



## ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**County Board Agenda Item  
Meeting of December 11, 2004**

**DATE:** November 30, 2004

**SUBJECT:** Columbia Heights Neighborhood Conservation Plan

**C. M. RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt the attached resolution to accept the Columbia Heights Neighborhood Conservation Plan with staff comments specified in this report.

**ISSUE:** None.

**SUMMARY:** The Columbia Heights Civic Association began work on this plan in 2003. A written survey was distributed to every household in the neighborhood. Neighborhood Conservation staff has worked extensively with volunteer plan writers to complete and review this plan, which was approved by the Association on May 20, 2004. The Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee reviewed the Plan on September 9, 2004 and recommended it be forwarded to the Planning Commission and County Board for acceptance. Therefore, staff recommends that the County Board accept the Plan with staff comments specified in the report.

**BACKGROUND:** Columbia Heights is a residential neighborhood in central Arlington County. It is bounded by Columbia Pike to the north, Army Navy County Club to the south, Walter Reed Drive to the west, and Arlington View to the east. It consists of single-family and multifamily dwellings, 3,070 units in all. Among the features most appreciated by its residents are the parks, schools, and neighborhood history. Neighbors particularly appreciate the proximity to commercial areas, central location, quality of their local schools, and architectural continuity of the neighborhood. Columbia Heights residents' main goal is to preserve and enhance the quality of life and the existing beauty of the neighborhood.

Written surveys were mailed and hand delivered to 3,070 homes and a 5 percent response rate was received, which is below normal 10 percent response rate for most civic associations in Arlington. A low response rate is thought to be due to the number of security apartments and condominiums that were inaccessible for follow up.

A draft plan was made available to all interested property owners and notices of the draft plan were advertised in both the Columbia Heights newsletter and via the Internet. Discussions of recommendations were held at several community meetings and

County Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

County Attorney: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff: Adam Denton, CPHD, ONS

County staff comments were incorporated into the plan. On May 20, 2004, the Columbia Heights Civic Association voted to approve the plan.

On September 9, 2004, the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) reviewed and approved the Columbia Heights Neighborhood Conservation Plan and recommended that the Planning Commission and the County Board accept this plan. Now, the Columbia Heights neighborhood is requesting the County Board acceptance.

Staff has provided comments on a number of recommendations to clarify issues and provide additional information. Staff generally supports the Columbia Heights Neighborhood Conservation Plan and recommends County Board acceptance of the plan, subject to staff comments attached to this report.

**DISCUSSION:** The Columbia Heights Neighborhood Conservation Plan makes 65 recommendations covering a broad spectrum of topics. County staff will work to implement the community projects as initiated by the neighborhood, subject to funding availability and NCAC approval. For non-capital recommendations, NC staff will act as a liaison between the community and other County agencies. Attached are staff comments, identified by department, on minor sections in the Columbia Heights NC Plan where additional explanation is useful. This memorandum will be printed and bound with the NC Plan when it is published.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The acceptance of the Columbia Heights Neighborhood Conservation Plan does not have any immediate fiscal impact upon County operations. If recommendations from this plan requiring funding or staff resources outside of the NC bond allocation are brought forward for implementation, they will each be analyzed as part of the County budget process.

**Motion for  
County Board Acceptance of Neighborhood Conservation Plans**

**Whereas**, the County Board created the Neighborhood Conservation Program in 1964 to encourage neighborhoods to carry out neighborhood improvement plans and provide dedicated funding to implement those plans; and

**Whereas**, the Neighborhood Conservation Program is a mechanism for improvement and maintenance of areas where residents indicate a desire to achieve an improved neighborhood and fulfill a broader vision of the modern “urban village” through coordination of public and private efforts; and

**Whereas**, these plans are initiated and prepared by the neighborhoods, who work with the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee and County staff; and

**Whereas**, Neighborhood Conservation Plans have three purposes:

- 1) To build a neighborhood vision and consensus on issues affecting the neighborhood, to evaluate County service delivery and the state of the neighborhood , and to suggest policies and projects that will improve the neighborhood
- 2) To establish eligibility for Neighborhood Conservation funding
- 3) To provide guidance to the County Board, Commissions, Departments and staff concerning issues in neighborhoods; and

**Whereas**, the County Board created the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) to guide the Neighborhood Conservation Program, and the NCAC reviewed this new, updated or amended Neighborhood Conservation Plan and recommends plan acceptance; and

**Whereas** the Planning Commission also recommended acceptance of this plan.

**Now, therefore be it resolved** that after careful consideration of the recommendations of the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee, the County Board hereby accepts the Columbia Heights Neighborhood Conservation Plan as a statement of the Columbia Heights neighborhood and directs the County Manager to ensure that the recommendations of this plan are considered in decision-making and actions that affect the Columbia Heights neighborhood.

**Columbia Heights Neighborhood Conservation Plan - Final (11/2004)  
Inter-departmental Staff Comments on Civic Association Recommendations**

<b>Streets And Sidewalks</b>			
<b>Recommendation No.</b>	<b>Location in Draft Plan</b>	<b>Civic Association Recommendation</b>	<b>Comment (Department)</b>
<b>1</b>	Page 90	Columbia Heights Civic Association urges the County to install sidewalks where none now exist. This is particularly evident on 11th, 12th, 13th, 16th, South Cleveland and South Edgewood Streets. In addition, County staff has already recommended creating a new sidewalk on Garfield between South 16 <sup>th</sup> Street and South 16 <sup>th</sup> Road.	New pedestrian signals are scheduled to be installed at Columbia Pike/South Scott Street. Construction of a new sidewalk on South Garfield Street between South 16 <sup>th</sup> Street and South 16 <sup>th</sup> Road has been approved. To consider adding additional streets for construction of sidewalk, curb, and gutter, the neighborhood should contact their NC representative to discuss submitting these locations for further NC funding. (DES)
<b>2</b>	Page 90	Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends removing overhead utility poles in the middle of sidewalks, and burying the lines.	Removal of overhead utility wires and poles located in the middle of the sidewalks and undergrounding the lines has been completed along Columbia Pike from South Court House Road to South Walter Reed Drive. Removal of additional utility poles along Columbia Pike in the Columbia Heights neighborhood (South Side) from Walter Reed to South Oakland Street is part of a project that will begin in 2005. There is no utility undergrounding currently planned for the other parts of the neighborhood other than along Columbia Pike. Additional overhead utility wires may take place if redevelopment occurs. (DES)
<b>3</b>	Page 90	Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends providing covered bus stops, when practical, and providing trash removal and clean up of these areas on a regular basis.	Metrobus and Art bus have existing covered bus stops on the following streets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South Barton Street east and west bound</li> <li>• Courthouse Road eastbound</li> <li>• Walter Reed Drive is currently under study for expanding improvements</li> </ul> Staff completed installation of trash receptacles at every bus stop on Columbia Pike and completed scheduling clean-up and pickup for all trash receptacles. Staff is currently working on enhanced bus bust stop services “Super Stops” for Columbia Pike. (DES)

4	Page 90	Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends that the County study pedestrian traffic at the 16th Street and Walter Reed intersection and into the redeveloped Walter Reed Community Park, and design solutions for safe crossing of the streets.	Staff will plan to study the intersection and bring the recommendations back to the Columbia Heights Civic Association. (DES)
5	Page 90	Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends that the County study pedestrian traffic crossing on Columbia Pike and assure adequate designation of crosswalks, install traffic lights on demand, provide safe crossing times and enforce traffic laws—including jaywalking—to protect pedestrians.	New pedestrian signals are scheduled to be installed at Columbia Pike/South Scott Street. Pedestrian count down signals have been installed at South Walter Reed Drive and South Court House Road, they will be added to all pedestrian crossings throughout the Columbia Pike corridor. Staff will be looking at signal timing currently provided for pedestrian crossing and adjust as necessary. (DES)
6	Page 90	Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends improving sidewalk pavement conditions (i.e., reduce water ponding at curb cuts, repair surface, repair dislocations at joints) and also work with Neighborhood residents to improve removal of seasonal debris.	There is a sidewalk maintenance program that has a 3-year cycle for repair and maintenance for neighborhood sidewalks. Staff will work with residents on any tripping hazards or other projects requiring more immediate attention. The County developed a brochure to inform the community about sidewalk maintenance. This brochure will be delivered to the Columbia Heights Civic Association to distribute to residents. (DES)
7	Page 90	Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends widening some walks to reflect pedestrian gateway status. The County should develop and enforce regulations accommodating sidewalk activities, such as cafés or art shows, to enhance pedestrian traffic, slow adjacent traffic (through friction and calming).	The neighborhood should identify specific locations and refer to the Transportation staff for follow-up. The long term plan for Columbia Pike calls for wider sidewalks as part of the Form Based Code development and streetscape plans. The neighborhood will have to work with County Code Enforcement to better provide adequate pedestrian passage at café locations. (DES)

**Traffic**

<b>Recommendation No.</b>	<b>Location in Draft Plan</b>	<b>Civic Association Recommendation</b>	<b>Comment (Department)</b>
8	Page 91	Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends conducting a full study of traffic patterns and traffic calming options in our Neighborhood. We support such traffic calming strategies as speed humps and calming circles.	NTC staff will collect speed data along neighborhood streets that are referred to staff by the residents. Speed data will be collected, evaluated and ranked. Staff will determine if the street meets the criteria for traffic calming measures, and how they rank in terms of problem severity which determines when these streets can be examined in detail. The County Board recently approved a traffic calming project on South Cleveland Street between Columbia Pike and 13 <sup>th</sup> Road South. (DES)
9	Page 91	Columbia Heights Civic Association supports creating a center/left turn lane for the entire Columbia Pike thoroughfare.	The Columbia Pike Street Space Planning Task Force recommended a center turn lane/medium for the entire Columbia Pike. The recommendation was adopted by County Board on February 10, 2004. The recommendations are now part of the Master Transportation Plan. (DES)
10	Page 91	Columbia Heights Civic Association supports implement practices to slow speed on residential streets, especially to allow for safe entry of nose-in parked cars, and to reduce speed in areas where there are short sight distances or congestion.	NTC staff will collect speed data along neighborhood streets that are referred to staff. Speed data will be collected, evaluated and ranked. Staff will determine if the street meets the criteria for traffic calming measures, and how they rank in terms of problem severity which determines when these streets can be examined in detail. (DES)
11	Page 91	Columbia Heights Civic Association supports revising the traffic plan around the Walter Reed Park to accommodate the drop off and pick up of park users. We also recommend collaborating with the School District Transportation provider to create a safe pick up and discharge point.	Transportation staff will work with the Department of Parks and Recreation to accommodate the community needs through the design of the park. A school bus stop exists there now, and Arlington Public Schools will be consulted as a new design plan is being developed. (DES)
12	Page 91	Columbia Heights Civic Association believes that traffic-calming strategies should be bicycle friendly. If streets are closed to cars for traffic calming purposes, they should be open to bicycles.	Traffic calming plans and measures are intended to be friendly to other road users, such as cyclists. (CPHD)

13	Page 91	Columbia Heights Civic Association supports repaving streets. Most of the streets in the neighborhood have not been repaved in over a decade. The County should identify public streets that need repair and schedule repair and repaving. Any redevelopment should include proper maintenance of private access roads.	There is a street paving and maintenance program that has a 3-year cycle for repaving and maintenance throughout neighborhoods. This program operates on a rotating basis to ensure a comprehensive service delivery approach. Residents should contact staff to request repaving of streets within the neighborhood. (DES)
14	Page 91	Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends extending Metrorail up the Pike as an effective transportation strategy (supported by over 75% of survey respondents).	WMATA along with Arlington County is currently looking at long range transit alternatives in the Columbia Pike corridor. The technology alternatives include bus rapid transit, light rail or street cars. Metrorail in this corridor was not recommended in previous planning efforts including the Columbia Pike Initiative process and the Street Space Planning Task Force. (DES)
15	Page 92	Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends more frequent bus service, faster service with shorter trip times, and more convenient bus routes.	Staff has been working with CPRO to increase Pike Ride frequency on Columbia Pike. As part of the Pike Ride Initiative there has been the recent addition of the 16Y, ART 73, and 74. These bus routes were added to Columbia Pike bus service to assist in the service delivery. Staff continues to adjust service to improve responsiveness and user convenience. (DES)
16	Page 92	Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends lowering bus and rail fares and creating easier access to bus schedules (recommended by about 40% of respondents).	Metrorail and Bus fares are set by the Metro Board of Directors. The development and establishment of fares support the annual operation cost. Fares will continue to be consistent with program and operational cost.  Transit and bus schedules are easily accessible on-line, by the web, and in brochures developed as a marketing tool to educate and inform the community about Metro and ART bus routes and schedules. (DES)
18	Page 92	Columbia Heights Civic Association supports the street space plan as it relates to bicycles.	The recommendation will be implemented as redevelopment happens along Columbia Pike. Funding for parallel bike routes is included in the CIP for 2006. (DES)

**Parking**

<b>Recommendation No.</b>	<b>Location in Draft Plan</b>	<b>Civic Association Recommendation</b>	<b>Comment (Department)</b>
19	Page 92	Columbia Heights Civic Association supports programs using neighborhood parking permits for residents.	There is currently a parking strategy study under way throughout Arlington County. Key issues are the revision of the Residential Zone Parking Program and its requirements. The results will be released in January 2005. (DES)
20	Page 92	Columbia Heights Civic Association urges county planners to require that any new residential or high-rise development include plans for adequate underground or on-site parking for all new residents and guests, and that current parking spaces should not be eliminated.	Parking provisions will be considered with all new development proposals submitted to the County. Opportunities for providing additional parking spaces to accommodate retail and neighborhood needs in addition to that of the new development as was accomplished with the recently adopted Columbia Station Project, will be considered. (DES)
21	Page 92	Columbia Heights Civic Association supports improved parking and loading areas for businesses along Columbia Pike, which will help businesses and help to prevent "overflow" parking in the residential areas.	<p>There is a parking strategy included in the Form Based Code identifying the minimum and maximum parking requirements. Each new project will be required to provide a specific number of off street parking spaces. Form Based Code Principals and Regulations were approved by the County Board in February 2003.</p> <p>The new Form Based Code requires developers to provide side or rear service entries to keep service deliveries from occurring on Columbia Pike. (DES)</p>
22	Page 92	Columbia Heights Civic Association supports upgrades in parking for the Walter Reed Community Center to prevent evening "overflow" parking on residential streets.	The current Walter Reed Community Center plans, when implemented, will significantly increase the amount of off-street parking spaces that existed prior to construction. (DPRCR)
24	Page 92	Columbia Heights Civic Association supports additional parking for bicycles. Redevelopment projects outside the Columbia Pike Revitalization District should use the same guidance for bicycle parking as in the form-based code.	Bicycle parking along Columbia Pike is required as part of the Form Based Code requirement. A bike parking requirement exists for all site plan development projects in Arlington. Bicycle Parking is requested, but not required of by-right projects. (DES)



25	Page 93	Columbia Heights Civic Association support the creation of rear service entry for loading and unloading to serve new commercial establishments.	The new Form Based Code requires developers to provide side or rear service entries to keep service deliveries from occurring on Columbia Pike. (DES)
<b>Public Safety</b>			
<b>Recommendation No.</b>	<b>Location in Draft Plan</b>	<b>Civic Association Recommendation</b>	<b>Comment (Department)</b>
26	Page 93	Columbia Heights Civic Association supports better street lighting throughout our area as a means to mitigate crime.	Staff will consult with existing street light studies and determine if the area meets the residential development requirements. If the standards are not met, the civic association will be contacted and measures implemented to upgrade or install additional lighting. (DES)
27	Page 93	Columbia Heights Civic Association supports traffic calming strategies, combined with traffic enforcement--both active and passive--to cut down on speeding within our civic association.	NTC staff will collect speed data along all neighborhood streets that are referred to staff. Speed data will be collected, evaluated and ranked. Staff will determine if the street meets the criteria for traffic calming measures, and how they rank in terms of problem severity which determines when these streets can be examined in detail. (DES)
<b>Parks And Recreation</b>			
<b>Recommendation No.</b>	<b>Location in Draft Plan</b>	<b>Civic Association Recommendation</b>	<b>Comment (Department)</b>
NA	Page 40	“The west end of the property will be beautifully landscaped, making it impossible to be torn up by soccer practices and games.”	There are currently no plans or funding for additional landscaping in that area, but such a project could be funded through the Neighborhood Conservation program. (DPRCR)
NA	Page 40	“Recreation programs will close promptly at 9:00pm, period.”	The agreed-upon hours of operation recommended by the Community and Staff Workgroup are 6am-10pm Monday through Friday, 8am-10pm Saturday, and 8am-6pm Sunday. It was never agreed upon to close the center at 9:00pm promptly. (DPRCR)
35	Page 94	Columbia Heights Civic Association urges Arlington County Parks Department to clean up Cleveland Park, remove vagrants, and prevent further decline. Park planning is an opportunity for collaboration among community groups. Arlington County is encouraged to consider renaming the park after Ruth Stewart, its benefactor.	The County has an adopted policy on park naming. (DPRCR)

38	Page 94	Columbia Heights Civic Association supports the creation of a Neighborhood Advisory Committee to oversee the creation and administration of the Walter Reed Community Center, including the selection of new playground equipment and landscaping.	During the planning stages for the community center, a workgroup of community members and staff collaborated on the selection of programs and the Center's operating plan. When the playground design commences, the community will be given an opportunity to participate. This is usually done through the Civic Association. DPRCR will also be happy to work with the Civic Association or a Neighborhood Advisory Committee to assess the facilities and programs at Walter Reed going forward. (DPRCR)
39	Page 94	Columbia Heights Civic Association urges the County to assess all trees and shrubs in the Walter Reed Community Park for disease and infestation. Trees and bushes with poor health should either be treated or removed, as appropriate. If trees must be removed, the County should move forward with plans to replace, in conjunction with a landscape planned developed in conjunction with the Neighborhood Advisory Committee.	Trees are assessed by the Urban Foresters and by the Maintenance Supervisor as necessary. Dead and hazard trees are removed. When replacing trees we work in conjunction with the Park Manager and concerned citizen groups to plant appropriate trees. Contact DPRCR for more information. (DPRCR)
40	Page 95	Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends that the County evaluate options for new fencing on the Walter Reed Community Park on its northern side, which separates parkland from The Commons of Arlington and Arlington Village. Any development of the park must include new fencing, to be developed in conjunction with the Neighborhood Advisory Committee.	There are currently no plans or funding to replace the fence. Funding for fence replacement can be sought through the Neighborhood Conservation program. (DPRCR)
44	Page 95	Columbia Heights Civic Association urges Arlington County to work cooperatively with the several condominium associations to recognize and	Private landowners may qualify for Park Enhancement Grant or Neighborhood Conservation funding for improvements if they provide an easement that grants legal access to the general public. (DPRCR)

		financially support their provision of green space for their residents and public (trespassers) through providing services.	
46	Page 95	Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends that the county secure a room or exhibit cases to be designated in the new Walter Reed Community Center for the placement of framed maps and photos that have been collected by members of Columbia Heights and Penrose Community Associations. This exhibit area should provide for expansion of exhibit materials contributed by Columbia Heights Civic Association, Douglas Park and Nauck members for appreciation and expression of each neighborhood's separate, and the area's mutual, history for benefit of current and future residents.	DPRCR supports the provision of exhibit cases by the Civic Association or other community groups. We believe that this participation helps to create a sense of community ownership of the Center. (DPRCR)
47	Page 96	Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends that a staff member of the new Walter Reed Community Center be designated to encourage and deposit exhibit materials, to collect local neighborhood conservation plans and historic documents and mementos.	A staff member could be assigned part-time to work jointly with the community in this effort, or this could be accomplished through volunteer effort. (DPRCR)

**Sharing History of Our Area**

<b>Recommendation No.</b>	<b>Location in Draft Plan</b>	<b>Civic Association Recommendation</b>	<b>Comment (Department)</b>
43	Page 96	Columbia Heights Civic Association believes that all development and site review processes must promote the preservation of open space, especially in the east end of the Neighborhood. Onsite parking must be underground	There is a parking strategy included in the Form Based Code identifying what the minimum and maximum parking requirements and where those spaces should be placed. Each new project will be required to provide a specific number of off street parking. (DES)

		or within the building footprint. Parks and open spaces, such as the park in the Eckerd Pharmacy site, are supported.	
<b>Community Service</b>			
<b>Recommendation No.</b>	<b>Location in Draft Plan</b>	<b>Civic Association Recommendation</b>	<b>Comment (Department)</b>
48	Page 96	Columbia Heights Civic Association supports improved trash collection in public areas. Trash collection at Walter Reed Community Park, Cleveland Park and around bus stops needs to be improved. The County should provide more trash receptacles in the parks and in public spaces and schedule more frequent trash removal and pick up. Signs encouraging a litter-free Neighborhood could be posted in strategic spots.	Staff completed installments of trash receptacles at every bus stop on Columbia Pike and completed scheduling clean-up and pickup for all trash receptacles. (DES)
<b>Beautification</b>			
<b>Recommendation No.</b>	<b>Location in Draft Plan</b>	<b>Civic Association Recommendation</b>	<b>Comment (Department)</b>
50	Page 96	Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends burying overhead utility lines, to enhance beautification of the area, to improve sidewalks, and to protect our trees from butchery by the utility companies.	Removal of overhead utility wires and poles has been completed from South Court House Road to South Walter Reed Drive. Removal of additional utility poles along Columbia Pike in the Columbia Heights neighborhood (South Side) from Walter Reed to South Oakland Street is part of a project that will begin in 2005. There is no utility undergrounding currently planned for the other parts of the neighborhood other than along Columbia Pike. (DES)
51	Page 96	Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends remedial action to "hide" the electrical substation located at the entrance of our civic association area, at the corner of Walter Reed and Columbia Pike.	As part of the recently approved Columbia Station Project, the substation will be eliminated and the function redistributed throughout the County. (DES)
52	Page 96	Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends that the County develop landscaping plans to create	The Walter Reed Community Center plans currently call for preserving the existing trees that provide a buffer for the adjacent neighbors. Additional landscaping to enhance the buffer

		privacy for next-door neighbors from the impact of the new community center at the Walter Reed Community Park. This is particularly true for those residents of The Commons of Arlington and Arlington Village, whose properties are on the back property line with the park.	could be funded through the Neighborhood Conservation program. (DPRCR)
53	Page 97	Columbia Heights Civic Association urges the County to install new street lighting in our area. Street lighting should be uniform, attractive and effective.	Staff will consult with existing street light studies and determine if the area meets the residential development requirements. If the standards are not met, the civic association will be contacted and measures implemented to upgrade or install additional lighting.  If additional Street lights are requested the neighborhood should contact the Neighborhood Conservation program for assistance to identify other types of lighting and seek additional funding. (DES)
54	Page 97	Columbia Heights Civic Association encourages the removal of inappropriate or badly damaged curbside trees and provide appropriate replacement trees to adjacent property owners, if requested and if there is adequate space. If space is not available for replacement trees, dwarfed tree varieties should be made available to replant at curbside. Maintenance responsibility may be ceded to property owners if the tree is located off county land.	County staff assess street trees and remove dead or hazardous trees as needed. Trees are replaced if the planting strip is 4-feet wide or greater. For planting sites beneath overhead utilities trees with a mature height of 30 feet or less are planted. The County does not currently plant trees on private property but staff is investigating the possibility of a program to plant on private properties in the future. (DPRCR)
55	Page 97	Columbia Heights Civic Association urges the County to establish community flowerbeds and tree planting, using salt-tolerant species, at desirable locations along Columbia Pike and Walter Reed. The county should cooperate with Columbia Heights Civic Association and merchant groups to maintain the beds.	The community may obtain funding through the Neighborhood Conservation program for landscaping on County property. Typically, the Civic Association agrees to do maintenance, however staff is also supportive of the community working with merchant groups to maintain the landscaping. In addition, trees may be obtained through the Public Tree Planting Program. Contact DPRCR for more information. (DPRCR)

56	Page 97	Columbia Heights Civic Association urges the County to replace street name signs and lights with historically appropriate signs and lamps. Columbia Heights supports the development of an “historic district” sign plan for the CPR, with signage tied in with street signs in the Neighborhood.	Signage will be consistent with the Form Based Code adopted for the corridor in 2003. Signs will be clear, durable and informative to the public. The Form Based Code does not speak to historically appropriate signs.  If additional Street lights are requested the neighborhood should contact the Neighborhood Conservation Program for assistance to identify other types of lighting and seek additional funding. (DES)
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**Land Use and Zoning**

<b>Recommendation No.</b>	<b>Location in Draft Plan</b>	<b>Civic Association Recommendation</b>	<b>Comment (Department)</b>
58	Page97	Columbia Heights Civic Association urges Arlington County not to exceed the existing population density, as amended by the CPR along Columbia Pike.	The vision for the Columbia Pike includes mixed use development along the corridor within the development nodes. It is anticipated that the new development will result in additional household locations in the area, but the new development and additional households will be located on or near Columbia Pike and it will not be located in the adjacent neighborhoods. (CHPD)
60	Page 97	Columbia Heights Civic Association urges Arlington County to preserve green space, especially at the eastern end of the Neighborhood, using various transfer of development rights or zoning procedures. The Neighborhood strongly supports preservation of the Army Navy County Club open space as green space.	A proposed amendment to Site Plan 83 involves a site with existing private green space. Through the site plan amendment process, the County is encouraging the contribution of public open space. (CPHD)
61	Page 98	Columbia Heights Civic Association urges Arlington County to adopt site review standards to reduce/minimize visual and sound impacts at the edges between residential and commercial areas in the CPR.	All uses must comply with the County’s Noise Ordinance Development under the Form Based Code steps down in terms of density, height and range of uses closer to the single-family neighborhood. (CHPD)

**Columbia Pike Revitalization**

<b>Recommendation No.</b>	<b>Location in Draft Plan</b>	<b>Civic Association Recommendation</b>	<b>Comment (Department)</b>
<b>63</b>	Page 98	Columbia Heights Civic Association residents are concerned about parking problems that will result from redevelopment of the Pike, and the negative impacts of traffic through residential side streets.	<p>The recently approved Columbia Station will include County participation with public parking spaces in the new development. The County is developing a Parking Study that addresses parking concerns raised by the community and suggests strategies to accommodate new development and reduce impacts on surrounding neighborhoods. The study would be completed in 2005. The general parking policy would regulate and address the concerns about parking impacts in the neighborhoods and ready for implementation in late 2005. (DES)</p> <p>In addition the Columbia Pike Revitalization Plan includes a parking strategy plan advocating dispersed public parking. Redevelopment of Adams Square is intended to include public parking over and above the Zoning Ordinance Requirements. (CPHD)</p>
<b>64</b>	Page 98	Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends additional trash disposal units to accommodate the foot traffic that will result from the Revitalization Plan.	This recommendation could be funded through the NC program. (CPHD)
<b>65</b>	Page 98	Columbia Heights Civic Association supports bringing Metrorail to the Pike.	WMATA along with Arlington County is currently looking at long range transit alternatives in the Columbia Pike corridor. The principal technology included bus rapid transit and light rail or street car. Metro rail in this corridor was not recommended in previous planning efforts including the Columbia Pike initiative process and the Street Space Planning Task Force. (DES )

# **Columbia Heights Civic Association**

## **Neighborhood Conservation Plan**

**August 30, 2004**

### **Introduction**

The Columbia Heights Civic Association has existed for over three decades, applying to The Civic Federation for membership in 1976. The group was very active in the 1980s and early 1990s, particularly in negotiating with the County over use of the Walter Reed neighborhood park. Although it became inactive at the end of that decade, the Civic Association was resurrected in 2001 by neighbors who were committed to pursuing a Neighborhood Conservation Plan to institute positive changes in our area.

In 2003 Sandy Bushue drafted what eventually became the finalized 16-page survey that was disseminated to residents. The Board members who approved the final version were Sandy Bushue (President), Dotsie Rowe (Vice President), John Antonelli (Secretary), Patty Brundage (Treasurer), Sara Collins, Ron Haddox and Mike Lane. Special thanks is also extended to Shirley Grant, of the Arlington County Neighborhood Conservation Plan program, for her patience and dedication in the completion of the final survey version, coordination of reproduction and personal delivery of the copies to the Association.

Flyers were distributed for the March 24, 2003 kickoff meeting that was held for the Columbia Heights Neighborhood Survey at the Barkley Condominium. Turnout was sparse with a dozen people, mostly from South Wayne and South Barton Street residents. At this meeting the Association introduced the Neighborhood Conservation Plan, its purpose and advantages to the community. Tom Greenfield, President of the Penrose Civic Association, was a guest speaker who talked about the fruit of the Penrose Plan, the Neighborhood Signs, the Carlyle Street Lamps, and the \$290,000 that was received for sidewalks, gutters and lighting improvements along South Wayne Street.

Survey forms were distributed at this kickoff meeting, and volunteers were solicited for distribution and the subcommittees to assist with the written report. Ralph Crawford offered his invaluable services to generate the database reports using Microsoft Access that were used to produce the the statistical results necessary to complete the final Neighborhood Plan.



Civic association members distributed forms by hand to every home, condo unit and apartment building in the area between the end of March through the end of April 2003. Sara Collins, Association Board member, and Patty Brundage, Association Treasurer, coordinated the dissemination of over 2,000 copies of the survey with the help of volunteers and the support of board members. Columbia Heights Civic Association owes special recognition to Roy Berkowitz, Emily Carnes, Laura Carrier, Gary Eakes, Mike Gering, Pam Johnson, Peter Jones, Jill Lewis and Sarah McKinley for contributing their time and effort towards the successful completion of the survey drop to residents and businesses within the Columbia Heights neighborhood. Bret Inzunza of the Commons of Arlington and Carmen Beaty of Arlington Village facilitated the extensive distribution to every resident in those communities within the Association boundaries.

Ron Haddox deserves our highest praise for his design of an electronic version of the survey form, which used advanced technology to collect data for the survey results and saved countless hours of data entry. The survey was available online through the Association's web site at <http://on-the-pike.com/CHCA/>. Submissions were accepted up until May 9, 2003.

In all, 186 surveys were completed, of which approximately 10% were entered directly through the Association's web site by residents themselves. The remainder were collected by Board Members or mailed to the Association's Post Office Box at South Glebe Station and the data entered from the hard copies. Lindsay Haddox deserves our sincere gratitude for the vast amount of time she spent entering the majority of the paper survey copies. Analytical compilation of survey results was completed in early 2004.

The following report describes our neighborhood, its history, and major conclusions and recommendations that surfaced from the survey and subsequent discussions. In all, the report lists 65 separate recommendations for positive changes for our Neighborhood. These recommendations were based on responses in the community survey, followed by discussions with community residents. Appendix B lists all of these recommendations.

The membership of Columbia Heights Civic Association approved this plan and its recommendations at its May 20, 2004 meeting. The Civic

Association Board was given approval to make minor editorial changes prior to submission to the County Board.

Many thanks to Adam Denton and other members of the Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development Department of Arlington County for their technical help in developing the survey and assisting this project to conclusion. Lisa Fowler provided demographic information about our Neighborhood, and Justin S. Clarke forwarded information about immigration patterns.

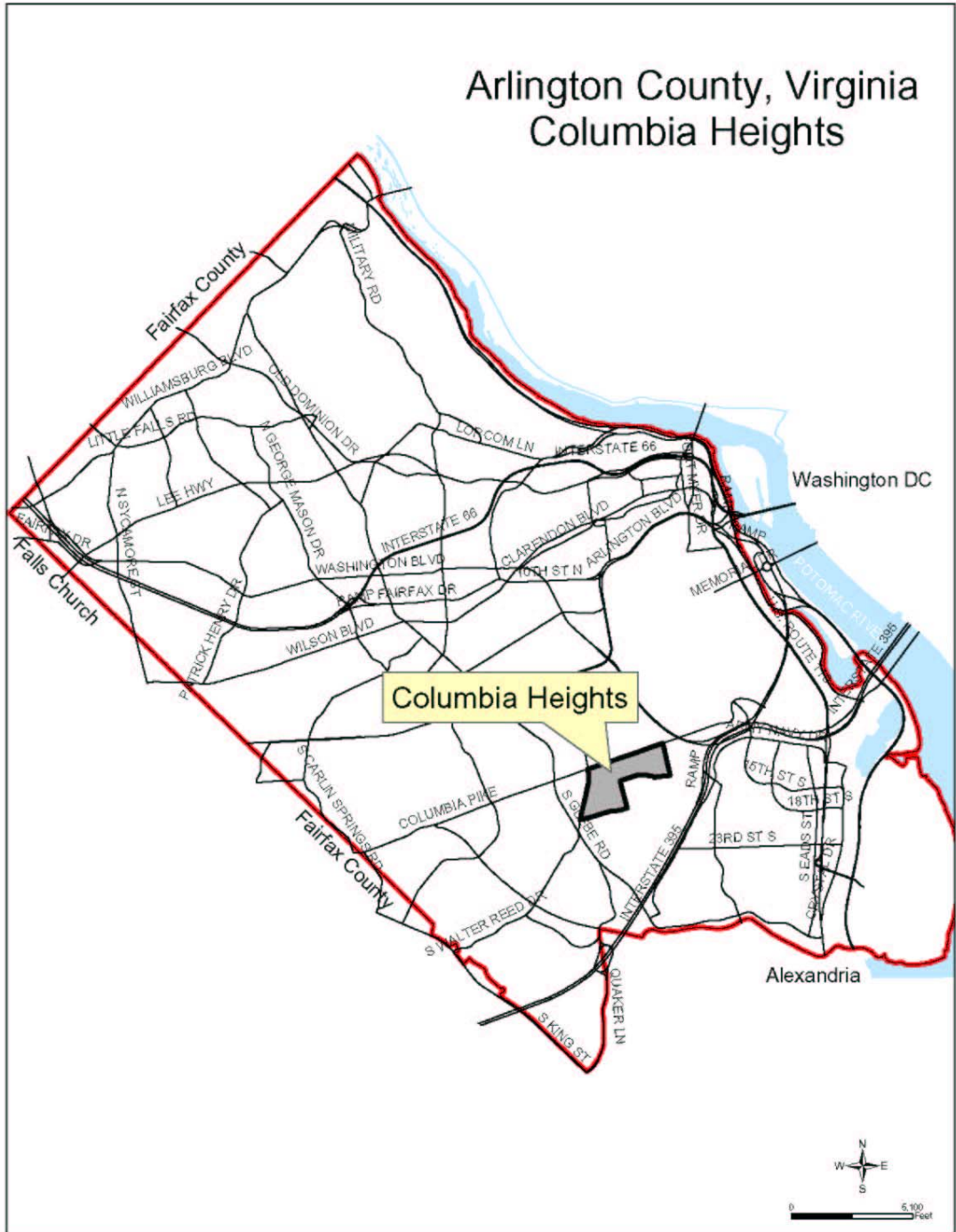
We are very much indebted to the many community residents who actively participated in this study. Carol Rakatansky was responsible for resurrecting the Civic Association in 2001 and led the effort to launch a conservation plan. Sandy Bushue, who served as President in 2003, along with Patty Brundage, as Treasurer, shepherded the process through distribution and compilation of the survey. John Antonelli, as current President, has led the effort to complete the study. Community members who contributed to the report include: Elise Annunziata, Julie Brienza, Richard Dooley, Valerie Emerson, Ken Fredgren, Anita Friedman, Peter Jones, Michael Lane, Jill Lewis, Lisa McAuliffe, Peter McAuliffe, Allen Muchnick, Reginald Nixon, Amy Pisani, Dotsie Rowe, Rob Schwarting and Elizabeth Smith.

Sara Collins is applauded for her heroic efforts in researching the history of our area and in identifying historic photos from local archives. Martin Ogle provided advice on the geology of our area. Jill Lewis took hundreds of photographs of our area as it exists today and is credited with providing the current pictures in this report. Sarah McKinley, a past President of the association, edited and compiled the final product.

The following page includes maps indicating the boundaries of Columbia Heights Civic Association, and its position within Arlington County.



# Arlington County, Virginia Columbia Heights



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## Current Description of the Neighborhood

The Columbia Heights neighborhood, represented by the Columbia Heights Civic Association, is located in Central South Arlington, bounded on the North by Columbia Pike, on the West by Walter Reed Drive, on the East by S. Rolfe Street and on the South by 16th Street and property owned by the Army Navy Country Club.

The three primary advantages of living in our neighborhood, as noted by participants in our community survey, were:

- Convenience and access to a variety of shopping and retail establishments (39%).
- Proximity to Washington, D.C., and living close to the city (34%).
- Access to public transportation and major roads (27%).

Other advantages noted by residents included:

- Diversity of the population
- Safe neighborhood, on some streets
- Neighborhood/community feeling in some community associations

The three primary disadvantages of living in our neighborhood that were cited were:

- Traffic – including speeding along Columbia Pike; cutting through residential streets, and lack of parking
- Lack of direct Metro access and poor bus service
- Dirty, unkempt streets and houses—including overcrowding, low income housing, and poor sidewalks and lighting

Other disadvantages noted by some residents:

- Poor or limited retail options
- Crime and concerns about public safety in some parts of the neighborhood
- Noise
- Rundown condition of Columbia Pike
- Lack of neighborhood feeling in the overall neighborhood
- Lack of green space
- Cost of housing



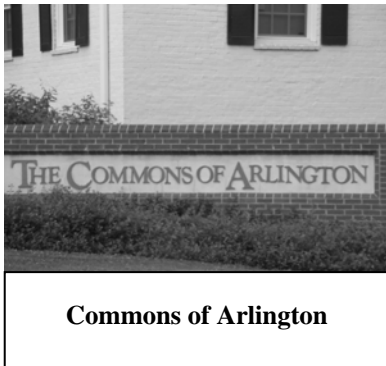




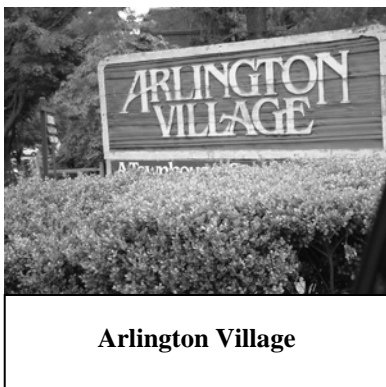
The residential area is geographically split, with the western portion of the civic association area composed of single-family homes on 11th Street, 12th Street, Cleveland Street, 13th Street, 13th Road and 16th Street, and four condominium associations:

- **The Commons of Arlington** contains 132 one and two-bedroom units in 18 separate buildings facing 13th Street, 13th Road and Walter Reed Drive.
- **Arlington Village** contains 595 separate units, primarily in courtyards facing 13th Road, Edgewood Street, Barton Street and South Cleveland Street.
- **Arlington Village Courtyard** contains 66 units on 16th Street, formerly the Arlington Village Cooperative, a low-to-moderate income community within Arlington Village.
- **Fairway Village** contains 28 townhouse units on S. Barton St. and 16th Street.

The following pictures are of the condominium facilities.



**Commons of Arlington**



**Arlington Village**





**Arlington Village Courtyard**



**Fairway Village**



Residences on the eastern side of the civic association consist primarily of apartment complexes on South Wayne Street, South Courthouse Road, South Scott Street, South Rolfe Street and the stretch of Columbia Pike between these streets. There are a few single-family homes in the far eastern section of the Civic Association, along South Rolfe Street. The apartment complexes include:

- **2200 Columbia Pike Apartments**, with 218 one and two bedroom units on the corner of South Wayne Street and Columbia Pike.
- **Barkley Condominium**, with 125 one and two bedroom units at 1016 South Wayne Street.
- **Key Apartments**, with 30 one and two bedroom units at 2112 Columbia Pike, on the corner of South Courthouse Road.
- **Dorchester Apartments**, with 338 efficiency, one, two and three bedroom units at 2040 Columbia Pike, on the corner of South Scott Street.

- **Arlington Overlook**, with 711 efficiency, one and two bedroom units at 1201 South Scott Street, on the corner of Columbia Pike.
- **Dominion Towers Apartments** with 330 studio, one and two bedroom units at 1201 South Courthouse Rd.
- **Dominion Plaza**, with 318 efficiency, one and two bedroom units at 1200 South Courthouse Rd.
- **The Lancaster Condominium**, with 102 efficiency, one and two bedroom units at 1830 Columbia Pike.
- **Arlington View Terrace**, with 77 one and two bedroom units at 1429 South Rolfe Street.



**Dominion Towers**



**Dominion Plaza**



**Arlington Overlook Apartments**



**2200 Columbia Pike and  
Barclay Condominium**



## Business Establishments

One of the advantages of the Columbia Heights Neighborhood ("Neighborhood") is the partial inclusion of, and access to, a diverse and thriving community of retail businesses and restaurants. Most of these retail establishments are on Columbia Pike or on side streets within one block of Columbia Pike. These also include establishments on the other side of Columbia Pike. As a district, they are known as Columbia Pike Revitalization District, and businesses have been targeted for Redevelopment. (See Columbia Pike 2000, a Revitalization Plan.)

Those business blocks included in the Neighborhood include the South side of Columbia Pike between South Rolfe Street and Walter Reed Drive, and businesses on South Edgewood Street between Columbia Pike and 12th Street. Business blocks adjacent to the Neighborhood include: business on the North side of Columbia Pike between South Rolfe Street and Walter Reed Drive; businesses on Columbia Pike west of Walter Reed Drive; businesses on the West side of Walter Reed Drive.

**Eckerd Pharmacy.** The corner of Columbia Pike between South Walter Reed Drive and Edgewood is dominated by Eckerd Pharmacy, a new establishment with a large, bricked courtyard in front that is used on Sunday mornings between May and October as the community's farmer's market.



**Fillmore Shopping Center.** Immediately across Columbia Pike from Eckerd Drugs is the Fillmore Shopping Center, which includes: Art and Framing, Bicycles, Eye Site, Botanica, Carballo Express International Courier and Signs to Go. Fillmore Shopping Center extends to the East to include Attila's Restaurant, Cecilia's Restaurant and Nightclub, Nail Expert, Virginia Beauty Academy, Buona Pizza, H&R Block and CVS Pharmacy.

**Edgewood Shops.** Several long-standing establishments are located on the corner of Columbia Pike and Edgewood, facing Eckerd Drugs on Edgewood Street. These include Ski Chalet, Asni Market, Ledo Pizza, Ming Haircutters and, most recently, Kayak Station.



**Columbia Pike - Edgewood to Cleveland.** On Columbia Pike, shops between Edgewood and Cleveland Streets within our Civic Association area include TLN Upholstery, Birds & Things, Arlington Animal Hospital, Dominos, Cash Depot and Self Service Laundromat. Behind these stores, on Cleveland Street, Any Mountain Tours is located in a converted single family home.



**Arlington Village Center.** On Columbia Pike between Cleveland and South Barton Streets, the Arlington Village Center includes many establishments, including: Manee Thai Restaurant, Top Jewelers, Golden Rhule Beauty Salon, Jackson



Hewitt Tax Service, Advance America and K-1 Beer and Wine. The rear portion of this building, with parking entrances on Cleveland and Barton include: Taco Baja Grill, Pizza Movers, White Birch School of Kung Fu-Tai

Chi, Country Cleaners, Pak Halal Groceries & Spices and Top's Chinese Carryout.

**Adams Square Shopping Center.** Immediately across Columbia Pike from the Arlington Village Center are two shopping centers: Adams Square Shopping Center and Adams Square Mall. In front of these is a small café--Michael's Salvadoran Restaurant. Adams Square Shopping Center includes Giant Food and Giant Pharmacy, which form an anchor for the strip mall. In between are: Izalco Barber Shop, Crystal Beauty Supply, Cowboy Café, Dollar Shop, Adams Square Dry Cleaners and Le Touché Beauty Salon. Adams Square Mall, directly in front of the strip mall, includes indoor shops: A. A. Locksmith, Café La Luna, Morris Van's Hair Design, Red Nails, Royal Two Jewelry, Frank's Engraving, Nutritional Solutions, Heritage Framing, and Samata Yoga Studio.



**Columbia Pike -  
Barton to Wayne Streets.**

Small stores on Columbia Pike between Barton and Wayne Streets include: Discount Cigarettes, L.A. Nails, Bendecido's Printing, Regal Cleaners, Rappahanock Coffee Shop, The Computer Store, Saah's Unfinished Furniture, Citgo Gas Service Station, Bob & Edith's Diner and a Texaco service station. Immediately across Columbia Pike from Bob & Edith's Diner is the Safeway Grocery Store.





## Parks

Overall, the parks within the community are used infrequently, and are not perceived by residents as a unifying community asset. Instead, by virtue of their location at the fringes of the community, they tend to contribute to some of the polarization of the neighborhood. The largest park has tended to serve the larger Arlington community, imposing outside traffic on the neighborhood. The Cleveland Park is notorious for its disrepair and misuse.

### **The Arlington Village Ravine.**

A private linear park, the ravine, where it runs through Arlington Village, has been preserved as a naturalized area and provides a major natural park for the residents of the Arlington Village Condominium. The ravine attracts many nature lovers from the surrounding Neighborhood.



### **Walter Reed Community Park.**

The largest community park within the Columbia Heights Neighborhood is this park, located at the corner of 16th Street and Walter Reed. It is currently undergoing major renovation. The community center, built in the 1960s, is being torn down and ground has been broken on a new building. [A more detailed history of the park is included in Appendix A.]

**Cleveland Park.** This little park was created by the efforts of Ruth Stewart. A former President of Columbia Heights Civic Association and a long-time resident of Arlington Village who lived near this small, wooded area, she envisioned it as a neighborhood haven for residents to enjoy nature. Since her death in 1994



the area was turned over to the Arlington Parks division. The park consists of several small benches, trees and grassy areas. It is generally unkempt, though some local residents have expressed interest in guiding a redevelopment of the park as the CPRO progresses.



**Towers Park.** This Arlington County owned and operated park is located at 801 South Scott Street, covering approximately 3.75 acres. This park is located at the extreme east end of the Neighborhood, the polar opposite of the larger Walter Reed Park at the west end. This park, and other land in the east end, serve residents in blocks with very high population density, especially

families with youth. This playground serves mainly younger persons and their supervising adults.

**Patrick Henry Elementary School Grounds.** Although not officially a neighborhood park, the playground of Patrick Henry is used by neighborhood residents as a park. Year-round outdoor play and community events are held there. The school grounds are located across Columbia Pike from the Neighborhood.



## Essential Services Outside Columbia Heights Neighborhood

Although our residents have access to stores on Columbia Pike, most of our essential services are located in adjacent neighborhoods. This concept is critical in understanding the interest that Columbia Heights residents have in events that affect the surrounding area. It also speaks to traffic patterns--both on foot and by vehicle--to reach essential services.

**Schools.** Columbia Heights falls within the school district of Patrick Henry Elementary School, which is located just outside our Neighborhood. The school is found across Columbia Pike, at 701 South Highland Street,



next to the area's community library and career center. Patrick Henry is physically located in the Arlington Heights neighborhood. A history of schools in Columbia Heights is included in Appendix A.



Patrick Henry Elementary School

Most middle school children in the Neighborhood attend Thomas Jefferson Middle School, also located in the Arlington Heights neighborhood. The TJ Community Center is also enjoyed by our residents, both for its gym, classes and site of the Arlington Fair.

The high school our students use is Wakefield High School, located in the Claremont neighborhood on George Mason Drive.

**Libraries.** The closest community library is opposite Patrick Henry Elementary and next to the Career Center, between Highland Street and Fillmore, in the Arlington Heights neighborhood. A history of library service in Columbia Heights is included in Appendix A.

**Churches.** While South Arlington contains many churches within easy distance of our residents, none are found within the civic association boundaries. The closest churches include:

- **Arlington United Methodist Church**, on South Glebe Road two blocks north of Columbia Pike.
- **Trinity Episcopal Church** and preschool, on the corner of South Wayne and Columbia Pike.
- **St. John's Baptist Church** on Columbia Pike & South Scott Street.

**Banks.** There are no banks within our civic association boundaries. The nearest banks are:

- **United Bank**, behind Safeway's Grocery Store.
- **SunTrust**, on Columbia Pike about one block east of Glebe Road.
- **BB&T Bank (formerly First Virginia)** on Walter Reed Drive across from Eckerd's Pharmacy.

- **Bank of America**, located on the Northwest corner of Glebe Road and Columbia Pike.

**Business Services.** Businesses providing printing, mailing, packing, copying, business supplies and other services to home businesses are not available in the Neighborhood. Commuting services and computer services establishments are found in the Neighborhood.

**Grocery Stores.** Our residents primarily rely on Giant and Safeway supermarkets, located on the other side of Columbia Pike in the Penrose neighborhood. However, there are also ethnic grocery stores that further lend to the Neighborhood's unique diversity of locally-owned services and stores.



**Post Office.** The nearest postal office is located on South Glebe Road, south of Columbia Pike, in the Douglas Park neighborhood.

**Fire and Rescue Service.** Fire & EMT Station 9 in the Nauck Community and the Firehouse on Glebe Road in the Alcova Heights neighborhood are the nearest rescue services. A history of fire service for Columbia Heights is included in Appendix A.

## Transportation

Columbia Pike residents enjoy easy mass transit, auto, pedestrian and bike access to Washington, D.C. and many government agencies within our area. Metrobus routes on Columbia Pike have been expanded, providing residents access to the Pentagon and Ballston metro stops. Expanded routes now provide service to Pentagon City. Arlington Regional Transit operates a feeder bus line on routes off Columbia Pike and on the side streets within the Neighborhood.

We are also within easy access of Route 120 (Glebe Road), Route 244 (Columbia Pike), Washington Boulevard, Route 395, and about 15 minutes distance (non-rush hour) to Route 66.

Bicycle commuting occurs along Columbia Pike, buses are equipped with bicycle carrying frames and the Four-Mile Run bike trail is accessible from the Neighborhood.

## **Demographics**

The following table shows demographic statistics for the Neighborhood and compares them to the overall statistics for Arlington County. Several statistics are important to note.

The largest age group in the Neighborhood is the 35-44 age bracket. However, changes in census data indicate that our area is aging. The largest increase since the prior census was a 98% increase in the 45-54 age group and a 97.5% increase in the over 85-age group. Females represented slightly over half the population.

About 55% of all households consist of one person, with 30% of households categorized as family households.

The Neighborhood is more ethnically diverse than the County as a whole and contains a higher percentage of low-income, recent immigrant, low-education attainment individuals. The Brookings Institute reports that the greater Metropolitan area experienced a surge in immigration in the 1990s, making up nearly half of the overall population growth.<sup>1</sup> The South Arlington 22204 zip code, which includes all of the Columbia Heights Neighborhood, was the top-rated immigrant destination zip code in the Washington Metropolitan Area between 1990-1998.<sup>2</sup>

Immigrants moving into the 22204 zip code area represented 128 countries of origin. The largest numbers of immigrants arrived from El Salvador, Vietnam, India, China, the Philippines, South Korea and Ethiopia. This immigration is reflected in the many ethnic establishments in South Arlington.

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<sup>1</sup> "At Home in the Nation's Capital: Immigrant Trends in Metropolitan Washington," The Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, June 2003.

<sup>2</sup> "The World in a Zip Code: Greater Washington, D.C. as a New Region of Immigration," The Brookings Institution, Survey Series, April 2001.

While the County is experiencing a high immigration of college graduates, the Neighborhood is not. However, the Columbia Heights neighborhood has a higher percentage of residents who are part of the work force than in Arlington County as a whole.

The family structure in the Columbia Heights Neighborhood is more likely to be single head of household and female head of household. Incomes are considerably less than those county-wide.

The age of the housing stock reflects the sudden growth of the apartments in the east end of the Neighborhood following the end of World War II. The low statistics for home ownership reflect the dominance of apartment dwellers and high-density housing in the Neighborhood.

Data below the level of census tract was not examined. However, anecdotal data suggest that many attributes of the population are disproportionately distributed within the tract, mirroring the geographic division of apartment house blocks and condominium and single-family blocks.

**Table 1  
Selected Demographics<sup>3</sup>**

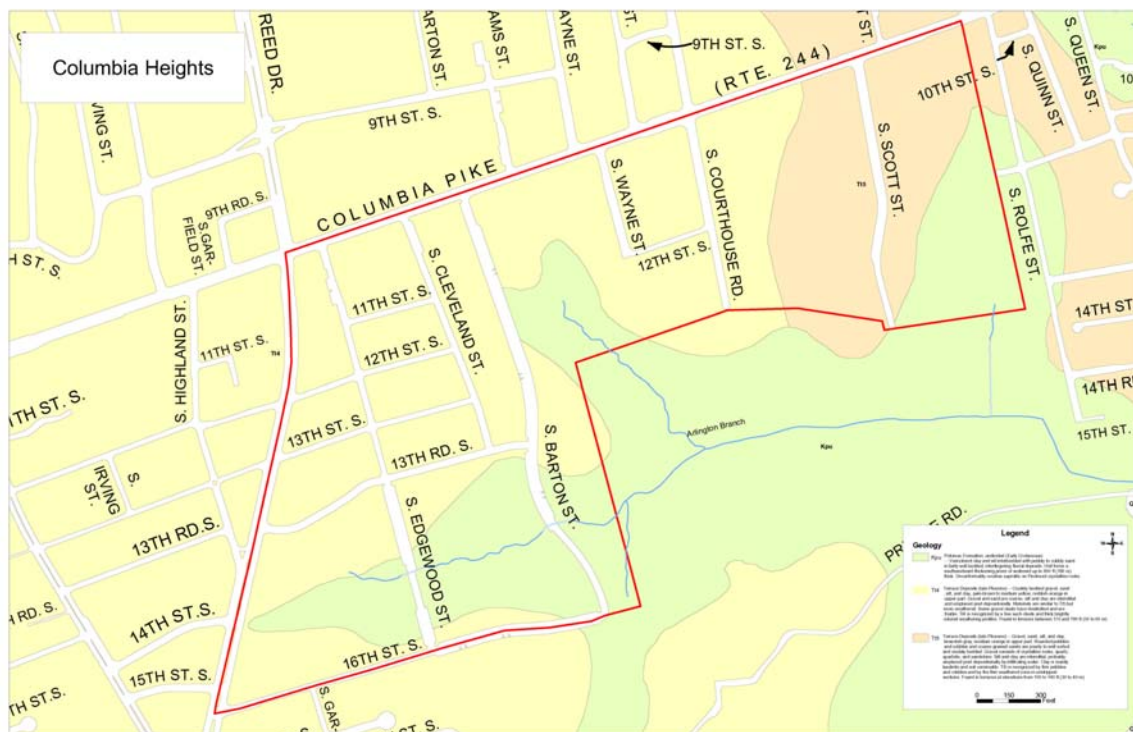
<b>Census Attribute</b>	<b>Arlington County</b>	<b>Columbia Heights</b>
Population	189,453	6,268 (3.3%)
Born in U.S.	72.2%	63.6%
Born in Virginia	16.1%	16.0%
Foreign Born	27.8%	35.1%
White	68.9%	52.8%
Asian or Pacific Islander	8.7%	10.3%
Black or African American	9.3%	14.6%
Hispanic or Latino	18.6%	17.7%
High School grad or higher	87.8%	89.7%
Bachelor's degree or higher	60.2%	52.7%
Workers in the labor force	74.9%	81.7%
Average household income:	\$78,700	\$54,314
Housing built 1959 or earlier	51.5%	44.3%

<sup>3</sup> Note: Data per Arlington County Planning Division - Planning Research and Analysis Team: "Data are for Census tract 1032, block groups 1, 2 and 3 which closely approximate the Columbia Heights Civic Association area. These data will not be directly comparable to civic association data available from the County's Census web page."

Housing built 1960-1979	26.5%	48.6%
Housing built 1980-2000	22%	7.2%
Housing owner-occupied	43.3%	20%
Single-person household	40.8%	55%
Population under 18 years old	18.1%	10.9%
Population over 65 years old	9.3%	6.7%

## Geologic History of Columbia Heights

Continental collisions of North America and North Africa, 250-450 million years ago, formed the Appalachian Mountains. As these two continents separated, the ancient Atlantic Ocean filled the gap. At one time, the Atlantic extended as far as what is now the fall line (the geologic boundary between the Piedmont Plateau and the Atlantic Coastal Plain) and sediments were deposited on the ocean floor. The map below shows the geologic terrain of our area.



Part of Columbia Heights sits on one such sedimentary deposit, called the Potomac Formation. This formation was laid down by the ancient Atlantic Ocean approximately 100-120 million years ago (lower Cretaceous Period). The Potomac Formation marks the Western-most extent of that ancient ocean and, thus, of the Atlantic Coastal Plain. It is composed of multicolored clay and silt interbedded with pebbly to cobbly sand (up to 600 feet thick) and overlies crystalline rocks of the Piedmont Plateau.

Much of the Columbia Heights area, however, sits on much younger sediments deposited by the Potomac River when the river used to flow

over what is now Arlington. These sediments, called terrace deposits, vary between about 5 and 13 millions years old in Arlington. The sediments in the vicinity of Columbia Heights are probably on the younger side of this range.

Columbia Heights slopes toward streams, including Long Branch, that flow generally south and east to join Four Mile Run. Parts of our neighborhood are in the Resource Protection Area (RPA), and the Neighborhood is in the Chesapeake Bay Management Area. The map below shows the streams flowing through the Neighborhood.



## **Social History of Columbia Heights**

### **18th Century Settlement Efforts**

One of the earliest speculators in the Tidewater region was Robert Howson (also referred to as Housing in records) who was granted 6,000 acres in 1669, which he soon sold to the Alexander family.

Columbia Heights is within a tract of 629 acres that James Robertson acquired in 1730. From 1724-1766 Robertson acquired six tracts totaling 3,280 acres in Arlington. Robertson was the original owner of these tracts, and he was, like most of the original owners, an absentee landowner. Settlement was sparse and tenants were working the land and yeomen were farming smaller tracts.

During the 18th century tobacco was the main cash crop, and later corn, cattle, mills and wheat brought income. Communication was by water with the beginnings of some roads by mid-century. Later, large landowners, including Robertson, began living in the area.

The Robertson legacy continues to this day in his Birch, Cleveland, Bowling, Walker, Payne and Minor descendants, in burials in family cemeteries, and in place names. His grandson Caleb Birch's reconstructed log home, Birchwood, can be found at 4572 16th Street North on land that was one of the Robertson tracts.

A more detailed discussion of the early history of Arlington County can be found in Appendix A.

### **The Turnpike - from 1808 through the Civil War**

At the core of our Neighborhood's history is the old turnpike that was responsible for the neighborhood's very existence, and which continues to be the center of community attention. We know this road today as Columbia Pike or "The Pike," but throughout its history it has been known by a number of names, including the Washington Road, the Columbian Road, the Arlington Turnpike, and the Washington Graveled Road.

Its beginnings date to 1808 when Congress chartered the Columbia Turnpike Company to build a road through the newly-formed (1801) Alexandria County of the District of Columbia. The purpose of this road was to provide access westward from the new Long Bridge that predated the 14th Street or Highway Bridges.



Old maps show clusters of settlement on the eastern part of the Turnpike near the bridge, around the toll gates and at the crossing of the Alexandria Canal, at the crossing of the Georgetown and Alexandria Turnpike, and west of that area near what is now Orme Street and the earlier location the predecessor to Trinity Episcopal Church, later relocated to Wayne Street.

One person who lived in this older community was Jeanette Mudd Allwine, a grand-niece of Dr. Samuel A. Mudd, whose family home was the old tollhouse at Columbia Pike and Jefferson Davis Highway. She helped her mother collect tolls and deliver mail and lunches by barge to the many brickyards along the Alexandria Canal. After she married, she lived at the old Abingdon Plantation and her daughter still lives in the county.

### **G.W.P. Custis and Arlington House**

The name "Arlington" was a natural for this part of the county because of the existence of Arlington House--the most magnificent home in the area. Arlington House was built by Martha Washington's grandson, George Washington Parke Custis between 1802 and 1817 on an 1100-acre tract of land he had inherited from his father, John Custis. The home and park-like grounds were visible from the newly-formed city of Washington, and were visited by dignitaries from this country and abroad.

G.W.P. Custis built the house as a memorial to George Washington, the foster father who had raised him. Custis brought with him from Mount Vernon many of the Washington treasures and displayed them in his mansion for any who visited. Because his home was a museum to George Washington, he at first called it Mount Washington, but later selected the name Arlington House after the Custis family ancestral home on the Eastern Shore, when his sister preempted the use of that name by calling her nearby home Mt. Washington.

Although G.W.P. Custis was our county's most distinguished resident during the first half of the nineteenth century, Arlington House is now a notable memorial to his son-in-law, Robert E. Lee. While never owned by Lee, he considered it home during his military leaves and lived there after Custis died in 1857 to administer the will and make improvements. The records for the settling of the will by Lee are in our county court records.

Custis would have known the other landowners or farmers in the county and served on various committees with many. The Frasers of Green Valley Manor (the nearby Army Navy Country Club) were friends, as was John Mason (what is now Roosevelt Island). He most certainly would have known the nearby Roach family of Prospect Hill on Arlington Ridge Road; descendants of that family have a picture of Robert E. Lee and James Roach chatting over the fence that divided the two farms.

Custis and other landowners in our county were expected to respond to calls for doing road repairs and he was in charge of gathering tithables for this work, which may have impelled him and others to support the new turnpike movement, where corporations were formed to build and maintain toll roads, or turnpikes, like the one that established Columbia Pike.

G.W.P Custis built his mill at Four Mile Run in 1836 on part of the 1200 acres he inherited from the first President and he encouraged his neighboring farmers in production that would make them and their country less dependent upon imported goods. His travels to Arlington Mill would take him along the local turnpike to the area that is now Barcroft.

**Arlington House Today.** Arlington House remains a local jewel, but its grounds are now occupied by Arlington National Cemetery, Fort Myer (Fort Whipple during the Civil War), Henderson Hall Marine barracks, and the roads and parkway. Previously, the Freedman's Village, Arlington Experimental Farm (now at Beltsville) and the Syphax property were on those sites.

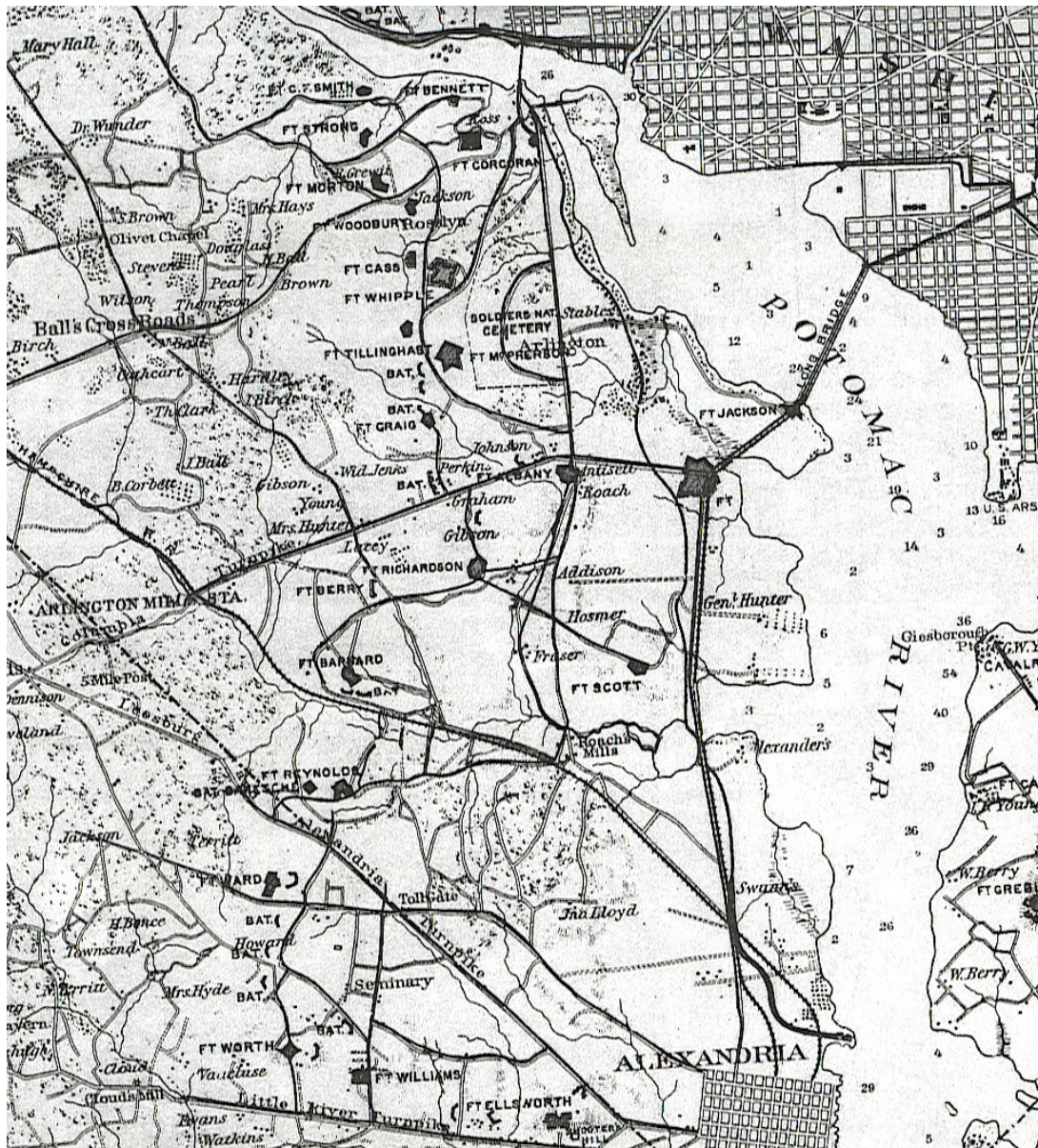
Lee left Arlington House to serve the Confederacy and his family fled just before federal troops occupied our county. The property was seized by the federal government when Mrs. Lee couldn't appear in person to pay the Insurrectionary Taxes imposed on all residents in the county. When finally reclaimed through legal action after the war, the property that was already a burial ground was sold to the government and maintained by the Army until the historic house was turned over to the U.S. Park Service.

### **Arlington and Columbia Heights during the Civil War**

With the onset of the Civil War and the occupation of the county by federal troops, the appearance and geography of our area was dramatically altered. At that time it was considered "enemy occupied territory," since the county was in Virginia, having been "retroceded" by Congress in 1847. The federal troops established their headquarters at

Arlington House. Our turnpike became a route of military importance and Civil War maps show entrenchments along Columbia Pike in the Columbia Heights area along both sides of the road.

Eventually there were 19 forts built in Arlington to protect the Capitol city and the transportation lines into it. The largest of the early forts constructed immediately upon the occupation was Fort Runyon, built a half-mile south of Long Bridge to protect the junction of the Columbia and the Washington-Alexandria (what is now Route #1) Turnpikes.



This map shows the location of civil war forts built in Arlington, in and around the Columbia Heights Neighborhood. Columbia Turnpike is in the center.

Shortly afterward Fort Albany was built in our area, near what is now the Pentagon. Following the First Battle of Bull Run, more fortifications were created, including Fort Craig (just north of Columbia Pike) and Fort Richardson (south of the Pike on the grounds of what is now the Army Navy Country Club. These were built "to command the plateau along which Columbia Pike passed. This turnpike was a major communication route to the heights of Munson's Hill four miles west of Arlington House."

Forts Berry (South Glebe Road at South 17th St. and Walter Reed Drive) and Barnard (South Pollard St. and Walter Reed Drive at the Fort Barnard Recreation Center) were other nearby forts, situated to protect the Four Mile Run and Glebe Road approaches to Alexandria. While the forts were never the scenes of battles, there were a few skirmishes, and they at times were active places with the arrival and restaging of units and a retreat for the weary and wounded returning from the battlefields.

Large landowners near the Columbia Heights area before the war include the Corbett, Young, Alexander and the Fraser families. The military occupation affected and confined the civilian population and destroyed the homes and crops of most of the residents and the nearby churches of Episcopalians and Methodists.

Some residents in our area would have attended the local Hunter's Chapel, then located at the crossroads of the turnpike and Glebe Road. The little church was used as a picket post, block house, commissary, and stable, and then dismantled by federal troops.

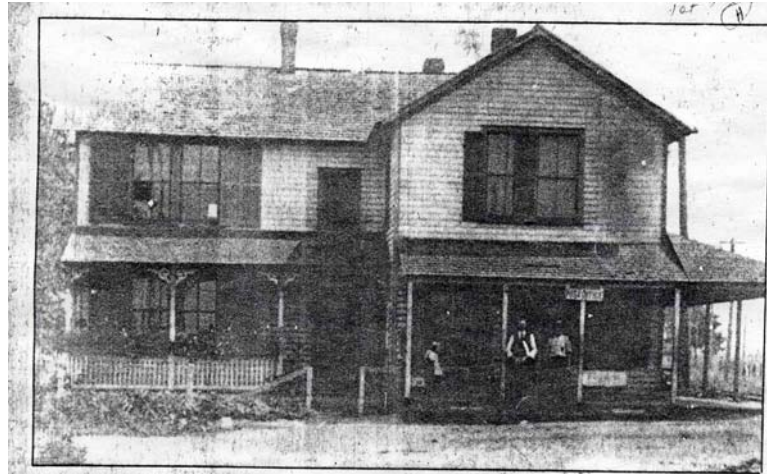
After the war, the Civil War Claims Commission held hearings and reimbursed somewhat those residents who could prove loyalty to the Union. Its records picture the devastating impact on the social, family and economic life of Arlington. Recovery would take many years; it wasn't until 1900 that the congregation of Hunter's Chapel received \$3,000 in compensation and rebuilt their church on the Bradbury tract (the northeast corner of the Pike and Walter Reed Drive). The church continues today a short distance away on Glebe Road as Arlington United Methodist Church.

Additional information on taxes and reparations following the Civil War for residents in our area are included in Appendix A. Also included in that section is a history of several pieces of land, their owners and the history of property developments in the Columbia Heights Civic Association area.



## Columbia Heights and the "Toonerville Trolley"

By the late 1890s, our nearby crossroads had become more the center of population on the Turnpike and housed the Post Office. When Alexandria County decided to move its court functions from the town, no longer part of the county, one of the areas contemplated was in our section of Columbia Pike. The final selection was land near where county offices are now located.



Arlington's first post office at Columbia Pike and South Walter Reed Drive, photo taken in August, 1916.

The stimulation for development in this area was the introduction, by the early 1900s, of a trolley line that connected Nauck to Rosslyn and other connections. The Columbia Station was situated where it crossed the Pike.



Originally, the Washington, Arlington and Falls Church Company, it became known as Arlington and Fairfax Railway Company, but seems to have been referred to as the "Nauck line" or the "toonerville trolley" by local residents.

The local stop, Columbia station, was also the ticket office, a post office in some years, and an eatery in an old farm house on the Cora E. McIntosh property (formerly Taylor farm) where **Eckerd's Pharmacy** is now located.

The trolley went through Ft. Myer to Rosslyn and offered commuting access to the city. Dr. Charles B. Munson traveled via trolley to his D.C. dental practice until he obtained one of the first autos in the community. While his home is slightly out of our Columbia Heights area, he was probably the most noted resident of the community before neighborhoods were defined by civic association boundaries. (See more information about Dr. Munson in Appendix A.)



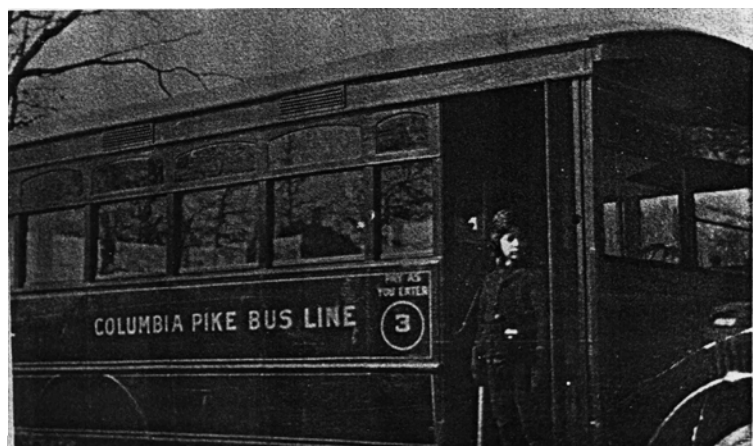
This home at 13th Street and Edgewood is one of the few remaining homes that were built at the turn of the century as part of the "Trolley Village" developed along the trolley route down what is now Walter Reed Drive.

By the 1913 period, the Columbia Heights area had about a dozen homes, and by the mid-twenties there appear to be approximately 24 homes or buildings in Columbia Heights, many still country homes but not necessarily farms, approached by lanes from the main thoroughfare, the Columbia Pike. The Munsons, Reeds, Corbetts, Macmillans, deLashmutts, Bradburys and others were old and interrelated families in our area, which was beginning to develop into a suburb of Washington, in large part due to the trolley system.

The trolley continued until the late 1930s and when it was closed part of its right-of-way became what we know now as Walter Reed Drive.

### The Pike - 1870s to Present Day

An article in the *Alexandria Gazette* of March 17, 1875 reports on the condition of our Pike: "The Arlington Turnpike Co., owing to the terrible condition of its road or perhaps to the ominous muttering of those who are so unfortunate as to have to travel it, have thrown its gate [toll gate] open until the road and the aforesaid mutters dry up." By 1905 cattle were no longer driven from Barcroft Rail Station to the abattoir on the eastern end of the Pike.



Robert Mays' Third Bus Line

The U.S. Department of Agriculture paved the road with concrete in 1928 west to Palmer's Hill in Barcroft as part of its experimental testing program. By 1919, this area had bus transportation when Robert L. May and his wife started a bus company to take residents to D.C. This developed into AB&W Bus Line, with service to Alexandria, Barcroft and Washington. Eventually this was replaced by Metro.

## The War Years

The World War II years brought more changes with the building of The Navy Annex (Federal Office Building No. 2) on the hill known locally as Round Top, and the Pentagon further east. The George Pickett Homes were built on the western part of St. John's Orphanage on the south side of Columbia Pike between South Scott Street and Court House Road. Built on concrete slabs, this was emergency housing during and subsequent to World War II, primarily for military personnel and families. The **Dorchester** and **Arlington Overlook** now occupy that site.



Lenora Faye Huber in the Picket Project on Jan. 3, 1946. The military housing included clothes' lines in each yard.



The Huber children in a photo showing St. John the Baptist Church at Columbia Pike and Scott Street.

An accompanying photograph of the Huber children at the Pickett Homes shows the St. John Baptist Church in the background across Columbia Pike. This church is unrelated to the orphanage that had earlier occupied the Pickett Homes property.

The Columbia Heights and surrounding neighborhoods are well reported in a locally published newspaper oriented to the Columbia Pike Neighborhood, **Columbia News**, started in 1941 at 1504 South Oakland Street and resumed in the years 1944 and 1945. Eugene Beard is listed as publisher for both volumes.

The paper notes that the county is developing toward the south and west. "With the beginning of the development of Arlington Village and the

business interests at Columbia Pike and Fillmore Streets there has continued a steady activity of construction along the Pike and in the residential section adjacent thereto. The new theatre and shopping center at Fillmore, and the recent development of Westmont, including a number of homes and the 'most modern shopping center to be found anywhere' all planned before defense activity began and now utilized to relieve congestion of the City of Washington." Additional details from this publication are included in Appendix A.



Bob & Edith's Diner is an historic business on Columbia Pike.



The Texaco Station was installed during the same era as Bob & Edith's Diner.

Housing needs were critical during periods of rapid growth in the country, and particularly during World War II. Two garden apartments in Columbia Heights have recently been placed on the National Register: Walter Reed Gardens (now the **Commons of Arlington**) and **Arlington Village**. [A detailed history of both Arlington Village and The Commons of Arlington is contained in Appendix A.] The Historic Preservation Coordinator described the reason for their importance in a period and architectural context:

From 1936 through 1952 garden apartment and low-rise apartment complexes were a dominant building type in Arlington County. The garden apartment developments were built for the growing influx of Federal employees who came first to work on the New Deal programs of the 1930s and then the WWII and post war era. These projects offered unusual solid construction and a generous amount of open space never before used for working family housing. These projects were among the first FHA insured developments and became prototypes for similar developments across the country.



Other apartment housing was added to the Columbia Pike area to accommodate a rapidly growing population in the metropolitan area. The Scott Terrace section has **Arlington Overlook Apartments** at 1201 South Scott Street, built in 1960 and managed by the Charles E. Smith Company. **The Dorchester** and **The Dorchester Garden Apartments** were built in 1959 and 1956 and are Reinsch family properties.

The area between Edgewood and Arlington Village is referred to on older maps as **Arlington Hills** and was developed on the old Buckley property. Single family homes here and in other subdivisions in Columbia Heights were built between 1900 and 1972, with most in the mid-thirties. The house at 2810 13th St. appears from photographs and subdivision plans to have been moved there to make room on the Oscar C. Dresser plot for the building of Walter Reed Gardens (now the Commons of Arlington). The subdivision on 16th Street South across from the Walter Reed recreation facility is called Foxhall, developed by Ashton Jones in the mid-thirties. One house there (2804) was built in 1904 and several have been built in recent years.

## **Post War Planning**

Wartime construction of housing, government offices and some businesses stimulated a land use planning study in 1958, which highlighted the traffic congestion, inadequate parking, and the need for more commercial services. Some of us may not have our homes today had the recommended Columbia Pike by-pass been built to route traffic around the business area. Subsequent discussions considered Columbia Pike as a possible route for the Metro subway. While that never materialized, a Metro tunnel junction was built at the Pentagon to accommodate a future subway line.

One of the more recent developments in the Columbia Heights area is the **Barkley Condominium** at 1016 South Wayne Street, opened in 1982 by Barkley Associates of the Richmarr Construction Corporation. This is located what had been the Graham property. **Fairway Village** was developed about 1985 on a portion of Arlington Village property, along with a vacation of a portion of South Barton Street and 16th Street South in 1985.

The Walter Reed Recreation Center was built in the early 1950s after the county bought the parcels of land on which it sits. The Center has served the Columbia Heights community for classes, recreation activity, as a polling place and for meetings. Diane Mason, daughter of Ozella

Hickman, tells us that it hosted a teen club that began in 1957 and which had a football team, was open after school and longer on Fridays and Saturdays for arts and crafts, a band, dances and other activities. The Center also sponsored hayrides, roller skating, bowling and other excursions for young people. On Friday evenings in the summer movies were shown on the baseball field. The club had about 100 members and attracted teens from other places in the county because of the nice place to dance.

The Center is now closed and scheduled for demolition and the Columbia Heights Civic Association has worked with and heard from planners and developers of the green-building replacement.



**The Walter Reed Rec Center being demolished (2004).**

The Columbia Heights community has a long history and one that continues to evolve through planned development on its main thoroughfare, Columbia Pike. Vestiges of its past are with us today in the configuration of land use and its development, the place names of past and present, the services we anticipate from our local commercial areas and the layout of its roads.

The area has seen land change from large farms, to garden market farms, to country estates, to a village-like community, to an urban neighborhood. Its history reflects the frequent change of ownership of land, the compiling and subdivision of tracts, the intermarriage of many area families, and a persistent theme of the residents of our area in improving their neighborhood, whether rural or suburban.

During the 1990s, our area once again saw major changes with an influx in immigrants, coming from Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, Europe and Africa. Children of Patrick Henry Elementary School celebrate over 50 countries of origin at their annual "International Dinner."

Members of its civic association have been involved in activities that promote and plan for the safety, transportation needs, appearance, local businesses and the quality of life in their neighborhood.

The following sections of this report list conclusions about the major issues facing our community, with specific recommendations for improvement. These recommendations are based on the survey that was conducted in the Neighborhood, as well as subsequent discussions with residents.

## Streets and Sidewalks

There were few issues that involved major repairs to streets and sidewalks, with several notable exceptions. Most streets in our area have sidewalks, installed by homeowner associations and building managers. However, we have several side streets that still need sidewalks.

The Columbia Pike Revitalization Plan describes a comprehensive overhaul of sidewalks along the Pike and leading to the adjacent neighborhoods. Gateways into the several distinctly different smaller communities within the Neighborhood need to be created and scaled appropriately. These three major groups, in descending order of importance, are dependent on pedestrian connections: Apartments, Condominiums and Single-Family homes.

Pedestrian traffic from the Neighborhood often terminates at the mass transit nodes on Columbia Pike. However, a significant volume of people cross Columbia Pike heading to the major community resources at the Elementary School and Library. Sidewalk repair, reconstruction and maintenance must reflect these volumes.

During negotiations with the community for the new Walter Reed Community Center design, County staff evaluated sidewalks (existing and non-existing) throughout the neighborhood—even as far north as Columbia Pike. The intention was to ensure safe and adequate access to the Center. The completed study recommended that many existing sidewalks needed to be widened and utility poles removed. One recommendation was for a sidewalk where none now exists: the short block of Garfield between South 16<sup>th</sup> Street and South 16<sup>th</sup> Road, to provide safe access to the new center for residents living on South 16<sup>th</sup> Road.

Other streets lacking sidewalks include:

- The west side of South Cleveland Street, between Columbia Pike and 13th Road.
- Both sides of 11th Street, between South Cleveland and South Edgewood.
- Both sides of 12th Street, between South Cleveland and Walter Reed Drive.
- Both sides of 13th Street, between S. Cleveland Street and South Edgewood.



In general, County-owned sidewalks do not receive the same amount of maintenance attention given by the condominiums and apartment owners in the community.

As also noted in our "Beautification" section, throughout our Neighborhood there are utility poles located in the middle of sidewalks throughout the Neighborhood. This is readily evident on Walter Reed Drive, for example. Burying overhead utility lines would eliminate this problem, particularly on thoroughfares.

Below is a map indicating the location of poles.



Side street bus stations are also an area that attracted the attention of respondents on our surveys. In some areas, bus stops are not covered, providing no protection to commuters from the elements. The ART stops are poorly identified and have no protective covers or enclosures. In those areas where we do have covered bus stops, e.g., those along Walter Reed and Columbia Pike, residents complained that the bus stops were dirty and trash was not regularly collected.

## Recommendations:

- **Recommendation #1:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges the County to install sidewalks where none now exist. This is particularly evident on 11th, 12th, 13th, 16th, South Cleveland and South Edgewood Streets. In addition, County staff has already approved construction of a new sidewalk on Garfield between South 16<sup>th</sup> Street and South 16<sup>th</sup> Road.
- **Recommendation #2:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends removing overhead utility poles in the middle of sidewalks, and burying the lines. (See also Recommendation #50, in “Beautification.”)<sup>1</sup>
- **Recommendation #3:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends providing covered bus stops, when practical, and providing trash removal and clean up of these areas on a regular basis.<sup>2</sup>
- **Recommendation #4:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends that the County study pedestrian traffic at the 16th Street and Walter Reed intersection and into the redeveloped Walter Reed Community Park, and design solutions for safe crossing of the streets.<sup>3</sup>
- **Recommendation #5:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends that the County study pedestrian traffic crossing on Columbia Pike and assure adequate designation of crosswalks,

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<sup>1</sup> County staff notes that overhead utility wires and poles located in the middle of sidewalks and undergrounding the lines has been completed along Columbia Pike from South Court House Road to South Walter Reed Drive. Removal of additional utility poles along Columbia Pike from Walter Reed to South Oakland Street (South side) is part of a project that will begin in 2005. No other plans for undergrounding are currently planned, and additional overhead utility wires may take place if redevelopment occurs.

<sup>2</sup> County staff notes that Metrobus and ART bus has existing covered bus stops on South Barton Street (east and westbound) and Courthouse Road (eastbound). Walter Reed Drive stops are currently under study for expanding improvements. Staff has completed installation of trash receptacles at bus stops on Columbia Pike. Staff also reports work on a plan for “Super Stops” for Columbia Pike.

<sup>3</sup> County staff reports that it will plan to study this intersection and bring the recommendations back to Columbia Heights Civic Association.



install traffic lights on demand, provide safe crossing times and enforce traffic laws—including jaywalking—to protect pedestrians.<sup>4</sup>

- **Recommendation #6:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends improving sidewalk pavement conditions (i.e., reduce water ponding at curb cuts, repair surface, repair dislocations at joints) and also work with Neighborhood residents to improve removal of seasonal debris.<sup>5</sup>
- **Recommendation #7.** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends widening some walks to reflect pedestrian gateway status. The County should develop and enforce regulations accommodating sidewalk activities, such as cafés or art shows, to enhance pedestrian traffic, slow adjacent traffic (through friction and calming) and provide mixed use of the sidewalks in the Neighborhood portion of the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization (CPRO).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> County Staff reports that new pedestrian signals are scheduled to be installed at Columbia Pike and South Scott Street. Staff has installed Pedestrian count down signals at South Walter Reed Drive and South Court House Road, which will be added to all pedestrian crossings throughout the Columbia Pike corridor. Staff also reports that it will be looking at signal timing currently provided for pedestrian crossing and adjust as necessary.

<sup>5</sup> Staff reports that there is a sidewalk maintenance program with a three-year cycle for repair and maintenance for neighborhood sidewalks. Staff says it will work with residents on any tripping hazards or other projects requiring more immediate attention. Staff will deliver a brochure to inform the community about sidewalk maintenance to the Columbia Heights Civic Association to distribute to residents.

<sup>6</sup> County staff has asked the neighborhood to identify specific locations and to refer to the DOT for follow-up. Staff reports that the long-term plan for Columbia Pike calls for wider sidewalks as part of the Form Based Code development, and streetscape plans. Staff asks that the neighborhood work with County Code Enforcement to better provide adequate pedestrian passage at café locations.



## Traffic

Three features of Columbia Heights directly affect traffic patterns. First, because there are so many essential services located outside our Neighborhood, this increases traffic for our residents—pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular. Second, we have a very high percentage of single residents, and households with commuters, both of which correlate with a high volume of traffic through and out of the neighborhood. And third, we experience “cut-through” traffic from commuters attempting to avoid traffic congestion on the major streets on our borders.

Columbia Heights is bounded on two sides by major thoroughfares: Columbia Pike to the North and Walter Reed Drive to the West. These are heavily traveled arteries, especially during rush hour. The streets within our civic association are more residential in nature. However, some areas encounter speeding traffic on a regular basis. As a response to such threatening traffic, a four-way stop was installed at the corner of 13th Road and South Edgewood in 2003, after a long and concerted lobbying effort by residents of Arlington Village.

Traffic calming measures, speed humps, are being evaluated for Cleveland Street, and two yield signs on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets were changed to stop signs. These streets are experiencing speeding problems during the morning commute as drivers cut through the residential area to avoid the congestion at the Columbia Pike-Walter Reed intersection.

Residents on 16<sup>th</sup> Street, 13<sup>th</sup> Road, South Barton and Edgewood report similar problems, though traffic data do not support the complaints. Many of these roads have nose-in parking on association property adjoining the road. On several spots on Edgewood and South Barton, rises and dips in the road make it hard for drivers and persons backing into the road to see one another. Trash collection vehicles four times a week make the traffic problems worse.

Residents on South 16<sup>th</sup> Street complain that their street is used as a shortcut to Columbia Pike east, off Walter Reed Drive. The southeast corner of this intersection is shaped so that drivers barely need to slow down when they turn off Walter Reed Drive onto South 16<sup>th</sup> Street. Recently several neighbors witnessed a van traveling so fast on South 16th Street that it killed a neighborhood cat—an accident they felt would not have occurred if the driver had been driving the speed limit. Neighbors have consistently expressed concern for children crossing this street, and

the threat of hit-and-run events with far more serious consequences. One solution is a traffic nub with a more acute angle to the turn. A traffic hump installed just before Garfield would also slow down eastbound drivers.

The community has identified traffic management as one of its top concerns. Speeding along Columbia Pike, without regard to pedestrian traffic, is an often-mentioned concern, as is speeding along the residential cut-through streets, particularly those that intersect with Columbia Pike and Walter Reed Drive.

While the community appears not to be overly concerned with general noise in the Columbia Heights neighborhood, “noise from traffic” elicited the highest negative response from those who find noise to be a chronic problem.

Residents expressed their concerns with the presence of cut-through traffic, particularly as it relates to excessive speeding by vehicles that cut through. For example, the community has suggested installing speed humps from the Columbia Pike/South Barton Street intersection to the South 16th Street/South Walter Reed intersection.

Of special concern is the area of South 16th Street at Garfield, where school buses stop to pick up and drop off children in morning and afternoon, and the entrance to the Walter Reed Recreation Center, including the parking lot to the temporary trailer. Cautionary playground signs around the park are no longer displayed.

As mentioned, speed humps appear to be the favored traffic-calming method in areas where speeding is a problem on residential streets. Also favored are four-way stops, more visible crosswalks for pedestrian traffic, positioning of mobile electronic speed indicators, and increased speeding fines for residential streets. Some residents expressed an interest in forming a community speed patrol under the Arlington County Community Policing Program.

Neighbors have strong opinions on options that they would not support. Limiting vehicular access to neighborhoods does not appear to be a favored traffic-calming method, nor does a switch to one-way streets.

The community identified the Columbia Pike corridor as another area rife with traffic problems, primarily in terms of entering and exiting from side roads and shopping centers, and lack of consideration for pedestrians. Residents suggested creating a center/left turn lane for all of

Columbia Pike, though turn lanes currently exist in numerous places. Several difficult spots include: entering and exiting Columbia Pike at South Cleveland Street (at CVS Pharmacy); at South Edgewood Street (at Attila's Restaurant); and at South Scott Street, where a traffic light might be helpful.

## Recommendations

- **Recommendation #8:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends conducting a full study of traffic patterns and traffic calming options in our Neighborhood. We support such traffic calming strategies as speed humps and calming circles.<sup>7</sup>
- **Recommendation #9:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports creating a center/left turn lane for the entire Columbia Pike thoroughfare.<sup>8</sup>
- **Recommendation #10:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports implement practices to slow speed on residential streets, especially to allow for safe entry of nose-in parked cars, and to reduce speed in areas where there are short sight distances or congestion.<sup>9</sup>
- **Recommendation #11:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports revising the traffic plan around the Walter Reed Park to accommodate the drop off and pick up of park users. We also recommend collaborating with the School District Transportation provider to create a safe pick up and discharge point.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> County staff reports that it will collect speed data along neighborhood streets that are referred to staff. Speed data will be collected, evaluated and ranked. Staff will determine if the street meets the criteria for traffic calming measures, and how they rank in terms of problem severity, which determines when these streets can be examined in detail. Staff reports that the County Board recently approved a traffic calming project on South Cleveland Street between Columbia Pike and 13<sup>th</sup> Road South.

<sup>8</sup> County Staff reports that the Columbia Pike Street Space Planning Task Force recommended a center turn lane/median for the entire Columbia Pike. The recommendation was adopted by the County Board on February 10, 2004. The recommendations are now part of the Master Transportation Plan.

<sup>9</sup> Please refer to footnote 10.

<sup>10</sup> County DOT staff will work with the Department of Parks and Recreation to accommodate the community needs through the design of the park. A school bus stop exists there now, and Arlington Public Schools will be consulted as a new design plan is being developed.

- **Recommendation #12:** Columbia Heights Civic Association believes that traffic-calming strategies should be bicycle friendly. If streets are closed to cars for traffic calming purposes, they should be open to bicycles.<sup>11</sup>
- **Recommendation #13:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports repaving streets. Most of the streets in the neighborhood have not been repaved in over a decade. The County should identify public streets that need repair and schedule repair and repaving. Any redevelopment should include proper maintenance of private access roads.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> County Staff reports that traffic calming plans and measures are intended to be friendly to other road users, such as cyclists.

<sup>12</sup> County Staff reports that a street paving and maintenance program has a three-year cycle for repaving and maintenance throughout neighborhoods. This program operates on a rotating basis to insure a comprehensive service delivery approach. They recommend that residents contact DOT to request repaving of streets within the neighborhood.

## Transportation

The Columbia Heights community survey indicates a heavy use of public transportation. Over half of all households reported one commuter, and about 24% of households had two commuters. This is especially significant, given that half of all households contain only one person.

**Metrobus.** About 40% of respondents used public buses. The most often-cited bus route was Bus No. 16 and its many variants (which travel to and from the Pentagon and Pentagon City metro stops). Almost everyone who reported using the bus rides No. 16, with the 16Y bus (with service into Washington, D.C.) being cited by a few residents. Other bus routes listed included Bus Routes 10B (from Ballston to Walter Reed Drive), 13 (linking the Pentagon to National Airport and downtown DC), 23 (traveling Walter Reed to Ballston and Tyson's Corner) and 24 (linking Pentagon to Ballston via Columbia Pike).

**Arlington Transit (ART).** The ART #74 bus travels through our neighborhood with stops at South 16th & Glebe, Walter Reed and South 16th, Barton & Columbia Pike, going to Pentagon City. The ART #31 bus stops at Columbia Pike and Glebe Road and goes to the Court House Metro.

**Bike Paths.** At present there are no official "bike" paths through our neighborhood. However, the Columbia Pike Street Space plan, developed from February 2003-February 2004 and adopted by the County on Feb. 10, 2004, includes limited access for bicycles along Columbia Pike, with street bike lanes in both directions on Columbia Pike east of Wayne Street, and shared use paths on the North side of Columbia Pike, and a possible bike route along 12th Street (or 11th Street) between Walter Reed and Cleveland Streets.

Other types of transportation include automobile, bicycles and walking. Reduction of commuting time was a major concern to residents.

### Recommendations:

- **Recommendation #14:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends extending Metrorail up the Pike as an effective

transportation strategy (supported by over 75% of survey respondents).<sup>13</sup>

- **Recommendation #15:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends more frequent bus service, faster service with shorter trip times, and more convenient bus routes.<sup>14</sup>
- **Recommendation #16:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends lowering bus and rail fares and creating easier access to bus schedules (recommended by about 40% of respondents).<sup>15</sup>
- **Recommendation #17:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends carpool listings at apartments or in condominium newsletters as one strategy to ease transportation issues (recommended by 24% of respondents).
- **Recommendation #18:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports the street space plan as it relates to bicycles.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> County staff reports that WMATA, along with Arlington County, is currently looking at long-range transit alternatives in the Columbia Pike corridor. The technology alternatives include bus rapid transit, light rail or street cars. Metrorail in this corridor was not recommended in previous planning efforts, including the Columbia Pike Initiative process and the Street Space Planning Task Force.

<sup>14</sup> County Staff reports that it has been working with CPRO to increase pike ride frequency on Columbia Pike. As part of the Pike Ride Initiative there has been the recent development and addition of the 16Y, Art 73 and 74 bus routes. These routes were added to Columbia Pike to assist in service delivery. Staff reports that it continues to adjust service to improve responsiveness and user convenience.

<sup>15</sup> County Staff reports that Metrorail and bus fares are set by the Metro Board of Directors. Transit and bus schedules are available on-line, by the web, and in brochures.

<sup>16</sup> County Staff reports that Recommendation #18 will be implemented as redevelopment occurs along Columbia Pike. Funding for parallel bike routes is included in the CIP for 2006.

## Parking

The major source of parking trouble, as expressed by Columbia Heights residents in the survey is overwhelmingly due to neighborhood overcrowding. The density of residents in Columbia Heights is very high, as demonstrated in our demographics. Less than 20% of residents have designated parking spots. Those residents who do not have designated parking often find it difficult to find parking for their vehicles. The majority of respondents indicate a desire to have designated parking, (similar to Douglas Park neighborhood plan) which is viewed as an effective parking method.

Survey responses also point to the problem of the lack of additional parking spaces for a resident's second vehicle, or a guest's vehicle. To see evidence of this overcrowding and general lack of parking, all one has to do is drive through the neighborhood streets, especially in the evenings when residents are at home and their cars are parked. Along South Barton, South Wayne, South Courthouse or South Scott streets, where there are multi-unit complexes, frequently there are very few street parking spaces available.

As more housing units are built (i.e., along South Courthouse) there will be even fewer street spaces available. The current development plans for new units along South Courthouse call for the elimination of the parking lot at the intersection of South Courthouse and South 12th Street, as well as the elimination of several street parking spots along South Courthouse Road.

As the Columbia Pike Revitalization Plan begins to be implemented and development increases, the neighborhood wishes to protect residential parking. As businesses begin to attract more patrons along Columbia Pike, it is feared that "overflow" parking may intrude on the already-burdened residential parking areas.

Another area of concern is that parking between and behind the shops along Columbia Pike. It appears to be, at best, disorganized, and at worst, dangerous. The Columbia Heights Civic Association would like to see improved parking and loading areas for commercial establishments, which will serve to attract more customers traveling the roadways where these businesses are located, and to improve both the image and the safety of our neighborhood and the County.

We are also concerned with parking problems at the Walter Reed Recreation Center. The center's parking lots usually become full during its events, and the overflow parking directly affects nearby residents.

In recent years the County has installed bicycle parking at fairly regular intervals up and down Columbia Pike. We support the expansion of these parking facilities into nearby side streets.

### **Recommendations:**

- **Recommendation #19:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports programs using neighborhood parking permits for residents.<sup>17</sup>
- **Recommendation #20:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges county planners to require that any new residential or high-rise development include plans for adequate underground or on-site parking for all new residents and guests, and that current parking spaces should not be eliminated.<sup>18</sup>
- **Recommendation #21:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports improved parking and loading areas for businesses along Columbia Pike, which will help businesses and prevent "overflow" parking in the residential areas.<sup>19</sup>
- **Recommendation #22:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports upgrades in parking for the Walter Reed Community Center to prevent evening "overflow" parking on residential streets.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> County Staff reports that there is currently a parking strategy study underway throughout Arlington County. Key issues are the revision of the Residential Zone Parking Program and its requirements. The results will be released in January 2005.

<sup>18</sup> County Staff reports that parking provisions will be considered with all new development proposals submitted to the County. Opportunities for providing additional parking spaces to accommodate retail and neighborhood needs, in addition to that of the new development, as Staff claims was accomplished with the recently-adopted Columbia Station Project, will be considered.

<sup>19</sup> County Staff reports that there is a parking strategy included in the Form Based Code identifying minimum and maximum parking requirements. Each new project will be required to provide a specific number of off-street parking spaces. Form Based Code Principals and Regulations were approved by the County Board in February, 2003. The new Form Based Code requires developers to provide side or rear service entries to keep service deliveries from occurring on Columbia Pike.

<sup>20</sup> DOT Staff reports that it supports this recommendation but notes that the Walter Reed Community Center is owned by the County and County Parks Services. The current plans, when implemented, will more than double the amount of off-street parking spaces that existed prior to construction.



- **Recommendation #23:** Columbia Heights Civic Association will work with County officials, including its Code Enforcement Office, to mitigate parking concerns for new development.
- **Recommendation #24:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports additional parking for bicycles. Redevelopment projects outside the Columbia Pike Revitalization District should use the same guidance for bicycle parking as in the form-based code.<sup>21</sup>
- **Recommendation #25:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports the creation of rear service entry for loading and unloading to serve new commercial establishments.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> County Staff notes that bicycle parking along Columbia Pike is required as part of the Form Based Code Requirement. A bike parking requirement exists for all site plan development projects in Arlington. By-Right projects are requested to provide parking, too, but have the right not to provide them.

<sup>22</sup> County Staff notes that the new Form Based Code requires developers to provide side or rear service entries to keep service deliveries from occurring on Columbia Pike.

## Public Safety

Public safety encompasses police, fire and emergency medical services (EMS). In Arlington, the Arlington County Fire Department (ACFD) provides EMS. The Arlington County Sheriff's Office, while primarily responsible for jail and court operations, is staffed by certified law enforcement officers who also perform traffic enforcement in the County. The following table catalogs crime in Columbia Heights for the last two years.

**Table 2**  
**Crimes in Columbia Heights<sup>23</sup>**

<b>Major Offenses</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Homicide	0	0
Rape	0	0
Robbery	7	6
Aggravated Assault	1	1
Burglary	5	5
Larceny	73	60
Auto Theft	13	29
<b>Selected Minor Offenses</b>		
Simple Assault	23	25
Vandalism	37	27
Exposure	6	0
Peeping Tom	0	0
Drunk in Public	16	13
Disorderly	1	1

### Survey Results

Overall, crime has decreased from 2002 to 2003, with the exception of assault and auto theft. The resident survey conducted for this plan generally echoed the statistics provided by the police, with the exception that residents noted the presence of gangs and vagrants in the neighborhood and complained about a lack of County responsiveness in dealing with them. Residents also noted problems with rats, mosquito control, and the need for increased traffic enforcement. Some residents

<sup>23</sup> Source: Arlington County Police Department

also noted the need for increased fire prevention and inspection activities, especially in condominium complexes.

Many of the problems noted, including gangs, vagrants and auto theft, can be mitigated partially with better street lighting. (See recommendations in the "Beautification" section to follow.)

Additionally, traffic-calming strategies, including traffic light synchronization, can be employed to address speeding issues. Our neighborhood is already meeting with County officials to discuss strategies for specific areas within Columbia Heights.

Finally, a core component of any public safety enhancement plan must be enforcement. This includes an emphasis on traffic enforcement, both active and passive (i.e., red light and speed cameras) involving both the police department, sheriff's office, and community-oriented policing groups.

Vagrancy and the presence of gangs in our area are of great concern to many of our residents. Many noted that police were not dealing with continued vagrancy in Cleveland Park (see "Parks and Recreation" section to follow). Arlington County Police held a public meeting in 2004 regarding the presence of gangs in our general area, but residents don't have a sense that this is an issue that is under control.

Other residents are concerned that buildings in our area--many of them older structures--may need fire inspections. Other structural concerns include inspection of water lines and sewers for the presence of rats. Enforcement to eliminate building violation and rat infestation should be initiated by County staff, including fire inspections of multi-family dwellings by the Fire Marshal's Office and full code inspections of multi-family dwellings by Community Code Enforcement. Upgraded water and sewer management strategies will also have a positive impact on the local rodent problems.

Residents in our area are also concerned about the mosquito population, particularly because of recent outbreaks of the West Nile virus in many parts of the East Coast. Last year mosquito populations were very high in those areas where water flows through the community, e.g., in the Walter Reed park and adjacent to property owned by The Commons of Arlington and Arlington Village. The County's Mosquito Control program should monitor these areas, treat all standing water, hold public meetings with local residents to inform them of mosquito mitigation measures, and

work with management teams of the various building complexes to eliminate standing water from eaves and other areas.

It is generally agreed that the Neighborhood would benefit greatly from a Neighborhood Watch Program.

### **Recommendations:**

- **Recommendation #26:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports better street lighting throughout our area as a means to mitigate crime.<sup>24</sup>
- **Recommendation #27:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports traffic calming strategies, combined with traffic enforcement--both active and passive--to cut down on speeding within our civic association.<sup>25</sup>
- **Recommendation #28:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports fire inspections for all multi-family dwellings throughout the Neighborhood over five years. We encourage County officials to work with managements to correct any fire code violations to improve safety for our residents.
- **Recommendation #29:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports the health and building code inspection of all single-family properties for junk or abandoned property that harbor rodents or collects water for mosquito breeding.
- **Recommendation #30:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports upgraded water and sewer management strategies to reduce or eliminate the local rodent population.
- **Recommendation #31:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges the County's Mosquito Control Program managers to monitor streams and look for standing water in the Neighborhood, hold public information meetings on mitigation measures, and work with

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<sup>24</sup> County Staff reports that it will consult with existing street light studies and determine if the area meets the residential development requirements. If the standards are not met, the civic association will be contacted and measures implemented to upgrade or install additional lighting.

<sup>25</sup> County Staff reports that it will collect speed data along all neighborhood streets that are referred to staff. (See also Footnote 10).

building managers and single-family property owners to eliminate standing water wherever it might occur.

- **Recommendation #32:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges County law enforcement to take firm action to deal with petty crime, including vagrancy. The Cleveland Park is the area cited most often by residents as needing attention.
- **Recommendation #33:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports the creation of an active, collaborative community-oriented police program. Such a policing program would involve business, residents and police officers.
- **Recommendation #34:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends that police and code officials monitor current and proposed clubs/restaurants in the Columbia Pike Redevelopment area for “hang out” and noise complaints, enforcing actions with the owners to discourage gangs, vagrants and noise issues.

## Parks and Recreation

One of the most pressing problems in our civic association is the lack of public open or recreation space. Because our area is so heavily developed, there are few opportunities to develop new parkland. This is particularly acute in the eastern portion of Columbia Heights, where thousands of apartment units were built with almost no land around them.

Currently we have three public parks in our area:

**Walter Reed Community Park.** On the corner of Walter Reed and 16th Street, this park has a children's playground and areas for tennis, basketball and soccer. Like many recreational areas, litter is a problem and several questionnaire respondents remarked that trash pick-up could be more frequent.

A history of the park is included in Appendix A, which includes Columbia Heights Civic Association's involvement in the 1970s and 1980s in community plans to incorporate existing houses into parkland. Over the past several years the County has created a plan for a new "Walter Reed Community Center, which is envisioned to be a flagship project in a series of "green" buildings in Arlington. Planners hope to provide "an urban oasis within a high-density residential district." The proposal for the new 30,000-square-foot building divides it into three main activities areas: active, leisure learning and adult daycare.

As of May, 2004, ground has been broken on the new building. The active area will contain a gym, teen lounge and game room. The academic area will consist of a divisible multipurpose room, canteen/café, arts and craft studio, dance studio, kitchen and a senior's lounge. The Adult Day Health Care will contain three activity areas: a private garden, rest area and the appropriate support services.

Through negotiations, the County has made a number of promises:

- There will be a Neighborhood Advisory Committee for the whole operation
- There will be a buffer between the redeveloped property and The Commons of Arlington
- The west end of the property will be beautifully landscaped, making it impossible to be torn up by soccer practices and games
- Recreation programs will close promptly at 9:00 p.m. Period.

- The “wild” ravine at the back of the property will be enhanced, cared for, and will be overlooked by a patio area attached to the rear of the Center and accessed from both inside and outside the Center.
- There will be a walking/jogging path around the entire premises.
- The small parking lot west of the tennis courts will be closed and will become part of the park landscaping.
- The new 94-space parking lot will be created between Walter Reed Drive and the west end of the new building. According to County staff, that size will satisfy all parking code requirements generated by the new programs. Ingress and egress will be from Walter Reed Drive, relieving South 16<sup>th</sup> Street from increased pressure and congestion.
- The tot lot will be moved to the west end of the new building and will have new equipment.

Comments by County Staff in response to this report dispute several points in the list above, including: plans or funding for landscaping; agreed-upon hours of operation; and the creation of a buffer zone between the park and the Commons of Arlington. The Columbia Heights Civic Association disputes the allegation that there was no agreement with County Staff on these issues. We worked with County Staff on a community process to develop programs and plans for the park beginning in 1999. During that process the community made very clear recommendations. PRCR failed to inform the community that it did not put forward our recommendations to the County Board. Furthermore, they now actively deny that these agreements had ever been made.

In addition, promises were made to the Civic Association that community members would be consulted in the identification of trees to be destroyed or moved, which were never kept. County Staff marked trees for destruction that were supposed to be moved, and then offered no explanation for their destruction. At least one tree—an upright lace-leafed Japanese maple—was transplanted in the middle of August, 2004, and will most likely die from heat. The original plan was to move this tree in April, at the appropriate time of year for transplantation. The Columbia Heights Civic Association will protest the destruction of our trees and the unprofessional conduct of County Staff members.

The park redevelopment has progressed slowly and indications are that the park will be left incomplete for an undetermined amount of time



(i.e., landscaping and some construction).<sup>26</sup> The County envisioned that the Walter Reed Community Center would become the center of the community. However, its location on the periphery of the Neighborhood, and its use by the larger community has the potential to increase traffic, noise and parking burden in the Neighborhood. It is essential that the Neighborhood Advisory Committee is put in place and establishes a defined, respected role in the process.

Below is a map showing the location of the Walter Reed Park.



**Cleveland Park.** Located on the corner of South Cleveland and 11th Street, this little park has been grossly neglected by Arlington County Park Department. Litter is not picked up, and a vagrant recently took up residence within the park, which was the subject of many complaints by residents participating in our community survey.<sup>27</sup> There is also sentiment expressed by residents to honor Ruth Stewart, who was responsible for its creation. This park could provide a unifying focal point for the single-family and condominium residents in the west end of the Neighborhood.

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<sup>26</sup> It should be noted that construction on the Walter Reed Community Center has begun in earnest, with increased activity coincident with this report.

<sup>27</sup> County Staff reports that this park receives two visits by maintenance staff each week, usually on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Staff inspects the grounds, picks up any litter on the ground and empties the trash can. If neighbors observe problems with litter in the park, they are encouraged to call DPRCR so maintenance staff can be notified.

**Towers Park.** Located at 801 South Scott Street, this county-owned and operated park is the only public space in the eastern portion of our civic association. This park is available to the residents of the high-rise apartments, but constitutes a very small green space. Given the high density of residents, the acquisition of more community open space is a high priority.

In addition, we have some natural areas that are contained within existing homeowner association property. For example, there is a natural ravine in the Walter Reed Park, which extends into Arlington Village. Many regard this natural area as a major feature of the community. Where it passes through the park it is underdeveloped, and where it passed through the golf course, it meanders in buffer area and is heavily overgrown. In the Arlington Village, it is managed as a "natural area" where fallen tree limbs are allowed to naturally decay, but litter and invasive plants are removed. There is a naturalized walking path in a segment of the ravine beside the small creek.

Some of the apartment complexes built in that area of our civic association have made attempts to create small playgrounds for the children who live there. Arlington View Terrace, for example, has a small playground, as does Dorchester Apartments. However, these are not enough. Children need areas to engage in outdoor games; families need areas to enjoy picnics.

Both Arlington Village and the Commons of Arlington communities have swimming pools for their members. Arlington Village maintains outdoor tennis courts.

We encourage the County to think creatively about the creation of new parkland, particularly in the eastern section. The open space and natural edges of the Army Navy Country Club, which is in this area, provides green space and natural habitat, and is the single largest parcel adjoining the neighborhood.

### **Sharing the History of Our Area**

Our civic association area has a rich history, as demonstrated in this report. We need to incorporate into community planning ways and means to maintain and celebrate our history. One way to do this is to incorporate this history into our new Walter Reed Community Center.

## Recommendations:

- **Recommendation #35:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges Arlington County Parks Department to clean up Cleveland Park, remove vagrants, and prevent further decline. Park planning is an opportunity for collaboration among community groups. Arlington County is encouraged to consider renaming the park after Ruth Stewart, its benefactor.<sup>28</sup>
- **Recommendation #36:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges the County to evaluate the Towers Park and how that space may best serve the residents who live in the apartment complexes in the eastern portion of our neighborhood.
- **Recommendation #37:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges the County to move forward to complete the renovation of the Walter Reed Community Center Project, possibly procuring bids from other “green” landscaping and construction companies. Neighborhood residents should be called upon to help complete the project, along the lines of the community groups such as Greater DC Cares and Habitat for Humanity.
- **Recommendation #38:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports the creation of a Neighborhood Advisory Committee to oversee the creation and administration of the Walter Reed Community Center, including the selection of new playground equipment and landscaping.<sup>29</sup>
- **Recommendation #39:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges the County to assess all trees and shrubs in the Walter Reed Community Park for disease and infestation. Trees and bushes with poor health should either be treated or removed, as appropriate. If trees must be removed, the County should move forward with plans

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<sup>28</sup> See previous footnote regarding trash pickup. County Staff notes that if the community wishes to rename Cleveland Park, that process can be initiated by contacting Parks and Recreation staff.

<sup>29</sup> County Staff reports that, during the planning stages for the community center, a workgroup of community members and staff collaborated on the selection of programs and the Center’s operating plan. When the playground design commences, the community will be given an opportunity to participate. This is usually done through the Civic Association. County Staff also reports that it will work with a Neighborhood Advisory Committee to assess the facilities and programs at Walter Reed going forward.

to replace, as part of a landscape planned developed in conjunction with the Neighborhood Advisory Committee.<sup>30</sup>

- **Recommendation #40:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends that the County evaluate options for new fencing on the Walter Reed Community Park on its northern side, which separates parkland from The Commons of Arlington and Arlington Village. Any development of the park must include new fencing, to be developed in conjunction with the Neighborhood Advisory Committee.<sup>31</sup>
- **Recommendation #41:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges Arlington County to "think outside the box" to create new parkland for our residents, particularly in the Eastern portion of our civic association, where apartment building development has resulted in almost no green space.
- **Recommendation #42:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges Arlington County to acquire any abandoned or run-down property to be converted to park or green space.
- **Recommendation #43:** Columbia Heights Civic Association believes that all development and site review processes must promote the preservation of open space, especially in the east end of the Neighborhood. Onsite parking must be underground or within the building footprint. Parks and open spaces, such as the park in the Eckerd Pharmacy site, are supported.<sup>32</sup>
- **Recommendation #44:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges Arlington County to work cooperatively with the several condominium associations to recognize and financially support their

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<sup>30</sup> County Staff reports that trees are assessed by the Urban Foresters and by the Maintenance Supervisor. Dead and hazard trees are removed. When replacing trees Staff works with the Park Manager and concerned citizen groups to plant appropriate trees. These comments are not sufficient, in the view of the Columbia Heights Civic Association, given the unprofessional and inappropriate destruction of our park trees during the month of August, 2004.

<sup>31</sup>County Staff notes that funding for fence replacement can be sought through the Neighborhood Conservation program.

<sup>32</sup> County Staff notes there is a parking strategy included in the Form Based Code identifying minimum and maximum parking requirements. (See previous footnotes.)

provision of green space for their residents and public (trespassers) through providing services.<sup>33</sup>

- **Recommendation #45:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges Arlington County to assist the Neighborhood with Neighborhood-focused programs in the parks.
- **Recommendation #46:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends that the county secure a room or exhibit cases to be designated in the new Walter Reed Community Center for the placement of framed maps and photos that have been collected by members of Columbia Heights and Penrose Community Associations. This exhibit area should provide for expansion of exhibit materials contributed by Columbia Heights Civic Association, Douglas Park and Nauck members for appreciation and expression of each neighborhood's separate, and the area's mutual, history for benefit of current and future residents.<sup>34</sup>
- **Recommendation #47:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends that a staff member of the new Walter Reed Community Center be designated to encourage and deposit exhibit materials, to collect local neighborhood conservation plans and historic documents and mementos.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> County Staff notes that private landowners may qualify for Park Enhancement Grants or Neighborhood Conservation funding for improvements if they provide an easement that grants legal access to the general public.

<sup>34</sup> County Staff states that it supports the provision of exhibit cases by the Civic Association or other community groups. "We believe that this participation helps to create a sense of community ownership of the Center," according to Staff.

<sup>35</sup> County Staff notes that a staff member of the Center could be assigned part-time to work jointly with the community in this effort, or this could be accomplished through volunteer effort.

## Community Service

Neighborhood conservation questionnaire respondents were generally pleased with community services provided by the county. However, many respondents were unsure how to rate some services provided. Landlords or condominium associations provide many municipal services to nearly 80% of Neighborhood residents.

Responses on the questionnaire revealed that:

- **Fire and Ambulance Service** was split nearly 50-50 as being rated "good" or "not sure," possibly due to the low incidence of needing such services.
- **Street signs, hydrants and curbside trees** all show signs of declining maintenance.
- **Street Cleaning** was rated by 47% of respondents as good. Only eight percent rated it poor.
- **Trash Collection** ratings were generally favorable, with 47% rating "good" from respondents. Twenty-four percent of respondents were "not sure" how to rate trash pick-up.
- **Curbside Recycling** was rated "good" to "excellent" by more than half of all respondents, while 40% were "not sure" how to rate it.
- **Leaf and Brush Removal:** Like recycling and trash removal, this service is provided by the apartment owners and condominiums.

### Recommendations:

- **Recommendation #48:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports improved trash collection in public areas. Trash collection at Walter Reed Community Park, Cleveland Park and around bus stops needs to be improved. The County should provide more trash receptacles in the parks and in public spaces and schedule more

frequent trash removal and pick up. Signs encouraging a litter-free Neighborhood could be posted in strategic spots.<sup>36</sup>

- **Recommendation #49:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges Arlington County to inspect all street side appurtenances (signs, trees, fire hydrants, etc.) and repair, replace, repaint or remove as appropriate.

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<sup>36</sup> County Staff reports that it has completed installments of trash receptacles at every bus stop on Columbia Pike and completed scheduling clean-up and pickup for all trash receptacles.

## **Beautification**

Columbia Heights residents, over the years, have dealt with beautification issues on an individual basis, or through committees within individual condominium communities. This report is the first opportunity the community has had to act in a holistic way to address beautification issues.

### **Tree Protection and Overhead Utility Lines**

One sore point for neighbors in prior years has been the butchery of our trees by the local electric utility, especially along Walter Reed Drive, 13<sup>th</sup> Road and Cleveland Street, where several trees had to be cut down after one of Dominion's "trimmings." As we continue to lose green space from development, it is even more essential to maintain the health of our trees. One solution employed by The Commons of Arlington was to replace trees destroyed by Dominion with a variety that would not exceed the height of the telephone lines.

Another solution involves the practice of burying electric lines. Burial of lines accomplishes two goals: protection of our trees, the elimination of telephone poles situated in the middle of narrow sidewalks, and eliminating unsightly overhead facilities.

This is particularly evident on major thoroughfares, down Columbia Pike and Walter Reed Drive. In fact, an unsightly electric substation exists on Walter Reed Drive, directly across from Eckerd's Pharmacy, that has stood for many years. Burying lines leading to it, and developing landscaping or privacy fencing around the substation, would definitely be an improvement.

Arlington Village is replacing 13 to 20 trees a year and will be addressing the replacement of curbside trees, particularly those that interfere with overhead utilities. Many of these trees are county-owned and a cooperative solution must be developed.

### **Landscaping Improvements at Walter Reed Community Park**

The County is about to embark on major construction of a new community center at the Walter Reed Community Park. It is unclear to us, at this time, to what extent this larger building will affect neighbors, particularly residents of The Commons of Arlington and Arlington Village, which abut the rear of this building.



We recommend that the County actively develop landscaping that will shield these neighbors from any unwanted noise or unsightly service activity (dumpsters, staff parking, etc.) associated with this new community center.

Security and safety fences at the park are in poor repair and have been a topic of ongoing discussion. A variety of fencing solutions may be required to accommodate the screening, noise barrier, and security requirements as they vary around the perimeter of the site.

### **Historic District Designations**

The Arlington Village and the Commons of Arlington condominiums are designated as historic districts. The designation extends to Columbia Pike for the Shops of Arlington Village. Arlington Village will be replacing a number of outdoor signs with more appropriate period-specific signs, and will be erecting historically appropriate community entry signs.

### **Street Lighting**

Another issue is street lighting, which has not been addressed in Columbia Heights in many years. The street lighting in nearly all our residential streets is outdated, has no "unified" look, and in many areas is lacking, leading to concerns about crime and safety. Areas noted in our study include: South 16th Street from Walter Reed to South Barton Streets, and Walter Reed Drive, from Columbia Pike to South 16th Street.

We recommend a full study of street lighting in our area, and a plan to institute uniform, attractive street lighting throughout.

### **Community Signs**

We support promoting the identity of the Columbia Heights Neighborhood by creating "visual gateways" with placement of identification signs and landscaping at appropriate neighborhood entrances and facilities. Because we are a "bifurcated" neighborhood system, with single-family homes and condos in the west and apartments in the east, several signs would be needed, more so than in many other neighborhoods. Sites for consideration include:

- 16th Street and Walter Reed

- Walter Reed and Columbia Pike as part of the CPR development
- Columbia Pike and South Rolfe Street as part of the CPR development
- Columbia Pike and South Barton as part of the CPR development
- Columbia Pike and Walter Reed Street as part of the CPR development
- Columbia Pike at the Eckerd plaza green space
- Cleveland Street Park, signed as a community focal point.

### **Recommendations:**

- **Recommendation #50:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends burying overhead utility lines, to enhance beautification of the area, to improve sidewalks, and to protect our trees from butchery by the utility companies. (See also Recommendation #2, in “Streets and Sidewalks.”)<sup>37</sup>
- **Recommendation #51:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends remedial action to "hide" the electrical substation located at the entrance of our civic association area, at the corner of Walter Reed and Columbia Pike.<sup>38</sup>
- **Recommendation #52:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends that the County develop landscaping plans to create privacy for next-door neighbors from the impact of the new community center at the Walter Reed Community Park. This is particularly true for those residents of The Commons of Arlington and Arlington Village, whose properties are on the back property line with the park. (See also Recommendation #38, in “Parks and Recreation.”)<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> See Footnote 4.

<sup>38</sup> Staff reports that, as part of the recently-approved Columbia Station Project, the substation will be eliminated and the function redistributed throughout the County. Landscaping to hide electrical facilities might be eligible for funding through the Public Tree Planting Program.

<sup>39</sup> County Staff reports that the Walter Reed Community Center plans currently call for preserving the existing trees that provide a buffer for the adjacent neighbors. Staff adds that additional landscaping to enhance the buffer could be funded through the Neighborhood Conservation Program.

- **Recommendation #53:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges the County to install new street lighting in our area. Street lighting should be uniform, attractive and effective.<sup>40</sup>
- **Recommendation #54:** Columbia Heights Civic Association encourages the removal of inappropriate or badly damaged curbside trees and provide appropriate replacement trees to adjacent property owners, if requested and if there is adequate space. If space is not available for replacement trees, dwarfed tree varieties should be made available to replant at curbside. Maintenance responsibility may be ceded to property owners if the tree is located off county land.<sup>41</sup>
- **Recommendation #55:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges the County to establish community flowerbeds and tree planting, using salt-tolerant species, at desirable locations along Columbia Pike and Walter Reed. The county should cooperate with Columbia Heights Civic Association and merchant groups to maintain the beds.<sup>42</sup>
- **Recommendation #56:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges the County to replace street name signs and lights with historically appropriate signs and lamps. Columbia Heights supports the development of an “historic district” sign plan for the CPR, with signage tied in with street signs in the Neighborhood.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> See Footnote 27 regarding street light studies. County Staff also notes that if additional street lights are requested, the Neighborhood Conservation program should be contacted for assistance in identifying other types of lighting, as well as additional funding.

<sup>41</sup> County Staff says it assesses street trees and removes dead or hazardous trees as needed. Trees are replaced if the planting strip is four feet wide or greater. For planting sites beneath overhead utilities trees with a mature height of 30 feet or less are planted. Currently the County does not plant trees on private property but staff is investigating the possibility of a program to plant on private properties in the future.

<sup>42</sup> County Staff reports that the community may obtain funding through the Neighborhood Conservation program for landscaping on County property. Typically, the Civic Association agrees to do maintenance. However, staff says it is supportive of the community working with merchant groups to maintain the landscaping. In addition, trees may be obtained through the Public Tree Planting Program.

<sup>43</sup> County Staff says that signage will be consistent with the Form Based Code adopted for the corridor in 2003. Signs will be clear, durable and informative to the public. The Form Based Code does not speak to historically-accurate signs.

- **Recommendation #57:** Columbia Heights Civic Association strongly recommends the creation of several signs designating the Columbia Heights neighborhood, aesthetically similar to the historic signs for CPR, to be established at appropriate neighborhood entry points and facilities.

## Land Use and Zoning

Most of our residents are unaware of zoning law and could not respond with any specificity to questions about zoning ordinances. However, most expressed general satisfaction with mixed zoning in our area--commercial, single detached homes and multi-unit residential units.

However, our residents are united in their concern about overcrowding in this area. They would be likely not to support public policy that would increase population density beyond the current level.

In general, our residents are quite happy living in close proximity to retail establishments and small businesses, but are concerned about development of Columbia Pike and how that might affect traffic patterns, transportation in general, and parking issues. Noise and “hanging out” issues were raised as minor concerns, as well as buffering close residences from building service activities like loading, unloading of equipment and trash removal.

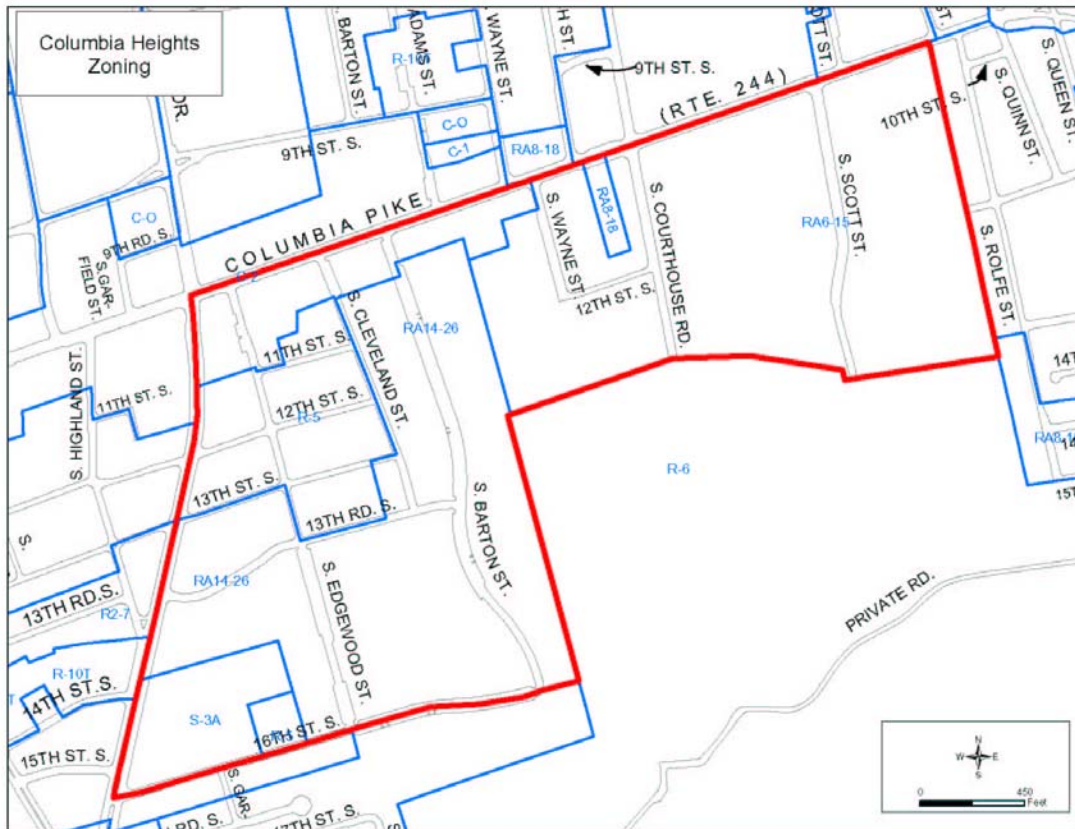
A majority expressed concern for maintaining or expanding green space on sites, and to maintain or increase levels of parking without reducing green space. Many cited the favorable site development of the Eckerd plaza green space for outdoor community events, such as the Farmer’s Market.

### Recommendations:

- **Recommendation #58:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges Arlington County not to exceed the existing population density, as amended by the CPR along Columbia Pike.
- **Recommendation #59:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports proximity of retail establishments, but is concerned that any development of Columbia Pike take mitigative measures to ameliorate the negative impact of rear lot noise, visual screening for services, congested traffic patterns and parking problems.
- **Recommendation #60:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges Arlington County to preserve green space, especially at the eastern end of the Neighborhood, using various transfer of development rights or zoning procedures. The Neighborhood strongly supports

preservation of the Army Navy County Club open space as green space.<sup>44</sup>

- **Recommendation #61:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges Arlington County to adopt site review standards to reduce/minimize visual and sound impacts at the edges between residential and commercial areas in the CPR.<sup>45</sup>



<sup>44</sup> County Staff reports that Site Plan Amendment #83 involves a site with private green space. Through the site plan amendment process, the County is encouraging the contribution of public open space.

<sup>45</sup> County Staff notes that all uses must comply with the County’s Noise Ordinance Development under the Form Based Code step down in terms of density, height and range of uses closer to the single family neighborhood.

## **Columbia Pike Revitalization**

Approximately 85% of the members surveyed in the Columbia Heights Neighborhood support attracting upscale shopping and dining opportunities, but there is also interest in retaining certain locally-owned businesses in the immediate area that are frequented by members of the community on a regular basis. These include, but are not limited to, The Cowboy Café, Bob & Edith's, Subway, and the Arlington Cinema and Draft House.

In terms of the actual construction process, concern has been expressed about both the Safeway and the Giant Food stores being rebuilt at the same time. There is also concern about current design plans for both stores that do not provide parking close to the entrance to facilitate the transfer of groceries from the store to the car.

With the revitalization of the Columbia Pike corridor, increased traffic in the nearby residential areas is anticipated and will need to be addressed.

The lack of adequate parking in several residential areas in the Columbia Heights area is already an issue. As redevelopment of the Columbia Pike corridor progresses and increases in density, the issue of sufficient parking for residents in the surrounding neighborhoods will intensify. In addition to the need to have sufficient parking for additional residents, there is a real concern that patrons of the new businesses and restaurants will use the available neighborhood parking for overflow or "free parking" in the event that the garages will charge for parking.

The use of South Barton Street as a cut-through street for access to and from Columbia Pike is already a concern among the residents in the Arlington Village neighborhood. With changes along Columbia Pike, it is anticipated that this problem will be exacerbated and will also become an issue for those residents who live on South Cleveland and South Edgewood and other connecting streets.

Most likely residents immediately adjacent to Columbia Pike will want to walk to shops and restaurants and this will require better upkeep and construction of sidewalks for adjacent neighborhoods. Similarly, better street lighting will be needed along these routes. In fact, according to the survey conducted, the need for better and new street lighting was expressed in most areas including, but not limited, to Arlington Village,



blocks surrounding South Edgewood, South Barton, and South Wayne Street as well as near Metro stops. (See Recommendation #53 in the “Beautification” section.)

The increased foot traffic that is expected with the redevelopment of the Columbia Pike Corridor will bring a greater potential for trash on the sidewalks and street. Therefore, additional trash disposal units on and near the Columbia Pike corridor in the area will be required.

Approximately 85% of the members surveyed in the Columbia Heights Neighborhood support bringing Metrorail to Columbia Pike, as opposed to bus rapid transit. Clearly this would attract upscale businesses and restaurants as well as new residents to the Columbia Pike corridor.

### **Recommendations:**

- **Recommendation #62:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports a Revitalization Plan that allows existing, historic businesses to remain in operation in the Pike.
- **Recommendation #63:** Columbia Heights Civic Association residents are concerned about parking problems that will result from redevelopment of the Pike, and the negative impacts of traffic through residential side streets.<sup>46</sup>
- **Recommendation #64:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends additional trash disposal units to accommodate the foot traffic that will result from the Revitalization Plan.<sup>47</sup>
- **Recommendation #65:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports bringing Metrorail to the Pike.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> County Staff notes that the Form Based Code identifies the County developing a Parking Policy that would be finalized and ready for implementation in January, 2005. The impacts would regulate and address the concerns about parking impacts in the neighborhoods. The recently-approved Columbia Station and the County have been participating in the development of public parking spaces in an attempt to continue this public-private partnership. Staff also notes that the Plan advocates dispersed public parking. Redevelopment of Adams Square is intended to include public parking over and above the Zoning Ordinance Requirements.

<sup>47</sup> County Staff notes that this recommendation could be funded through the Neighborhood Conservation program.

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<sup>48</sup> County Staff notes that WMATA, along with Arlington County, is currently looking at long-range transit alternatives in the Columbia Pike corridor. The principal technology included bus rapid transit and light rail or street car. Metro rail in this corridor was not recommended in previous planning efforts.



With adoption of a new constitution in 1870, Alexandria County was divided into three magisterial districts: Washington in the North, Arlington in its mid-section and Jefferson in the South. The communities on Columbia Pike were in the Arlington District and called their neighborhood and post office "Arlington" long before the County adopted that name in 1920. [See discussion of Arlington House in the History Section.]

In 1801 Arlington County was formed out of Fairfax, not long before the turnpike was built, and it was then known as Alexandria County of the District of Columbia. The existing town of Alexandria was part of the new county and stayed so until it gained independence in 1870.

By 1846, the merchants of the town of Alexandria were spearheading a movement to become part of Virginia again, and a referendum made Retrocession possible in 1847, even though the people in the rural part of the county were generally in support of remaining a part of the federal district. G.W.P. Custis and his neighbor Roach were two of the five Commissioners appointed by President Polk to oversee the poll taken at the Court House in the town of Alexandria and the list of voters from the Columbia Pike neighborhoods lists some for and some against Retrocession. In 1847, Alexandria County began a new life as a Virginia county.

The confusion between a county and city having the same name brought about a movement to rename the county from Alexandria to Arlington in 1920. The 1930s brought major changes to Arlington. The old magisterial districts were eliminated to make way for a new form of government, the county manager system, which was inaugurated in 1932.

Soon afterwards a new county board was in place and a committee was appointed to determine an orderly street naming system to correct duplications. For example, there were eleven Washington Streets or Avenues without any relation to each other. Postal and department store deliveries were difficult, and also there was a need for a central post office.

J. Vernon Smith of Glebe Road represented our section of the county, and the committee came up with a grid plan similar to that in Washington, D.C. After much deliberation, debate and public hearings, new names were adopted in 1934. The changes for the few streets in Columbia Heights were as follows:

Edgewood Street replaced Buckley Ave. [Gray on some maps.]  
Cleveland Street replaced Ehrhardt Ave.

11th Street replaced Wilson Ave.  
12th Street replaced McAdoo Ave.  
13th St. replaced Underwood Ave.  
Rolfe Street replaced Hoard

A short road along the trolley tracks beside the McIntosh tract had been called Bingham Road. The name was changed to Fillmore until the road and trolley route were renamed Walter Reed Drive around 1940.

### **Civil War Insurrectionary Taxes and Reparation in Columbia Heights**

The Insurrectionary Taxes imposed upon property owners during the war were paid by residents on Columbia Pike in the Columbia Heights area: C.B. Graham on 40 acres (between Cleveland and Court House Rd.); Joshua Gibson who lived near Graham on a 23-acre tract, which he had purchased from Graham; William P. Taylor, located west of Gibson on his 37 acres; Septimus Brown, "Near Arlington" on 12 acres; S.B. Corbett with almost 262 acres; Cooper Corbett with 253 acres; Cornelia Corbett with 4.5 acres; Henry M. Travers (sometimes spelled Travis on maps), 4 acres at Taylor's Crossroads (sometimes called Hunter's, at Glebe Rd.); and J. W. Travers with 19.75 acres.

Civil War maps show the Graham place, with batteries there and entrenchment and batteries throughout our area, and the scattered homes approachable from the Turnpike via long lanes. Elizabeth Taylor's claim, after William's death, was for timber, corn, vegetables, barn, wagon house, corn house, poultry house, earth and sod used in the erection of the forts. In her testimony, she described the farm as 47 acres, three miles from Long Bridge, bounded on the north by Columbia Pike, east by lands of Joshua Gibson, south by lands of G. Alexander and west by the lands of W.D. Lacey. This would put the farm on land that would be later bisected by the trolley.

Ms. Taylor said they had bought the farm in 1849 for a market garden and that it was in front of Fort Richardson and Fort Berry. The neighbors who testified on her behalf as to her loyalty to the Union and to the extent of her loss, were Sewell Corbett, Robert Dyer and Henry W. Travers.

The Corbetts were among the many New York families who came to Northern Virginia in the 1850s and they eventually owned much land in the area. Travers (whose family cemetery is on Monroe Street) said he saw sod hauled to Camp Distribution and the Invalid Corps Hospital from her

place. Older residents still refer to the community in nearby Green Valley where the Convalescent Camp was located as "camp."

The largest landowner next to Mrs. Lee in the county was Southern sympathizer Bushrod Washington Hunter, who along with Louisa Hunter lost nearly 1000 acres of land in our area. Property of those southerners who didn't pay the taxes in person, like the Lees and the Hunters, were seized and sold by the federal government.

### **The Curtis B. Graham Property - A Journalism Treasure**

The Graham property and family story is interesting for its ties to this period and the evolution of property use. This tract is immediately east of what became Arlington Village. We know about Curtis B. Graham from the writer of the *Washington Evening Star's* "Rambler" column. This featured stories of interesting places and people he visited on his walks or hikes around the Washington area.

On one of these, the journalist came upon an old home in an older grove of trees on Columbia Turnpike here in Alexandria County. He wrote about Graham and his home in his column of October 21, 1917 entitled, "Families who lived where Arlington Towers Stand." The radio towers north of the turnpike were distinctive landmarks from 1913 to 1941. The article contains family pictures on this country place, "Montrose," and descriptions of the family, neighbors and area.

Curtis B. Graham was a pioneer lithographic engraver who came from New York for employment with the Navy Department. He bought a house in the city and later, about 1847, purchased a home and grove along the Pike where he summered and then made his permanent residence.

Before he purchased the property, he boarded with a Mrs. Walker, whose house was near where Fort Berry would later be built on the 100-acre farm of C.B. Corbett and where his sons still lived at the time of the column. Graham walked to and from (and sometimes rode horseback) to Washington from Mrs. Walker's and admired the tract of land that he later purchased from an Englishman, Henry Hardy. Hardy was a friend of Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth and may have collaborated with her on novels.

The Rambler introduced his readers to the Graham family and provided a description of the Columbia Pike areas, industries and nearby residents, including the Williams, Johnson, Young and Jenks families. He

informed his readers that the Episcopal Orphan Asylum mentioned in oral history interviews and owned by the St. John's Episcopal Church in Washington had been built on Williams' land, along the Pike, at 2100 Columbia Pike.

The Graham story is an example of several continuing themes in Arlington's history. Commuting, for example, is not new: today it is aided by wheels, rails and more bridges, but Graham wouldn't have known about traffic jams. Also, it appears that most of the people whose names appeared on early maps also served official functions in the local Alexandria County government or on committees, as we have seen with G.W.P. Custis of Arlington House. Curtis B. Graham served as Commissioner of Revenue from 1904-1911, and was on the Executive Committee for the Dedication of the Alexandria County Court House when the court relocated from the town of Alexandria to the area then known as Fort Myer Heights in 1898. A Miss Graham was on the Ladies' reception committee. Curtis B. Graham, Jr. served as the Arlington District representative on the County Board of Supervisors in 1884 and 1885.

The 1935 Franklin Survey Co. atlas of the county shows the division to heirs of the tract designated as "Curtis B. Graham est. Plan." While the grove of trees and old homes are gone, the Graham name lives on in the deeds of residents or owners of business property in the area. **Dominion Plaza** apartments on 1200 S. Courthouse Rd. was built in 1956 on one of the partitions of the Graham property. Part of **Dominion Towers** at 1201 S. Courthouse Rd., built in 1958, is on part of the Graham land, along with parts of Fort Richardson and other properties. **The Key Apartments** at 2112 Columbia Pike were built in 1961 by Ben H. Smith Jr. etc. on Lot 2 of Graham's land. **Columbia Pike Apartments** were built in 1972 by Graham Associates (B.M. Smith & Associates) on another part of the Graham tract. The **Texaco** station, **Bob and Edith's Diner** (1959), **Citgo** and **Saah's Unpainted Furniture** are businesses developed by B.M. Smith Associates on the Graham Tract.

### **Williams' Property**

The tract east of Graham's in 1860 was held by Richard Williams and he was taxed for 34.5 acres, with the tax paid by Septimus Brown. Richard inherited this tract in 1855 from Uncle Bazil Williams, whose farm was situated on both sides of the Turnpike. Bazil had acquired this property in 1829 from that old family who owned so much of the county, the Alexanders. Richard Williams sold his property to Sewell B. and Frank



G. Corbett in 1864, and it went through subsequent subdivision and ownership.

Part was owned by the Close family, and their parcel was called "Roselawn" by 1878. That area was owned by St. John's Orphanage from 1888-1955. The community that developed was referred to as Closeville, and the popular 1878 Hopkins map of Alexandria County shows settlement near there with the Arlington Post Office, and residents with the names Jas. Stevens, Dr. Smith, Cha. Calbert, S. Wibert, H.B. Austin and R. O'Dowd. The Wiberts were another family who were inveterate office holders and Stephen B. Wibert was Superintendent of Schools before his death in 1882. The part acquired in 1867 by H. Dwight Smith was sold to the **Army Navy Country Club** in 1925 when the club was acquiring the southern portions of these Columbia Pike tracts to add to the Fraser's Green Valley farm for building the club's golf courses. Richard William's tract is bisected now by Scott Street and has **Dorchester Apartments**, **Dominion Towers Apartments**, the **Arlington Overlook** buildings (formerly the Executive) and **Lancaster Condominiums** (formerly Homestead Apartments).

### Emma Buckley

Maps toward the end of the 19th Century continue to show settlement concentrated further east from Columbia Heights on the Turnpike around the Arlington Post Office, Johnston's store and the Episcopal Church, but a gradual moving of the population westward. By 1878 Emma Buckley held a 53-acre tract in our area. She and her husband also bought one of the Alexander tracts south of Columbia Heights in 1867 and sold it to John D. Nauck, Jr. in 1874, the beginnings of the neighboring Nauck community.

Emma was a daughter of Sewell B. and Jane Corbett and had married Rudolph Buckley, a Washington furniture dealer, in 1860. The Corbetts were among a number of New York families who migrated to Virginia in the 1850s and who acquired many farms. Corbett property across Columbia Pike from the Buckley tract eventually was owned by son-in-law Sanford Bradbury. The Corbetts had



The home in the background was owned by Sanford Bradbury. Col. John Singleton Mosby wrote his memoirs in this house.

built their home there when they lost their residence to Fort Berry, and it was on this Columbia Pike property where Col. John Singleton Mosby lived for a few years in the 1910s when it was owned by B.M. Smith.

Like the Graham tract, the Buckley (spelled Buchly in some deeds) property figures in the subdivision and development of the Columbia Heights area. The commercial property on the south side of Columbia Pike near the Edgewood crossing was developed by B.M. Smith on the Buckley property. Local lore tells us that the old Buckley home sat where the parking lot for **Ski Chalet** is located, and that it was eventually hidden from view by the stores surrounding it. Also shown on the 1878 map are C. Graham and H.D. Smith properties. The latter came here from New York in 1867 and is listed as a merchant and farmer who served as a supervisor in the county from 1870 to 1873.

### **Dr. Charles B. Munson**

One of the most noted residents of this area after the turn of the century, Dr. Munson spent his retirement years actively buying land and building houses and commercial structures, including the **Arlington Theater** and **Dorchester Towers**. The land on which the latter was developed was long owned by the family.

His home on 13th and Irving included farm land, barn, cattle, orchards and gardens, and had been a small cottage used by Union troops in the Civil War and added onto many times by him and subsequent owners.

While the original parts of this home predate others that were here in the early 1900s, one can see a few homes built in our area in the early 1900s on both sides of the former trolley line in area that is now known as Walter Reed Drive. These comprise what many refer to as a trolley village, having developed from the trend at the turn of the 20th century to live away from the cities and in the suburbs when transportation was available.

### **History of Business in the Area**

In the 1920s and early 1930s, the area was served by three stores: Sher's had meats, grain feed and groceries and had operated as a country store since early in the 1900s where the **Arlington Theater** was later built. At that point it moved to the South side of Columbia Pike on the old Buckley tract. Sam Eller's was another grocery in the community, and Johansen's Candy Store served as a memorable gathering place.

Older residents in South Arlington continue to refer to the Sher market as "The Jew Store," with no derogatory intent. Mr. Sher was one of the leading and most highly admired citizens of the county. During the Great Depression he allowed residents to keep running tabs at his store. His kindness and generosity is credited for saving many families in the Columbia Heights, Barcroft, Alcovia Heights, Penrose and Arlington View neighborhoods from starvation.



**C.F. Burner's Emporium in 1909, later to become M. Sher & Son General Merchandise. Now the site of the Arlington Cinema and Draft House on Columbia Pike.**

An interview with Everett E. Norton tells us that his father opened a restaurant in 1924 at Columbia Pike and Edgewood, where the **Ski Chalet** is now located. At first called Columbia Quick Lunch and later called Norton's Café, it was operated after World War II by Everett and a brother-in-law and was a popular gathering place for almost fifty years, with Tom Jackson's chili a specialty. It was a popular eatery for the Pentagon crowd during the war years. The second floor once housed a beauty parlor operated by Grace Richmond, nee Stoneburner.

That block of the Buckley tract eventually became a thriving commercial area, with stores on Edgewood and with Norton's, Sher and Cohen's grocery, Malone's Hardware, Dominick's Shoe Repair, Dependable Cleaners, Ehrhardt's, and the Animal Hospital on Columbia Pike.

The local bank was Jake White's Peoples Bank on the southwest former of Columbia Pike and Walter Reed Drive. It became Old Dominion Bank and moved a few doors away in 1948. Old Dominion Bank became First Virginia Bank in 1970, whose founder and Chairman of the Board was Edwin T. Holland, father of former State Senator Holland. The bank became First Virginia Bank with Mr. Holland as founder and chairman of the board. It has recently become BB&T (Branch Banking and Trust). Redevelopment by the Georgelas Group of McLean for "The Lofts at Columbia Station" is under consideration at present for that corner, exclusive of the bank building.

## **The Uncommon Market**

From 1976 to 2003 the Arlington Food Cooperative, known as the Uncommon Market, was located at 1041 S. Edgewood Street, in what had once been the local firehouse. It was first incorporated in 1976, and was founded by the Arlington Cooperative Organization.

That group was founded in the 1960s to promote the values of community-building, develop alternative economic systems, create greater health, social and lifestyle diversity, promote environmentalism and engage in consumer education.

Within the first three to four years of its founding, 500 people each purchased \$10 shares of the Arlington Food Cooperative, making them member-owners of equal vote. Membership increased tenfold over the years. Through the years the organization suffered a number of financial crises, only to be saved from the brink of extinction by campaigns launched by members who were dedicated to its survival.

The 2003 demise of the Uncommon Market was due to a number of factors, including the fact that products and services once unique to the local co-op began to be carried by larger food chains (Giant, Safeway) and the introduction of newer, better financed and more efficient natural food outlets (Whole Foods Market, My Organic Market (M.O.M), Fresh Fields and Trader Joe's).

Other problems that plagued the Uncommon Market included chronic under-capitalization via low membership fees, a location on a side street with poor visual prominence, and chronic problems related to its low budget, including temperamental equipment, the inability to attract qualified managers and an excessive reliance on partially-trained volunteers.

Despite these limitations, The Uncommon Market was credited for major achievements in the community, including:

- Launching the County's first recycling program;
- Initiating the first long-lasting farmer's market (which continues to this day);
- Supporting local organic farmers;
- Promoting greater self-awareness of health, diet and agricultural economics through its consumer-education policy and commitment to sustainable agriculture;

- Creating a forum for all ages, lifestyles, races and ethnic groups to experience community interaction, friendships and even marriages;
- Remaining faithful to "one member, one vote;" and
- Supporting independent thinking and grass-roots organizing.

## **A History of Schools in Columbia Heights**

The local school for our area was a one-room schoolhouse that had once been a private school and which became a county-operated public school in 1871. It sat on a half-acre plot at S. Wayne Street.

As needs grew and the population developed westward on the Pike, the county built a new Columbia School on the "Brown" lot (formerly the Taylor farm) slightly west of what is now Walter Reed Drive. Each of the districts of Alexandria County had its own Board of Trustees and Dr. Munson (mentioned above) served on the Arlington District Board, with other local residents.

The new Columbia School House was dedicated on June 14, 1904 with what now sounds like elaborate ceremonies, including prayer offerings, a union presentation of Bible and flag, speech by Hon. A.P. Douglas, Chairman of the Arlington District School Board, and by J.E. Clements, county school superintendent, and several others. The highlight was a surprise presentation of a silver service from the citizens of Columbia to Augustus Davis, Jr. in appreciation for his building the school. The flag was unfurled by Miss Evangeline daughter of Dr. and Mrs. C.B. Munson, and the 5th cavalry band from Ft. Myer played the "Star Spangled Banner."



**The "New" Columbia Pike School opened in 1904 on Columbia Pike near the Southwest corner of what is now Walter Reed Drive.**



**The original Thomas Jefferson Junior High School, now the site of the Columbia Pike Branch Library and Career Center.**

The building was described in a newspaper article as being about 60 feet square, two stories high, surmounted by a tower, the lower floor being divided into two school rooms and the second story to be used as a public hall.

This school was replaced by Patrick Henry School when it was built at Fillmore and 7th Street in 1925 on the old Miles Munson farm across Columbia Pike. The old building continued as a community hall and library until demolished in 1941. A new Patrick Henry Elementary School was rebuilt in 1975 at Highland and Walter Reed Drive, directly behind the old Patrick Henry. The Career Center was built on the site of the original Thomas Jefferson Junior High School.

### **Library Service for Columbia Heights**

Our area had a library as early as 1930 when the Community Library Club rented a double garage next to Patrick Henry School, and later in the abandoned Columbia School near the corner of the Pike and Walter Reed Drive. The building was called "The Community Hall."

When it was torn down in 1941, the collections were moved in 1942 to a new store building at 911 S. Glebe Road. The library had become a branch of the new county library system in 1938. In 1959, it moved again to new quarters at 3239 Columbia Pike and in 1975 from the Westmont Shopping Center to share a building with the Arlington Career Center at 816 S. Walter Reed Drive, the former site of Thomas Jefferson Junior High School.

### **Fire Service for Columbia Heights**

Evidently the first fire truck for the area was housed in a barn on the Snoot's Farm where Westmont Shopping Center is now located. At some point, B.M. Smith donated land in the 3200 block of the Pike and later a structure on Edgewood across from what is now Eckerd's Pharmacy. For many years The Uncommon Market was housed in what was commonly referred to as "The Old Fire Station."

### **The Columbia News**

As noted earlier, ***The Columbia News*** was launched in 1941 and operated sporadically throughout the war years. The early issues of Columbia News heralded the opening of the new **Westmont Shopping Center** and listed the businesses installed there, included ads for

businesses and services on the Pike, expressed concerns about the bus service to the new War Department Building (not yet called The Pentagon) and to the new **Arlington Village** area. It also reported on changes in property ownership and planned construction and stated hopes for a new Post Office. Areas under construction included **Arlington Village** and **Barcroft Apartments**.<sup>1</sup>

Business ads included one for Dependable Cleaners and Tailors, Charles J. Sher, Manager, 3008 Columbia Pike in the Charles Building. This issue mentioned several times the relocation of postal services, and one article stated that there was to be a branch somewhere near Columbia Pike and Glebe Road. "While the exact location is not known, this station will be located in this section about April 1, 1941." [This turned out to be the Post Office on Columbia Pike at Monroe; it would take another 50 plus years for the present Glebe Road site to come to fruition.] Another editorial supported citizen and county government protests to the expansion of Arlington National Cemetery.

The 1944 issues continued to promote the Pike's commercial enterprises and announced what sounds like a precursor to CPRO in that "Plans are being initiated for the forming of an organization of business and professional interests and all citizens who are interested in the general welfare of the Columbia Pike area and to take an active part in postwar efforts to develop and improve this section."

The issues reflected home-front activity, war casualties from local families, postwar planning, development, neighborhood news, clinics and teen dances at the Pickett Homes, church activities and county government actions. William Snoots of the family associated with Fire Hall #1 was one of the war casualties.

One item bemoaned the loss of "Heflin's," a local landmark, the weathered old tavern at Fillmore and the Pike. Business ads included "Home Cooked Foods" at Norton's Café at 2718 Columbia Pike. Another

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<sup>1</sup> Volume II carries the address 1035 S. Edgewood and by March 1945 its address was 3010 Columbia Pike. These newspapers were recently donated to the Virginia Room, Central Library, and will be available for use after they have been preserved. There is only one issue for Volume I, Dec. 18, 1941, and it is not known if there were others or if issues are missing. It may be that wartime paper and manpower shortages intervened. Volume II, #1 is dated Nov. 1, 1944 and that volume contains 25 issues through Oct. 15, 1945. There is a loose copy inserted into the volume and called *The Virginia News*, Vol. 3, #18, dated Aug. 1, 1946. It is the same address as the earlier paper and states that it is "successors to *The Columbia News*." We can only hope more issues turn up as these existing ones give us an interesting account of life along the Pike in these years. There are news items on the businesses as well as the neighborhoods.



ad announced that the Munson Estate planned to develop property at the Pike and South Highland, on property adjoining the A&P. For much of our history, Smith and Munson were the main developers in the area.

Another issue described the McIntosh property, "a pioneer home of the area, has one of the finest old shady yards in the whole Pike area, fenced in with tall hedges, and a half-circle driveway cutting in near the Pike and coming out at the end of the property on the S. Edgewood side." This describes what became the **Eckerd Pharmacy** location. Development is currently planned on the McIntosh property by Capstone behind the drug store.

### **Development of the Walter Reed Park**

In the 1980s, following the County's published General Land Use Plan (GLUP), Columbia Heights Civic Association led a community-wide movement to consolidate three houses and a very large garage on land shown to be parkland on the GLUP map.

One house, facing S. 16<sup>th</sup> Street near Walter Reed Drive, was used by the County's drug and alcohol counseling staff for daytime counseling. Problems arose when the county rented the facility to Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) programs in the evenings. The program managers paid no attention to numbers, parking and noise, so at the community's urgent request, the building was closed and demolished. The programs were moved to a commercial building on Columbia Pike.

The garage next to that house was used for storage of County vehicles and tools. It was discovered that the building had been broken into for drug use. Drug paraphernalia was found in and around the building. The County demolished it and found other storage.

On the east end of the property, there were two private single-family homes located on what the County had planned for the east end of the park. An in-fill developer wanted to build 20 townhouses on the property and CHCA fought that at County Board meetings. Our Neighborhood was already packed with cars and traffic, and the GLUP designated those lots as parkland.

The Board agreed with the CHCA, and the County bought the houses. At the County's request, the community agreed that, until such time as the park was to be redeveloped, one house would be designated

for persons living with AIDS and the other for persons living with Praeder Willy Syndrome. Those usages proved to be beneficial and were well-accepted by the Neighborhood. Partly because of expensive maintenance challenges that these two older homes posed to the County, the programs were discontinued after about 4-5 years. The two buildings were eventually demolished and the land converted to park space.

Ken Fredgren was President of Columbia Heights Civic Association during much of this negotiation. Other active neighborhood members included Peter Jones, who continues to be involved in the development of Walter Reed Community Park, and Ruth Stewart, who developed the Cleveland Park and was also very supportive of the development of the Walter Reed Park. Ken Fredgren was succeeded by Sarah McKinley as President, who continues to be active in the civic association.

### **Development of Arlington Village**

The largest development within this civic association area is **Arlington Village**, a garden apartment area developed after 1939 when Gustave Ring bought the Graham and other tracts (possibly assembled by B.M. Smith) for \$362,500. In 1900 this area was part of the Buckley Estate and consisted of small farms. By the time of Ring's purchase, this area of Columbia Pike reflected more of a village than a rural area.

The organization that Ring put together for designing, building and selling the units in Arlington Village was a model of efficiency. It no doubt benefited from his experience in developing other FHA insured projects, including the Colonial Village in North Arlington. In order to accommodate the potential buyers in an era when people were still wary after the depression and salaries were not large, he needed to build as inexpensively as possible. In planning his concept of a suburban village with housing, streets, a business district, sewage and water systems, electric and heating systems, parks and recreation areas, and using FHA guidelines, he formed his organization of architect, landscape architects, real estate agents, contractors and apartment manager, all specialists.



**Arlington Village under construction. Taken from across Columbia Pike at Barton Street. The building at the left is B.M. Smith's real estate office.**

The architect was the same as the one he had used in Colonial Village, Harvey Warwick of Washington, who designed buildings with changing roof forms, materials, elevations and with a variety of sparse colonial revival details. The 661 apartments were built on 12% of the acreage, which allowed for 47 acres of green space, parks, recreation area, yards, roads, parking spaces and services.

Apartments were built around five super blocks after constructing S. Barton Street and shortening S. Cleveland Street, lengthening 15th Street and Edgewood. Each apartment had a front court and private back court. Through selective use of standardized components, purchasing materials in bulk, and tightly scheduled work, he was able to provide rental units to carefully selected clients at \$11 a room. Ring's building permit was obtained in March 1939 and renters moved into the first completed section by July of the same year.

Local lore is that second floor bedrooms were juxtapositioned or overlapped over other units to avoid Arlington's strong objection to "row houses," but a scholarly study of Arlington Village indicates this was done for the three-bedroom units only, to maintain the economy of rectangular form.

Ring sold the development 11 years later to New England Life Insurance Co. for \$5 million, having increased his original investment 666%. These owners installed the swimming pool, tennis courts and more off-street parking. It was sold again in 1979 to Arlington Village Associates for \$9.7 million, the buyers being Frank S. Phillips, Preston Caruthers, Terry Eaken and Paul Nesetta. Their intention was to convert the units to condominiums. Opposition resulted in their selling 98 units to Holladay Corp. for \$2.5 million. Holladay was a cooperative organization experienced in leasing to elderly and low income individuals. Their plan was to sell some units for less than the condos.

## **Development of The Commons of Arlington**

**The Commons of Arlington** is a small development in this area. These four buildings (eighteen separate addresses) were built in 1948 as a rental garden complex of 134 units, 56 being one-bedroom apartments and 78 as two-bedroom units. Known as **Walter Reed Gardens**, these sit upon 5.33 acres of land of the Dresser and Tinkle subdivisions. It has been said that it was developed and built by the same company as Fillmore Gardens, developed in 1942 by Banks and Lee, Inc., an Alexandria based building

firm. They were part-owners in the original Fillmore Gardens, Inc., along with the Burka family from Arlington. Arthur P. Davis was architect for Fillmore Gardens and designed Walter Reed Gardens to be identical to Rock Creek Gardens in Washington, D.C.

Walter Reed Gardens was developed as The Commons of Arlington by the Investment Group Development Corporation, the agent and nominee of GLM of Arlington, Virginia, Inc., a DC corporation. The Nominee Agreement of 1982, filed in the land records of the county in 1982, presents a proposal for condominium ownership that described planning, renovation program, replacement of roofs and windows, pavement and masonry, new landscaping, new hot water heating system, all new kitchens, renovated bathrooms, upgraded plumbing and electrical systems and individual heating and air-conditioning units. Converted units were offered for sale at \$55,000 - \$59,000 for one-bedroom units and \$62,00 - \$71,000 for two-bedroom units.

## Appendix B

### Columbia Heights Civic Association Recommendations

#### Streets and Sidewalks:

**Recommendation #1:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges the County to install sidewalks where none now exist. This is particularly evident on 11th, 12th, 13th, 16th, South Cleveland and South Edgewood Streets. In addition, County staff has already recommended creating a new sidewalk on Garfield between South 16<sup>th</sup> Street and South 16<sup>th</sup> Road.

**Recommendation #2:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends removing overhead utility poles in the middle of sidewalks, and burying the lines. (See also Recommendation #50, under “Beautification.”)

**Recommendation #3:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends providing covered bus stops, when practical, and providing trash removal and clean up of these areas on a regular basis.

**Recommendation #4:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends that the County study pedestrian traffic at the 16th Street and Walter Reed intersection and into the redeveloped Walter Reed Community Park, and design solutions for safe crossing of the streets.

**Recommendation #5:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends that the County study pedestrian traffic crossing on Columbia Pike and assure adequate designation of crosswalks, install traffic lights on demand, provide safe crossing times and enforce traffic laws—including jaywalking—to protect pedestrians.

**Recommendation #6:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends improving sidewalk pavement conditions (i.e., reduce water ponding at curb cuts, repair surface, repair dislocations at joints) and also work with Neighborhood residents to improve removal of seasonal debris.

**Recommendation #7.** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends widening some walks to reflect pedestrian gateway status. The County should develop and enforce regulations accommodating sidewalk activities, such as cafés or art shows, to enhance pedestrian

traffic, slow adjacent traffic (through friction and calming) and provide mixed use of the sidewalks in the Neighborhood portion of the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization (CPRO).

## Traffic

**Recommendation #8:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends conducting a full study of traffic patterns and traffic calming options in our Neighborhood. We support such traffic calming strategies as speed humps and calming circles.

**Recommendation #9:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports creating a center/left turn lane for the entire Columbia Pike thoroughfare.

**Recommendation #10:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports implement practices to slow speed on residential streets, especially to allow for safe entry of nose-in parked cars, and to reduce speed in areas where there are short sight distances or congestion.

**Recommendation #11:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports revising the traffic plan around the Walter Reed Park to accommodate the drop off and pick up of park users. We also recommend collaborating with the School District Transportation provider to create a safe pick up and discharge point.

**Recommendation #12:** Columbia Heights Civic Association believes that traffic-calming strategies should be bicycle friendly. If streets are closed to cars for traffic calming purposes, they should be open to bicycles.

**Recommendation #13:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports repaving streets. Most of the streets in the neighborhood have not been repaved in over a decade. The County should identify public streets that need repair and schedule repair and repaving. Any redevelopment should include proper maintenance of private access roads.

## Transportation

**Recommendation #14:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends extending Metrorail up the Pike as an effective transportation strategy (supported by over 75% of survey respondents).

**Recommendation #15:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends more frequent bus service, faster service with shorter trip times, and more convenient bus routes.

**Recommendation #16:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends lowering bus and rail fares and creating easier access to bus schedules (recommended by about 40% of respondents).

**Recommendation #17:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends carpool listings at apartments or in condominium newsletters as one strategy to ease transportation issues (recommended by 24% of respondents).

**Recommendation #18:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports the street space plan as it relates to bicycles.

## **Parking**

**Recommendation #19:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports programs using neighborhood parking permits for residents.

**Recommendation #20:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges county planners to require that any new residential or high-rise development include plans for adequate underground or on-site parking for all new residents and guests, and that current parking spaces should not be eliminated.

**Recommendation #21:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports improved parking and loading areas for businesses along Columbia Pike, which will help businesses and prevent "overflow" parking in the residential areas.

**Recommendation #22:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports upgrades in parking for the Walter Reed Community Center to prevent evening "overflow" parking on residential streets.

**Recommendation #23:** Columbia Heights Civic Association will work with County officials, including its Code Enforcement Office, to mitigate parking concerns for new development.

**Recommendation #24:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports additional parking for bicycles. Redevelopment projects outside

the Columbia Pike Revitalization District should use the same guidance for bicycle parking as in the form-based code.

**Recommendation #25:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports the creation of rear service entry for loading and unloading to serve new commercial establishments.

## **Public Safety**

**Recommendation #26:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports better street lighting throughout our area as a means to mitigate crime.

**Recommendation #27:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports traffic calming strategies, combined with traffic enforcement--both active and passive--to cut down on speeding within our civic association.

**Recommendation #28:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports fire inspections for all multi-family dwellings throughout the Neighborhood over five years. We encourage County officials to work with managements to correct any fire code violations to improve safety for our residents.

**Recommendation #29:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports the health and building code inspection of all single-family properties for junk or abandoned property that harbor rodents or collects water for mosquito breeding.

**Recommendation #30:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports upgraded water and sewer management strategies to reduce or eliminate the local rodent population.

**Recommendation #31:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges the County's Mosquito Control Program managers to monitor streams and look for standing water in the Neighborhood, hold public information meetings on mitigation measures, and work with building managers and single-family property owners to eliminate standing water wherever it might occur.

**Recommendation #32:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges County law enforcement to take firm action to deal with petty crime, including vagrancy. The Cleveland Park is the area cited most often by residents as needing attention.



**Recommendation #33:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports the creation of an active, collaborative community-oriented police program. Such a policing program would involve business, residents and police officers.

**Recommendation #34:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends that police and code officials monitor current and proposed clubs/restaurants in the Columbia Pike Redevelopment area for “hang out” and noise complaints, enforcing actions with the owners to discourage gangs, vagrants and noise issues.

## **Parks and Recreation**

**Recommendation #35:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges Arlington County Parks Department to clean up Cleveland Park, remove vagrants, and prevent further decline. Park planning is an opportunity for collaboration among community groups. Arlington County is encouraged to consider renaming the park after Ruth Stewart, its benefactor.

**Recommendation #36:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges the County to evaluate the Towers Park and how that space may best serve the residents who live in the apartment complexes in the eastern portion of our neighborhood.

**Recommendation #37:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges the County to move forward to complete the renovation of the Walter Reed Community Center Project, possibly procuring bids from other “green” landscaping and construction companies. Neighborhood residents should be called upon to help complete the project, along the lines of the community groups such as Greater DC Cares and Habitat for Humanity.

**Recommendation #38:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports the creation of a Neighborhood Advisory Committee to oversee the creation and administration of the Walter Reed Community Center, including the selection of new playground equipment and landscaping. (See also Recommendation #52, under “Beautification.”)

**Recommendation #39:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges the County to assess all trees and shrubs in the Walter Reed Community Park for disease and infestation. Trees and bushes with poor health should either be treated or removed, as appropriate. If trees must be removed, the County should move forward with plans to replace, as part of a landscape

planned developed in conjunction with the Neighborhood Advisory Committee.

**Recommendation #40:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends that the County evaluate options for new fencing on the Walter Reed Community Park on its northern side, which separates parkland from The Commons of Arlington and Arlington Village. Any development of the park must include new fencing, to be developed in conjunction with the Neighborhood Advisory Committee.

**Recommendation #41:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges Arlington County to "think outside the box" to create new parkland for our residents, particularly in the Eastern portion of our civic association, where apartment building development has resulted in almost no green space.

**Recommendation #42:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges Arlington County to acquire any abandoned or run-down property to be converted to park or green space.

**Recommendation #43:** Columbia Heights Civic Association believes that all development and site review processes must promote the preservation of open space, especially in the east end of the Neighborhood. Onsite parking must be underground or within the building footprint. Parks and open spaces, such as the park in the Eckerd Pharmacy site, are supported.

**Recommendation #44:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges Arlington County to work cooperatively with the several condominium associations to recognize and financially support their provision of green space for their residents and public (trespassers) through providing services.

**Recommendation #45:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges Arlington County to assist the Neighborhood with Neighborhood-focused programs in the parks.

**Recommendation #46:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends that the county secure a room or exhibit cases to be designated in the new Walter Reed Community Center for the placement of framed maps and photos that have been collected by members of Columbia Heights and Penrose Community Associations. This exhibit area should provide for expansion of exhibit materials contributed by Columbia Heights Civic Association, Douglas Park and Nauck members for

appreciation and expression of each neighborhood's separate, and the area's mutual, history for benefit of current and future residents.

**Recommendation #47:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends that a staff member of the new Walter Reed Community Center be designated to encourage and deposit exhibit materials, to collect local neighborhood conservation plans and historic documents and mementos.

### **Community Service**

**Recommendation #48:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports improved trash collection in public areas. Trash collection at Walter Reed Community Park, Cleveland Park and around bus stops needs to be improved. The County should provide more trash receptacles in the parks and in public spaces and schedule more frequent trash removal and pick up. Signs encouraging a litter-free Neighborhood could be posted in strategic spots.

**Recommendation #49:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges Arlington County to inspect all street side appurtenances (signs, trees, fire hydrants, etc.) and repair, replace, repaint or remove as appropriate.

### **Beautification**

**Recommendation #50:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends burying overhead utility lines, to enhance beautification of the area, to improve sidewalks, and to protect our trees from butchery by the utility companies. (See also Recommendation #2, under "Sidewalks.")

**Recommendation #51:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends remedial action to "hide" the electrical substation located at the entrance of our civic association area, at the corner of Walter Reed and Columbia Pike.

**Recommendation #52:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends that the County develop landscaping plans to create privacy for next-door neighbors from the impact of the new community center at the Walter Reed Community Park. This is particularly true for those residents of The Commons of Arlington and Arlington Village, whose properties are on the back property line with the park. (See also Recommendation #38, under "Parks and Recreation.")

**Recommendation #53:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges the County to install new street lighting in our area. Street lighting should be uniform, attractive and effective.

**Recommendation #54:** Columbia Heights Civic Association encourages the removal of inappropriate or badly damaged curbside trees and provide appropriate replacement trees to adjacent property owners, if requested and if there is adequate space. If space is not available for replacement trees, dwarfed tree varieties should be made available to replant at curbside. Maintenance responsibility may be ceded to property owners if the tree is located off county land.

**Recommendation #55:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges the County to establish community flowerbeds and tree planting, using salt-tolerant species, at desirable locations along Columbia Pike and Walter Reed. The county should cooperate with Columbia Heights Civic Association and merchant groups to maintain the beds.

**Recommendation #56:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges the County to replace street name signs and lights with historically appropriate signs and lamps. Columbia Heights supports the development of an “historic district” sign plan for the CPR, with signage tied in with street signs in the Neighborhood.

**Recommendation #57:** Columbia Heights Civic Association strongly recommends the creation of several signs designating the Columbia Heights neighborhood, aesthetically similar to the historic signs for CPR, to be established at appropriate neighborhood entry points and facilities.

## **Land Use and Zoning**

**Recommendation #58:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges Arlington County not to exceed the existing population density, as amended by the CPR along Columbia Pike.

**Recommendation #59:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports proximity of retail establishments, but is concerned that any development of Columbia Pike take mitigative measures to ameliorate the negative impact of rear lot noise, visual screening for services, congested traffic patterns and parking problems.

**Recommendation #60:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges Arlington County to preserve green space, especially at the eastern end of

the Neighborhood, using various transfer of development rights or zoning procedures. The Neighborhood strongly supports preservation of the Army Navy County Club open space as green space.

**Recommendation #61:** Columbia Heights Civic Association urges Arlington County to adopt site review standards to reduce/minimize visual and sound impacts at the edges between residential and commercial areas in the CPR.

### **Columbia Pike Revitalization**

**Recommendation #62:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports a Revitalization Plan that allows existing, historic businesses to remain in operation in the Pike.

**Recommendation #63:** Columbia Heights Civic Association residents are concerned about parking problems that will result from redevelopment of the Pike, and the negative impacts of traffic through residential side streets.

**Recommendation #64:** Columbia Heights Civic Association recommends additional trash disposal units to accommodate the foot traffic that will result from the Revitalization Plan.

**Recommendation #65:** Columbia Heights Civic Association supports bringing Metrorail to the Pike.