

City Currents

Fall 2021



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Speed Limit Changes across West U: Enforcement Begins in 2022

In January, the City will begin enforcing the speed limit changes under the Citywide Speed and Safety Plan Ordinance.

This ordinance, approved by City Council at its meeting on May 10, lowers the speed limit for the majority of streets in the city from 30 mph to 25 mph.

Locations not impacted by this ordinance are:

Buffalo Speedway
will remain at 30 mph

The 4100 and 4200 blocks of Bissonnet
will remain at 35 mph

School zones and park zones
will remain at 20 mph

This ordinance was adopted on the basis of the Citywide Speed and Safety Traffic Study, which was commissioned in February 2020 to assess existing speed limits in West U, gather data for recommendations, and identify areas for safety enhancements. This study looked at the overall safety of the city's transportation network and determined the best options for speed management in the city limits. In order to ensure that recommendations were data-driven, this study was initially delayed due to lower levels of traffic resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, but was completed earlier this year.

The City will begin installing new permanent signage for the speed limit changes in November. The replacement of existing speed limit signage is scheduled to be completed in January, at which point the City's Police Department will begin enforcement of the changes.

The City will continue its educational campaign over the coming months to inform West U residents of the speed limit change.

For more information on the Speed and Safety Traffic Study, please contact Public Works Director Gerardo Barrera at (713) 662-5845 or gbarrera@westutx.gov or visit www.westutx.gov/speedlimit.

For information on the City's enforcement of the speed limit changes, please contact Community Resource Officer Katie Wilson at (713) 662-5866 or kwilson@westutx.gov.



From the Mayor's Desk

City Council's Vision and Goals for the Next Year and Beyond



At our July 26 meeting, your City Council voted to formally adopt goals for the city for the next year. This vote followed many nights of discussion during the strategic visioning process regarding those issues that prompted many of us to become involved in public service, along with those topics that our friends and neighbors had brought to our attention during the campaign earlier this year. Identifying priorities will ensure that the City is able to devote the funding, resources and attention to those issues that are most pressing for residents and that are most vital for our community's continued success. While we covered a wide variety of topics that affect life in West U, there were trends among those issues we prioritized.

Firstly, this Council underscored its commitment to long-term planning for the future of our city. We committed to completing a Master Plan for City Facilities, which will identify the function and final location of municipal buildings, supporting the continued development of the West U community in the decades to come.

In addition, Council adopted goals to address drainage issues in West U. This includes identifying the next steps required to implement needed improvements to Poor Farm Ditch, the drainage channel that runs through the middle of the city parallel to Edloe Street. Poor Farm Ditch is one of the oldest drainage channels in Harris County, and this Council has committed to working alongside Southside Place and the County to address the replacement of the channel in a way that mitigates impacts on neighbors while ensuring that the system works properly.

Finally, Council established West U's first Sustainability Task Force. This advisory body will confer for six months, identifying opportunities to build on West U's history of environmental stewardship by recommending additional sustainable practices in our community. We look forward to receiving the task force's report in the spring of 2022.

The full list of policy issues adopted by Council as priorities are the following:

Top Priority

City Facilities Master Plan –
Future Upgrades/Replacement

Intergovernmental Partnerships:
Review, Opportunities and Direction

Poor Farm Ditch Improvements/Public Use:
Evaluation and Direction

Stormwater Detention Property Availability:
Direction

Bond Proposal and Election in 2022:
Direction and Preparation

High Priority

Sustainability Task Force:
Direction, Report and Action Plan

Community Engagement Strategy:
Direction and City Actions

City Government Transparency:
Recommendations, Direction and City Actions

Non-Profit Organizations:
Contract Review, Future Funding and accountability

Community Greenspace/Greenway Expansions:
Policy, Plan and Funding

Senior Services:
Review, Direction, City Actions and Funding

In addition, Council adopted goals for the City's operations, such as evaluating revenue options in order to continue to fund West U's high level of service for residents, along with continuing efforts to improve the City's communications. Altogether, these goals represent a commitment by City Council and staff to address the long-term and short-term needs of residents, and to uphold the vital quality of life in West U.

For more information, and for a complete list of the City's policy and management goals, as well as other initiatives that will be taking place over the next year, please visit www.westutx.gov/goals.

A Message from Council Member Melanie Bell

I am looking forward to the autumn months as it is my favorite time of year in West U. The weather tends to be the nicest and the holiday season is right around the corner.

This summer has been a busy one. Touring the city and meeting city staff was a highlight of being elected to the City Council. With each encounter with a staff member, I continue to be impressed with the level of knowledge and dedication they provide the residents of West U. It was great fun to tour the city departments and see behind the scenes.

We started as a Council in setting our strategy and goals. I commend the hardy souls that zoomed into those meetings to listen. We had some really good discussions on a variety of topics and I am excited about several of the actions we have landed on. The city has formed a Sustainability Task Force, which is a group of seven residents that will look at ways to improve the city's environmental footprint in cost effective ways. The task force will provide a report to Council in April 2022. The world is changing and I want our city to be a leader in the positive changes that need to occur.

Developing strategies and goals is an important process in that it helps define the city's annual budget to secure additional funding, if necessary, for critical projects already underway and funded by previous Councils. (I have to admit though that setting the budget was one of my least favorite tasks when I was a corporate manager although I love doing it for my personal life.) In addition, setting goals and developing strategies assist in deciding on new projects that future Councils will support. A critical project that has required the attention of several Councils, including this one, is drainage to minimize the impact of flooding homes in West U. The work in progress on Buffalo Speedway is part of that project. The West and East drainage projects are still in planning stages to provide additional relief from flooding.

Speaking of water, this Council will also be making decisions related to our water service due to the concerning trend of increased water usage. Data indicates that older, smaller homes demolished and replaced with larger homes is one of the reasons for the increase. The City's engineer has provided the City with several options, including a new water plant. However, before moving forward with that option, I would like this Council to explore costs and consider other options. In the meantime, work on the Wastewater Treatment Plant Master Plan and the Effluent Water Reclamation will continue to be developed and progressed.

I am honored to have been elected to the City Council and am looking forward to the discussions, challenges and learning the next two years will bring. As we work together as a community, I am excited to work with this Council to develop solutions that support the City of West University Place.

-Council Member Melanie Bell



*Council Member
Melanie Bell*

City Spotlight

Prime Police Work

On a summer afternoon in July, Officers David Davis and Josh Clark of the West University Place Police Department were actively patrolling the city when something suspicious caught their attention, an unusual amount of Amazon boxes piled high on the doorstep of an unoccupied property. After further investigation, the officers discovered that all of the packages were addressed to various residents throughout the city. Without hesitation, the officers sorted through the packages and began planning a custom route to personally deliver each of the packages to their proper destinations. While residents were surprised to see West U officers at their doorstep, they were more than pleased to learn that Officer Davis and Officer Clark had gone out of their way to ensure that each package was safely delivered.

Officer Davis and Officer Clark were each presented with the West U S.P.I.R.I.T Coin for their dedication to serve

the residents of West U. The S.P.I.R.I.T Coin is meant to recognize employees who go above and beyond to exemplify the City's core values of **Service, Professionalism, Integrity, Results, Innovation, and Teamwork**. Employees can be recognized by citizens, supervisors, peers, and others in the community for doing something that goes above and beyond their regular job duties to serve as an example of West U's SPIRIT.



Left to right: Officer Josh Clark and Officer David Davis of the West University Place Police Department

Port of Call: West U Senior Services

For more than 17 years, Senior Services Manager Toby Brooks has been at the helm of helping the 50+ set in West U. Brooks is a graduate of Southern Illinois University, and immediately after leaving college she went into the cruise line industry to put her recreation and leisure services degree to use. After several years on the high seas, she went into municipal recreation working for the cities of Pearland and Missouri City before finding her favorite destination here in West U. Through Brooks' leadership and innovation, the senior services programming and offerings have expanded immensely including the addition of a wide variety of exercise/fitness options, outdoor adventures, and enriched community outreach through volunteer services such as the Good Neighbor Team. When Brooks is not busy planning and serving West U's seniors, she enjoys traveling and spending time with her husband and their dogs. The City of West University Place is grateful to have someone like Toby Brooks on the team!



Toby Brooks, Senior Services Manager



Left to Right: Participant Carolyn Allen and Toby Brooks

Resident Resources

Upcoming City Observed Holidays

On the following days, City offices will be closed and there will be no curbside trash, recycling or yard waste collection. Emergency services will still be available.

Thanksgiving Holiday **Thursday, November 25 and Friday, November 26**

Christmas Holiday **Thursday, December 23 and Friday, December 24**

New Year's Holiday **Friday, December 31**

Christmas Tree and Christmas String Light Recycling

December 28 – January 15

How to Recycle Your Tree

Place your tree, free of any foreign materials or objects (such as bulbs, lights, decoration and stands), curbside on your regular trash day. These trees will be taken to a local composter and recycled as mulch. Trees that are flocked (or have ornaments, lights, stands, or any other foreign objects) WILL NOT be accepted for recycling.

How to Recycle Your Lights

In conjunction with the Houston Zoo, the City will be accepting holiday string lights for recycling at the following facilities:

City Hall
3800 University Blvd.

Public Works Administration Office
3826 Amherst St.

West U Recreation Center
4210 Bellaire Blvd.

If you have questions regarding Christmas tree or Christmas string light recycling, please contact the Public Works Department at 713-662-5839.

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 Point & Pay 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, while also reducing the amount of your incoming mail, by signing up to receive e-statements. Simply choose the electronic statement option on your Point & Pay dashboard. For assistance 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



Direct Link Alarm Monitoring System

Direct Link connects you directly to the West University Place Dispatch Center. You'll talk directly with the people who can really help you, instead of a third party dispatch center.

For more information about the Direct Link Alarm Monitoring System visit, www.westutx.gov/directlink.

Flood Insurance – Don't Miss Out on a discount!

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. If you have flood insurance and are in the 100 year flood plain, 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.

For more information, go to www.westutx.gov/insurance or contact the Community Development Division at pwinfo@westutx.gov or 713-662-5839.



Public Safety

Vacation House Watch

Are you going on a well-deserved vacation or planning to be away from home for an extended period of time? The West University Place Police Department is pleased to offer its Vacation House Watch service to residents. This service is designed to provide peace of mind while you are away from home.

Benefits

- Officers will physically check your house during your absence.
- Officers will look for signs of unlawful entry, foul play, or anything else that may be wrong, and will contact you in case of an emergency.
- This service increases police presence around your home during your time away.

Restrictions & Exclusions

- Residents must be gone from their residence for a minimum of 72 hours.
- No other individual(s) should be going into or around the residence during your absence.
- If you are gone for more than 30 days, you must call in or submit a new form to renew the watch.

Registration Options

- Complete our online [House Watch Form](http://www.westutx.gov/229/House-Watch) by visiting www.westutx.gov/229/House-Watch
- Come by the police station and fill out a House Watch card
- Call the House Watch Line at 713-662-5317 and follow the instructions
- Fill out the House Watch Form and mail it to us or bring it to the Police Department

This program is intended to be a deterrent to illegal entry of the residence. Although this service is a crime prevention tool, for maximum confidence and peace of mind, we also encourage residents to plan appropriate home security and maintenance by following this checklist:

Checklist

1. Engage your alarm security system.
2. Ensure that your doors and windows are secured properly.
3. Clear out your mailbox and suspend mail deliveries.
4. Keep your yard maintained.
5. Use lights to create the illusion that someone is home.
6. Hide and lock up your valuables.
7. Don't broadcast your plans online.
8. Close your blinds and curtains.

Please note that the West University Police Department cannot guarantee that your residence will be checked at specific times or dates, but that every effort will be made to check on your residence as time and workloads allow. During the time of a natural disaster (such as a hurricane or flood) all Vacation House Watch services will be suspended.

Be sure to follow and like the official Facebook page of the West University Place Police Department. We strive to be your first source for news and announcements from the department!

Protect Your Home from Carbon Monoxide

As we approach the fall season, residents should consider lessons learned from this past year and plan ahead for the winter. During the February winter storm, the West University Place Fire Department (WUFD) responded to several calls for carbon monoxide (CO) detection and fireplace malfunctions.

WUFD wants to take this opportunity to remind residents of the importance of having a CO detector in your home. Carbon monoxide can be produced by incomplete combustion of gasoline, wood, charcoal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane. This can come from items such as heating units, fireplaces, hot water heaters and/or kitchen appliances.

Equipment (including portable generators) and vehicles that are powered by internal combustion engines can also produce carbon monoxide. This past winter, WUFD experienced several incidents with homeowners running their vehicles inside of their closed garages in order to charge electronic devices, or to stay warm. Running an engine inside a closed garage can cause dangerous levels of CO to enter your garage and home, causing occupants to breathe in toxic gases. Please remember to move your vehicle outside to a well-ventilated space while the vehicle is on or running.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning at low levels could resemble flu-like symptoms or food poisoning. Other possible symptoms can be shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, lightheadedness or headaches. Extremely high levels of CO can present with confusion and altered levels of consciousness, as well as a "bright-red" skin color.

Another common cause of CO poisoning includes fireplace malfunctions. WUFD recommends getting fireplaces serviced early before cold weather arrives. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommends that chimneys be swept at least once a year to remove soot and debris. You can also find a certified chimney sweep online by going to the Chimney Safety Institute of America's website <https://www.csia.org/>.

Be sure that you are familiar with the specifics of your fireplace before lighting it, and make sure the flue is open. Otherwise, a fireplace malfunction could cause dangerous levels of CO to accumulate inside your home.

The NFPA recommends that you have a CO detector outside every sleeping area, on every level of your home. You should also regularly test these devices and their batteries, and change out the batteries just as you would for your smoke detectors. Check with your fire alarm company to make sure that you have a CO detector installed in your system, or purchase a plug-in detector at a local home improvement store.

Carbon monoxide is the "invisible killer." Be prepared and stay safe. For additional information, you can contact the West University Place Fire Department or go to www.NFPA.org.

Parks and Recreation



Full Moon Fest

The Full Moon Fest event is scheduled for Friday, October 22 from 5:30 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. at Colonial Park. Be sure to register and participate in the Kids Costume Contest! For more information visit, www.westutx.gov/events.

Movies in the Park

Pack your blankets and chairs for a movie night under the stars at Colonial Park! Playing on the big screen Friday, October 15, will be *Raya and the Last Dragon*. Following the Full Moon Fest on Friday, October 22, will be the showing of *The Croods: A New Age*. Both movies will begin at 7:00 p.m. For more information visit, www.westutx.gov/events.

West U Halloween Dash and Kids' Fun Run

Saturday, October 30; - Community Building, 6104 Auden

Register now for the 10th anniversary of the West U Halloween Dash and Kids' Fun Run. The Halloween 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. Proceeds from the event will benefit the West U Parks and Recreation Department. You can register to participate at www.westutx.gov/funrun.

Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony

The Parks and Recreation Department will kick off the holiday season with its annual Christmas Tree Lighting at Friends Park on Monday, December 6 at 5:30 p.m. For more information about holiday events, visit www.westutx.gov/events.

Wally's Pool School Year Round Swim Lessons

The West U Rec Center offers swim lessons all year long! Sign up now to stay ready for swim time next summer. Lessons are offered by the City of West University Place, Infant Aquatics, Lifelong Swim School, the Swim Guru (Corrie), Stuart Harper, and Wolfies Swim School.

Community Building Offerings

Small Group Personal Training (with a minimum of three people and a maximum of six per group). Four consecutive sessions. \$50 for Residents and \$55 for Non-Residents.

Mondays

7:45-8:30 a.m. — 8:45-9:30 a.m.

Wednesdays

7:45-8:30 a.m. — 8:45-9:30 a.m.

Saturday, October 9: Daughters of the American Revolution Lecture

Join this group to help celebrate the 100th anniversary of the dedication of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The guest speaker will be, Mr. Kris Mancha, a member of the Society of the Honor Guard. 10:30 a.m. **Free**

Monday, October 18: The ABCs of Medicare

Find out about all of your choices during this annual enrollment period, which ends December 7. Hosted by Jennifer Gomez with Kelsey Care. 4 p.m. **Free**

Tuesday, October 19: Physicians' Lecture Series – Join us for this interesting doctors' lecture series. The speaker will be provided by Arosa Care. 1 p.m. **Free**.

Wednesday, October 27: Garden Talk with Beth Braun – Gardening has many relaxing qualities, and can spur your creativity. Join Beth Braun, past president of the Master Gardener Association, as she inspires you with tips and tricks for gardening success. 2 p.m. **Free**.

Tuesday, November 2: Musical Theater Lecture – Rice Professor Debra Dickson will provide this fascinating lecture, which will focus specifically on the works of the celebrated composers Rodgers and Hammerstein. 2 p.m. **Free**

Thursday, November 4: Holistic Lecture Series – Wellness Specialist Kim Shi will show you holistic ways to keep your blood pressure as normal as possible. 11 a.m. **Free**

Saturday, November 13: Medicare 101 – Are you turning 65 soon? Do you know how to enroll in Medicare parts A, B and D? Join Henry Cook, who specializes in Medicare, for this informative session. This session is geared for those who are still working, and are not yet 65. 10:30 a.m. **Free**

Saturday, November 13: Daughters of the American Revolution Lecture – Susan Kaufman, senior manager of the Houston Public Library's Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research, will explain ways to retrieve information in your family Bible and how to use tools such as Family Search and Ancestry to trace your family's history. 10:30 a.m. **Free**.

Tuesday, November 23: Physicians Lecture Series – Dr. Benjamin Hsu will discuss crucial conditions in our body that conventional medicine can miss. 1 p.m. **Free**.

For more information (or to suggest a presentation, trip, program, or a skill you would like to share with others) call 713-662-5895.

Fundraising Year-Round

Fundraising by the Friends of West University Parks Fund (Friends) continues year-round with offerings of business partnerships, memorials and honorariums, pavers, benches, and tree sales. Sign up for Friends emails at www.westuparks.org to receive email alerts about Friends including registration for this year's Fathers & Flashlights event and for information on the 2022 Park Lovers' Ball. For other information about Friends and upcoming events, contact Friends Executive Director Donna LaMond at 713-662-7430 or diamond@westutx.gov.

Park Lovers' Ball 2022

Mark your calendars for Saturday, February 5, 2022.

The gala will be held at Hotel ZaZa in the museum district. Interested in volunteering to help with the ball? Sign up on the Friends website or email Donna LaMond at diamond@westutx.gov.

Star Citizen Awards

Presented at the May 24 City Council meeting, Former Mayor Bob Higley presented awards to Mary Frances and David DuMay and Kimberly and John Carr Eads for co-chairing Park Lovers' Ball 2020, and to Sami and Jud Morrison and Christine and Owen Parker and for co-chairing Fathers & Flashlights 2019 and the Park Lovers' Golf Ball Tournament and Auction 2021.

Congratulations to these well deserving West U residents!



Left to right: Owen and Christine Parker, Jud and Sami Morrison, Mayor Bob Higley, Kim Eads, Mary Frances DuMay, Donna LaMond Friends of West U Parks Executive Director

Fathers & Flashlights – October 23 and 24

Everyone is more excited than ever about Fathers & Flashlights! It is great to be able to bring this beloved event back to our community. October 23 and 24 is the weekend for the next highly anticipated Fathers & Flashlights campout known throughout our community and beyond. Since its inaugural year in 2007, the campout has become instrumental in raising funds for the continued improvement and development of West U parks while also providing a great opportunity for fathers and their children to spend some quality time together. Campers can look forward to an afternoon of fun activities such as live catch and release fishing, inflatables, camel rides and a petting zoo along with an array of new activities and entertainment for this year.

Thank you to our Camp Founder sponsor Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital, the title sponsor for the event. We are grateful to all of the Friends underwriters, sponsors and in kind donors who make this event possible. Please visit www.westuparks.org for a listing of these generous donors.

Katie and Chris Hill, Michelle and Doug Huth and Sarah and Mark Knysh are the event co- chairs for F & F 2021.

“ We are super excited to have these amazing couples co-chairing one of the neighborhoods' most popular events,”

- Friends Executive Director Donna LaMond

To receive Fathers & Flashlights updates and other Friends information or to update your email address with us, please visit the Friends website and sign up for emails from Friends. Questions? Please call 713-662-7430 or email Donna LaMond at diamond@westutx.gov.

We are excited to announce a new donation option. We have partnered with DonateStock! Not only does it make stock donations fast, easy and secure, you can save a bundle on taxes by donating stock directly to Friends of West U Parks. Donating stock (vs. cash) helps you avoid capital gains tax while earning a bigger tax deduction. For more information on this new giving opportunity, please visit our website at www.westuparks.org.



Public Works

Buffalo Speedway Project Update

Construction on the Buffalo Speedway project continues to move forward. Over the last several months, the contractor (SER Construction) has completed the new outfall at Poor Farm Ditch located behind St. Vincent's Church. As of this writing, SER has installed approximately 1,200 linear feet of dual 8 ft' x 8 ft' storm sewer boxes, and has completed road paving on the southbound lanes of Buffalo Speedway south of W. Holcombe. Storm box installation and road paving will continue to progress northward to the intersection of W. Holcombe and Buffalo Speedway. Due to the complexity of underground utilities, the intersection will be completed in a series of phases while accommodating the flow of traffic for both Buffalo Speedway and W. Holcombe motorists. Motorist are advised to expect delays.

The new waterline installation between Amherst and Wroxtan has been completed. Prior to being placed in service, the new waterline was tested in accordance with state regulations to ensure proper pressure and the absence of any potential contaminants. All water testing passed. Crews continue to work on remaining connections at specified intersections and have completed the installation of new fire hydrants.

Looking ahead, the contractor is scheduled to begin work on Phase 4 of the project (Amherst St. – Wroxtan Rd.) which will include installation of new storm boxes and new pavement. Project staff continues to notify all residents affected by construction and working with TXDOT and the contractor on the sequencing of future work. Notifications and updates of upcoming work, including tree clearance pruning, will be sent to affected property owners and the general public.



For questions regarding this project, please contact Capital Project Manager Eduardo Barreto at 713-662-5848 or via email at ebarreto@westutx.gov.

Sign up to receive notifications about the Buffalo Speedway Project by visiting www.westutx.gov/buffalo.

Water Heater Maintenance

Water heaters are one of the appliances that we rely upon every day, but don't think about much until they don't work. Whether gas or electric, water heaters are generally very dependable and quiet. Water heaters can last for a decade or more and with this simple 3-step annual maintenance plan you can extend the life of your water heater even further and save money in the process.

Three-Step Annual Maintenance Plan

By following this easy three-step annual maintenance plan, you can maintain the safety functions of your water heater, while significantly extending the life of your water heater of this valuable appliance.

01 Dial Down the Temperature

- ▶ Go to the temperature setting dial on your water heater. It will be a knob on the gas valve or a thermostat behind an electric water heater panel.
- ▶ Dial the temperature setting down so it is between 115 to 120 degrees F.
- ▶ This lowered setting will protect the tank from overheating and will reduce the energy used to heat the water.
- ▶ This saves money on fuel costs.

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

- ▶ To test the T&P valve simply lift up on the lever part way, then let go and allow it to rapidly snap back.
- ▶ You should hear a gurgling sound as the valve allows some water to be released into the drain tube.
- ▶ If the T&P valve did nothing then it is bad and needs to be replaced by a state licensed plumber.
- ▶ This T&P valve, although simple in design, protects you and your family from the devastation that can be caused should your water heater fail to function as designed.

03 Do a Mini-Flush

- ▶ Place a bucket under the drain valve found near the bottom of the tank.
- ▶ Some drain valves have a handle while others have a short handle-less stem with a slot for a flat blade screwdriver.
- ▶ Turn the valve counter-clockwise to release a few gallons of water into the bucket. A full tank flush is best but can take time, bucket by bucket.
- ▶ Close the valve by turning it clockwise and drain the bucket.
- ▶ This step will help you extend the life of your water heater.

West U Recycling and Solid Waste Reduction Board

Improper Disposal of Household Hazardous Waste is an Explosive Problem

On Tuesday, April 13 smoke began billowing out of a West U trash truck. Because staff on the truck acted quickly and followed protocol, no one was injured and the \$250,000 trash truck was not destroyed. But this should never have happened. Household hazardous waste (HHW) does not belong in the trash or the recycling bin. It must be disposed of at special centers designed to safely handle these dangerous wastes.

This incident is no anomaly. Between 2015 and 2020, an average of 318 recycling facility fires occurred in the US and Canada each year. A November 2020 incident at a Houston recycling facility led to a shelter in place order and took firefighters 12 hours to extinguish. In April 2020 alone, two fires in Houston trash trucks occurred because residents threw away flammable items.

Putting HHW in your trash or recycling bin can lead to explosions and fires in trucks, recycling facilities, and landfills, causing toxic releases and endangering public works and waste management staff members. If disposed of in landfills, HHW leaches into our ground and surface water, poisoning our communities.

Lithium-ion batteries and chemicals are the main culprits in costly and dangerous trash and recycling fires.



Lithium-ion Batteries

Do you think it's harmless to throw an old cellphone battery or a singing birthday card into the trash? Think again. Many electronics contain lithium-ion batteries. These batteries are useful because they store a large amount of energy while taking up minimal space, but this makes them extremely explosive when damaged. In January 2020, a lithium-ion battery was the suspected cause of a fire, which took four days to extinguish and completely destroyed an Apalachin, NY recycling facility. In 2016, a Plano, Texas recycling facility was completely destroyed by a fire thought to be started by a lithium-ion battery.

Chemicals

Chemicals (such as household cleaners, pesticides, paint, and pool chemicals) are both fire and explosion risks, but can also create toxic fumes when mixed and compacted in trash/recycling trucks, threatening workers and surrounding communities. Additionally, if these chemicals make it intact to landfills, they leach toxins into the land and poison our ground and surface water.

Where to Dispose of Hazardous Household Waste

- Lithium-ion batteries and other rechargeable batteries: Lowe's, Home Depot, Best Buy, and the Harris County HHW Facility.
- Chemicals, including, household cleaners, pesticides, pool chemicals, and paint: Harris County Hazardous Waste Facility at 6900 Hahl Road.

For a list of what they take and hours of operation visit, www.eng.hctx.net/Consultants/Household-Hazardous/Household-Hazardous-Waste

Household Hazardous Waste Voucher Program

An HHW voucher can be obtained from the West U Public Works Department. For details about accepted materials and how to get a voucher visit, www.westutx.gov/hhwvoucher.

Don't forget to download the West U Collects app!

- Do you want to know your trash, recycling and yard waste collection schedule?
- Do you want to know what you can recycle or where you can recycle it?
- Want to receive changes in the collection due to holidays?

Then don't delay and download West U Collects app and enter your address. Visit www.westutx.gov/westucollects for all the details.



City Currents

Fall 2021



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

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

City of West U Officials

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor Susan Sample
Mayor Pro Tem John Montgomery
John P. Barnes
Melanie Bell
Shannon Carroll

CITY MANAGER

Dave Beach
dbeach@westutx.gov

City Currents is a quarterly publication
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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
Starting at 6:30 p.m.

Building and Standards Commission

Meetings are the first Thursday of each month
Starting at 6:00 p.m.

Zoning and Planning Commission

Meetings are the second Thursday of each month
Starting at 6:15 p.m.

Zoning Board of Adjustment

Meetings are the fourth Thursday of each month
Starting at 6:30 p.m.

Recycling and Solid Waste Reduction Board

Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month
Starting at 6:00 p.m.

Parks and Recreation Board

Meetings are typically held the first Wednesday of each month
Starting at 6:30 p.m.

Senior Services Board

Meetings are the second Thursday of each month
Starting at 2:00 p.m.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic **meetings are also being held via teleconference**. For more information on how to attend these meetings, please visit www.westutx.gov/agendacenter or call the City Secretary's Office at 713-662-5813.



Save the Date!

Paper Shredding and E-Waste/Mattress Collection Event

When: Saturday, November 6
Hours: 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Where: 3826 Milton St.
www.westutx.gov/specialevents