



# CITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS ANNUAL REPORT

# 2019

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**COLUMBIA HEIGHTS**  
REDISCOVER THE HEIGHTS

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# OVERVIEW

## In 2019 ...

...the City of Columbia Heights welcomed a new City Manager, a new Community Development Director, a new Fire Chief, a new Assistant Fire Chief, and a new City Clerk. The City also said goodbye to a number of longtime employees who retired in 2019.

...Kelli Bourgeois started as City Manager on Jan 2, replacing Walter Fehst, who retired at the end of 2018 after 22 years on the job. Bourgeois has been with the City of Columbia Heights since 2014, previously as the human resources director and assistant City manager. Her career in local government has spanned 23 years.

...Chief Charlie Thompson took over for Chief Gary Gorman, who retired after 41 years with the City. And Dan O'Brien was promoted to Assistant Fire Chief, taking over for John Larkin, who retired after 29 years with the City.

...residents turned out in record numbers to celebrate the second annual Truck or Treat event, which more than doubled its first-year attendance with an estimated 1,500 visitors. Residents also showed up in big numbers for National Night Out, the Canadian Pacific Holiday Train, the Columbia Heights Community Picnic, the Fire Safety Open House, the Citywide Garage Sale, the Jamboree, and the second annual Cheers for Beers event.

...the City held its first City Services Expo and Town Hall event in March to provide a chance for residents to meet one-on-one with City staff and get their questions answered about a variety of City services.

...to help advance redevelopment along Central Ave, the Economic Development Authority purchased the NE Bank Building located at the intersection of Central and 40th Ave NE. The City Council also voted to locate a new City Hall at the location in a one-of-a-kind development opportunity.

...the Outstanding Citizen Award went to active community member Catherine Miske, and the Employee of the Year Award went to Fire Cpt. Tony Cuzzupe. Congratulations Catherine and Tony!

...Columbia Heights Police Chief Lenny Austin was among 256 law enforcement officers who

graduated from the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia, this fall. Internationally known for its academic excellence, the Academy offers 10 weeks of advanced communication, leadership, and fitness training.

...the City adopted its 2040 Comprehensive Plan to help guide the vision for the City's future.

...the Economic Development Authority, in partnership with the CHPD, expanded its Façade Improvement Grant Program in its second year to include 40th Ave. The program helped fund exterior improvements for eight businesses along both Central Ave and 40th Ave, amounting to roughly \$25,000 in reimbursements. The program will continue in 2020.

...for the 28th year in row, the City of Columbia Heights Finance Department won a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association, the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting in North America.

...for the first time in eight years, the Columbia Heights Fire Department had a chance to practice live-burn training inside an actual house thanks to a collaborative effort among City departments and residents.

...for the first time this fall, the Columbia Heights Public Library offered citizenship classes in partnership with the Adult Education Center. The library also expanded its English Conversation Circles drop-in service to include Monday evenings.

...with help from a grant from the Minnesota Department of Health, public works installed a bike fixit station at the Columbia Heights Public Library to help support the library's mission to provide residents access to resources, information, and technology in a welcoming environment that can improve their lives.

...in less than a year, Officer Darry Jones Jr. went from never having formally trained as a boxer in his life to fighting in 15 official bouts and winning 14, which gave him enough experience to compete in the Olympic Trial Qualifiers. He trained at the Firehouse Gym, connected to City Hall, and took the opportunity to promote community policing in the City.

Thanks so much to residents, City staff, Mayor, City Council and other elected officials, volunteers, businesses, and community groups for making 2019 such a great year for Columbia Heights!



Below represents just a snapshot of Columbia Heights' 2019 year in images. Find many more photos throughout this report.



# 2019 Recognitions

## Outstanding Citizen

### 2019 Outstanding Citizen of the Year Award Goes to Active Community Member Catherine Miske

The kind of people who get nominated for Columbia Heights' Outstanding Citizen Award tend to have a healthy dose of humility. So when Catherine Miske received a call from Columbia Heights City Hall, she assumed she was in trouble.

"At first I thought, 'why is the City calling me, is my yard not up to standard? Are there too many toys out front?'" Miske said. The City was actually calling to inform her she had been selected as the 2019 Outstanding Citizen winner.

Miske was nominated by Katherine Hosch and Cheri Fischer, who highlighted Miske's work as a Cub Scout volunteer at Immaculate Conception Church and liturgy coordinator at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, where she works with Deaf and hard-of-hearing youth. She hosts Boy Scout programs out of her house, and regularly arranges to bring kids to area nursing homes to sing songs, play games, and do projects with the residents.

Miske moved to Columbia Heights in 1986 and raised three children here. She has been

a volunteer for the Columbia Heights Public Schools reading and theater programs. She has also stepped in to help with youth programs at the Columbia Heights Public Library when the library is short-staffed.

"I think part of the responsibility of living in a community is to support it and try to give back as much as you can," Miske said.

#### About the Award

Every year the City seeks to find one adult and one youth within the community who puts the needs of others before their own. Nominees can be submitted by anyone. The only requirement is that those who are

nominated live in Columbia Heights. The selection process gives extra consideration to people who have not otherwise been publicly recognized.

Miske was selected from a group of nominees by Mayor Donna Schmitt and last year's Outstanding Citizen winner Tanya Moore.



Catherine Miske, left, receives her Outstanding Citizen Award from Mayor Donna Schmitt at a Columbia Heights City Council meeting last June

# 2019 Recognitions

Employee of the Year

## 2019 Employee of the Year Award Goes to Fire Department Captain Tony Cuzzupe

Thirty-five years ago, the City Council approved the Employee of the Year Award as a method of rewarding employees seen by their peers and supervisors as deserving of special recognition for their accomplishments and contributions to the City of Columbia Heights. This year, Fire Capt. Tony Cuzzupe became the 40th employee to receive the honor.

As a fire captain, Tony is expected to make life-saving decisions at all hours of the night with little to no sleep over 24-hour shifts. There is no room for error. During his 13 plus years of full-time experience, he has spent more than 38,000 hours on shift duty, averaging 56 hours a week. Yet, every day, on every call, inspection, or school education event, he rises to the occasion and shows his true heart.

Described by those who nominated him as being one of the most caring and dedicated people they have ever known, as someone who has had myriad chances to make positive impacts in people's lives and who has never passed up the opportunity to do so. For example, while on a rental inspection job, Tony noticed a boy walking a bicycle up the driveway. The boy looked upset. When asked, the boy explained that his day of biking had come to an abrupt end when his bike broke. Tony noticed this boy's distress, took the time to stop and listen to him, and assessed the damage of the bicycle. But he didn't stop there. He promptly grabbed a tool kit from the department's truck and fixed the bike on the spot.

Tony has become a key part of the growth and mentorship of the City's younger firefighters and has demonstrated a true knack for team building. He formed the Columbia Heights Fire Department Honor Guard to help honor the sacrifices made by former firefighters and their families.

Tony was nominated by his fellow employees and selected from a list of nominees by past winners of the Employee of the Year Award for being an asset not just to the Fire Department, but to the community, and to our lives.

Congratulations, Tony!



*Tony Cuzzupe accepts the Employee of the Year award plaque from Mayor Donna Schmitt*



# ADMINISTRATION

## Introduction

The Administration Department is responsible for daily administration of the City, the annual budget, supervision of City departments, human resource functions, the City Code, communications, special projects/events, cable television administration, boards and commissions, City election coordination, event planning, and City Clerk functions.

The City Manager is the Chief Administrative Officer for the City and is appointed by the City Council. The City Manager is responsible for the daily administration of the City, including:

- Appointing and advising division heads
- Enforcing ordinances and council directives
- Preparing the annual budget for council review
- Supervising City Clerk, HR Manager, Communications Coordinator, and all City departments as determined by the City Charter
- Final approval of personnel decisions

On June 2, 2019, former Assistant City Manager and HR Director Kelli Bourgeois replaced Walter Fehst as City Manager, who retired in 2018 after 22 years with the City.



The City said farewell to City Clerk Katie Bruno, who took a position at Roseville, and welcomed new City Clerk Nicole Tingley. The department also welcomed new HR Manager Patricia Sweep.

Administration staff helped coordinate the fourth annual Community Picnic, where 25 local organizations set up information booths and dozens of art vendors sold their crafts.

Also in 2019, the City created the position of Events and Special Projects Coordinator to assist the Communications Coordinator with

event planning, including the 2021 100th anniversary.

The Administration Department was highly involved in planning for a new City Hall to be located at the intersection of Central and 40th. Construction on the site, which will also include a new apartment complex, began in fall, 2020.

The department also held its first annual City Services Expo at the Columbia Heights Public Library, where residents learned about City services and attended a town hall Q&A with the Mayor and City Council.

# Administration Department Staff

Name	Title	Start Date	End Date
Kelli Bourgeois	City Manager Assistant City Manager/HR Director	Jan 2, 2019, as City Manager July 10, 2014 as HR Director	---- Dec. 31, 2018
Patricia Sweep	HR Manager	July 15, 2019	----
Ben Sandell	Communications Coordinator	April 23, 2018	----
Katie Bruno	City Clerk	May 19, 2014	March 27, 2019
Nicole Tingley	City Clerk	June 17, 2019	----
Nancy Becker	Admin. Assistant for HR	Sept 1, 2015	----
Jody Griffin	Events & Special Projects Coor.	July 29, 2019	Dec 6, 2019
Adam Davis	Cable Intern	Oct 23, 2000	----

## Columbia Heights Welcomes New City Manager Kelli Bourgeois



*Kelli Bourgeois started as Columbia Heights new City manager Jan 2. She was officially hired by the City Council Nov 26. Former City Manager Walter Fehst retired Dec 31.*

After 22 years, the City of Columbia Heights welcomed a new chief administrative officer in early 2019. Kelli Bourgeois stepped into the role of City manager on Jan 2, replacing former City Manager Walter Fehst, who retired Dec 31, 2018.

Bourgeois has been with the City of Columbia Heights since 2014 as the human resources director and assistant City manager. Previously, she was a community development director, assistant city administrator, and city planner for the City of Becker, and senior planner for the South Eastern Council of Governments. She holds a juris doctor degree from Hamline University School of Law, and a bachelor's degree in local and urban affairs from St. Cloud State University. Her career in local government has spanned 23 years.

"I am looking forward to continuing and building upon all of the great things we have going in Columbia Heights," Bourgeois said. "We have wonderful residents, elected officials, and staff. There is no other city I would rather serve."



*Bourgeois stands with former City managers Walter Fehst and Malcolm Watson at an employee appreciation luncheon.*

# Plans Develop for New City Hall

In September, 2019, the Columbia Heights City Council voted to authorize the establishment of a new, 20,000 square-foot City Hall as part of a vertical mixed-use development at 3989 Central Ave. According to the plan, the City Hall would be owned by the City, like a condo, inside a larger private development, with construction scheduled to begin late 2020.

## Background

In the spring of 2019, the Minneapolis development firm Alatus LLC emerged as the City's preferred partner for the redevelopment of the 3989 Central Avenue NE site. The current mixed-use concept plan proposed by Alatus for the site includes the development of approximately 266 luxury apartments, 3,500 square feet of retail, and 20,000 square feet of office space. Shortly after selection as the City's preferred partner, Alatus approached City staff and the Council to gauge interest on a public-private partnership that would program a new City Hall space into their Central Avenue project.

Within the initial concept layout provided by Alatus, the new City Hall would occupy 20,000 square feet of office space located on the first floor. In response to the inquiry by Alatus, staff was directed to work with the

Alatus development team to further refine their plans so that a more fully developed concept plan could be vetted in the future.

In review of the draft site plan, preliminary budget, and pros and cons analysis, staff believed that the City should move forward and partner with Alatus to locate a new City Hall at 3989 Central Avenue. Locating City Hall within the Alatus development is expected to save the City more than \$5 million when compared to the proposed stand-alone option near Murzyn Hall.

The existing City Hall, located at 590 40th Ave, NE, is in poor condition and out of ADA compliance. Necessary renovations to keep the building functional would have cost at least \$6.6 million, according to an analysis by the Leo A Daly architecture firm. Therefore, renovation was not seen as a feasible option.

## Bank Building Purchase

In 2018, the City's Economic Development Authority purchased the NE Bank Building located at the intersection of Central Ave and 40th St. The six-story structure had stood empty for more than four years. The EDA purchased the property from 500, LLC for \$2.9 million with the intention to sell it to a private developer.



# Human Resources Report

## New Hires

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The City experienced several personnel changes this year. Overall, in 2019, the City hired 26 full-time employees (of which 11 were on a promotional basis), 11 part-time employees (of which two were on a promotional basis), four paid-on-call firefighters, and numerous seasonal and temporary positions. Openings occurred mainly due to attrition.

In July, Patty Sweep took over the HR Manager position, which was left vacant when Kelli Bourgeois was promoted to City Manager in January. Sweep previously worked within the human resources field both in retail, for Supervalu, and most recently in the public sector for the Metropolitan Mosquito Control District as its Human Resources Manager.

## Years of Service Awards

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The following employees were recognized for their years of service:

- **5 Years:** Christopher Allen (Fire), Kelli Bourgeois (Administration), Kenneth Brown (Liquor), Namgyal Dorjee (Liquor), John Flanders (Fire), Elizabeth Hammond (Community Development), Jeremy Hansen (Public Works), Lauren Letsche (Public Works), Kate McKay (Fire), MaRaye Mickey-Brocks (Liquor), Zachery Picard (Fire), Bryan Schachtele (Fire), Ben Streed (Liquor), Tabitha Wood (Police).
- **10 Years:** Felisha Burns (Liquor), Jesse Dittbenner (Fire), Kyle Hall (Fire), Randy Iskierka (Liquor), Cory Mattson (Fire), Eric Shurson (Liquor).
- **15 Years:** Jesse Davies (Public Works), Joe Kloiber (Finance), Kevin Niznik (Liquor), Stephen Woods (Liquor).
- **20 Years:** Matt Aish (Police), Aleksandr Chernin (IS), Lavonne Greene (Liquor), Sherri Jensen (Public Works), Tom Mattson (Fire), Rich Nordstrom (Public Works), Steven Olson (Liquor), Sue Schmidtbauer (Public Works), Susan Wolney (JPM).
- **25 Years:** Paul Bonesteel (Police), Tim Lund (Public Works).
- **35 Years:** Shelley Hanson (Community Development).
- **40 Years:** Mike O'Reilly (Public Works), Scott Rockstad (JPM).

The Employee of the Year and Years of Service Awards were announced at the annual employee holiday luncheon/recognition event, held Dec 11 at Murzyn Hall.

## Labor Contracts

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All six collective bargaining agreements expire Dec 31, 2021. The City will begin new contract negotiations with all six units in the fall of 2020.

## Grievances

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No union grievances were filed in 2019.

## Furloughs

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There were no furloughs in 2019.

## City-Wide Safety Committee

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The Columbia Heights City-Wide Safety Committee continued to meet in 2019.

Members of this committee (as of year-end) were:

Nancy Becker, Administrative Assistant–Human Resources (Chair)

Tom Costello, Assistant Liquor Manager

Eric Hanson, Facilities Maintenance Supervisor

Duane Hopkins, Public Service Worker

Greg Sinn, Police Officer

The main charge of this committee is to review injuries on duty, and to determine if they could have been prevented and how they can be prevented in the future. In 2019, there were 11 recordable injuries, resulting in 15 days away from work, and 113 days of restricted work activities.

The City renewed its contract for services with Safe-Assure to draft updated safety manuals and compliance documents, provide required and voluntary safety training, and to conduct building safety inspections for all departments within the City except Public Works, Police and Fire as they have their own safety programs.

Required AWAIR, Right to Know, Bloodborne Pathogen, Emergency Action Plans, and Ergonomics training was provided to all employees.

## Wellness Committee

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In 2019, the City of Columbia Heights partnered with Anoka County Public Health on a Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) Grant. The purpose of the partnership with SHIP was to promote healthy behaviors at work such as increasing physical activity, promoting healthy food and drink choices, supporting nursing mothers, decreasing tobacco use, and creating positive mental wellbeing. To best plan on how to use those resources and organize and implement better

# Human Resources Cont.

workplace wellness practices, the City formed a Wellness Committee in 2019. The committee represents different functions of each City department and the various staff roles. Inaugural members of this committee (as of year-end) were: Aaron Chirpich, Jodi Griffin, Elizabeth Hammond, Paula Haynus, Jacob Hilden, Stacey House, Sherri Jensen, Emily Kosman, Kelly Olson, Sue Schmidtbauer, Deanna Saefke, Ben Sandell, Steve Silverdahl, Debbie Steffen, Patty Sweep, and Jackie Zillmer.

As one of its first acts, the Wellness Committee conducted a Citywide employee survey to collect ideas on how to best improve workplace wellness. After initial feedback, the City made three immediate changes; It provided City bicycles for staff to use for transportation within town if they so choose; it installed a healthy snack rack in the City Hall break room; and it designated and remodeled a room at City Hall as a “wellness/mother’s room.”

## City Clerk Report

### City Council

Council met for a total of 46 meetings. In 2019, there were 23 regular City Council meetings held, 10 regular work sessions, five special work sessions, one Local Board of Appeals and Equalization meeting, and five special meetings, which included one joint meeting with the City of Fridley, one joint meeting with the Columbia Heights Board of Education, and three Public Improvement Hearings. One Assessment Hearing was held during the Oct 14 City Council Business Meeting.

Council members as of 2019: Donna Schmitt (mayor), Connie Buesgens, John Murzyn Jr., Nick Novitsky, and Bobby Williams.

### Ordinances and Resolutions

During 2019, five ordinances were proposed and approved. Of the 102 resolutions requested, 94 were approved, five were removed, two were denied, and one was tabled into 2020. Property abatements accounted for three of the requested resolutions with two being approved and one removed. Rental License Revocation Resolutions accounted for 21 of the requested resolutions with 15 being approved, four being removed, and two being denied.

### Position of City Clerk

Nicole Tingley started as Columbia Heights’ new city clerk this June. Previously she was the assistant to the city administrator for the City of Maple Plain. She replaced former City Clerk Katie Bruno who took a position in Roseville as deputy city clerk after five years with Columbia Heights. The City Clerk is the appointed City Council Secretary and is responsible for the preparation, execution, and archiving of all City Council documents as prescribed by the City Charter, City Code, and State law. The City Clerk also administers local elections, and facilitates the Charter Commission.

### Charter Commission

The Columbia Heights City Charter determines the procedures of City government in accordance with state statutes and the MN Constitution. The Charter enables the City to be a self-governing City under the municipal home rule provisions of the Constitution. Under the Charter, the City has adopted the council-manager form of government. Charter commissioners in 2019 were: Steve Smith, Patrick McVary, Rob Fiorendino, Kathy Ahlers, Carolyn Laine, Joe Schluender, Tom Kaiser, Gregory K. Sloat, Kt Jacobs, Ramona Anderson, Frost Simula, Bill Hugo, Matt Abel, Susan Wiseman, and Tyler Eubank.

### Elections

There were no elections in Columbia Heights in 2019.



*New City Clerk Nicole Tingley and new HR Manager Patty Sweep.*

# Communications and Outreach

## Cable and Recording

By the close of 2019, cable subscribers in the Columbia Heights franchise area totaled 3,128, resulting in a penetration rate of 33%. Franchise and PEG (Public, Educational, and Governmental) fees received by Columbia Heights totaled about \$215,000. The City continues to work with Tigtrope Media to schedule and stream cable channel content. The City records every City Council meeting and every Planning Commission meeting. Council meetings, informational videos, and bulletins are streamed on local cable channels 16 and 19, and on the City's website.

## Newsletter and Recreation Brochure

The City Newsletter was mailed to every household four times in 2019: spring, summer, winter, and fall. The 12-page document, which is attached to the Recreation Brochure, underwent a redesign over the course of 2018. In 2019, the Recreation Brochure received a redesign (see page 15). The City contracted with Lindsey Fuhrman of PixelPoint Design to help create the new design and provide other graphics support. The City continues to contract with mailing company Do-Good to ensure all newsletters reach their intended audience. Nystrom continues to be the print source for the newsletter. The newsletter is mailed to 9,600 households in Columbia Heights.

## Social Media

The City maintains many social media accounts, including a Youtube channel, a police Instagram and Twitter account, and Facebook accounts for the Police Department, Fire Department, Library, and City as a whole. In 2019, the City's Facebook page attracted 500 additional

followers, for a total of 1,000 followers by the beginning of 2019. Near the end of 2018, the City hired the firm ArchiveSocial to keep track of all posts and comments made on the City's social media pages. This was to ensure that the City has complete and proper records in the event of a data practices request. A social media comments policy was posted on the City's Facebook page to help regulate controversial posts from the public. The City continues to contract with ArchiveSocial.

## Communications Committee

In 2019, the Communications Committee was made up of Paula Haynus, Jeff Hanson, Jodi Griffin, Sue Schmidt-bauer, Jason Schulz, Kelli Bourgeois, Nancy Becker, Deanna Saefke, Winnie Coyne, Karen Olson, John Larkin, Katie Bruno, Liz Hamond, and Ben Sandell (chair). The committee met bi-monthly.

## Website

The City continues to contract with Revize to host the City's website. Roughly 70 City news stories were posted online in 2019.

## Graphic Design

For the second year, Lindsey Fuhrman, of PixelPoint Design, contracted with the City to help with graphic design projects.

## Communications Award

The City received a Silver Award in 2020 from the Minnesota Association of Government Communicators for its photography series of a 2019 CH Fire Department live-burn training event. See page 49 for more.



# City Rec Brochure Redesign



## RECREATION PROGRAMS

**FALL 2019**

**Youth Basketball Grades 2 - 6**  
Girls Season October - December  
Boys Season December - March

\*Twin Cities Youth Basketball League  
\*Games held at school gyms in Coon Rapids, Blaine, Anoka, and Spring Lake Park, Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

**Volunteer coaches are needed**, registration fee waived for your child.  
\* Fee: \$45

**GIRLS Basketball Registration Deadline September 28.**  
**BOYS Basketball Registration Deadline November 30.**

See Page 8 for more details.

**NEW PROGRAMS**  
**Adult Co-Ed Kickball Tournament Day - Sept. 21**  
**Co-Ed Volleyball Tournament Day - Oct. 12**

See page 11 for more details. Register your team today.

**IN THIS ISSUE**  
3 - Park & Event Wagon Reservations  
4 - Youth Programs & Trips  
8 & 9 - Youth Sports  
10 - Adult Exercise  
11 - Adult Co-Ed Kickball & Volleyball  
12 - Active Agers

**COLUMBIA HEIGHTS**  
REDISCOVER THE HEIGHTS

See Flip Side for City Newsletter  
[www.columbiaheightsmn.gov](http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov)

## 2 Recreation Information

**C.H. Recreation Department**  
530 Mill Street NE  
John P. Murzyn Hall  
763-706-3730  
Office Hours:  
Monday through Friday,  
8 am to 4:30 pm  
The office will be closed on  
Sept. 2, Nov. 11, 28, & 29

**Recreation Hotline**  
To better serve the residents of Columbia Heights, the Recreation Department maintains an information and weather phone line. Call (763) 706-3737 anytime, twenty-four hours a day, for a recorded message regarding recreation programs and activities. In the event of inclement weather, facility closure and program cancellation information will also be presented. A decision will not be made for evening programs until 4 pm. Call our information line at (763) 706-3737.

**FOR SALE!**  
Heights Athletics  
Sweatshirts  
Youth & Adult  
Sizes - 120  
available at the  
Recreation  
Office

**John P. Murzyn Hall Rental Information**  
John P. Murzyn Hall (JPM), operated by the Recreation Dept., is available for rental by the general public during non-programmed times. Reserve JPM for wedding receptions, meetings, parties, banquets, etc.

Our facility offers a spacious banquet hall that comfortably accommodates 400 people. Several meeting rooms are also available for rentals. See more photos of Murzyn Hall on our website at: [www.columbiaheightsmn.gov](http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov)

We invite you to tour our facility or call 763-706-3737 for the Murzyn Hall information line. Reservations may be made Monday through Friday from 8 am to 4:45 pm by calling 763-706-3734, or in person at the Recreation Office located in Murzyn Hall.

**Photo Policy:**  
Photographs and videos are periodically taken of participants while they are engaged in programs, special events, or enjoying the parks. Please be aware that these photos may appear in the local newspapers, on local cable television, and/or Recreation Department publications.

**Park & Recreation Commission**  
Chair: David Payne  
Commission Members: Ann Carder, Sean Clerkin, Jr., Bruce Evans, Tom Greenhigh, Kevin McDonald, David Payne, & Marsha Stroik  
Council Representative: Nick Novitsky

## 3 Recreation Information

**PARK RESERVATIONS**  
The City of Columbia Heights Park reservations will begin on the first business day of each year. A permit must be filled out with the Recreation Office. Fees including tax, are as follows and due at time of reservation.  
**Residents:** \$50  
**Non-Residents:** \$75  
**Large Groups (100 people or more):** \$125  
Call 763-706-3730

**NEIGHBORHOOD EVENT WAGON**  
The Neighborhood Event Wagon is for residents of Columbia Heights to use. It will be delivered and picked up by the Recreation Department. Reservations will begin on the first business day of each year.  
**Reservation Fee:** \$45  
Make reservations at the Recreation Department, 530 Mill St or by calling 763-706-3730. Payment is required at time of reservation.

**HYLANDER CENTER 1300 49th Ave**  
The exercise room contains 2 treadmills, 5 elliptical machines, and various weight machines. Open gym basketball, volleyball, and pickleball, when not in use for programming. Hylander Center - East Door #38, North side of CH High School. Parking directly across 49th Ave in designated marked stalls for Hylander Center users.  
**WHEN:** Monday - Friday 9 am - 12 pm Monday - Thursday 6 - 8:30 pm  
Saturday & Sunday 9 am - 12 pm  
**Closed if hosting a tournament and on holidays.**  
Calendar available at [www.columbiaheightsmn.gov](http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov)

**COST:** \$1 Daily drop in / \$10 monthly pass for adults

**YOUTH AFTER SCHOOL OPEN GYM WITH THE CHPD**  
at the Hylander Center, 1300 49th Ave Door #38  
High School aged students ONLY. Free admission  
Tuesdays & Thursdays 5:30 pm-5:50 pm

**JOIN US!** The Columbia Heights Boosters need your help supporting youth activities and athletics in Columbia Heights! Monthly Meetings: 3rd Wednesday of every month 7 pm @ Murzyn Hall. Bingo: Meet Raffles, Pull Tabs, and FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES! <http://chatathleticboosters.com>  
[www.facebook.com/ColumbiaHeightsBoosters](http://www.facebook.com/ColumbiaHeightsBoosters)

**WATER SAFETY & SWIMMING LESSONS\*** CH Recreation and Columbia Heights Public Schools are joint partners with the 21st Century Learning Center Grant. One of the grant-funded programs is a FREE Water Safety Instruction on Saturdays at the CH High School pool. For more information: [www.columbiaheightsmn.gov](http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov), k12.mn.us/aquatics or call your school's main office for ENCORE Aquatics.  
\*This program is partially funded with a grant from the Minnesota Department of Education using federal funding, CFDA #42.26. Every Student Succeeds Act, Title IV-B 21st Century Community Learning Centers. The content of this program does not necessarily represent the policy of the federal Department of Education or the Minnesota Department of Education.

**ENCORE**  
21st Century Community Learning Center

The City's Recreation Brochure underwent a redesign in 2019. Redesign was completed by the City's Communications team and graphic design contractor Lindsey Fuhrman.

The newsletter from the flipside of the Recreation Brochure underwent a redesign in 2018.

## RECREATION PROGRAMS

**SPRING 2020**

**SIGN UP NOW!**  
**Youth Baseball & Softball**  
Grades K-18 years old.  
See pages 8 & 9 for more details.

**Spring Family Fun Night**  
April 4, 6-7:30 pm, Hylander Center  
Celebrate the arrival of Spring at this fun, family event!  
Egg Hop Relay Race • Easter Egg Rolling • Crafts • CH Police Bike Demo and more!

**NEW THIS YEAR!**  
See page 4 for more details.

**IN THIS ISSUE**  
3 Park & Event Wagon Reservations  
4 - 9 Youth Programs & Trips  
8 & 9 Youth Sports  
10 & 11 Adult Programs  
11 & 12 Active Agers

**NEW PROGRAMS**  
5 & 6 Preschool Age Programs  
5 Spanish/English Musical Theater  
5 Youth Art Programs  
11 Active Agers Special Events

**ONLINE REGISTRATION**  
[www.chreconline.org](http://www.chreconline.org)

**CITY WEBSITE**  
[www.columbiaheightsmn.gov](http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov)

**LIKE US ON FACEBOOK**  
[Facebook.com/CHRecreation](https://www.facebook.com/CHRecreation)

**COLUMBIA HEIGHTS**  
REDISCOVER THE HEIGHTS

SEE FLIP SIDE FOR CITY NEWSLETTER

## RECREATION INFORMATION

**C.H. RECREATION DEPARTMENT**  
The mission of the Columbia Heights Recreation Department is to provide recreational and service opportunities for all ages.

**RECREATION DEPARTMENT**  
530 Mill Street NE  
John P. Murzyn Hall  
763-706-3730

**OFFICE HOURS**  
Monday-Friday, 8 am-4:30 pm

**CLOSED**  
Nov. 11, 28, 29, Dec. 24, 25, & Jan. 20

**WEATHER HOTLINE**  
Call 763-706-3737 anytime for updates on cancellations.

**PHOTO POLICY**  
Photographs and videos are periodically taken of participants while they are engaged in programs, special events, or enjoying the parks. Please be aware that these photos may appear in the local newspapers, on social media, and/or Recreation publications.

**REGISTRATION INFORMATION**  
Online: [www.chreconline.org](http://www.chreconline.org)  
In person / via mail: Columbia Heights Recreation, John P. Murzyn Hall, 530 Mill Street NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421. Drop box after hours is on the east side of building. You may register over the phone with a Discover, Visa, or MasterCard payment by calling 763-706-3730. Please make checks payable to: City of Columbia Heights.  
**Confirmation:** Assume registration is confirmed. You will be notified only if the class is canceled or full. Registrations will be placed on a wait list if full. Refunds will not be given if withdrawn 1 week prior to the activity.  
**Participants Scholarship:** Apply at the office for assistance if unable to pay for an activity. The scholarship will cover 75% of the program fee (maximum discount is \$25); the remaining 25 percent needs to be covered by the participant's parent or guardian. Please bring a copy of your federal income tax or school district free lunch form for verification. Only one scholarship per child per newsletter.

**JOIN US!** The COLUMBIA HEIGHTS BOOSTERS need your help supporting youth activities and athletics in Columbia Heights! Monthly Meetings: 3rd Wednesday of every month 7 pm at Murzyn Hall. Bingo • Meet Raffles • Pull Tabs • FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES!  
[chatathleticboosters.com](http://chatathleticboosters.com) • Facebook: ColumbiaHeightsBoosters

**JOHN P. MURZYN HALL RENTAL INFORMATION**  
John P. Murzyn Hall (JPM), operated by the Recreation Dept., is available for rental by the general public during non-programmed times. Reserve JPM for wedding receptions, meetings, parties, banquets, etc.

Our facility offers a spacious banquet hall that comfortably accommodates groups up to 400 people. Several meeting rooms are also available for rentals. See more photos of Murzyn Hall on our website at [www.columbiaheightsmn.gov](http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov)

We invite you to tour our facility or call 763-706-3737 for the Murzyn Hall information line. Reservations may be made Monday through Friday from 8 am to 4:45 pm by calling 763-706-3734, or in person at the Recreation Office located in Murzyn Hall.

**PARK RESERVATIONS**  
The City of Columbia Heights Park reservations will begin on the first business day of each year. A permit must be filled out with the Recreation Office. Fees including tax, are as follows and due at time of reservation.  
**Residents:** \$50  
**Non-Residents:** \$75  
**Large Groups (100 people or more):** \$125  
Call 763-706-3730

**NEIGHBORHOOD EVENT WAGON**  
The Neighborhood Event Wagon is for residents of Columbia Heights to use. It will be delivered and picked up by the Recreation Department. Reservations will begin on the first business day of each year.  
**Reservation Fee:** \$45  
Make reservations at the Recreation Department or call 763-706-3730.

**HYLANDER CENTER**  
The exercise room contains two treadmills, three elliptical machines, and various weight machines. Open gym basketball and volleyball when not in use for programming. Hylander Center - East Door #38, North side of CH High School. Parking directly across 49th Ave, designated stalls for Hylander Center users.  
**When:** Monday-Friday, 9 am-12 pm  
Monday-Thursday, 6-8:30 pm  
Saturday & Sunday, 9 am-12 pm  
**Closed if hosting a tournament & holidays.**  
**Cost:** \$1 Daily drop in / \$10 monthly pass for adults  
Calendar available at [www.columbiaheightsmn.gov](http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov)

**WATER SAFETY & SWIMMING LESSONS\*** CH Recreation and Columbia Heights Public Schools are joint partners with the 21st Century Learning Center Grant. One of the grant-funded programs is a FREE Water Safety Instruction on Saturdays at the CH High School pool. For more info: [www.columbiaheightsmn.gov](http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov), k12.mn.us/aquatics or call your school's main office for ENCORE Aquatics.  
\*This program is partially funded with a grant from the MN Department of Education using federal funding, CFDA #42.26. Every Student Succeeds Act, Title IV-B 21st Century Community Learning Centers. The content of this program does not necessarily represent the policy of the federal Department of Education or the MN Department of Education.

**ENCORE**  
21st Century Community Learning Center

**YOUTH AFTER SCHOOL OPEN GYM WITH THE CHPD**  
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 5:30 pm-5:50 pm  
Hylander Center, 1300 49th Ave Door #38  
High School aged students ONLY. Free admission.

# Events

## New Events and Communications Specialist

The City Council approved the creation of an events and communications specialist to work with the Communications Coordinator to organize City events, plan the City's 100th anniversary schedule, and help out with day-to-day communications needs. This is the second position within the City focused specifically on citywide communications and outreach. Jodi Griffin was the first to fill this position. Two 100th Anniversary Event Planning committees were created, one made up of City staff, the other of community stakeholders.

## Community Picnic and Art and Craft Fair

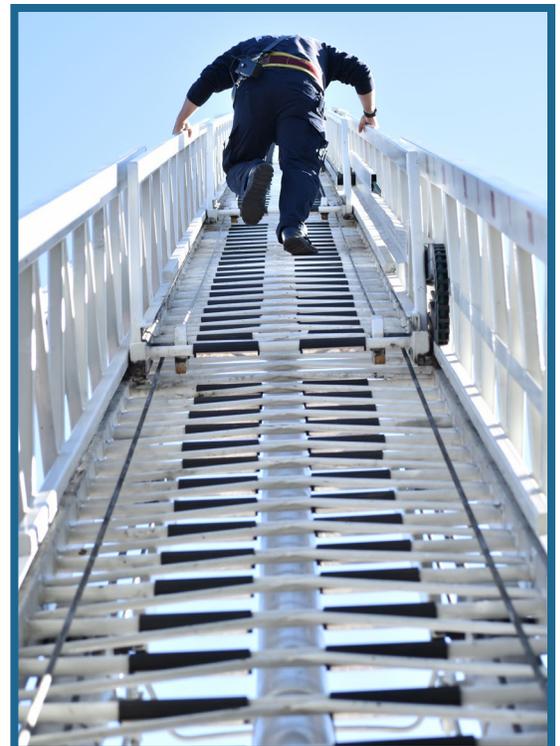
The City of Columbia Heights' annual Community Picnic was June 27, from 4:30 to 7 pm, at Huset Park West, organized by the Communications Coordinator Special Projects Coordinator Jodi Griffin, with participation from all departments. City and community organizations hosted 25 informational booths around the Huset Park Splash Pad. El Taco Loco cooked and handed out 300 free tacos (first-come, first-served) to residents, and charged \$2 per taco after that. A mariachi band provided an hour of music, HeightsNEXT passed out free ice cream, a face painter helped brighten up kids' faces with colorful designs, and the DNR provided a free "fishing clinic" for kids. It's estimated that about 800 people visited the picnic during the event. This was the third annual Community Picnic around the Splash Pad. The City also held an art and craft fair adjacent to the picnic inside Murzyn Hall with 30 local vendors.

## City Services Expo and Town Hall

Columbia Heights held its first City Services Expo and Town Hall March 2, 11 am to 2 pm, 2019, at the CH Public Library. Planning for the event began in the summer of 2018. Check the 2019 annual report for more details on the event.

## Other Events

Residents turned out in record numbers to celebrate the second annual Truck or Treat event, which more than doubled its first-year attendance with an estimated 1,500 visitors. Residents also showed up in big numbers for National Night Out, the Canadian Pacific Holiday Train, the Fire Safety Open House, the Citywide Garage Sale, the Jamboree, and the second annual Cheers for Beers event.



*Above left: Jamboree Parade. Top Right: Canadian Pacific Train arrival. Bottom right, Truck or Treat fire truck ladder demo.*

# Events Cont.



In 2019, the City debuted its City Services Expo and Town Hall event at the Columbia Heights Public Library. Residents had a chance to visit with representatives from Columbia Heights City Hall, Public Works, Recreation, Library, Police and Fire and get their questions answered and hear about some of the City's notable projects. The inaugural event also included a town hall forum with the Mayor and City Council. The event returned in 2020.

## Community Picnic

The City of Columbia Heights annual Community Picnic returned for its third year June 27 at Huset Park West. In 2019, the picnic also offered an expanded arts and craft fair inside Murzyn Hall.

The picnic featured booths with officials from City and community organizations, children's activities around the splash pad, a fishing clinic, and free tacos and ice cream.



## Art and Craft Fair

More than 30 local artisans displayed their wares at the Art and Craft Fair at Murzyn Hall held in conjunction with the Community Picnic.

There were free wine samples courtesy of Top Valu Liquor. And beer for sale from the Columbia Heights Lions.





# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## Introduction

Through community engagement, the Community Development Division strives to better understand the values of the community—both business and residential—and reflect those values in its programs, projects, policies and development standards implemented throughout the year.

Throughout 2019, the Community Development Division Continued implementing the strategic plan adopted by the City Council in 2017. The strategic plan outlined the City Council’s vision for the City by 2040, but also the necessary goals and objectives required in achieving that vision. Through aggressive economic devel-

opment and incentive programs, careful and articulate municipal planning, and appropriate regulatory control over permits and licenses, the Community Development Division ensures alignment to the vision of the City as guided by our Comprehensive Plan.

The Community Development Division is charged with the overall land use planning and development activity within the City, specifically with the implementation, administration, and enforcement of the City zoning code and respective state building codes, but also coordination of economic development activities that both directly and indirectly act as catalysts



for improving the overall quality of life, business vitality, and economic performance of the City.

The Community Development Division performs the following four core functions of the City:

- Planning and Zoning - Long range planning and zoning administration and enforcement, development plan review, historic preservation, and corridor enhancement review.
- Economic Development Department—Business and workforce development, neighborhood stabilization, acquisition and redevelopment.

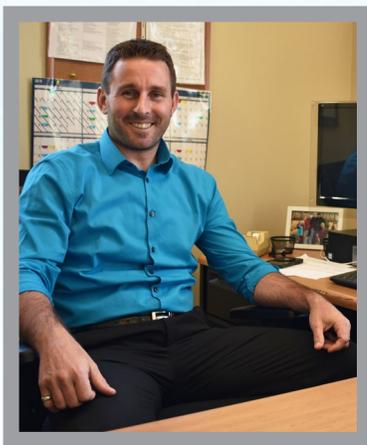
- Housing Department—Audit duties associated with the HRA’s former ownership of Parkview Villa.
- Building Safety Department—Building, mechanical, and plumbing permitting and inspections, code compliance and enforcement, as well as business licensing.

Each core function plays a fundamental role in achieving the City’s vision of ensuring and fostering a safe community; diverse, welcoming “small-town” feel; economic strength; excellent housing and neighborhoods; affordability; and strong infrastructure and public services.

# Community Development Staff

Name	Title	Start Date	End Date
Aaron Chirpich	Community Development Director	April 2, 2019	----
Joseph Hogeboom	Community Development Director	Oct, 2013	Jan 11, 2019
Keith Dahl	Community Dev. Manager	Jan, 2016	March 15, 2019
Elizabeth Hammond	City Planner	Aug, 2013	----
Mitchell Forney	Community Dev. Coordinator	June 6, 2019	----
Ryan Smith	Building Official	Feb, 2019	----
Larry Pepin	Building Official	Jan, 2005	Jan 31, 2019
Shelley Hanson	Admin. Assistant	May, 2001	----
Jodi Griffin	Admin. Assistant	Dec, 2015	July 29, 2019

## Columbia Heights Welcomes New Community Development Director



*Aaron Chirpich started as new Community Development Director April 2, 2019.*

Aaron Chirpich is passionate about helping communities reach their maximum potential.

“We have great people here,” Chirpich said. “Our geographical location is strong. Our commercial properties create great redevelopment opportunities. I’m excited to get started.”

Chirpich became the City’s new Community Development Director April, 2019, taking over from former

director Joseph Hogeboom, who left the position that winter. Chirpich previously worked as Community Development Specialist for the City of New Hope and Development Director for the Headwaters Regional Development Commission in Bemidji. He has a master’s degree in public administration from Metropolitan State University and an undergraduate degree from Bemidji State University, where he graduated Summa Cum Laude.

“I like to help communities grow. I like to change the trajectory and bring something new,” Chirpich said. “There’s a lot of redevelopment potential, but it’s also important not to lose sight of the value of single family neighborhoods. We want to make sure people continue to be happy about where they live. It’s about finding the right balance between commercial redevelopment and residential improvement. It’s all interconnected.”

# Planning and Zoning

## About the Commission

The purpose of the Planning and Zoning Department is to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the community through administration of the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinances. Department staff works closely with the Planning Commission regarding Land Use Applications, Site Plan Reviews, and amending Zoning Ordinances as needed in the City of Columbia Heights.

The seven members on the Planning Commission are appointed by the City Council to serve in an advisory role concerning land use and zoning items. In 2019, the Planning Commissioners included: Marlaine Szurek, Chair, Rob Fiorendino, Vice Chair, Stan Hoium, Treasurer, Mike Novitsky, Adam Schill, Tom Kaiser and Eric Sahnaw. Councilmember John Murzyn Jr. served as Council liaison to the Planning Commission and Elizabeth Hammond served as its staff liaison.

## 2019 Planning Commission Highlights

1. Completed an amendment to the City Code relating to Community Centers, Banquet Halls, and Recreational facilities within the City of Columbia Heights.
2. Completed an amendment to the City Code relating to Brewery Taprooms and Brew Pubs within the City of Columbia Heights.
3. Completed Interim Use Permits for Temporary Fireworks Tent at 4005 Central Ave (Renaissance Fireworks).
4. Reviewed and denied variance request for wall height for 4320 Stinson Blvd
5. Reviewed and approved Site Plan application for 1400 49th Ave (High School Addition)
6. Reviewed Conditional Use Permit for signage at

3836 Stinson Blvd

7. Reviewed Conditional Use Permit for Site Plan, Variance, and Conditional Use Permit for new school at 4141 University Ave (Prodeo Academy)
8. Reviewed Preliminary Plat and Site Plan for remnant parcel located at Huset Pkwy and Jefferson St
9. Completed a Zoning amendment to rezone the property located at 4230 Central Ave
10. Complete Site Plan review for 4435 Central Ave for new accessory structure.
11. Approve acquisition of 230 40th Avenue by the City.

## Comprehensive Plan Update

The Metropolitan council reviewed the City's comprehensive plan and gave its approval on September 25th, 2019. The City council formally adopted the plan on Nov 12, 2019. Going forward, the Columbia Heights 2040 Comprehensive Plan will articulate the future vision of the City and be used as a guide for the Planning Commission and City Council to implement the City's vision. It will also serve as the basis for any subsequent changes to City Code, rules and regulations as needed.

## Other Duties

The Planning and Zoning Department also facilitates management and enforcement of the City's Zoning Code. This role includes monitoring and correcting zoning violations throughout the City. It also involves administration of the City's Sign Code, and the issuance and review of all Sign Permit applications in the City. In addition the City Planner works with residents who face issues associated with FEMA and/or floodplain overlay districts.



# Economic Development Authority

## 2019 Changes and Members

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The Economic Development Department is charged with promoting economic development, redevelopment, housing and neighborhood stabilization in Columbia Heights.

The Economic Development Department is responsible for coordination of the EDA. EDA members include the City Council and two appointed members. In 2019, members included: Marlaine Szurek (President), John Murzyn Jr. (Vice President), Connie Buesgens (Treasurer), Robert Williams, Nick Novitsky, Donna Schmitt, and Gerry Herringer. The EDA considers the following goals when making its decisions:

1. Enhance the City's image and enhance community pride by actively promoting the many positive aspects of Columbia Heights.
2. Actively celebrate success in the community through press releases, website publications and other means.
3. Focus on reinvestment for Central Avenue that will contribute to long-term community stability through an increased tax base and business vitality.
4. Establish and manage a comprehensive housing program that will help increase values, manage and reduce the number of single family rental properties, generate a wider range of price point options and encourage reinvestment.
5. Continue to invest and reinvest in City infrastructure as a means to promote growth and shape the community.
6. Sustain and reinvest in residential neighborhoods.
7. Implement the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

## Facade Improvement Grant Program

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In a collaborative effort with the Police Department and the City, the EDA administered the Façade Improvement Grant Program for a second year in 2019. The purpose of this grant program is to encourage businesses and commercial property owners within commercial corridors to revitalize, rehabilitate, and restore exterior store fronts, but also for the CHPD to provide monitored surveillance along Central Avenue NE in an effort to reduce crime, as well as increase business vitality and economic performance of businesses.

The grant program is setup to reimburse businesses or commercial property owners for eligible improve-

ments up to 50% of the total project cost; for a maximum reimbursement of \$5,000. Moreover, if determined by the Police Department that an exterior surveillance system is warranted, the EDA would install surveillance equipment to monitor adjacent businesses and properties, as well as parks and open spaces and City rights-of-way.

In 2019, the EDA received 10 applications, and staff reviewed and scored them based upon completion, eligibility, quality of design, and the capacity of the applicant to commence the project within the same year. Of the applications received, 7 were awarded grant funding. This program leveraged \$56,228 in private reinvestment and paid out approximately \$24,860 in public funds. This equates to a leverage ratio of 1: 2.26; for every \$1.00 of public investment, there was \$2.26 of private reinvestment. Also, of the seven projects funded, the Police Department selected four grantees for the installation of exterior surveillance systems. A total of 14 cameras were installed along Central Avenue NE and 40th Ave to reduce the call volume and incident rate of criminal activity.

## 4827 University Ave Purchase

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In 2018, the EDA purchased the property located at 4827 University Avenue. The goal of the project was to demolish the house on the property to prepare the lot for future development. 4827 University is located next to another City owned lot that had already been cleared for development 4833 University. During 2019 Community Development staff worked in conjunction with the police and fire departments to utilize the house at 4827 University for training. On Oct 27 the fire department conducted a training burn at the residence burning down the building. The lot was then further demolished clearing it for future development.

## CEE Home Energy Squad

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In 2019 the EDA approved a resolution to enter into a Home Energy Audit Program with the Center for Energy and Environment (CEE). CEE's Home Energy Squad program provides home energy audits to home owners for a starting price of \$100. These home energy audits are meant to assist home owners in discovering low cost energy saving opportunities. With an initial investment of \$5,000 from the EDA, the cities partnership has brought the Home energy audit down to \$50 for the residents of Columbia Heights. This program was very successful in 2019 and looks to expand on this success in 2020.

# Building, Mechanical, Plumbing Permits

## Building Safety Department

The Building Safety Department ensures the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens and visitors of Columbia Heights through reviewing both residential and commercial construction plans and inspecting new construction to ensure compliance with State Building and Construction codes. The Building Safety Department is also responsible for issuing and monitoring business licenses. The Building Official serves as department manager for this core functional area.

## Building Inspection Data

During 2019, the Building Official conducted 1,398 inspections for permits, 74 rental inspections, and 3 abandoned property inspections.

To promote and protect the health, safety and welfare of the community, the Community Development Department issues licenses primarily for alcohol and tobacco sales, contractors and other miscellaneous vendors. There were 336 business licenses issued in 2019.

## Permits Issued

The graph below depicts the permit activities—building, plumbing and mechanical permits—over the last 10 years. In 2015, there was a spike in permit activity due to a severe storm that damaged several properties and increased exterior improvement projects. Whereas, in 2019, the Building Safety Department issued 1,125 permits, which is fairly close to the 10-year average.

2015	2,076
2016	1,458
2017	1,434
2018	1,108
2019	1,125

## Permit Valuations

The total permit valuation in 2019 was \$14,753,109. This value is attributable to new home construction and remodeling, commercial reconstruction and remodeling jobs and the usual maintenance and installation projects throughout the City. Large projects included the construction of Prodeo Academy and an addition to the High School.

The following graph depicts the permit valuations over the last 10 years. It's important to explain that the permit valuations in 2015, 2016, and 2017 were higher due to storm damage repair, along with the construction of two apartment buildings in 2016 and 2017. The Legends of Columbia Heights, constructed in 2016, contained a permit valuation of \$24,475,494, whereas Grand Central Flats, constructed in 2017, contained a permit valuation of \$23,000,000. If these two permit valuations were extrapolated from the permit valuation for their respective years, the adjusted values would be close to the overall average. On average, the City's annual construction valuation amounts to approximately \$7,546,828.

2015	\$25,476,137
2016	\$35,252,845
2017	\$36,189,715
2018	\$9,095,404
2019	\$14,753,109

# Housing and Business

## Housing Department

The original purpose of the Housing Department was to coordinate the HRA, and oversee the operation and management of a U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) supported multifamily rental housing facility known as Parkview Villa North and South. On September 28th, 2015, the HRA officially sold Parkview Villa North and South to Aeon, a non-profit housing organization in Minnesota, for \$7,470,000. The agreed upon purchase price was structured for Aeon to pay \$885,000 at time of closing and \$6,585,000 on or before December 31, 2047. The deferred portion of the purchase price was by means of a Promissory Note, dated Sept 25, 2015, and amended on Aug 2, 2017.

Since Parkview Villa North and South were the last two properties owned by the HRA, the HRA adopted amended operational bylaws in 2016 to no longer hold

regularly scheduled meetings. However, because of ongoing audit and reporting requirements mandated by HUD and the outstanding Promissory Note with the sale of Parkview Villa North and South, the HRA is required to remain an entity even though it no longer owns or operates any property.

The HRA is currently comprised of five members, which include the five City Council Members. In 2019, HRA Commissioners included John Murzyn, Jr. (Chair), Connie Buesgens (Vice Chair), Donna Schmitt (Treasurer), Robert Williams and Nick Novitsky. HRA meetings are no longer regularly scheduled, and are only held if necessary.

HRA staff continues to oversee the necessary reporting and auditing requirements set by HUD for Parkview Villa North and South.



## Business Licensing

License Type	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Beer/Liquor	16	20	21	20	18
Contractor	285	271	252	247	238
Other	58	57	63	60	80
Total	359	348	336	329	336

# 2019 Commission Rosters

## Economic Development Authority

Marlaine Szurek, President  
Donna Schmitt, Vice President  
Robert Williams, Treasurer  
Connie Buesgens, Commissioner  
Nick Novitsky, Commissioner  
John Murzyn Jr., Commissioner  
Gerry Herringer, Commissioner

## Housing and Redevelopment Authority

John Murzyn Jr. Chair  
Connie Buesgens, Vice Chair  
Donna Schmitt, Treasurer  
Robert Williams, Commissioner  
Nick Novitsky, Commissioner

## Planning Commission

Marlaine Szurek, Chair  
Rob Fiorendino, Vice Chair  
Stan Hoium, Treasurer  
Adam Schill, Commissioner  
Michael Novitsky, Commissioner  
Eric Sahnov, Commissioner  
Tom Kaiser, Commissioner





# FINANCE

## Introduction

The Finance Department is tasked with administering all the financial activities of the City. It also oversees the City's information systems and liquor store operations.

The Finance Division, under the direction of the Finance Director, consists of three departments, each with its own manager:

- The Finance Department provides accounting, financial reporting, budgeting, and trea-

sury services for all functions of the City. This includes the customer billing functions for the City's water, sewer, and refuse services.

- The Information Systems Department provides information technology services for most functions of the City. Depending on the particular technology, the level of service by this department ranges from coordinating with outside vendors to implementing and maintaining systems and projects entirely



in-house. Example systems include the City's computer network, its telephone system, video security, mobile device management, et cetera.

- The Liquor Department operates three retail liquor stores located within the City of Columbia Heights. Under MN statute, the primary purpose of municipal liquor stores is to control the distribution of alcohol for public

safety purposes. Municipal liquor stores can also generate income for the community, reducing the amount of property taxes otherwise required for City functions. The City's three-store operation has provided funds for City infrastructure and equipment, and for community policing activities such as D.A.R.E. that reduce the potential negative impacts of alcohol.

# Finance Staff

Name	Title	Start Date	End Date
Joseph Kloiber	Finance Director	June 21, 2004	----
Jackie Zillmer	Assistant Finance Director	June 6, 2011	----
Stacey House	Payroll Accountant	April 14, 2010	----
LeAnn Ottney	Accounting Coordinator	Feb 20, 2002	----
Jill Haley	Accounting Clerk II-Utility	Sept 17, 2012	----
Deborah Steffen	Accounting Clerk I-Utility	Oct 22, 1990	----
Heather Schirmer	Accounting Clerk I	Nov 22, 2018	----
Sue Sartwell	Budget Coordinator	Oct 17, 2005	----
Jess Kemp	Accounting Clerk II	Sept 3, 2015	----
Paula Haynus	Receptionist/Cashier (PT)	Sept 17, 2012	----
Aleksandr Chernin	Information Systems Director	Sept 7, 1999	----
Jeff Hanson	Assistant IS Director	Oct 16, 2007	----
Steve Silverdahl	IS Technician	Sept 19, 2011	----
Jason Schulz	Liquor Operations Manager	May 10, 2017	----

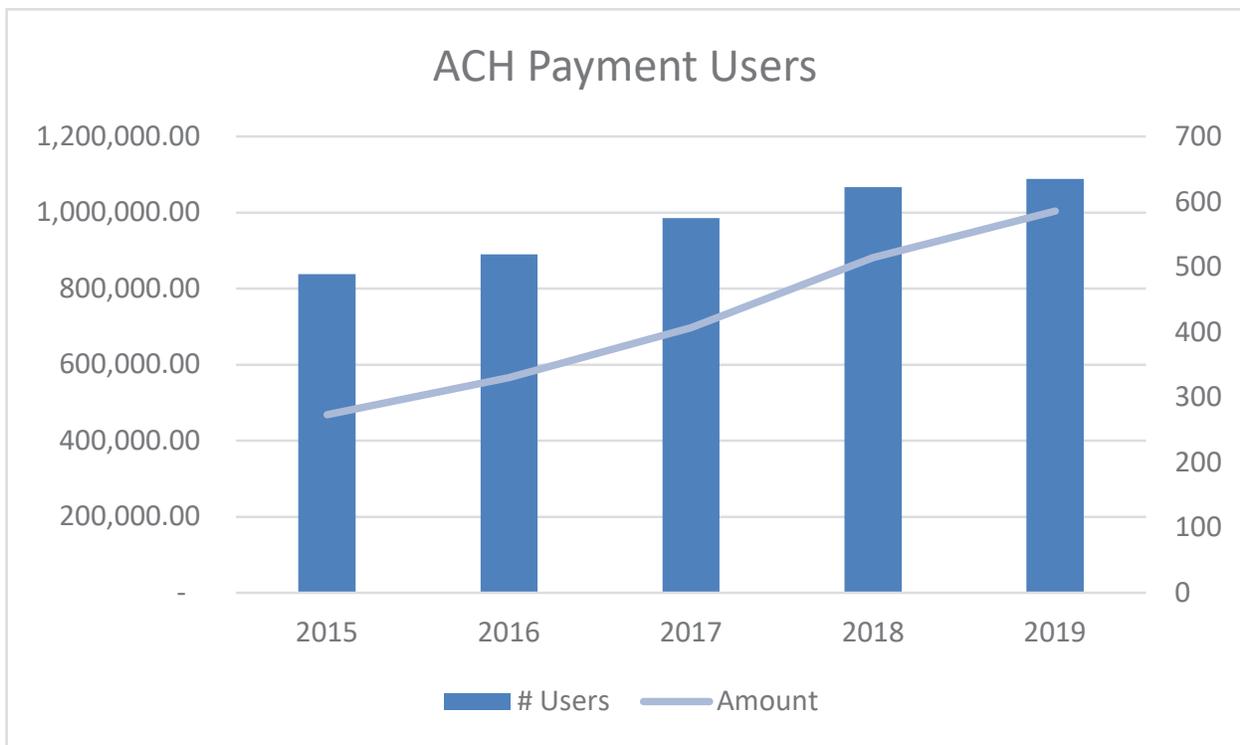
# Finance and Utility Billing

## Process Improvements

In 2019, the Finance Department implemented several process improvements in 2019:

- The utility billing department has been offering multiple ways to pay utility bills for many years. While the webstore is a customer favorite, ACH direct withdrawal has been gaining popularity. While the number of users of this option has slowly grown over time, the type of user is greatly changing. More management companies are using this feature to pay multifamily bills, increasing the annual amount collected through this payment option. There are great benefits to this option for both the user and the City.

- Various internal process improvements began in 2019 in preparation for both the replacement of the ERP system and the relocation of City Hall. The focus has been on processes that have remained unchanged for a period of time and how technology improvements can increase efficiency in these processes. In particular, this included reducing the amount of paper records created and retained, as there will be less storage space in the new City Hall.



- To replace the outdated existing financial, payroll, and utility billing software with a modern enterprise resource planning system (ERP), staff began working with a technology consultant to create a request for information (RFI) from ERP vendors. After the RFI was completed, the five responding vendors provided demonstrations of their software and pricing proposals. Following further review in 2020, staff will present their final recommendation for an ERP vendor to the City Council.

## CAFR Award

In 2019, the City's 2018 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) was awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association. This certificate is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting, representing a significant accomplishment by a governmental unit and its management. This was the 29th consecutive year for which the City's CAFR received this award. The City's most recent CAFRs are available on the City's website.



# Information Systems

## Achievements and Activities

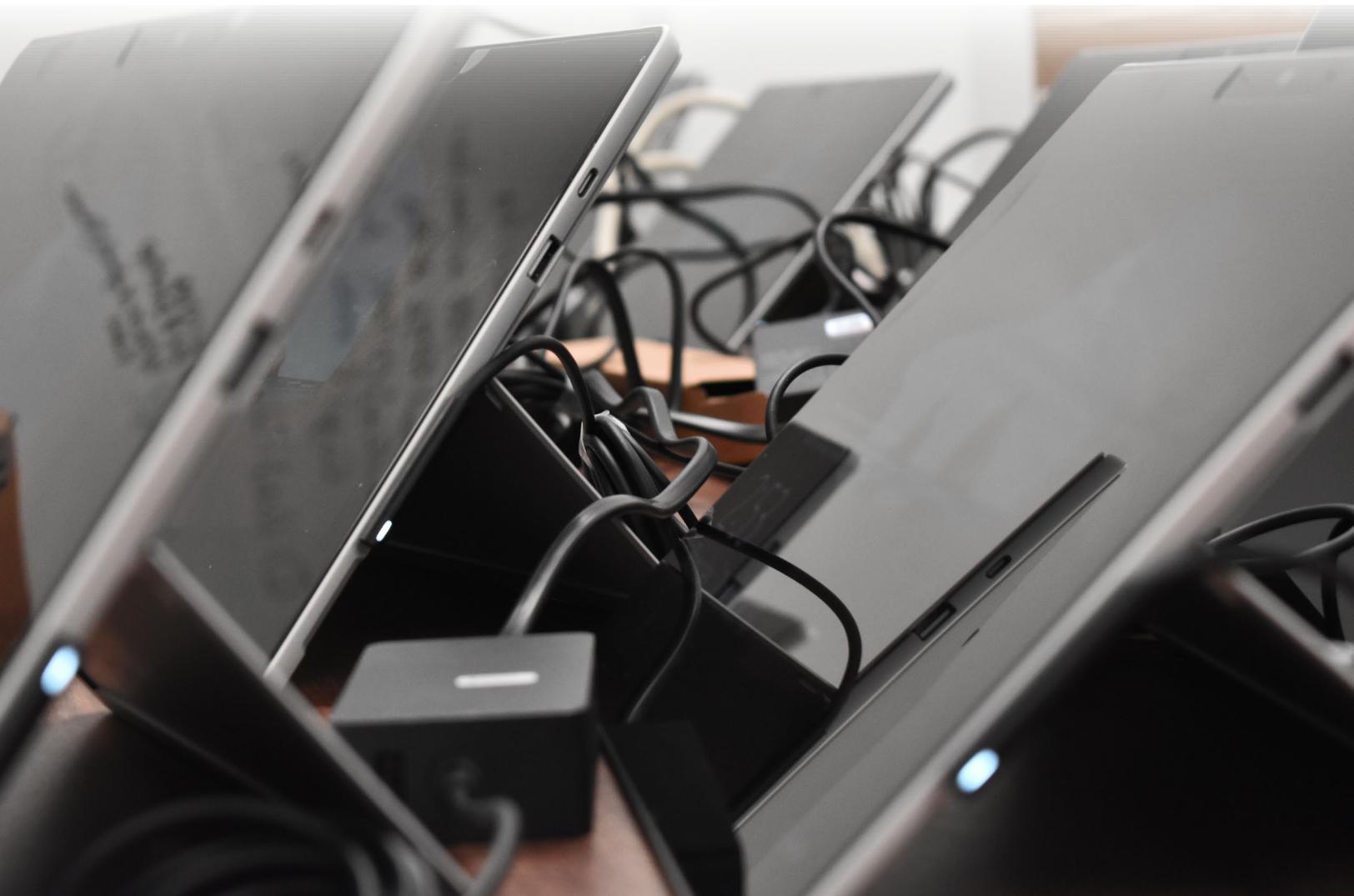
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- Deployed Windows 10 to all workstations.
- Upgraded or replaced virtual Windows Servers.
- Updated Library software used by staff and patrons.
- Updated payment terminals at the Liquor stores.
- Worked with vendor and Public Works to replace SCADA computer.
- Worked with vendor and other departments to install and upgrade security cameras and DVRs.
- Worked with vendor to update access security system.
- Replaced physical email archiver with virtual appliance to reduce maintenance costs.
- Improved security by implementing multifactor authentication for remote access.
- Installed tape library for backups.
- Updated infrastructure for virtual servers and virtual desktops.

## Statistics

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- More than 200 computer users at nine locations.
- Almost 200 desktop PCs, virtual PCs, and portable computers.
- More than 270 phones with 570 phone numbers and voicemail boxes; over 7,000 hours call time.
- 80 physical and virtual servers and data storage systems.
- More than 20 network segments.
- More than 40 printers, copiers, scanners.
- Almost 250 network devices and components of video security, physical access control systems, and building automation systems.
- 20 databases.
- Laserfiche document imaging system with more than 460,000 documents (3.8 million pages).
- More than 700 Help Desk tickets resolved.



# Liquor

## Stores See Sales Increase

In 2019, overall sales increased by 3.8% for the operation, with two of the three stores outperforming the previous year, which was already an increase over 2017. Top Valu #1 showed an increase of 5.5%, Top Valu #2 was down 1% and Heights Liquor posted an increase of 10.3%, all resulting in \$328,780 more in sales for the year. Staff attributes the decline at Top Valu #2 to the departure of Unique Thrift store, significantly reducing the amount of traffic in the area. The overall increase in 2019 builds on the sales increase in 2018, indicating the relative strength of the operation, at a time when competition continues to get more aggressive.

The liquor operation continued to reach new customers in 2019 by offering the latest trends in the industry, including hard-to-find bourbons, hard seltzers, canned wine and cocktails, as well as locally-produced spirits, beer, and wine. The continued use of social media has increased the visibility of the operation and the unique products that are difficult to find at other retailers, making Top Valu Liquor a destination for consumers throughout the market. Special events, such as the Grand Scotch Tasting which attracted over 200 customers from around the

state, also contributed to the increased customer traffic.

The profits from the liquor operation continue to help reduce property taxes paid by the residents of Columbia Heights. In 2019, the City Council re-affirmed its commitment for the liquor fund to make annual contributions of \$50,000 to the City's infrastructure fund and \$10,000 to the City's community-policing programs, such as D.A.R.E and Business Watch. These contributions are in addition to the share of City administrative overhead allocated to the liquor fund, and the continued growth in the City's equity investment in the store properties.

## Partnerships

The liquor operations partnered with several community organizations, including Columbia Heights Athletic Boosters, HeightsNEXT, the Columbia Heights Lions Club and others, on fundraising opportunities and special events. The liquor operation is also contributing a significant amount of film plastic to the City's Recycling program. The operation has become more involved with the Minnesota Municipal Beverage Association (MMBA), and received a 2019 MMBA Facility of the Year Award for Best Product Launch.



### Top Valu #1:

4950 Central Ave

### Top Valu #2:

2105 37th Ave NE

### Heights Liquor:

5225 University Ave NE

— TOP VALU —  
LIQUOR





# FIRE

## Introduction

This report illustrates the Fire Department's commitment to the residents, visitors, and businesses within our community. Much has changed in the 114 year history of the Fire Department, but what hasn't changed is the commitment of our men and women to serve others. The outstanding accomplishments of our Training, Public Education, Property Maintenance, Emergency Management, Logistics, and Administrative divisions exemplify our department's core values of Integrity, Pride, Honor, Excellence and Duty.

Following Chief Gary Gorman's retirement in May, Charlie Thompson had the unique opportunity to return to the City of Columbia Heights as Fire Chief where he had served as Chief from 1999 to 2005. After 14 years as the Fire Chief of the Anoka-Champlain Fire Department,

coming back to the CHFD felt to him like coming home. Chief Gorman joined the Columbia Heights Fire Department in June 1981. He served in various positions during his tenure from Firefighter, Captain, Assistant Chief and finally Chief from 2005 to 2019.

We also bid farewell to Assistant Fire Chief John Larkin when he retired at the end of February. During his tenure in the CHFD (which began in 1990) he served as a full-time Firefighter, Captain, and finally Assistant Fire Chief. We wish Chief Gorman and Chief Larkin well in the new chapters of their lives and thank them for all they did for the Columbia Heights Fire Department and citizens of Columbia Heights.

Among our most significant achievements of 2019 is the



completion of a Public Safety Staffing Study conducted by McGrath Consulting Group. The plan resulted in the creation of an action plan based on recommendations outlined in the study. With City Council support, the 2020 budget included two new fulltime Firefighter/Inspector positions to support the Property Maintenance Division. The inspectors will be tasked with local ordinance, rental, and fire code enforcement. As firefighters, they will also be responsible for responding to calls for service as needed.

Emergency calls for service increased in 2019 by 0.7% over the previous year and 30.9% increase over the past 10 years. This upward trajectory of EMS calls within our system dictates that we must proactively prepare our organization to manage this trend. Fire-related incidents

accounted for 926 of the calls, 15 of which were structure fires.

The current year of 2020 will continue to challenge our department and the resources allocated. However, through critical thinking, creative problem solving, and a strategic thought process, we will remain vigilant while continuing to build public safety resilience within our community.

Our dedication to responsive quality emergency services while ensuring our members are cared for is priority one. Regardless of the challenges that we may face, each member of the CHFD is committed to supporting the community in an innovative and fiscally responsible manner.

# Fire Department Full-Time Members

Name	Title	Start Date	End Date
Gary Gorman	Fire Chief	June 2, 1981	May 31, 2019
Charlie Thompson	Fire Chief	Aug 19, 2019	---
John Larkin	Assistant Fire Chief	Nov 13, 1990	Feb 28, 2019
Daniel O'Brien	Captain Assistant Fire Chief	Oct 1, 1995 Nov 30, 2019	Nov 29, 2019 ---
Richard Hinrichs	Full Time Firefighter	July 2, 1986	May 1, 2019
Thomas Mattson	Captain	Jan 1, 1999	---
Anthony Cuzzupe	Captain	July 1, 2003	---
Grant Dickinson	Full Time Firefighter	March 1, 2016	---
Zachery Picard	Full Time Firefighter	Jan 1, 2014	---
Emily Kosman	Full Time Firefighter	May 1, 2011	---
Kelly Schmidt	Fire Secretary	April 28, 2008	Oct 4, 2019
Jeri Caron	Fire Clerk	June 1, 2015	---

# Paid On-Call Lieutenants

Name	Title	Start Date	End Date
Jesse Dittbenner		July 24, 2009	April 30, 2019
Cory Mattson		Sept 1, 2009	---

# Paid On-Call Firefighters

Name	Title	Start Date	End Date
Christopher Allen		Sept 1, 2014	----
Lisa Boatman		March 1, 2016	----
John Flanders		Sept 1, 2014	----
Jacob Gillespie		May 1, 2011	----
Kyle Hall		Aug 1, 2009	----
Katherine Larson		March 1, 2018	Aug 26, 2019
Kate Hayden-McKay		Sept 1, 2014	----
Anahi Ordonez		April 1, 2019	----
Cody Oveson		May 1, 2019	----
Jennifer Pena		March 1, 2016	----
Brian Polski		May 1, 2010	----
Michael Pyka		March 1, 2016	----
Bryan Schachtele		Sept 1, 2014	----
William Shutte		March 1, 2010	----
Brian Sibri		July 1, 2019	
Meghan Sipple		Sept 1, 2014	Aug 22, 2019
Charles Struzyk		Jan 1, 2013	----
Greg White		April 1, 2019	----
Adam Zimmerman		March 1, 2016	----

# City Bids Farewell to Chief Gorman, Welcomes Chief Thompson



*Fire Chief Gary Gorman, top left, retired May 31. He had been a part of the Columbia Heights Fire Dept for over four decades. Assistant Fire Chief John Larkin retired in February after 29 years with the City.*



## Chief Gorman, Assistant Chief Larkin Retire

After 41 years with the City of Columbia Heights Fire Dept, and 14 years as fire chief, Gary Gorman retired in May. He started at Columbia Heights as one of the first Fire Explorers. Assistant Fire Chief John Larkin also retired this year after three decades with the City.

## New Fire Chief Began Aug 19

Chief Charlie Thompson began as the City's new Fire Chief on Aug 19, though he's not exactly new here. Thompson was Columbia Heights' fire chief from 1999 to 2005 before becoming fire chief of Anoka-Champlin, where he had been for the last 14 years. The ways Columbia Heights has changed and evolved over that time has made it exciting to return to the job here, Thompson said.



*Fire Chief Charlie Thompson, pictured here with daughter, Stacy, and son, Tyler, also firefighters, began as Columbia Heights' new Fire Chief Aug 19. Firefighting truly runs in the family. Thompson has another son, Jordan, who's fire captain in St. Michael and a career firefighter for South Metro Fire. His father was a firefighter at Brooklyn Park Fire for 20 years.*

# Dan O'Brien Promoted to Assistant Fire Chief

Dan O'Brien started as Columbia Heights' new Assistant Fire Chief Nov 27, 2019. His promotion was officially recognized at a Dec 2 ceremony where Chief Charlie Thompson pinned the Assistant Fire Chief badge to O'Brien's uniform.

O'Brien started with the Columbia Heights Fire Department May 1, 1995, as a reserve firefighter and was appointed to the paid-on-call division on Oct 1, 1995. He was hired as a full-time firefighter on July 6, 1999, and promoted to fire captain on Aug, 2005. In 2004, O'Brien was awarded the first ever Firefighter of the Year award from the Columbia Heights Fire Department. He also received an Award of Merit from the Columbia Heights Police Department for his actions related to a shooting incident resulting in several police officers being wounded. From 1995 to 2015, he served as the Lead Adviser for the Fire Department's Fire Exploring Program, and, in 2008, was the first President of the Minnesota Fire Exploring Association, a non-profit organization created by O'Brien and several other Exploring advisers to promote firefighting as a career path for youth. In 2011, O'Brien had the honor of being the first fire department employee ever to receive the City's Employee of the Year award.



# Pinning Event Celebrates New Team Members

Family and friends helped pin badges to the uniforms of four new Columbia Heights firefighters at a badge ceremony Dec 2, at the Public Safety Building. The event celebrated the completion of the firefighters' hazmat, EMT, firefighter 1 and 2, and academic training, and marked the next major step in their careers. Firefighters honored were Anahi Ordonez, Brian Sibri, Greg White, and Cody Oveson. Chief Charlie Thompson led the ceremony. If you or someone you know might be interested in joining the Columbia Heights firefighting team, please call 763-706-8150 for more information. If you are 18 or older, live within the City borders, and have a valid driver's license, you are eligible to apply!



The cold and rainy weather didn't stop the VFW from holding its annual Flag Retirement Ceremony Oct 5, 2019. Columbia Heights firefighters and police helped set up and monitor the event in the parking lot of the VFW Post #230.



Burning flags in an official ceremony like this is the most respectful way to dispose of older American flags. According to the United States Flag Code: "The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning." Residents were encouraged to bring old or tattered flags to the event. The ceremony was open to the public. It's one of many events and ceremonies per year where the Fire Department helps manage health and safety. Others include the Canadian Pacific Holiday Train gathering, the Truck-or-Treat celebration, the High School Homecoming bonfire, and the Fire and Ice Plunge.

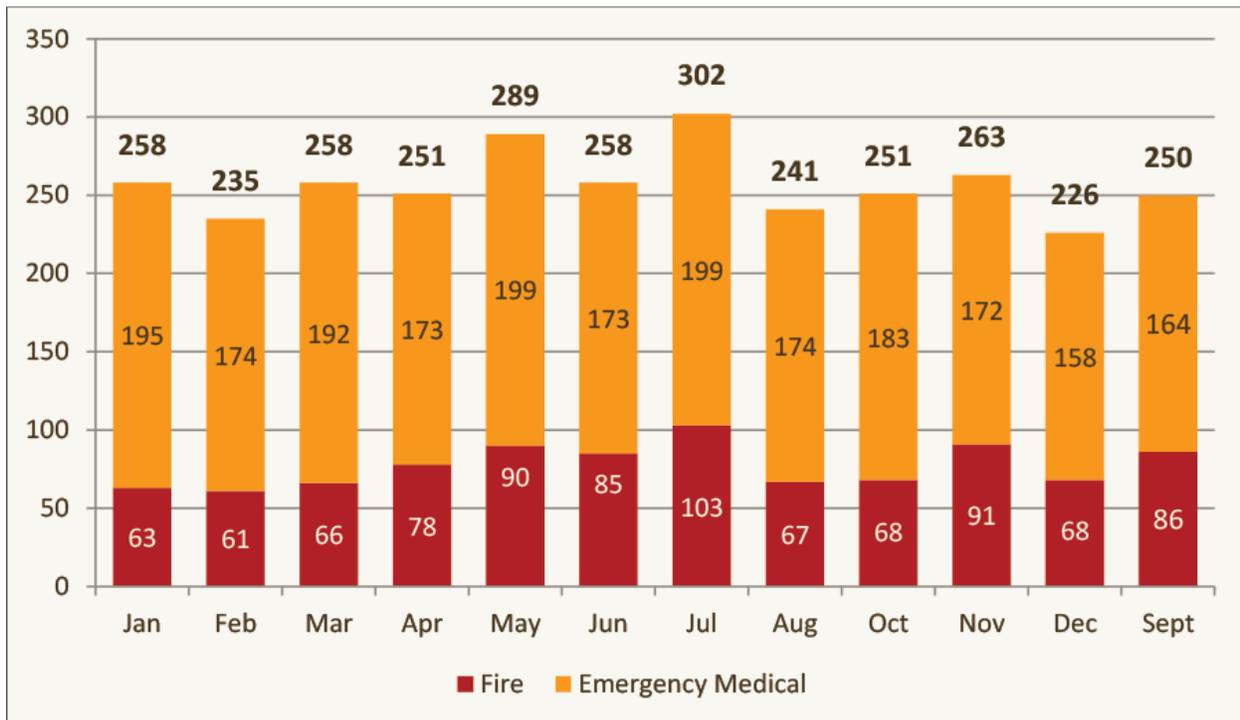
# 2019 Incident Statistics

**3,082** Total Incidents  
0.7% Increase from 2018

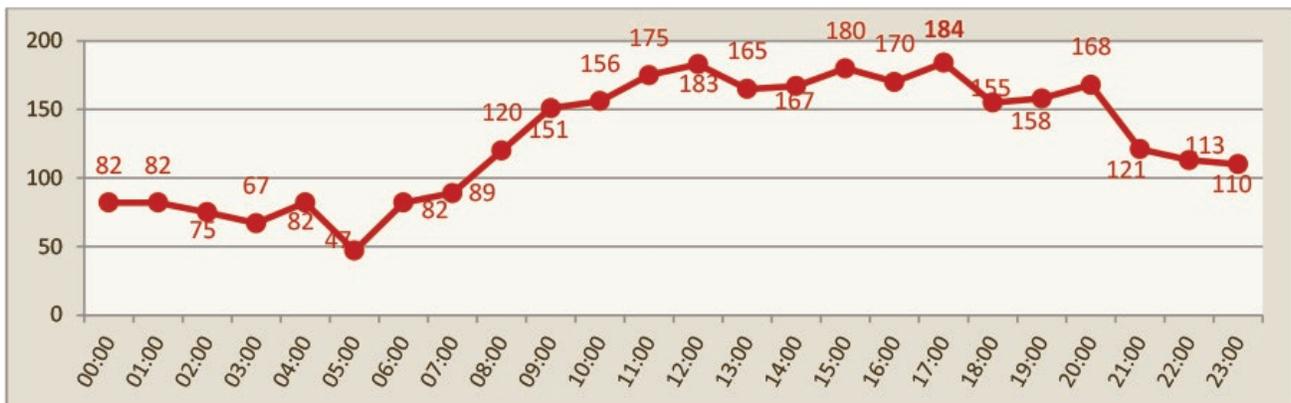
**926** Fire Incidents

**2,156** Medical & Rescue

2019 FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL CALLS BY MONTH



2019 FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL CALLS BY TIME OF DAY



# 2019 Incident Statistics Cont.

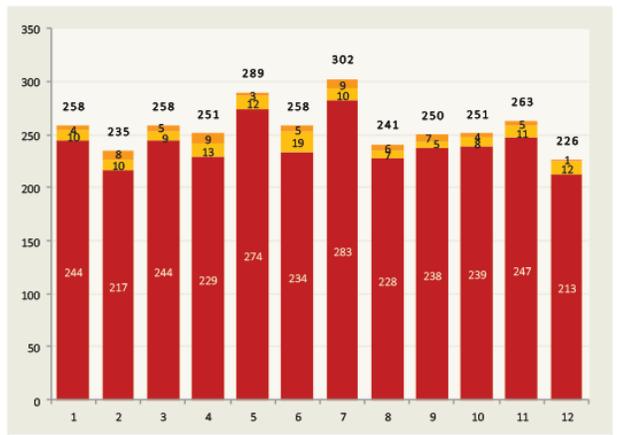
## 2019 Type of Alarms by Month

*Still Alarms* are handled by on-duty personnel without calling for additional help.

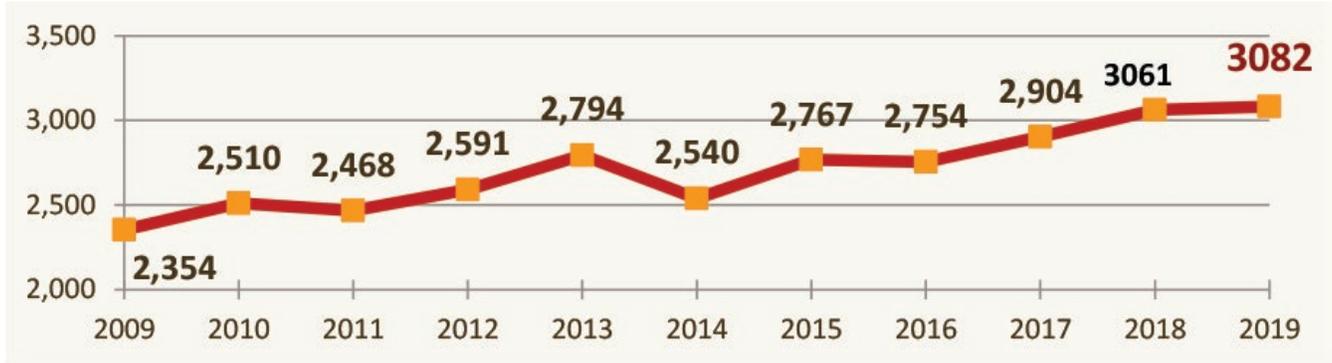
*Company Alarms* are handled by call-back of available off-duty paid personnel and approximately one half of the available Paid-on-Call membership.

*General Alarms* are used when the situation calls for the services of all available members.

Month	Still Alarm	Company Alarm	General Alarm	Total
Jan	244	10	4	258
Feb	217	10	8	235
Mar	244	9	5	258
Apr	229	13	9	251
May	274	12	3	289
Jun	234	19	5	258
Jul	283	10	9	302
Aug	228	7	6	241
Sep	238	5	7	250
Oct	239	8	4	251
Nov	247	11	5	263
Dec	213	12	1	226
Total	2890	126	66	3082

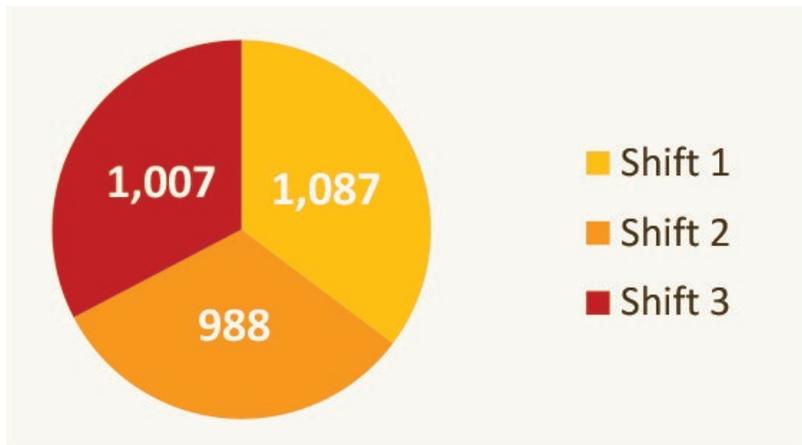


## 10-Year Comparison of Total Incidents



Busiest Month <b>July</b>	Busiest Day of Week <b>Wednesday</b>	Busiest Time of Day <b>5-6 pm</b>
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## Incidents by Shift



# Top 20 Properties for Service

	Address			# of Calls for Service
1	The Legends of Columbia Heights	191-Unit Senior Apartments	3700 Huset Pkwy NE	142
2	Parkview Villa Apartments	146-Unit Apartment Building	965 40th Ave NE	136
3	New Perspective Senior Living	92-Unit Assisted Living/Memory Care	3801 Hart Blvd NE	115
4	Northeast Seniors Housing	85-Unit Apartment Building	3850 Stinson Blvd NE	107
5	Crest View Lutheran Home	122-Bed Nursing Home	4444 Reservoir Blvd NE	99
6	Crest View on 42nd	50-Unit Assisted Living/Memory Care	900 42nd Ave NE	88
7	Royce Place Assisted Living	50-Unit Assisted Living/Memory Care	1515 44th Ave NE	64
8	MedExpress	Urgent Care Clinic	4880 Central Ave NE	56
9	Hart Lake Apartments	75-Unit Senior Apartments	3839 Hart Blvd NE	49
10	Columbia Village	40-Unit Senior Apartments	1675 44th Ave NE	33
11	Haelan House LLC	Duplex Rental Property	5000 Block of Jackson St NE	24
12	Boulevard Apartments	74-Unit Senior Apartments	4458 Reservoir Blvd NE	23
13		Single Family Rental	3900 Block of Hayes St NE	22
14	Hart Lake Apartments	35-Unit Apartment	3838 McKinley St NE	21
15	Grand Central Flats Apartments	88-Unit Apartment Building	1069 Grandview Ct NE	19
16	Grand Central Flats Apartments	60-Unit Apartment Building	4729 Grand Ave NE	18
17	Lynde Investment Company	11-Unit Apartment Building	5121 University Ave NE	16
18	Aminhasco Properties LLC	7-Unit Apartment Building	4628 Tyler St NE	14
19		Single Family Residence	4500 Block of Tyler St NE	13
20		Duplex Rental Property	3700 Block of 3rd St NE	12

# Classification of Alarms

Fire	
Fire, misc.	1
Grass/Brush/Vegetation fire	3
Trash fire	1
Vehicle fire	6
Cooking fire	29
Trash/Dumpster fire	4
Canceled en route: Fire	27
No Incident Found: Fire	31
Structure fire	16

Rescue/Medical Alarms	
Possible Narcotics	3
Extricate victim(s) from vehicle	1
Medical Alarm (accidental)	1
DK/ETOH Ingestion (Alcohol)	81
Headache	23
Substance/Drug Abuse	4
CVA/Stroke/TIA	49
EMS call, pt not transported by	1
Gunshot	1
Lock-in	1
Pregnancy/OB/Childbirth	11
Behavioral/Psychological	59
Drowning/Submersion	1
DOA	17
Respiratory Arrest	1
Stalled elevator rescue	4
Stabbing	2
Syncope/Fainting	41
Epistaxis/Nose Bleed	23
G.I. Bleed	5
No Incident Found: Medical	81
Unconscious/Down	39
Cardiac Arrest	26
Choking/Airway Obstruction	7
Abdominal/Flank Pain	125
Lift Assist	9
Motor Vehicle Accident	9
Cold Emergency/Hypothermia	1
Flu Symptoms	104
Fall	227
Attempted Suicide	13
Weakness	124

Burns	3
Wrong Location: Medical	1
Assault	15
Diabetic Problem	73
Medical Incident	232
Vehicle/pedestrian accident	13
Injury/Laceration/Bleeding	41
Other Cardiac Problem	24
Pain	127
Pneumonia	1
Vehicle accident with injuries	29
Vehicle accident, no injuries	12
Back Pain - Non Traumatic	50
Canceled en route: Medical	167
Overdose/Poisoning	20
Heat Emergency/Hyperthermia	2
Heroin Overdose	16
Rescue or EMS standby	9
Seizure	79
Allergic Reaction/Anaphylaxis	19
Breathing Problem	272
Chest Pain - Cardiac	107

Service Calls	
Heat from short circuit (wiring)	3
No Incident Found: Medical	8
Combustible liquid spill	1
Hazardous condition	1
Arcing, shorted electrical	13
Steam/gas/fog mistaken for	3
Canceled en route: Fire	2
Carbon monoxide incident	12
Hazmat investigation w/no	12
CO detector activation, no CO	8
Malicious, mischievous false call,	2
Authorized controlled burning	5
Flammable liquid spill	1
Person in distress, misc.	5
Electrical wiring/equipment	11
Canceled en route: Medical	4
Severe weather/natural disaster,	1
Smoke scare, odor of smoke	9
Defective elevator, no occupants	2
Excessive heat w/scorching. no	1

Lift Assist	194
Public service	12
Sprinkler activation, no fire	1
Chemical hazard (no spill or leak)	1
Public service, misc.	5
Citizen complaint	2
False alarm/call, misc.	5
Smoke detector activation, no	8
Sprinkler activation, malfunction	4
Unauthorized/Illegal burning	28
Cover assignment/standby	3
Power line down	16
Vehicle accident, general cleanup	1
Alarm system, malicious false	4
Assist police/other governmental	18
Alarm system activation, no fire	41
Lock-out	1
Smoke detector activation,	5
Water problem, other	1
Ring or jewelry removal	1
Alarm system sounded,	43
Gas leak (natural gas or LPG)	11
Police matter	20
Water or steam leak	8
CO detector activation,	19
System malfunction, other	2



# Fire Incidents With Property Loss

Date	Call #	Address	Property Use	Cause of Fire	Pre Incident Property Value	Property Loss	Property Saved
<b>Building fire</b>							
2/1	19-0265	4319 7th St NE	1 or 2 family dwelling	Other	\$20,000	\$5,000	\$15,000
6/29	19-1532	4054 Van Buren St NE	Attached Shed	Intentional	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$0
7/1	19-1554	3923 Jackson St NE	1 or 2 family dwelling	Cause under investigation	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$0
9/2	19-2108	679 40th Ave NE	1 or 2 family dwelling	Unintentional	\$400	\$400	\$0
10/16	19-2473	3806 Stinson Blvd NE #106	Multifamily dwellings	Unintentional	\$700	\$700	\$0
<b>Estimated totals Building fire (5 Incidents)</b>					<b>\$23,600</b>	<b>\$8,600</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>
<b>Fire in mobile home used as fixed residence</b>							
10/18	19-2485	4550 Central Ave NE #1635	1 or 2 family dwelling	Cause under investigation	\$25,000	\$20,000	\$5,000
<b>Estimated totals Fire in mobile home used as fixed residence (1 Incident)</b>					<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>
<b>Fire, other</b>							
2/1	19-0265	4323 7th St NE	1 or 2 family dwelling	Exposure Fire	\$5,000	\$500	\$4,500
<b>Estimated totals Fire, other (1 Incident)</b>					<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$500</b>	<b>\$4,500</b>
<b>Mobile property (vehicle) fire, other</b>							
2/1	19-0265	4319 7th St NE	1 or 2 family dwelling	Unintentional	\$38,000	\$18,000	\$20,000
<b>Estimated totals Mobile property (vehicle) fire, other (1 Incident)</b>					<b>\$38,000</b>	<b>\$18,000</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>
<b>Passenger vehicle fire</b>							
2/21	19-0431	5085 Central Ave NE	Vehicle parking area	Unintentional	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$0
4/10	19-0839	5060 Central Ave NE	Restaurant or cafeteria	Failure of equipment or heat source	\$2,600	\$2,600	\$0
5/25	19-1235	3939 University Ave NE	Restaurant or cafeteria	Unintentional	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$0
7/11	19-1675	0 47th Ave NE	Highway or divided highway	Unintentional	\$13,000	\$13,000	\$0
8/1	19-1858	3700 Huset Pkwy NE	Vehicle parking area	Unintentional	\$1,500	\$200	\$1,300
<b>Estimated totals Passenger vehicle fire (5 Incidents)</b>					<b>\$23,100</b>	<b>\$21,800</b>	<b>\$1,300</b>
<b>Estimated totals for 2019</b>					<b>\$114,700</b>	<b>\$68,900</b>	<b>\$45,800</b>

\* Undetermined fire causes include those fires that have not yet been investigated or those that have been investigated, or are under investigation, and have insufficient information to classify further.

## In 2019 there were 1 Civilian Casualty Injuries

Date	Call #	Address	Incident Type	Primary Symptom	Severity
9/2	19-2108	679 40th Ave NE	Building fire	Burns only: thermal	Minor

## In 2019 there were 1 Firefighter Casualty Injuries

Date	Call #	Address	Incident Type	Primary Symptom	Severity
6/8	19-1362	3700 Huset Pkwy NE	Defective elevator, no occupants	Contusion/bruise	Report only

\* with lost time

# Mutual Aid Report

Mutual aid is an agreement between fire departments to assist each other when called for emergencies by responding with available staffing and apparatus. The Columbia Heights Fire Department works closely with surrounding departments and has an “automatic” mutual aid agreement with the cities of Fridley and St. Anthony to be dispatched simultaneously for fires during the weekday hours when staffing is at its lowest.

## 2019 Mutual Aid Received - (3 Times)

Date	Call #	Address	Incident Type	Aid Type	Department
2/1	19-0265	4319 7th St NE	Structure Fire	Automatic aid received	Fridley Fire Department
2/1	19-0265	4319 7th St NE	Structure Fire	Automatic aid received	St. Anthony Fire Department
7/3	19-1571	4880 Central Ave NE #100	Medical-Stroke	Mutual aid received	Fridley Fire Department
9/13	19-2204	1015 44 1/2 Ave NE	Structure Fire	Automatic aid received	Fridley Fire Department

## 2019 Mutual Aid Given - (5 Times)

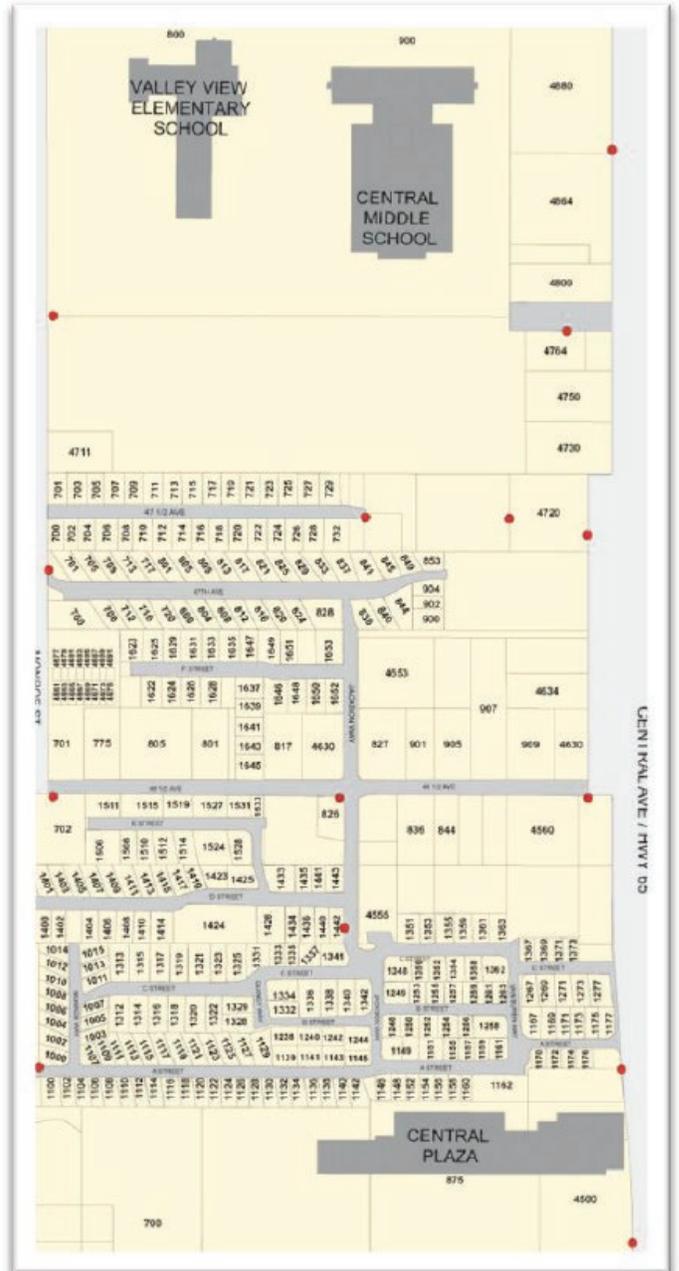
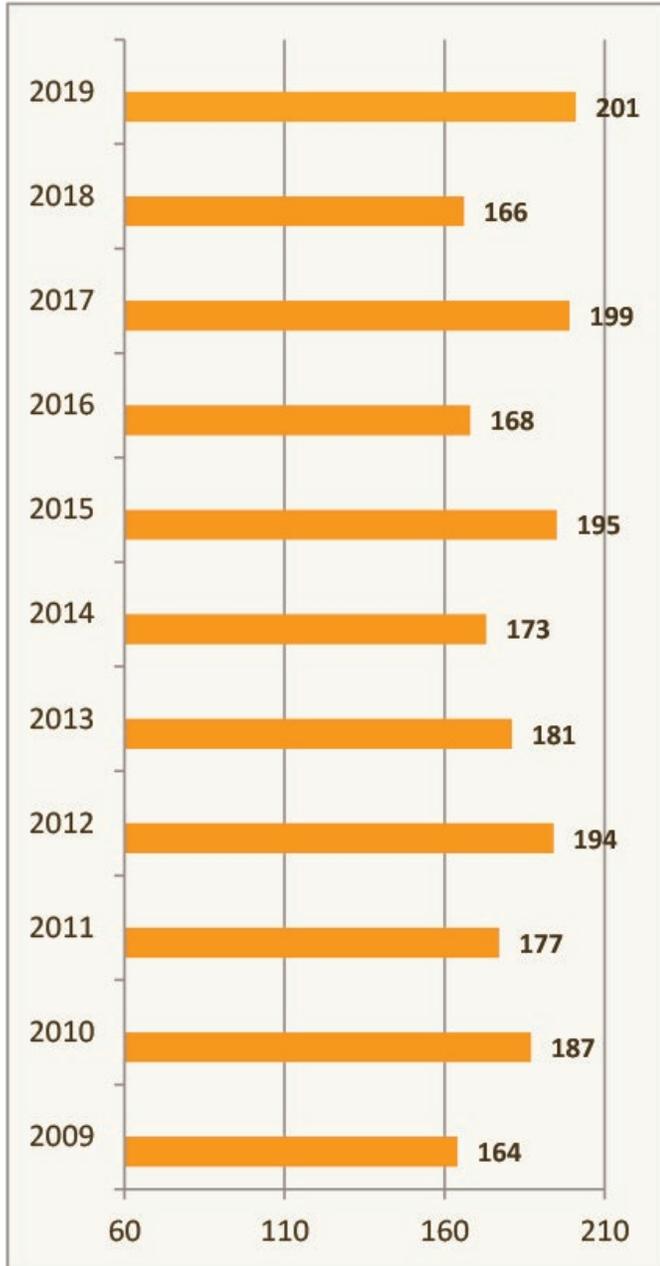
Date	Call #	Address	Incident Type	Aid Type	Department
4/23	19-0940	7651 Bacon Dr NE	Structure Fire	Automatic aid given	Fridley Fire Department
5/11	19-1095	0 Interstate 694	Medical	Mutual aid given	Fridley Fire Department
7/5	19-1598	2540 Kenzie Ter	Fire Mutual Aid	Automatic aid given	St. Anthony Fire Department
8/14	19-1959	1400 73rd Ave NE	Misc Fire	Automatic aid given	Fridley Fire Department



# Hilltop Agreement

The Columbia Heights Fire Department has an agreement to provide full fire suppression, emergency medical services, and fire inspection services for the City of Hilltop. A three-year Joint Agreement and Contract was signed in 2019, which covers the years 2019-2021.

A 10-Year comparison of the number of calls to the City of Hilltop is reflected in the chart below:

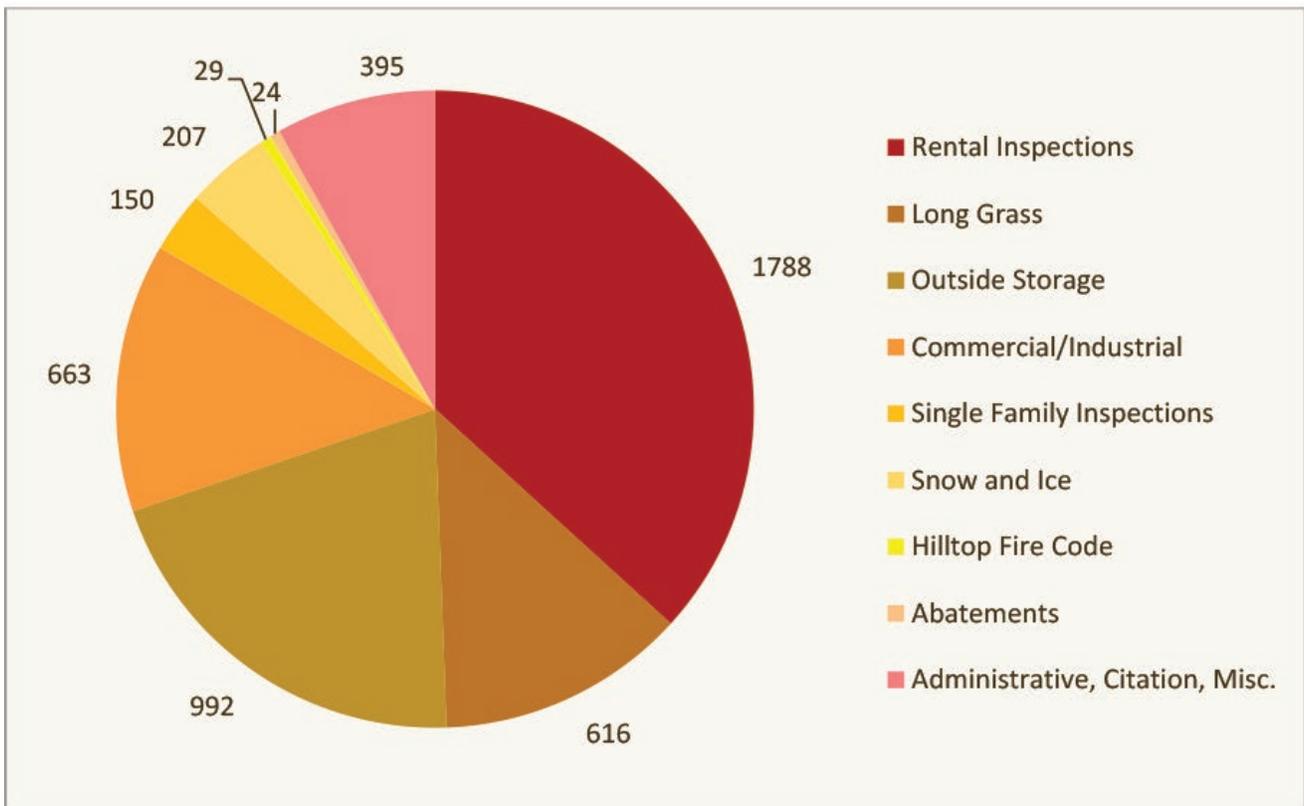


# Inspections

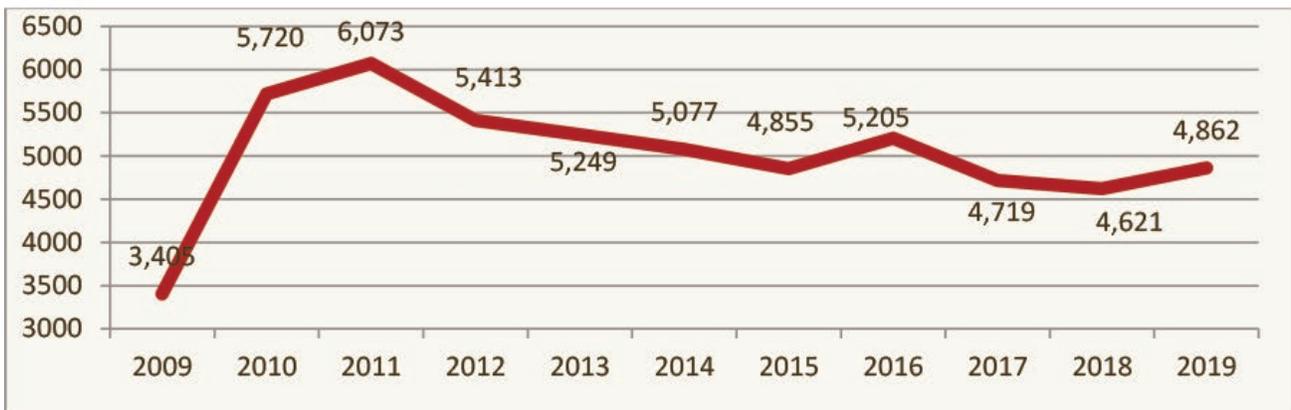
The Fire Department Inspection Program is supervised by the Assistant Fire Chief and involves the eight full time firefighters as inspectors. All inspectors are cross trained for both fire and property maintenance inspections, allowing for flexibility in scheduling.

The fire department conducted a total of 4,862 inspection, license, and inspection-related data entry activities during 2019. This report summarizes inspections which are broken into categories including commercial/industrial inspections, rental property inspections, single-family home inspections, and other actions performed by the inspection office.

**2019 Number/Type Inspection Summary**



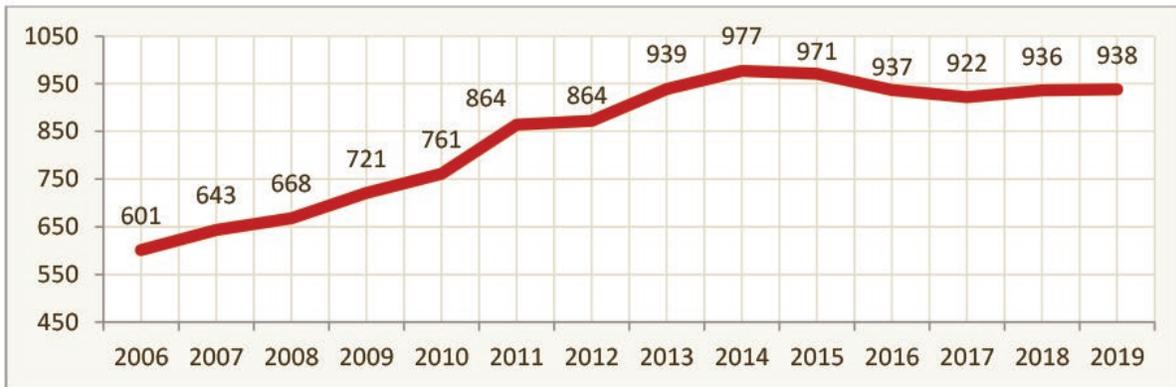
**Total Inspections by the Year**



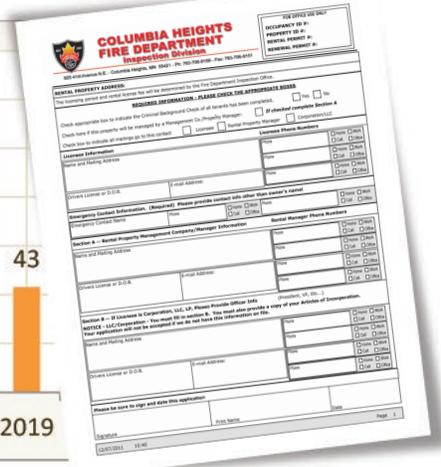
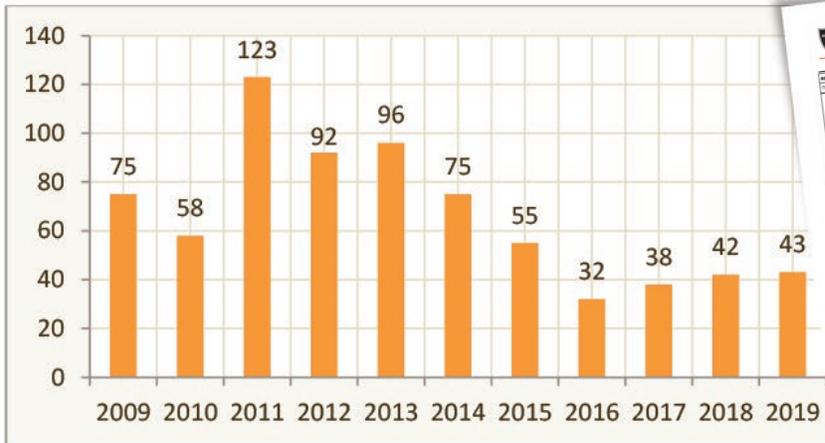
# Rental Licenses

The overall number of rental properties in the city has stabilized following the sharp increase after the recession. In 2019, the inspection department issued 43 new rental licenses, however there is little change in the overall total number of rental properties due to an offset of rental properties converting back to single family residences and no longer requiring a license. Property exteriors and common areas are inspected on an annual basis and interior inspections of rental properties are performed bi-annually. Complaints on properties are investigated in a timely manner.

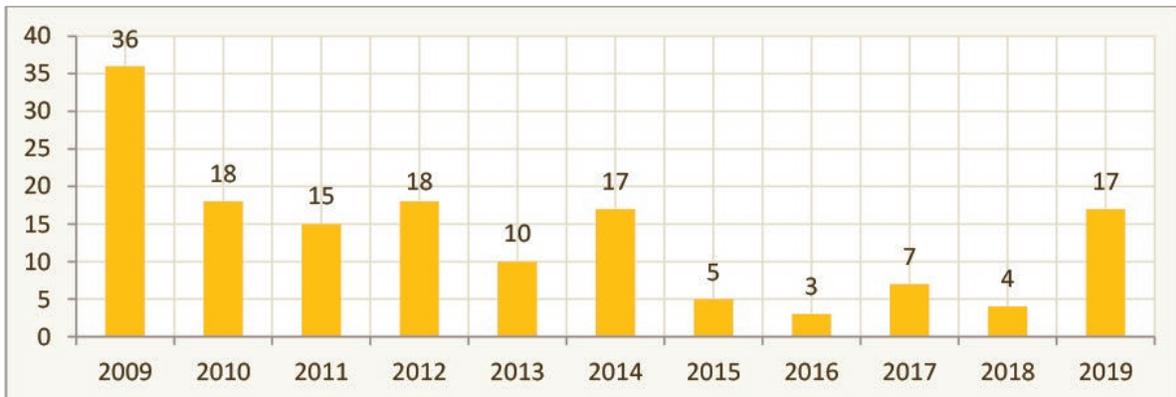
**Number of Rental Licenses**



**Number of New Rental Licenses**



**Number of Rental License Revocations**



# Fire Prevention, Education & Outreach

Every year, our department receives numerous requests for firefighter speakers or public education to outside organizations. This year the Columbia Heights Fire Department had 44 fire prevention events allowing us to speak and teach over 2000 people of all ages.

## Smoke Alarm Program

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In our third year of partnership with the American Red Cross, the fire Department continued to offer a free smoke alarm installation program for residents. The department visited 12 homes and installed 30 smoke alarms in 2019.

## Blood Pressure Checks

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The Fire department provides blood pressures free of charge to the public seven days a week at the fire station. Additionally, on a monthly schedule, the fire department performs blood pressure checks for the seniors at Murzyn Hall on a Friday. The fire department took 200 blood pressures with these programs.

## CPR Training

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The fire department also provided first aid and/or CPR training to City employees, the Police Reserves and taught first aid to the Summer Recreation Program Attendants as well as several other public organizations.

## Night to Unite

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Every year, the fire department takes an active role in the Night to Unite in an effort to meet, greet, and present our fire prevention message to as many citizens as possible at their local gatherings.

## Station Tours and School Visits

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This past year, hundreds of children and adults visited the fire station for a tour and a public safety message and firefighters visited over 275 children and teachers in their schools to spread safety messages. Firefighters also visited schools during National Reading Month and read books to over 100 students.

## Summer Spectacular Bash

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Once again in June the fire department participated in the Summer Spectacular Bash, which is a safety camp for youth where we spread a fire safety message through fun activities.

## Fire Prevention Open House

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The Annual Open House held at the end of September had beautiful weather and an attendance of over 350 people. Visitors were entertained and educated in fire prevention and interactions with local safety and community organizations. The department once again received a gracious donation by a resident of several hundred pumpkins, which were passed out to children attendees.



## Teacher Appreciation Picnic

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The fire department worked together with the School District with a picnic to appreciate the teachers of the district. Assistant Chief Larkin, along with several firefighters prepared and served the picnic fare to the teachers to say thanks for all they do in educating and guiding our youth. In addition to these activities, the firefighters conducted station tours for preschool groups, scouting troops, and for the occasional walk-in group.

## Holiday Train

---

The Canadian Pacific Holiday Train made a stop at 37th and Stinson Boulevard on Dec 11. The fire department partnered with Eastside Neighborhood Services, the St. Anthony Fire Department, Allina Health Ambulance, Columbia Heights Public Works, and the Columbia Heights, St. Anthony, and Minneapolis Police departments to provide security, EMS standby, and fire safety for the bonfires for the event. A crowd of nearly 3,000 people came out to make food donations, and for food and merriment.

## Fire & Ice Plunge

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For the fifth year in a row, the fire department assisted with the Fire and Ice Plunge, a charitable fundraising event for the Southern Anoka Community Assistance Program. Firefighters in ice rescue gear provided help for the participants jumping into the icy waters.

# Honor Guard

Established in 2011, the Columbia Heights Fire Department Honor Guard started building their mission to represent the department as a highly disciplined team serving with honor at ceremonial functions. The Guard functions with respect and dignity at funeral services for active and retired personnel as needed. The Honor Guard projects a positive image of the Department and its members by performing as a well trained professional team at local, state, and national events as well. The Honor Guard is dedicated to honoring fallen firefighters, their families, and department members, past and present. In addition to funerals and memorial services, the honor guard may be called upon to post colors, march in parades, attend social functions and badge pinning ceremonies, and any other function authorized or requested by the Fire Chief. As word spreads on their skill and professionalism the list of events grows.

## Explorers & Cadets

The Columbia Heights Fire Explorer Program has been a part of the fire department since 1978. This long-lived, self-sufficient program consists of young adults, aged 14-21, who are interested in learning about the Fire and EMS service. This group meets weekly and trains using the same fire and EMS curriculum as the fire department. The program has generated dozens of

dedicated and competent firefighters throughout the years for departments all across the state of Minnesota. Our explorer's have been quite busy representing the department by participating in community outreach events such as the Jamboree parade, the Night to Unite, Community Picnic, and the Fire Department's Fire Prevention Open House.

## Training and Education

Members of the Fire Department train and attend classes regularly to ensure they are prepared to safely handle the variety job duties and incidents to which the fire department responds and to meet OSHA, National Fire Protection Association, FEMA and Department of Homeland Security, Minnesota Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, National Registry of EMT's state and federal certification and licensure standards. The number of standards and training hour requirements continue to rise to meet the

growing needs of our area. Fire departments no longer train just for their own communities, but train for the needs of the metropolitan area with an all-hazards approach. Members also have numerous opportunities to attend schooling, special outside classes, conferences, and seminars around the metro area.

In 2019, the Fire Department had two live-burn training events. The first (see photo to left and below) was with a trainer from Fire Instruction Rescue Education Inc., who set up the burn by igniting planks of wood inside a specialized trailer. The other (see photos on page 49), involved a live-burn of an actual house. These types of training are required at least once per year.





For the first time in eight years, the Columbia Heights Fire Department had a chance to practice live-burn training inside an actual house in 2019. Thanks to a collaborative effort among City departments, a house near University Ave and 49th Ave was acquired and made available for live-burn training. As some residents gathered to watch, firefighters practiced Level 1 and Level 2 exercises inside the building.



Training started at 8 am and ended around 1:30 pm when the house was allowed to burn down completely. This type of training is ideal because it gives firefighters real-world experience in a controlled setting with multiple instructors on hand.

The photos from the training have been used in various promotional materials by the City. The images as a photo series earned Columbia Heights a Silver Award in photography from the Minnesota Association of Government Communicators in 2020.



# LIBRARY

## Introduction

The Columbia Heights Public Library's 2019 mission was to serve a diverse community's needs for access to resources, information, and technology in a welcoming environment. Visits were up slightly, with 118,659 visits. Use of library meeting and study rooms continued to rise, up 10% over the previous year, to 4,155 uses.

The library continued to offer interactive educational and recreational programs for guests of all ages in the building or in other locations throughout the community. From literacy-based story times for toddlers and caregivers, computer instruction for active agers, conversation circles for language learners, to a graphic novel book club at Columbia Acad-

emy, the library served the needs of 9,000 program attendees. With funding support from the CHPL Foundation, the library worked with educators from Metro North Adult Basic Education Center to offer a U.S. citizenship class at the library for the first time.

Each day, job seekers use the library computers to draft resumes and apply for work. Small business owners write business plans, print invoices, and email customers using the Wi-Fi network. An access point to the internet, via a desktop computer or through a personal device on the library's free Wi-Fi, enables Columbia Heights residents to fully participate in community life. Use of public computers and the wireless network remained high in 2019.



Libraries encourage bootstrapping, a founding principle of Columbia Heights illustrated in Irene Parson's "Columbia Heights: Bootstrap Town." Bootstrapping takes many forms depending upon personal needs, but always involves the sharing of information and resources. In 2019 the library helped people to improve their lives. Bootstrapping programs included learning about pollinator friendly landscaping from a local naturalist, an introduction to child development for parents at Baby Read, Baby Grow classes, getting help with broken bicycles or clothing at fix-it clinics, and consulting an expert on legal matters. Anoka County Law Librarian John Murphy began offering monthly office hours in the fall to connect people to legal resources for family law, self-representation

in court, and estate planning.

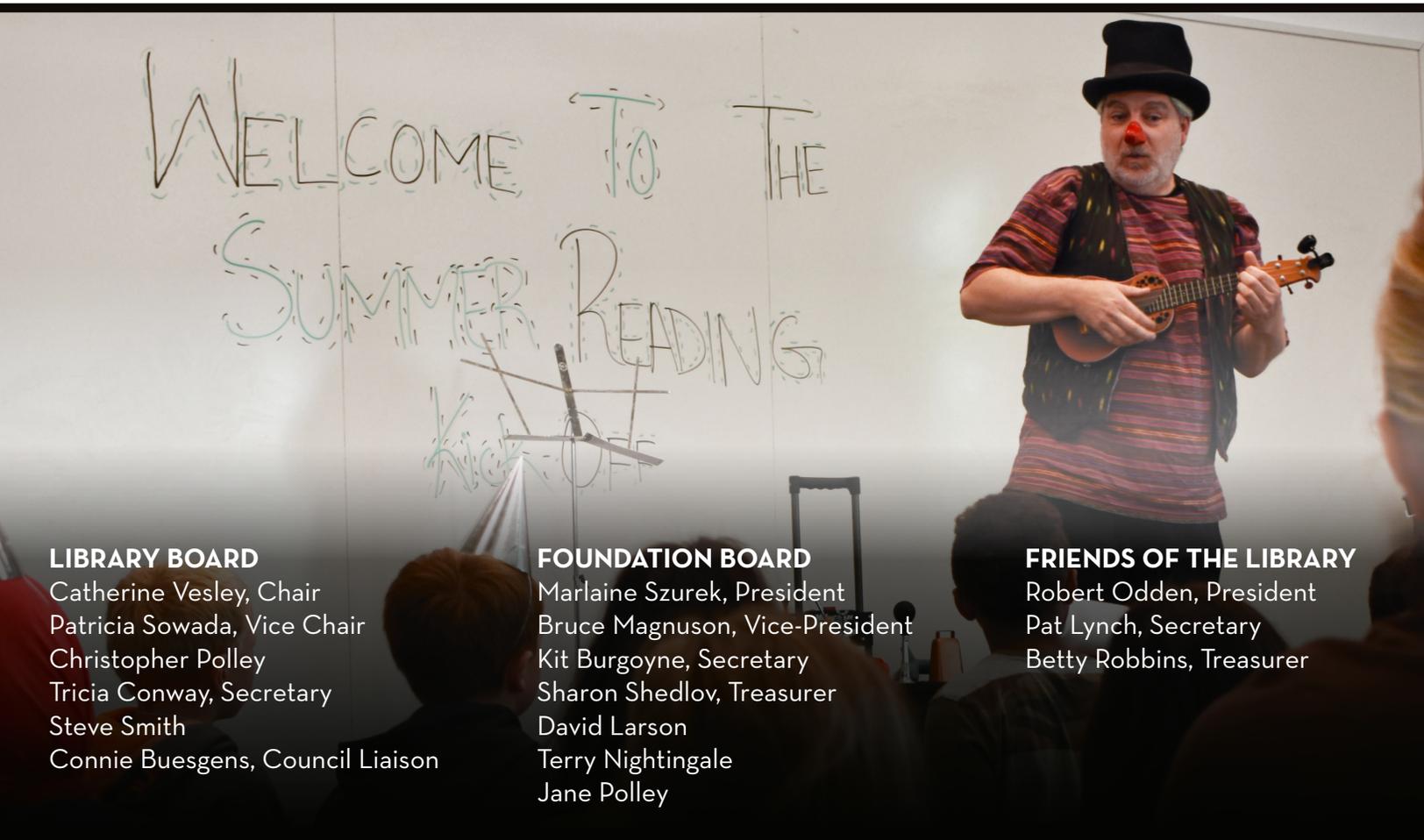
The library also offered a volunteer program for teens and adults, allowing people to build marketable skills and contribute to community betterment. The Friends of the Library, who have been volunteering their time since the 1970s, completed the sorting and organization of a set of letters from World War II servicemen and women sent to Pete Tema, the owner/editor of the "Columbia Heights Record" who mailed copies of the hometown newspaper to those stationed abroad. The work of the Friends sets the foundation for future digitization of these unique and important pieces of community history.

# Library Staff

Name	Title	Start Date	End Date
Renee Dougherty	Library Director	April 1, 2013	----
Cortni O'Brien	Adult Services Librarian	July 10, 2017	----
Brianna Belanger	Youth Services Librarian	Oct 19, 2015	----
Nick Olberding	Clerk Typist II -- Adult	July 5, 2016	----
Kelly J. Olson	Clerk Typist II -- Children's	June 1, 1992	----
Winnifred Coyne	Clerk	Jan 26, 2015	----
Elaine Dietz-Mamaril	Library Supervisor	Nov 15, 1993	----
Al Mamaril	Library Supervisor	Oct 8, 2007	----
Barbara J. Kondrick	Library Supervisor	July 9, 2018	----
Alison Marzolf	Library Page	Aug 1, 2007	----
Rachel Meyers	Library Page	May 1, 2008	----
Gianna Ritzko	Library Page (substitute)	Jan 17, 2012	----
Rosa Boda	Library Page (substitute)	March 2, 2015	----
Jacqueline Olson	Library Page	April 29, 2019	June 29, 2019
Samuel Rinne	Library Page	April 29, 2019	----

# Library Staff Continued

Name	Title	Start Date	End Date
James Heryla	Library Page	March 2, 2015	Aug 10, 2019
Karen Yaeger	Library Page	Jan 11, 2016	----
Michelle Wer- merskirchen	Library Page (substitute)	June 23, 2010	----
Farrah Briest	Library Aide	June 24, 2019	----
Maria Fink	Library Page	Dec 5, 2016	----
Tammie Yin Powell	Library Page	Dec 5, 2016	----



## LIBRARY BOARD

Catherine Vesley, Chair  
 Patricia Sowada, Vice Chair  
 Christopher Polley  
 Tricia Conway, Secretary  
 Steve Smith  
 Connie Buesgens, Council Liaison

## FOUNDATION BOARD

Marlaine Szurek, President  
 Bruce Magnuson, Vice-President  
 Kit Burgoyne, Secretary  
 Sharon Shedlov, Treasurer  
 David Larson  
 Terry Nightingale  
 Jane Polley

## FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Robert Odden, President  
 Pat Lynch, Secretary  
 Betty Robbins, Treasurer

# Youth Services Highlights

## Early Literacy and School Readiness

A primary objective of all library programming is to build literacy. For youth, literacy programs include family storytimes. **Storytime** attendees build letter knowledge, phonological awareness, and vocabulary which are the essential building blocks for learning to read. Storytime also teaches social and emotional skills like listening, taking turns, and waiting in line, soft skills needed in school and later in life. Storytimes are developmentally rich and enjoyable experiences informed by educational research which suggests that children with early positive reading experiences tend to persevere as learning becomes more challenging. Storytime families build community and vital social infrastructure which strengthens communities and makes them more resilient; they share tips, meet up for playdates, and support each other beyond the library context. In response to patron feedback, the library piloted Spanish language storytimes in collaboration with Ensemble Music in May and December. The library hosted 34 family storytimes attended by 1,677 people in 2019.

**Baby Read, Baby Grow**, offered collaboratively with Early Childhood and Family Education (ECFE) staff from Independent School District 13, teaches parents and caregivers to recognize and nurture early literacy and overall development in children from birth to 24 months of age. Classes build connections and community among participants so that new and seasoned parents can learn from one another and share community resources. A welcoming environment helps parents feel comfortable asking questions and sharing challenges. Participants sing the same songs for a full session to model the importance of repetition in a child's learning and to help parents learn songs they can use at home. A primary objective of Baby Read, Baby Grow is to help parents feel confident and to equip them with the tools to build early literacy skills at home starting at birth. Thirty-seven sessions of BRBG reached 823 individuals in 2019.

Every spring **Early Childhood and Family Education** classes visit the library. Students and families participate in an interactive storytime, tour the library, and spend free time exploring and playing. Visits give parents who have never been to the library a hands-on experience with services to build familiarity and encourage return visits. Class visits allow library staff an opportunity to educate parents about the numerous learning opportunities available with a

library card, including books, play spaces and programs.

The library features an early literacy play space, funded by the Columbia Heights Public Library Foundation, with themes and accessories changing quarterly. Some of the themes of the play space in 2019 included a chemistry lab, flower shop, and farmers' market. Play is the work of children and is a powerful interactional learning method. As children play together or with caregivers, they are building background knowledge and vocabulary. Play hones problem solving and narrative skills. It allows children to explore early math and science concepts and prepares them for school. Play also fosters friendship and community.

## School-Aged Youth Programs

The library also serves the educational and social development needs of school-aged children. Programs addressing school-aged youth are held in the summer months and throughout the school year.

The library regularly hosts class visits from Immaculate Conception School helping students in grades K-5 find reading materials. During 32 class visits in 2019, the youth services librarian provided reader's advisory to students and connected youth with leisure reading that excites them. Class visits provide an opportunity for library staff to build relationships with youth which continue year-after-year and with family visits during school recesses.

**Summer Adventure**, a summer reading program, kept community kids reading and learning throughout the summer months. Students, especially those from low-income families, may lose some of the achievement gains they made during the previous school year if they do not continue learning during the summer. By providing youth an opportunity to read and attend educational and enriching programs all summer long, libraries help keep kids learning when school is not in session. Summer programs in 2019 included Spark Y Camp and Storytelling Camp. Two hundred and fourteen kids participated in the summer reading program.

Food insecurity and lack of nutrition is linked to a number of negative outcomes for youth, including poor academic achievement, behavior issues,



*Youth Librarian Brianna Belanger with Clifford the Big Red Dog at the Summer Reading Kickoff*

# Youth Services Highlights Cont.

depression, suicide and several health-related problems. Increasing the number of meals served in after-school, summer, and expanded learning programs can improve school enrollment and retention of youth participating and enhance the long-term educational, health and life outcomes of the youth. The library

partnered with Youth-prise during the summer of 2019 to serve 454 summer lunches on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays in June, July, and August.

**STEAM Saturdays** and other enrichment programs planned during school recesses are funded through a community partnership with ISD 13 made possible through a federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant. STEAM Saturday topics

vary and have included NASA and space exploration, animal biology with the Minnesota Zoo, and electricity with the Bakken Museum.



*LEGO Challenge at the Library*

## Service to Young Adults

**Tech Wizards**, originally part of Anoka County 4-H, is now in its fourth year at the library. Experienced youth who've been with the program since the beginning now lead younger youth in team building activi-

ties and reflections. Teens learn classroom management techniques and gain mentorship experience. Youth leadership and voice are integral in creating quality programming for youth.

The Library also offers volunteer opportunities for youth throughout the summer. Youth served lunches, helped with programming, and used their creativity to design bulletin boards. These leadership opportunities enabled teens to earn service hours for Key Club or National Honor Society and add volunteer experience to their resumes. Sixteen teen volunteers donated 266 hours of service in 2019.

**Graphic Novel Book Club** is offered in collaboration with the school district once per month. Graphic Novel Book Club at Columbia Academy allows staff to make connections with middle school youth who may be unable to visit the library. Youth find their voice and practice leadership skills by selecting titles and participating in discussions.

**Junior Kitchen**, a youth-teaching-youth nutrition program was made possible through a collaboration with 4-H and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP.) Six community teens learned leadership skills by learning the curriculum and then teaching three nutrition and cooking classes for younger children.

*Library Live is a summer performance and interactive series. Above: Learning about music. Below: Reptiles.*



# Adult Services Highlights

## Program Highlights

The library hosted Minnesota photographer Doug Ohman in the spring for a “Minnesota from the Road” presentation. Fifty-eight attendees toured the North Shore without leaving the library through Ohman’s vibrant photos and historically detailed storytelling. Longtime Columbia Heights local Rita Norberg offered a hometown tour of her own with “Memories of Columbia Heights,” a “passionate, informative, and touching” presentation of her personal memories of Columbia Heights throughout the decades.

Two library programs offered attendees the chance to reflect on the upcoming 75th anniversary of World War II: “Finding Loren: The Life, Death and Discovery of a P-47 Fighter Pilot,” presented by Gretchen Hinz Wronka, and an author event with Minnesota Book Award Finalist Carolyn Porter, author of “Marcel’s Letters: A Font and the Search for One Man’s Fate.”

Geared up by the installation of a new bike fix-it station at the library’s east entrance, the library hosted three “Bike Fix-it Clinics” throughout the summer and fall. A team of bike hobbyists volunteered their time to repair and tune, as well as teach community members how to care for their bicycles. In total, 41 bikes were repaired at clinics in 2019.

The library hosted creative opportunities throughout the year, including two Hardanger embroidery workshops and several Legacy funded programs “Coiled Jewelry,” “Drawing to Watercolor,” and “Needle Felted Fall Foliage.”

## Adult Language Learners

The library offers two primary programs for English language learners: Buddy Up and Read and Conversation Circles. In 2019, 13 Buddy Up volunteers met with an adult learner “buddy” 199 times. At our weekly Conversation Circles programs, a group of adult English language learners meet with an English-speaking volunteer facilitator to practice English speaking skills in an informal environment. The library hosted 94 Conversation Circles in 2019.

## Reading Programs

Winter Reads, a Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA) sponsored adult reading program held throughout January and February, encouraged adult readers to write and share short book reviews. Participants’ names were entered into weekly prize drawings, and a grand prize winner was announced in March.

The library’s Adult Book Club meets monthly. Popular titles in 2019 included “Before We Were Yours” by Lisa Wingate and “The Turtle Catcher” by Nicole Helget.

The library offered an “Adult Read Down” in February, throughout which adult library patrons were able to read away their library fines.

In July, local author Kathy Baxter presented “The Road to Stardom,” a talk about three prominent Minnesota children’s authors: Wanda Gag, Laura Ingalls Wilder, and Maud Hart Lovelace.

## Community Partnerships

The library partnered with the Metro North Adult Basic Education Center to bring a US Citizenship Prep class to the library throughout the fall of 2019.



*The Bike Fix It Clinic event at the Library.*

# Adult Services Cont.



*Kerlan Collection at the U of M*

The library partnered with the City of Columbia Heights Senior Center to offer a “Valentine Cardmaking” program in February and a “Notes of Gratitude” writing workshop in November. The departments also collaborated to bring three groups of seniors to the University of Minnesota Wilson Library’s Kerlan Collection of children’s books.

The library partnered with the Mobile Menders nonprofit organization to bring two clothes mending clinics to the library in September and November.

The library partnered with the community-building nonprofit group HeightsNEXT to host a birdscaping basics program in April, a Día de los Muertos celebration in October, and a pet bed-making service event in December.

The City of Columbia Heights and The Northeast newspaper partnered to conduct city-wide a photo contest for the library’s 90th anniversary celebration. The library hosted a photo contest exhibit in the library’s community room in January.

The Columbia Heights Sister Cities group organized cultural heritage displays at the library for Polish American Heritage month in October.

The library worked with American Red Cross to host a blood drive in March.

Beginning in September, the library partnered with the Anoka County Law Library to offer monthly drop-in clinics at the library.

## **Digital Literacy**

**AARP Tech Workshops:** The library hosted four AARP technology workshops in September. Eighty people attended the workshops, which were conducted by AARP staff and covered iPhone basic and advanced skills. AARP provided devices for each registrant to use during the workshop.

**Senior Surf Classes for older adults (55+):** Senior Surf classes provided in collaboration with the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging (MAAA), Senior LinkAge Line and the Minnesota Board on Aging, are free,

two-hour sessions offered the first Wednesday of each month for seniors who want to learn computer basics, Internet searching and websites of interest to seniors. In 2019, 47 people attended a Senior Surf class at the library.

## **At-Home Delivery**

Residents who are not able to come to the library due to age, health issues, or physical challenges can elect At-Home Delivery service. Deliveries, which can include books in large print or regular print, audiobooks, CDs, DVDs, and magazines, are made by volunteers or library staff.

## **Volunteers**

The library is grateful for its team of dedicated and talented adult volunteers. In 2019, 24 volunteers gave 589 hours to the library: tutoring ESL learners through our Buddy Up and Read program, leading the English conversation circle, organizing magazines, dusting and cleaning, setting up book displays, and performing many miscellaneous tasks at the library.

# 2019 Public Service Data

## Collection

Print Materials (books and magazines)	45,406
Audio Materials (Music and Books on CD)	4,038
Video Materials	4,130
Watt Meters	4
Total Collection Items	53,578
Donated Items Added to Collection	+295

## Circulation

Physical Items	127,180
EBooks	7,441
EAudiobooks	3,357
Total Circulation	137,978

## Programs at the Library

Adult Programs	192
Youth Programs	184
Teen Programs	41
Total Programs	417
Total Program Attendance	9,000

## Reference Questions

Reference Questions	15,730
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# Public Service Data Cont.

## Public Internet Use

Users	27,716
Computer Sessions	46,390
Minutes Used	1,217,688
Hours	20,295

## Service Hours

Public Service Hours	2,681
Volunteer Hours	855

## Total Visitors and Users

Total Visitors at the Library in 2019	118,650
At-Home Patrons (materials delivered)	9
Institutional Borrowers (businesses, churches, schools, etc.)	16
Active Borrowers	20,612

## Additional Services

Interlibrary Loans for Items Unavailable at Local Libraries	898
Items Supplied for Statewide Interlibrary Loans	465

## Room Use By Public

Total hours of room use by public	4,155
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## Friends of the Library Volunteers Organize WWII Letters Home

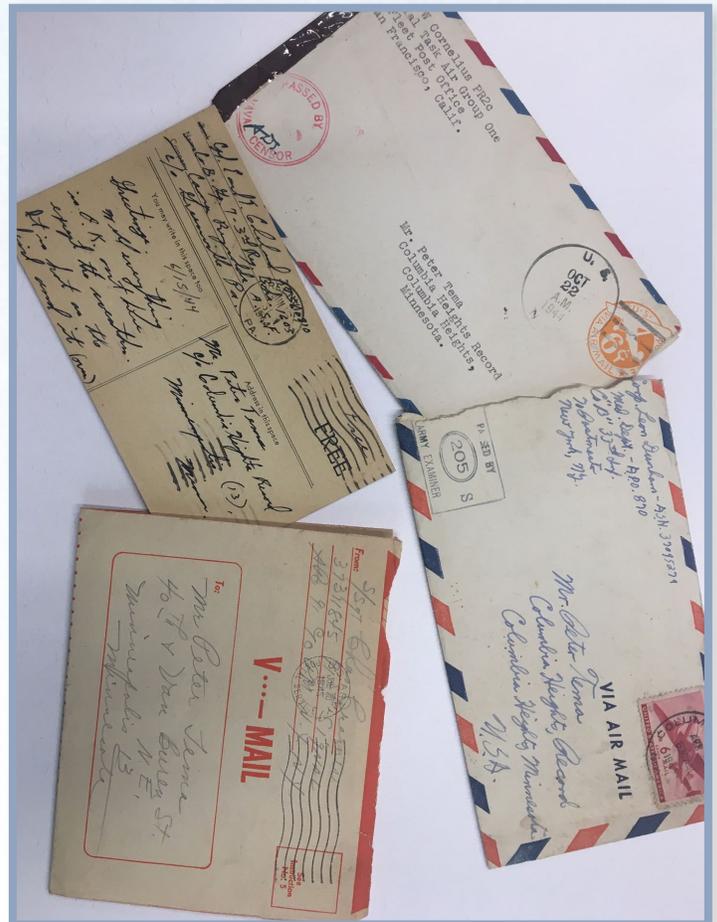


The project took many hands and many hours to complete. The dedication demonstrated by the Friends of the Library is amazing to behold year after year, but the hard work and commitment required to complete the Tema letters project is simply above and beyond. The library wishes to thank Rita Norberg and Cathy Devoy for preserving this important piece of Columbia Heights history. Thanks also to the Friends of the Library for their time and dedication to this project: Pat Lynch, Bob Odden, Jane Polley, Nancy Rathbun, Kay Reiners, Betty Robbins, and Renee Sawyer. Special thanks to Carol Tema Opheim for her insight and assistance.

Fifty years ago, World War II servicemen and women from Columbia Heights received their news from “back home” from the weekly newspaper, the “Columbia Heights Record.” Pete Tema was the editor and publisher of The Record, and throughout World War II, Tema, with the help of his family, mailed a copy of the newspaper to each soldier, wherever they were stationed, free of charge. The soldiers were grateful and delighted. So much so, that they wrote many letters of thanks to Tema in return. Tema saved every piece of correspondence from the soldiers, many of which contained news and information about the war.

Pete Tema passed away in 2002, and Rita Norberg, a longtime resident of Columbia Heights, attended an estate sale at the Tema household. She came across a table full of old letters and postcards—over 700 of them—written to Pete Tema during the war. She was astounded. An avid collector and antique professional, she knew the letters needed to remain in Columbia Heights. She found a secure home for them at the Columbia Heights Public Library, where the letters lived in storage until 2019.

At a Friends of the Library meeting in the spring of 2019, Norberg proposed that the letters be organized once and for all. In July, Norberg and six other Friends of the Library met to begin sorting and alphabetizing the “Dear Pete” letters. The Friends organized the letters into binders. One member of the Friends, Cathy Devoy, spent over 40 hours entering the data from each letter onto an electronic spreadsheet, capturing names, military branch, and geographic information from each letter. The library looks forward to working with the Anoka County Historical Society to make the letters findable online. In the meantime, they are indexed and stored alphabetically in the library’s history room.



# Misc.



With help from an Anoka County grant, Public Works installed a Bike DIY Fix-It Clinic station just outside the back entrance of the library. It includes a rack to place your bike, as well as a wide array of repair tools.



Left: The Columbia Heights Library table at the 2019 Community Picnic. Right: Longtime resident Rita Norberg gives a History of Columbia Heights lecture in the Library's Community Room.



Left to Right: 2019 Library Foundation Spaghetti Dinner fundraiser, sidewalk obstacle course, construction equipment storytime.



# POLICE

## Introduction

The year 2019 presented the CHPD numerous opportunities to engage with the community in positive ways and prepare for the challenges that lay ahead over the next several years.

In 2019, the City of Columbia Heights commissioned a public safety staffing study for the Police and Fire Departments. This was the first time an in-depth analysis of police and fire operations was conducted in the City. Some of the recommendations of the staffing study included increasing sworn staff from 27 officers to 29 officers, restructuring police civilian staff to include a lead records technician, and

adding an additional full time community service officer. The staffing study has provided valuable information that will be used over the next several years to continue to provide the best service to the citizens of Columbia Heights.

The CHPD continues to be dedicated to active partnerships within the community. One of our new programs included “Cooking with the Cops” at the Columbia Heights High School. The event was a great success and we look forward to working with students again as we continue to find new opportunities to involve



community partners in our community policing efforts.

The year saw two significant retirements at the CHPD. Beth O'Brien, who retired in July, was a loyal employee for the City for over 35 years, 29 of which were with the Police Department. Beth was active in many of our community oriented policing activities and the cornerstone of the Records Division of the PD. Officer Dale Sorensen also retired in 2019, after 23 years of service. He started as a Community Service Officer.

As you will note in the pages of the 2019 annual report, the CHPD has been fortunate in bringing several new officers and civilian staff on board. These new officers represent the future of the Columbia Heights Police Department.

In spite of some of the hiring challenges that law enforcement has experienced, we have continued to bring on good people committed to active partnerships that help protect life and property and enhance the safety and quality of life in the City of Columbia Heights.

# Police Department Staff Roster

Name	Title	Start Date	End Date
Lenny Austin	Chief of Police	Feb 2, 1995	----
Erik Johnston	Sergeant/Captain	Aug 31, 1998	----
Matthew Markham	Sergeant/Captain	Aug 31, 1998	----
Ted Fischer	Sergeant	Oct 30, 1992	----
Justin Pletcher	Sergeant	May 24, 2010	----
Andrew Museus	Sergeant	May 13, 2013	Oct 11, 2019
Erik Hanson	Police Officer/Sergeant	Feb 5, 2007	----
Timothy Noll	Investigator/Sergeant	April 1, 1985 Promoted Nov 30, 2019	----
Paul Bonesteel	Drug Task Force	Sept 8, 1994	----
Dale Sorenson	Police Officer	Sept 11, 1997	Dec 13, 2019
Matthew Aish	Police Officer	Aug 30, 1999	----
Gregory Sinn	Police Officer	June 5, 2000	----
Jason Piehn	High School Liaison	April 4, 2005	----
Joseph Pikala	Police Officer	Aug 12, 2008	----
William Monberg	Community Policing Coord.	Oct 13, 2008	----
Jacob Hilden	Police Officer/Investigator	May 14, 2013	----

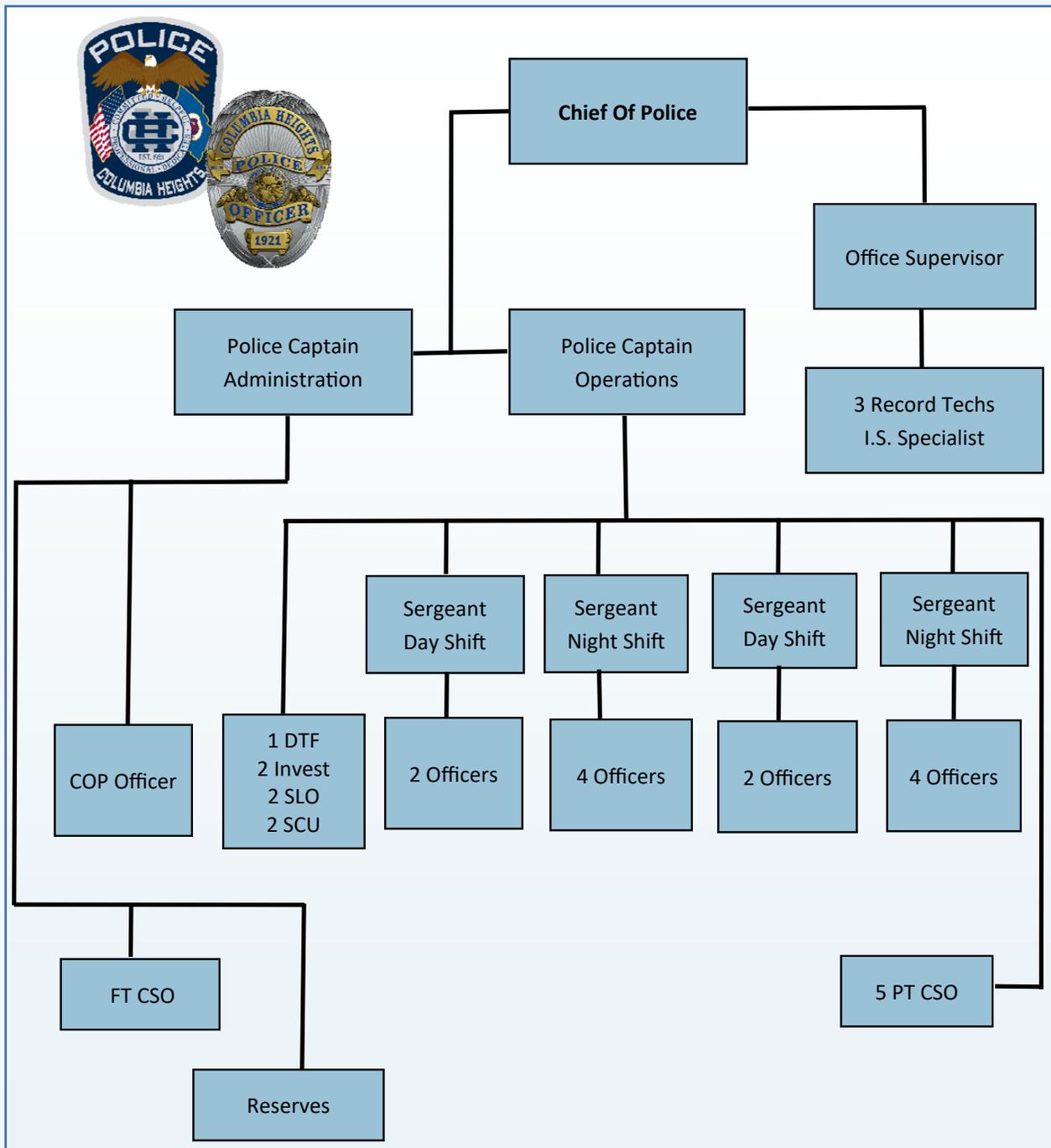
# Police Staff Roster Continued

Name	Title	Start Date	End Date
Mohammed Farah	Police Officer	Jan 13, 2015	----
Tabitha Wood	Police Officer	Sept 14, 2015	----
Ibrahim Farah	Middle School Liaison	April 27, 2016	----
Jacquelyn Urbaniak	Police Officer	Nov 28, 2016	----
Darry Jones	Police Officer	Feb 2, 2017	----
Troy Vaughn	Police Officer	Feb 2, 2017	----
Jamie Mittelstaedt	Police Officer	Aug 12, 2008	----
Thomas Hall	Police Officer	Aug 30, 2018	----
Mitch Weisser	Police Officer	Jan 14, 2019	----
Avery Harris	PT CSO/Officer	Feb 28, 2018 Promoted March 20, 2019	
Nate Bursch	Police Officer	Aug 12, 2019	----
Karen Olson	Office Supervisor	Feb 19, 1986	----
Jessica Racchini	Lead Records Tech	Sept 16, 2019	----
Elizabeth O'Brien	Records Technician	Aug 20, 1990	July 12, 2019
Ramon Gomez	Records Technician	Nov 4, 2013	----
Becky Romanik	Records Technician	March 14, 2018	----
Nick Fedor	Information Systems Specialist	Sept 18, 2018	----

# Police Staff Roster Continued

Name	Title	Start Date	End Date
Jerry Wellman	Community Service Officer	Jan 25, 2006	----
Tony Miller	PT Community Service Officer	Oct 26, 2016	----
Shelby Tombers	PT Community Service Officer	Sept 13, 2017	----
Robert Tombers	PT Community Service Officer	Aug 30, 2018	----
Alex Barrott	PT Community Service Officer	May 28, 2019	----
Kelvin Yang	PT Community Service Officer	Aug 12, 2019	----
Luke Troyak	PT Community Service Officer	Nov 20, 2019	----





Officer Mitch Weisser joined the CHPD on Jan 1, 2019



Officer Nate Bursch was hired on Aug 12, 2019



Jessica Racchini became our first Lead Records Tech on Sept 16, 2019

# Chief Austin Completes Specialized FBI Training

Columbia Heights Police Chief Lenny Austin was among 256 law enforcement officers who graduated from the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia, in September. The 277th session of the National Academy consisted of men and women from 50 states and D.C. and included members of law enforcement agencies from 34 countries, five military organizations, and nine federal civilian organizations.

Internationally known for its academic excellence, the National Academy offers 10 weeks of advanced communication, leadership, and fitness training. Participants must have proven records as professionals within their agencies to attend. FBI Academy instructors, special agents, and other staff with advanced degrees provide the training.

The coursework includes a fitness component, culminating in a final test called the “Yellow Brick Road,” which is a grueling 6.1 mile run/obstacle course through a hilly, wooded trail built by the marines. Chief Austin endured that challenge and learned from many other, less grueling, lessons at the Academy. He gained significant new insights into modern-day law enforcement, including some eye-opening facts about the increasing prominence of technology and cybercrime. But one of his biggest takeaways was that the Columbia Heights Police Department has been on the right track in its commitment to community policing.

“They really emphasized the importance of building relationships,” Austin said. “No matter how good technology gets, at the end of the day, the most effective crime-fighting tools are the relationships we build with our community partners and the one-on-one interactions we have with our fellow neighbors.”



*The department creates at least one opportunity per month for residents to meet with officers in a low-stress environment, from the monthly Coffee With a Cop series to the annual spring-time Citizen's Police Academy. To find out more about any other CHPD community policing initiative, please call Community Policing Officer Bill Monberg at 763-706-8142.*

# McGrath Staffing Study Recommended Personnel Changes

In the fall of 2018, the City of Columbia Heights entered into an agreement with McGrath Human Resources Group to do an in-depth staffing study of its Police and Fire Departments. Intensive work was done in preparing materials for this study, including meetings with the department's administration, and interviews with each employee.

The completed study was received in January 2019 and contained an analysis of police and fire operations, staffing levels and organizational effectiveness, with suggestions for improved procedures and technology enhancements.

Many of these suggestions have been implemented,

resulting in improved efficiencies throughout the department.

The study also recommended that staffing levels be increased by two police officers, one full-time community service officer, and a lead record technician. One additional police officer and the lead record technician have been added, with plans to request the other positions in future budget cycles.



# CHPD Puts Focus On Pedestrian Safety Initiative

Recently, MnDOT found that a portion of MN State Hwy 65 that runs through Columbia Heights has a higher-than-average risk of crashes involving pedestrians, including crashes that cause serious injury or death. The study also showed both Central Ave and University Ave are among the most dangerous corridors in the state.

The CHPD, in partnership with Anoka County, MnDOT, TZD (Toward Zero Deaths), and Metro Transit, has started an initiative to make the Central Avenue corridor safer for both pedestrians and motorists. CHPD officers are dedicating time during their shifts to seek out unsafe traffic and pedestrian activities in an effort to educate the public and promote safety through these contacts.

“While enforcement is part of this, our focus will be on public education and outreach,” said Sgt. Justin Pletcher.

The goal of this pedestrian safety initiative is to reinforce the importance of our community’s safety. Central Avenue is one of the busier roads in Anoka County, with multiple bus stop locations and limited stop lights. Moving forward into 2020, the CHPD will continue its efforts with reinvigorated team-based



proactive measures to continue to reach out to our students, walkers, bikers, and drivers alike.



## Retired Officer Helps Central Ave Clean-Up



Retired Police Officer Terry Nightingale re-joined us on a contract basis to help out during the summer and fall months with a Central Avenue Clean-Up code enforcement project. Terry worked as a representative of the Police, Fire and Community Development Departments in contacting those businesses and residences with code violations, in order to bring them into compliance.



## CHPD Officer Darry Jones Makes Big Debut in Boxing Ring

Columbia Heights Police Officer Darry Jones Jr. was still new to the job when he first noticed the Firehouse Boxing Gym inside the City Hall building on Mill Street. He decided it might be fun to train there as a boxer, since it was so close to where he worked and boxing had always been an interest of his. It turned out, Jones was a natural. In less than a year, he went from never having formally trained in his life, to fighting in 15 official bouts and winning 14, which gave him enough experience to enter the Olympic Trial Qualifiers in Columbus, Ohio, in the fall of 2019. Jones’ presence at the Firehouse Gym also helped the department’s mission of community policing. Even when Jones isn’t training, he’ll regularly stop by the gym while on patrol to lend some encouragement to the kids there.

“I’ll come by for five minutes and just hang out,” Jones said. “I want to show them that I support them, and keep them motivated.”

In 2020, Jones is taking a boxing break to focus on being a new father.



# Strategic Plan

Since 2009, the CHPD has been preparing an annual Strategic Plan. The plan outlines those things that are important to our mission, defines our objectives within those strategies, and lists action steps with measurable goals under each of those categories. The CHPD's plan is broken down into five categories: Problem Oriented Policing, Community Oriented Policing, Communication, Accountability, and Training/Equipment.

In the final months of 2018, we sought input from multiple community members and stakeholders, including the Columbia Heights School District along with stu-

dents and parents, faith-based leaders, business owners, Neighborhood Watch members, other City departments, as well as the Mayor and City Council. That input was discussed in meetings with officers and staff members to be considered for the final plan.

Once all input was gathered, it was analyzed and incorporated into the strategic plan at a planning meeting held in December. By obtaining the input of our stakeholders and fellow employees, our Strategic Plan helps us to address community needs and goals, and provides direction and focus for the organization.

## Community Oriented Policing

*The Columbia Heights Police Department continues to focus on the core philosophy of Community Oriented Policing. The tenet of this philosophy is a strong partnership between community and police where problems are solved together. We continue to support and foster our great relationship with the community by engaging in multiple programs where we interact together and work to make the community a safer and more enjoyable place to live, work and play.*

### Landlord Outreach

CHPD views our partnership with landlords as an integral part of creating a safe and enjoyable community. The police department has regular interaction with our rental community. In 2019, we had contact with over 800 landlords and hosted quarterly forums with topics including legislative updates, lease enforcement, code violations, and information on the civil process.

### Business Watch

The police department continues to partner with our business and retail community in the form of our Business Watch program. Members of the police department visit many of our business locations throughout the year to check-in and work on crime-prevention partnerships.

### Neighborhood Watch

The Neighborhood Watch program connects neighborhood leaders with the police department to assist with community communication and reporting suspicious activity. CHPD provides quarterly training sessions for the 174 block leaders and attends neighborhood events throughout the year. No one knows a neighborhood better than the people that live there and we view this program as a vital partnership in keeping communities safe.

### National Night Out

Each August, the Police Department attends block parties for National Night Out. In 2019, we attended over 50 parties and collected more than 1,400 pounds of food donations for SACA! This event serves as a great opportunity to connect with the residents and provide an update on current happenings in the police department.

### Coffee With a Cop

CHPD's monthly "Coffee with a Cop" events continue to provide the community and police officers an opportunity to connect in a relaxed, informal setting. We extend our gratitude to all of our host locations from 2019! Be sure to check the CHPD Facebook page for information on upcoming events!

### Cooking With a Cop

One of our new programs this year was "Cooking with the Cops" which took place at the Columbia Heights



# Community Oriented Policing Cont.

High School. This new event was a great success and we look forward to working with students once again as we continue to find new opportunities to involve community partners in our community policing efforts.

## Citizen Academy

In April, CHPD hosted its first Citizen Academy in several years. Sessions were held on Thursday evenings and included topics ranging from Use of Force to Drug Enforcement to Community Policing. The academy provided a great opportunity to share the inner workings of a police department with the community and create a greater shared understanding of how police work functions.

## Community Picnic

The police department participated in the annual community picnic on June 27 in Huset Park. This year, the picnic was combined with the Jamboree week activities and a great time was had interacting with community residents.



Officer Jason Piehn at Cooking With a Cop event at the Columbia Heights High School. Photo on page 70 depicts CWC award winners.

## Partnership Projects

### Lee Carlson Center

In 2019 we continued our partnership with the Lee Carlson Center. The focus of this partnership is to connect people in need of services with the best organizations able to provide them. Columbia Heights police officers responding to calls in the community will identify and refer situations which could potentially benefit from being connected to additional services. With the individual's permission, they will receive a follow up visit under the Community Outreach Program (COP) as soon as the next business day. This follow up visit will include a Columbia Heights police officer and a trained intake specialist from the Lee Carlson Center who will work together to connect those individuals with needed services.

### Facade Improvement Grant Program

For the second year, we had the opportunity to work closely with the Columbia Heights Community Development Department on the façade improvement program. This program provides grants for businesses along parts of Central Avenue and included camera installation where video would be voluntarily accessible by the police department.

### Truck Or Treat

About 1,500 residents attended the second annual Truck

or Treat event at Huset Park in October. The Columbia Heights Police Department again partnered with Recreation and other City departments to host. Costumed kids and their parents explored a variety of vehicles, including police cars, fire trucks, tow trucks, a dump truck, a garbage truck, a mail truck, a school bus, and even a helicopter. In addition to the organizations that provided their vehicles, Columbia Heights and its City departments also collaborated with community partners such as SACA Food Shelf & Thrift Store, HeightsNEXT, and the Columbia Heights Lions to help make the event happen.

### Teen Academy

Partnering with the Columbia Heights School District, the CHPD hosts a Teen Academy each year over MEA weekend in October. This year we graduated thirteen teens from the Academy. The kids get exposure to various law enforcement topics such as: use of force, careers, criminal investigation, crime scene forensics, and interrogations. This year we had special presentations on police drones, human trafficking, and a K-9 demonstration. During the course of the Academy, students and officers get to know each other while role-playing crime scenarios and practicing traffic stops. The students graduate with a better understanding of law enforcement and are provided with resources for those interested in becoming a future officer.

# Youth Outreach

## Anti-Bullying Reading

It is more important than ever to teach students about the negative effects of bullying and to do so as early as possible. The Columbia Heights Police Department continues to partner with the Columbia Heights School district with our anti-bullying reading program initiative. CHPD employees have been partnered with a teacher in our schools. Officers and police staff go into classrooms and read anti-bullying books to students. This is done twice during the school year. Students learn about the different types and forms of bullying. They also learn how to report it as quickly as possible before it becomes



a repetitive behavior. Students are also happy to see visitors from the police department.

## Open Gym

The Columbia Heights Police Department still does the open gym program (basketball and soccer) which is run by the school resource officers for Columbia Heights Students. This is usually done after school. The high school students have their open gym three times a week. The middle school students at Columbia Academy have their open gyms twice a week. We continue to collaborate with the school district and Columbia Height Recreation Department. The program which has been successful also runs through the summer months. The program provides a safe place for students to interact while still having fun.

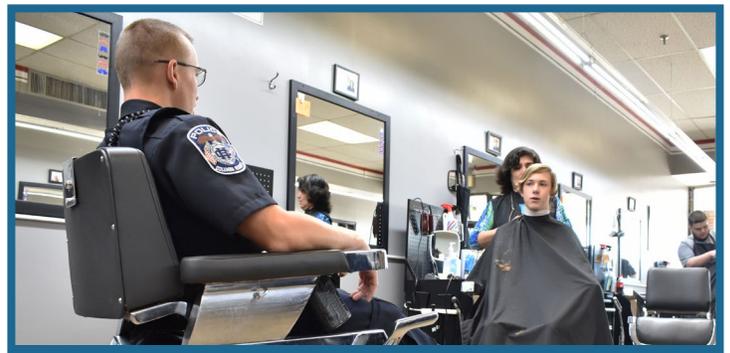
## Big Brothers, Big Sisters

CHPD has partnered with Big Brothers/Big Sisters Twin Cities since 2011, and is the only department in Anoka County involved in the program. Department staff who volunteer to be a Big Brother or Sister go into the school to meet their matched student. The two will meet weekly and develop a mentoring relationship over the course of the school year. The partnership first started at Highland Elementary and has since expanded to Valley View Elementary and Columbia Academy. We're now also involved in mentoring young men at the Columbia Heights High School.

## Cuts With a Cop

On Aug 30, 2019, the Columbia Heights Police Department partnered with the Fridley Police Department at the new location for the Moler Barber School in Fridley

to host the second annual "Cuts with a Cop" event. Officers brought snacks, handouts, and other goodies for families who brought their kids in for free haircuts. The Moler Barber School was gracious enough to give all students a free back-to-school cut, allowing police officers to sit and chat with kids and their parents about the upcoming school year, the community, and anything else they could think to ask. It was a great turnout, as 51 kids got their hair cut for free, saving families over \$400! The Moler Barber school was so pleased with the turnout, we've decided to make this an annual event hosted on the last Friday before school starts. The CHPD looks forward to working with Fridley and the Moler Barber School to continue to give our communities full support, both from their respective police departments as well as their community stakeholders.



## Columbia Heights Bike Rodeo

The Columbia Heights Police Department started its bicycle rodeo class in the summer of 2019. The program runs during the summer months. It is put together by School Resource Officer Ibrahim Farah and Katie Holznaegel with parks and rec. The focus is on highlighting and reinforcing bicycle and pedestrian safety. The event provides an opportunity for children bicyclist to practice and develop skills that would help them be safer riders. The Columbia Heights Police department partners with Columbia Heights Parks and Recreation in bringing the program to life. CHPD also partners with the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota (BikeMN) who provides us with a trailer full of bicycles and helmets for students to use. In 2019, we also partnered with the Minnesota Department of Transportation who helped us obtain bicycle rodeo equipment through their safe routes to school programs. There is a two-day training session for 4th and 5th-grade students. There is also a one-day session for the 8th-grade student. Once students complete the course, they ride with staff along with members of the police department in a predetermined route in the city utilizing skills they have learned.

# Other Programs and Activities

## Multi-Cultural Advisory Committee

Now entering its 4th year of existence, the Columbia Heights Police Department's Multicultural Advisory Committee, commonly referred to as our MAC, continues to work progressively towards better community-police relations. In 2019, the CHPD and MAC worked together to discuss juvenile accountability, pedestrian safety, de-escalation, strategic planning, and several other topics affecting law enforcement and the community today. In December, the CHPD also hosted a MAC appreciation dinner where MAC members brought their family members to the police department for a hosted dinner as Chief Austin and the police department showed gratitude for the volunteerism of our current members.

## Wellness

The CHPD continues to focus on wellness for its employees. In 2019, the department contracted with two mental health providers with experience in dealing with emergency services personnel for the purpose of offering up to two visits each year at no cost to the employee. These visits are completely confidential, and provide employees with an opportunity to address their mental health. It is becoming increasingly important to realize that wellness does not just refer to physical health, and this is an important step to helping our employees to address their mental health as well.



## Training

The police department's commitment to training continues to be a priority. Having a highly trained and well equipped police force continues as a core strategy for the Columbia Heights police department. We continued our efforts to provide officers with the tools to help safely resolve conflicts through de-escalation and tactics. Officers are attending the POST Board mandated training on Conflict Management and Mediation, Crisis Intervention and Recognizing and Valuing Community Diversity. The Columbia Heights Police Department goes above and beyond the state requirements for these trainings.

The police department has also been investing in leadership training for current and future leaders in 2019. Chief Lenny Austin attended the FBI National Academy where the learning focused on future trends in law enforcement and industry best practices. Other police

department leaders have attended the Leading Police Organization course through the MN BCA. This course provides an intensive course of instruction and provides key methods of leading and motivating individuals.

## Opiates Education

Once per semester (twice per year) High School Liaison Officer Jason Piehn does a presentation on opiates with CHHS health classes. Students watch a video made by the DEA and FBI called "Chasing The Dragon" and then there is a discussion with Q&A and a presentation by a guest speaker. Speakers have ranged from recovering users to parents of a local Heights kid who died of an overdose and how his addiction affected their family. This reaches about 120 students per semester.

## Police Reserves

The CHPD Reserve Unit is a volunteer organization comprised of members of the Columbia Heights community. These members support the police department and the Columbia Heights-Hilltop community through a variety of tasks that include patrol, transports and participating at special events. Reserve members receive specialized training related to their areas of responsibility.

The Reserve Program has been a part of the Columbia Heights Police Department for over half a century, and thousands of hours of volunteer time have been donated. The CHPD continues to be grateful for their service to their community.

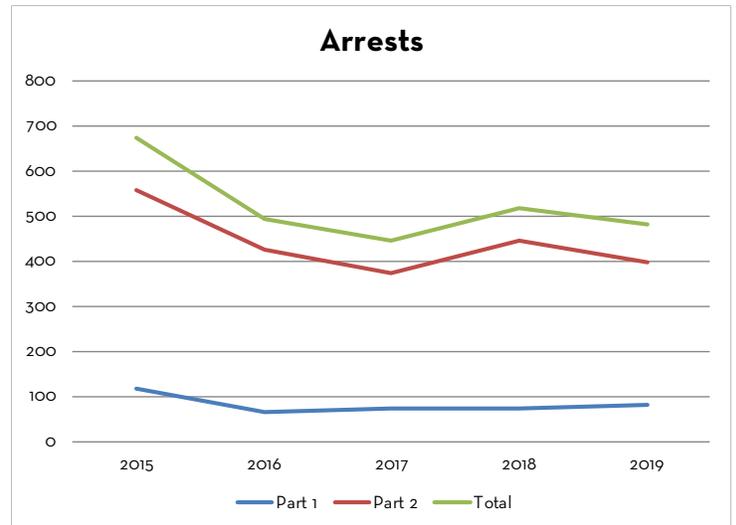
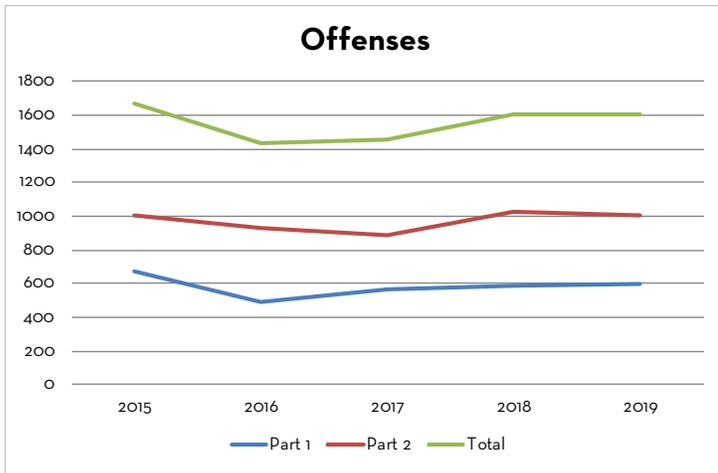
## Shop With a Cop

We raised \$7,500 from donors including the Columbia Heights Lions, MN Petroleum, Nashville Pedal Tavern, Dr. Wendy Woster, and the members of the CH Police Association. There were lots of other donors too numerous to mention, and we're grateful to all for their support. We're also appreciative to our friends at the Fridley Target, who provided us with a discount on items purchased through the program. Police Dept employees (on their own time, not on the clock) took 19 families shopping. That means over 66 kids received toys, clothes, and food this holiday season!

Some people ask us why we take the parents shopping and not the kids. It's because we like to help families keep the magic of Christmas and the holidays alive, therefore we help the parents so they can be the ones enjoying the looks on their children's faces on Christmas morning. Also, it gives us a great opportunity to get to know some of the parents in our community, so we can form a team that gives their children a safe, happy place to grow up!

# Crime Statistics

During 2019 the CHPD saw an increase in Part 1 crimes and a decrease in Part 2 crimes. Narcotic drug violations were down approximately 13 percent in 2019. We often see property crimes rise and fall along with drug activity, and this was reflected with a decrease of approximately 13 percent in motor vehicle thefts for 2019. The first two graphs on this page represent the total number of offenses and adult arrests.

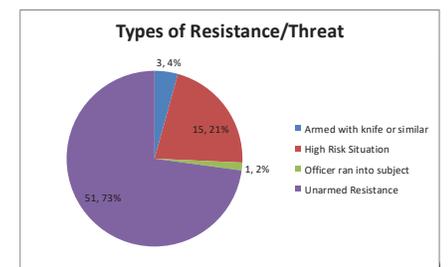
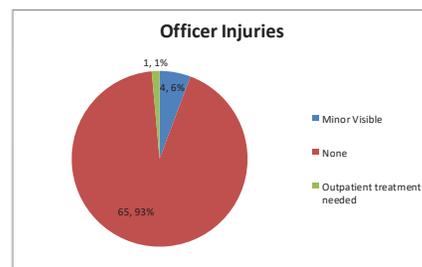
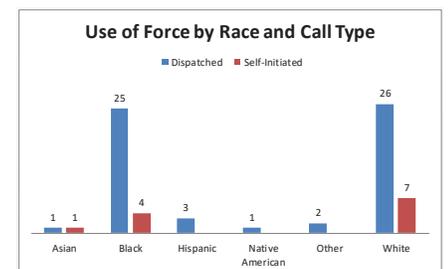
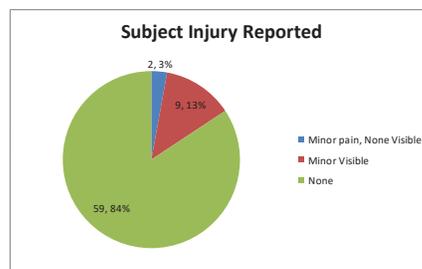
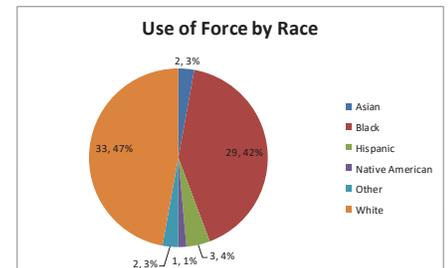
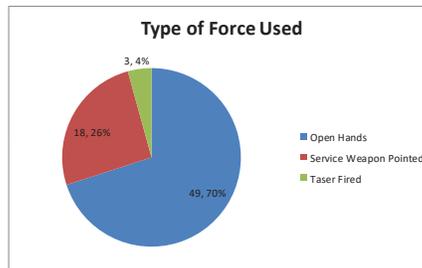


# Use-of-Force Statistics

In 2019, the CHPD responded to 22,730 calls for service (up 2,335 from 2018) and used force 70 times (up 6 from 2018).

Starting in July of 2018, the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension began to formally collect use of force data from MN Law Enforcement Agencies for inclusion in the FBI National Use-of-Force Data Collection. Agencies are asked to report incidents which include Use-of-Force resulting in death or serious bodily injury of a subject, or the discharge of a firearm at or in the direction of a subject. The Columbia Heights Police Department did not have any incidents meeting these criteria for 2019.

A more detailed report can be viewed on the police department website at [chpolice.com](http://chpolice.com)

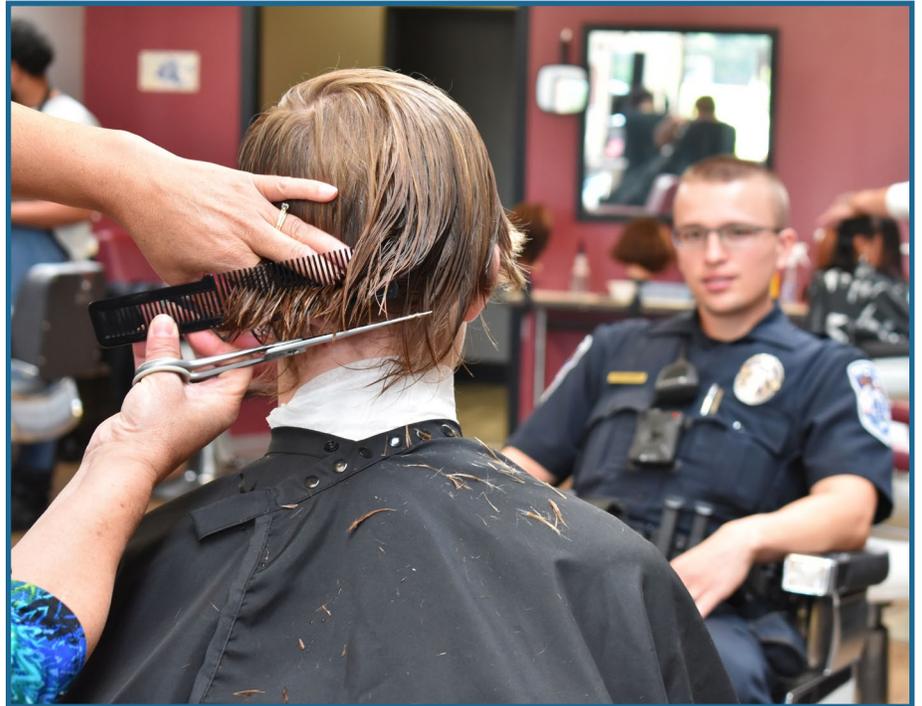




Left: Chief Lenny Austin speaks with a group of residents as part of the CHPD Citizens' Academy Training. Above: Officers around the City attended multiple National Night Out events to visit with residents.



Above: CHPD Teen Academy; Right: The second annual Cuts with a Cop. Below: CHPD Open Gym program.



Left: Cone With a Cop. Above: Coffee With a Cop. Right: Big Brothers, Big Sisters



# PUBLIC WORKS

## Introduction

The Columbia Heights Public Works Department provides many services to the residents of Columbia Heights. These services include but are not limited to the maintenance of City streets, parks, water mains, and sanitary and storm sewer systems, the planning, design, construction, and assessing functions of the Engineering Department, the administration of refuse collection, recycling, and hazardous waste programs, the implementation of special projects such as the Inflow-Infiltration Reduction Program and street lighting programs, management of urban forestry, and the emergency response to an array of Public Works needs at all times of day.

In 2019, Public Works performed its usual duties that included street patching and repair, snow plowing and ice control, street sweeping, tree trimming, park facility and turf maintenance, athletic field preparation, continuation of a systematic program for water main and sewer main maintenance, testing to ensure our drinking water meets or exceeds all state and federal requirements, repair of water main breaks, maintenance of the sanitary lift and water pump stations, refuse and recycling collection, vehicle and equipment repair and preventive maintenance, and the design and inspection of construction projects.



Also in 2019, Public Works secured grant funding from the State of Minnesota under their MnDNR Outdoor Recreation Program to provide funding for the reconstruction of the Silver Lake Boat Landing in 2020. Staff also secured a state grant of \$100,000 to assist with and support the City's Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan, saving the City what would have been contracted costs. It was a significant year in the citywide Hazardous and Diseased Tree Inspection Program to improve the health of the urban forest. A dedicated City Forester was hired in 2019.

The annual Water Main Cleaning and Lining

Program was on hiatus in 2018 and again in 2019 to allow for water main replacement. This activity is still considered program work in cases where cleaning and lining would not be effective due to a history of breaks. The Utility Department continued the annual Sanitary Sewer Line Cleaning Program with over one-third of the entire system cleaned in 2019.

Work on the City Hall Master Plan continued in 2019 with the site selected at 40th and Central Aves. Under a public/private partnership, a new City Hall will be integrated into the main floor of a 5-story luxury apartment building. Work on the schematic design began in the fall.

# Public Works Staff

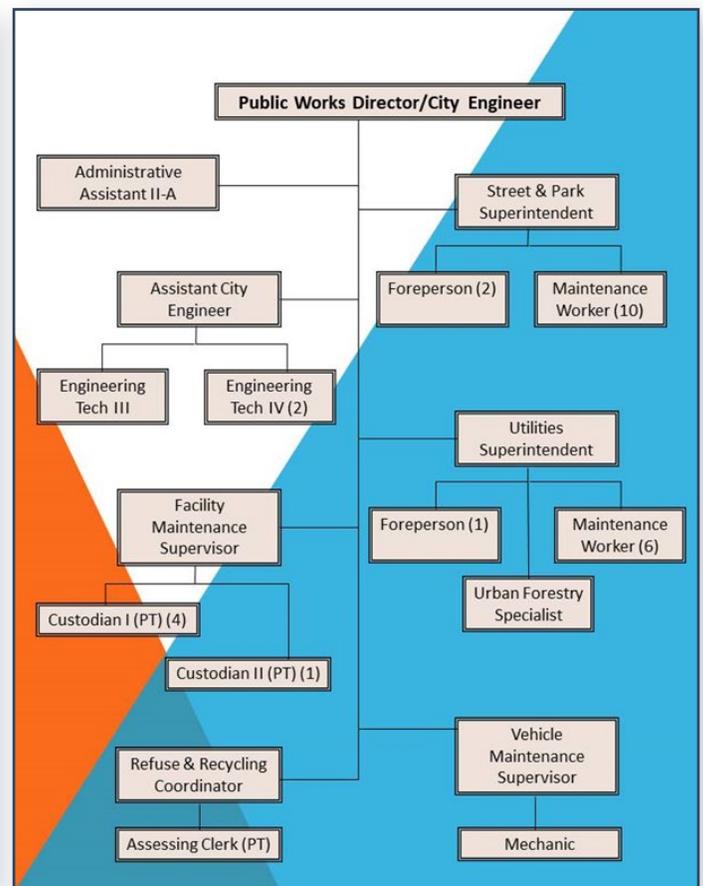
Name	Title	Start Date	End Date
Kevin Hansen	Public Works Director/ City Engineer	Dec 1, 1997	----
Kathy Young	Assistant City Engineer	Aug 11, 1986	----
Lauren Letsche	Engineering Tech	May 5, 2014	----
Rich Nordstrom	Engineering Tech	May 17, 1999	Oct 30, 2019
Clark Trytten	Engineering Tech	April 20, 2015	April 12, 2019
Derek Maine	Engineering Tech	Nov 18, 2019	----
Jesse Davies	Refuse & Recycling Dept.	Sept 13, 2004	----
Sue Schmidtbauer	Admin Assistant	March 1, 2010	----
Barb Thomas	Purchasing/Assessing Clerk	Sept 29, 2008	----
Eric Hanson	Facilities Maintenance Supervisor	July 9, 2013	----
Lauren McClanahan	Utilities Superintendent	June 9, 1986	Feb 28, 2019
James Hauth	Utilities Superintendent	April 29, 2019	----
Liam Genter	Urban Forestry Specialist	July 1, 2019	----
Mike O'Reilly	Street and Park Superintendent	Aug 25, 1979	Sept 27, 2019
Jeff Hook	Vehicle Maintenance Supervisor	April 28, 1997	----
Cody Overson	Mechanic	March 27, 2017	----
Ted Kriesel	Sign Department	May 24, 2016	----

# Street & Park Department

Name	Title	Start Date	End Date
David Cullen	Maintenance Worker Foreperson (streets) Street & Park Superintendent	May 2, 2016 July 22, 2019 Sept 30, 2019	July 19, 2019 Sept 27, 2019 ----
Ben Mathson	Maintenance Worker Foreperson (streets)	May 20, 2002 Oct 14, 2019	Oct 11, 2019 ----
Tim Lund	Foreperson (parks)	May 2, 1994	----
Matthew Edwards	Maintenance Worker	March 4, 2019	----
Jacob Fish	Maintenance Worker	Dec 2, 2019	----
Kelly Fetzer	Maintenance Worker	June 12, 1995	----
James Green	Maintenance Worker	Feb 2, 2015	----
Jeremy Hansen	Maintenance Worker	Aug 25, 2014	----
Jeff Kline	Maintenance Worker	Aug 1, 1988	April 30, 2019
Janelle Niznik	Maintenance Worker	May 20, 2019	----
John Nordlund	Maintenance Worker	March 26, 2001	----
Jonathan Perkins	Maintenance Worker	Dec 2, 2019	----
Tim Sandquist	Maintenance Worker	June 12, 2017	----
Jackie Wohlers	Maintenance Worker	Dec 3, 2002	----

# Sewer & Water Department

Name	Title	Start Date	End Date
Sherri Jensen	Foreperson	Aug 23, 1999	----
Kyle Burns	Maintenance Worker	Jan 27, 2016	----
Duane Hopkins	Maintenance Worker	May 8, 2017	----
Ben Lund	Maintenance Worker	Jan 5, 2015	----
Jeff Olson	Maintenance Worker	June 25, 2018	----
Mike Pyka	Maintenance Worker	May 3, 2016	----
David Quady	Maintenance Worker	March 30, 2015	----



# Engineering and Construction Activities

## Construction Work Projects

Project 1800: Misc. Concrete Repairs and Installs

Project 1905: Jefferson St Median Restoration

## Design and Construction Work

Project 1801: Seal Coat Prep - Zone 3

Project 1808: Silver Lake Park Pond Improvements\*

Project 1900: Misc. Concrete Repairs and Installations

Project 1904: Sanitary Sewer Lining

Project 1908: Traffic Signal on Central Ave at 41st Ave.

Project 1910: CSAH 4 University Ave to Jackson St\*  
Watermain on 49th Ave, 7th St to Washington St.

## Surveying/Design Work

Project 1802: Zones 4A Street Rehabilitation

Project 1902: Madison St. Curb and Gutter  
Construction

Project 1903: Water Main Construction

Project 1905: State Aid Miscellaneous Construction

Project 1906: Concrete Alley Construction

Project 1907: 37th Ave Bituminous Trail and Pedestrian  
Ramp Improvements; 37th Ave Mill and Overlay, 5th St to  
Central Ave\*

Project 1909: Polk St. Sanitary Sewer Construction

Project 1912: Silver Lake Boat Landing and Site  
Improvements

Project 2006: Library Parking Lot Expansion

Project 2007: 53rd Ave State Aid Street Turnabout/Trail

Project 2008: Silver Lake Lift Station

Project 2010: Pump Station 3 Upgrades

Other Projects:

- Khyber Street Backyard Drain

\* Work coordinated with other agencies or consultants

## Misc Work Performed

- Warranty inspections on completed construction projects and review of corrective work done by contractors. Prepared record drawings of public improvements.
- Review of building permits
- Street striping citywide
- Miscellaneous surveys, traffic counts and reports as required.

- Traffic Commission agenda and meetings.
- Implementation of Special Assessment module.
- GIS database expansion and metafile development.
- In-house and off-site seminars to enhance job knowledge and performance.
- Addressed erosion and drainage concerns on commercial and residential properties.
- Annual NPDES public meeting (combined with Community Picnic), annual report, annual Public Works training, and implementation of best management practices (BMP), including new SWMP software to track inspections.
- Public outreach with Rice Creek Watershed District to encourage private rain gardens.
- Director of Public Works, Kevin Hansen, and Stormwater Specialist, Lauren Letsche, were involved during the year for input and coordination on projects of the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization and Rice Creek Watershed Management Districts.

## Improvement Hearings

STREET REHABILITATION PROGRAM: Project 1902: PIR 2019-Z7-09-001 Concrete curb and gutter construction on Madison Street from 37th Ave to 300' north of 37th Ave

CONCRETE ALLEY CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM: Project 1906: PIR 2019-AL-06-001 AND PIR 2019-AL-06-002, Washington to Jefferson Streets, 41st to 42nd Avenues; Madison to Monroe Streets, 40th to 41st Aves; Madison to Monroe Streets, 42nd to 43rd Avenues

STATE AID STREET REHABILITATION: Project 1907: PIR 2019-SA-44-001, Bituminous mill and overlay with multi-use trail construction on 37th Ave from 5th St to Central Ave



# Sanitary Sewer Maintenance

## Sanitary Sewer Cleaning

The Utility Department cleans over 40% of all sanitary sewer mainlines in the City annually. In 2019, 42% of sewer mains were cleaned using a hydraulic method to remove dirt, grease and root penetrations. Columbia Heights is broken into three separate meter districts for the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES) metering. Each year cleaning efforts focus on completing one total MCES metering district and lines in the other two districts identified as needing more regular cleaning.

In 2019, all 68,194 feet of District 3 was cleaned. An additional 58,062 feet of sanitary sewer mains requiring annual cleaning was completed in Districts 1 and 2. The Utility Department cleaned 126,256 feet of sanitary sewer. Cleaning the city owned sanitary sewer lines helps minimize backups that can affect residents, infrastructure and the environment. In 2019, five sanitary sewer backups were reported and cleared. No sanitary sewer overflows were reported.

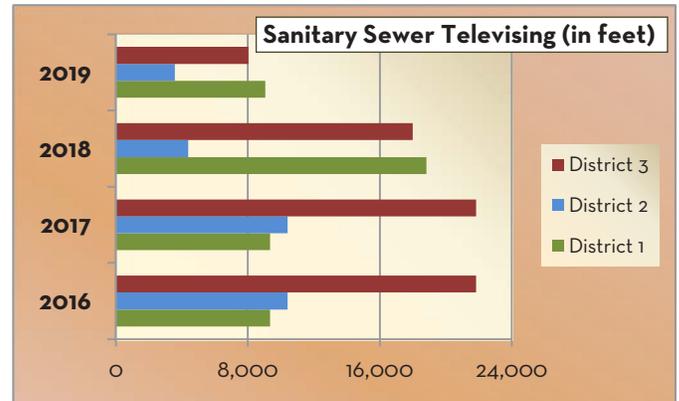
## Sanitary Sewer Televising

The Utility Department performs Closed Circuit Televising (CCTV) of sanitary sewer main lines to assess condition and maintenance needs. From the inspection results, determinations are made on cleaning priority and repair schedule. Each year, televising records are used to identify sanitary sewer to repair with cured in place pipe (CIPP). Larger repairs are often required and identified through the inspection. Inflow and Infiltration (I/I) leaks can be located using these inspections as well. In 2015, the Utility Department began the goal of televising over 40,000 feet per year. The goal is designed to ensure a CCTV inspection on every pipe in Columbia Heights once every seven years. In 2019, 20,645 feet of sewer main was televised. This is significantly less than the yearly

goal, and to make up for the lost productivity in 2019 more sewer main will need to be televised in 2020. To meet the additional televising requirement in 2020, the Utility Department will focus on inspecting sewer mains that have not yet been inspected.

## Sanitary Sewer Improvements

The sanitary sewer system requires continual maintenance to protect the public and environment from san-

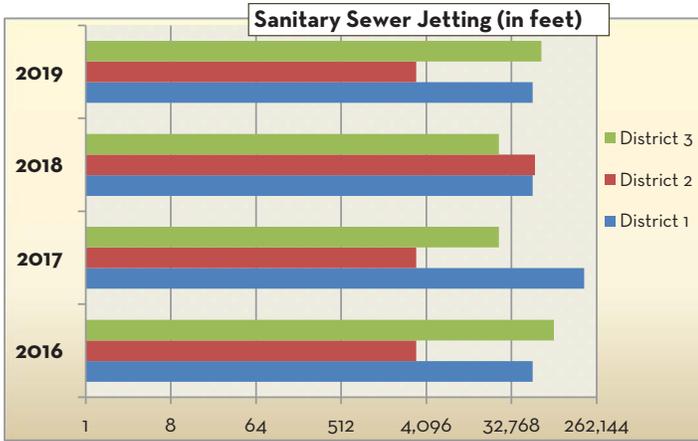


itary sewer backups and overflows. System repairs also help minimize the rain water, ground water and snow melt entering the sanitary system. When clear water unnecessarily enters Columbia Heights' sanitary system, it must be treated, which costs the City money. By rehabilitating manholes and lining sewer pipes, City staff reduce the cost of treating sanitary sewage and improve the performance and reliability of the system. Each year the Utility Department plans to line roughly 5,000 feet of sanitary sewer pipe. These repairs improve broken and deteriorating pipe and eliminate groundwater infiltration from the system.

Sanitary Sewer System Repairs & Improvements	2016	2017	2018	2019
City Main Backups	9	4	5	5
Private Service Backups	12	4	13	9
Manholes	49	47	17	38
Manhole Covers	12	11	0	20
Sewer Lining (FT)	6,364	5,784	0	8,262

In 2019, 8,262 feet of sanitary sewer was rehabilitated using CIPP. Due to not lining any sewer in 2018 and needing to fulfill grant requirements from the MCES, two years' worth of lining was completed. The Utility Department also repaired 38 manholes and replaced 20 manhole covers as part of larger street rehabilitation projects. Sanitary sewer cleaning operations continued to keep

# Sanitary Sewer Maintenance Cont.



mainline backups low, with only five sewer backups occurring in 2019.

## Sanitary Sewer Lift Station Maintenance

As a result of changes in elevation throughout Columbia Heights, sanitary lift stations are required to maintain proper flow dynamics within the sanitary sewer system. These stations lift sewage from a lower elevation area of town upward and allow it to then rejoin the gravity sewer system. These stations require annual maintenance and weekly inspections to ensure they are

performing as they are intended, and that the pumps, motors and other equipment are in good working order. Each year the stations are cleaned twice, once in the spring and once in the fall. These station cleanings remove deposited materials from the walls and base of the wet well, or holding tank, that collects sewage before it is pumped uphill.

By cleaning the wet wells twice annually staff ensures no material breaks off causing damage or clogging to occur on the pumps. The pumps in the sanitary sewer lift stations are some of the hardest working pieces of equipment in the utility and run regularly. The pumps and motors are required to start many times per day and expected to perform without fail in the conveyance of sanitary sewage. The weekly inspection of the stations ensures pump noise and any other minor changes in the operation of the station are observed and can be remedied before they become larger problems.

Sewer Lift Station Pump Statistics

Station Name	2019		2018		2017		2016	
	Starts	Hours	Starts	Hours	Starts	Hours	Starts	Hours
Argonne	3,435	779	3,485	743	3,493	702	3,644	685
Pump 1	1,725	412	1,744	391	1,749	363	1,827	348
Pump 2	1,710	367	1,741	352	1,744	339	1,817	337
Chatham	17,155	865	13,673	692	13,859	742	29,082	1,458
Pump 1	8,494	407	6,840	339	6,936	370	14,264	903
Pump 2	8,661	458	6,833	353	6,923	371	14,818	555
Sullivan Lake	8,701	811	9,143	892	9,750	947	10,150	973
Pump 1	4,357	394	4,567	433	4,879	468	5,077	485
Pump 2	4,344	417	4,576	458	4,871	479	5,073	488
Silver Lake	44,577	788	36,463	617	44,192	1,896	43,595	749
Pump 1	22,298	394	18,235	309	23,813	1,337	21,357	382
Pump 2	22,279	394	18,228	308	20,379	559	22,238	368
Jackson Pond (Storm)	535	1,808	136	869	591	1,375	79	1,481
Pump 1	204	1,743	40	818	127	1,329	68	1,478
Pump 2	331	65	96	51	464	46	11	4

# Water System Operations

## Uni-Direction Hydrant Flushing

The potable water system in Columbia Heights consists of more than 72 miles of water main, 565 hydrants, 1,715 valves (529 hydrant valves and 1,186 system valves), two pumping stations and one elevated water tower. To maintain aesthetically pleasing water throughout the entire water system, uni-directional hydrant flushing is performed every spring. By isolating water mains and forcing water out of the system at higher than normal velocities, tuberculation and deposits are removed from the pipe walls and water quality complaints are reduced.

## Valve Operation Program

The Utility Department began a new preventative maintenance valve operation program in 2019, turning 272 system valves. The percentage turned was 23% of all system valves which meets the goal of turning all valves every 5-7 years. Each year the number of valves turned will be determined by available time and breakage rates. By turning valves on a regular basis, the Utility Department ensures the water can be shut off when an emergency repair is

Water System Repairs				
	2019	2018	2017	2016
Main Breaks	14	16	15	17
Hydrants	7	7	11	8
Valves	2	4	3	0
GV Risers	10	5	5	3
Water Main Lining (FT)	0	0	0	4,874
Valves Operated (Planned Work)	273	0	0	0

required and the impact of a shutdown can be minimized to as few homes as absolutely necessary.

## Water System Repairs

The Utility Department responded to and repaired 14 water main breaks, and repaired 7 hydrants, 2 valves and 10 valve stacks. Two of the water main breaks were contracted out for repair to Valley Rich Company due to their location on Central Ave. By using a contractor with larger equipment, traffic disruptions were minimized and repairs were made as quickly as possible. A water main break on 49th Ave at Fillmore St occurred in February and damaged a large portion of the roadway, curb line, sidewalk and driveways. The repair took the entire summer and was a coordinated effort between all Public Works staff.

## Water Main Cleaning and Lining Program

Water main lining was not performed in 2019 because the bid prices were not competitive. The City of Minneapolis is not bidding a project for 2020, so the program for water main clean and line will resume in 2021.

# Storm Sewer Operations

## Storm Sewer Overview

The storm sewer system requires continual maintenance and inspection to keep operating as it is intended. After every significant rain event the Street Department inspected and cleaned the pond inlet and outlet structures and street catch basins, and monitored areas that have historically flooded during large rainfall events.

## Jackson Pond

In partnership with the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWMO), the Columbia Heights Public Works Division manages and maintains an iron enhanced sand filter at Jackson Pond. The surface of the sand filter must be cleaned annually and the pump schedule and operations must be monitored to ensure the filtering goals for the pond are being met.

In 2019, the Utility Department optimized the filtration system by running the pumps that direct water to the filter bed every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 7 am and 1:30 pm. By running the pumps on alternating days the filter bed was allowed to dry out, which is a best management practice. The pump moving water to the filter bed ran for 65 hours and started 331 times. The MWMO installed monitoring stations on the filter discharge locations to measure the amount of water passing through the filter bed, and identify if it is operating as intended.

Jackson Pond also requires continual monitoring to ensure the water level in the pond does not reach flood levels. The pump that discharges water to the storm sewer system and manages the pond level ran 204 times for 1,743 hours. The Utility Department pulled the pump in order to dislodge a pop bottle from the volute and restore proper operations. All Public Works maintenance

# Storm Sewer Operations Cont.

staff worked together to break up the iron fillings that have a tendency to clump together as they age and clear the filter bed of weeds and plant growth. Through a combination of seasonal and full time staff the filter bed was fully maintained on two days.

## Storm Sewer Structure Repairs

The Utility Department repaired 38 storm sewer man-holes and catch basins as part of the street projects for 2019-2020. By performing the work in-house, Public Works was able to keep project costs down and ensure the quality of work completed. Three Utility staff worked most of the summer completing 2-3 repairs per day as weather and schedule permitted.

## Training and Education

In 2019, the Utilities Department received training in AWAIR, Right to Know, Slips, Trips and Falls, Fall Protection, Fire Extinguisher Operation, Vehicle Hoist Operation and Safety, Backhoe Safety and Procedures, Confined Space, Gas Monitor Operation and Calibration, Water Operator Certification, Scissor Lift Operation, Work Zone Safety and Wastewater Operator Certification.

The training and knowledge of Public Works staff is vital to the safety and best management of the City's infrastructure. By providing opportunities and training for all staff to learn good habits, proper techniques and equipment operation requirements, daily tasks run more smoothly, equipment is maintained, and employees are kept safe.

# Utilities Customer Response

The Utility Department is responsible for responding to many types of customer requests and concerns throughout the year. Citizen requests include water service issues, sanitary sewer concerns, and general inspection of contractor repaired or installed pipe and valves. In 2019, the Utility Department responded to nearly 300 customer requests and performed 2,107 utility locates for Gopher State One Call. Utilities staff also collected 648 water samples to ensure compliance with all Minnesota Department of Health requirements, and resident safety.

<b>Customer Service - Water</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
Turn On	41	52	124	126
Turn Off	37	46	102	92
Frozen Service	14	0	4	3
Broken Pipe - Interior	11	3	1	7
Broken Pipe - Exterior	8	5	0	1
Inspect New/Repaired Curb Stop	8	4	10	46
Inspect New/Repaired Service	5	12	9	19
Water Meter Install	12	32	29	38
Water Meter/MXU Repair	62	56	59	77
High Water Bill	45	37	29	16
Water Quality Complaints	1	2	3	2
Hydrant Flow Test	4	3	2	1
Residential Flow Test	3	1	4	2
<b>Customer Service - Sanitary</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
Private Sewer Backup	7	13	4	9
Sewer Repair Inspection	21	17	13	17
Inspect Sewer Liner Install	4	3	5	4
Inspect New Install	3	5	8	16
Sewer Dye Test	0	1	0	0
<b>Locating Services</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
Gopher State One Call	2,107	1,899	2,230	2,218

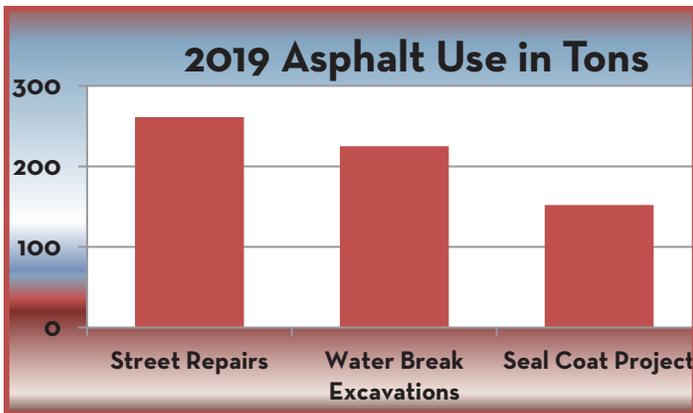
# Street Maintenance

## Asphalt Repair/Paving Operations

In the fall of 2019, Public Works purchased 12 tons of cold mix from the City of Saint Paul Public Works asphalt plant for winter road repair. Two mid-season winter water breaks, one located at approximately 4040 Central Avenue and the other on University Ave just north of 44th Ave, depleted the Street Department's supply of cold winter mix. Mid-winter, an additional 11.2 tons of UPM cold mix was purchased to have on hand.

The start of the 2019 spring pothole repair season was unseasonably cold, which presented a bituminous material sourcing challenge for Public Works agencies state-wide, as commercial asphalt plants withheld bituminous production until the low nighttime temperatures rose to industry-accepted standards.

In April, the City of Saint Paul Public Works was the only asphalt plant open to purchase bituminous mix for the initial pothole repair season. For almost a month, the Street Department was forced to send the pothole patch repair truck to the City of Saint Paul asphalt plant where crews waited in long lines with all the other municipalities to purchase bituminous mix. Throughout April, a combined total of 27 tons of asphalt was purchased through the City of Saint Paul Asphalt Plant for city-wide pothole repair.



Public Works purchased a total of 1,227 tons of bituminous material for all road repairs that were completed by the Street Department in 2019. Of the 1,227 tons purchased, 225 tons went towards water break repairs, 261 tons to general street repairs, and 152 tons was used for the seal coat project. A considerable amount of time and energy was spent in March and April repairing reoccurring potholes along 49th Avenue prior to street reconstruction in the summer of 2019.

## Winter Operations

In late October, the Street Department strategically placed orange snow markers around curb lines, bump-outs and transition areas to reduce the amount of snowplow related damage. In early November, nine salt/sand barrels were placed throughout the City for resident use. The first snow removal event occurred on November 6, 2019.

Public Works committed to ordering 236 tons of treated rock salt in July through the state contract awarded vendor. A total of 229 tons of salt was used in 2019 for 35 winter events. Of the 35 events, 20 consisted of snow and ice control and 15 consisted of ice control only. To conserve dwindling salt supplies mid-season, Public Works used 62 tons of a salt- sand mixture and 206 tons of straight sand in its winter maintenance program.

After snow events, the Street Department monitored pedestrian crossings and bus stops located on Central Ave from 37th Ave to 53rd Ave and on University Ave from 37th Ave to 45th Ave for pedestrian accessibility. In-between snowfalls the Street Department hauled snow from city-owned parking lots five times throughout the winter. On an as-needed basis, staff worked a volunteered overnight shift change to remove snow berms along the Central Avenue business district from 37th Avenue to 43rd Avenue.

The 2019 winter season finally came to an end on April 16 with a total of 77.1 inches of snow. When spring arrived and the snow had melted, each route driver was assigned to patrol their areas and address any right of way turf damage with black dirt and seed.

## Street Sweeping

The Street Sweeping program requires a minimum of two fulltime Street employees that operate one regenerative air and one mechanical sweeper, plus any additional supporting staff. In adhering to MS4 clean water requirements, two full rounds of street sweeping were completed in spring and again in fall.

Spring street sweeping began in late March. The business district, bump-out areas, intersection traffic control islands, center mediums, sidewalks, crosswalks, and bus stations along Central Ave between 37th Ave and 53rd Ave were the first areas to be swept. Spring street sweeping required 40 working days to complete from March 25, 2019, through July 3, 2020. The Street Department also swept all City-owned parking lots, flood-prone elevation areas, the Jamboree parade route, and the MSC shop yard on an as-needed basis.

The first sweep collected a total of 505 cubic yards of waste, and the second sweep collected 312 cubic yards

# Street Maintenance Cont.

of waste. A Trommel was rented in July to process the collected street sweeping material for disposal and reuse. A total of two 50 cubic yard dumpsters were used to dispose of trash screened from the sweeping campaign.

The Street Department completed two full rounds of street sweeping in fall, which took 21 working days to complete collecting over 1,294 cubic yards of leaves. Leaves were hauled away in 19 dumpsters to The Mulch Store in Shakopee for recycling.



## Storm Sewer Maintenance

After significant rain events and annually each month, the Street Department inspected and cleaned; if necessary, pond inlets and outlets, street catch basins, and monitored other flood-prone problem areas. Numerous floating bogs that plug the Sullivan Lake Outlet were removed throughout the year. The Zurich Pond drain line was jetted and cleaned along with extensive removal of pond debris from around the outfall in September 2019.

## Debris Disposal

In 2019, Public Works purchased and delivered 30.45 tons of Class 5 road base for street repair projects. The Street Department hauled away from the MSC storage lot 460

cubic yards of excavated water break material to locally sourced disposal sites.

## Street Dept Storm Sewer Maintenance

After significant rain events and annually each month, the Street Department inspected and cleaned; if necessary, pond inlets and outlets, street catch basins, and monitored other flood-prone problem areas. Numerous floating bogs that plug the Sullivan Lake Outlet were removed throughout the year. The Zurich Pond drain line was jetted and cleaned along with extensive removal of pond debris from around the outfall in September 2019.

## Misc Activities

- In July, a nonselective herbicide was applied along the city right-of-way for weed control on Central Avenue from 37th Ave to 53rd Ave and University Ave from 37th Ave to 45th Ave. Miscellaneous locations throughout the city were also sprayed on an as-needed basis.
- To reduce landfill waste and generate extra revenue for the city, Public Works stockpiled recyclable metal from construction projects, equipment maintenance, and any illegal dumping violations that could be taken to the Recycling Center in Minneapolis.
- The Street Department responded to and cleaned up numerous illegal dumping violations that were reported by the Police Department.
- Staff monitored the MSC yard and cleaned it as needed of dirt, sand, and other debris preventing entry into the local storm sewers.
- The Street Department responded 24/7 to all storm tree reported damage that blocked public roadways or sidewalks.

# Sign Department

The Sign Department completed regular curb and crosswalk painting, sign installation and repair, street/traffic re-lamping, traffic counter maintenance and installation, flag raising/lowering, and tree pruning for clearance around street signs and lights. The Sign Department consists of one employee.



# Park Department

## Winter Activities

The Park Department maintained the hockey and skating rinks at McKenna and Ostrander Parks. For budgetary and staffing reasons, the skating and hockey rinks remained unstaffed and automated timers controlled the light operation. The rinks opened for the season on December 14, 2018 and remained open and maintained until March 8, 2019.

A cold spell in mid-November 2019 followed immediately by frequent rounds of snow created challenges for the Park Department to regularly maintain hockey and skating rinks. By mid-December the rinks were able to be reopened and maintained at an acceptable level. In late December an unseasonable rain event forced the temporary closure of the ice rinks until conditions allowed their reopening in January 2020.

The Park Department dedicates a significant amount of time to removing snow and ice from city maintained building entranceways and sidewalks, either by manual snow shoveling or snow blowing and sweeping.

In January, snow events required sidewalk maintenance on five days. February was very snowy with 14 days of snow events and March had five snow events. Surprisingly, April was very cold with two days of snow events. November had only one snow event requiring sidewalk maintenance and December had seven snow events requiring sidewalk maintenance.

The Park Department also clears snow from the Central Avenue walk bridge, citywide sidewalks, and park pathways. Staff has access to a variety of snow removal equipment consisting of a Toro Grounds Master, Ventrac AWD tractor, and a Trackless MT all up-fitted with either a plow, broom, or snow blower. Staff utilized 4x4 pickup trucks equipped with a straight blade or V-Plow to complete snow removal assignments in parking lots, dead end roads, cul-de-sacs, and hard to maneuver alleys.

The Park Department uses MWMO Smart Training Application Guidelines and BMP's, to apply the appropriate amount of de-icing material pre and post ice events. A non-chloride prewetting liquid is applied to the Central Avenue walk bridge prior to snow events

to extend the life expectancy of the bridge due to the harsh effects of winter operations.

## City Events



On Sat, Jan 26, Silver Lake Beach Park was home to the 6th Annual Columbia Heights Fire and Ice Plunge. Fire rings, fencing, and trash stations were set up for the event.

The Park Department also participated with setup of crowd control fencing, right of way permits, and coordinating efforts with the City of Saint Anthony in preparation of the Holiday Train event in December.



In preparation for the City of Columbia Heights 77th Annual Jamboree the Park Department coordinated efforts to set up fencing and refuse stations around Huset Park. Approximately 3,500 feet of temporary

fencing was installed for the Jamboree fireworks and Lions Beer Garden. Additional fencing was installed to completely enclose the carnival area to control access. The additional fencing was a success. Numerous extra

tables and trash cans were temporarily added to Huset Park for the event.

In November and December, park staff worked on boulevard tree trimming operations. This included removing hazardous hanging branches as well as trimming for clearance. Park staff also worked on Christmas decorations.



# Park Maintenance

## Turf Maintenance

The Park Department is responsible for maintaining turf at 50 city-owned buildings, parks, and lots throughout the city. Bulk mowing operations began on May 6 while remaining mowing and trimming operations did not begin until mid-May due to a cold snowy April.

TruGreen ChemLawn made spring weed and feed applications to Huset, Edgemoor, McKenna, LaBelle, Prestemon, Sullivan, Ramsdell, Silver Lake Beach, and Keyes parks. They also applied additional applications of fertilizer to the Ramsdell ball field throughout the season. Gateway and Wargo parks received spring and fall applications.

TruGreen Chem Lawn also treated City Hall, Library, SACA, MSC, 4400 Reservoir Boulevard, 1307 42nd Ave, water tower, Jackson Pond, Public Safety, and Top Valu 1 and 2. They applied growth retardant to the city-owned hillside along 37th Avenue as well as tree fertilization and shrub bed weed control in the beds along Central Ave and University Ave.

A majority of the turf areas were aerated and thin spots over seeded this year. Numerous holes and dips as well as areas with poor soils and thin turf in the parks were top dressed with a mixture of screened compost sand and screened dirt and over seeded.

Right of way mowing along University Ave from 37th Ave to 53rd Ave was done 11 times throughout the summer season and trimming was done around signs. Mowing was also done along the University Avenue service road.

Irrigation systems are operated and maintained at 37th Avenue and Huset Parkway, Lions Park, Wargo Park, Gateway Park and Ramsdell Park.

## Shrub Bed Maintenance

The Park Department is responsible for maintaining shrub beds at 22 locations throughout the city. General bed maintenance consists of trimming, mulching, weeding, watering, plant replacement and applying weed control. TruGreen ChemLawn applied herbicide to the shrub beds on Central Avenue, at Public Safety, the library, and the liquor stores, and also fertilized the trees at Public Safety, the library, and the liquor stores.

## Ball Fields

Spring maintenance on the ball fields began April 5 at Ramsdell, Huset, Prestemon and McKenna parks. The first game was played on April 16. One to eight fields were prepared daily for games, which included dragging, lining, hand raking and installing bases at the proper distances. This included games for Recreation programs, the Columbia Heights School District, and Immaculate Conception.

Ball field improvements in 2019 include adding infield ag lime, replacing base standards and infield lip removal. Top dressing and over seeding of the outfield areas was completed. Repairs were made to the fencing, backstops, and ball field lighting.

Soccer and football fields were laid out and maintained throughout the summer and fall. Starting in August, Huset Park West was striped with a large soccer field and Huset Park East was striped with two medium sized soccer fields. Huset Park Field #3 was striped with two small soccer fields. These fields were maintained through the end of October with the lines being repainted approximately every 12 to 15 days.

## Wading Pools and Splash Pad

The splash pad in Huset Park was opened for the season on May 30 and closed on September 3. Prior to opening, park staff installed shade shelters, picnic tables and benches, and prepped the splash pad itself. The splash pad is very popular and was in constant use during its open hours.

The wading pools were cleaned, painted and prepped in May. McKenna and Ramsdell pools were filled and recirculation systems started on May 30. The pools passed inspection of the Anoka County Health Department on June 6 and were opened for the season. The pools were shut down for the season on Sept 3.

## Playground

Broken parts were replaced on playgrounds as needed. Additional engineered wood fiber was added to Huset, McKenna, Sullivan Lake, LaBelle, and the Silver Lake Beach playgrounds. Several playground diggers were replaced. Weeds were removed and debris cleaned out of the playground surfacing. Seasonal workers were dedicated to keeping the parks and playgrounds trash free.

## Aerator Fountains

Aerator fountains were installed and operated on ponds at Huset and LaBelle Parks on May 7. The fountains were removed, cleaned, winterized, and stored for winter on Oct 10.



# Park Improvements and Misc

## LaBelle Park - Circle Terrace

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In 2019, improvements continued to the Circle Terrace area landscape that included tree planting, improvements to the landscape beds, grass seeding and turf improvements.

## Trees

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Bare root trees were planted near the end of April at several parks and multiple boulevard locations. A variety of trees were planted including 10 Heritage Birch, 10 Shademaster Honey Locust, 10 Burr Oak, 10 Kentucky Coffee Tree, 10 White Oak, 10 River Birch, 10 Paper Birch, 10 Majestic Skies Oak, 10 Northern Red Oak, 10 Cathedral Elm, and 10 Prairifire Crab.

In addition to the bare root trees, container trees including two Black Hills Spruce were planted at LaBelle Park -Circle Terrace.

In June, 108 boulevard green ash trees were re-treated to resist the Emerald Ash Borer. These trees were previously treated in 2016.

## Miscellaneous Activities

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- Park Department staff time is also spent taking care of trash and litter clean up, graffiti removal, minor repairs to playgrounds and other park amenities, and sign maintenance. Over the summer, park entrance signs were cleaned and resealed.

- In early October, staff submitted a DNR permit for the Silver Lake Aeration System, which went into operation on February 5, 2019 when oxygen levels in Silver Lake reached critical thresholds.
- Park staff hung and maintained Christmas decorations along Mill Street, Gateway Park, Wargo Park, and along Central Avenue.
- In November and December between snowstorms the Park Department participated in boulevard tree trimming operations with the goal being to remove hazardous hanging branches as well as trimming for pedestrian and vehicle clearance.
- The Park Department also assisted departments outside of Public Works including the Library, Recreation, City Hall, and the liquor stores with special projects and tasks such as hanging pictures, televisions, and bulletin boards, moving furniture, and remodeling projects.

## Training

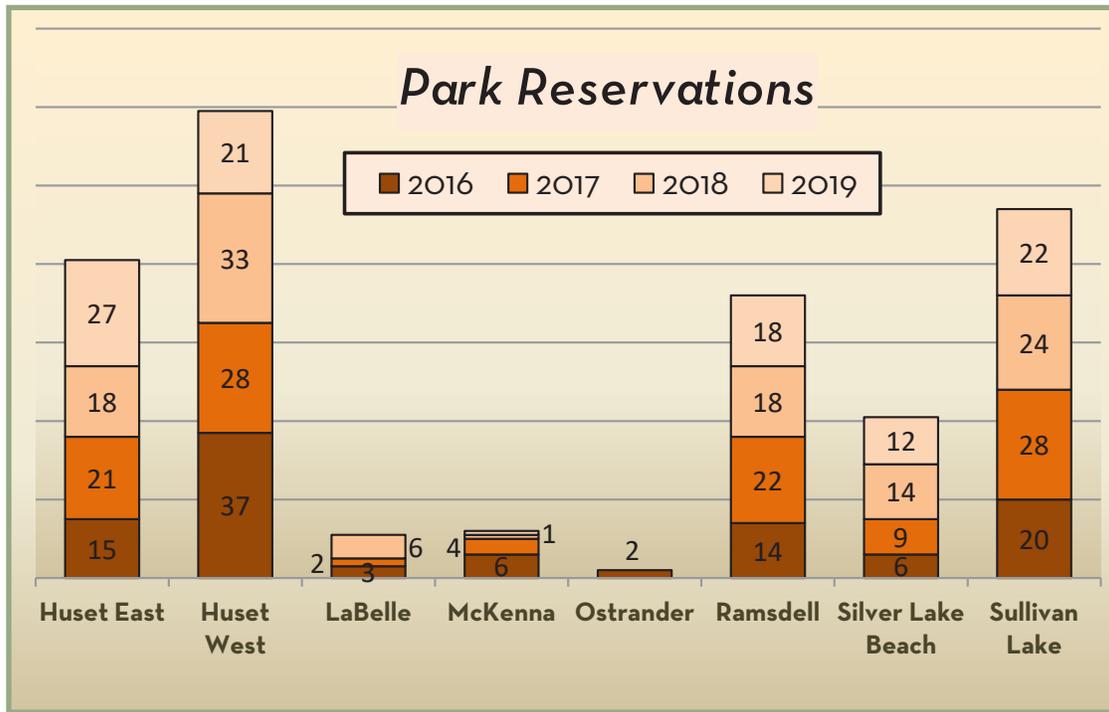
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In addition to the required training such as Confined Space and Right to Know training, park staff completed additional training in 2019. Staff attended the Green Expo in January where John Nordlund recertified for his pesticide license. In March, John Nordlund and Tim Lund recertified their Tree Inspector licenses at the Shade Tree Short Course. Tim Lund attended the League of Minnesota Cities Loss Control Workshop. Jim Green attended Pool Operators Training in April and obtained his pool operator license.



# Park Reservations

Numerous reservations for picnics and other uses of park facilities were received throughout the summer months. Picnic areas and bathrooms are thoroughly cleaned in preparation for these events and cleanup takes place following events.

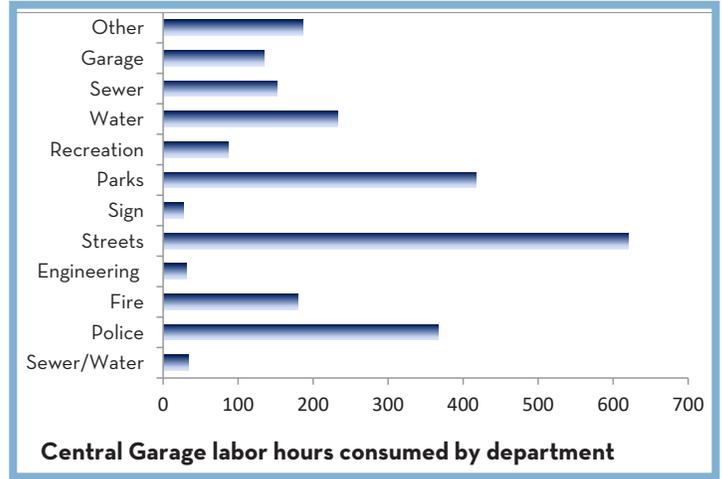
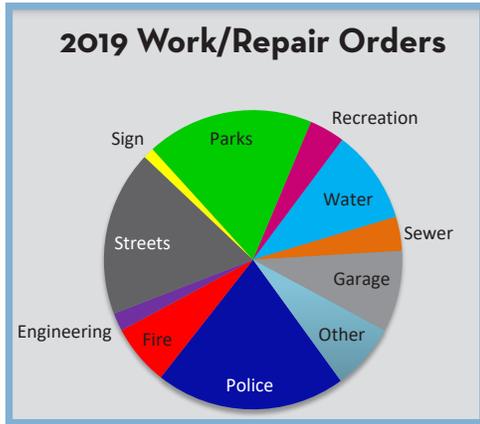


# Central Garage

## Work Orders

The Central Garage processed 1,869 repair and work orders totaling 2,471 chargeable hours at \$69.50 per hour, plus a \$4.50 surcharge per work order. Repair orders consist of requests by the operators for repairs or maintenance on the vehicles. Work orders consist of preventive maintenance procedures generated by the CFA Fleet Maintenance Program.

The Police Department, Park Department, Street Department, Water Department, and Fire Department generated the most work orders in 2019.



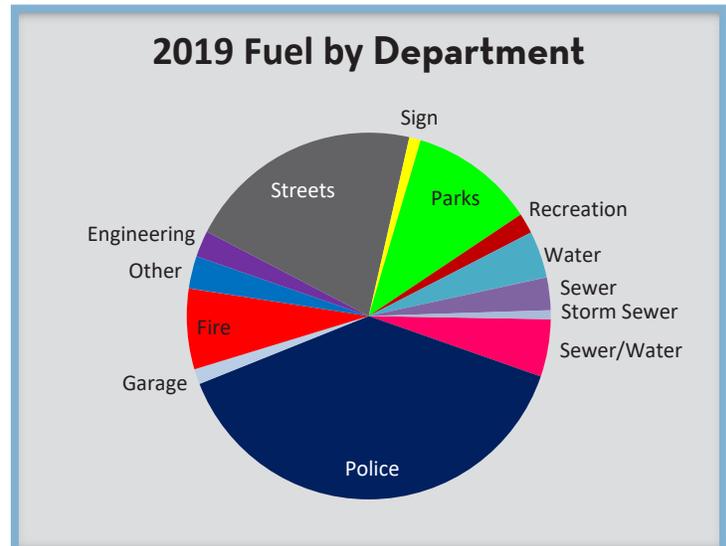
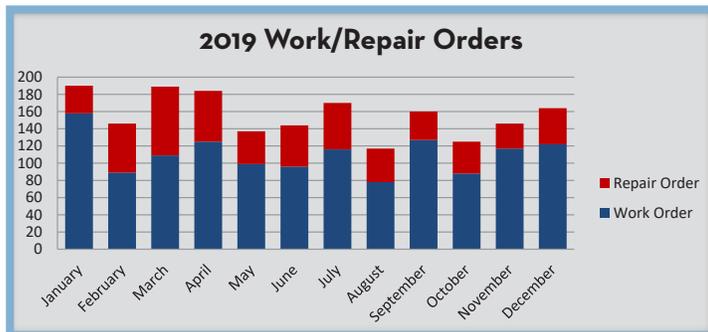
## Major Repairs

Major repairs in 2019 which resulted in equipment down time or altered daily work programs were:

- #O101 HP Hose Reel \$ 8,156.00
- #OO83 Pre-Wet System \$ 4,843.00
- #OOO3 Drag Shoes/Mounts \$ 3,819.00
- #O430 Transmission \$ 3,625.00
- #OOO9 Bucket Cylinder/Pins \$ 3,518.00
- #O128 Front/Rear Tires \$ 3,127.00
- #O459 Rear Springs \$ 2,162.00

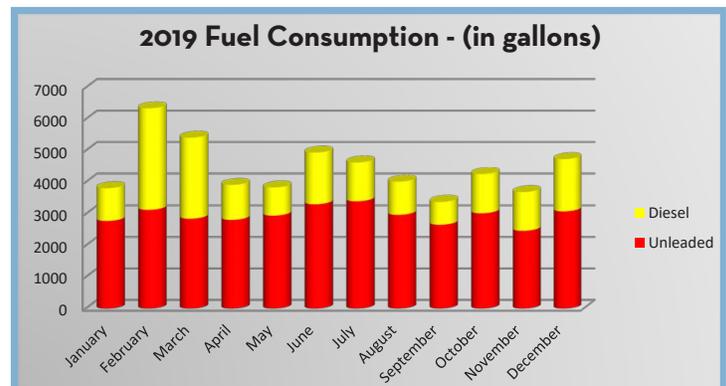
## Fuel Usage

The City purchased 32,938 gallons of unleaded gasoline and 16,018 gallons of diesel fuel. Total cost of fuel purchased in 2019 was \$105,841.28. The City used 35,504 gallons of unleaded gasoline and 17,475 gallons of diesel fuel. Total fuel used in 2019 was 52,979 gallons. The Police Department, Street Department, Park Department, and Fire Department used the highest amounts of fuel in 2019.



## New Capital Equipment

- #OO50 - 2019 Brush Chipper - Park Department
- #OO85 - 2020 Western Star Dump Truck/Plow - Street Department



# Urban Forestry Operations

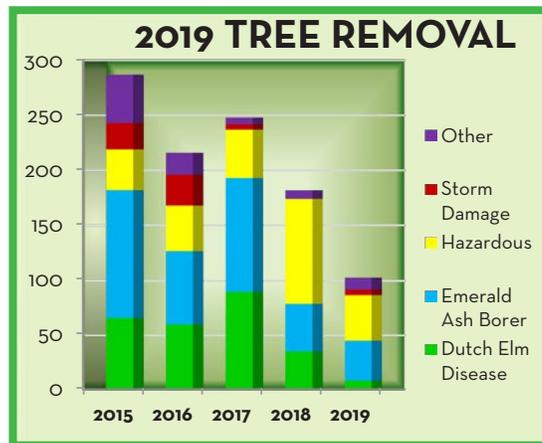
## Urban Forestry Specialist Position

In 2019, Liam Genter was hired as the Urban Forestry Specialist. Liam's role is to manage and maintain the public forest in Columbia Heights. One of the first tasks he undertook was to identify Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) and report it to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Through this identification the City was able to apply for a \$100,000 grant through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for managing EAB in Columbia Heights. If approved, the grant will be used to remove diseased trees, increase plantings to maintain the urban forest at current levels, and continue to improve the diversity and health of the publicly owned forest.

## Inspection and Removal Activities

Multiple citywide inspections are performed annually to identify hazardous and diseased trees. These inspections were completed in April, July and August. Following the inspections, 103 total trees were identified for removal and sent to the City contractor. This included 42 hazardous trees, 5 storm damaged trees, 45 diseased trees and 11 trees removed for construction related activities.

Tree removals were reduced in 2019 as preparations were made for the 2020 Managing EAB Grant program. Removing fewer trees per year also allows for more plantings to revitalize the urban forest, and reverse the reduction in tree cover that was occurring as a result of previous years' removals. While the number of trees removed in 2020 will increase, the number of trees planted will likewise increase. Maintaining, or even increasing, the number of trees planted per removal will be a continued effort for the Urban Forestry Department.



## Tree Planting

The Urban Forestry Department continued to plant bare root trees to offset diseased and hazardous tree removals. In coordination with the Park Department, 110 trees were planted in various boulevard and park locations. The intention is to plant more trees than are removed in publicly owned spaces. As trees are removed, a minimum of two years will be allowed for the ground to eliminate roots left behind after the removal, and prepare the soils for a new tree planting. With the increased number of removals due to EAB the Urban Forestry Department will increase the number of bare root trees planted to ensure at least a 1:1 removal to planting ratio.

## Gravel Bed Construction

To assist in the long term health and survival of new bare root trees the Urban Forestry Department began construction of a gravel bed nursery. The gravel bed is built behind the Recycling Center on Madison St. and will



allow the watering of new bare root trees to be managed and maintained for the first year of a new tree's life. Gravel beds similar to the one built in the Public Works yard have been shown to significantly increase the health and survival rate of new trees.

The gravel bed was made possible by a generous donation from the Columbia Heights Lions Club. With their \$1,500 donation most of the construction materials were purchased. The Public Works Department worked together to level an unused area, bring in the retaining walls and lay out the gravel. The first trees will be planted in the gravel bed in May 2020 and watered all summer. They will then be removed in early-mid fall and planted in boulevard and park locations throughout the city. These plantings will offset removals associated with EAB.

## Tree Trimming and Pruning

Public Works staff worked with a contractor to prune trees in nearly one-third of City right of way (ROW). The pruning was to clear the area around traffic signals, signs and street lights. The pruning also removed diseased and dead wood from many publicly owned trees; as a result the trees are healthier and more able to withstand environmental and weather related pressures. In three weeks a total of 123,048 feet of ROW was cleared. That is a total of 23.3 miles. The pruning occurred mostly between University and Central Avenues, north of 40th Ave.

# Refuse and Recycling

## Residential Services

The Refuse and Recycling Department manages solid waste disposal for approximately 6,400 residential properties in Columbia Heights. Services include curbside refuse, recycling, yard waste/organic composting, and special collections, as well as a drop-off Recycling Center. Of these properties, 151 are multi-dwelling with four or more units totaling over 2,200 apartments or condominiums. Total expenditures for all refuse operations were \$2 million.

In 2019 over 1,000 service issues were escalated to the Refuse Department. An ice situation on December 29th caused services for over 1,200 properties to be delayed for a week increasing complaints during that time period. An alert notification was posted to the City's webpage and an email was sent to approximately 150 residents affected by the delayed services. The hauler picked up all extra bags resulting from the delay and the City's Finance Department refunded (on the utility bill) approximately \$4.00 to those who were missed for a week.

Twelve liquidated damage charges for poor performance were assessed to the hauler totaling nearly \$3,000 in deductions on their service bills. The most common complaints expressed by residents were missed services and delayed cart exchanges. Over 600 change orders were processed for properties that adjusted their services during the year. An audit was conducted for over 3,000 properties to ensure service matched contractor invoices and utility billing charges, and to verify correct lid colors, labels, cart condition, and inventory of the City owned carts.

Columbia Heights is recognized as a leader for managing solid waste and last year the City of Robbinsdale requested a copy of our 2017 refuse hauling Request for Proposal to use as a model. The City of Anoka also reviewed our full suite of refuse services. The City of Saint Anthony Village Environment & Parks Commission requested staff to conduct a briefing about our curbside composting program. They currently have an organics drop-off site but want to transition to curbside collection.

Staff has professional memberships in the RAM (Recycling Association of MN), MNCC (MN Composting Council), ReuseMN, and ARM (Association of Recycling Managers). Tim Lund, Park Foreman, attended the Anoka County Park Supervisors Recycling Meeting.

Several vendors were used to collect and recycle material including: Waste Management (WM) and their Materials Recycling Facility, J.R.'s Appliance, Greenlights Recycling, Loe's Oil, Second Chance Recycling, Specialized Environmental Technologies, and the SMSCORF (Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community's Organics Recycling Facility).

## Solid Waste Disposal

The City disposed of 6,301 tons of trash which was 4% less than the previous year. Trash was reduced by 234 tons saving the Refuse Fund over \$15,000 in disposal fees. Trash disposal was considerably lower during the deep freeze of February and March 2019. All the waste was delivered to landfills due to the lack of trash incineration facilities to produce electricity.

The City recycled 1,955 tons of materials from residential curbside programs, the Recycling Center, and city facilities. This was an increase of 11% from the previous year. Residential households composted 1,602 tons of yard waste comingled with an estimated 184 tons of food organics for composting.

The City's subsidized \$20 flat fee for electronics curbside recycling removed over 351 electronic items. The city offers one free appliance pickup per year to each property and 355 units were recycled in 2019. The city also recycled another 19 tons of problem/hazardous materials, mainly from the Recycling Center.

Bulk curbside recycling started in September and over 100 mattresses were stripped apart and the various components recycled. Another 30 had to be disposed of with the trash due to other issues or being overly wet. The curbside bulk project to repair or recycle furniture is on hold as there are currently no facilities to process furniture in a feasible manner.

## Neighborhood Recycling

There is no additional fee for larger or additional recycling carts; approximately 200 households, multi-dwelling properties, and duplexes increased recycling service at their properties. Those rental properties also received free tenant recycling kits.

Over 70 households participated in the citywide garage sale event and received a Spring Cleaning Packet with information on where and how to donate or recycle their remaining items.

Several National Night Out block parties increased recycling, including organics, and received free compostable dinnerware from the City. The Refuse and Recycling Department has over 900 email subscriptions for the periodic Refuse & Recycling E-news.

The Mayor sent a postcard to over 1,200 properties that increased recycling and/or organics in 2019. Recycling Champions were recognized at a City Council meeting in June. Barbara Babekuhl and Rick and Sue Larson were recognized by Anoka County. Nick Novitsky and the Columbia Heights-Fridley Kiwanis were recognized by the City for their Recycling Champion activities. A dozen others received a certificate for being neighborhood

# Refuse and Recycling Cont.

recycling leaders. The event was reported to promote recycling to the general public.

The Refuse and Recycling Department along with Anoka County Recycling Solutions staff worked with Grand Central Flats to determine their refuse needs and to review our full service refuse system and recycling promotions with management. HeightsNext provided monitors at the refuse stations for the Grand Central Flats grand opening event.

Lynde Investment Company, who owns several apartment buildings in the city, worked with staff to improve recycling and received additional tenant recycling kits.

Hart Lake Apartments hosted the quarterly meeting of the Metro Multiunit Recycling Managers group. All were very impressed with how they have worked closely with the Refuse and Recycling Department over the years to increase single-sort recycling and now offer organics collection on site. They also have designated collection spots for electronics, household batteries, and fluorescent bulbs for tenants which their maintenance person brings to our Recycling Center. They may begin film plastic and Styrofoam collection on site as well.

Staff attended the RAM Electronics Collection and Disposal conference. The focus was on data security for discarded and recycled electronics. The city does practice some level of physical security by directing residents not to put items on the curb, but near the front door, rear door, or garage door. The hauler walks up to remove the items so passersby don't take them off the curb. Even though the hauler and electronics recycler have the proper certifications to properly handle and clean/wipe the information from items with data, it is suggested that households take steps to delete/clean/wipe memory drives and data boards. This information was posted on the electronics disposal webpage.

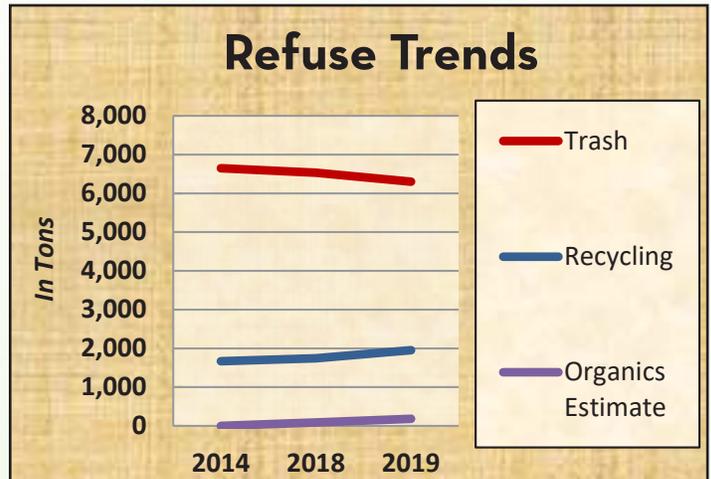
## Community Recycling

The Recycling Center was open most Saturdays and received \$3,316 for scrap metal, fluorescent bulbs, and used oil. The Columbia Heights-Fridley Kiwanis Club staffed the Recycling Center and received rebates for the value of the material, which they use for high school scholarships.

Film plastics cannot be put into the single sort recycling cart so staff coordinated with Trex, Inc. who recycles film plastics to make outdoor patios and furniture. The city recycled 1.7 tons of plastic bags and films in 2019 and Trex, Inc. awarded the city two free park benches. Besides the public drop-off at the Recycling Center, film plastics are collected from Murzyn Hall and the Public Works building, the liquor stores, City Hall, and the Columbia Heights School District kitchens. One of the benches was given to the school district and is located on the Blooming Gardens site.

Styrofoam was added to the Recycling Center drop-off options in 2019. The Styrofoam and film plastics are taken to the Coon Rapids Recycling Center as they have a Styrofoam condensing machine and a bailer for the plastic. They also ship the material to recyclers.

In coordination with the City of Fridley and the Columbia Heights School District, a Master Recycler course was conducted and some of the 21 graduates were able



to attend tours of the SMSCORF, Waste Management Materials Recycling Facility, and the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center.

The Refuse and Recycling Department facilitated a joint project with Waste Management and the North Metro Adult Basic Education site to add a Commercial Driver License test preparation course. At least one person has been accepted into the apprenticeship program for a future job with the company.

The local Lions Club committed to recycling, including organics, at the Jamboree carnival. The Refuse and Recycling Department provided compostable food service ware. The Lions Club also hosted a community paper shredding event. Over 3,000 lbs. was shredded and properly recycled directly to the paper mill.

The Kiwanis Club provided "Master Recycler" volunteers to educate the public at the Town Hall and Expo event.

HeightsNext hosted two Fix-It Clinics and provided monitors at refuse stations for various city events.

Staff coordinated with the Boosters Club to utilize city provided compostable food service ware at city events.

Councilmember Buesgens attended the RAM conference to gain firsthand information on the status of recycling in Minnesota.

The Recreation and Library Departments properly disposed of organics during their lunch programs during the summer.

# Refuse and Recycling Cont.

## Organics

Another 200 households received a compost cart and free kitchen organics kit, plus new in 2019, a free bag of finished compost was offered. After less than two years of curbside compost collection (mixed yard waste and organics), the City now has over 1,210 carts in the field. This is 19% of city refuse serviced properties. Ten multi-dwelling buildings also offer organics collection on site. The local food shelf SACA (Southern Anoka Community Assistance), Murzyn Hall, Publics Works, and the Library have organic services for their buildings as well. This is by far the most successful organics service in Anoka County.

The Columbia Heights and Fridley High School Key Clubs distributed over 400 bags (over \$1,200) of finished compost for their fundraising as part of a MNCC program with our composting service. This was a joint project with the City of Fridley who also has an organics program. The SMSCORF donated the compost to the Key Club.

The legislature provided \$1 million to develop programs to reduce food waste. Staff attended a meeting at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency as they were seeking ideas for food waste reduction and developing grants. The main topic at the ARM workshop was preventing food waste before placing in the organics. Staff posted helpful hints for households about this topic, i.e. smarter shopping, food preservation, etc.

Three of the University Heights Condo buildings have started organics service and were provided kitchen kits and compost carts.

Staff provided a briefing about our curbside compost program at the Library as part of their Earth Day events.

Staff attended the CHSD Community Education Advisory Council meeting and coordinated with the agricultural/food specialist to help promote our curbside organics collection.

## SCORE (Select Committee on Recycling and the Environment)

The MPCA is mandated by the state legislature to recycle 75% of solid waste by 2030. The State approved the latest version of the MSWP (Metro Solid Waste Policy) April 2017. In the document they specify numerous RBMPs (Recycling Best Management Practices, or strategies) including composting and bulk recycling. They are expecting and have been encouraging counties and cities in the metro area to begin implementing some of these

RBMPs. The MPCA manages the SCORE funds and distributes them to the counties. The Refuse and Recycling Department is executing the following MSWP RBMPs in the City of Columbia Heights:

- Implement strategies for the priority materials
- Allocate staff time on reaching the goals in the Plan for reduction and reuse and ensure that grant funding eligibility should include reduction, reuse, and recycling (including organics)
- Standardize ordinances
- Cities contract for residential recycling
- Cities contract for residential MSW collection
- Make residential curbside organics collection available region-wide
- Implement organics diversion at public entity facilities and in large event venues
- We are also meeting the Storm Water Pollution Control BMPs of keeping yard waste and other organic material out of the water runoff.

The Refuse and Recycling Department received over \$102,000 in SCORE grant money from Anoka County. The SCORE funds are used to subsidize curbside organics, the Recycling Center, special curbside bulk recycling (mattresses, carpet, appliances, and electronics), parks, promotions, events, and multi-unit/rental programs. SCORE required activities were completed including newsletter articles, two direct mailers, outreach activities, drop-off opportunities, and community event recycling.

Anoka County reviewed and/or designed many of the informational materials we used, including new cart labels, and provided promotion items such as water bottles. Anoka County also provided many flyers and other publications. The Anoka County Recycling Solutions office translated our spring and fall recycling guide into Somali and Spanish. These versions are distributed around city buildings. Anoka County also assumed overhead responsibilities for countywide Fix-It Clinics.

Anoka County provided recycling assistance and several grants to various entities in Columbia Heights including HeightsNEXT, Community United Methodist Church, Legacy Community Care, NJC Dentistry, Community Grounds, Immaculate Conception School, and Valley View Elementary.

## Facility Maintenance

In 2019, the City subscribed to additional solar gardens that will run online in 2020 or early 2021. Central Roofing inspected roofs at Murzyn Hall, City Hall, Public Safety, Public Works, Library, Pump Station 3 and all liquor stores. The PACOM (card access) server was updated to the latest version. There were 259 Help Desk requests for facility issues.

# Training, Safety, and Personnel

## General Training & Education

All employees attended courses for sewer/water maintenance, street maintenance, park maintenance, forestry, vehicle maintenance and safety to obtain or maintain required certification.

## Safety Management

For the 19th consecutive year, Public Works contracted with Integrated Loss Control Inc. for safety training and record-keeping activities required by state and federal regulations as well as City policy. Public Works is very pleased with the improvement that the safety program has shown under the administrative support of Integrated Loss Control Inc

## Personnel Changes

- Clark Trytten, Engineering Tech III, retired April 12. Clark spent four years in the Engineering Department. Prior to the Engineering position, Clark was with the Street Department for about 19 years. Rich Nordstrom, Engineering Tech IV, retired Oct 30. Rich spent 25 years with the Engineering Department. The Department appreciates the hard work, dedication, professionalism, and friendship illustrated

by Clark and Rich during their employment with the City.

- As of December 2019, the Utilities Department consisted of eight fulltime employees. Lauren McClanahan, Utilities Superintendent, retired on Feb 28 after nearly 33 years of service.
- As of December 2019, the Street Department consisted of seven fulltime employees. Tom Pope, Street Foreman, retired on July 15, 2019, and Mike O'Reilly, Street & Park Superintendent, retired on Sept 27, 2019. David Cullen was promoted to Street & Park Superintendent and Ben Mathson to Street Foreman. Janelle Niznik transferred from the Park Department to the Street Department on Sept 3, 2019.
- As of Dec 31, 2019, the Park Department had six full time employees, the foreman and five maintenance workers. Jeff Kline retired April 30, 2019. Janelle Niznik started fulltime on May 20 and transferred to the Street Department on September 3. Jon Perkins was hired and started with the Park Department on December 2. From April through September, ten seasonal employees assisted with park maintenance duties.





# RECREATION

## Introduction

The mission of the Columbia Heights Recreation Department is to provide recreational and service opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds. The Recreation Department offers vast, year-round, comprehensive programs that strive to meet the needs of the whole community.

These programs include Youth Athletics/Programs, Traveling Athletics, Youth Enrichment Programs, Adult Athletics, Senior Citizens Center, Senior Citizen Outings, Special Events, John P. Murzyn Hall management, Community Garden Plot Rentals, Neighborhood Event Wagon Rentals, Park Scheduling, and Hylander Gym and Fitness Center management.



The following pages contain the vast number of community members that the Recreation Department reaches, hopefully enriching the quality of life.

With the support of the Mayor, City Council, Park and Recreation Commission, City Man-

ager, and the many civic and community organizations, the high quality delivery of services and opportunities are provided through the dedicated work of the Recreation staff and our numerous volunteers.

# Recreation Department Staff

Name	Title	Start Date	End Date
Keith Windschitl	Recreation Director	Aug, 1997	----
Deanna Saefke	Recreation Secretary	July, 2005	----
DeLynn Mulligan	Senior Citizen Coordinator	Sept, 2012	----
Katie Holznagel	Recreation Program Coordinator	April, 2019	----
Carissa Goebel	Recreation Program Coordinator	Nov, 2017	March 5, 2019
Brit Gartner	Part-time Rec Coordinator	April, 2019	Feb 13, 2020
Candy Lack	Half-time Recreation Clerk	Jan, 2017	----
Darci Knauer	Half-time Recreation Clerk	Feb, 2015	June 28, 2019



## PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

David Payne, Chairperson  
 Anne Carder  
 Sean Clerkin, Jr.  
 Bruce Evans  
 Tom Greenhalgh  
 Kevin McDonald  
 Marsha Stroik

Nick Novitsky, City Council Liaison  
 Kevin Hanson, Public Works  
 Director/City Engineer  
 Keith Windschitl, Recreation Director  
 Deanna Saefke, Recreation Secretary



## CITY PARK ADDRESSES & AMENITIES

	BASEBALL/SOFTBALL FIELDS	BASKETBALL COURTS	INDOOR BATHROOM RENTALS	T= TENNIS V= VOLLEYBALL B=BOCCIE BALL	PORTABLE OUTHOUSE	GRILLS	HOCKEY & SKATING RINKS	OPEN FIELD SPACE	PAVED TRAILS	PICNIC TABLES	PICNIC SHELTER WITH OUTLETS	PLAYGROUND	SLEDDING HILL	SPLASH PAD	SWIMMING BEACH	WADING POOL	NATURE AREA/NATIVE GRASSES
<b>BRUCE NAWROCKI</b> 1271 CIRCLE TERRACE BLVD		•	•							•	•	•					
<b>EDGEMOOR</b> 3950 EDGEMOOR PLACE											•						
<b>GAUVITTE</b> 4333 2ND STREET	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•						
<b>HILLTOP</b> 4657 HEIGHTS DRIVE					•		•		•								
<b>HUSET EAST</b> 3965 JEFFERSON STREET	•	•	•	V		•	•	•	•	•	•						
<b>HUSET WEST</b> 3965 JEFFERSON STREET	•			B	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•				•
<b>KEYES</b> 1345 45 1/2 AVENUE	•				•		•	•		•	•						
<b>LABELLE</b> 1150 42ND AVENUE					•		•	•	•	•	•						•
<b>LOMIANKI</b> 80 39TH AVENUE							•	•	•	•							
<b>MCKENNA</b> 4757 7TH STREET	•		•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•				•		•
<b>OSTRANDER</b> 1500 40TH AVENUE					•	•	•	•	•	•							
<b>PRESTEMON</b> 3900 MCKINLEY STREET	•	•			•		•	•	•	•	•						•
<b>RAMSDELL</b> 4956 JOHNSON STREET	•		•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•				•		•
<b>SILVER LAKE</b> 4305 STINSON BOULEVARD				V	•	•		•	•	•	•			•			•
<b>SULLIVAN LAKE</b> 721 51ST AVE			•	T	•	•	•	•	•	•	•						•

# Recreation Highlights

## Summary

The Recreation Department provides a wide variety of social, educational, and recreational programs for youth and adults. Youth programs are divided between athletics and enrichment programs. Youth in-house athletics are designed for children in grades K-6, with traveling athletics designed for experienced players in grades 3-9. It is envisioned that youth athletic program participation will remain steady over the next few years, with growth to be found in enrichment activities like the summer playgrounds (i.e. Glitter-Bugs, Dyno-Hites, Sparks, Puppet Wagon, T.N.T., community special events and the After School Program. Autumn of 2017 was the start of a three year grant program, with the Columbia Heights School District, that focuses on the arts for grades 5 and up. Adult athletics consists of league play in softball during the summer and fall seasons. It also includes the Jamboree Softball Tournament.

## Park Scheduling

While City parks are maintained by the Park Department, the parks usage is scheduled through the Recreation Department. Both Departments work hand-in-hand to provide the highest quality service to the residents who utilize our parks. In 2019, rental of park facilities were provided for a small fee of \$46.67 plus tax for Columbia Heights residents, \$70.01 plus tax for non-residents, and \$116.69 plus tax for large groups of 100 plus people. A \$100.00 key deposit was once again required to improve security of the park buildings. The \$100.00

deposit is returned if parks are left in good condition after the event and the key is returned.

Total number of park reservations in 2019: 136

## Neighborhood Event Wagon

The Neighborhood Event Wagon is a 16-ft trailer equipped with tables, chairs and a variety of sports equipment. The recreation staff delivers the trailer to the residence for their use during their event. Once their event is complete, the recreation staff picks up the trailer and completes an inventory of all supplies. In 2019 a small fee of \$46.67 plus tax was charged for use of the wagon. The Columbia Heights V.F.W. Post #230 donated the wagon. The sports equipment, tables, and chairs were supplied by the Recreation Department.

Total number of community event wagon rentals in 2019: 18

## Community Garden Plots

The Recreation Department offered Community Garden Plots located on Reservoir Boulevard. In 2019 residents were able to rent a 10 x 15 foot garden plot for the summer at a cost of \$23.34 plus tax. The garden plots are maintained by the Recreation Department and tilled by the Parks Department.

Total number of garden plots rented in 2019: 48



# Recreation Highlights Cont.



# Youth Programs

2019 was a very successful year with established programs continuing as well as new programs being offered. A highlight of our 2019 programming was the attendance for non-school day trips. Our dance, martial arts, and gymnastics programs were very popular again this year. Listed below are the enrichment and special event programs provided for the youth in 2019. They are broken down into specific areas that show the variety of programs.

Seasonal Youth Program Attendance				
Program	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall
Gymnastics Koalas (ages 1.5-2.5)	5	4	8	4
Gymnastics Monkeys (ages 3-4)	12	12	12	9
Gymnastics Lions (ages 5-8)	13	12	7	10
Gymnastics Rollers (level 1)	15	11	3	10
Gymnastics Turners (level 2)	13	10	9	4
Gymnastics Twisters (level 3)	4	4	1	5
Dance (preschool)	10	9	-	16
Dance (grades K-2)	9	9	-	10
Dance (grades 3-5)	3	3	-	6
Martial Arts Little Tigers (ages 3-6)	16	14	10	11
Tae Kwon Do (levels 1 & 2)	27	25	8	26



# Youth Programs Cont.

Summer Youth Program Attendance	
Program	Attendance
Glitter-Bugs Preschool Program in Ramsdell Park (2 sessions)	41
Dyno-Hites Playground in Huset Park (2 sessions)	61
S.P.A.R.K.S. Playground Program in McKenna Park (2 sessions)*	25
T.N.T. Teen Program (2 sessions)*	59
Wild Wednesday Summer Trips (8 trips)	
Nickelodeon Universe	55
Valleyfair	52
Twins Game	26
Bunker Beach	50
Cascade Bay	53
Edina Aquatic Center	44
Wild Mountain	46
St Louis Park Aquatic Center	41
August Adventure Day Trips (2 trips)	
KidCreate & Bouldering*	17
Science Museum*	26
Puppet Wagon Puppeteers*	36
Puppet Wagon Shows Audience	~1,350
Loaves and Fishes Lunches/Snacks	1,700 provided

# Youth Programs Cont.

## Summer Youth Program Attendance Cont.

Program	Attendance
Moonshoe Players*	17
Moonshoe Play Attendance*	116
The Mill Street Players*	13
The Mill Street Play Attendance*	78

## Youth Holiday Special Event Attendance

Event	Attendance
Flashlight Egg Hunt	26
Fireworks/Jamboree	5000
Fishing Clinic/Community Picnic	18
Holiday Family Fun Night	225
Truck or Treat	~1500

## Holiday School Break Day Trips

Event	Attendance
Twin Cities Fall Harvest Festival	20
Wild Chutes Snow Tubing at Wild Mountain	27
Nickelodeon Universe	33

# Youth Programs Cont.

## 21st Century Learning Communities Grant Programs

Event	Attendance
Family Yoga	14
ENCORE at Murzyn Hall (trimester 1)	22
Puppet Wagon at Truck or Treat	8
Holiday Theater	10
Mindful Art	24
Theater Skills Workshop	24
Healthy Body, Healthy Minds	18
Outdoor Adventures at Silverwood Park	13
Vertical Endeavors/Snowshoeing	18
Whole Food Cooking & KIDCREATE	12



# Youth Athletics

Athletic programs are divided between in-house and traveling. Youth in-house athletics are designed for children in grades K-6, with traveling athletics designed for experienced players in grades 3-9. Some parents would rather have the youth learn the basic fundamentals of the game and have fun with friends. In the traveling programs, youth travel to other communities throughout the metro area. We have had continued success with youth in-house basketball, baseball, softball, and soccer.

Youth Athletics Program Attendance	
Baseball In-House Programs	44
T-Ball	19
Squirts Baseball	25
Baseball Traveling Programs	23
10U	11
11/12U	-
13U	12
Basketball	41
Basketball Clinics	9
Traveling Programs (girls)	15
Traveling Programs (boys)	9
Wrestling (K-8th grades)	17
Softball (Girls Fast-Pitch Traveling)	40
8U (beginners/not traveling)	12
10U	12
12U	2
16U	14
18U	12

# Youth Athletics Cont.

## Youth Athletics Program Attendance Cont.

Soccer In-House Programs	
1st-2nd Grade Co-ed	9
3rd-4th Grade Co-ed	10
5th-6th Grade Co-Ed	10
Skate for Fun	25



# Adult Classes & Athletics

## Adult Athletics and Classes Participation

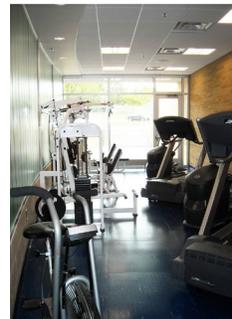
Adult Softball	
Slow Pitch Softball - Summer	13 teams/156 participants
Slow Pitch Softball - Fall	13 teams/156 participants
Jamboree Tournament	15 teams/180 participants
Total Body Conditioning	85
Adult Aerobics Dance	86
Crochet	50
Art Fair Vendors	34
Stompin' at the Hall	96

## Hylander City Gym & Fitness Center

Participation has been increasing as more people become aware of the facility and become familiar with the hours of operation. In 2019, it was open for community use Monday through Friday 9 am to 11 am, after school, Monday through Thursday 6 pm to 8:30 pm, and Saturday and Sunday 9 am to noon. For 2019, we sold 52 monthly memberships and 6,304 daily drop-in passes. Examples of other usage include senior shuffleboard, after school youth open gym, adult open gym, youth basketball league, weekend tournaments, youth sports camps, wrestling, youth basketball kick-offs, summer park programs, and school out day field trips. This has been a wonderful asset to our Recreation Program.



**Hylander Center  
Fitness Center**



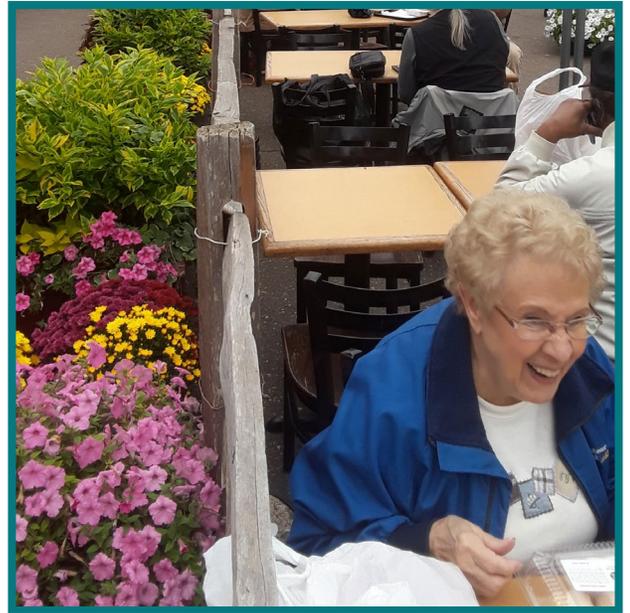
# Senior Center

Senior Programs	Annual Attendance
500 Club	600
Cribbage	200
Bridge	600
Friends of the Library Bridge	144
Bingo	3200
Midday Matinée	130
Walking Group	200
Bocce Ball	240
Skip-Bo	200
Free Exercise	600
Group Puzzle Time	30
Hiking Group	72

## Summary

The Senior Program offers a wide variety of programs for people 55 and older. The Senior Trips continue to be very popular programs (both the motor coach and the mini-bus outings). The motor coach trips offer the comfort of a larger bus on longer trips and the mini-bus for local trips remain very successful.

The Senior Center is located in the lower level of John P. Murzyn Hall at 530 Mill St. It's open Monday through Friday from 9 am to 4 pm. For additional information on programs available, please call the Recreation Department at (763) 706-3730, Monday through Friday from 8 am to 4:30 pm.



## Senior Motorcoach Day Trips Attendance

Harmony Amish Trip	36
Glen Miller Orchestra St. Cloud Paramount Theater	19



# Senior Center Cont.

Specialty Senior Events/Classes	Attendance
AARP Income Tax Service	320
Blood Pressure Checks	400
Health Insurance Counseling	40
Happy Feet Foot Care	200
Dime Bingo	200
Senior/Caregiver Expo	60
Potluck Luncheons	60
Pie Socials	60
Adult Coloring	20
Flu Shot Clinic	40
Thanksgiving Concert	40
Notes of Gratitude	20
“What is Senior Housing?”	20
Valentine Cards	10
Normal V. Not Normal Aging	15
Eyeshadow & Contouring	20
Pasta Lunch	5
Jeanie’s Travel Presentation	15
Food Demo w/Chandler Place	60

Specialty Senior Events/Classes	Attendance
Bag Lunch & Learn w/CHDentistry	12
Beginning Water Color	5
Sweet Treat Social	40
Wellness Expo at Murzyn	200
500 Holiday Meal	200
Most Mysterious Bingo	60
Preplanning Lunch w/Dignity Memorial	60
MN Legal Aide Presentation	60
Pizza Lunches	20
Pasta Lunch	40
Intro to Pastels	40
Christmas Concert	20
Defensive Driving	168
Mini Bus Trips	597



# John P. Murzyn Hall

Similar to years past, Murzyn Hall was booked for most weekends throughout 2019. In addition to housing the Recreation Department, Murzyn Hall was used by many local civic and community groups in one capacity or another in 2019. The ability to use any licensed caterer is another very attractive feature offered at Murzyn Hall. Our flexibility and willingness to work with various renters puts Murzyn Hall in a class of its own. The following consists of various community users that receive a reduced or waived rental fee (City organizations and related groups also use Murzyn Hall for various events, such as the Employee Holiday Lunch, the Library Foundation Fundraiser, and elections.

- AARP
- Al-Israa Academy
- American Red Cross
- Anoka County - Housing/ ACCAP
- Anoka County Senior Issues Network
- Association of Recycling Managers
- Beautification Committee
- CH Administration
- CH Athletic Banquets
- CH Athletic Boosters
- CH Basketball Association
- CH Fire Department
- CH Fire Explorers
- CH Fire Fighters Association
- CH High School Class Reunions
- CH IS Department
- CH Library Foundation
- CH Lion's Club
- CH Liquor Operations
- CH Police Department
- CH Public Works
- CH Recreation Department
- CH Royalty
- Community Education-ISD #13
- Friends of the Library
- Girl Scouts - 3 troops
- Global Academy
- Happy Feet Foot Care, Inc.
- Heights Next
- IBEW Local 292
- Immaculate Conception School
- Independent School District #13
- Kiwanis Club
- Metro ECSU
- Minnesota Polka Association
- Minnesota Deaf Senior Citizens
- Northeast Strikers Soccer Club
- PACIM
- Pals
- Park & Recreation Commission
- Parkview Townhomes
- Persian Student Organization of MN
- Robbinsdale Area Wrestling
- SACA
- Sister Cities
- Tewahido Orthodox Church
- Theater Elision
- Toastmasters
- Traffic Commission
- Train Collectors
- University Heights Condominiums
- University Heights Townhomes

## John P Murzyn Hall Paid Rentals Events and Frequency

Funerals	3
Birthday Parties	31
Classes/Seminars/Meetings	68
Parties/Banquets	48
Holiday Parties	12
Wedding Receptions	37
Fundraisers	2
<b>Total Resident Rentals</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Total Non-Resident Rentals</b>	<b>39</b>

# THANK YOU!

On behalf of all City Departments, Division Heads and Staff, thank you for another great year! It's an honor to serve the City of Columbia Heights and its residents. See you in 2020!

