



# City Currents

Fall 2018





Dear neighbor,

With the one-year anniversary of Harvey's devastating floods having just passed, we'd like to share an important program that West U will be participating in that could save you money on insurance and help minimize future flooding in our city.

The National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS) is a voluntary incentive program that recognizes and encourages community floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum NFIP requirements. As a result, flood insurance premium rates are discounted to reflect the reduced flood risk resulting from the community actions, meeting the three goals of the CRS:

- Reduce flood damage to insurable property
- Strengthen and support the insurance aspects of the NFIP
- Encourage a comprehensive approach to floodplain management

By participating in the program and depending upon our final ranking by NFIP, we believe that residents who qualify and live within the 100-year floodplain would see yearly policy discounts ranging from \$41 – \$123, with the average being \$82 per year in the 500-year floodplain. Areas outside of the 100- and 500-year floodplain do not qualify for discounts since their NFIP insurance is already at the minimum rate.

While the most noticeable benefit for residents living in communities participating in the CRS will be flood premium discounts, the activities credited by the CRS provide direct benefits to the residents of that community, including enhanced public safety, improved public infrastructure which helps reduce flood damage to property, and protection of the environment.

If you haven't thought about flood insurance, the NFIP issues policies twice a year (May and October) and in most cases, there is a 30-day waiting period before NFIP coverage takes effect. The application process for the CRS program is lengthy and any discounts received by the City's participation would take effect in October 2019.

If you are thinking about flood insurance and still undecided, the rates are determined by the zone your property is located in and repetitive flood loss. If you are unsure of your zone, please visit FEMA's website ([www.msc.fema.gov](http://www.msc.fema.gov)) and enter your address. If you are interested in finding out how much flood insurance costs and what it covers, or how the City's participation in this program will impact your policy, please contact your insurance agent.

# From Council Member Kellye Burke



This time last year, our community was reeling from the catastrophic effects of Hurricane Harvey. If you didn't personally flood, you knew someone who did. Though West U came out relatively unscathed when compared with our neighboring communities of Bellaire and Meyerland, it doesn't in any way lessen the heartbreak and frustration for those in West U who did have flood damage.

The Harvey anniversary also corresponded with an important Harris County bond election, Prop A. By demonstrating that we have "skin in the game," this \$2.5B bond package not only kickstarts a bunch of flood-related projects, but also allows Harris County to access billions of dollars in federal matching funds. As both logic and gravity clearly shows us, West U can have the largest and most expensive flood mitigation system in the area, but what happens upstream and downstream from us matters a whole heck of a lot. As a city within Harris County, these projects will benefit us.

Concurrent to these county-level projects, West U continues to look at ways to minimize flooding and its impact on our homes and businesses. In June, an engineering firm under the guidance of Assistant City Manager and Director of Public Works, Dave Beach, presented its initial assessment of West U's entire drainage system to Council. The West U drainage system is, simply put, the system of storm drains, drainage pipes, and ditches that drain water *out* of West U and *into* Brays Bayou. Engineers identified a series of near- and long-term projects designed to bring all areas up to a "two-year storm event" capacity, which is an opaque and confusing way to say a rainfall rate of 4" to 5" per day.

And much like with the Harris County bonds, residents will have the opportunity to vote on them in the future.

In the next month, the City Council will be receiving the draft report for the Citywide Drainage Study, which has tentatively identified several drainage-related projects. Additionally, the City is laying out a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), which will incorporate these drainage-related projects, as well as other projects that help us maintain our great services. The initial steps by your City Council and Staff will identify short- and long-term projects that will not only benefit us, but also generations to follow.

In the meantime, keep up with current weather conditions and local emergency instructions by signing up for Swift911 and following Ready Harris ([www.readyharris.org](http://www.readyharris.org)) online and on social media.

## Ways to opt in to Swift911

- Text the phrase Swift911 to 99538, download the Swift911 public app on your cell phone, register your information, and select "West University Place" as your Home Publisher.
- Go to [www.westutx.gov/184/swift-911](http://www.westutx.gov/184/swift-911) and register via the Swift911 web portal

# Parks and Recreation



Julia Williams, Alison Moorhead, and Mitra Woody team up again to chair Fathers & Flashlights 2018 campout.

## Friends of West U Parks

Friends of West University Place Parks Fund, Inc. and the Parks and Recreation Department will host the 12th annual **Fathers & Flashlights** campout on Saturday, October 20, on the fields surrounding West University Elementary School. The Moorhead, Williams and Woody families, along with all of the wonderful volunteers, promise another fun and memorable event.



Thank you to our Camp Founder and title sponsor, Conway MacKenzie, for Fathers & Flashlights 2018.



The many fun activities at the campout will include catch-and-release fishing, bungee-run races, and a climbing wall, just to name a few. As the daytime activities conclude, campers will be treated to entertainment sponsored by Heidi Dugan, Realtor, Greenwood King Properties. Thank you to all of our underwriters, sponsors, and in-kind donors, plus the many volunteers and staff who make this event possible. Our generous contributors also include: Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital, Jones Day, The Woman's Hospital of Texas, Maggie Garza, Realtor/John Daugherty Realtors & Old Republic Title, Lauren DeFrehn Photography, Butler Cohen, LLC, Laura Mayer Cyprow, Realtor/John Daugherty Realtors, and iKids.

For a current listing of the generous underwriters and sponsors and more event highlights, please visit [www.westuparks.org](http://www.westuparks.org). Fathers & Flashlights continues to be a very popular and successful fundraiser for Friends of West U Parks. It is a neighborhood favorite.

### Park Lovers' Ball La Fête du Jardin (The Garden Party)

will be held on February 2, 2019 at the Hilton Americas downtown. Event co-chairs Jennifer and Scott Allison, Megan and Brian Cushing, Stephanie and Ryan Fleck and Caroline and Kevin Walter are planning a fun and festive evening. Heading up the auction for the ball are Jessie Cutler and Michele Marandi. If you would like to donate to the auction or know of a business that can donate, a donor form is available on the Friends website, [www.westuparks.org](http://www.westuparks.org). The underwriter/sponsor co-chairs are Kim Eads and Emily Yardley. Couple seats for the gala start at \$300 and tables for ten start at \$3,000. Seats and tables can be purchased online through the Friends website also. Look for your invitation to the ball to arrive in the mail in early January. Meanwhile, please visit [www.westuparks.org](http://www.westuparks.org), email Friends executive director at [DLaMond@westutx.gov](mailto:DLaMond@westutx.gov), or call (713) 662-7430 for information on becoming an underwriter, sponsor, auction donor, or to volunteer.



# Special Events

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## Fifth Annual Festival of the Arts

Local artisans will be showcasing and selling fabulous and unique Christmas gift ideas including paintings, jewelry, and skilled artistry in crafts. Vendor spaces are available for \$15. RSVP by September 20. This wonderful event will be held at the Community Building on Saturday, October 13, at 10:00 am. Sign up now by calling Senior Services at (713) 662-5895. We know there are many talented West U Residents out there! Get a booth, or come out and support your amazingly talented neighbors. Pictured are watercolor artists Anne Murphy and Paula Doughty, who will both be returning this year.



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## Movies in the Park

Grab your picnic blankets or lawn chairs, bring the family, and enjoy an outdoor movie shown on a huge inflatable screen! The movie is complimentary and refreshments will be available for purchase.

**Dates:** Fridays, October 12 & October 19

**Time:** 7:00 pm

**Location:** Colonial Park Pavilion, 4130 Byron Street

### *Smurfs the Lost Village*, Rated PG, October 12

In this fully animated, all-new take on the Smurfs, a mysterious map sets Smurfette and her best friends Brainy, Clumsy, and Hefty on an exciting and thrilling race through the Forbidden Forest filled with magical creatures to find a mysterious lost village before the evil wizard Gargamel does. Embarking on a rollercoaster journey full of action and danger, the Smurfs are on a course that leads to the discovery of the biggest secret in Smurf history!

### *Coco*, Rated PG, October 19

A boy journeys into the Land of the Dead to seek forgiveness from his ancestors and lift a curse.

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## Full Moon Fest

The West University Place Parks & Recreation Department will host their sixth annual Halloween celebration, Full Moon Fest, at 5:30 pm on Friday, October 19, at the Colonial Park Pavilion, located at 4130 Byron. Join us for an evening of pumpkin decorating, costume contests, face painting and more. The costume contest will have different age categories, so make sure the whole family comes in their spookiest attire. Complete the evening by staying for *Coco* (PG), as part of the Movies in the Park series; showing begins at 7:00 pm!

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## The King & Spalding West U Halloween Dash and Texas Children's Hospital Kids Fun Run

Registration continues for the eighth-annual West U Halloween Dash and Kids Fun Run on Saturday, October 27. The Dash is a chip-timed 5K race through the beautiful, tree-lined streets of West U. The Kids Fun Run is a non-competitive one-mile run or walk. All Fun Run finishers will receive a medal.

New for 2018, there will be a separate 5K division for people running with strollers or dogs. This division will have its own start following the start of the regular 5K. We will give awards to the overall Male and Female from this division, but you will not be eligible for age-group awards. Proceeds from the event benefit the West U Parks and Recreation Department. Register at [www.westutx.gov/funrun](http://www.westutx.gov/funrun).

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## Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony

Come one, come all! Get into the holiday spirit with the 30th-annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony when the City of West U heralds the season by lighting the Christmas tree. Join us with your camera in front of the Community Building, 6104 Auden, on Monday, December 3. Activities will start at 5:30 pm and the tree lighting ceremony will start at 6:00 pm. Santa will be available for photos at the end of the ceremony!

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## Winter/Spring 2019 Class Registration

Discover a new craft or polish a skill for great benefits without investing a lot of time or money. Most Winter/Spring classes begin in January. They include dance, tennis, Pilates, yoga for adults, kids swimming, gymnastics, CPR, and so much more!

### \*Priority Registration

(for those currently enrolled in classes within the past 30 days)

Tuesday, November 27

\*online registration is not available

### Resident Registration

Tuesday, December 4

### Non-Resident Registration

Thursday, December 6

Complete your registration online at [www.westutx.gov/reg](http://www.westutx.gov/reg) or come by the Recreation Center, 4210 Bellaire, to sign up. Visa, MasterCard, Discover, personal checks, and cash are accepted. To view a copy of the fall *West U at Your Leisure* guide, visit [www.westutx.gov/parks](http://www.westutx.gov/parks) or call (713) 662-7420 for more information.

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## Looking for a Job?

Hey, you! Yes, you! The West University Recreation Center is hiring part-time employees. Positions available are Customer Service Team Member, Swim Instructor, and Lifeguard. If you are interested in great starting pay, flexible schedules, a team atmosphere, the potential for advancement, and a fun place to work, then West U is the place for you. For more information, call (713) 662-7420, visit [www.westutx.gov](http://www.westutx.gov), or pick up an application at the Recreation Center at 4210 Bellaire Blvd.



## DirectLink

Do you know that the West U is one of only a few cities that offers an alarm monitoring service to its residents? There is no contract or hidden fees. You pay only a \$35 monthly fee that is conveniently billed to your utility statement. This service offers the satisfaction that your alarm signal is sent directly to the first responders of West U and not a third-party connection. For more information, please contact us at (713) 662-5860 or [directlink@westutx.gov](mailto:directlink@westutx.gov).

## Contamination in the Plastics Recycling Stream

Contamination in the recycling stream is causing lots of problems and pushing some recyclers out of business. According to The Association of Plastic Recyclers and the National Association for PET Container Resources, the plastic bales that recyclers have been buying to recycle have become more and more contaminated in the last 10 years. The average bale used to yield 70 – 75% PET when it was recycled. Now the number usually averages 60 – 65%. This means that for every 100 pounds of plastic a recycler buys and ships to its facility, 60 pounds is recycled and 40 pounds gets shipped off for further recycling or gets thrown away, if no value remains.

With exports of recyclables down due to China banning their imports, it is important that the U.S. has the capacity to recycle all of its recyclables domestically. One important way to increase recycling capacity is by decreasing the amount of contaminants in the plastics recycle stream. We currently accept plastics for recycling curbside with the recycling numbers of ♻️ 1 ♻️ 2 ♻️ 3 ♻️ 4 ♻️ 5 and ♻️ 7 **not** ♻️ 6.

What materials are contaminating the plastics recycling stream, and what can we do about them? First, the plastic materials that find their way into the recycling stream are varied, such that ♻️ 1 bales may be contaminated by other plastics. Many “throw-away” or single-use plastics are sold as packaging for items such as cookies, pies, cakes, lettuce, and other vegetables. Similar plastic packaging is used for electronics and toys as well. Much of plastic packaging contains PET, but also contains other plastics, such as polystyrene (PS) — number ♻️ 6. If a bale has PS in it, an average PET recycler will end up giving the bale away.

Additionally, different types of flexible packages have sprung up in the last 10 years that are making their way into the recycling stream. Many people believe that all plastics are recyclable, but this is not accurate. Packages that are “squishy” are usually a combination of plastics that are too difficult to recycle with today’s technology. For example, packaging for children’s fruit drinks and potato chip bags are made of many different layers of plastics, which is good for holding the food substance and keeping it fresh, but makes the material very difficult and expensive to recycle. These materials sometimes end up in plastic recycle bales and ultimately contaminate the recycling stream.

What can be done to reduce the contamination? Unfortunately, the recycling technology has not yet caught up with the packaging industry. Corporations are looking to make changes, but it will not be immediate.

So, what can you do in the short term? Remember that not all plastics are recyclable, and bags should definitely not be mixed with recyclables. Plastics marked ♻️ 1 or ♻️ 2 are the main plastics recycled in the U.S., even though ♻️ 3, ♻️ 4, ♻️ 5 and ♻️ 7 plastics are accepted for curbside recycling. Look at the bottom of your container. **If it says ♻️ 6, it is not recyclable, so throw it in the garbage.** Plastics thrown in the recycling bin that are not recyclable increases the cost of processing.

# Vegetation Maintenance Reminder

The City of West University Place continues to remind residents of the following issues being caused by vegetation.

Note: Property owners can be held liable for contributing to accidents when vegetation obscures a regulatory sign (i.e., stop sign) or interferes or blocks a driver's visibility.

## Regulatory Sign Obstruction

A good way to verify if the vegetation needs to be trimmed is to look at the sign from four (4) property lots away (approx. 200 feet). If the full sign cannot be seen, the vegetation needs to be trimmed. This may also mean that owners up to four lots away from a stop sign may need to trim vegetation as well.

Below are a before-and-after photos of a stop sign sight visibility obstruction:



City crews provided a courtesy trimming at this location due to the severity of the obstruction, but it is up to property owners for ongoing continual maintenance.

## Clearance Over Roadways

The City requires vegetation over the roadway be maintained at a minimum height of 13'-6" extending from curb to curb (see diagram 1). A good rule of thumb when determining the need to trim your trees is to look at the streetlights. If the limbs are below the top of the globe, trimming is required. The top of the light is approximately 15 feet above the street. Remember that the property owner could be held liable for damage to vehicles and equipment caused by low-hanging limbs.

## Potential Assessment of a Special Fee for Vegetation Trimming Completed by City

This is a reminder that in cases where multiple violation notices have been issued to a property, the City may assess a special fee for having to trim the vegetation. The special fee would be assessed to the property owner's monthly utility bill. Remember that the continual maintenance of vegetation and trees is the responsibility of the property owner.

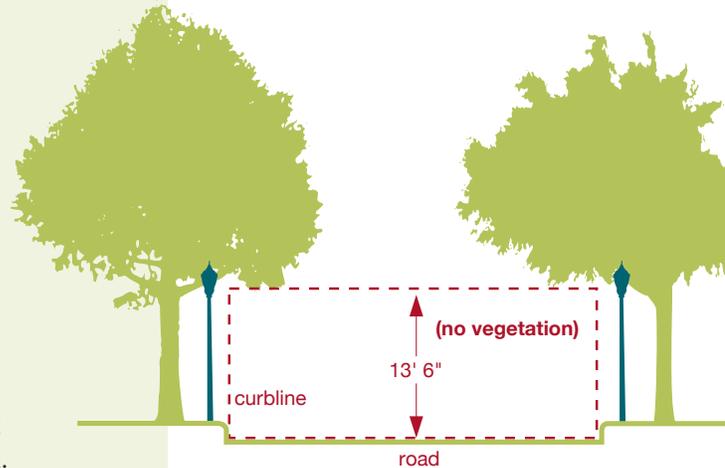
If you have any questions concerning road or sign clearance or tree height, please contact the West U Public Works Department at (713) 662-5839.



## Save the date!

**What:** Paper Shredding/E-Waste/  
Mattress Collection Event  
**When:** Saturday, November 4, 2018  
**Where:** 3826 Milton Street  
**Hours:** 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Shredding is limited to five (5) banker boxes per household. No business or commercial shredding is accepted. This event is open to West University Place residents only. Proof of residency is required.



**Diagram 1: The care and maintenance of all trees in the public right-of-way is the responsibility of the property owner.**

# City Currents

A Newsletter for the citizens of  
City of West University Place  
Fall 2018



City of West University Place  
3800 University Blvd.  
West University Place, TX 77005

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## CITY OF WEST U OFFICIALS

**CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS** Mayor Susan Sample  
Mayor Pro-Tem Wayne J. Franklin  
Kellye Burke  
Bob Higley  
Mardi Turner

**CITY MANAGER** Chris Peifer  
cpeifer@westutx.gov

**GENERAL INFORMATION** (713) 668-4441

**CITY WEBSITE** [www.westutx.gov](http://www.westutx.gov)

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For questions and comments about *City Currents*, contact Anna Evelyn at (713) 662-5812 or [aevelyn@westutx.gov](mailto:aevelyn@westutx.gov).

Design by Minor Design

## Download the West U Collects App!

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

### via Internet



[www.westutx.gov/westucollects](http://www.westutx.gov/westucollects)

### via Mobile

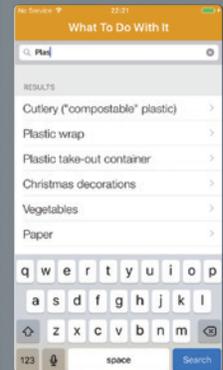
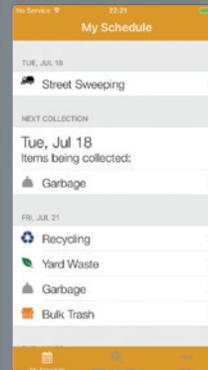
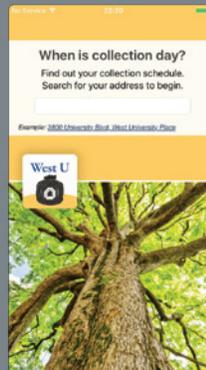


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- Set up service reminders
- Search the "What To Do With It" disposal/recycle guide



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