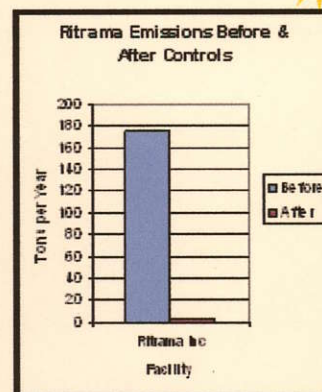
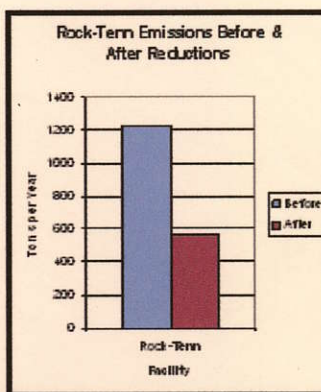


Good Neighbor Agreements

In the beginning of Phase I the Environment Committee set a goal to work collaboratively with local businesses regarding emission reductions. In the past four years, due to the dedicated efforts of staff and the committee, two official *Good Neighbor Agreements* were reached with local industries resulting in significant emission reductions, the last of which, with Rock-Tenn Corporation, reduced emissions by more than 670 tons of solvent (pictured below). Since the signing of the Good Neighbor Agreement we have been actively working with them on a variety of fronts including the third annual Meet 'n Greet at their plant in St. Paul. The Meet 'n Greet is an event the SECIA environment committee organizes for businesses and neighbors to better get to know each other and find out how both can work together better. SECIA published a newsletter titled "Bridges" to more than 600 area businesses highlighting success stories like Rock-Tenn's and inviting them to events like the Meet 'n



Signing of the Rock-Tenn Good Neighbor Agreement which highlights the efforts to reduce over 670 tons of solvent from being released into area neighborhoods from their stacks. Pictured above (foreground) are Justin Eibenholz, Environmental Coordinator and Jack Greenshields Vice-President of operations for Rock-Tenn Corporation. Also pictured (left) is former board president of SECIA Frederik Bethke, and Environment Committee member Miran Chantooni, Jr. The accompanying chart, next page, demonstrates reductions of 55% in emissions.



The first Good Neighbor Agreement was with Ritrama Inc. (April of 2003) and resulted in all Hazardous Air Pollutants (HAP's) being controlled out of their stacks. Including more than 130,000 lbs of Toluene—an environmental toxicant and potent solvent. Notice the dramatic reductions in the chart (above)

Greet. Rock-Tenn and Ritrama (our other "Good Neighbor") are just two of many businesses we have worked with to reduce environmental impacts or encouraged to work more closely with other neighborhoods. Several of the facilities and neighborhoods worked with are outside the area of Southeast. Since air pollution knows no boundaries and very few other neighborhoods have staff dedicated to the environment, we see this type of collaboration as part of the role of the environmental coordinator. These efforts have contributed to the overall environmental health of the City.

Organizing a Community

One of the primary roles of the environmental coordinator is to inform residents of air quality concerns and to organize residents around air quality issues. Of all the efforts the one most notable would be our work on encouraging clean-up of a local coal fired power plant (River-side—Northeast Minneapolis). Xcel Energy responded with what has been titled the **Metro-politan Emission Reduction Project—MERP**. MERP is a \$1 billion proposal presented by Xcel Energy to convert two metro power plants from their coal burning equipment

Quick fact: Local residents have generated over 1,500 public comment letters on air pollution permits

(which dates to the 1940's) to new natural gas fired units and to install modern pollution controls at a slightly newer third plant. Our effective organization and participation in this campaign led to the promised clean-up the Riverside power plant (by 2009) and the largest emission reduction project in Minnesota's history. We helped to pack the basement of a church in Northeast Minneapolis where a Riverside permit meeting was held in November of 2001, hosted by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), demonstrating the will and passion of the community. More than 200 public comment letters were generated from concerned citizens, elected officials, neighborhood organizations, environmental groups and civic groups as a result of that meeting.

Quick fact: *Clean Energy Now! distributed over 1,000 lawn signs, raising the awareness of coal burning issues*

In addition to public comment on the permit, SECIA also organized and co-founded **Clean Energy Now!** a broad coalition of neighborhood and environmental groups working to raise awareness of the dangers of coal burning in the metro. Over 1,000 signs were distributed in this successful lawn sign campaign that generated more than 1,000 letters of comment to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) on the topic. After more than two years



Clean Energy Now! Lawn sign kickoff event April 2003 (left). SECIA was a founding member and played an active lead role in seeing that the Riverside coal fired power plant in Minneapolis get cleaned up. The environmental coordinator (right) addresses the crowd at the event with the stack of the Highbridge power plant (St. Paul) in the background.



of our citizen organizing work, MERP was finally approved by the PUC in December of 2003. These efforts will result in better air quality for generations to come.

Future Air Quality Challenges

SECIA Environmental committee members will continue to seek out new and novel sources of funding to continue this important work. Relationships with businesses take years to create, foster and maintain. Without active work in this arena, and dedicated staff, the livability of Como and surrounding neighborhoods will likely not improve. There are several industries that we have been working with and hope to eventually reach the Good Neighbor Agreement point with them. Additionally, as SE Minneapolis flirts with falling out of attainment for ozone, it will be increasingly important that the public is educated and informed about what can be done to change the current course.

Other Activities in Phase 1

- Worked with PCA to get critical environmental data on-line and notices sent out to a broad list—including permits, and monitoring information (Environmental Data Access).
- Worked with City to provide Air Quality information on-line and create the first City-wide Air Quality study.
- Provided effective comments on numerous permits resulting in improved air quality including large facilities outside the geographic area (e.g. Heartland Tire Burner).
- Helped provide critical input into the newly adopted "Sustainability Plan" for the City of Minneapolis.
- Acted as resource for other neighborhoods who lack environmental staff to address their specific challenges or access needed information and share potential contacts.

Environment: Community Gardening and Greening



The newly opened Gateway Garden, built in response to the 911 Tragedy. Garden volunteers and neighbors gather during a National Night Out Block Party.

SE CIA's Environment Committee and Community Garden Organizer worked diligently over the Phase 1 period to **enhance the overall environmental quality of Como**. SE Como is proud of its efforts in creating neighborhood gateways, nurturing and expanding community gardens, emphasizing public trees, keeping watch over industrial redevelopment and polluted sites, and making improvements to natural green spaces. All of these efforts required active volunteers and significant leveraged dollars. Environmental programs are often a "gateway" to the SE CIA organization, where new community members become aware of the neighborhood's values and then become volunteers and stewards. A few are highlighted here.

SE Como's Urban Forest

SE Como's environmental values were well demonstrated in SE CIA's urban forestry initiatives. Multiple aspects of our Action Plan have addressed Como's trees, through maintaining and expanding a healthy forest canopy. Neighborhood volunteers, NRP funds to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, leveraged grants, and affiliations with TreeTrust, Master Gardeners, and the DNR collectively resulted in tree planting and tree care for every year of our Phase 1 time period.

NRP \$ Spent= \$53,610

Leveraged \$=103,000

Volunteer Hours = 3,700+

of Locations in Como supported = 106

of trees planted = 278

of people trained in tree care = 79

of bird species in Como's green spaces = 67

An integral part of SE CIA's urban forestry programs was the training provided to residents. Grant programs were designed to include training for tree recipients. Workshops were held at neighborhood tree planting events. A number of residents participated in the multi-session TreeKeepers training to become tree stewards (2002). Finally, 15 neighborhood volunteers underwent specific training in order to complete the citizen science iTree survey, which inventoried all the public right-of-way trees in about 25% of the neighborhood – including their species, size and condition (2004).



Carolyn Clemmons and Diane Pederson, two of the many devoted and enthusiastic neighborhood community gardeners, catch-up on neighborhood happenings at the Como Corner Community Garden.

Community Gardening = Community Building in SE Como

Over the Phase 1 period, SECIA has grown its community gardening both by strengthening the support network for pre-existing community gardens and by developing 6 new garden projects. From the vegetable gardens, the youth cutting garden at Van Cleve Park, to the ornamental plantings at the neighborhood gateways, new



Museum Services Community Garden (MSCG) - an award winning example of a new SE Como garden that came to be during SECIA's Phase 1. This was a collaborative project between SECIA, Como Student Community Cooperative (CSCC), and the landowner, Museum Services. This 60 plot allotment garden project was well matched to CSCC both in the demand for organic garden space and in its proximity to the 350-unit University family student housing. This garden provides community building opportunities and a supplemental food source for residents of CSCC. Garden design was a pro-bono plan by Ingram and Assoc. Hawkins Inc provided funds for a garden fence. No where in SE Como is diversity as well demonstrated than at MSCG.



projects have featured low maintenance designs, focused on low inputs and were developed with low costs to the neighborhood association.

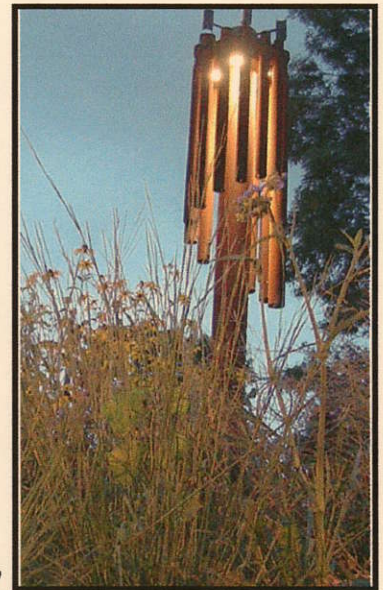
By adding a Community Garden Organizer to the SECIA staff, the neighborhood has increased the sustainability of the volunteer-supported garden

Quick fact: 30 Southeast Como neighborhood gateway signs have been added during NRP Phase I

projects by connecting to resources such as grants, service groups, support programs, and by expanding Como's gardening volunteer network. SECIA not only nurtured community planned plantings, but the organization also cultivated the community of people that tend to these plantings. This is where the outreach role that SECIA's community gardening program shines. We often make contact with SE Como's under-represented populations at Como's gardens, which then leads them into other neighborhood involvement.

Improvements to Neighborhood Natural Areas

SECIA additionally has leveraged volunteers and dollars in efforts to improve green spaces and wetlands within its borders, some of which are highly polluted sites. This goal required working with government agencies (EPA, MPCA, and City of Minneapolis), partnering with other neighborhoods and businesses, and finally securing a \$39,400 Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWMO) grant to make an impact on these goals. With the MWMO grant, SECIA hired The Kestrel Design Group who produced a vegetation survey, a native plant species restoration plan, and



Accolade Gateway sculpture

recommendations for an implementation schedule to return the Bridal Veil Creek watershed to its natural state. The Minnesota Conservation Corps (MCC) has been retained to implement the restoration plan. MCC has already conducted non-native plant remediation at the site as well as laying out and constructing the initial trails. An unexpected, but welcomed effect of the neighborhood's intent to make habitat improvements at Bridal Veil Pond was the MPCA's actions to investigate pollution related to the Valentine Clark site adjoining the pond. Due to the high degree of contamination at this adjoining site, rehabilitation work at Bridal Veil was delayed for more than a year as the MPCA conducted its in-depth investigation. Using the recommended procedures and limitations imposed by the MPCA, SECIA and its partners are now moving forward on reclaiming the entire Bridal Veil Creek site.



Future Challenges

SECIA has leveraged significant volunteer and organizational involvement, donations, and grants towards tree planting, establishing and maintaining community gardens, and other greening activities. This could not be achieved as effectively and consistently without the staff coordinator and technical advisor. Thus, a priority of the SECIA Environment Committee is to continue to find funding support for a part-time Community Garden Organizer position.



Not only does this young Museum Service Community Gardener harvest organic sustainable food for her family, but her family meets other neighbors which leads to a safer community.

Parks, Schools and Transportation



Van Cleve Park was clearly a priority for the entire community. With few natural amenities (lakes, forest, hills, etc.), interest centered on those places that draw people together. SECIA focused on improving the physical features – playgrounds, athletic spaces, green spaces, and the community center, as well as the programs offered to youth and adults at Van Cleve Park.

The neighborhood spent quite a bit of time considering Tuttle School and its needs and discussing the community's access and usage of the School. It quickly became apparent that the grounds of the school had a deleterious affect on the neighborhood. The playground was 40 years old, falling apart, dangerous and not accessible to handicapped or small children. Tuttle also was in need of a new science lab to be in compliance with the School Boards requirements for a K-8 school, a priority for the community if Tuttle was to remain open.

A transportation and thoroughfare study was conducted through Biko Associates to develop strategies to make Como a neighborhood with access to all modes of transportation. Most of the NRP money allocated to transportation was shifted to other strategies as it became apparent that most of SECIA's goals were mirrored by existing or planned City projects.

Van Cleve Park Completion

Van Cleve Park's importance to the community was confirmed by the participants and the commu-

NRP \$ for Tuttle = \$190,015

Total \$ for Tuttle = \$265,000

NRP \$ for Van Cleve Park = \$210,800

Total \$ for Van Cleve Park = \$1,200,000

NRP \$ for Transportation = \$5,200

of Speed Bumps on Talmage Ave = 2

nity at large. Van Cleve Park is a community park, a center for not only a wide range of outdoor and athletic activities, but also for social, community, and educational opportunities. Improving the physical park structure was vital in once again making Van Cleve Park a community asset. To these ends SECIA has collaborated with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board in restoring Van Cleve Park. SECIA has worked on the new wading-pool deck (\$30,600), benches (\$6,800), round picnic tables (\$8,900), signage (\$500) and a new drinking fountain (\$1,500). Another \$69,000 was spent on improvements to the gymnasium floor and on replacing the old playground equipment. These physical improvements have encouraged park usage by the entire community, and has enabled Como to hold a variety of events at the



Joan Menken, former SECIA President and current Board member, speaks during the Rededication of Van Cleve Park. Also pictured City Council President Paul Ostrow, former SECIA President and current Board member Bill Dane, and Park Commissioner Walt Dziedzic, (June, 2000).

park. Our relationship with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and their staff has been an outstanding experience. The work has been focused and productive through discussion and consensus.

Hire a Youth Line Worker

Van Cleve Park was a major center for athletics for many generations. Over the years, Van Cleve lost many youth activities and participants. A lack of direction and coordination, fewer participants and volunteers, and budget issues took their toll. A #1 priority was "to get the kids back in the park". \$87,500 was set aside to hire a Youthline worker. Hiring a youth worker has been an outstanding success story. The park is bustling with activity covering a wide range of interests for our young people. Sports are back with teams for the 8 to 18 year olds (boys and girls), Friday Fun Nights, Movies In The Park, Teen Council (develops new activities), Girls Group, Boys Group, a cutting garden (participants take flowers to seniors), an ever-changing array of activities. The objective was to fund this position in conjunction with the MPRB until it became a permanent line item in the Park Board's budget. In 2002 this position was added to the MPRB budget.



Tuttle Play Ground Improvements



September, 1998, area volunteers and consultants from EFA, Inc. put the finishing touches on the new playground equipment at Tuttle community School.



A primary goal of the Action Plan was to create a safe, accessible playground at Tuttle Community School. The existing playground was inaccessible to people with special needs, was over 40 years old, visually unappealing and unsafe due to exposed bolts on the equipment and general disrepair. SECIA, in conjunction with the Minneapolis Public Schools, BBD Holdings, other area businesses, the Tuttle Parents and Staff Organization, EFA, Inc. and numerous area residents planned and built a new playground for Tuttle. \$50,000 of NRP money turned into a \$120,000 new playground and landscape that brought a sense of pride back to the school as well as to the neighborhood. Tuttle Community School and Como now have a safe, accessible, clean and usable playground for all to enjoy.

Tuttle Science Lab



Tuttle Community School, home of the new Tuttle/Pratt Middle School. Classrooms on the third floor were converted into the new Middle School Science Lab, pictured above.

In 2003, Tuttle Community School joined efforts with Pratt Community School to form the new Tuttle/Pratt Middle School for 7th and 8th grades. The middle school, now housed in the Tuttle Community School building, needed an updated science lab to meet Minneapolis Public School requirements. In conjunction with Hawkins Inc., who generously matched at-large community donations, SECIA donated \$140,000 of its NRP money to build the new science lab and purchase other relevant equipment to get the middle school off the ground.

SEMCOL



SECIA has been a proud sponsor of the Southeast Minneapolis Council on Learning since its inception in 2003. SEMCOL believes that the establishment of a culture of learning in homes and in the community is the foundation for all educational success. We work to demonstrate that it is possible to bring together an entire community to support learning and reading in home, family by family, person by person, especially for families who can benefit from such support. In addition, SEMCOL has worked with Tuttle Community School on events to support literacy, including the donation of several hundred books to the school.

Thoroughfare Study

SECIA commissioned the SE Como Thoroughfare Study, completed in May of 1999, as a tool to use when planning and implementing future improvements in the neighborhood. Created by Biko Associates, Inc., the study has proved to be an invaluable tool in consulting with Public Works, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, the Eastside Bicycle Task Force, and several other transportation projects in the community. This study has also aided SECIA in planning the completion of the Grand Rounds Scenic Byway with the MPRB and the Minnesota legislature. SECIA commissioned the study with \$12,960 in NRP funds with an additional \$1,000 spent on publishing the actual materials.

Speed Bumps on Talmage Ave SE

Neighborhood residents were concerned with the speed of traffic along Talmage Ave SE, especially as it runs adjacent to Tuttle Community School. The Thoroughfare Study also identified this area as in need of attention for safety measures. In 1999 a test was conducted using two speed bumps, between 18th Ave SE and 20th Ave SE, to reduce the speed of the traffic. The study showed that the average speed was reduced to 22 m.p.h., a drastic improvement. Working in conjunction with Tuttle School, the City of Minneapolis, Public Works, the Department of Transportation, SECIA funded

(\$4,500) the permanent placement of two speed bumps on Talmage. The traffic calming measure has been well received by the neighborhood and has increased the safety of Tuttle Community School.



The Tuttle School is a safer place thanks to the speed bumps installed along Talmage Ave. SE.

Community



NRP \$ Spent = \$484,902

Leveraged = \$160,067

of Community Events = over 75!

The Como neighborhood has always been a vital residential, commercial and industrial hub in SE Minneapolis. One of the main components of the NRP Phase I Action Plan was to retain, build, and strengthen the services, programs and character of the neighborhood. This has taken many forms, including the establishment of a neighborhood office and dedicated staff, offering commercial business grants for exterior improvements, hosting and sponsoring numerous community events, establishing a multiple media communications network, cataloging and celebrating Como's rich history, and working with local law enforcement and city departments to ensure the continued safety and livability of the community as a whole.



The Como Cookout brings the community together: long time residents, University of Minnesota students, business owners and neighborhood organizations. SECIA has continually sharpened its focus on the neighborhood's underserved populations. Events like the Como Cookout, outreach efforts such as Bagel Give-aways and SECIA's Community Gardening and Greening program, are designed to increase a sense of community. After visiting the balloon animal exhibit, these neighborhood residents pay a visit to the 2004 Como Cookout's resource table to discover the multitude of programs and activities available in SE Como.

Commercial Matching Grants Program

NRP \$ Spent = \$53,620

Total Cost = \$173,116

Funds leveraged = \$119,496

Outcomes= 15 businesses have been improved

SECIA has supported local neighborhood businesses primarily through our Commercial Matching Grants Program in partnership with the Minneapolis Community Development Agency. The program is designed to help offset the costs to commercial property owners in making exterior improvements,



East River Market, a new Asian neighborhood deli on the corner of Hennepin Ave SE and 15th Ave SE, received a matching grant from SECIA for their new sign.

such as new and improved signage, building restoration and stabilization, improving the "curb appeal" of the businesses, replacing masonry work, windows, doors, lighting and parking lot resurfacing. Each property was eligible to receive up to \$5,000 in matching funds in a one-to-one matching format. As of May, 2005, this program

has spent \$53,620 in NRP funds and leveraged an additional \$119,496 in matching funds from the local business community. The availability of these funds have been at least partially responsible for the opening of a new Asian grocery market and a neighborhood coffee shop scheduled to open in the summer of 2005. 15 businesses have received grants through May of 2005.

Community Events

NRP \$ Spent = still in progress

Total Cost = still in progress

Attendees = still in progress

Since the Como neighborhood has a high turnover of its residents each year, neighborhood events play an important role in allowing new and old neighbors to become acquainted and form new friendships. These events also introduce new residents to the neighborhood association, leading to new volunteers and stronger connections between the community and SECIA.



An entertainer from Clown Town USA works on a balloon animal during the 2004 Como Cookout.

The annual Como Cookout and community garage sales each September have become signature events for the neighborhood. The first Cookout in 2003 attracted over 300 neighbors; attendance for the second one topped 500. Information booths detailing local businesses and community programs are intermingled with face-painting stations and tomato-tasting exhibits to create a vibrant



community gathering. This event would not be possible without the support of Van Cleve Park, the University of Minnesota offices of University Relations and Student and Community Relations.

Each spring, we sponsor a Como Cleanup event that brings neighbors together to go out and pick-up litter on the streets. Area businesses, including Hawkins Chemical and Kohl & Madden Printing, co-sponsor these cleanups. The annual attendance ranges from 30-45 community members, with many residents returning year after year to not only clean up their community, but to meet their new neighbors as well.

Communications

NRP \$ Spent = \$32,329

Outcomes = 62 issues of *Comotion*, over 100 Como Tidbits, and a single day high of over 1,700 website "hits" in May, 2005



Welcome page of the SECIA website, www.secomo.org

SECIA has developed three main ways to communicate with Como neighbors: the *Comotion* newsletter, the *Como Tidbits* e-newsletter, and our website - www.secomo.org. Since 1996, we have sent out 62 issues of the *Comotion* newsletter to all 2500 residences in the neighborhood. It began as a quarterly publication and was switched to monthly in March of 2001 to allow us to share more infor-