

**COLUMBIA PARK NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSOCIATION**

**NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PROGRAM
PHASE I**

REVIEW

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NRP PHASE I REVIEW**

OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN

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OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN

"Columbia Park residents will be actively involved in maintaining the quality of neighborhood housing and the safety of the residents, while pursuing increased accessibility to Columbia Park."

This is the vision statement of the Columbia Park Neighborhood Action Plan, Phase I, which was approved in 1996. Did we meet our goals? A seven member task force was formed to review the plan. Two members had been part of the team that wrote the neighborhood's participation agreement. Four had served on focus groups to determine the needs, goals, and actions in NRP Phase I; two were chairs of those focus groups. A past community organizer and the current community organizer were both on the committee. The group reviewed housing surveys which were returned by 31 of the 90 residents who received grants for exterior improvements. The task force asked for comments in the October 2000 issue of the *Columbia Park Neighborhood News* which was delivered to every home in the Columbia Park Neighborhood. The review was on the agenda at the Columbia Park Neighborhood Board Meeting held in November, 2000. And the task force considered their own observations and the comments they had heard from neighbors throughout the past four years.

There are many significant achievements that Columbia Park Neighborhood can attribute to the Neighborhood Revitalization Program. Ninety homes made exterior improvements, maintaining the quality of neighborhood housing. Many residents commented that they would not have done the work without the help of the matching grants. This has improved the appearance of the neighborhood. It is now evident that people take pride in living in this Minneapolis neighborhood.

Sidewalks where there were none, a three way stop sign at a previously uncontrolled intersection, and a "No Turn on Red" sign at a five street intersection increase the safety for residents. Another intersection will be improved in 2002 with cooperation from other neighborhoods and the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

There is increased accessibility to Columbia Park. Two rooms at Columbia Park Manor (Columbia Golf Course) were renovated for community use through the NRP process. The neighborhood now has a place to meet within their neighborhood boundaries. Before 1996 most neighborhood meetings were held at Audubon Neighborhood Center or Waite Park Community Center, both outside of our neighborhood. Classes and community events are also now held at Columbia Park Manor, giving residents a greater sense of belonging to a community. The Columbia Park playground was renovated, and with a partnership between the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB),

Metropolis Rugby, the neighborhood association, and the State of Minnesota, a rugby/ soccer field was included. The legislature provided a Youth Initiative Grant to help fund the field. A change in the location of the play equipment and greater use of the recreation space because of new equipment and the new field has increased the safety for parents and grandparents bringing their children to the park to play. The recreation space is much busier than it was five years ago.

A Gateway and gathering place was built in the neighborhood with a grant from the Minneapolis Arts Commission. And while this was not an NRP project, it was the neighborhood's involvement with NRP that gave us the wherewithal to apply for the grant and follow it through to completion. This gateway includes community gardens, which further enrich the community.

The most significant achievements of NRP PHASE I are not the tangible ones. While the housing, park, gateway and infrastructure improvements do much to enhance our neighborhood the real benefits are the sense of community and pride in community that residents exhibit now.

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PROGRESS REPORT

HOUSING PROGRAM

GOAL 1:

Encourage consistent upkeep and maintenance of homes within the Columbia Park Neighborhood.

OBJECTIVE A:

Implement a home improvement program for exterior improvements to single family homes and multiple dwellings (not to exceed 4 units).

FUND:

\$250,000 assigned to this NRP-CPNA project.

TIME FRAME:

1996-1999

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

Columbia Park Neighborhood Association (CPNA) is making available \$200,000 of NRP funds that have been designated for exterior home improvements in the Columbia Park Neighborhood. Columbia Park's Neighborhood Vision is that "Columbia Park residents will be actively involved in maintaining the quality of neighborhood housing..."

The CPNA Home Improvement Grant Program will consist of two pools. Pool 1 will be a matching grant program with a 1:1 ratio. The maximum NRP grant amount is \$2000. Total NRP funds set aside for Pool 1 are \$160,000.

Pool 2 will be an outright grant program based on low income eligibility. The maximum NRP grant amount is \$4000. Total NRP funds set aside for Pool 2 are \$40,000.

The types of exterior improvements that will be considered for this program are those that will:

- . IMPROVE THE EXTERIOR OF THE PROPERTY'S STRUCTURES
- . REDUCE LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE & IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY
- . IMPROVE HANDICAP ACCESS
- . INCREASE THE VISIBLE SAFETY OF THE PROPERTY

The CPNA Home Improvement Grant Program is a repair, renovation, new construction and replacement program that focuses on exterior rehabilitation or improvements.

Eligible projects include but are not limited to:

- . PAINTING/SIDING, GARAGES, TRIM, FENCES
- . STRUCTURAL AND FOUNDATION PROBLEMS:
(GRADING IF NECESSARY)
- . STUCCO, RE-STUCCO
- . SIDING: INSTALL-NEW/REPAIR/REPLACEMENT
- . DOORS, WINDOWS: INSTALL-NEW/REPLACE/REPAIR
- . ROOF: REPLACEMENT/REPAIR
- . DRIVEWAY, SIDEWALK, STEPS: INSTALL-NEW/
REPLACE/REPAIR
- . GARAGE: NEW CONSTRUCTION/REPAIR/REPLACEMENT
- . RETAINING WALLS: NEW CONSTRUCTION/REPAIR/REPLACE
- . SAFETY LIGHTING: INSTALL-NEW/REPLACE/REPAIR
- . DECKS, PORCHES: NEW CONSTRUCTION/REPAIR/REPLACE
- . TREE REMOVAL

Projects NOT ELIGIBLE include recreation or luxury projects (pools, playground equipment, saunas, whirlpools, gazebos, landscaping except as required by city code, alarm systems, etc.).

All eligible improvements must be performed by contractors who are licensed by the City of Minneapolis.

OUTCOMES:

The CPNA housing program did the obvious. Improvements to 86 homes covered a wide variety of projects with roofs, siding and windows the major choices. The effect this improvement activity had on next door neighbors was these questions: "How did you get that grant?" "Did you REALLY get money from the city that you don't have to pay back?" "How can I get a grant like that?" "I really need to fix my home too." When residents saw neighbors improving their properties it inspired others to make improvements without a grant, like a domino effect. The sound of hammers pounding and large dumpsters in front of homes said "This is a neighborhood worth fixing up. We are proud of where we live and we want to stay here." Today as we enter the second phase of NRP neighbors have no trouble answering the question, "How can I get a grant like that?" Most neighbors are now aware that they live in a neighborhood called Columbia Park, that they have representation through the CPNA board and that a similar program coming soon could benefit them. The housing component brought a sense that "We are a community" better than any other project we did under the first ten years of NRP.

KEY COMPONENTS:

Greater Minneapolis Metropolitan Housing Corporation (GMMHC), Northeast Resource Center (administered the program).

Matching money paid by neighborhood residents totaled \$126,943.86 while actual grant money given out totaled \$198,035.69.

FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN:

\$225,000 NRP-CPNA Housing Program.

\$20,000 - GMMHC to administer the program.

\$1000 - Mailings, postage, paperwork.

\$323.78 to CPNA to cover printing, postage.

\$326.00 pd to CPNA for housing related costs to promote program and assist with mailings.

\$105.56 for final survey

\$244.66 surplus returned to CPNA-NRP Housing Fund for Phase II use.

\$4000 of unused funds for administration costs moved to CPNA Park fund.

\$1000 - Columbia Manor Improvements

\$3000 - Columbia Park Classes and Programming

\$200,000 - Total actual grant fund.

\$198,035.19 - grant money dispersed to neighbors.

\$1964.81 - unused program funds returned to CPNA-NRP Housing Fund for Phase II use.

(\$146.99 - interest generated over length of program added to CPNA-NRP Housing Fund for Phase II use.)

PARK IMPROVEMENTS: RECREATION

GOAL 1:

Encourage and enhance the use of Columbia Park by neighborhood residents.

OBJECTIVE A:

Upgrade the recreation space at Columbia Park - including improvements to the playground, nearby fields and parking areas.

FUND:

\$142,000 assigned to this NRP-CPNA project.

TIME FRAME:

1997-1999

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

Columbia Park Neighborhood Association will work with the Minneapolis Park Board to redesign the recreation space at Columbia Park for use by neighborhood children and other residents. Elements to be included where possible are:

Install new playground equipment, resurface the tennis courts, improve nearby fields, install a junior softball field, improve lighting, install a 911 phone, and improve pathways.

OUTCOMES:

Columbia Park Recreation Area now includes new playground equipment covering preschool through middle school age levels, a half basketball court, a junior softball field, a rugby/soccer field, and a big red slide! Locating the equipment closer to the parking area offers visibility and invites all who pass to come and play! Numerous rugby activities have opened the park to use by those from other states and countries while the presence of adults in the recreation area increases safety. What once was seen as a unsafe corner of Columbia Park now vibrates with community life and activity.

KEY COMPONENTS:

This project truly reflected community in action. It was a combination of the efforts of the Columbia Park Neighborhood Association, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, the State of Minnesota, Councilman Joe Biernat and the Greater Metropolis Rugby Football Club.

FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN:

\$142,000 NRP - CPNA Park Improvement fund.

\$100,000 - MPRB.

\$70,000 - Minnesota Youth Initiative Grant.

\$\$ - ongoing maintenance funds - Greater Metropolis Rugby Football Club.

COLUMBIA PARK MANOR PROGRAMMING

GOAL 1:

Encourage and enhance the use of Columbia Park by neighborhood residents.

OBJECTIVE B:

Undertake a pilot program expansion at the Columbia Park Manor--adapting underutilized space for park programming, meetings and other neighborhood events.

FUND:

\$3000 assigned to this NRP-CPNA project, from unused housing administration funds.

TIME FRAME:

1997-ongoing

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

The neighborhood will allocate NRP funds for the MPRB program expansion at the Columbia Manor site. This will include park staffing, recreation supplies and equipment. There are no organized park program activities at Columbia Manor for neighborhood residents.

OUTCOMES:

After a very shaky start, class attendance at the Columbia Park Manor and park has steadily increased. Through the efforts of CPNA, Waite Park Community Center and Columbia Park staff we have been able to offer a wide range of classes never before done in this building. In a given year neighbors can take cross country ski lessons, learn Tai Chi or attend a craft class. The building now resonates with the sound of many new voices bringing neighbors together for more than voting or golf.

KEY COMPONENTS:

CPNA staff and task force members, Columbia Park Manor staff, Waite Park Community Center staff, and MPRB.

FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN:

An agreement was reached with the MPRB to assign an account to CPNA where all profits from classes and activities and all expenses would be paid out of the initial \$3000. The fund will last as long as profits are generated by the classes.

COMMUNITY ROOMS AT COLUMBIA PARK MANOR

GOAL 1:

Encourage and enhance the use of Columbia Park by neighborhood residents.

OBJECTIVE B:

Undertake ...expansion at the Columbia Park Manor--adapting underutilized space for park programming, meetings and other neighborhood events.

STRATEGY 1:

Currently, due to scheduling and security restrictions at the Manor, neighborhood residents must go to Audubon Park to take part in park programs or to hold regular neighborhood meetings. Through a pilot program designed to expand neighborhood use of the Manor, the CPNA will work with the Park Board to develop a schedule and procedures for neighborhood access to the building, and to make improvements to underutilized rooms (such as the old caretaker's apartment) for use as meeting, program and storage space.

FUND:

\$20,000 assigned to this NRP-CPNA project.

TIME FRAME:

Two community rooms finished in 1998.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

The intent of this program was to create a space within the Columbia Park Manor for neighborhood activities to take place. This is the only public building in the entire Columbia Park neighborhood.

OUTCOMES:

What once was an unused caretaker's apartment filled with dusty, broken equipment and cracked plaster became two bright community rooms plus new offices for park recreation staff. On a summers day golfers relax in the clubhouse while above them a CPNA board meeting takes place with recreation staff busy right down the hall. In winter, youth come off the hills to get a hot cup of chocolate while neighbors learn the fine art of Tai Chi upstairs. In a community that had to go to other neighborhoods to meet, the Columbia Park Neighborhood in conjunction with the MPRB turned underutilized space in a public building into space now frequented by a wide range of people. Neighbors once went to this building only to vote or play golf. It now welcomes all segments of public life and gives the Columbia Park Neighborhood a place to call home. It has become the heart of this community.

KEY COMPONENTS:

MPRB, CPNA task force and staff, Waite Park recreation staff, Columbia Park Manor staff, Minneapolis Community Education and the *Northeaster* newspaper - activity page.

FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN:

The MPRB paid for the remodeling. CPNA - \$1000 for furniture, supplies.

CARGILL SITE IMPROVEMENTS

GOAL 2:

Improve the appearance and use of public open space to reduce blight and make the neighborhood a more welcoming place for residents and visitors.

OBJECTIVE A:

Create ways to better utilize the Cargill Site as a green space and neighborhood gateway. (The Cargill site is the property vacated by *Cargill Inc.*. It is a parcel on the southeast corner of the intersection of University Avenue NE and 37th Avenue NE.)

FUND:

\$6000 assigned to this NRP-CPNA project.

TIMEFRAME:

1998 - ongoing.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

The CPNA will work with the MPRB, Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority and the Canadian Pacific Railroad to determine the long term feasibility of establishing a public park at the Cargill site. Currently, the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority and Canadian Pacific Railways (CPR) own the site. It is being held for light rail use. In addition the creation of a public Gateway to both Columbia Park Neighborhood and the City of Minneapolis will be pursued.

OUTCOMES:

The CPNA pursued and won a Minneapolis Arts Commission Grant for the creation of a Gateway at the Cargill site. A water tower mimicking those near the CPR roundhouse on Central Avenue provides water to 11 community garden plots. A small train shed covers a picnic table while a wheat bench allows neighbors to sit and enjoy the Minneapolis downtown skyline. Watching over all is a bronze hawk atop the water tower, a powerful symbol of the prairie which the Gateway honors. In the southeast corner of the Cargill site plans are underway for an off-leash dog area run by the MPRB in conjunction with Responsible Owners of Manageable Pets (ROMP). Flowering crab trees that line the site along 37th Avenue NE were provided by CPNA and Hennepin County while Tree Trust provided the labor to plant the trees. Maintenance of the site is done through Hennepin County's community service program. In the near future a Gateway sign will grace University Avenue announcing to all, "Welcome to Columbia Park Neighborhood, Gateway to Minneapolis." Lastly, CPNA has become part of the Adopt a Garbage Can program which keeps the site clean. What once was rubble and weeds now invites all to come and garden, rest, and enjoy this corner of our community.

KEY COMPONENTS:

CPNA, ROMP, Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority, Canadian Pacific Railway, Hennepin County Community Service Program, Tree Trust, Minneapolis Arts Commission, the Minneapolis Adopt a Garbage Can Program and the MN Dot Partnership Program. The Metropolis Rugby Football Club has agreed to help in installing the landscaping around the new sign.. The Gateway artists are Jeffrey Kalstrom and Ann Klefstad.

FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN:

The CPNA will use the \$6000 to pay for the sign on University Avenue in the near future. \$2000 were transferred from unused funds from the Community Rooms project to pay for supplies at the site, especially those needed for the community gardens. \$\$2326.76 of unused contingency funds from Pedestrian and Traffic Safety were transferred to provide funds for the purchase of crab apple trees. Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority provided major funds to support these projects and the Minneapolis Arts Commission Grant provided \$50,000 to the Gateway Artists. The MN Dot Partnership Program will provide the cost of landscaping materials and the services of a MN Dot landscaper to create and beautify the new welcome sign on University Avenue.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

GOAL 1:

Increase pedestrian and traffic safety in the neighborhood.

OBJECTIVE A:

Install sidewalks where needed, to improve the safety and movement of pedestrians.

FUND:

\$20,000 assigned to the NRP-CPNA project.

\$15,000 contingency fund.

TIME FRAME:

1996 -1997

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

Install sidewalks along 5th Street NE and 37th Avenue NE... to improve the safety and movement of pedestrians.

OUTCOMES:

Existing in the northwest corner of Columbia Park neighborhood is a small concentration of rental housing in the form of double bungalows. This end of the neighborhood never had sidewalks installed. A high concentration of children playing along a busy street created a dangerous situation and culminated in a car accident involving a child. Installation of new sidewalks gave children a safe place to play, adults access to the nearest bus stop and families an easy walk to the only corner grocery store in the neighborhood. For the rest of the neighborhood it completed a cement walking grid that united the two sides of our neighborhood across University Avenue NE and gave all residents an enjoyable walk to the Minneapolis Grand Round Path system.

KEY COMPONENTS:

CPNA, City of Minneapolis Public Works Department, & Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority.

FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN:

\$35,000 NRP - CPNA Pedestrian and Traffic Safety funds.

\$8,800 - Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority.

Total project cost: \$41,463.24 .

Unused funds of \$2336.76 were assigned to Parks and Open space for use at the Cargill Site.

TRAFFIC SAFETY

GOAL 1:

Increase pedestrian and traffic safety in the neighborhood.

OBJECTIVE B:

Improve pedestrian and automobile safety in the neighborhood by making improvements to key intersections.

FUND:

\$15,000 assigned to this NRP-CPNA project.

TIME FRAME:

1995 - 2002

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

CPNA proposes installation of a "No Turn on Red" sign on the southwest corner at the intersection of 37th Avenue NE, Central Avenue NE and Reservoir Boulevard. Heavy traffic covering four lanes combined with a five way intersection causes blind spots for drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists alike.

CPNA and the Minneapolis Public Works Department are proposing traffic safety measures to the intersection at St Anthony Parkway and Central Avenue NE. Improvements suggested are new signals, turn bays, and curbing and paving of the intersection.

CPNA will work with the MPRB to create a 3 way stop sign at the intersection of St Anthony Parkway, 5th Street NE and St Anthony Boulevard NE. This will allow bicyclists and pedestrians to follow the Minneapolis Parks Grand Round path system in safety.

OUTCOMES:

After several meetings between the Columbia Park Neighborhood and the City of Columbia Heights, the City of Columbia Heights gave approval for the installation of the "No Turn on Red" sign. The sign immediately created a much safer intersection for the multiple users of this corner. Beyond that it afforded the CPNA a closer link with Columbia Heights, the city which it shares a border with. Doors of communication were opened for the future.

The intersection improvements at St Anthony Parkway have become part of a complete commercial corridor improvement plan for Central Avenue NE. Our birdseye view of one intersection in our neighborhood led us to collaborate with a wide array of interested parties to develop a much larger plan that will include such amendments as new landscaping, better recreational paths for park users and bus bays to keep traffic flowing.

The proverbial mustard seed has now turned into a mountain of improvements that will benefit over five northeast neighborhoods.

The three way stop sign at the west end of Columbia Park was an immediate success. Bicyclists use this intersection to access the Minneapolis Park Grand Round trail and no longer wait for endless cars to pass while drivers are alerted to the presence of pedestrians by coming to a stop and looking in all directions.

KEY COMPONENTS:

“No Turn on Red”; CPNA, the Minneapolis Public Works department and the City of Columbia Heights. The intersection of St Anthony Parkway and Central Avenue NE improvements will include Columbia Park and Audubon neighborhoods, the City of Minneapolis Public Works and Planning Departments, MN DOT and the Central Avenue “Mainstreet” improvement program.

The three way stop sign included CPNA and the MPRB.

FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN:

The “No Turn on Red” was paid for by the City of Columbia Heights.

CPNA will contribute \$15,000 of NRP - CPNA Pedestrian and Traffic Safety funds to the improvement of the intersection at St Anthony Parkway and Central Avenue NE.

The three way stop sign project was paid for by the MPRB.

**COLUMBIA PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
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CONCLUSION

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Columbia Park Neighborhood has changed for the better since the Phase I plan was written and implemented. The most significant changes are not the new playground and rugby field, not the rooms at the park building, not the safer sidewalks and intersections, not the 90 homes that look better because of exterior improvements. All of these make the community a good place to live and raise children, and likely contribute to the increased value of our homes. But the biggest benefit, in the eyes of the task force, and a comment made time and again by members of the neighborhood, is that Columbia Park is now perceived as a community. University Avenue divides the neighborhood, and before NRP people on the west side of the division called themselves Hi-View. And many people who lived on either side of the neighborhood had no idea they lived in a neighborhood called Columbia Park. And while it is true today that some residents don't know the name, most residents now identify themselves as members of Columbia Park Neighborhood. Several of the ten positions on the Columbia Park Neighborhood Board went unfilled for the first six years we were a neighborhood organization. Now we have more people wanting to serve than we have members on the board. We have people attending board meetings when they first purchase a home within our boundaries because they already know there is a Columbia Park Neighborhood Association. And board members represent the whole neighborhood, where at one time they all lived within a seven square block area.

We have forged strong partnerships through our involvement in the NRP process. Agencies and organizations we have worked with include Minneapolis Public Works, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Greater Minneapolis Metropolitan Housing Corporation, Metropolis Rugby, the Minneapolis Arts Commission, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the *Northeaster* newspaper, and of course the Minneapolis Community Development Agency and the Neighborhood Revitalization Program. We have good working relationships with our City Councilman Joe Biernat and neighboring City Councilman Paul Ostrow. We also have stronger partnerships with other northeast Minneapolis neighborhoods, and in particular, with Holland and Waite Park Neighborhoods. Having established these relationships will serve us well in NRP Phase II and in other future neighborhood endeavors.

Again, Columbia Park Neighborhood is a good place to live and raise a family. The Neighborhood Revitalization Program gave us the opportunity to maintain our housing and improve our parks and infrastructure. Our involvement with NRP PHASE I has strengthened our community.

APPENDIX

HOUSING PROGRAM

- 1) "Home Improvement Projects",
Columbia Park Neighborhood News, November 1996, p. 2
- 2) "31 Residents Return Housing Survey",
Columbia Park Neighborhood News, October 2000, p. 5
- 3) Letter from Columbia Park resident

PARK IMPROVEMENTS: RECREATION

- 1) "Columbia Park Recreation Area Renovations Underway",
Columbia Park Neighborhood News, September 1997, p. 2
- 2) "Grand Opening Celebration: Columbia Park Playground",
Columbia Park Neighborhood News, October, 1998, pp. 1-5
- 3) "Rugby Comes to Northeast",
Northeaster, September 8, 1998, p. 20
- 4) Letter from Columbia Park resident

COLUMBIA PARK MANOR PROGRAMMING

- 1) Photo: "...Tiny Boxes' Class at Columbia Manor..." and Class Schedule
Columbia Park Neighborhood News, November 1996, p. 1
- 2) "Winter Party at Columbia Golf Manor",
Columbia Park Neighborhood News, March 1997, p. 2
- 3) "Spring Programs at Columbia Manor", and photo of cross county ski class
Columbia Park Neighborhood News, March 1997, p. 2
- 4) "Winter Events at Columbia Manor",
Columbia Park Neighborhood News, January 2000, p. 1

COMMUNITY ROOMS AT COLUMBIA MANOR

- 1) Photos of the community rooms

CARGILL SITE IMPROVEMENTS

- 1) "Gateway Design Chosen,"
Columbia Park Neighborhood News, October 1998, p. 1
- 2) Gateway Photos and "Gateway Community Garden Policies Defined",
Columbia Park Neighborhood News, January 2000, p. 2
- 3) "Gateway Grand Opening,"
Columbia Park Neighborhood News, October 2000, p. 1
- 4) "Welcome Sign Winner",
Columbia Park Neighborhood News, October 2000, p. 2

APPENDIX:

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

- 1) Photos of new sidewalks

TRAFFIC SAFETY

- 1) Photo of 3 way stop sign

Columbia Park Neighborhood News, August 1995, p. 2

- 2) "No Turn on Red" Sign Stays!"

Columbia Park Neighborhood News, November 1997, p. 3

- 3) Photos of intersections