UPCC General Meeting

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University Park Community Council Welcome

- Kate Winn is the current president of the University Park Community Council.
- The board is made up of volunteers from the community and is looking for more volunteers for committees and board positions.

Safety Chair Introduction

- Mike Cox is the safety chair and a starting point for neighborhood concerns.
- The Community Resource Officer is now Officer John Silva, as Kate Young was promoted to detective.
- Mike's email is safety@uparkcc.org.

Crime Statistics and Resources

- A QR code links to the Denver Police Department's crime statistics page, with a map showing crime data for University Park and other Denver neighborhoods.
- Mike Cox states that University Park is a comparatively safe neighborhood, but theft from and of vehicles are common issues.
- Officer Silva encourages residents to use the QR code to view crime stats, broken down by District 3 and University Park.
    - Theft from motor vehicles is down 9.5% (68 in 2024 vs. 48 this year).
    - Larceny is up 28% (50 last year vs. 73 this year).
    - Burglaries are down 12.5% (32 last year vs. 28 this year).
    - Auto theft is down 53% (52 last year vs. 19 this year).
- Officer Silva recommends residents take keys inside, lock cars, roll up windows, and consider programs like "the club" or Denver Track.
- 529 garage bicycle registration is available.
- Residents should remove garage door openers and all items from vehicles to prevent break-ins.

Community Meeting and Crime Discussion

- The next CAB meeting is October 8th, with a guest speaker from the Denver Automotive Task Force (DAC team).
- Violent crime statistics are not typically shared, the website does provide these stats.
    - Overall, violent crime is down 55% compared to last year.
- Traffic statistics are not available on the website.

- Residents are encouraged to report dangerous driving with license plate information.
- Speed limits on residential streets are generally 20 or 25 mph.
- Traffic unit does enforcement periods for expired license plates.

Police Staffing and Recruitment

- Recruitment is a struggle for the Denver Police Department.
- Two recruit classes are in progress, with nine new officers joining District 3 in November.
- Denver Police Department is losing officers to other agencies.
- Officer Silva is available via email for follow-up questions, except for the following week due to training.

Follow-up on Previous Question

- Speaker is happy to dig deeper into a previous question and encourages anyone interested to contact them via the website.
- Councilman Cashman may also have relevant comments.

A Little Help Presentation

- Walker from "A Little Help," a nonprofit, speaks about their work connecting volunteers with older adults to help them age well in their homes.
- The organization started 20 years ago as a grassroots movement in the Washington Park neighborhood.
- They connect neighbors to help older adults with tasks like yard work, transportation, and indoor cleaning.
- They operate in the metro Denver area, northern Colorado, and parts of Weld County, engaging 2,000 older adults across the state.

Community and Volunteering

- The community consists of those receiving help and those giving help, with many older adults participating in both.
- Volunteers undergo a background check process.
- The organization receives many applications for help, indicating a significant need in the community.
- Volunteering is flexible, with volunteers choosing what they do via a map portal called Help Connect.

Services Provided

- A Little Help provides 8,000 to 10,000 services a year.
- Services include transportation, yard work, light indoor cleaning, tech help, and snow shoveling.

- They also offer pet walking, friendly visits, and companionship.
- Intergenerational programs are a key focus, connecting people across generations.

Events and Involvement

- They host annual picnics in the summer, most recently in Observatory Park.
- November 15th is a service Saturday, where volunteers gather to do yard work for older adults.
- Opportunities to get involved include joining, giving, and sharing via social media or the website.
- The website is alittlehelp.org.

Questions and Answers

- There is no minimum age for volunteers, but children under 15 should volunteer with a parent.
- There is no fee for membership.

Transportation and Mobility Survey Results

- Joel Cox, the mobility chair, presents the results of the South Denver Mobility and Transportation Survey.
- The survey was sent to neighborhoods within District 6, gathering about 400 responses, with University Park contributing the most (171).
- The presentation focuses on University Park results, covering walkability, biking, and public transit.
- The full report for University Park and District 6 will be sent out by the end of the month.

Car Dependency and Attitudes

- The neighborhood is car-dependent, with 1.9 cars per household, on par with the US average.
- 66% drive daily, while only 2% rarely or never drive.
- 39% own an EV or hybrid, and 32% have considered it.
- 65% believe the city should reduce car dependency and invest in transit, walking, and biking infrastructure, even at the expense of car dependency.

Priorities for Change

- Pedestrian infrastructure is the top priority for improvement.
- Sidewalks and crosswalks are the most desired improvements.
- Other desired improvements include more shade, benches, protected bike lanes, lower speed limits, and better lighting, especially at transit stops.
- "We don't want just one solution. We want a whole bunch of different solutions."

Public Transit Survey Results

- Public transit has declined, with a 42% drop in regular users since 2017.
    - Regular users went from 42% to 19%, a 55% reduction.
    - Rare public transit use increased by 167%.
    - 7% fewer people say they never use public transit.
- Many major cities have recovered ridership rates, but Denver has not.
- 57% agree that public transit should be a top priority for elected officials, while only 13% opposed.
- The biggest barrier to public transit use is that it's not frequent or reliable enough.
    - Reliability is considered a bigger issue than coverage (routes to more destinations).
    - Safety concerns were also significant.

Bus Rapid Transit

- Bus rapid transit is being implemented on Colfax and is being considered for Colorado and Alameda Avenues.
- More people support bus rapid transit than are unsure or opposed.
- More community stakeholding is needed before moving forward.

Open Feedback

- The Yale bike lanes were a major concern.
    - One comment was: "remove it or I know a guy who will."
- Other concerns:
    - Speeding and traffic enforcement.
    - Light rail reliability, especially at the University of Denver and Colorado stations.
    - Sidewalk improvements.
    - Scooters/e-bikes being left on sidewalks.

Summary

- The community is car-dependent but wants to reduce it.
- Residents want leaders to provide options for different modes of transportation and prioritize safety for pedestrians.
- Transit is down, but there is optimism.
- Reliability is the biggest barrier.

Full Report

- The full report will include:
    - Demographic data.
    - Data around parking and EVs.

    - Environmental priorities.
    - Specific feedback on streets, speed limits, and bike lanes.

Actions and Sharing of Results

- The survey results will be shared with:
    - Elected officials (Councilman Cashman, RTD Director Gutching Ritter).
    - Local nonprofits.
- Dottie (Department of Transportation) reports directly to the mayor, limiting local control.
- The survey can be forwarded to Dottie or the mayor's office to show community concerns.

Tension Between Preferences

- There is tension between the desire for pedestrian- and bike-friendly transit and complaints about bike lanes.
- The Yale bike lane is a particular point of contention.
- Some believe bike lanes are being implemented for traffic calming purposes, even without a demonstrated need.

Pilot Program

- A pilot program is coming to the community, focusing on the University of Denver station.
- The program aims to close the "last mile" gap by incentivizing the use of e-bikes and e-scooters to reach public transit stations.
- The first mile of the ride to the station will be free.
- The program is funded by RTD ($120,000) and Lime/Bird (discounted rides and $60,000).
- Parking within a geofenced area around the transit stop triggers instant savings.
- For every $100,000 in funding, 20,000 to 25,000 transit trips are expected.
- RTD's Flexride shuttle service costs $1300 per person, while this model costs $5 per rider.
- The program is expected to launch in early 2026.
- The survey showed 66% support for such a program.
- The program primarily helps with the trip to the station (first mile).
- It ensures scooters are available at the station for those arriving.
- It frees up money for people to use on the last leg of their commute.

E-Scooter Program Follow-Up

- Geo-fencing uses GPS to define acceptable parking boundaries for e-scooters.
    - The app will show a circle indicating the parking area, and users get a discount if they park within it.

    - The app shows scooter locations and allows reservations.
- Concerns about dead space at the station being used for e-scooter parking were raised.
    - RTD is determining parking locations, possibly at the parking garage.
- A question was asked about taking a scooter home and storing it in a garage.
    - While not explicitly allowed, it's implied it's not socially acceptable or legal.
- There will be a follow-up transit survey in two years to measure the program's impact on ridership.
    - Data will be collected on e-scooter usage and in-app surveys will ask users if the program influenced their public transit use.

Vibrant Denver Bond Presentation

- Dan Ashkenazi from Vibrant Denver presented on the bond.
    - A general obligation bond is a way for the city to get large sums of money for infrastructure.
    - The Vibrant Denver bond is a six-year bond, unlike previous 10-year bonds.
- The bond aims to improve everyday infrastructure and is considered a "fix it" bond.
    - The bond includes $950 million in projects, narrowed down from $7 billion in potential projects.
    - The bond will not elevate taxes, as previous mill levies will cover the amount.
- The bond includes five measures: transportation and mobility, parks and recreation, shelters and housing, health and human services, and city facilities.
    - Over 100 intersections will be improved under the transportation and mobility measure.
    - A new public safety center will be built for firefighters and police officers.
- The campaign is spreading the word and answering questions.
    - The Denver Post and various organizations have endorsed the bond.
    - The website has a QR code for requesting yard signs and seeing a map of projects.
- Evans Avenue corridor will receive safety improvements, including pedestrian crossings.

Councilman Paul Kashmann's Remarks

- $15 million is allocated for Evans Avenue improvements between Colorado Boulevard and Quebec.
    - A formal study was done a couple of years ago, estimating the project at $86 million.
- Improvements are planned for the crossing to Asbury School, including a pedestrian refuge island.
- A pedestrian-activated light is planned for Downing Street at Mexico.
- The council unanimously approved the bond.

    - Keshman stated, "If I were the king of the world and I got to draw that list up myself, there'd probably be a couple of things I'd take off the list and a couple of things that I would add."
- The city is facing budget challenges due to lower-than-expected revenue.
    - 169 city employees were laid off, and 700 unfilled positions were removed.
    - Important projects will receive less funding or no funding at all.
- The budget process involves council amendments and potential mayoral vetoes.
    - The budget will pass on November 10, even if all council members vote against it.
- Denver is discussing unlocking housing choices and considering changes to single-unit zoning.
    - A task force committee has been assembled to guide the discussion.

Housing Choices Discussion

- There is another meeting Oct. 22 to learn more.
- denvergov.org housingchoices will provide information.
- Community meetings will be held to gather input.
- The Near Southeast Neighborhood Planning initiative looked at neighborhoods from Colorado Boulevard to Quebec, Alameda to Yale, and considered adding duplexes to single family neighborhoods, but with tools to maintain affordability and neighborhood character.

Virginia Village Example

- The speaker uses their home in Virginia Village as an example, a 903 square foot bungalow on 7,340 square feet of land, worth around $500,000 - $550,000.
- The speaker raises the question of whether they want to open the door for someone to tear down their affordable house and put up two, $3 million duplexes.
- The speaker believes that density needs to be added to the city, but not with 20-story buildings everywhere, or six-story buildings everywhere, or quadplexes everywhere.

Public Safety

- The speaker believes that the number one responsibility of any person in government is to maintain public safety.
- Denver has a good police department, a great police Chief in Ron Thomas, a great fire chief in Desmond Fulton, and Elias Diggins is the sheriff.
- The speaker states that cops catch criminals, but the root causes of crime need to be addressed to stop the "never ending pipeline".
- The speaker notes that the budget does not make a commitment to providing the needed funds for after school programming, child care, subsidies for mental health, and support for drug treatment.

Traffic

- The speaker does not believe there are too many people in Denver, but traffic is a "flipping nightmare".
- Unlined neighborhood streets have a speed limit of 20 mph, while lined streets are 25 mph and above.
- The speaker encourages people to call their office if there is a dangerous spot, and they will get the speed cameras out there.
- 90% of the tickets given out are for people from the neighborhood.

Neighborhood Organizations

- The speaker's office, along with Council member Serena Gonzalez Gutierrez, has been collecting opinions on how the city is supporting neighborhood organizations.
- There are two remaining in-person meetings: October 7th in northwest Denver and October 15th at Cook Park Recreation Center from 6 to 8pm.
- More information can be found by Googling "Your city, your voice, Denver".

Other Items

- Pete’s University Park Cafe is closing November 9th after 30 years.
- Harvard Gulch work is being done near Deborah park.
- Virginia Village and Ross Cherry Creek libraries will be open seven days a week.
- Bucktell improvements are proceeding.
- The Y project is off the table.
- Kentro Group has decided not to rezone Belcaro.
- The property at the corner of Colorado Boulevard and Bucktell may be shifting to retail.

Lamont School of Music Tickets

- The new director of the School of Music is giving away free tickets.
- There will be a drawing for six pairs of tickets for faculty performances.
- There are also free tickets to the symphony orchestra, the jazz orchestra, and the wind ensemble.

Quantity

- Speaker dropped some items.
- Speaker asks, "How much do you need? Seven or six."
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