



CITY OF UNIVERSITY PLACE

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University Place chooses historical names for new roads in town center

Drexler Drive and Larson Lane will be the new names for two new roads to the east and west of Bridgeport Way W. The names honor Leopold Frank Drexler and Hjalmar Larson, both early residents of University Place and strong community leaders.

Drexler moved to University Place from Milwaukee with his family in 1901 and built his home at 36th and Bridgeport Way. Drexler's home was used as the Ferndale Station for the streetcar line connecting University Place to Tacoma and Steilacoom in 1904. The streetcar would stop at the Big Bend Ranch at the current site of Charles Wright Academy, and then onto Steilacoom and back to UP.

Larson was a respected hybridizer of rhododendrons who often taught school children about the plants and the process of hybridizing them. He lived on a large piece of property on the west side of Bridgeport Way, across from the Clocktower commercial building is now located. Many of Larson's rhodies are located on the school grounds around the city. Larson had 84 plants named and registered with the American Rhododendron Society.

In choosing the names, the University Place City Council followed its Historic Place Names Policy, which was established in 2001 to honor persons, families, groups, places or events deemed by the Council to be of historic significance. Input was received from the University Place Historical Society, the city's Economic Development Committee and citizens as directed by the policy.

Drexler Drive, which was formerly known as 74th Avenue West, will open for traffic in a few weeks. It runs from 35th Street West to 40th Street West in front of the Public Safety Building and behind UP City Hall. The road was extended behind Homestead Park and the Albertsons grocery store as part of the city's six-year transportation improvement plan. The new road will take some traffic off Bridgeport Way W., but more importantly it will give fire and police emergency responders alternate routes to reach accident scenes or medical aid calls in the city if Bridgeport is blocked.

Larson Lane only exists on paper at this point. The city's six-year transportation improvement plan shows the road running between 35th and 40th streets on the west side of Bridgeport Way W., behind Green Firs an apartment complex and the Coldwell Banker building. A construction timeline has not yet been set for building Larson Lane.

For more information, contact Assistant City Manager Steve Sugg at (253) 460-2527 or ssugg@cityofup.com.