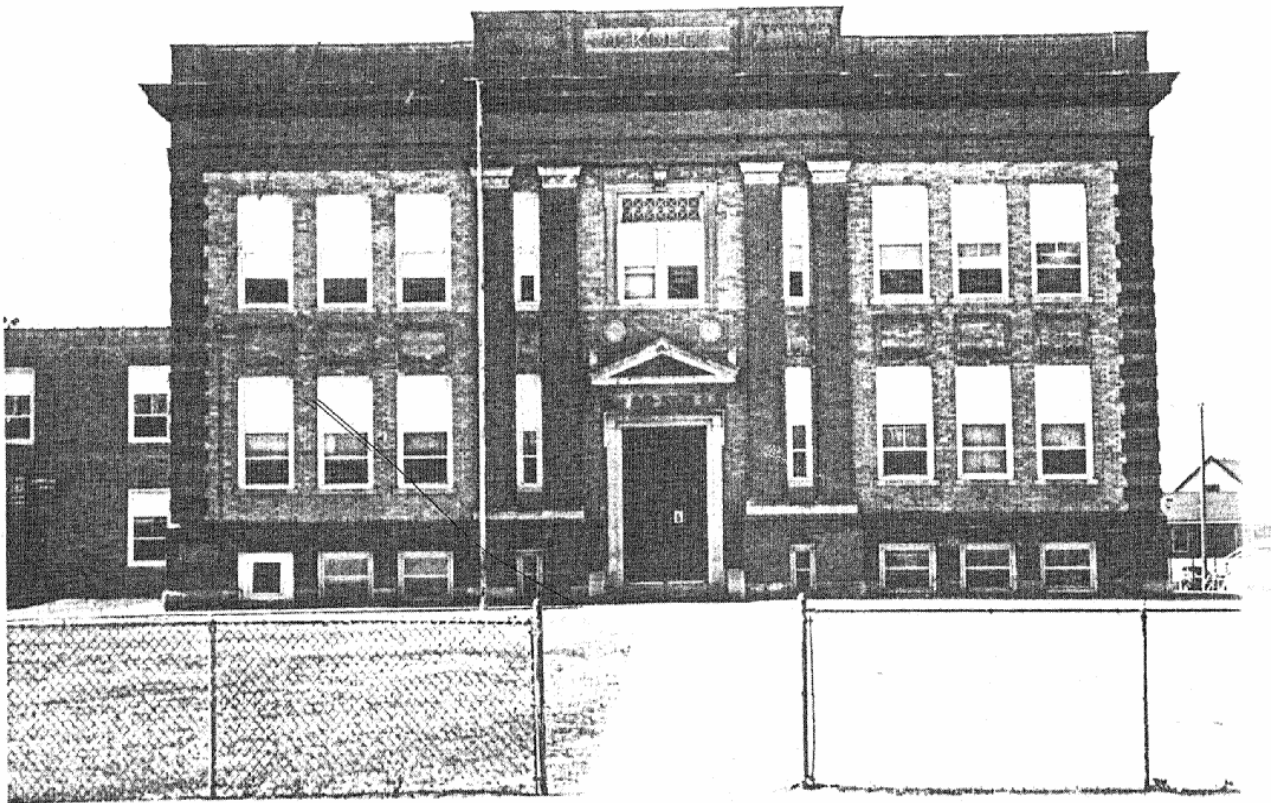


A Des Moines Neighborhood

COLUMBUS PARK

Action Plan for a Neighborhood Project Area



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: The Columbus Park Neighbors, the Neighborhood Advisory Board, the City of Des Moines Plan and Zoning Commission, and the City of Des Moines Departments of Planning and Housing Community Services.

FEBRUARY, 1991

***COLUMBUS PARK
NEIGHBORHOOD
ACTION PLAN***

INTRODUCTION

Essential to the success of any neighborhood revitalization program is the participation of the area residents in the actual planning process. Mounting concern about deteriorating housing and the spread of decline in inner-city neighborhoods prompted the City of Des Moines to adopt a unique revitalization program based on neighborhood planning.

The Housing Improvement and Neighborhood Revitalization Program proposed by the consulting firm of Stockard and Engler, Inc., was approved in February, 1990, by the Des Moines City Council and the Polk County Board of Supervisors. As recommended in this revitalization program, the County and the City have combined with Des Moines business leaders to form a public/private partnership that addresses critical housing issues within the metropolitan area. During a three year demonstration

period specific neighborhoods will be selected annually for inclusion in the intensive neighborhood planning process. Within the selected neighborhoods, project areas of about 6 to 12 blocks in size are targeted for concentrated revitalization activities. The neighborhood planning process relies on resident groups to identify the critical neighborhood issues in their area. Technical assistance and planning coordination is provided by a planning team headed by staff from the Des Moines City Planning Department. The planning team works in conjunction with the neighborhood group to develop appropriate goals and a feasible action plan. These neighborhood action plans then become the basic components that activate the entire structure of the new revitalization program. This document is the result of just such a planning process.

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

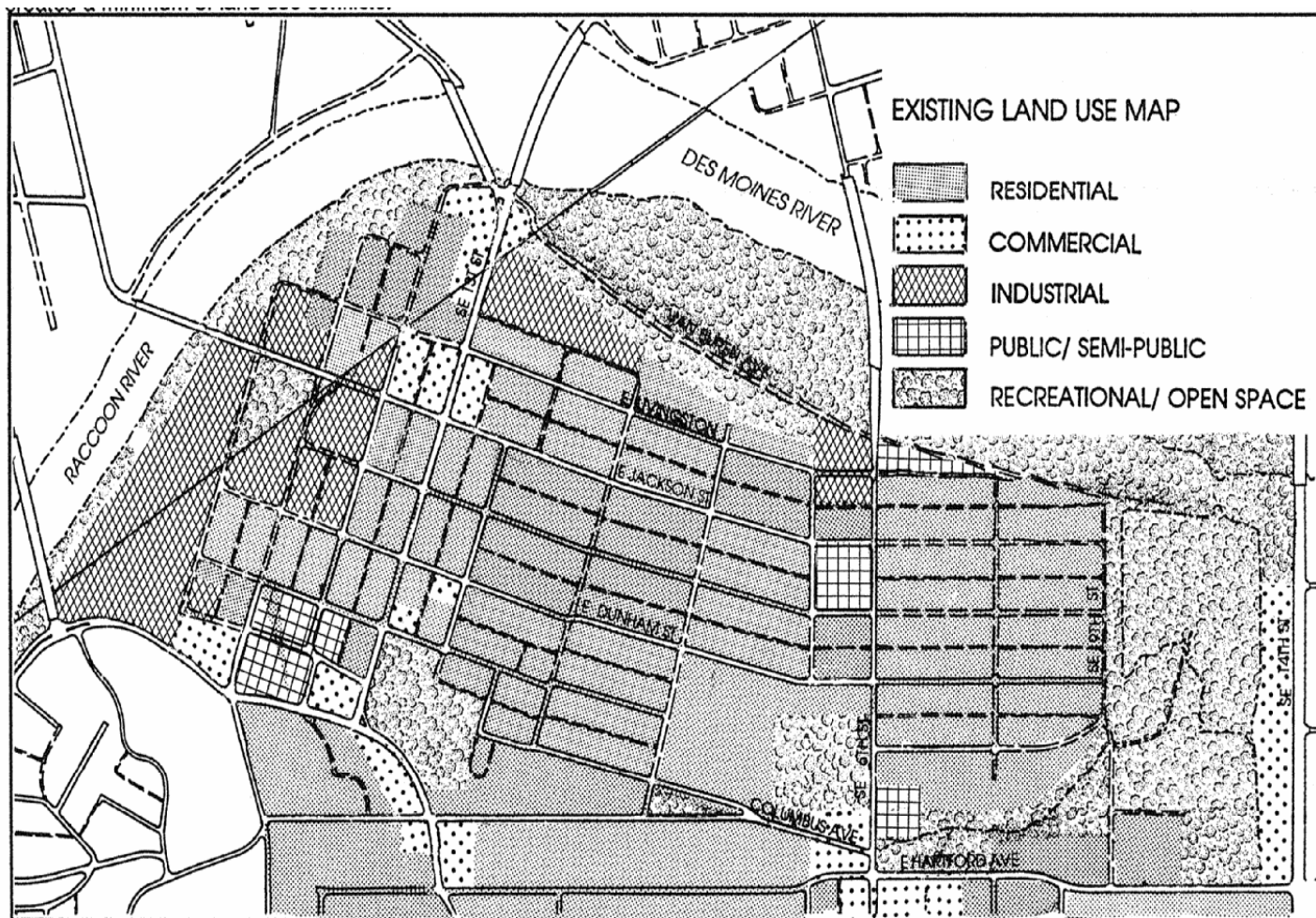
The Columbus Park Neighborhood, on Des Moines' southside, has a unique history in the city of Des Moines. Land south of the Raccoon River was the last portion of original Des Moines to be fully developed for residential use. In the middle of the southside area was the immigrant village of Sevastopol whose boundaries were similar to the current Columbus Park Neighborhood. Sevastopol began as a Dutch and German village that supported its own brewery, a Methodist Episcopal Church, and a four-grade elementary school. By 1877, Sevastopol was incorporated into Des Moines, but was still identified as a separate entity on city maps as late as 1920. Many of the people who lived within the Sevastopol area worked at the nearby coal mines and brickyards. Immigrant groups who arrived later, such as the Italians in the 1880s, replaced the original settlers and brought with them grape arbors, specialized bakeries and pasta factories, all of which added to the cultural melange of the southside neighborhoods. More recently, Mexican-Americans have moved in the neighborhood in significant numbers.

The trait that most distinguished the southern sector from other parts of early Des Moines was its industrial character. Especially predominant were the coal mines that remained active until the 1930s. Columbus Park is still an area that combines industrial with residential land uses. Historically, these arrangements have created a minimum of land use conflicts.

The 56 blocks that comprise the Columbus Park Neighborhood are bordered on the north and west by the confluence of the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers. The eastern edge is formed by S.E. 14th Street, with Hartford Avenue making up the southern border. It is primarily a single-family residential area with pockets of commercial and industrial buildings. (See Neighborhood Map)

Although the Columbus Park Neighborhood does not have an official neighborhood organization, an informal group of area residents worked extremely hard to develop this plan and are now forming a homeowners association. The Columbus Park area has a long history of citizen participation in city government through the Pioneer-Columbus/Southeast target area. The elected Pioneer-Columbus/Southeast Citizens Services Task Force advises the City on social service needs to low- and moderate-income residents in the target area.

Many of the Columbus Park residents grew up in this area and have chosen to continue living in the same neighborhood. The nearness of relatives and friends is an important factor in prompting the special type of social bonding that becomes apparent in a close-knit neighborhood.



NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING PROFILE

The most common housing type in this area is the small, one- or two-story bungalow with a large lot, built prior to World War II. Some new housing construction has occurred as individual vacant lots have been sold. The percentage of single-family dwellings within this neighborhood (94%) is much higher than in other central city neighborhoods and the City as a whole.

In the fall of 1988 the City conducted a Housing Condition Survey of the entire metropolitan area. The conditions of the residential structures in the Columbus Park area compared substantially worse than housing conditions city-wide. This can be partially attributed to very poor housing stock interspersed among industrial uses along the Raccoon River. Many of the houses with condition ratings of sound (#1) or fair (#2) are newer, or may have received loans through past City housing programs. (See Housing Condition Map)

HOUSING		COLUMBUS	CITY
CONDITION RATING		PARK	WIDE
#1	Sound Condition	34%	67%
#2	Fair Condition	23%	19%
#3	Deteriorating	37%	11%
#4	Dilapidated	6%	3%
1989 MEDIAN SALES PRICE			
Residential Properties		\$24,940	\$52,000
MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME			
1980 Census Data - Tract 42		\$16,046	\$20,665

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL AREAS

There are two neighborhood commercial areas within, or just outside the neighborhood. The food related and auto businesses located along S.E. 1st Street serve the neighborhood residents as well as the City as a whole. The cluster of businesses on S.E. 6th and Hartford Avenue, just outside the neighborhood area, contain some well known local landmark businesses. Some of the buildings, however, have been neglected and area having trouble finding tenants.

An area zoned as M-2 (heavy industrial) forms the western boundary of the neighborhood along the Raccoon River. The southern portion of this area contains larger industrial uses. The northern portion is largely residential properties in very poor condition, interspersed with a few small commercial or industrial enterprises. The River Point Urban Renewal Plan identifies the area north of the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific Railroad tracks for redevelopment to high density residential because of its connections and views into the downtown.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

Many public facilities can be found within the Columbus Park Neighborhood. Area schools include, McKinley Elementary and St. Anthony's Catholic School. In a cooperative effort with the Des Moines School Board, the City is now working to purchase the residential block south of McKinley School for building expansion and playground improvement. The expanded school facilities should become a focal point within the neighborhood.

Columbus Park itself is located at S.E. 1st and Indianola Streets. Just outside the neighborhood boundaries is Stone Park, which holds the facilities for the Pioneer-Columbus Community Center. The Center is frequently used by both the neighborhood and surrounding area residents for sports and classroom space. The

ball fields on S.E. 6th are maintained by the Southside Youth Association for the Southside Little League Association. Most of the League participants are drawn from the immediate area. A wide expanse of frontage along the Des Moines River is available for recreational development, but is under utilized at this time. All of these sites provide the area residents with the advantages of recreational space.

Both S.E. 1st and S.E. 6th Streets are north-south arterial routes through the neighborhood. According to the Year 2000 Transportation Plan, future improvements will include widening S.E. 6th Street to four lanes. At this time, no specific time schedule for this work has been determined.

The Stockard and Engler Preliminary Neighborhood Plan identified the following neighborhood issues for this area:

- * Elderly owners have difficulty with maintenance
- * Sold properties are often converted to rental status
- * Lack of strategy to deal with isolated problems
- * Strong need for housing rehabilitation assistance
- * General appearance is a problem
- * Streets/sidewalks need immediate repair/replacement
- * McKinley School needs to be kept open
- * Lack of community organization for planning and implementation
- * Lack of resident interest in neighborhood issues

At a meeting on April 4, 1990 neighborhood residents added the following issues to the list:

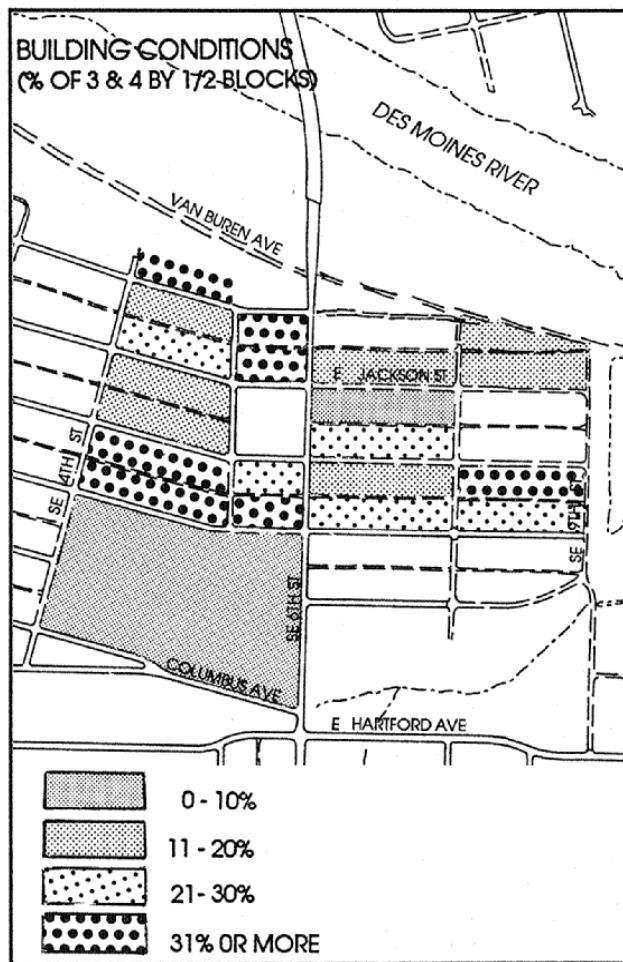
- * Poor appearance of duplexes on north side of Hartford Avenue
- * Junk and junk cars surrounding properties
- * Riverbank from Scott Street Bridge to S.E. 14th Street is uncared for and needs beautification
- * Reservoir area between S.E. 9th and 14th Street has become unsightly and stagnant, and is overgrown by weeds

PROJECT AREA

PROJECT AREA PROFILE

* Number of dwelling units	219
* Number of parcels	310
* Number of vacant lots	91
(many are used as side yards or gardens, some are plots within the floodplain)	
* Number of tax delinquent parcels (1989)	51
owner-occupied	3
investor-owned	44
commercial	0
vacant parcels	4
* Number of building permits, 1980-89	64
new construction and additions	22
rehab and repair	14
commercial	2
minor construction	7
garages	19
* Number of residential properties sold from 1986-90 ..	29
single-family (median cost/\$20,000)	27
duplex/multi-family	2

The Columbus Park project area consists of 18 blocks located south of the confluence of the Raccoon and the Des Moines Rivers. The boundaries are formed by S.E. 9th Street on the east, the ravine between Edison Street and Hartford Avenue to the south, with S.E. 4th Street as the western border. The northern edge is marked by the Des Moines River.



BUILDING CONDITIONS

HOUSING	OWNER	INVESTOR	
CONDITION RATE	OCCUPIED	OWNED	TOTAL
#1 Sound Condition	33 (19%)	7 (18%)	40
#2 Fair Condition	116 (68%)	23 (61%)	139
#3 & #4 Deteriorating & Dilapidated	22 (13%)	8 (21%)	30
TOTALS	171 (100%)	38 (100%)	209

STRENGTHS OF PROJECT AREA

- * The ethnic cohesion and variety of cultural facilities within the neighborhood
- * The high percentage of single-family housing
- * Ease of access to downtown and recreational facilities
- * The expansion of the facilities and playground of McKinley Elementary School
- * Availability of low-cost housing within a stable area

LAND USE

	OWNER	INVESTOR	
RESIDENTIAL	OCCUPIED	OWNED	TOTAL
Single-Family	170 (85%)	31 (15%)	201 (100%)
Duplex	1 (14%)	6 (86%)	7 (100%)
Multi-Family		1	1 (100%)

PROJECT AREA ACTION PLAN

RESIDENTIAL

GOAL	PLAN OF ACTION	SCHEDULE
1. Rehabilitate existing housing stock by providing funding assistance to owner/investor occupants in the form of low interest loans based on applicant's income.	A. Provide funding for rehabilitation of twenty-two (22) #3 and #4 condition owner-occupant dwellings in a three (3) year period.	7 dwellings per year
	B. Provide funding for rehabilitation of eighty-six (86) #2 condition owner-occupied dwellings during the next three (3) years.	28 dwellings per year
	C. Encourage rehabilitation of fifteen (15) #2, #3, and #4 condition single-and/or two-family investor-owned dwellings in a three (3) year period.	5 dwellings per year
2. Encourage new owner-occupant homeownership by offering a variety of funding programs that will provide affordable housing in the project area.	A. Purchase and rehabilitation of seven (7) #2, #3, and #4 condition rental dwellings in the project area by owner-occupants over a three (3) year period.	2 dwellings per year
	B. Purchase and rehabilitation of seven (7) #2, #3, and #4 condition single-and/or two-family rental dwellings by a non-profit organization for resale to owner-occupants during the next three (3) years.	2 dwellings per year
	C. Construction of eight (8) new single and/or two-family dwellings on existing vacant lots to be sold to owner-occupants in three (3) years.	3 dwellings per year
	D. Provide affordable mortgage financing for seven (7) owner-occupant home purchases.	Ongoing
	E. Work with the County to convey County owned lots and with the City to waive assessments to make new housing affordable.	Ongoing

GOAL	PLAN OF ACTION	SCHEDULE
3. Continue to enforce City's Housing Code.	A. Inventory existing rental units to determine uninspected units or expired Certificates of Compliance. Inspect these dwellings. Take proper action with non-complying landlords. B. Provide Housing Code Inspection Services requested on a complaint basis.	Ongoing Ongoing
4. Discourage and prevent the problem of abandoned houses and vacant lots.	A. Support the transfer of abandoned houses to a non-profit organization for rehabilitation and sale to owner-occupants. B. Encourage the reuse of vacant lots as open spaces where development of infill housing appears unfeasible. Support the transfer of such vacant lots to owners of adjacent properties for use as open space.	Ongoing Ongoing
5. Support the construction of landscaped buffers between residential and conflicting land uses.	A. Insure that appropriately landscaped buffers are provided through the site plan review process and that site regulations will be enforced by city officials at the time of allocation for any new development or structure. B. Work with city code enforcement officials to insure proper maintenance of landscaped buffer areas required for new commercial developments.	Ongoing Ongoing

Housing Budget Summary

<u>Type of Housing Support</u>	<u>Approximate Three Year Cost</u>	<u>Approximate One Year Cost</u>
1. Single-Family Dwelling Units Rehabilitated by Owner-Occupants (#3 & #4 condition houses)	22 @ \$20,000 = \$440,000	7 @ \$20,000 = \$140,000
#2 condition Rehabilitations	86 @ \$ 7,500 = \$645,000	28 @ \$ 7,500 = \$210,000
2. Single- and Two-Family Units Rehabilitated by Investor-Owners (#2, #3, & # 4 condition houses)	15 @ \$20,000 = \$300,000	5 @ \$20,000 = \$100,000
3. Purchase and Rehabilitation of Single-Family Rental Dwelling Units by Owner-Occupants (#2, #3, and #4 condition houses)	7 @ \$46,000 = \$322,000	2 @ \$46,000 = \$92,000
4. Rehabilitation of Single- and/or Two-Family Rental Dwelling Units by Non-Profit Organization for Resale to Owner-Occupant (#2, #3, and #4 condition houses)	7 @ \$46,000 = \$322,000	2 @ \$46,000 = \$92,000
5. Single- and/or Two-Family Dwelling Infill Construction	8 @ \$60,000 = \$480,000	3 @ \$60,000 = \$180,000
TOTAL	145 Dwelling units \$2,509,000	47 Dwelling units \$814,000

(These funding amounts represent various mixtures of city/county subsidy funds and private funds.)

COMMERCIAL

GOAL

PLAN OF ACTION

SCHEDULE

1. Develop a partnership between neighborhood business owners, residents, and the city to promote the revitalization and beautification of the neighborhood business district at Hartford and S.E. 6th Streets.

A. Support the neighborhood business-owners association in its efforts to stimulate growth and promote the neighborhood as a whole.

Ongoing

B. Develop a partnership between neighborhood business owners and the city to develop a commercial revitalization plan for the project area.

Ongoing

C. Work with the City's Office of Economic Development to obtain rehabilitation loans for building facades.

Ongoing

PUBLIC

GOAL	PLAN OF ACTION	SCHEDULE
1. Repair/replace bad streets, sidewalks, and driveway approaches in project area.	A. Grade and repair roads that receive minimal use such as S.E. 9th Street.	1991
	B. Develop program and provide funding from the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and the Assessment Subsidy Program to pave S.E. 4th Street.	1992
	C. Secure CIP funding or Assessment Subsidy Program funding to repair/replace/or construct approximately 5,200 lineal ft. of sidewalk. Install sidewalks on both sides of the street throughout the project area.	1992
	D. Seek funding from City's Assessment Subsidy Program to repair/replace seventy-six (76) drive approaches. Include driveway repair/replacement as an eligible item for rehabilitation development through NFC funding.	1992
2. Improve appearance of alleys.	A. Provide concentrated enforcement of the City Beautification Ordinance for backyards by city enforcement officials.	Ongoing
	B. Encourage a project area clean up day on a periodic basis with assistance from the City in the execution process.	Yearly
	C. Provide alley grading and gravel service by the City Public Works Department.	Ongoing
3. Work with the City to develop a maintenance plan for the upkeep of the Raccoon River Basin.	A. Work with the City, Department of Natural Resources, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to develop a comprehensive land use plan for the river front area along Van Buren Street.	1991
	B. Encourage uses such as walking trails and bicycle paths by limiting motor vehicle access to riverfront.	Ongoing
	C. Work with the City to develop a maintenance plan for the upkeep of the retention pond basin between S.E. 9th and S.E. 14th Streets.	

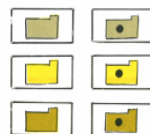
GOAL	PLAN OF ACTION	SCHEDULE
4. Develop a bike path along levee.	A. Encourage the construction of a paved bike path along the levee that will connect with the City's existing bike path plan.	Ongoing
5. Zoning changes.	A. Change zoning of property at S.E. Livingston Street, between S.E. 6th and 8th Streets, from M-1 to R-2.	1991
6. Enhance major entrances.	A. Enhance main corridor along S.E. 6th Street with landscaping that includes tree planting.	1991-1993
	B. Encourage McKinley Elementary School to apply for Lillian Swartzell funding for tree planting.	1991-1993
	C. Retain the bridge at S.W. 5th Street for foot traffic.	Ongoing
	D. Clean and repair the aluminum guard-rail on the S.E. 6th Street bridge.	1991
7. Provide more street lighting.	A. Encourage an assessment by the City Traffic and Transportation Department of street lighting in the project area. Erect new street lights as per assessment.	1991
8. Improve facilities at Youth Athletic Association ball field.	A. Develop a group made up of Youth Athletic Association and neighborhood supporters to work on fundraising for ball park improvements.	1991
	B. Provision of technical in-kind services for the design of the parking area by the City.	As needed
	C. Explore the possibilities of moving the ball park to another site on the southside.	1991
9. Continue to enhance neighborhood identity through emphasis of the history of the area.	A. Encourage school board or group of school children to list McKinley Elementary School on the National Register of Historic Places.	1991
	B. Develop the McKinley School site as a neighborhood focal point.	Ongoing



COLUMBUS PARK PROJECT AREA ACTION PLAN

HOUSING IMPROVEMENTS:

OWNER OCCUPIED RENTER OCCUPIED



SOUND UNITS

MINOR REHAB

MAJOR REHAB



POTENTIAL INFILL HOUSING

PUBLIC & OTHER IMPROVEMENTS:

SIDWALK CONSTRUCTION/REPLACEMENT



DRIVEWAY APPROACH REPLACEMENT

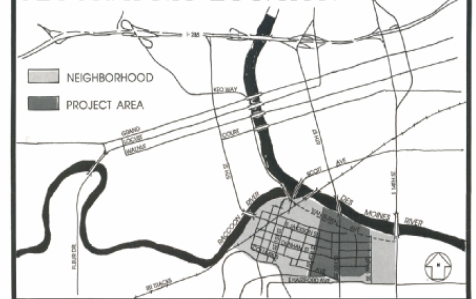
PROPOSED BIKE PATH

COMMERCIAL AREA



LANDSCAPING

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION



COLUMBUS PARK NEIGHBORHOOD LAND USE PLAN

- LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- PUBLIC/SEMI-PUBLIC
- RECREATION/OPEN SPACE
- MAJOR THOROUGHFARE
- PROPOSED SW 3RD ST BRIDGE

