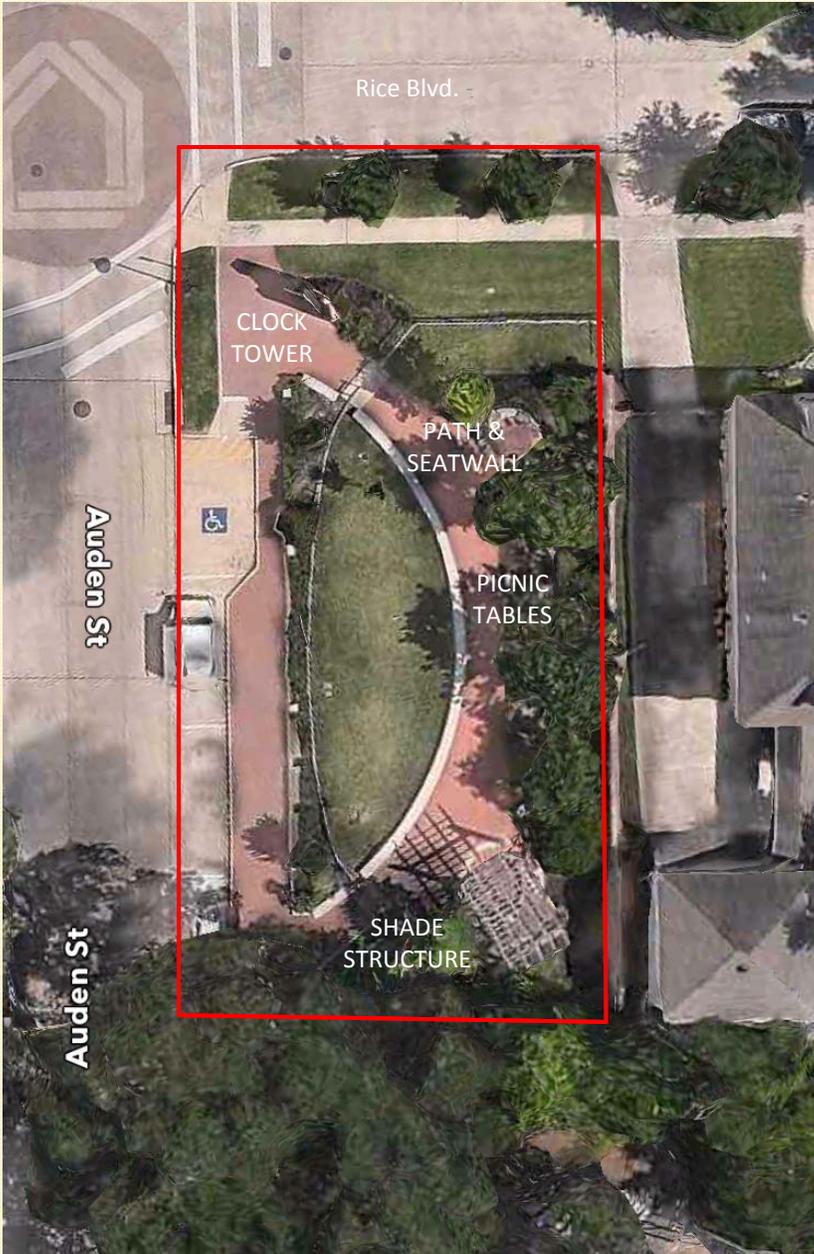




*A Look at Today*  
Colonial Park Assessment



*A Look at Today*  
Friends Park Assessment



**Friends Park**

Pocket Park .17 Acres

Dedicated 2007

**Facility Inventory:**

- Picnic area
- Shade structure
- Parking (3 spaces)
- Clock Tower
- Path and Seatwall

**Assessment Comments:**

- Successful pocket park and civic landmark,
- Planting and clock tower enhance streetscape.



## Huffington Park

Neighborhood Park .61 Acres  
Dedicated 1989

### Facility Inventory:

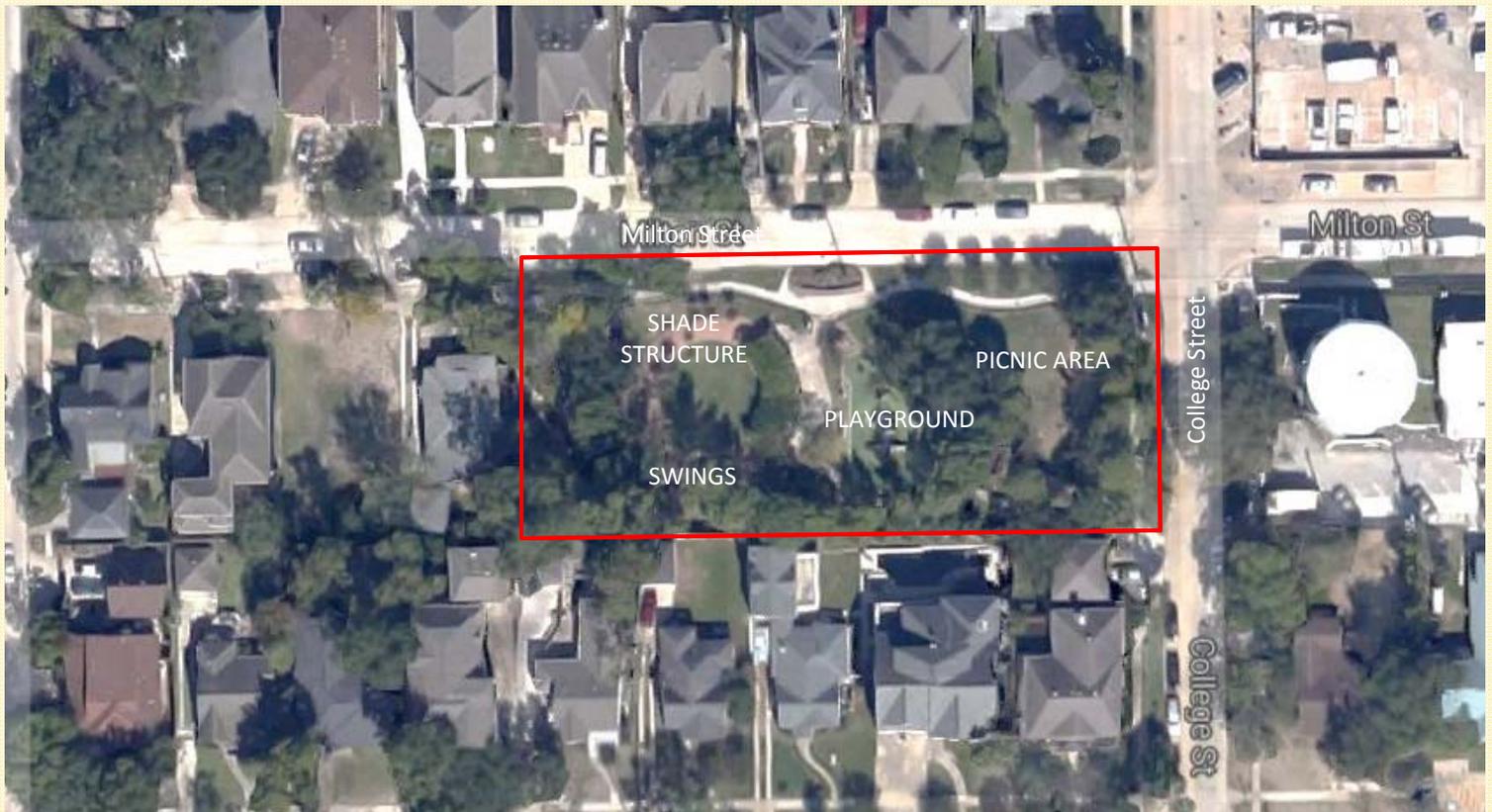
- Playground (ages 2-5)
- Swingset
- Picnic area
- Shade structure
- Walking paths
- Entry landscape

### Redevelopment Projects:

- 2009: Redeveloped

### Assessment Comments:

- Poor visibility into park,
- Excessive shade limits lawn growth,
- Entry hardscape outdated and needs repair/ replacement,
- Reconsider arbor and circular path.



*A Look at Today*  
Huffington Park Assessment



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## Judson Park

Neighborhood Park .73 Acres  
Dedicated 1940

### Facility Inventory:

- 1 Tennis court
- Playground (ages 2-5)
- Playground (ages 5-12)
- BBQ area
- Parking (8 spaces)

### Redevelopment Projects:

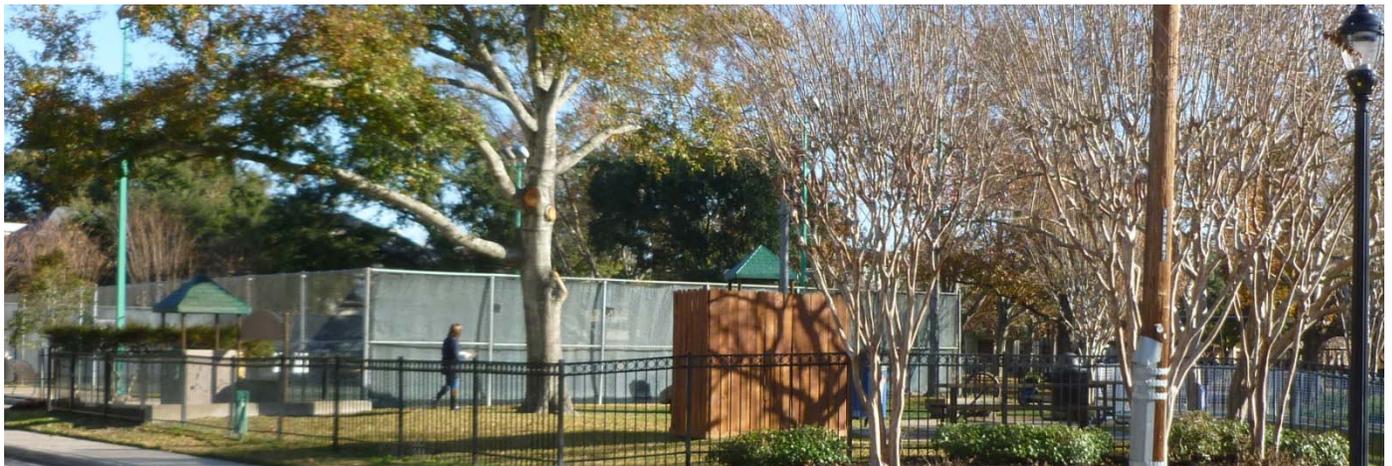
2011 Playgrounds  
2012 Wood deck and game tables  
2014 Tennis court, lighting system, fence

### Assessment Comments:

- Park functions well as traditional neighborhood park,
- Separation between the two playground areas limits caregiver supervision ability,
- Picnic deck and unstructured open space well-liked.



*A Look at Today*  
Judson Park Assessment



## Liberty Hill Park

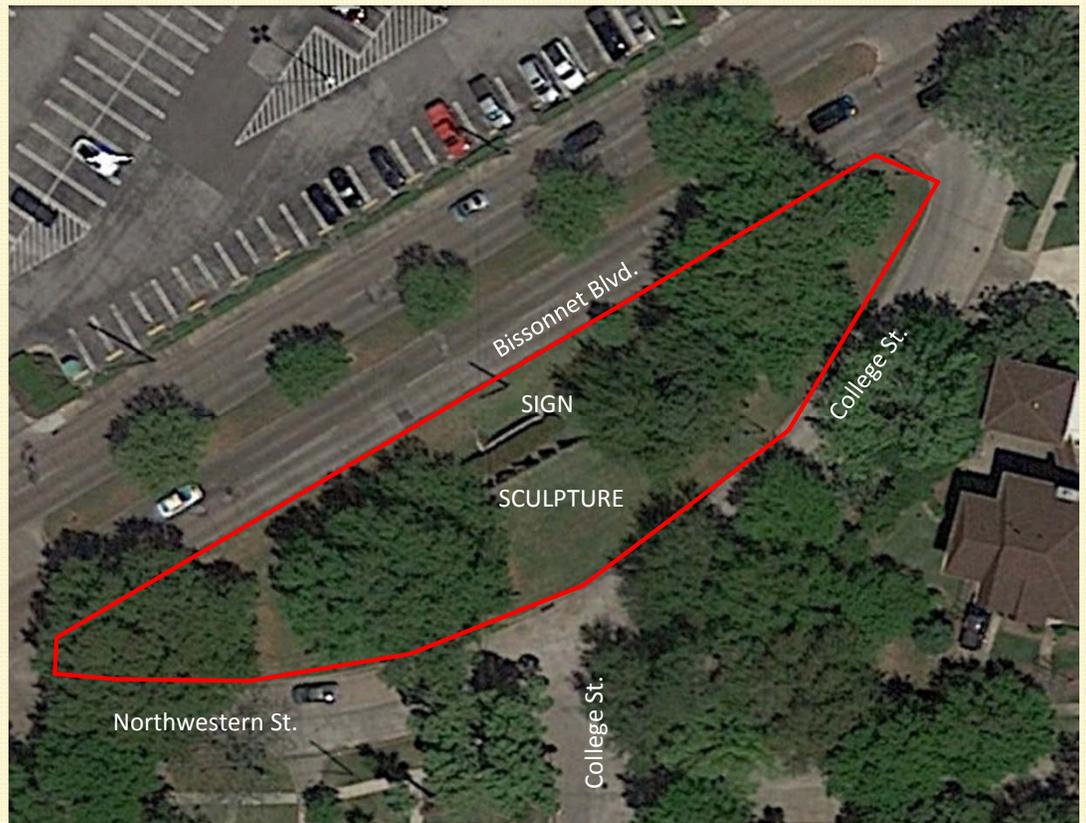
Park Property .17 Acres  
Dedicated 1924

### Facility Inventory:

- City Sign and landscaping
- Art Work
- Lawn and trees

### Assessment Comments:

- No recreation facilities,
- Primarily serves as city identification sign and buffer for homes from Bissonnet,
- Explore ways to make the park usable and safe for recreation or consider re-allocating the land as landscape amenity space, not designated for recreation use,
- Outdated landscape at Bissonnet sign,
- Trees are in good shape and provide lots of shade.



# Recreation Center Assessment

## Recreation Center

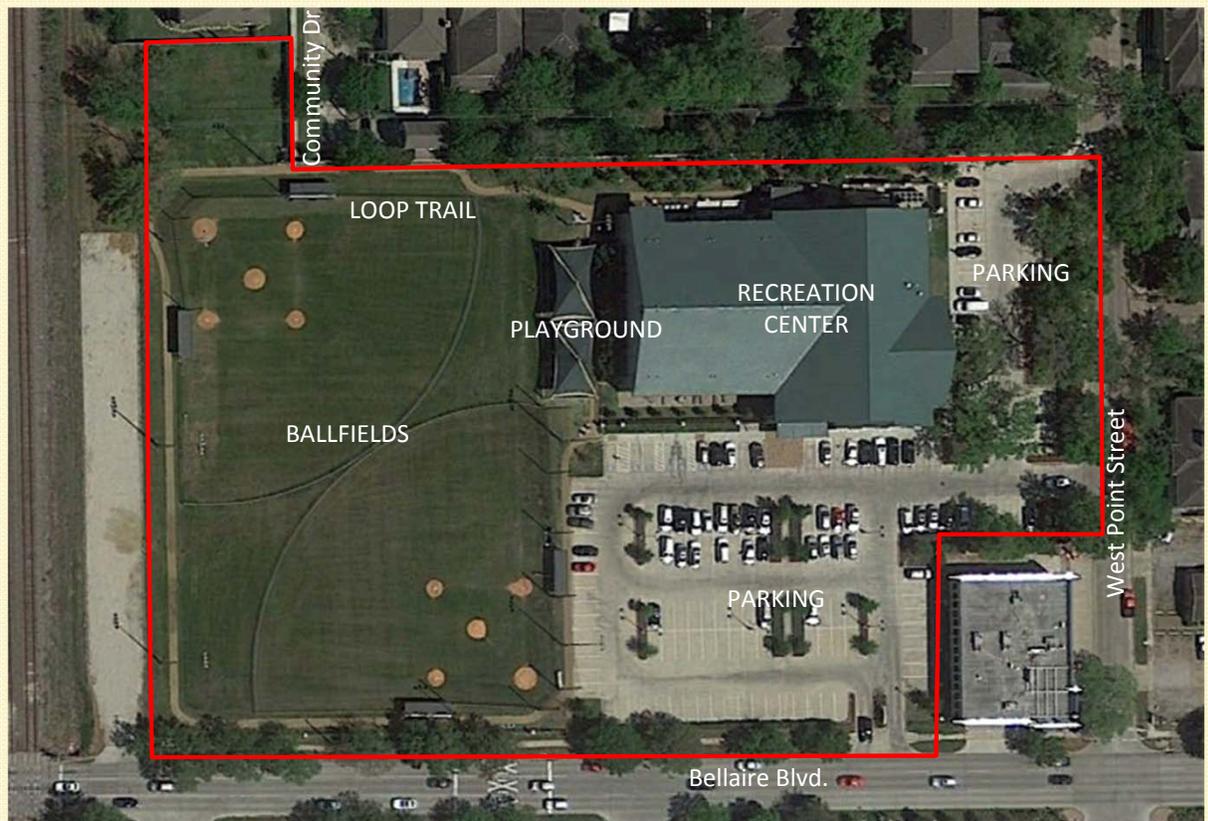
Community Park 5.35 Acres  
Acquired and Dedicated 2003  
Reconstructed 2010

### Facility Inventory:

- Playground (ages 2-5)
- Playground (ages 5-12)
- Swingset
- Picnic area
- Shade structure
- Parking
- Ball fields
- Jogging track
- Indoor Facilities

### Assessment Comments:

- Well-used, successful facility,
- Outdoor recreation opportunities for general use are limited,
- Consider park use for lot at northwest corner.



*A Look at Today*  
Recreation Center Assessment



# Whitt Johnson Park Assessment

## Whitt Johnson Park

Neighborhood Park .52 Acres  
Dedicated 1973

### Facility Inventory:

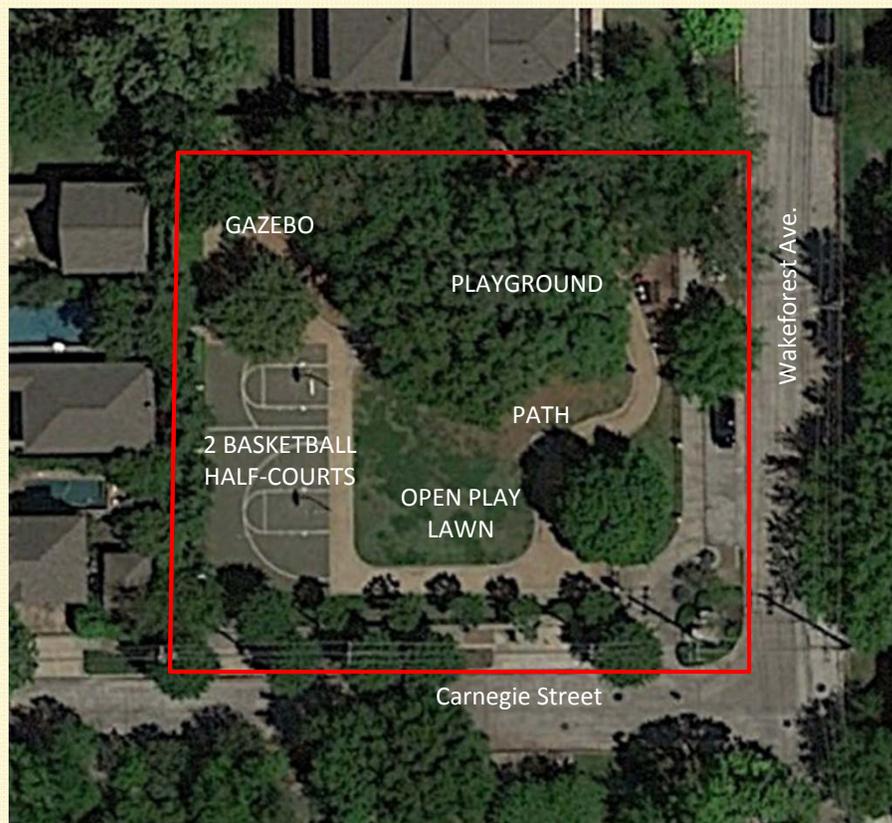
- Playground (ages 2-5)
- Playground (ages 5-12)
- Swingset
- Picnic area
- Shade structure
- 2 Basketball half-courts
- Parking (3 parallel spaces)

### Redevelopment Projects:

2008: Treehouse play structure  
2013: 2-5 play system

### Assessment Comments:

- Park elements well-integrated: columns, fence, furnishings ,
- Lacks significant unstructured open space,
- Well-used park.





Wier Park

Neighborhood Park .88 Acres  
Dedicated 1939

**Facility Inventory:**

- 2 Tennis Courts
- Playground (ages 2-5)
- Playground (ages 5-12)
- Shade structure
- Picnic area
- Basketball half-court

**Assessment Comments:**

- Well loved neighborhood park; heavily used,
- Nicely shaded,
- Park space dominated by two tennis courts,
- Lacks significant unstructured open space.

**Redevelopment Projects:**

2008: Major redevelopment





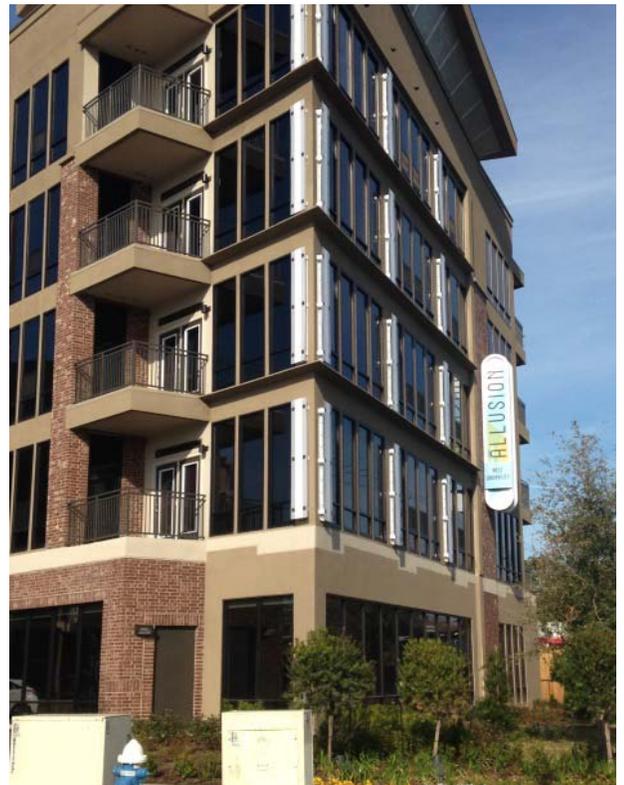
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## Population / Demographic Issues

- West U population roughly stable since 2000 at around 14,800
- Increase in multi-family residential near WUP may add pressure on park facilities
- Staff estimates that 5% to 10% of WUP population moves in or out of the city annually
- Staff observes a more diverse, global citizenry attending events and recreation classes

## Conclusion

Changes in age, ethnicity and mobility are resulting in changing recreation needs and practices.



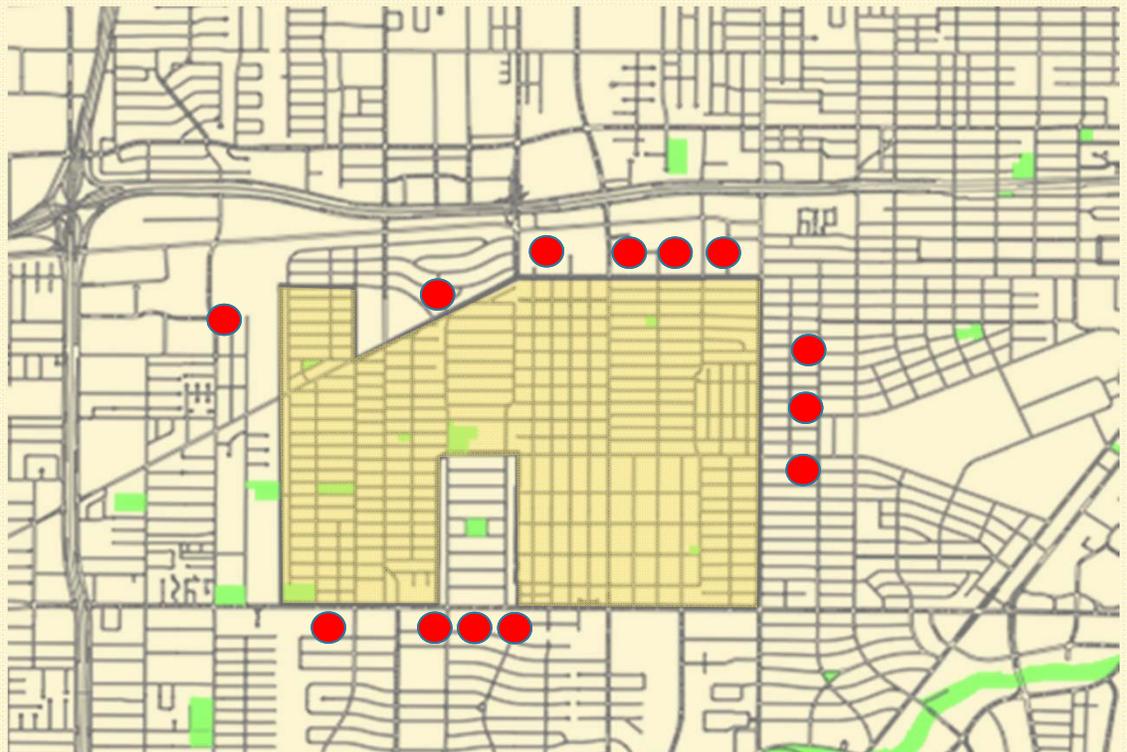
## Multi-Family Residential Development

West U parks are open to the public, both city residents and non-residents from surrounding areas.\*

Multi-family residential development has recently increased outside the West U city limits, due to desirable location and great market demand. This can be expected to increase non-resident use of the parks, putting more pressure on park land, facilities and upkeep of parks and facilities.

Restricting use of open parks is not practical without significant investment in additional staff to monitor each park. The open-park policy should be maintained.

\* Special facilities such as the Rec Center, Colonial Park Pool and tennis court reservations are only available to residents.



Recent Multi-Family Residential Development Near West U

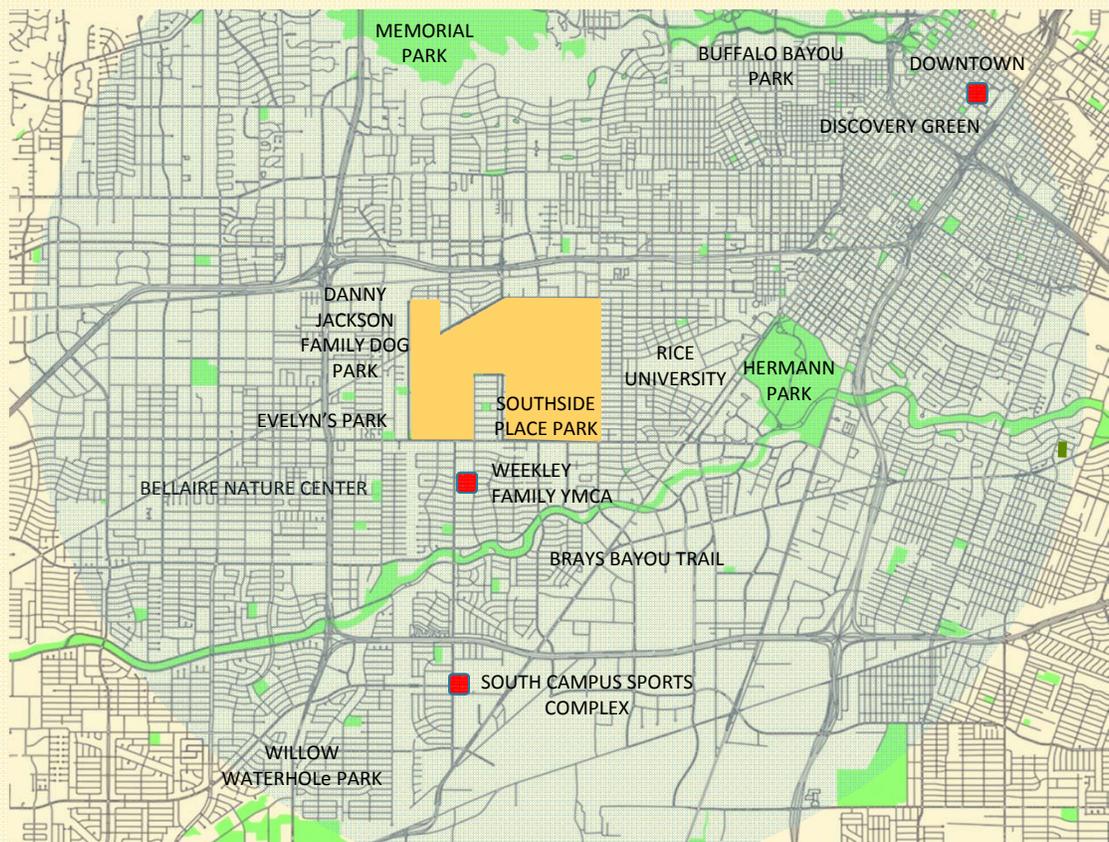
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## Nearby Park Resources

West U residents benefit from wonderful park resources in the surrounding metropolitan area. There are many parks within a short drive from West U that provide an array of outdoor recreation experiences, including hike and bike trails, natural areas and major urban parks.

Consideration of these resources should be included as West U plans for utilization of limited land and facilities within the city. Outdoor experiences that require large parcels of land, special facilities or separation from residential properties should be left for venues outside of the city.

The availability of such parks allows West U to focus on providing neighborhood parks that are quickly and easily accessible for frequent use by West U residents of all ages.



**Parks & Recreation Department  
2015 Operating Budget**

|                                  |                    |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| ▪ Administration                 | \$568,035          |
| ▪ Recreation Center              | \$1,312,975        |
| ▪ Colonial Park                  | \$395,520          |
| ▪ Senior Services                | \$306,100          |
| ▪ Parks Maintenance              | \$565,460          |
| <u>        Total 2015 Budget</u> | <u>\$3,148,090</u> |

Estimated 2015 Revenue                   \$1,300,000

Net Taxpayer Expense                   \$1,848,090

**Capital Improvement Projects Funding**

Capital improvement projects are generally funded with taxpayer-approved City park bonds and with supplemental funds raised and donated by Friends of West U Parks.

The City pays for capital projects with budgeted funds that may include bond proceeds.

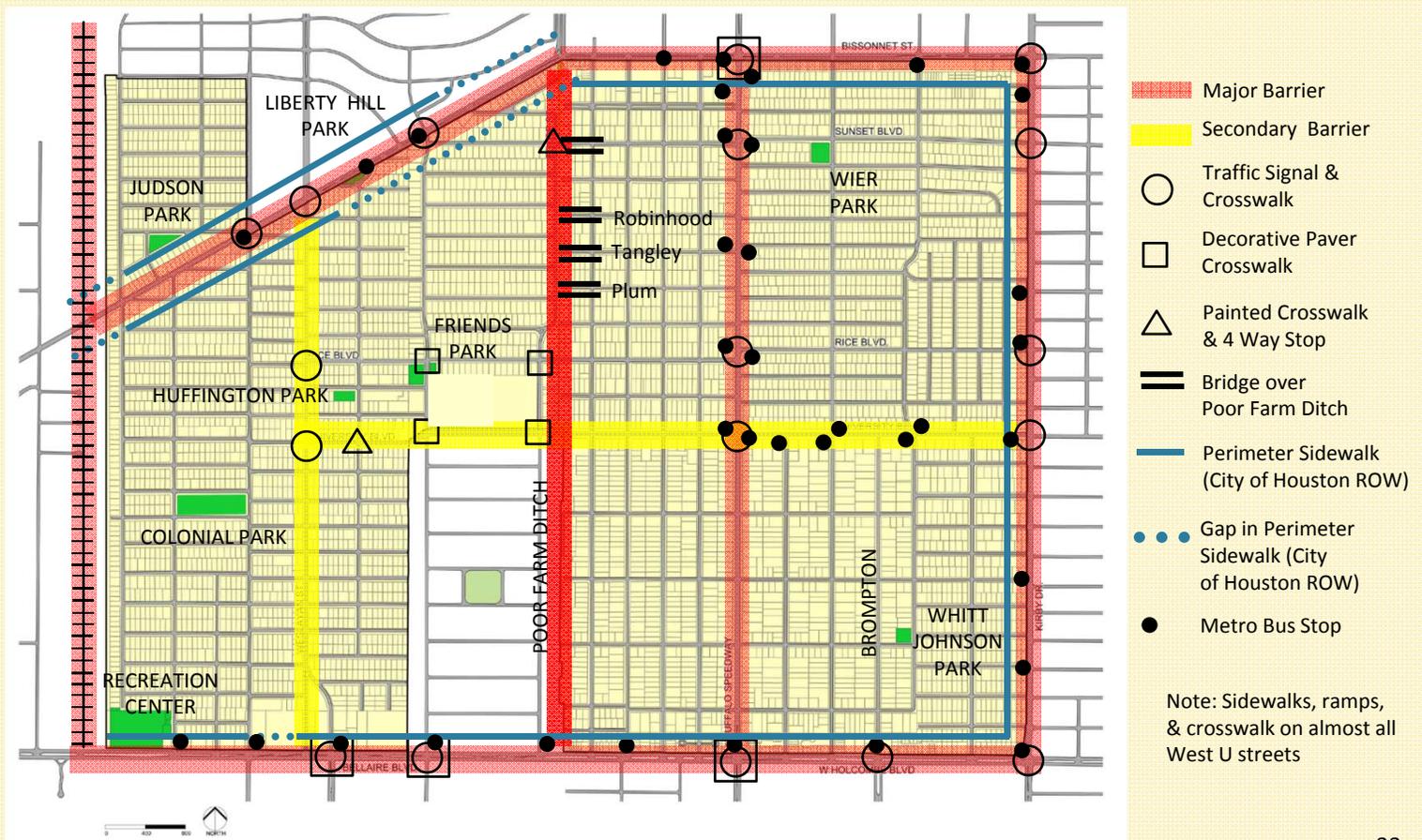


## Walking, Running and Bicycling in West U

Walking, running and bicycling around neighborhood streets continue to be important and enjoyable forms of recreation and exercise in West U. Major street and sidewalk improvement programs over the last 15 years have made these activities safer and more enjoyable. Virtually every street within the city now has sidewalks and intersection curb ramps, accommodating young children on trikes and bikes and walkers with strollers and wagons.

The map on this page evaluates key issues related to navigating West U on foot and cycle. Major streets, railroad tracks and the Poor Farm Ditch are identified as potential barriers to pedestrians. Traffic signals and crosswalks are noted.

While the vast majority of West U residents drive their own cars when traveling outside the city, some do depend on public transportation or walking – perimeter street sidewalks and Metro bus stops are indicated as key ingredients to those modes of transportation.



# Pedestrian Mobility / Access to Parks

## Access to Parks in West U

As barriers to pedestrians and bicyclists, major streets and Poor Farm Ditch affect access to West U Parks. Residents ranked safe walking distance to parks higher than any other open space activity in the Citizen Survey.

The 2000 Parks Master Plan utilized an accepted standard ½ mile radius (about a 10 minute walk) from each West U Park to evaluate proximity to parks. The map on this page demonstrates how streets and Poor Farm Ditch change the effective proximity of some residents to the closest park.

The area between Buffalo Speedway and Edloe / Poor Farm Ditch remains the largest area that does not have a park within a ½ mile effective walking radius of residents.





*Master Plan Recommendations*

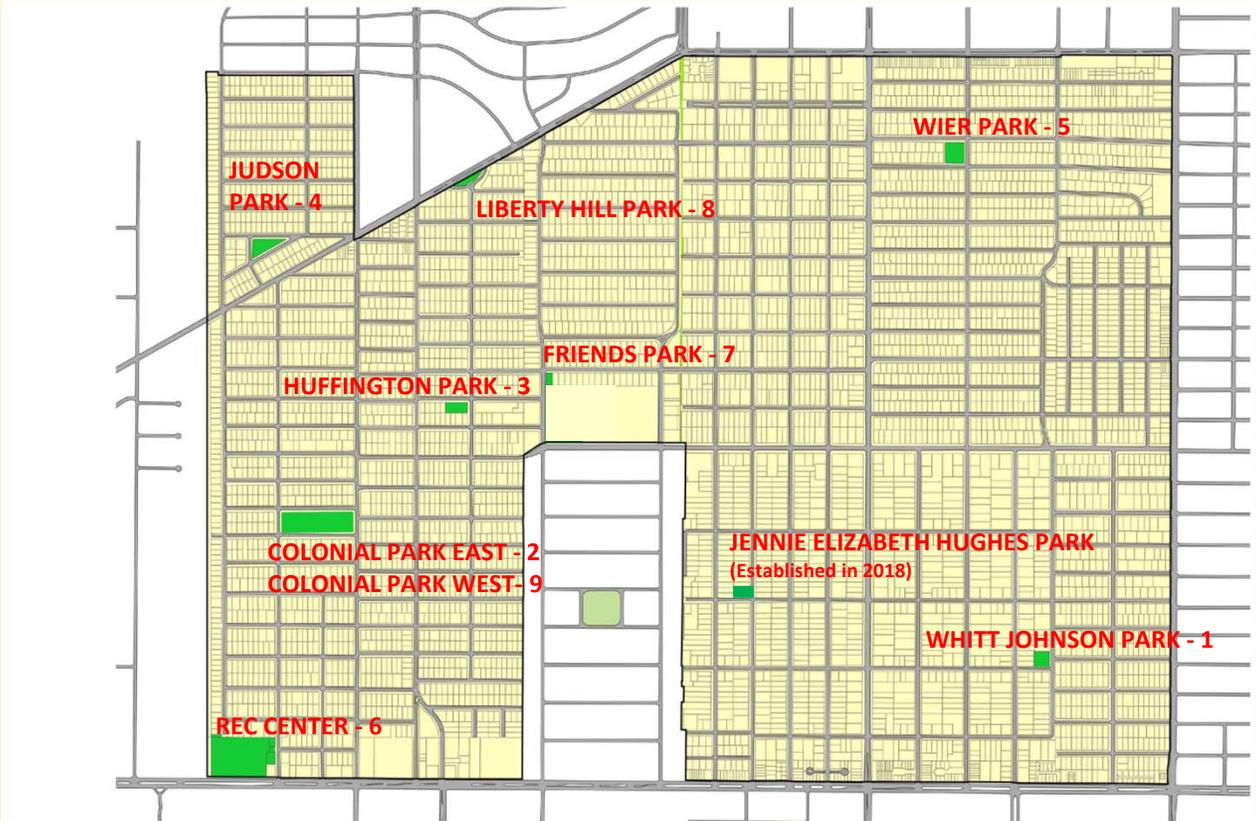
1. Establish a phased program to evaluate, design and redevelop every West U park over the next 15 years.
2. Parks facilities should reflect evolving needs and interests of the community.
3. Explore ways to increase unstructured open space in existing parks.
4. Seek opportunities to add unstructured open space to the park system
5. Pursue acquisition of additional park property for development as passive, unstructured open space, if parameters specified in this plan can be met.
6. Explore ways to increase recreation use of underutilized spaces in West U parks and around the community.
7. Explore ways optimize residents' ability to enjoy public ways and to access parks on bike and foot.
8. Include walking paths within West U where appropriate.
9. Explore opportunities to create a north-south linear hike & bike trail connecting to existing trails along Brays Bayou and Buffalo Bayou.
10. Pursue street, sidewalk and landscape improvements along Auden.
11. Explore cooperative efforts with West U Elementary School to enhance public use of school grounds after hours and to improve outdoor recreation facilities at the campus.
12. Develop gateways with signage and landscaping at key entrances to West U.
13. Continue key partnership with Friends of West U Parks.
14. Explore cooperative arrangements with other agencies and non-profit organizations.
15. Work with Friends of West U Parks to explore expanding the use of corporate sponsorships and partnerships
16. Develop a broad-based strategy to fund parks acquisition and capital projects.

\* Note: Recommendations are numbered for convenience but are not ranked in order of importance.

**Recommendation –**

- 1. Establish a phased program to evaluate all West U parks. Design, revitalize, and redevelop parks as applicable to best serve the needs of the community.**

Periodically parks must be reevaluated and considered in a fresh light to ensure they serve the community as needed. This program will address fundamental issues at each park and will consider whether major, fundamental changes need to be made. It will not be focused on repairs or replacement of equipment, but will address what amenities are provided, how they are arranged within the park property and how the park relates to the surrounding neighborhood. Current park uses will be challenged to ensure they remain vital and appropriate for the limited space available.



The above order should not be considered absolute. Circumstances such as new parkland acquisition, equipment issues, amenity additions, etc. may alter or supersede the prioritization.

# Park Redevelopment Program

Updated – December 10, 2018



## STAKEHOLDERS

- Residents around the park
- Resident park users
- Parks Board – balanced view of overall park system
- Friends of West U Parks
- West U Senior Board
- Parks Department Staff
- Design Professionals

## PROCESS

- Evaluate preferences of park users and community needs
- Evaluate conditions and performance of the park
- Evaluate surrounding neighborhood conditions and pedestrian access
- Consider a variety of improvements – up to complete redesign as warranted

## BUDGET AND FUNDING

- Allocate major capital funding for each park depending on park size and project scope
- Work with Friends to determine target share for each



\$



\$



**PROJECT BUDGET**

**Recommendation –**

**2. Parks facilities should reflect evolving needs and interests of the community.**

The population of West U is becoming more diverse and global. The city is home to families of professionals and business people who move here from all over the world. Recreation needs and interests of these families may differ from those of a more homogeneous population of the past.

Interest and involvement in senior adult recreation has increased dramatically since 2000. Staff observes that West U seniors are more active and interested in fitness than in the past.

- Be proactive to encourage new and current residents to be involved and communicative about their needs and desires for outdoor recreation and programs.
- Continue informal staff observation and communication regarding public preferences and desires.
- Conduct a Five Year Follow-up preference survey in 2020 to obtain updated feedback.
- Consider non-traditional facilities and programs to supplement familiar park amenities.
  - Gardening is valued by many new residents as a familiar activity and a way to share their culture with new friends.
  - Recent immigrants as well as long-time citizens may enjoy gathering with friends and family at large open-air picnics and events.
  - Classes and organized events can incorporate a variety of activities, such as tai chi.
  - People from many cultures value the opportunity to walk and exercise in natural surroundings.
- Public events are gateways to civic involvement. Continue parks-based events that engage new residents.



Residents expressed a strong desire in the Survey for open, unstructured green spaces. Open lawn areas provide places for a variety of recreation activities as well as giving a sense of spaciousness to the park and surrounding neighborhood. West U parks have limited acreage and to a large extent have been filled with recreation facilities, limiting the amount of unstructured open space available close to home.

*Recommendation –*

**3. Explore ways to increase unstructured open space in existing parks.**

As parks are re-evaluated in the Park Redevelopment Program, consider opportunities to rearrange park layout to add more unstructured open space.

Consider expanding existing parks by acquiring adjacent lots as available.



Open play lawn in Judson Park is well-loved by residents



Unstructured open space is flexible for a variety of uses

**Recommendation –**

**4. Seek opportunities to add unstructured open space to the park system**

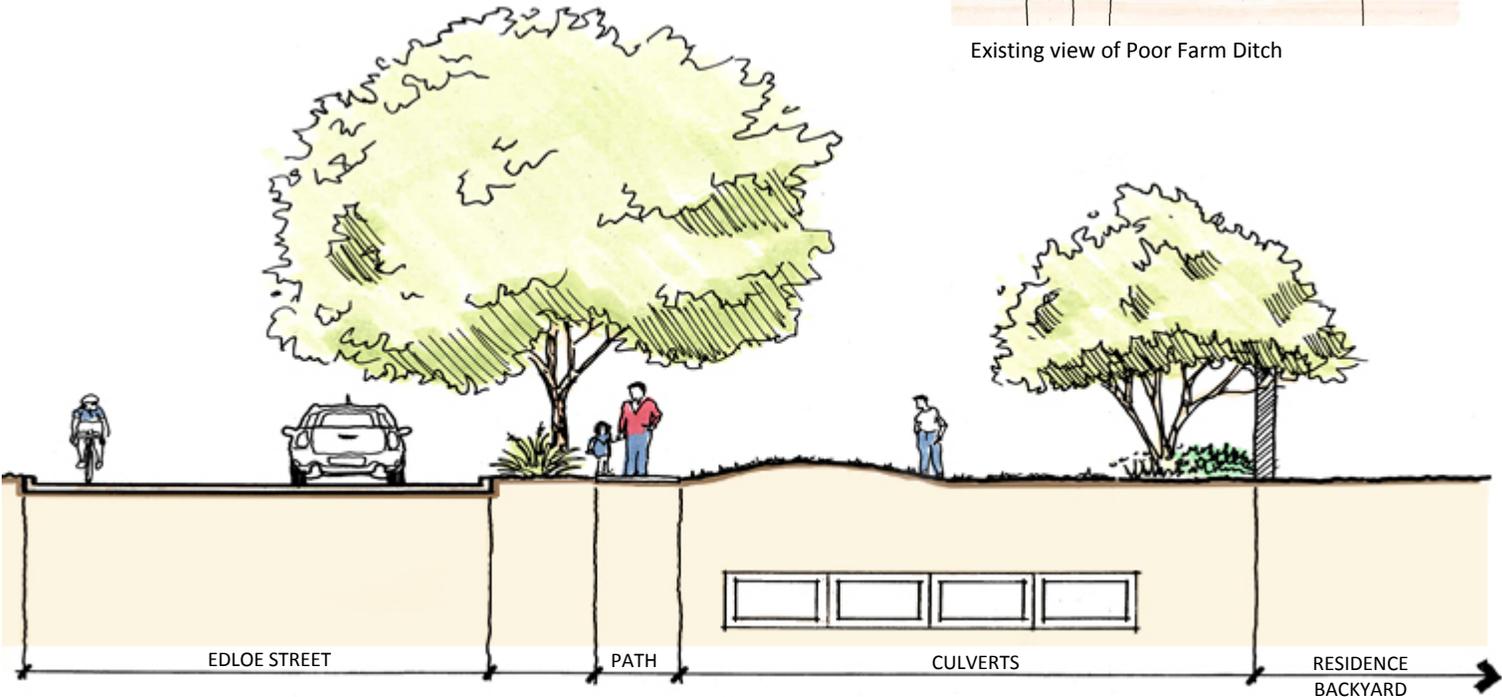
- Pursue conversion of a portion of Poor Farm Ditch along Edloe, between Sunset and Georgetown to become a park, including unstructured open space. ‘Conversion’ would involve replacement of the open ditch with large underground culverts to convey stormwater.
  - Valuable resource with excellent location
  - Ditch is currently a blight in the community; it could be an amenity
  - Issue has been studied previously with Harris County Flood Control District and found viable
  - Long-term, costly project
  - Park amenities would be studied carefully with community involvement



Location of possible park along Edloe



Existing view of Poor Farm Ditch



Possible approach to enclose Poor Farm Ditch in culverts to provide open space



Existing view of Edloe Street along Poor Farm Ditch



Possible appearance of park space over Poor Farm Ditch, along Edloe

While improvements have been made for walking access to parks for some areas of West U, residents between Edloe and Buffalo Speedway still are not within ½ mile of a park.

As noted above, there is not community consensus about acquisition of new parkland. Accordingly, any pursuit of new land should proceed only under careful guidelines and full, open community involvement.

Public feedback indicates that passive, unstructured open space should be the focus, if new parkland is considered.

The community continues to be concerned about the ability of new parks to be 'good neighbors' to the surrounding residents. Parking, safety, traffic, light and noise are concerns.

*Recommendation –*

**5. Pursue acquisition of additional park property for development as passive, unstructured open space, if parameters specified in this plan can be met.**

- Within target area between Edloe and Buffalo Speedway, both north and south of University
- No tax rate increase
- Local neighbors' support
- Address safety, traffic, privacy, noise, parking and light issues



## Increase Use of Underutilized Spaces

### *Recommendation –*

#### **6. Explore ways to increase recreation use of underutilized spaces in West U parks and around the community.**

It is important to take full advantage of all park and open space available to the citizens of West U. The Task Force identified some areas that could be better utilized for outdoor recreation.

- The Recreation Center occupies a substantial parcel of land but currently provides limited outdoor recreation opportunities that are open for general use, outside of organized sports. The city owns an adjacent residential lot on Community Dr. that may offer opportunity as well. Explore options to increase and diversify recreation at this facility.
- The west end of Colonial Park is enclosed within the swimming pool fence and is available for use only in conjunction with the pool facilities. Options should be explored to more fully utilize the area throughout the year.
- Liberty Hill Park is small and surrounded by streets, including Bissonnet, a high-traffic collector street. Explore ways to make the park usable and safe for recreation or consider re-allocating the land as landscape amenity space, not designated for recreation use.

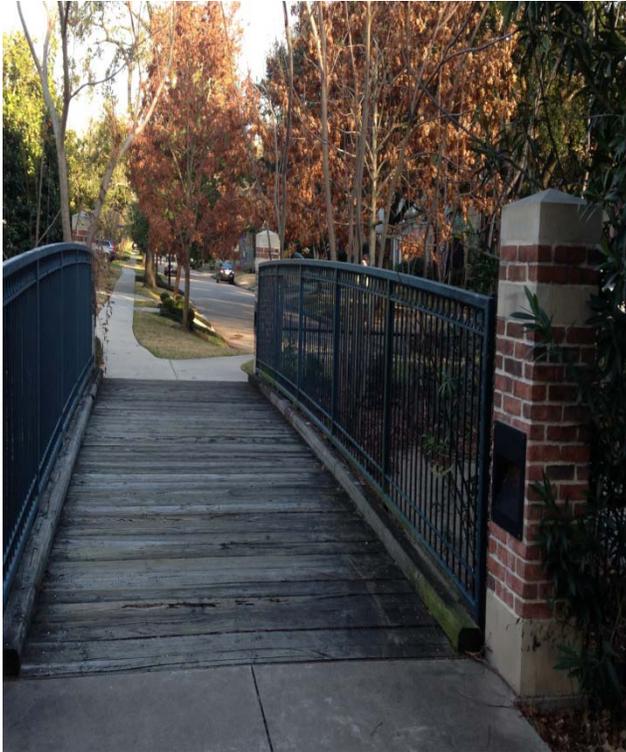


Recommendation –

**7. Explore ways to optimize residents' ability to enjoy public ways and to access parks on bike and foot.**

West U has limited parkland and people of all backgrounds love to walk, jog and bicycle along streets and other public areas. Evaluate opportunities to reduce barriers described above in A Look At Today: Access to Parks.

- Explore ways to enhance safe crossings along Buffalo Speedway
- Evaluate opportunities to cross Poor Farm Ditch south of University Blvd.
- Ensure bike racks are well-located within all parks





West U residents expressed a strong desire to have walking paths within parks and linear parks with trails. West U parks do not currently allow adequately for that activity and residents must drive to be able to use major area trails .

*Recommendation –*

**8. Include walking paths within West U where appropriate.**

- Within parks
- Along Poor Farm Ditch

*Recommendation –*

**9. Explore opportunities to create a north-south linear hike & bike trail connecting to existing trails along Brays Bayou and Buffalo Bayou.**

Linear tracts of land near West U offer opportunities for public trails.

- Coordinate with public agencies, non-profit organizations and CenterPoint to create a public hike & bike trail extending north-south along CenterPoint right-of-way to Brays Bayou and to Memorial Park
- Consider constructing a hike & bike trail along West U-owned Kilmarnock Ditch, south of Bellaire Blvd. toward Brays Bayou.

The **City Center** is a vital area of West U, contributing to a unique small-town atmosphere and sense of place. Enhancement projects over the last 10 years have made dramatic improvements. The City Center must continue be attractive and functional for pedestrians and drivers, children and adults.

*Recommendation –*

**10. Pursue street, sidewalk and landscape improvements along Auden between Rice Blvd. and University Drive.**

- Enhance pedestrian safety
- Improve appearance
- Reduce congestion
- Improve pedestrian mobility at Library and Community Center



*Recommendation –*

**11. Explore cooperative efforts with West U Elementary School to enhance public use of school grounds after hours and to improve outdoor recreation facilities at the campus.**

*Recommendation –*

**12. Develop gateways with signage and landscaping at key entrances to West U.**

West U is a distinct municipality but also enmeshed in the urban fabric of surrounding Houston. Physical landmarks at key entrances to West U can be a source of pride and identity.





*Recommendation –*

**13. Continue key partnership with Friends of West U Parks.**

The Friends of West U Parks has been a major supporter of parks capital development projects for many years. In addition to financial support through their non-profit status, the members lead community involvement in parks advocacy and engagement. The organization also offers opportunities through social events for all interested citizens to become actively engaged with community parks. This leadership role is invaluable and should be encouraged and cultivated by the City.

*Recommendation –*

**14. Explore cooperative arrangements with other agencies and non-profit organizations.**

West U is integrated with the surrounding metropolitan area. There are opportunities to cooperate with other organizations on outdoor recreation initiatives that benefit the citizens of West U as well as others. With the assistance of the Friends group, the City should explore a variety of cooperative arrangements with non-profit and governmental organizations.

- Joint-use arrangements
- Cooperative development
- Planning Coordination

*Recommendation –*

**15. Work with Friends of West U Parks to explore expanding corporate sponsorships and partnerships**

Corporate sponsorships have been utilized on a limited basis. Public response to the Survey indicates an interest in exploring expanded roles in a manner that is appropriate in West U.



West U currently uses the Parks & Recreation Department annual budget for operations, repairs and replacements. Major capital projects are approached in partnership with the Friends of West U Parks.

The citizen survey indicated a strong preference to avoid tax increases to pay for parks capital improvement projects.

West U has previously used bond debt to pay for major sidewalk, street and lighting projects that have made substantial improvements for walking, jogging and biking within the community.

West U currently has significant bonded debt repayment obligations, however repayment of current bonds over the next several years will enable new bond debt without tax increases.

*Recommendation –*

**16. Develop a broad-based strategy to fund parks acquisition and capital projects.**

- Include major park improvement projects in long-range planning for the City annual budget
- Explore grants and interagency assistance
  - Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
  - Texas Department of Transportation
  - Harris County Precinct Three
  - Harris County Flood Control District
  - Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC)
- Work with Friends of West U Parks to establish a structured, stable project strategy. Schedule major projects and set targets for Friends and City share.
- Consider strategy of bond financing for major acquisition and/or development projects if needed beyond the City budget and Friends assistance.
- Explore private donations of property where appropriate
- Consider the strategy of obtaining an option to purchase for property of interest. This will help resolve timing constraints; the City typically cannot move as quickly as private developers to place a traditional offer on available property. The City can also utilize the additional time to ascertain community support, develop a use plan and organize funding for potential park properties.

# 2014 West U Parks & Recreation Citizen Survey



## WEST UNIVERSITY PLACE PARKS & RECREATION CITIZEN SURVEY 2013



The City of West University Place is updating our parks and open space master plan and we want your input. Your feedback on this survey will help West U develop resident- guided- short and long-range goals for the parks and recreation department.

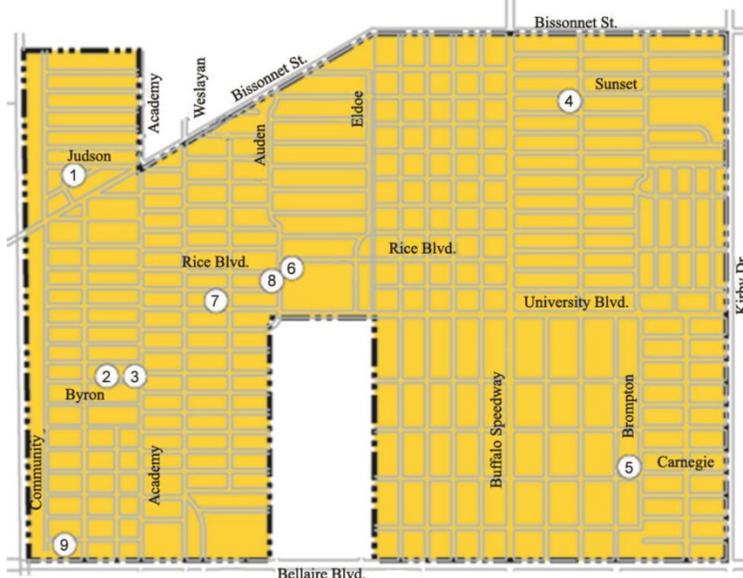
Thank you for your help!

### WEST U PARK AND RECREATION USE

Using the scale provided, please **INDICATE HOW OFTEN** you and the members of your household have used each park and recreation facility in West U in the past year. For example, if you have used Colonial park about once a week, please **write** a “W” on the line for “You” under the Colonial park column.

|  | <b>D = Almost daily</b> | <b>W = About once a week</b>     | <b>M = About once a month</b> | <b>Y = About once a year</b> |  |                       |                          |  |                                 |
|--|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
|  | <b>N = Not at all</b>   |                                  |                               |                              | <b>N/A = We have no household members in the age group</b> |                       |                          |  |                                 |
|  | <u>Judson</u><br>(1)    | <u>Colonial Park Pool</u><br>(2) | <u>Colonial</u><br>(3)        | <u>Wier</u><br>(4)           | <u>Whitt Johnson</u><br>(4)                                | <u>Friends</u><br>(6) | <u>Huffington</u><br>(7) | <u>Community/ Senior Center</u><br>(8) | <u>Recreation Center</u><br>(9) |
| <b>You</b>   | _____                   | _____                            | _____                         | _____                        | _____  | _____                 | _____                    | _____                                  | _____                           |
| <b>Please complete the section below for members of your household (not including you)</b> |                         |                                  |                               |                              |  |                       |                          |  |                                 |
| <b>Children</b><br>(0-5 yrs.)  | _____                   | _____                            | _____                         | _____                        | _____  | _____                 | _____                    | _____                                  | _____                           |
| <b>Youth</b><br>(6-12 yrs.)  | _____                   | _____                            | _____                         | _____                        | _____  | _____                 | _____                    | _____                                  | _____                           |
| <b>Teens</b><br>(13-17 yrs.)   | _____                   | _____                            | _____                         | _____                        | _____  | _____                 | _____                    | _____                                  | _____                           |
| <b>Adults</b><br>(18-30 yrs.)  | _____                   | _____                            | _____                         | _____                        | _____  | _____                 | _____                    | _____                                  | _____                           |
| <b>Adults</b><br>(31-64 yrs.)  | _____                   | _____                            | _____                         | _____                        | _____  | _____                 | _____                    | _____                                  | _____                           |
| <b>Adults</b><br>(65+ yrs.)  | _____                   | _____                            | _____                         | _____                        | _____  | _____                 | _____                    | _____                                  | _____                           |

### MAP OF WEST U PARKS & FACILITIES



| <b>LEGEND</b> |                          |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| 1.            | Judson Park              |
| 2.            | Colonial Park Pool       |
| 3.            | Colonial Park            |
| 4.            | Wier Park                |
| 5.            | Whitt Johnson Park       |
| 6.            | Friends Park             |
| 7.            | Huffington Park          |
| 8.            | Community/ Senior Center |
| 9.            | Recreation Center        |

2014 West U Parks & Recreation  
Citizen Survey

**WEST U PARK AND RECREATION USE CONT.**

Please **CIRCLE ALL OF THE FACILITIES** for each park listed below that you and the people in your household have used in the last year. (Circle all that apply).

|                                |                      |                           |                      |                   |                          |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| <b>Judson</b>                  | Tennis court         | Picnic deck               | Playground equipment | BBQ grills        | Other: _____             | None     |
| <b>Colonial</b>                | Swimming pool        | Sand volleyball           | Concessions          | Party deck        | Multi-purpose/party room | Pavilion |
|                                | Tennis courts        | Playground equipment      | Walking/jogging path | Other _____       | None                     |          |
| <b>Wier</b>                    | Playground equipment | Picnic tables             | Tennis courts        | Basketball courts | Other: _____             | None     |
| <b>Whitt Johnson</b>           | Playground equipment | Gazebo                    | Picnic facilities    | Basketball courts | Other _____              | None     |
| <b>Friends</b>                 | Seating              | Walkway                   | Shade arbor          | Other _____       | None                     |          |
| <b>Community/Senior Center</b> | Leisure classes      | Trips                     | Rentals              | Group exercise    | Other _____              | None     |
| <b>Huffington</b>              | Playground equipment | Shade arbor               | Game/picnic tables   | Other _____       | None                     |          |
| <b>Recreation Center</b>       | Indoor pool          | Racquetball/squash courts | Cardio equipment     | Weight equipment  | Trail                    |          |
|                                | Group exercise       | Leisure classes           | Playground           | Athletic fields   | Other _____              | None     |

Please **CIRCLE ONE** answer indicating about how often members of your household have used West U Elementary School facilities during the last 12 months.

|   |              |                   |                    |                   |            |
|---|--------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Playgrounds (outside of school-time)                      | Almost Daily | About once a Week | About once a Month | About once a Year | Not at All |
| Open spaces (not ball fields outside of organized sports) | Almost Daily | About once a Week | About once a Month | About once a Year | Not at All |

**SERVICE QUALITY/ PROGRAMMING**

Please **CIRCLE ONE** level of agreement for each of the following measures of service quality.

|  |       |         |          |     |
|--|-------|---------|----------|-----|
| West U parks are well-maintained.                                    | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | N/A |
| West U playgrounds are well-maintained.                              | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | N/A |
| There is adequate shade in West U Parks.                             | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | N/A |
| Overall, I am satisfied with West U parks and recreation facilities. | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | N/A |
| I am satisfied with the number of parks in West U.                   | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | N/A |
| West U parks provide safe places to recreate/ exercise.              | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | N/A |
| West U parks provide opportunities to interact with neighbors.       | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | N/A |
| West U should have more open, unstructured green spaces.             | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | N/A |
| Members of my household can easily walk to a West U Park.            | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | N/A |

2014 West U Parks & Recreation  
Citizen Survey

**FUTURE PROGRAMS & FACILITIES**

Please **CIRCLE ONE** level indicating how important each of the following amenities in West U parks is to you and your household members.

|   |      |        |     |      |
|---|------|--------|-----|------|
| Playgrounds   | High | Medium | Low | None |
| Walking paths in parks  | High | Medium | Low | None |
| Linear park(s) with trails and walking paths (such as the Union Pacific right-of-way) | High | Medium | Low | None |
| Tennis courts   | High | Medium | Low | None |
| Basketball courts   | High | Medium | Low | None |
| Shaded seating  | High | Medium | Low | None |
| Picnic tables   | High | Medium | Low | None |
| Benches   | High | Medium | Low | None |
| Outdoor exercise equipment  | High | Medium | Low | None |
| Outdoor areas for personal fitness/personal training                                  | High | Medium | Low | None |
| Open, unstructured green spaces   | High | Medium | Low | None |
| Open air pavilion   | High | Medium | Low | None |
| Native plant / habitat area   | High | Medium | Low | None |
| Community garden  | High | Medium | Low | None |
| Outdoor classroom   | High | Medium | Low | None |
| Parks within safe walking distance of my home   | High | Medium | Low | None |
| Other _____   | High | Medium | Low | None |
| Other _____   | High | Medium | Low | None |

Please **list** up to 3 programs you would like the West U Parks and Recreation Department to offer in the future and indicate for which age group(s). (Circle all age groups that apply for each line/program suggestion):

- \_\_\_\_\_ Children (0-5) Youth (6-12) Teens (13-17) Adults (18-30) Adults (31-64) Adults (65+)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Children (0-5) Youth (6-12) Teens (13-17) Adults (18-30) Adults (31-64) Adults (65+)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Children (0-5) Youth (6-12) Teens (13-17) Adults (18-30) Adults (31-64) Adults (65+)

2014 West U Parks & Recreation  
Citizen Survey

Please indicate how you feel about the following statements.

**CIRCLE ONE** answer for each statement.

|  |                |       |         |          |                   |
|--|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| West U should acquire <u>land</u> for a park between Edloe and Buffalo Speedway? | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| West U should acquire land for a park in other areas of the City?                | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| If agree, where _____ ?  |                |       |         |          |                   |
| I would support a property tax increase to both acquire and develop a new park?  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| I would support a new neighborhood park near my home.                            | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

There are different ways to fund acquisition and construction of public parks in West U. For each of the options listed below, **CIRCLE** whether you are in FAVOR or AGAINST each option.

|   |          |         |
|---|----------|---------|
| Private contributions (including Friends of West U Parks) | IN FAVOR | AGAINST |
| Revenues bonds repaid with increased property taxes       | IN FAVOR | AGAINST |
| Corporate sponsorship                                     | IN FAVOR | AGAINST |

**WEST U LIBRARY**

The library is owned by West U and operated by Harris County. Please provide us feedback about the West U public library. **CIRCLE ONE** answer for each question.

|  |                |                   |                    |                   |                   |
|--|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| How often do you use the West U public library?                        | Almost Daily   | About once a Week | About once a Month | About once a Year | Not at All        |
| I would support West U tax funded capital improvements to the library? | Strongly Agree | Agree             | Neutral            | Disagree          | Strongly Disagree |

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

Demographic data is collected to determine if a representative sample of the community has completed the survey. This data is also useful when it is utilized to apply for grants and external funding. All data will be kept confidential and will be reported in aggregate form only.

Are you? (check one)  Male  Female      Do you own or rent in West U? (check one)  Own  Rent  
 In what year were you born? \_\_\_\_\_      How long have you lived in West U? \_\_\_\_\_ years?

Including yourself, indicate the **NUMBER** of people who live in your household who are in the following age categories: (If none, write "0")

\_\_\_\_ 0- 5 yrs.    \_\_\_\_ 6-12 yrs.    \_\_\_\_ 13-17 yrs.    \_\_\_\_ 18-54 yrs.    \_\_\_\_ 55-64 yrs.    \_\_\_\_ 65+ yrs.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

Is there anything else you would like to tell us regarding West U's Parks & Recreation Facilities?

# 2014 West U Parks & Recreation Citizen Survey

## West University Place Citizen Survey Snapshot



### Parks

Safe walking distances to parks (70%); and shaded seating (51%), benches (51%), open, unstructured spaces (45%), and walking paths in parks (42%) are of high importance to citizens.

### Access

82% of Citizens indicate members of their household can easily walk to a West U park.

### Park Use

56% of survey respondents use at least one West U park at least once a month.



Prepared by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

### Impact

Citizens indicate West U parks provide safe places to recreate/ exercise (89%) and provide opportunities to interact with neighbors (77%).



### Acquisition

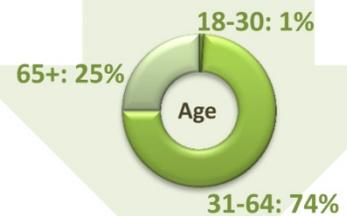
38% and 45% of survey respondents indicated they were neutral regarding acquiring parkland. 32% agree land should be acquired between Edloe and Buffalo Speedway, while 30% disagreed. 22% agreed parkland was needed elsewhere but 32% of respondents disagree.

### Funding

Majority of residents favor using private contributions (96%) and corporate sponsorship (85%) to fund parks.

1,430 survey respondents

99% C.I. +/- 3



2014 Parks and Recreation Department Citizen Survey

