



University Park Community Council

University Park Community Council General Meeting

May 3, 2023 – 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm

University Park Elementary School
2300 South St. Paul St.

- **6:30 pm - Welcome from the UPCC - Steven Hick, UPCC President**

Steve Hick is the current UPCC president. He welcomed everyone and stated he is thankful to be hosting meetings back in the Upark school. (It has been at least 3 years since meetings were last held at the school mostly due to COVID.) UPCC is hopeful that meetings can stay at the Upark School location for the foreseeable future.

- **6:31 pm - Denver Police Department Report - Rob Landis, UPCC Safety Committee**

Rob Landis, the UPCC Safety Committee member, provided a report out on the Neighborhood Crime Stats.

Neighborhood Crime Stats:

UPCC neighborhood crime is down 18% in total crime

Violent crime is down 64%

Property crime is down 6.5%

Auto thefts are high and up about 33% (mostly stolen valuables left in car, catalytic converters, and license plates) There are anti-theft screws available at D3 station, but does not work on Volvo, Tesla, BMW/Mini.

Other crime is down 8.38%

White collar crime is up 100% (difference is fraud)

What you can do:

Close garage doors and lock your cars.

Use exterior lighting and get bright lights; make sure your property is well lit.

Enroll in the new “DenverTrack” program to register your car with the police. More info available and to register at: [Denvergov.org/denvertrack](https://denvergov.org/denvertrack) A sticker will

be mailed to you. The DenverTrack sticker program is also advertised in all the jails, holding cells, probation offices so criminals become aware of what it is.

Always lock your bike.

Attend Denver Police Dept Mtgs (open to the public) for more information and to voice concerns.

Discussion

Drag racing in and around the neighborhood was brought up. DPD is aware of it. Don't call 911, use the non-emergency number.

Garage doors have been accidentally left open and people go in and rummage through. Question about whether we can get any more neighborhood police presence? There have also been a number of package thefts etc. Neighbors are encouraged to call the police and have them do a full report. Use the non-emergency number.

Question: We have not seen much police presence in the neighborhood. We know our neighborhood has less crime. If you have anything to report, call the non-emergency line. There has been advanced police presence at the Colorado and Evans McDonald's location.

Overall, it is important to know your neighbors and look out for each other.

Rob's email is: safety@uparkcc.org

- ***6:40 pm - Buchtel Corridor Improvements Report - John Lasala, Senior Engineer, Dept. of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI) and Perry Edman, Project Manager II Engineering, DOTI***

Mark Kristensson, UPCC Transportation, Traffic, and Sidewalk Committee member, introduced John Lasala with DOTI. John is a project engineer with DOTI. Stated that the goal is to strengthen connectivity and improve safety for all users along the Buchtel and University and Evans light rail stations.

Perry Edman is also with the DOTI project.

John Lasala then provided an overview of the project and included maps with key proposed improvements noted.

Overview of Project

4 main intersections to improve:

-Buchtel/University

-Evans/University

-Buchtel/Colorado

-Evans/Colorado

Overall changes include:

-Bicycle and pedestrian improvements

-Crossing improvements

-Facility improvements

-Traffic signal replacements

Improvements and Enhancements

Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) in crosswalks

Bicycle Facility Treatment and Materials (drainage etc.)

Question from neighbor: What do you do about plowing?

Answer: Denver has some small plows that are made specifically for plowing bike lanes.

Project Timeline

Working on the final design (2023-2024), then will go to construction next, probably 1 year to 1.5 years after

Community Engagement Milestones

Self-guided online public meeting in June 2023

Self-guided online public meeting in Dec 2023

Buchtel and University Map

Key improvements include new islands for SB/NB right turns, installing raised crosswalks, people making that right turn will really have to slow down. The other 2 corners will get curb extensions to shorten the crosswalk distance. Green, on the map, is the connection of protected bike lanes on to Buchtel E of University. Will also be bike signals at the intersections.

Buchtel and St Paul Map

Key improvements include upgrading the existing traffic signal, improving the sidewalks, bike lanes on either side of Buchtel, and a protected curb.

Question about adding bike lanes on St Paul/Steele? This is a Merrill school route, and lots of biking and walking students.

Answer: Not included in this current scope, will put that as question to look at, and bring up with design team

Question: When you talk about changing signaling, will cars be able to turn left from Buchtel?

Answer: No, there will not be any left turn arrows. The curb is in the way so cars would have to stop and not be able to go around. It's designed to be a one lane approach.

Question: St Paul and Florida intersection has a single lane and people constantly are stopped behind turning traffic causing a jam.

Answer: Overall, goal is trying to improve traffic and safety and make it less attractive to cut through.

Buchtel and Monroe Map

Key improvements include trying to clean up the intersection and improve. It's currently very wide on South side and will narrow to shorten the pedestrian crosswalk length. There is currently a giant raised median. Will leave some parts a protected curb for the bike lane. Adding an RRFP on the East side with a median about halfway.

Question: The build outs are shown as concrete, but can you consider planted areas?

Answer: Will add to their notes.

Question: Is the corner by the assisted living housing a shared lane?

Answer: Yes. The bus turns there at that intersection, so that's why it is shown as wider.

Buchtel and Colorado Map

Key improvements include for the South bound traffic, changing to a single left turn lane. There will be a bike lane that continues to the station and to the bridge to cross I25. There will be bike signals to help try to separate motorists and cyclists.

Question: Is there still a double left turn lane from Buchtel to Colorado East Bound? T

Answer: Yes, believe so.

Colorado Center Dr at Colorado Light Rail Station Map

Key improvements include allowing the bike lane to track through as well as RTD buses. Will also have a bike lane westbound.

CO Center and Birch Street Map

Key improvements include connecting bike lanes to the Birch Street bridge.

Evans and Colorado Map

Key improvements include curb extensions, adding medians to NB and SB on Colorado Blvd. and all approaches will have medians, and pedestrian refuges.

Evans and University Map

Key improvements include curb extensions, adding a SB right turn lane, moving the bus stop down some, and shortening the crossing distance.

Question: The Southbound left turn light at Evans is very short.

Answer: Will look at the timing of the light.

- ***7:10 pm - University Park Historic Preservation Committee - Rosemary Stoffel and Committee***

Rosemary Stoffel, a part of the UPark Historic Preservation Committee (which is about 5 years old now), provided a committee update.

THE FOLLOWING WAS INSERTED FROM ROSEMARY'S PRESENTATION:

Don Etter wrote the University Park Walking Tour book in 1974 as an introduction to our cultural heritage. Since that time, 19 of the 86 homes he included have been demolished. Each of those houses added to the character of our neighborhood and told stories that have now been lost.

Over recent years, residents were becoming more vocal about the increasing loss of our older homes, and that led to the formation of the Community Preservation Committee 5 years ago.

The goals were to create awareness of our neighborhood's history, and to recognize and preserve our most important buildings. Each building is a physical reminder of University Park's past and adds so much to the character of our neighborhood. Community Preservation Committee members would like them to remain for future generations.

The group applied for and received funding from Historic Denver to hire professional consultants to research and document our history, and to identify our most historically important buildings. University Park residents contributed over \$2000 in matching funds for the \$9000 project.

The consultants spent two years researching our history, which resulted in our History Book, formally titled "University Park: Utopian Colony and Suburb on the South Denver Plains". It covers our neighborhood history from 1885 – 1969, which is when most of our development occurred. We've sold over 200 copies so far.

Next, the consultants and committee members identified University Park's most historically significant buildings. Back in 1974, Don Etter wrote that "the opportunity exists to preserve a small but significant cross-section of our heritage." The committee is attempting to do that now, in a potential University Park Historic District. The houses in this district would not be allowed to be demolished, and their designation as a landmark would ensure that they're still standing 50 years from now. Each one had to meet a high bar to qualify; currently only about 4% of Denver's buildings are designated landmarks.

This proposed district would be a noncontiguous, or thematic district, based on our neighborhood's early origins with DU and Methodism, as well as our history as an architectural laboratory. The buildings are scattered throughout the neighborhood, rather than located next to each other. Together they tell the story of University Park, and each building is a chapter in that story.

Committee members have spent the past two years meeting with, or attempting to meet with, every property owner in this proposed district. Property owners were provided with information about why their home is important, what designation means, and about the tax credits available. The committee is continuing these efforts.

All the property owners were invited to a public meeting in March 2022 at Fitzroy Place to give them the opportunity to talk to various experts – City Landmark and Historic Denver staff, the project consultants, a residential architect familiar with historic homes, and a realtor.

Presentation of a Power Point of Slides with Building Photos. (NOTE: The text that accompanied the PPT is included below:

1. Warren Avenue today (this shows our connection to DU, which is why our neighborhood is here. We were formed as a colony in 1886 as an elite residential community to support DU, which was moving from downtown to its present location. Generous donors provided the land for DU, and they stipulated that an adjacent community be developed.
DU was required to lay out at least 200 acres in blocks and lots, and plant at least 1,000 trees along streets and parks within two years).
2. Warren Avenue, 1895 (shows the early, scattered development. Our neighborhood grew up in fits and starts, due in part to water shortages, the Silver Panic, and the Great Depression. On the right is Grey Gables, the second house built in University Park)
3. Professor's Row late 1880's (named because many professors lived there)
4. Professor's Row today (Grey Gables, still intact, in front)
5. Evans Market today, 2084 S. Milwaukee St., now Stailey Insurance. (It was built in 1888 and housed a neighborhood market through 1968. It was the site of the first post office in the area and the first telephone; it served as a depot for the University Park Railway and Electric Company line and was a meeting place for Methodists who held Sunday services from 1891 – 1894.)
6. Chamberlin Observatory, Professor Herbert Howe House (the Observatory was built in 1894 after businessman Humphrey Chamberlin pledged money to build it, and DU astronomer and professor Herbert Howe took it on with a passion. He developed the plans, decided on the location, helped select the architect, oversaw the construction, and ordered a state-of-the-art telescope which remains

in the Observatory today. The Howe House was built in 1891 directly across from the Observatory, and initially a plank served as the sidewalk between the buildings)

7. Observatory Park (the width was developed wider on the southern end to prevent vibrations on surrounding streets from impacting the precious telescope. The land is owned by the city, and the Observatory buildings are owned by DU.)
8. Fitzroy Place, 2160 S. Cook St. (built in 1892 as the mansion for early movers and shakers Elizabeth Iliff Warren and her husband Bishop Henry Warren. Elizabeth Warren owned considerable land in University Park, donated heavily to DU, and was a savvy developer).
9. Gardener's Cottage, 2143 S. Madison St. (this charming shingle style cottage housed gardeners, servants, chauffeurs, and cooks for Fitzroy Place)
10. Ormleigh, 2145 S. Adams St (built in 1899 by William Seward Iliff and Alberta Bloom Iliff, donors and supporters of DU. It sits on 9 city lots and was designated a Denver landmark in 2017).
11. Buchtel Bungalow, 2100 S. Columbine St (built in 1906 by Henry and Mary Buchtel. Buchtel was a DU Chancellor and Colorado Governor, and the house was the site for many events during those years. Architecturally, the innovative Arts and Crafts style Bungalow was considered progressive and notable at the time)
12. Clough House, 2525 E. Evans Ave./Russell-Trout House, 2111 S. Fillmore St. (the Clough House on the right was the first house built in University Park in 1886, by banker, cattleman and Methodist John Clough). The Russell-Trout house on the left was built in 1892 and served first as the home of Professor Herbert Russell, and then for Professor Owen Bertram Trout. It was one of many houses built by DU to accommodate professors and students during a housing shortage in the late 19th and early 20th centuries)
13. Cutler House, 2122 S. Clayton St (built in 1892 and is one of the earliest Queen Anne houses still surviving in University Park. It was owned by Professor Ira Cutler, a specialist in life sciences. He planted many trees and plants in his own yard and developed a variety of rose known as the DU Rose. The family-owned goats, and they were often found wandering around the DU campus. The Cutlers hosted DU students and professors as boarders over many years).
14. Beardsley-Duncan House, 2174 S. Columbine St. (this 1909 house was initially the home of Hosea Beardsley, a Methodist Episcopal minister and DU faculty member, and then home to other faculty members. It was an early and substantial Foursquare built in the neighborhood)

15. Warren Lodging House, Ramoth-Gilead Home, 2220 S. St. Paul St. (Elizabeth Warren was instrumental in building this as a lodging house to help solve DU and University Park's critical housing shortage during the early 20th century. After she sold it in 1919, it functioned as a sanitorium called the Ramoth-Gilead Home, then as a sorority house, and finally as a private home. It was one of the earliest houses in the south end of the neighborhood.)
16. Storybook House, 2261 S. St. Paul St. (built in 1924 by Leslie Pigott, who served in World War I in Europe and with the French Ambulance Service. The Storybook Style was a 1920's fad with medieval and romanticized features and originated with young American soldiers who had seen homes like this in rural France. This style is rare in Denver)
17. Holland House, 2340 S. Josephine St. (this was built in 1932 by Mary Holland, who hired Harvard trained architect Eugene Groves to design the unique home, which is built entirely of concrete. Mary Holland worked in child welfare and was an advocate for the DU School of Social Work).
18. University Park Methodist Church, 2180 S. University Ave. (built in 1928 as the first permanent Methodist place of worship in University Park. Despite the formation of University Park by Methodists in 1886, the community did not build a freestanding place to meet until this building was constructed. Methodists first met in the Evans Store, and then in locations around the DU campus. It was built in the Collegiate Gothic Style, and additions were added later. The architecture reflects its connection to the DU campus across the street).
19. Former sorority house, now Mountain View Friends House, 2280 S. Columbine St. (this 1941 building was formerly the Gamma Phi Beta sorority house, the longest tenured sorority associated with DU. It is an excellent example of Georgian Revival architecture in the neighborhood).

Map of the proposed historic district was shown (showing the locations of properties eligible to be included in the proposed historic district).

Discussion

Barb Pahl (a member of the committee) came up to say a few words. She expressed she is fortunate to have inherited one of these buildings herself. In 50 years, she hopes the homes are all still here and the best way to do that is to get the historic district and tell the story of the neighborhood. Also, our neighborhood story is a story of powerful Denver women, like Elizabeth Iliff Warren.

Question: How long before the district would be approved?

Answer: The committee has been working on this for nearly 2 years and are nearing the end of the process. The committee would submit the application for designation first to Landmark Staff, and if approved (does it adequately tell the

story of our neighborhood?) it would then go for further consideration to Landmark Commission (LPC), Planning Board, City Council Land Use Transportation and Infrastructure committee, then finally to City Council. There will be required public hearings at LPC, Planning Board, and City Council. It's a lengthy process, and takes approximately 120 days from the time of application submission to a vote by City Council.

The commercial Downtown Historic District is the only other non-contiguous historic district. UPark would be the 2nd but 1st in Residential.

Rob Pahl also spoke to emphasize that the neighborhood is losing our history. We've lost 20% of the homes in the original walking tour book. We're counting on further owner support and the support of the neighbors as well. Saving our history is a benefit to the neighborhood.

- **7:40 pm - City Councilman Paul Kashmann**

Councilman Kashmann was then invited to speak. He expressed that it is nice to be back in the school. He represents District 6 (includes UPark neighborhood) on City Council and is currently at the end of his 2nd term. He was just elected to his 3rd and final term in last election.

Kashmann stated that Districts 8,9,10 will have a run-off election including a runoff for the mayor. He stated that overall, the council seems moderate leaning currently. It could change to be more progressive and could ultimately be composed of possibly 11 women, and 2 men, depending on how the run-off elections go. He also stated that districts are being redrawn; this is done every 10 years.

He then discussed how most of the calls his office gets are related to crimes, affordability, traffic, and homelessness. He stated that there are no quick answers. He noted that the city is in the process of hiring more police. We are supposed to have 1600 but are currently down 10%. States are in competition with all other states, Denver does not offer top pay for cops, jail is down 30-40% of their deputies, sheriff doesn't patrol handle jails etc.

He stated that Denver is trying to offer incentives etc. He noted that certain emergency calls are triaged by 911, and instead send out a mental health professional. The STAR team program is designed to send out MH professionals, and that the need is there. He noted that we can't arrest our way out of crime and stated we need better programs and treatments.

He also stated the need for changes in Federal efforts as well.

Regarding housing, he mentioned the ADU study. This has to do with looking at neighborhood plans. ADUs can help increase the rental housing stock and allow for more intergenerational housing. He noted ADUs can raise the value of your property. Denver needs affordable housing options for the middle class so they can build wealth. He stressed the need to think about how to implement new housing that's affordable.

Some discussion of Land Use Bill 23-213 which threatened to override the local housing authority and pretty much allow any anything except single family zoning. He noted that those initial provisions were stripped out but stressed that cities need to come up with affordable housing plans. Kashmann said he advocates for more local control.

Questions:

Concern expressed by a neighbor that the land use bill legislator is our current state legislator.

Concern expressed by a neighbor that property taxes are likely going up due to new assessments. Concern about those who live in older homes and how assessments were conducted considering many of those homes could be scraped.

- **7:55 pm - Q&A and Discussion**

Question: Denver is #1 in the county for auto theft, and these are often categorized as misdemeanors. What is there to do?

Answer: Best to sign up for the Denver Track program. If your car is stolen, the police can access its online GPS system.

Question related to UPCC Newsletter: Suggestion to provide more input on committees and what is happening in the community.

Answer: Yes, that is the plan but trying to have each of the 4 annual newsletters provide more information about the neighborhood and individual committee work. This is also the function of the new UPCC website. **VISIT: www.uparkcc.org**

8:10 Adjourn