OVERVIEW

The final Public Open House for the Upper Montclair Stormwater Systems Study was held on April 10, 2018 at the Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church. Approximately 70 residents and community members turned out to celebrate the end of a successful study, provide input on the study outcomes, and learn about the next steps related to each study topic. The meeting included an overview presentation and update by the project team, followed by an open house organized around the outcomes of four community-driven investigations within the basin:

- E. 16th Ave Green Streets Strategy
- Colfax Ave, 14th & Krameria, and Business Improvement District
- Hale Parkway and Severn System
- Community Education and Resources

An additional open house station included the results from the Hale Parkway Focus Area Traffic Study – an independent assessment of traffic and transportation conditions affecting Hale Parkway and related roadway network.

The Upper Montclair project team was joined by representatives from several complementary City and County of Denver projects: Jackson Street Pipe Design, E. 16th Ave Interceptor, and the Neighborhood Planning Initiative (NPI) East Area Planning Team.

Final boards and materials presented at the meeting are available on-line at: www.denvergov.org/uppermontclairbasin
The meeting began with a brief overview presentation from Beth Vogelsang (OV Consulting) and Jennifer Williams (Denver Public Works, Project Manager). The presentation described the study process, basin history, and highlighted a few key outcomes and next steps for each investigation. An informal open house followed the presentation; and attendees were invited to visit each open house station to talk with experts about the investigations and outcomes.

A general description of each open house station and community comments is summarized below:

OPEN HOUSE STATIONS OVERVIEW AND COMMUNITY INPUT

E. 16th Ave Green Streets Strategy

This investigation, generally bounded by Colorado Blvd and Glencoe Street, focuses on small-scale, green infrastructure improvements that can contribute to improved water quality and reduce the severity of localized flooding.

Community conversations and multiple public meetings identified several types of green streets applications that were favored by area residents. Findings from this investigation will inform the development of a refined green streets strategy that includes concept design and cost estimates for green infrastructure design in the area. As this investigation moves into the concept design stage, it will continue to be coordinated with the concurrent E 16th Ave Interceptor project and have additional opportunities for community input.

Key comments and takeaways from the Open House:

- Local residents are eager to implement some of the green streets strategies; this particular area has seen repeated damage over recent years and neighbors are ready for changes.
- Community preferences for intersection bulb-outs and permeable pavement treatments were generally reinforced and confirmed by the participants at the Open House. Several people, though, voiced support for larger scale interventions that protrude more explicitly into the roadway and provide greater water capture volume.
- Most residents were curious about the maintenance responsibilities and capacity of the City to manage these new stormwater assets.
- Some local residents remain frustrated over the recurring damages from summer storms.
- Everyone was very appreciative for the honest, open, and constructive community engagement process. Residents in the immediate area were excited for the next phase of work and pipe project.

Colfax, 14th & Krameria, and BID

This investigation combines two critical focus areas – the E Colfax Corridor and the intersection of 14th Ave & Krameria St -- and includes significant collaboration with the Colfax Mayfair Business Improvement District (BID). While current city planning efforts are taking a more comprehensive look at land use and transportation in this area, the Upper Montclair investigation has focused on providing stormwater specific analyses and recommendations that may help guide future development along the corridor. Recommendations for future program, practices or policy incorporate input from business owners and community members involved with the Colfax Mayfair BID.
Key comments and takeaways from the Open House:

- City should consider increasing water quality requirements or options for development; what else can be done with small size lots?
- City should modify detention requirements for smaller lots; some small residential lots are being developed with a larger footprint and increasing runoff.
- Water quality improvements should be integrated into the streetscape project along Colfax Ave (GO Bond funded project)
- Water quality and/or stormwater detention should be implemented alongside the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project. It would be shortsighted to not leverage this opportunity.
- Water quality and streetscape improvements would also be welcomed along 16th Avenue to enhance the existing bike facility.

Hale Parkway and Severn System

Hale Parkway was identified by the community as an opportunity site in the Upper Montclair Basin early in the study process. The investigation began by identifying the right approach to maximizing this opportunity site. Through four public meetings, several focused stakeholder meetings and numerous neighborhood conversations, community members agreed on a ‘hybrid’ approach to Hale Parkway—managing local stormwater with a conveyance system that relied on both underground pipe improvements and above ground greenway capacity. This area also includes recommendations to improve one of the basin’s most inundated intersections at Severn Place and Jersey Street.

No particular concept for Hale Parkway reconfiguration has been identified as a ‘preferred’ concept, but community input indicates favor for some form of greenway on the north side of the roadway to manage stormwater and improve water quality. Input from all community meetings and conversations will be carried forward into the next phase of work that includes a concept design and cost estimates.

Key comments and takeaways from the Open House:

- Strong support from neighbors about the possibility of leveraging stormwater improvements to create more park space in the area.
- There was specific confirmation and support of the idea of managing stormwater within a greenway along Hale Parkway.
- No particular concerns voiced about reducing Hale Parkway to one travel lane in each direction with turn lanes at intersections. There was a high level of concern over the future volumes of traffic on 8th Avenue and a request to evaluate roadway changes or improvements to 8th Avenue.
- Many attendees liked the idea of transforming Hale Parkway south of 11th into a linear park, but neighbors remained concerned about the increase in traffic along 11th.
- Some attendees expressed a feeling that the audience at this public meeting was not inclusive of, or representative of the younger people who live in the basin.
- Property owners near Severn and Jersey expressed frustration that improvements will likely not reach their area until later in the process; hoping to alleviate the intense flooding in the more
immediate future; understand the idea of creating downstream capacity to drain the Severn and Jersey area.

- Residents were curious about seeing their own property in the FLO-2D flood mapping and discussed the benefit of having this information readily available.
- Many people expressed excitement for moving a design for Hale Parkway forward and asked to be involved in future discussions.
- Several people were first-time attendees and expressed gratitude towards project staff for explaining the history of the study and thinking behind the Hale Parkway investigation.

Results from the Hale Traffic Study were also shared at the Open House.

**Key comments and takeaways from the Open House:**

- Several attendees brought up the importance of pedestrian safety crossing Hale Parkway. The neighborhood north of Hale Parkway would like to be able to use the new amenities being developed south of Hale Parkway.
- Attendees would like us to take a closer look at emergency vehicle routes and impacts as part of the next level of analysis. Hale Parkway was mentioned as a heavily travelled emergency vehicle route.
- Attendees were supportive of a narrower cross section for Hale Parkway especially as it relates to reducing speeding on Hale Parkway.
- Several attendees mentioned that Hale Parkway is not particularly busy for traffic and are supportive of improvements to better utilize the space.
- In terms of traffic congestion, attendees were most concerned with congestion on 8th Avenue and related observations of speeding and aggressive driving on that roadway.

**Community Education and Resources**

This investigation builds on the idea that everyone has a role to play in stormwater management – the City, local businesses, and homeowners alike. Throughout the study, community members were presented with information and resources that could help make their property more resilient to flooding. A community resource handout, available for free, is being finalized with City and project staff.

**Key comments and takeaways from the Open House**

- Residents are looking for more information on flood insurance in this area
- Many residents expressed support and enthusiasm for creating a neighborhood flooding group – an organization to provide input to the City on stormwater planning and disseminate important information to neighborhood residents and businesses.
- Some residents would like to start rain gardens or other similar projects today!