

City Currents

Winter 2021



IN THIS ISSUE

Recreation Center Programs Pg. 9

Crime Prevention Tips Pg. 11

And More Helpful Information About Your City!



2021 Budget: City Council Lowers Tax Rate for Second Year in a Row

It is a new calendar year for our community, and a new fiscal year for the City of West University Place. The City Council of West University Place voted unanimously on September 28 to adopt the City's 2021 Operating Budget, establishing the City's priorities for the year. The adopted budget maintains the City's high service levels while lowering the property tax rate for the second year in a row, from \$0.30921 to \$0.294066 per \$100 assessed value. It also avoids increasing fees for water, sewer, or solid waste services for residents.

The City believes that 2021 will be a transitional year, with operations returning to normal in 2022 after the singular event of the pandemic. Despite the challenges of this pandemic, the City maintains healthy reserves to uphold its AAA bond rating, and to ensure that it is able to respond to unforeseen events and natural disasters.

This 2021 budget advances the City Council's priorities of protecting our residents' quality of life, along with their safety, in West University Place. It also continues to fund those services that are most valued by the city's residents, including fire, police, and parks & recreation, and this is reflected by the fact that over 44% of General Fund expenditures are dedicated to public safety operations.

The 2021 budget also invests approximately \$3.09 million in the City's 2021 Community Improvement Program, funding important infrastructure projects that include:

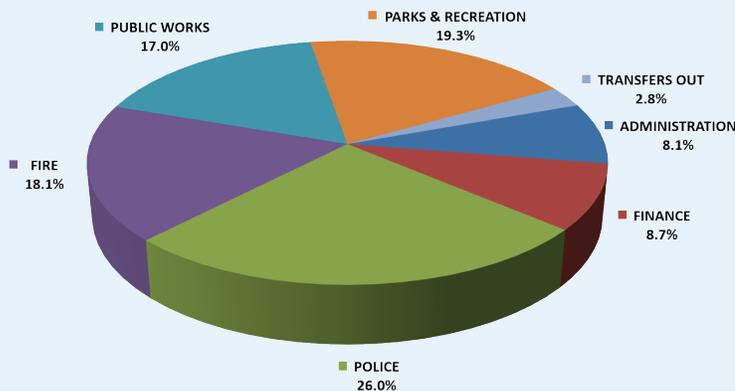
Engineering design for planned improvements to the city's wastewater treatment plant

Condition assessments for streets and sidewalks

Street maintenance to remove standing-water issues

Residents will experience the benefits of these investments in the coming years through enhanced infrastructure, fewer service disruptions, and less water in the streets during severe weather events.

West University Place Mayor Bob Higley stated, "On behalf of the City Council, I am proud of our community's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the approval of this 2021 budget is another step in the right direction. I want to specifically highlight that, even in the midst of a pandemic, our City Council and staff were able to create a budget that lowers the tax rate for the second year in a row – lowering actual taxes paid for average homeowners, while maintaining our high-level service model."



From the Mayor's Desk

Year in Review: Resilience and Community in Times of Adversity

It has been one year since the world entered the COVID-19 era. Putting this pandemic in perspective, West University Place has persevered through hurricanes, floods, depressions, assassinations, and world wars over its century as a home rule city, but nothing has been quite like the COVID-19 experience.

2020 was a year of historic challenges for our great city, state, and nation. As a result of COVID-19, many of us have seen our worlds shrink to the four corners of our own homes, as we seek to keep ourselves and our families free from exposure, sickness and, perhaps, death. This insidious virus has greatly impacted our professional lives, as well.

Adding to this global pandemic, the numerous regional hurricanes and tropical storms that have occurred in 2020 have reminded us of the universal environmental threat of climate change.

Despite the uncertainty that we have all experienced in 2020, our City Council and staff have demonstrated the resiliency of our residents as we remain dedicated to delivering daily services and developing short- and long-term solutions for West U. It is with pride in our city that I look back on the accomplishments of 2020, and ahead to a 2021 that sees our continuing return to normalcy.

Public Safety

The pandemic underscored the importance of public safety – long a top priority for our residents and this City Council. In addition to our heartfelt COVID-19 mitigation efforts, West U has made long-term investments in public safety, markedly through the installation of our Virtual Gate security camera system. This Virtual Gate system, comprising strategically placed cameras around the city's perimeter, is designed to deter criminals and aid in solving crimes.

Phase I of the Virtual Gate system is well underway. The project will be finished in 2021, providing additional peace of mind to our homeowners and our families.

After a cautionary pause in services due to prevailing health guidelines, we have recently seen some in-person programming return to the Parks & Recreation Department.

Tax Rate Reduction

The hallmark of an outstanding budgeting process is a responsible, balanced budget. Your City Council and staff worked efficiently and effectively this year to ensure that the 2021 budget will continue to enhance our service model – once again, lowering taxes for the average West U homeowner and also adhering to our employee incentive pay plan.

Additionally, in this 2021 budget, we are holding fast on increases in our water, sewer and solid waste fees, even as the City is experiencing a net revenue loss of approximately \$1 million.

In this historically challenging time, such positive management of scarce resources is not the result of fancy financial engineering. It was achieved through our City Council's sound fiscal stewardship of the public's money, and involved experienced experts at the City management level. Your Council is dedicated to ensuring that taxpaying homeowners will continue to get their money's worth from us.

Infrastructure from the Ground Up

While our team worked to address one of the greatest infectious disease threats in world history, City Council also continued to plan for the future of our community – and to invest in infrastructure that will benefit all West U citizens for decades to come.



Mayor Bob Higley



The future includes replacing Buffalo Speedway over its entire course through West U, along with initiating engineering design on the citywide streets and drainage improvement project that will tackle the issue of drainage throughout our community.

Council has also approved funding to address concerns with water pooling along the curbs, day-to-day maintenance of storm drainage systems, and upgrades to the water and sewer systems to improve their reliability.

Keeping our eyes on maintaining our existing systems, while looking at long-term improvements, will uphold our enviable quality of life in West U for generations to come.

Quality of Life

In 2020, the West U City Council worked hard to protect our residents' quality of life. In addition to doing what was needed to protect our citizens against COVID-19, we worked on issues that affect our daily lives, such as updating noise and lighting ordinances. As times change, and our community progresses, it is vital to update our West University Place Code of Ordinances to ensure that we are proactively addressing our homeowners' needs.

Lastly, COVID-19 interrupted our methodical approach to evaluating subjects relevant to our taxpaying homeowners: traffic speed and safety. Specifically, our City's studies to evaluate speed limits in the city were delayed, due to decreased traffic during the pandemic. City Council is anxious to deliver on these issues, subsequent to our careful consideration of the data in these studies.

One matter that needed no in-depth study was the City Council's unanimous vote on October 26 to establish Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Day as an official City of West U Holiday. Historically, an ordinance was passed by a previous Council on first reading 27 years ago, then tabled on the obligatory second reading. A procedural outcome that almost never happens, yet it did, curiously.

Following some unbounded curiosity, some thorough research by our staff, a motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously, in short order by all four Councilmembers simultaneously. In brief, MLK Day is now an official City Holiday. No second reading, this time.

Thanks to you, there is a silver lining, despite the year's adversity. Our city has witnessed the strength of our community. We have noted the gratitude expressed by homeowners toward our frontline workers who work diligently each day to keep us safe, including those in the Police and Fire departments. Also working hard on the front lines have been City workers who ensure that the trash is collected, the water flows, recreational programming continues, City bills get paid, and staff who deliver all of our City services. This is truly a team effort, with each individual's contribution ultimately of equal importance because, as the saying goes, "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." Without each member of this great team, we would fail on our commitment to deliver services that improve the quality of life for all taxpaying homeowners.

On a personal note, I salute our community members who have reached out to support the most vulnerable residents in our city, along with those parents who have become teachers to their homebound children – and those of our community who have taken on the responsibility of protecting not only themselves, but also their neighbors from this devilish virus.

West U is not "off-limits" to this deadly COVID-19 virus. Although COVID-19 threatens to take life from us, this virus has not stripped us of our sense of humanity or of our commitment to our community.

COVID-19 is not our fault, but it is our responsibility. We must own it. Single acts of human kindness are a potent antidote. My heartfelt thanks go out to each of you for your help and prayers.

— MAYOR BOB HIGLEY

A Message from Mayor Pro Tem Kevin Trautner



Mayor Pro Tem Kevin Trautner

Working Together for a Brighter Future

Your West U city government is an example of how government officials can work collaboratively in a non-partisan manner to achieve exceptional results for the community. Working together with mutual respect for each other, your City Council members use their shared passion for our city to drive the discovery and analysis of facts in order to maintain and enhance the quality of life for the taxpaying homeowners of West U. Since the most important part of the process is listening to our neighbors in West U, we are working hard to enhance our communication with residents. To achieve this goal, the City Council approved the addition of a new communications position to improve the City's communications. Currently, residents may communicate with the City through phone calls or emails, and we strive to keep residents informed through the City's website and publications, and/or through emails or text alerts. As always, residents may also reach out directly to City Council members by phone, email, or in person. Your City Council members are eager to hear from you.

Our current City Council has held numerous public workshops and meetings to analyze potential solutions to problems. Under the leadership of Mayor Bob Higley, in cooperation with our talented City Manager Dave Beach, this City Council is the first to develop a unanimously approved, long-term strategic plan for the city. Strategic planning is crucial to develop the annual budget and to focus on the city's finite resources in an efficient manner. During one of the most challenging periods in West U's history, with the COVID-19 pandemic and the downturn in the oil and gas industry, our City Council has worked hard to maintain and enhance the residential quality of life in West U, and, most importantly, to help keep its citizens safe and healthy. We did this through timely communications about COVID-19 – and by closing our playgrounds and facilities, and, later, re-opening them in a safe manner. We have also accomplished the following:

- Enhanced and supported our hard-working police and fire departments
- Increased compensation and benefits for City employees to ensure our exceptional service model
- Initiated preliminary designs on citywide street and drainage improvements
- Approved construction plans for the Buffalo Speedway street and drainage improvements
- Implemented Phase I of the Virtual Gate security camera system
- Supported our recycling and environmental stewardship efforts
- Approved Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Day as an official city holiday
- Enacted common-sense ordinances, including on noise and light, to protect the quality of life in West U.

We did all of these things while substantially cutting the tax rate over the last two years, thus delivering outstanding value to the taxpaying homeowners.

The high productivity of this City Council is only possible because of the council members' respect for each other – and because of their desire to work together alongside their fellow residents for the benefit of West U. If you have any questions or concerns about your City government, please reach out to any of us. We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with you to serve our community.

— MAYOR PRO TEM KEVIN TRAUTNER

New Lighting Ordinance

On November 16, the City Council approved revisions to the outdoor lighting ordinance. This new ordinance is designed to provide regulations that will minimize adverse impacts of outdoor lighting, such as light glare on neighboring properties in the city.

The City recommends that all property owners review this ordinance to ensure that they are aware of the new requirements and can plan on making any necessary adjustments in order to comply. For a full version of the ordinance, please refer to the West University Place Code of Ordinances, Chapter 54, Article IX, at: library.municode.com/tx/west_university_place

If you have any questions about this ordinance, please contact Chief Building Official Clay Chew at 713.662.5830, or email him at cchew@westutx.gov.

Don't Forget to Download the 'Click West U' App!

Have you spotted an issue that needs attention in West U? Submit requests to the City from the convenience of your smartphone by downloading the "Click West U" app, which is now available for Apple and Android phones.

This app allows residents to report non-emergency issues in different areas, such as sidewalk conditions, code enforcement requests, street light outages, and more. From their homes, residents can track their complaints or requests, receive updates from staff members, and learn about issues of interest.

This "Click West U" app is just one way that the City works to innovate and provide a high level of service to our residents. For more information on the "Click West U" app, please visit: westutx.gov/click



Noise Ordinance Reminder

On July 27, the City Council voted to amend the City's noise ordinance, expanding residential quiet hours in West University Place and establishing a noise limit for lawn equipment.

Residential Quiet Hours

Any weekday (Monday through Friday, except for the holidays mentioned below)	Before 7am or after 7pm
Any Saturday (except for the holidays mentioned below)	Before 8am or after 5pm
Any Sunday, New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, Independence Day, and any city holiday during which there is no curbside trash collection	Before 12pm (noon) or after 5pm

Noise Limits

Per the ordinance, it is unlawful for any persons to make, assist in making, permit, or continue making any sound at any location beyond the property lines of the property on which the sound is being generated and that, when measured, exceeds the applicable decibel levels:

- 1 Residential property:
 - a. Limited to 58 decibels during residential quiet hours
 - b. Limited to 65 decibels during all other times

- 2 Nonresidential property: Limited to 68 decibels at all times

Lawnmowers and other lawn equipment are also limited to 85 decibels outside of quiet hours. Leaf blowers are limited to 70 decibels outside of quiet hours, and operators are required to have a certification from the manufacturer that states the decibels either on the equipment itself or via manufacturer documentation.

Enforcement

The City will begin proactive enforcement of the lawn equipment noise limits on Monday, May 3, 2021. Please be sure to contact your landscaping or mowing provider to ensure that they are aware of these new requirements.

For a full version of the ordinance, please refer to the West University Place Code of Ordinances, Chapter 54, Article II. library.municode.com/tx/west_university_place

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this ordinance, please contact Chief Building Official Clay Chew at 713.662.5830, or email him at cchew@westutx.gov.

Parking Etiquette Reminder

The City's Parking Etiquette Program not only serves to enforce the law, but also to educate residents on measures that improve safety and transportation in West U. Following this parking etiquette not only helps you to avoid receiving a ticket, but it also encourages all of us to be good neighbors and members of the community.

Some of the most common parking violations for which a driver could receive a ticket include the following:

- **Parked over 18 inches from the curb**
- **Parked within 20 feet of an intersection**
- **Parked on a sidewalk or crosswalk**
- **Parked within 30 feet of a stop sign**
- **Parked in front of a driveway**
- **Parked within 30 feet of approach to signal**
- **Parked within 15 feet of a fire hydrant**
- **Parked in excess of 72 hours**
- **Parked within 20 feet of a crosswalk**
- **Parked facing the wrong way**

For more information on the Parking Etiquette Program, please visit: www.westutx.gov/parking

General Election – May 1, 2021

On May 1, 2021, registered voters of West University Place will vote to elect a mayor and four City Council members.

If you are interested in being a candidate to serve your community, you must meet the following qualifications:

- **Be at least 21 years of age**
- **Be a resident of the city for at least the 12 months immediately preceding the election**
- **Be eligible to vote in the city**

The mayor and councilmembers are elected from the city at-large for two-year terms and can serve three consecutive terms.

Applications for a place on the ballot will be accepted between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday-Friday, beginning Wednesday, January 13 and ending Friday, February 12.

Other important election dates include the following:

- **First day to apply for a ballot by mail Friday, January 1, 2021**
- **Last day to register to vote Thursday, April 1, 2021**
- **Last day to apply for a ballot by mail Tuesday, April 20, 2021**

For more information, please contact City Secretary Thelma Gilliam at tgilliam@westutx.gov or 713-662-5813, or visit westutx.gov/elections

Save the Date!

Paper Shredding and E-Waste/Mattress Collection Event

WHEN: Saturday, May 1, 2021

WHERE: 3826 Milton St.

HOURS: 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Paper shredding is limited to five banker boxes per household. No business or commercial shredding is accepted. This event is open to West University Place residents only, and proof of residency is required.



Power Outages

As the major local electricity service provider, CenterPoint Energy offers its Power Alert Service to notify customers of power outages, restoration progress, and when electric service is restored.

Through this service, customers can sign up for phone, text, and email alerts through CenterPoint Energy at: www.centerpointenergy.com

Losing your electricity is never convenient, but you can lessen this headache by staying informed and monitoring the weather, and also by stocking up on water, batteries, and nonperishable food.



Flood Insurance – Don't Miss Out on a Discount

With hurricane season behind us, the City of West U wants to remind everyone to take the time to review your home's insurance coverages to ensure that you are up to date, and, if you have flood insurance, that you may be eligible for a discount. This is because of the City's high Class 7 rating in the FEMA National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System. The City of West University Place strives to protect its residents and their property.

We may not be able to totally eliminate flooding, but we can minimize its effects. Please help the City to reduce the potential for flooding by keeping debris and trash out of the streets, inlets, and ditches. And, remember, when driving on flooded roadways, turn around – don't drown!

For more information, go to www.westutx.gov/insurance or contact the West U Community Development Division at pwinfo@westutx.gov or 713.662.5839.



2021 City Holidays

On October 26, the West University Place City Council unanimously voted to reaffirm our community's values by adopting Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Day as an official City holiday. In 2021, the City of West U will be observing the following holidays:

January 1 New Year's Day (2021) Friday	January 18 MLK Day Monday	April 2 Good Friday Friday
May 31 Memorial Day Monday	July 5 Independence Day Monday	September 6 Labor Day Monday
November 25 Thanksgiving Thursday	November 26 Day After Thanksgiving Friday	December 23 Additional Christmas Holiday Thursday
December 24 Christmas Eve Friday	December 31 New Year's Eve Friday	

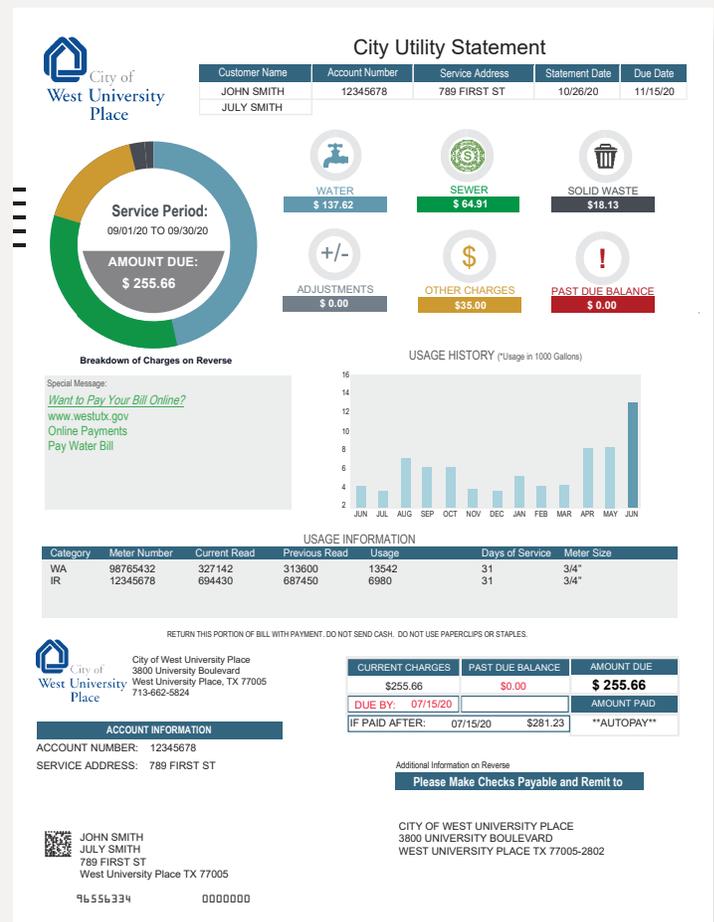
On these days, City offices will be closed, but emergency services will continue to function. Please check www.westutx.gov/holiday or the West U Collects App for the holiday trash collection schedule.

New Look for West U Utility Statements!

Out with the old and in with the new – a fresher, more vibrant utility statement is coming to West U!

These new statements will include all the information you need to know about your utility account. With new features, such as a Usage History Graph and a Message Center, these statements were designed to be more user friendly and easier to read.

Here is a special sneak peek. We love these new statements – and we know you will, too!



Point & Pay Payment System and Electronic Statements

It's never too late to sign up for Point & Pay – a faster, easier way to pay your West U utility bill.

Signing up for the Point & Pay system will allow you to make your payments through a computer, phone, or tablet – and to also:

- Update account information and settings
- Schedule recurring or future-dated payments
- View payment and statement histories

To register, visit the City's website at www.westutx.gov and click on the "Online Payments" button and then on the "Pay Water Bill" button.

Go green! Help the City save paper, and reduce the amount of your incoming mail, by signing up to receive e-statements. Simply choose the electronic statement option on your Point & Pay dashboard. You may also contact Utility Billing at 713-662-5824 or billinghelp@westutx.gov for assistance.

To learn more about Point & Pay, please visit the system's website: www.pointandpay.com



Parks and Recreation



Summer Sponsorship Opportunity for 2021 Party on the Patio Series

Friends is seeking a sponsor for the next Party on the Patio series, which will be held on Friday evenings in June at Colonial Park. This is an exclusive \$10,000 sponsorship. If you, or a business you know, would be interested in this sponsorship, please contact Friends Executive Director Donna LaMond at DLaMond@westutx.gov or call her at 713-662-7430.

Friends fundraising continues year-round with business partnerships, memorials and honorariums, pavers, benches, and tree sales.

Senior Virtual Programs

West U Senior Services continues to offer virtual recurring classes such as Evening Yoga, Tai Chi, Meditation, Shakespeare, and YouTube offerings such as Chair Yoga and Early Risers.

Shakespeare

Shakespeare is coming back on January 8th. Join Kate Pogue for wonderful instruction that focuses on Shakespeare's life, his plays, and pertinent historical information that will delight and transport you to another era. This 8 week-long course is taught via Zoom with advanced registration at a cost of \$25.

Virtual Passport Program

New in January, the Virtual Passport Program is a personalized and immersive video virtual reality (VR) experience. Senior Services provides the new VR equipment and portal so you can open doors to exciting places and new adventures. Thursday appointments are available for your VIP treatment and one-on-one experience. You must reserve your spot in advance by calling 713.662.5895

COVID-19 protocols will be strictly practiced and face masks are required.

Please visit www.westutx.gov/seniors for more information. If you are interested in any Join.me or Zoom events, advanced registration is required. To register, please contact Toby Brooks at 713.662.5895 or tbrooks@westutx.gov

Our Parks & Recreation Department is Hiring!

Want to Join a Fantastic Team and Make Some Money While Having a Blast?

Do you want to be part of a fantastic team – and make some money while having fun? The West University Place Recreation Center and Colonial Park Pool are hiring part-time employees. Available positions include Customer Service Team Member, Swim Instructor, and Lifeguard.

If you are interested in excellent starting pay, a flexible schedule, a team atmosphere, and a fun place to work, then West U is the place for you.

For more information, please visit www.westutx.gov/jobs or call the Recreation Center at 713.662.7420.



Parks and Recreation

Updates from the Friends of West University Parks

We want to say a huge “thank you” to our first sponsor of the new Youth Fitness Challenge Course at Colonial Park. Friends of West University Parks (Friends) is so thrilled to have **Children’s Memorial Hermann Hospital** step up for this three-year sponsorship commitment. The challenge course is part of the recent redevelopment of the east end of Colonial Park, which is a fitness destination that connects people of all ages and backgrounds to socialize with family and friends while staying active.

2021 Park Lovers’ Ball Cancelled

After much deliberation and, due to the lack of a crystal ball, Friends has made the difficult decision to cancel Park Lovers’ Ball for 2021. This is a fabulous and popular neighborhood event which is also our largest fundraiser for our parks and green spaces. While we will miss the annual ball, Friends does have some other fundraising events planned and details will be provided soon.

Be Sure to Participate in the 2021 Wine Pull, Featuring the West U Wine Wagon!

While we will not have the opportunity to celebrate the Park Lovers’ Ball this year, there will still be safe festivities in support of our parks. You do not want to miss the opportunity to have the West U wine wagon stop by your home in February for a socially distanced wine pull! For more information or to donate wine, please contact Friends Executive Director Donna LaMond at DLaMond@westutx.gov or by phone at 713.662.7430.

Please visit the Friends website at www.westuparks.org to receive updates – and to also sign up to receive Friends emails.



A tremendous “thank you” to Gibson Dunn, sponsor of the 2020 Fathers & Flashlights Camp at Home event! We also thank those who made individual donations in the spirit of this event. We look forward to welcoming campers back in the fall of 2021.

GIBSON DUNN



Recreation Center Programs

The West U Recreation Center has recently resumed in-person programs* that follow local, state, and federal health recommendations for COVID-19 protocols. These parameters will be updated as new recommendations or mandates are distributed.

Examples of in-person programs include:

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| Adult Tennis | Private Swim Lessons |
| Aqua Cross Fit | Youth Tennis |
| Ballet | Jazzercise |
| Yoga Flow | Pilates |

*In-person programs are subject to change.

Please check www.westutx.gov/activities for the most current class offerings. Parks & Recreation continues to offer virtual programming for at-home engagement. Please visit www.westutx.gov/virtualplay for more information.



Update on West U's Virtual Gate System

State-of-the-Art Security Camera System Becoming a Reality to Keep West U Safe

Work began in June on the first step of the City's \$4.5 million project to turn West University into a "virtually gated community" that is circled with a network of security cameras in and around the city. This system will be a passive, non-monitored system, and the images captured will be used by the Police Department to help narrow possible leads for crimes in the area. Since the system is designed to access local, state, and federal databases, it will also notify patrol officers of stolen vehicles, amber alerts, and more.

Phase I of this project, including the installation of cameras at 15 locations, is well underway. The second phase, to finalize the program and install cameras in an additional 25 locations, will be completed in 2021.

To learn more about the Virtual Gate project, please visit: www.westutx.gov/virtualgate

What is a Knox HomeBox?

The Knox Rapid Entry System is a secure emergency access program developed for property owners and first responders. The West University Place Fire Department has utilized the Knox Rapid Entry System for more than 15 years to prevent costly entry damage while protecting lives and property. The Knox HomeBox is designed specifically for residential use, offering a more discreet key box and a streamlined ordering process.

For the peace of mind offered by a Knox HomeBox, you can order it directly from Knox at www.knoxhomebox.com or by calling 1.855.GET.KNOX.

Once you receive your Knox HomeBox, please contact Fire Marshal James Novak at JNovak@westutx.gov or 713.662.5837 for registration and key installation.

Crime Prevention Reminder

Burglary of motor vehicles and incidents of identity theft/fraud are the two most frequently reported crimes in West University Place. Those of us who have fallen victim to either one of these crimes know well the frustration and inconvenience of having to deal with these situations and the efforts in clearing them up. Fortunately, these types of crimes are preventable to some degree through the implementation of proactive crime prevention measures that include the following recommended precautions:

To Help Prevent Burglaries of Motor Vehicles

- Remove items of value. Leaving items such as purses, wallets, laptops, and even your phone inside your vehicle makes it a likely target.
- Remove firearms or any indication of firearm possession/ownership from your vehicle. There are many ways that criminals come into possession of firearms, and people leaving them unattended inside of a vehicle is one of the most common ways. Leaving boxes of ammunition or empty holsters inside, and displaying decals of weapon manufacturers on bumpers or windows only enhances the probability of your vehicle becoming a target.
- Lock your vehicle. A vast majority of the vehicles that are targeted are unlocked.

To Help Prevent Identity Theft / Fraud

- Check your credit report on a regular basis. Checking your report is easy, and allows you to review your accounts and look for credit inquiries. If your name and identifying information are being used by someone else, this is usually where the information will show up first.
- Pay close attention to your credit card and bank statements. Go a step further than just paying the bill or checking the bottom line. Pay close attention to the charges and transactions made to see if someone has tapped into your account. In an effort to avoid detection, most fraudulent activities take place in small increments that will most likely be overlooked.
- Consider the use of credit/bank account monitoring services.
- Limit the type and amount of information that you make available to others. Take the time to question and verify the need for sharing your identification and financial information. If you did not initiate contact with the person asking you to provide this type of information, the chances of your becoming a victim are extremely high.

Consider this information when taking active measures to reduce your risks and exposure to crime. Additionally, take the initiative in meeting and getting to know your neighbors, as they are your first line of defense if crime occurs close to home. Look out for one another, and report all suspicious activity to the West University Place Police Department immediately.

DirectLink Alarm-Monitoring System Provides Peace of Mind for Residents

The City's alarm-monitoring program, DirectLink, has rolled out improvements that are available only to West U residents. Through the DirectLink program, West U's Police Department receives your alarm signal directly, rather than through a third party, and can dispatch first responders to your property immediately – saving valuable time for emergency responses.

We have refreshed our DirectLink logo, signs, and decals. If you are an existing customer and would like to pick up a new yard sign with the new logo, please stop by the Police Department and we will be happy to provide you with an updated yard sign.



In addition, we have partnered with Alarm.com to bring convenience to your fingertips. This new feature allows you to access your DirectLink system remotely on any compatible smartphone or tablet.

With this system, protecting your home has never been easier!

For more information on the DirectLink system, please visit our website at www.westutx.gov/directlink or call our DirectLink coordinator at 713.662.5860.



Buffalo Speedway Rehabilitation Project

Construction Begins in 2021!

The project to resurface and improve the drainage of Buffalo Speedway along its entire course through West U is scheduled to break ground in January 2021. Key components of the Buffalo Speedway Rehabilitation Project include:

- **Installation of box culverts to improve drainage from Bissonnet Street to south of West Holcombe Boulevard**
- **Removal and replacement of the roadway pavement between Bissonnet Street and West Holcombe Boulevard**
- **Installation of a new water line on the East side of Buffalo Speedway from Wroxton Road to Amherst Street**
- **Other potential improvements, including traffic signals, intersections, and upgraded streetlights**

The project will be divided into phases, with a series of steps in each phase. The following is an approximate timeline for each phase of the project:

Phase 1
Water Line Replacement
January 2021 – March 2021

Phase 2
Poor Farm Ditch Outfall to South of Cason Street
January 2021 – September 2021

Phase 3
South of Cason Street to Amherst Street
September 2021 – August 2022

Phase 4
Amherst Street to Wroxton Road
August 2022 – March 2023

Phase 5
Site Cleanup
March 2023 – June 2023

While disruptions may be experienced during construction, City staff will work hard to ensure that notifications to residents are provided during each phase of construction. Emergency services and trash collection will continue to be provided at all times.

For more information regarding the Buffalo Speedway project, or to sign up to receive email and text alerts, please visit: www.westutx.gov/buffalo

Public Works

Community Improvement Projects in 2021

There is no shortage of progress coming to West U in 2021. Under the direction of the City Council, our staff is gearing up for multiple projects for the upcoming year, including, but not limited to:

- Buffalo Speedway Rehabilitation Project
- Stormwater Management Plan
- Drinking Water Efficiency Study
- Water Line Replacement Program
- Booster Pump Replacement
- Law Street Water Line
- Wakeforest Elevated Storage Tank (EST) Riser Pipe Replacement
- Inflow and Infiltration in Sanitary Sewer System Mitigation Program
- Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) – Basin Gate Replacement
- WWTP – Weir Replacement and Automated Weir Cleaning System

For more information, or for updates on these projects, please visit www.westutx.gov/projects or contact Public Works at 713.662.5839 or via email at: pwinfo@westutx.gov



- WWTP Master Plan – Preliminary Engineering Report and Implementation
- WWTP – Effluent Water Reuse
- Sidewalk Condition Assessment
- Roadway Condition Assessment
- Street Maintenance (Addressing Street Ponding Issues)
- Facilities Master Plan
- Emergency Storage Room
- Virtual Gate Project – Phase II
- Citywide Engineering Speed and Safety Study
- Huffington Park Improvements

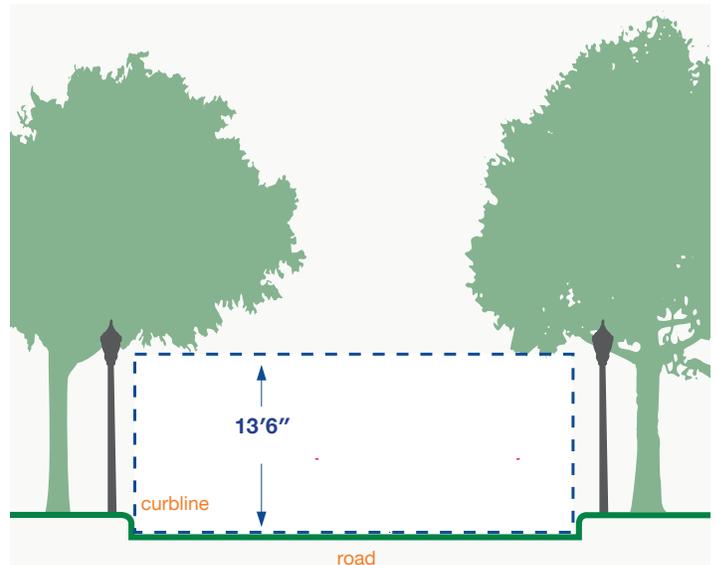
Reminder to Trim Low Hanging Vegetation

Tree Height Clearance Over Roadways

The City requires a minimum clearance over the roadway of 13'6" in. from curb to curb. Low hanging limbs over the roadway are dangerous to drivers and interfere with providing effective City services (i.e. paramedics, fire, trash/recycling collection and street sweeping).

Not sure how high 13'-6" is? A good rule of thumb is if vegetation growth is below the height of the streetlight globe located along your street, then they need to be trimmed.

We encourage residents to keep West U friendly for the motor public by maintaining your trees and shrubs. Note that you may be assessed a fee (min \$150) after being issued warnings regarding proper maintenance of vegetation.



For more information, please contact the West U Public Works Department at 713.662.5839 or email pwinfo@westutx.gov

Donate or Recycle Your Used Textiles and Clothes

A Message from the Recycling & Solid Waste Reduction Board

Facts about textile waste!

1

The average American throws out about 82 pounds of textile waste per year. Only 15% is donated or recycled.

2

Clothes can take up to 40 years to decompose, while shoes can take up to 1,000 years.

3

Americans are buying and discarding five times as much clothing as they did 25 years ago. Fast (and cheap) fashion is everywhere, and, consequently, it is filling up landfills (and harming the environment) at a rapid rate.

4

Almost all (95%) of textiles can be recycled – even such items as single socks; stained shirts; and clothes with holes, broken zippers, and missing buttons.

5

Textiles can be repurposed into a number of things, including sports fields, pillow stuffing, and paper money.

6

When you donate clothing to charities, it's not uncommon for the clothing to be sold overseas.

7

Approximately 70% of the world's population wears secondhand clothing, and it is now even being sold at major stores, such as Macy's, J.C. Penney, and The Gap.

8

The environmental benefits from recycling one ton of clothing is equivalent to five times that of yard waste, four times that of glass, more than that of plastic, and just a little less than that for aluminum.

Yes, donating is better than landfilling, but sustainability lies in wearing clothes longer and buying less. Steps in the right direction are to buy quality over quantity, and to also rent, swap, share, and buy used clothing whenever possible.

Convenient Places to Donate or Recycle Textiles

Type of Item	Local Organizations Accepting Used Clothing	Drop Off or Pick Up?	Location
Prom dresses, shoes, wraps, jewelry	The Giving Gown Foundation	Drop off	Tide Dry Cleaners at Buffalo Speedway or Holcombe
Women's professional work clothes	Dress for Success	Drop off	3310 Eastside
Men's professional work clothes	Career Gear Greater Houston	Drop off	Old Sharpstown Mall, 7500 Bellaire Blvd., Suite BB20
Clothing, shoes, stuffed animals, household linens, towels, pillows	American Textile Recycling Services (ATRS)	Drop off	Drop box is located on northeast corner of Buffalo Speedway and Westpark
Towels and sheets	YMCA International Services (Refugee Resettlement), 713-339-9015	Drop off	6300 Westpark Dr., Suite 600
Leather, wool, silk, fabric, ribbons, felt, trim, quilts, vinyl, fabric samples	Texas Art Asylum (see website for drop-off days and for a more complete list of accepted items)	Drop off	1719 Live Oak St.
Towels, blankets	SPCA, 713-869-7722	Drop off	900 Portway Dr.
Towels, bath mats, small rugs	Humane Society, 713-433-6421	Drop off	14700 Almeda Rd.
Clothing, furniture, housewares	Salvation Army (call 1-800-728-7825 to arrange pick-up time)	Both	6150 Bissonnet
Clothing, furniture, housewares	Goodwill	Drop off	5213 Kirby Dr., 2428 West Holcombe Blvd.
Clothing, furniture, housewares	The Mustard Seed Resale Shop (arranges pick-ups for estates and large items)	Both	1410 Elgin (at LaBranch)
Clothing, sheets, blankets, pillows, household, small electronics	Various Charity Clothing Donation Drives	Both	Various locations

Sell or Consign, Locally or Online

Clothing that is in excellent condition, in style, vintage, or in season can be sold or consigned. Local resale shop locations include the Buffalo Exchange, The Guild Shop, the Charity Guild, and the Blue Bird Circle. To sell used clothing items, consumers can also explore online options, such as Etsy, eBay, The RealReal luxury consignment outlet, and Poshmark.

Resources:

[Planetaid.org](https://www.planetaid.org)

[Fabricoftheworld.com](https://www.fabricoftheworld.com)

[Secondary Materials and Recycling Textiles](#)

[Council for Textile Recycling](#)

[AllFreeSewing.com](https://www.allfree Sewing.com)



A Newsletter for the Citizens of the City of West University Place

City of West U Officials

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor Bob Higley
Mayor Pro Tem Kevin Trautner
John Barnes
Lauri Lankford
Ed Sobash

CITY MANAGER

Dave Beach
dbeach@westutx.gov

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and is printed on recycled paper.

For questions and comments about *City Currents*,
contact Communications Coordinator Bianca Cuccerre at
bcuccerre@westutx.gov or 713.662.5350.

Design by Minor Design

Meeting Reminder for City Council, Boards and Commissions

City Council

Meetings are the second and fourth Monday of each month
Starts at 6:30 pm

Building and Standards Commission

Meetings are the first Thursday of each month
Starts at 6:00 pm

Zoning and Planning Commission

Meetings are the second Thursday of each month
Starts at 6:15 pm

Zoning Board of Adjustment

Meetings are the fourth Thursday of each month
Starts at 6:30 pm

Recycling and Solid Waste Reduction Board

Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month
Starts at 6:00 pm

Parks and Recreation Board

Meetings are the first Wednesday of each month
Starts at 6:30 pm

Senior Services Board

Meetings are the second Thursday of each month
Starts at 2:00 pm

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the federal government's recommendations regarding social distancing measures, **meetings are currently being held via teleconference**. For more information on how to attend these meetings, please visit <https://www.westutx.gov/280/Boards-Commissions> or call the City Secretary's Office at 713.662.5812.



We Need Your Help to Keep West U Green!

Receive Your Utility Bill Statement Electronically

Help conserve resources now by enrolling to receive your e-statement. To get started, please email us at billinghelp@westutx.gov or call 713.662.5824, and please reference your account number.