



# Guidebook Public Realm Improvements

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*House by House  
Block by Block*





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# 1 Introduction

The Joseph Selvaggio Initiative is a three pronged approach to improving the quality of life in this section of the Phillips neighborhood. The initiative area includes the eight blocks bounded by 26th and 28th streets, and Portland and Chicago avenues. Tools of the initiative include improving the quality of affordable rental housing, strengthening the existing single family residences, and designing a revitalized public realm.

This unique section of Phillips is home to a number of institutions as well as residences. Facilities range from care for the elderly to care for youth, and institutions such as the Swedish Institute, Abbott Northwestern hospital, and others are located here.

Developing the Framework Plan is the first step in Planning for public realm improvements. The Framework Plan describes a concept for the character and organization of the area, and helps formulate the “tools” used to enhance the public realm. The Plan is a collaboration between the consultants, Close Landscape Architecture and Hokanson/Lunning/Wende, the Phillips Partnership, and the the Joseph Selvaggio Initiative resident advisory committee.

The implementation of the Framework Plan will occur over the course of several years. The first phase, funded by the Phillips Partnership, will move into implementation immediately. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the advisory committee, who helped define it, we believe this first phase of the Framework Plan will have a significant and positive impact on all residents.



## 2 Historic Research

Part of the exploration process for the public realm improvements included a look back into the history of the Phillips Park Neighborhood study area. This historical research was requested by the residents at a Joseph Selvaggio Initiative open house. On this cue, the design team worked to complete the Phillips Neighborhood Historic Study, a companion booklet published about the neighborhood, focusing specifically within the eight blocks of the study area.

The booklet includes a brief history about the growth of Minneapolis, provides information on the characteristics of residential structures at the turn of the century, and explores street character and trends in residential gardening and outdoor space in this era.

In some cases the research project provided residents with copies of historical photos of their homes. Residents were also given the opportunity to study plan books from the era that provided them with clues about the original exterior details and layout of their homes, many of which have gone through several renovations.

Street and outdoor space research revealed how our society has undergone significant changes over the last 100 years. Our inner-city streets, built for horse and carriage use, were gradually “improved” and many have evolved into high speed automobile corridors. Lawns, gardens, and outdoor space were important culturally and provided an important resource for nutrition. Front lawns were treated as important space to be viewed both by the passer by and from the interior of the house. Back yards were functional and contained kitchen gardens, laundry washing and drying facilities, and fruit trees.

The fact that Park Avenue was once Minneapolis’s “gold coast”, long before the lakes area was developed, provided insight into what was a once thriving neighborhood. Park Avenue is also the home of the first neighborhood association in the City of Minneapolis, giving the current residents incentive to carry on this century long tradition.

Interestingly, many of the area businesses today have their roots in the neighborhood at the turn of the century. Two of the most important institutions of the area are Abbott Northwestern Hospital and Honeywell, however there are many other important facilities in the area that provide valuable resources to the community are committed to the neighborhood.



## Framework Plan Goals

The Framework Plan is an organizing tool for the 8 block project area of the Joseph Selvaggio Initiative. The goals of the Framework Plan are:

### To increase community pride and ownership

Increasing the visual quality of the neighborhood begins with the individual property. Our hope is that the domino affect will happen, and neighbors will influence each other as they clean up, maintain, and improve their properties and the public space around them. These efforts will reflect and enhance the community pride that is already on the upswing in this area.

### Improve the perception of safety

Safety is an important issue in any neighborhood. In recent years the residents of the troubled Phillips neighborhood have begun to reclaim it for themselves. However, safety is still a concern not only for residents but also for visitors to the many institutions in the area. One way to affect the perception of safety is to increase the amount of lighting in the neighborhood. The Framework Plan continues the efforts of the Phillips Park Initiative to the north and Portland Place to the west by implementing pedestrian scale lighting throughout the neighborhood.

Another way to increase the feeling safety is to have positive activity on the streets, both day and night. Commercial buildings with after hours businesses such as coffee shops, markets, and restaurants provide traffic and “eyes” on the streets. The Framework Plan identifies and encourages maintaining existing neighborhood commercial nodes for after hours businesses.

Outlets for neighbors to meet each other can also have a profound impact on neighborhood safety. This initiative has already provided such an outlet, and community members have formed new relationships. Neighbors now watch each other’s property, and have created a safety network that is far more comprehensive than law enforcement can be.

### Calm traffic

Our inner city streets were created before the development of the automobile. They were never designed to serve the volume of traffic that they currently carry. They seem to work fairly well most of the time. However, one way systems, rush hour traffic, and our general desire to go from one spot to another as fast as possible has contributed to the need for “traffic calming”. This is a term used to describe a variety of techniques used to help reduce the speed of motorists on residential streets. The advisory committee helped define the traffic calming techniques most appropriate for the neighborhood.

## Boundary Delineation

The Joseph Selvaggio Initiative study area is composed of a unique combination of institutions and residences. The institutions bring a welcome variety of visitors into the neighborhood. They also employ many residents and provide beneficial neighborhood services.

Five out of seven roads intersecting the study area are arterial streets. This creates a high volume of traffic concentrated in this portion of the neighborhood. Many of these vehicles are traveling through the area to destinations downtown. Others are using these streets for their destinations in the study area. The neighborhood has a constant influx of visitors and trespassing has become a neighborhood issue.

Another factor influencing this boundary issue is the type of residential structures in the neighborhood. Fifty percent of the dwelling units in the Phillips neighborhood are rental. There is a tendency for rental dwellers to feel disconnected from a neighborhood. Also, rental structures tend to have more occupants and increase the overall density of the area.

One issue with which residents struggle is their ability to keep their property private. Because of the public nature and density of the neighborhood, it is important to provide a consistent physical boundary defining public and private property on the street side of homes.

## Improve the interface between residential and institutional property

Although the institutional facilities are welcome neighbors in the community, they bring with them a unique set of issues. The largest visual impact that the institutions have on the neighborhood other than the scale of their buildings are the number of surface parking lots.

In many cases, these surface parking lots are located across the street from residential structures; The Framework Plan suggests that they be screened. Careful use of ornamental fencing and plantings will screen the parking lots and improve the overall character of the neighborhood dramatically. Sensitive designed additional lighting in the lots will keep the neighborhood safe as well.



## Provide open space for children's play

There is a real need for a children's play lot in the study area. This was expressed to us by residents and institutions alike. The Framework Plan has identified a potential location for a play lot. Ownership and liability issues are complicated, however, and the construction may not be accomplished easily. We encourage the neighborhood to continue working towards this goal.



## Improve the urban forest

Minneapolis is fortunate to have a significant amount of mature urban forest in its urban area. Tree enthusiasts founded the city and many of our neighborhoods are the beneficiaries of these past ideals. Trees do not last forever, though, and it is important to continue to infill and maintain our urban forest.

The individual elements used to accomplish these goals are described in detail in the next chapter. All of the elements were chosen in a style that will integrate with the existing character of the area. This character is defined by the architecture, site elements, and the history of the area. (see the Joseph Selvaggio Initiative Phillips neighborhood history study)



Images of mature street trees in the study area

## The Framework Plan Elements

The framework plan seeks to unify the eight block study area, providing an option for adjoining blocks to join in by implementing the same public realm elements. This study stops at the middle of our boundary streets, but the hope is that the public realm elements will at a minimum cross that boundary in future phases of work.

The north/south boundaries of 26th and 28th streets are currently undergoing planning studies exploring the options of returning them to two way streets, and studying traffic volumes. The framework plan assumes that the one way pairs remain, and that using bump-outs on these streets would impede their ability to carry traffic, thus they are not recommended. However, lighting, boulevard planting, and crosswalks are elements that could be implemented along these streets without impeding traffic flow.

Portland and Chicago Avenues, the east/west boundaries, are wide enough to accommodate bump-outs and still maintain the same volume of traffic. The intention of the framework plan is to create a more livable situation on these streets by reducing traffic speed with the introduction of these elements.

One major organizing element in the Framework Plan is connecting the doors of two major area institutions both located on 27th street: Honeywell and Abbott Northwestern Hospital. This is accomplished by the creation of a "green street" along 27th avenue.

The vision for this street is to create a pedestrian oriented parkway. Replacing broken, dead or missing street trees; planting the boulevards with perennials; using "bump outs" to narrow the street further at intersections; building an edge along private property with walls and plants; and re-surfacing the street with a red sealcoat similar to that found on the Minneapolis parkways will all contribute to the feeling that the street is uniquely different and pedestrian oriented. Another part of the 27th street design is creating seating areas along its length. The street becomes an alternative, more civic outdoor space for area residents.

The Framework Plan uses all of the public realm site elements to create a unique, pedestrian-scaled, livable community. The following chart describes the elements and how they are applied to each street type identified in the study area:

Joseph Selvaggio Initiative				Public Realm Improvements Guidelines			
Street Type	Street Trees	Lighting	Fencing and Boundary	Accent Planting	Crosswalk Paving	"Bump-Outs"	Street Furniture
Residential • <i>Oakland Ave.</i> • <i>Columbus Ave.</i>	35' O.C. Shade Trees Typical Mpls. Species and Spacing	120' O.C. Acorn Fixture Staggered placement	Variety of Types- Property Specific Screen surface parking lots	Use plants to screen existing parking lots. Possible garden in "bump-outs".	None	Yes - parking both sides of street	None
Historic • <i>Park Avenue</i>	35' O.C. Large Canopy Shade Trees. Align placement across streets	60' O.C. Acorn Fixture Aligned across street	Wrought Iron w/ masonry columns.	in pre-cast planters and "bump-outs" Youth planting program	yes - red sealcoat or pavers	Yes - parking both sides of street	historic info. associated with seating, planters
Green Street • <i>27th Street</i>	Smaller scale trees closely spaced. Potentially Crab or other flowering tree.	100' O.C. Acorn Fixture Staggered Placement per City recommendations.	Low walls with planting if grade change exists. Fencing and hedges optional	Perennials or low growing shrubs in boulevard and on outside edge of walk. Annuals in "bump-outs"	yes - red sealcoat or pavers	yes - parking both sides of street	yes - bench placement at "stopping" areas along promenade.
Institutional Mix • <i>Chicago Ave.</i> • <i>Portland Ave.</i>	35' O.C. Shade Trees Typical Mpls. Species and Spacing	120' O.C. Acorn Fixture Staggered Placement	Low walls with planting if grade change exists. Fencing and hedges #2 option	None	yes - red sealcoat or pavers	yes - parking on both sides of street. Traffic Calming Effort.	None
One Way Corridor • <i>26th Street</i> • <i>28th Street</i>	35' O.C. Shade Trees Typical Mpls. Species etc.	120' O.C. Acorn Fixture Staggered Placement	Variety of Types - Property Specific	Perennials or low growing shrubs in boulevards in future phase.	yes - red sealcoat or pavers in future phase	No	None

Bump-outs at 27th Street.

Bump-outs on one-ways.



# 4 Public Realm Elements

## Lighting

Several types of lighting currently exist in the Joseph Selvaggio Initiative study area because many of the institutions have implemented their own individual exterior lighting. In addition to these efforts, we propose the installation of the city standard acorn fixture on decorative cast steel poles. Using the typical City of Minneapolis standards for lighting layout, approximately three fixtures will be installed on each side of the street per block.



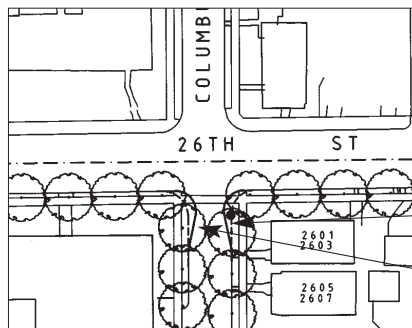
Any further lighting in the neighborhood is welcome. Bollard lighting and accent lighting to match the character established by the acorn fixtures are encouraged. And most importantly, the use of porch lighting is encouraged throughout the neighborhood.



The acorn fixture will be used for pedestrian scale lighting.

## “Bump Outs” /Traffic Calming

A primary goal of the project is to “calm” vehicular traffic and create a balance between pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular movement. Pedestrian and bicycle movement is encouraged throughout the study area. One of the most common complaints received in the public meetings and small groups revolved around the issue of traffic moving too quickly through the streets. The recommended solution is to create “bump outs” on every street in the study area. This technique helps to slow the traffic down, and also reduces the width of the intersection making crossing the the wider streets of Portland Avenue and Park Avenue easier.



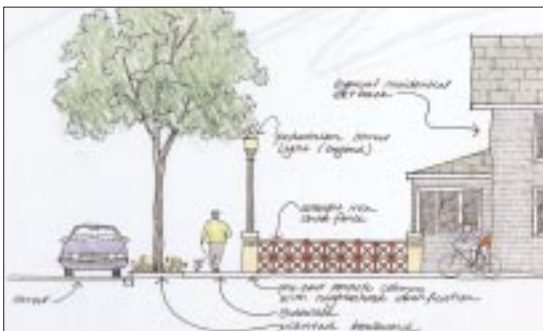
- existing curb alignment
- “bumped out” street

# Public Realm Elements

## Corner Fencing

The corner fencing elements help unify the neighborhood and signify change to area visitors. They are also elements that can be adopted by blocks adjacent to the Joseph Selvaggio Initiative study area, extending the vocabulary further into Phillips.

The fencing pattern is designed to fit into the character of the neighborhood, using an early 1900's pattern. The posts are made of durable cast steel. This quality will make them less attractive to vandals.



## Crosswalk Paving

Treating the surface of crosswalks with a different color, striping pattern, or paving is a signal to the vehicle operator that the area is a pedestrian zone. In many cities, the use of modular pavers in the crosswalk has become standard. This communicates the pedestrian zone via color and texture. In Minneapolis, unlike St. Paul, use of modular pavers in the street is not widely accepted. Other options include seal-coating the area with a reddish colored stone, or using paint to create a zebra stripe pattern in the crosswalk.

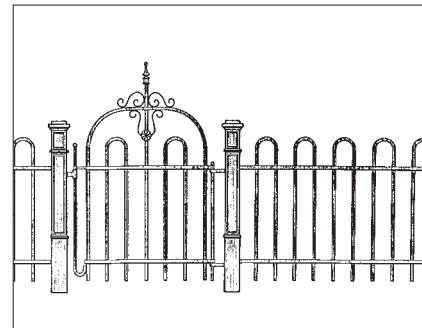


# Public Realm Elements

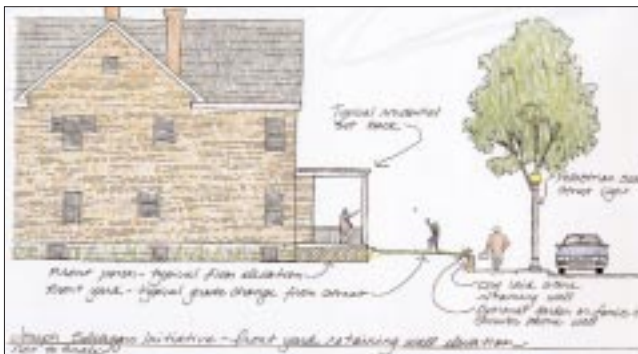
## Private/Public Property Delineation

Many residents communicated that trespassing is a major problem in the study area. The temptation for resolving this issue is to install fencing along all property lines. Instead, the plan suggests the use of low walls which delineate private property but creates a warmer appearance than a patchwork of fencing from house to house. The streets most in need of addressing this issue are Chicago and Portland. These two streets stand out primarily due to the high volume of traffic travelling on them and the proximity of the homes to the streets.

The low walls suggested in this guidebook are constructed with dry laid limestone. They are used only when there is a need for a retaining wall due to a grade change between the sidewalk and front door of the residence. The vertical separation they provide can be further reinforced by the homeowner using a variety of techniques. The homeowner may choose to install wrought iron fencing behind the top of the wall. Another, softer approach is to install a hedge or garden above the retaining wall to create another layer of privacy.



Options for boundary definition.



Low wall suggested for Portland and Chicago Avenues.

# Public Realm Elements

## Street Furniture

Street furniture is not widely used in the Framework Plan. It is suggested along on the “green street” to create small seating areas. Other possibilities for site furniture are locations along Park Avenue in conjunction with interpretive historical signage, or in the children’s play lot. Large concrete pots are shown lining Park Avenue. These are envisioned to be filled with annuals and maintained by the property owners along the avenue. The plants to fill the containers could come from the “KEY” program already at work in the neighborhood.



## Accent Plantings

The Framework Plan specifies the use of accent Plantings primarily along several streets. The installation of perennials in the boulevards of all streets is encouraged; and the impact such a planting installation would help calm traffic, would give streets a pedestrian scale, and make them more livable.

Additional Planting space will be created at all intersections where bump outs are added. These re-captured areas can be used as block gardens, planted and maintained by each block.



# 5

## Phase One Implementation

Through the Joseph Selvaggio Initiative, the Phillips Partnership will fund the first construction phase of the public realm improvements. The primary goal for the first phase is to have an impact on as many residents as possible. The second goal for the project is to have a positive impact on area visitors, and traffic moving through the area.

Accomplishing both these goals within a limited budget is not easily accomplished. Throughout the process of developing the guidebook, input was gathered from the public through neighborhood meetings. Neighborhood comments were essential for gaining an understanding about the greatest needs of the residents. That information was analyzed and further reinforced by the work of the resident advisory committee.

New lighting throughout the study area invited the most comments from residents. Pedestrian scale lighting was desired, but the installation of lighting throughout all eight blocks used the majority of the phase one budget.

Second to lighting was the desire for traffic calming and boundary delineation. Again, It was impossible to accomplish all of these improvements throughout the study area in phase one.

Phase one ended in a compromise that satisfied the advisory committee:

Pedestrian scale lighting will be installed throughout the eight blocks, with the exception of Park Avenue. The elimination of Park Avenue lighting is due in part to the institutional nature of the street. Fundraisers felt that other means of financing may be obtained by the institutions. A significant amount of funding then became available for other improvements in phase one.

Traffic calming will be installed in the areas where it will have the most significant impact. Bump outs will be constructed at the intersections of 28th and Park, Portland, Oakland, Columbus; and 26th and Park, Portland, Oakland, and Columbus. These bump outs will not extend into 26th and 28th, but will narrow the north south streets only. Chicago Avenue will not be included in this phase since the street is slated for reconstruction by the City in 2004.

Boundary definition will be budgeted for installation along Chicago Avenue and Portland Avenue. These streets were chosen because of the high volume of traffic they receive, and the close proximity of the residences to the street. The following guidelines will be used for the installation of elements at front property lines:


A dry-laid limestone wall will be installed if there is a need for a retaining wall 18" height or greater. If there is no grade change between the sidewalk and the front door, the owner will have the option of a hedge, or wrought iron fence.

It is important to remember that all of these options will be installed along the front property line only.

Corner Fencing is an element that will unify the neighborhood and signify change throughout the area.

This element will be installed at the three corners of the study area including 26th and Chicago, 28th and Chicago, and 28th and Portland. An existing high quality fence is installed at the corner of Portland and 26th, so that intersection is not included.

The installation of phase one of the Framework Plan will have a major visual impact on the neighborhood. This positive first step will be the impetus needed to push the project ahead and work towards its completion.

				
<b>Estimated costs for implementation of phase one public realm improvements</b>				
<b>Phase One:</b>				
<b>Item</b>	<b>Qty.</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Ea.</b>	<b>Extended</b>
Lighting - excluding Park Ave.	48	ea	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 240,000.00
Bumpouts 26th/ 28th & Oakland/Columbus (excluding Chicago)	8	corners	\$ 5,625.00	\$ 45,000.00
Bumpouts @26th/28th & Park and Portland	8	corners	\$ 5,625.00	\$ 45,000.00
Boundary Delineation at Chicago and Portland (plus demo)	2300	lf	\$ 42.00	\$ 96,600.00
Corner Fencing: Chicago & 26th & 28th; Portland & 28th	3	corners	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 16,500.00
Misc. demolition and site restoration	1	ls	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
<b>Subtotal</b>				<b>\$ 463,100.00</b>
Contingency 12%	1	ls		\$ 53,000.00
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$ 516,100.00</b>
<b>Estimated costs for implementation of complete public realm improvements</b>				
<b>Item</b>	<b>Qty.</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Ea.</b>	<b>Extended</b>
Lighting	64	ea	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 320,000.00
Fencing	20,000	lf	\$ 50.00	\$ 1,000,000.00
Bump-outs partial intersection	10	ea	\$ 22,500.00	\$ 225,000.00
Bump-outs full intersection	5	ea	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 225,000.00
Children's Play Lot	1	ea	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00
Boulevard plants	25,000	ea	\$ 6.00	\$ 150,000.00
Site Furniture (8 benches,36 pots)	1	ls	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
Crosswalk Paving	50	ea	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 75,000.00
Misc. demolition and site restoration	1	ls	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Contingency	1	ls	\$ 220,000.00	\$ 220,000.00
<b>Preliminary Total</b>				<b>\$ 2,385,000.00</b>