North Park Planning Committee (NPPC)
Urban Design-Project Review Subcommittee Meeting
Minutes: April 7th, 2026 – 6:00 pm
www.northparkplanning.org info@northparkplanning.org

Attendance: Jay Robinson-Duff, Malachi Bielecki, Jason Vance, Johanna Mall, Doug Schueler (virtual), Holden Leslie Bole,
Members of community, in-person: Meghan Traynor, Molly Ryan, Barbara Hanson Forseith
Members of board, virtual: Mark Spitzer

I. Parliamentary Items

Meeting called to order at 6:07 pm.

Motion to table Discussion Item 1 and approve the balance of the agenda passes (Bielecki/Mall/6-0-0).

March 3rd, 2026 minutes approved (Bielecki/Robinson-Duff/6-0-0).

II. Non-Agenda Public Comment, Announcements, Event Notices

Malachi: Flagged a recent KPBS article on housing supply as relevant to the group's work.

Holden: Shared information on the City's bicycle master plan and noted the subcommittee should consider weighing in.

III. Action and Informational Items

a. Action Item 1: Ad-Hoc Group for Scope and Objectives of Subcommittees

Malachi presented on the scope and objectives of the subcommittees, prompting discussion about how responsibilities have overlapped between UDPR and PFT and what a clearer delineation might look like going forward.

Mark noted that a Communications subcommittee exists and that the operating procedures listed on the website may be outdated, raising the question of whether the City has current documentation.

Doug suggested that the Communications subcommittee should be included in any process to redefine scope and objectives.

Meghan sought clarification on who may attend the ad-hoc committee. After discussion, there was consensus that the ad-hoc process should begin after new members are sworn in.

Motion to request that the Chair create an ad-hoc committee to define the scope and objectives of each subcommittee passes (Bielecki/Leslie Bole/6-0-0).

b. Action Item 2: Crosswalk & Stop Sign Policy Input

Jay presented a City survey on stop sign policy, including the current points-based scoring system and the Community Planning Group (CPG) override process. Jay expressed

support for retaining the CPG override and proposed that the subcommittee provide collective input in the form of a letter.

Holden: Recommended transitioning from a points-based system to a “safety first” presumption, citing the issue of latent demand—when it is not safe to walk, people do not walk, which depresses measured pedestrian activity.

Malachi: Shared a letter from community member Kevin Davis expressing frustration with the proliferation of stop signs and advocating for alternative traffic calming measures. Malachi discussed the feasibility and limitations of stop signs as a traffic solution and raised the possibility of lowering the scoring threshold rather than eliminating it.

Holden: Agreed that lowering the threshold could be a workable solution and noted that the current scoring system has frequently been a hindrance even when the community supports stop sign installation—and often praises the results when the CPG override is used.

Barbara: Asked what specifically the city is looking for from the community and suggested that qualitative community input may be more valuable than a purely quantitative approach. Noted that engineers are doing their best but that community members are seeking alternatives.

Jay: Affirmed the importance of engineer involvement and noted that when incentivized correctly, engineers produce good outcomes. Indicated he could draft the letter with Holden rather than convening an additional ad-hoc group.

Motion to write a letter expressing support for crosswalk improvements, the CPG’s ability to override the stop sign scoring system and articulating a long-term vision for a more comprehensive approach to street safety beyond stop signs passes (Robinson-Duff/Bielecki/6-0-0).

c. Discussion Item 1: Bird Park Improvements

Item removed from agenda. Malachi will follow up with Amit and agendize for a future meeting.

d. Discussion Item 2: Solutions for Triangular Traffic Islands: Monroe & Mission

Marc from UHCA (University Heights Community Association) was unable to join due to a missing Zoom link; Malachi sent the link during the meeting for any potential late join.

Holden presented with slides. The site is located in University Heights, north of El Cajon Blvd, east of Park Ave, and north of Texas St—a long diagonal street. The 85th percentile vehicle speed is approximately 35 MPH, well above what is appropriate for a mixed-use neighborhood context.

A local resident previously brought a full intersection redesign request to the PFT subcommittee, and a traffic engineering report was filed, though no action followed. UHCA has been focused on this intersection for some time with an eye toward safety improvements and activating underutilized right-of-way space.

The intersection currently contains two triangular traffic islands. The geometry creates awkward sight lines and ambiguous conditions for both drivers and pedestrians. Daylighting law has removed parking adjacent to the islands due to proximity to the intersection, creating additional available right-of-way. Holden proposed that these islands could be converted into a community plaza or mini-park for University Heights, pointing to the scarcity of public open space in the area and its designation in the North Park Community Plan as a neighborhood center—intended to support civic, cultural, and recreational uses scaled to the immediate neighborhood.

Holden cited comparable projects in Cambridge, MA (a peanut roundabout with pedestrian seating) and Hoboken, NJ (which has achieved zero traffic fatalities over the past seven years through innovative paint and flex post interventions). A low-cost quick-build pilot using painted markings and flexible delineator posts was proposed as a first step.

Malachi: Noted that Marc from UHCA had offered to support the effort through volunteering and fundraising.

Johanna: Suggested developing tiered options ranging from quick-build improvements to more substantial capital investment if funding becomes available. Proposed closing the short Alabama St. segment at that location to create a pedestrian area and adding bulb-outs to slow vehicles. Suggested that the Board Chair reach out to Sam Solis as a first step.

Jason: Emphasized the value of developing a visual concept before outreach, to give stakeholders something concrete to react to.

Holden: Offered to develop some concept options with Jason and UHCA and bring them back to the next UDPR meeting for feedback before broader community distribution.

Jay: Agreed on the importance of building support among key community stakeholders, including UHCA and local businesses such as Mystic Mocha, before advancing any proposal.

The item will return to a future UDPR meeting once Holden and Jason have developed initial concepts.

e. Discussion Item 3: Angled Parking Standards

Jason presented on the City's approach to angled parking in response to ongoing resident requests for more parking. He outlined three configurations: parallel parking (fewest spots per block), forward-in angled parking (approximately double), and 90-degree parking (approximately 2.5x). Both angled and 90-degree configurations create significant safety hazards, particularly for cyclists, because drivers backing out of forward-in stalls cannot see people in the travel lane.

Jason described back-in reverse angle parking (BIRAP) as a superior alternative: drivers reverse into the space, making the backing maneuver more visible to others, and exit by pulling forward with a clear view of the lane. Reverse lights serve as an active warning. Seattle has adopted BIRAP as its standard. North Park already has an example installation on Park Blvd in front of Sprouts.

Jason noted that when the subcommittee has previously requested BIRAP, the City has typically declined to act, preferring to install no angled parking at all rather than the safety-oriented configuration. The City is now returning with another angled parking proposal, and Jason proposed that the subcommittee push back and request BIRAP.

Molly: Asked why residents resist back-in parking. Jason explained that there is a learning curve, though modern backup cameras make it comparable to parallel parking. He compared it to initial public resistance to roundabouts—an education issue more than a practical one.

Doug: Raised a concern about scope and process, noting that the specific location was not on the agenda and was listed as an informational item. Suggested that taking a formal position without giving nearby residents the opportunity to attend raises procedural concerns. Proposed routing the item through the PFT subcommittee to allow proper noticing. Jason indicated he would follow up on the status of a prior BIRAP recommendation from October (Suncrest Dr., near 30th and 32nd St., Howard to Polk).

Motion to extend the meeting by ten minutes to 7:10 pm passes (Bielecki/Leslie Bole/6-0-0).

No formal action taken on angled parking. Item to be agendized at a future PFT meeting to allow proper community input. Concerns expressed about the capacity of PFT to handle this item. Jason, as Chair, may bring action to the full board directly.

IV. Unfinished, New Business & Future Agenda Items:

- Bird Park Improvements: Malachi to follow up with Amit and agendize for a future UDPR meeting.
- Triangular Traffic Islands (Monroe & Mission): Holden to develop concept options with Jason and UHCA; item to return to a future UDPR meeting.
- Lafayette item: A community member has expressed interest. Follow up on email pending.
- Molly asked whether the ad-hoc subcommittee scope process would preclude formation of new subcommittees. Malachi clarified that new subcommittee formation can be part of the ad-hoc conversation.

V. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:08 pm

Next Urban Design-Project Review Subcommittee meeting date: May 5th, 2026

For information about the Urban Design-Project Review Subcommittee please visit northparkplanning.org or contact the Chair, Jay Robinson-Duff, at urbandesign@northparkplanning.org or (203) 964-7388.

**** Subcommittee Membership & Quorum:*** *When all 15 elected NPPC Board Member seats are filled, the maximum total of seated (voting) UD-PR Subcommittee members is 13 (up to 7 elected NPPC Board Members and up to 6 seated North Park community members). To constitute a quorum, a majority of the seated UD-PR Subcommittee members must be elected NPPC Board Members.*

Community Voting Members: *North Park residents and business owners may gain UDPR Subcommittee voting rights by attending three UDPR Subcommittee meetings. Please sign-in on the meeting attendance list and notify the Chair or Vice-Chair if you are attending to gain Subcommittee voting rights.*

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