

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF PORTLAND

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**NEW COLUMBIA:  
REPORT ON DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

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DECEMBER 2007

**New Columbia is more than a housing development.**

From the beginning, the Housing Authority of Portland and its community partners created a vision for the new community that encompassed project goals in a number of areas:

- MIXED-INCOME HOUSING
- SUPPORT FOR RESIDENTS
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND OPPORTUNITY
- LIVABILITY
- SUSTAINABILITY
- BUILDING COMMUNITY
- HOMEOWNERSHIP
- PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNITY PROCESS
- LEVERAGING OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

This document describes these development project goal areas and identifies the achievements under each as the former Columbia Villa was transformed into New Columbia.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **From Columbia Villa to New Columbia**

Columbia Villa was built in North Portland in 1942 as housing for World War II shipyard workers. After the war, it became a public housing site, with 462 housing units in barracks-style buildings scattered over 82 acres. Over the years, the aging buildings and inadequate infrastructure fell woefully short of modern building standards in virtually all areas. In addition, Columbia Villa's 1,300 low-income residents were physically, socially, and economically isolated from the community.

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**The success of New Columbia depended on partnerships with and support from innumerable individuals and organizations.**

A collaborative process was built into all aspects of the project from the beginning and was a common thread in realizing the multiple project goals. Types of assistance included workforce development and employment preparation; case management services that supported the language, cultural, and mental health needs of residents; programs for youth; and financial support.

In 1993, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) created the HOPE VI program, which offered grants to reconstruct aging public housing sites into new, mixed-income communities. HAP applied for and was awarded a \$35 million grant in 2001, which was supplemented with funding from multiple other sources into a project total of \$151 million. In addition, the agency led the development of the Community Campus at New Columbia, a \$20.2 million project that is anchored by a new public elementary school and Boys & Girls Club and includes a new wing and gym for a City-owned recreation center.

The vision for New Columbia was to create a vibrant new neighborhood with a mix of housing types affordable to people at all income levels. New Columbia includes the following features:

- 854 housing units, including public housing, affordable rentals, senior housing, and both market rate and affordable homes for sale.
- A mix of residents, representing a variety of cultures, age groups, and income levels.
- A community-friendly design, with front porches, parks, and public spaces.
- A new street grid that provides easy circulation within New Columbia and connects the community to the rest of the Portsmouth neighborhood.
- A Main Street that offers a variety of recreational, cultural, and educational opportunities for both New Columbia residents and the surrounding neighborhood.

## MIXED-INCOME HOUSING

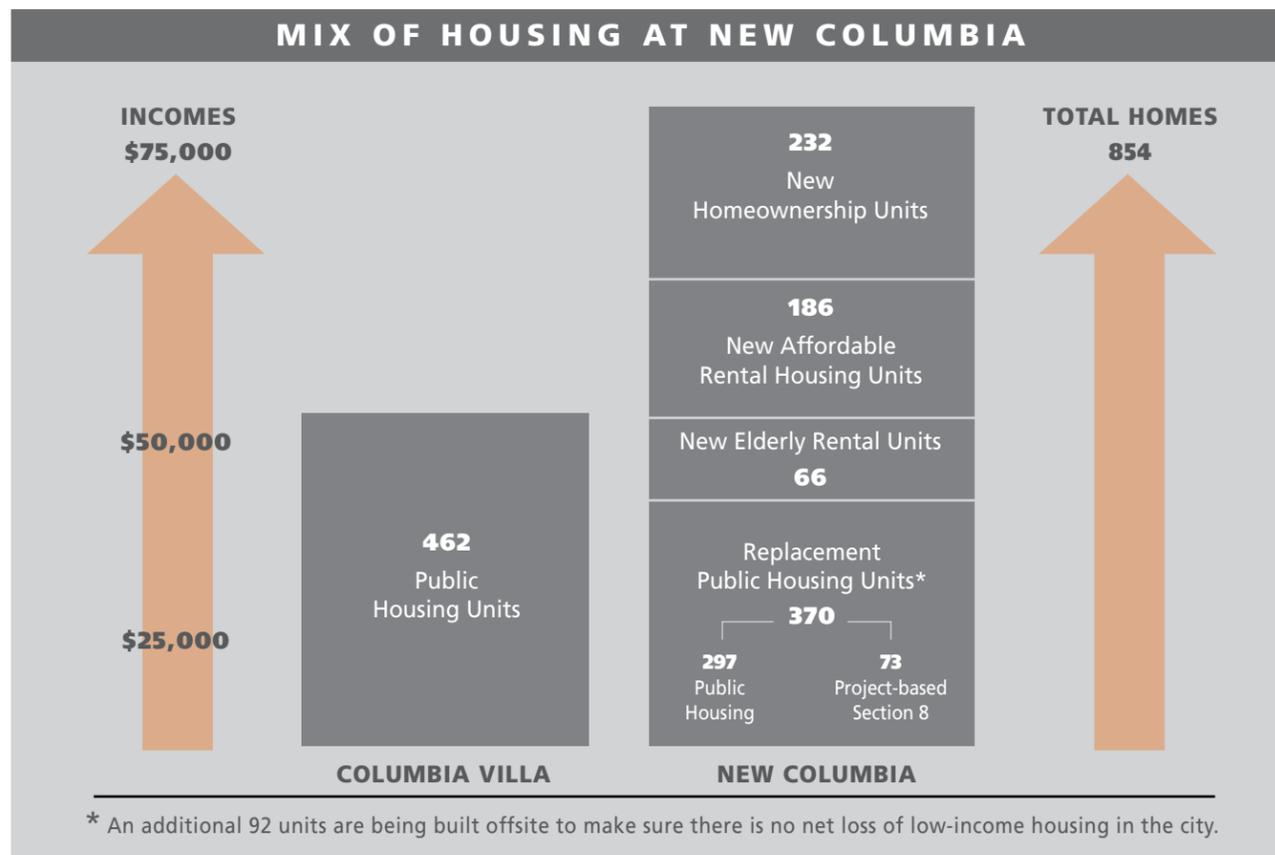
When Columbia Villa was dismantled, it comprised 462 units of public housing. In contrast, New Columbia offers a choice of housing types and sizes to accommodate a diverse population and attract people of various income levels.



◀ Rental housing



▲ Homes for sale



## SUPPORT FOR RESIDENTS

A top priority during the transition from Columbia Villa to New Columbia was to provide comprehensive relocation and support services for the almost 400 households that were affected. HAP offered services to all Columbia Villa residents, whether or not they chose eventually to return to New Columbia. Key elements included housing choices, moving assistance, case management, connection to schools and other services, emergency rent and utility help, and youth development.

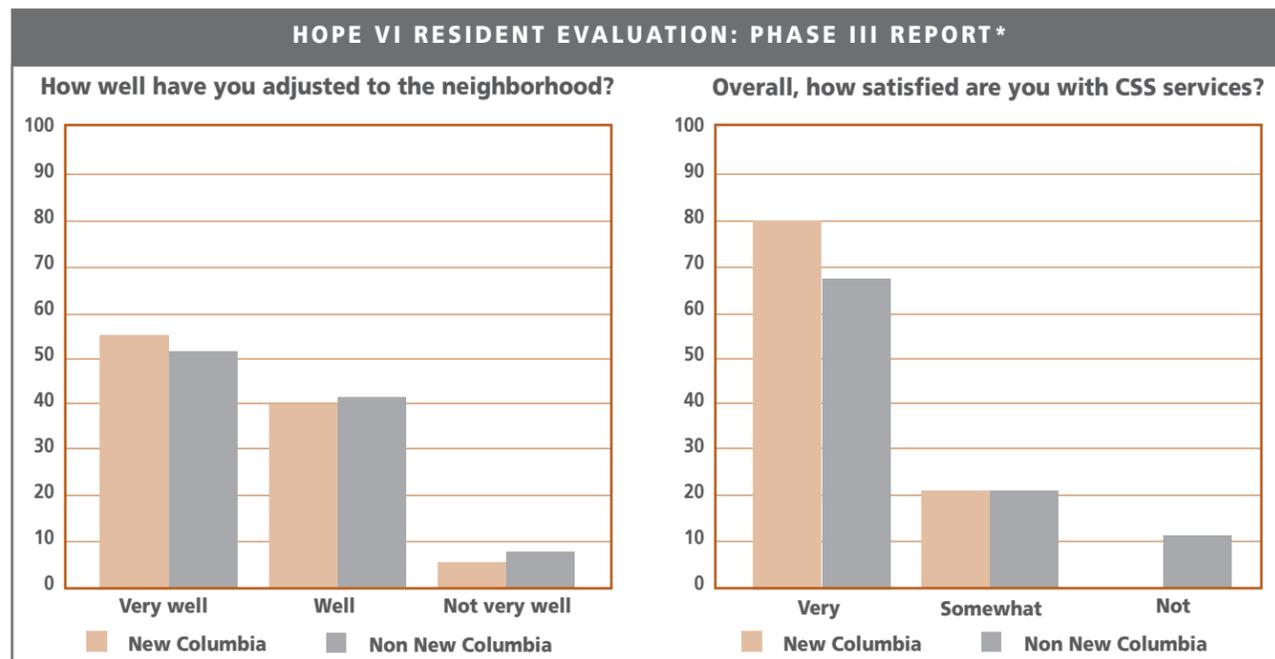
### Relocation and Return

- HAP developed a comprehensive Relocation Plan, with input from a 15-member Relocation Task Force made up of residents, housing advocates, and social service and public school representatives.
- HAP offered each household a choice of comparable, available housing units and prepared an individual detailed plan that addressed every aspect of relocation, from packing and unpacking to reestablishing utilities and social services.
- Relocation information and outreach materials were provided in the five primary languages (besides English) spoken at Columbia Villa: Spanish, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Hmong, and Russian.
- Between March and October 2003, HAP's 11-person Relocation Team relocated 382 Columbia Villa households:
  - 74 percent of households chose Section 8 rent assistance vouchers, 23 percent chose to stay in other public housing, and three percent chose unassisted housing.
  - Two thirds of the households were able to find replacement housing in their preferred location. In all, 166 households remained in North Portland, while 49 relocated to inner Northeast Portland.
- 86 percent of respondents to a written survey indicated that they were either very or somewhat satisfied with relocation services.
- HAP used a variety of outreach measures—including written information, meetings, tours, and opportunities for input—to familiarize Columbia Villa residents with New Columbia and help them decide about returning.
- By the end of December 2006, 29 percent of the households that had been relocated from Columbia Villa returned to New Columbia—110 in rental housing and two as new homeowners.

WHERE COLUMBIA VILLA FAMILIES MOVED	
North/Inner Northeast	215
Outer Northeast/Southeast	94
Inner Southeast	27
Outside Portland Metro Area	17
Northwest/Southwest	15
Gresham/Fairview	12

## Community and Supportive Services (CSS)

- HAP set aside \$4.25 million (12 percent of the HOPE VI grant) for Community and Supportive Services for relocated residents, including case management, employment assessments, education, workforce training, rent and utility assistance, family counseling, and resident workshops.
- Five CSS family specialists offered support services to relocated residents for five years—before, during, and after relocation. Many households took advantage of these services, with 117 families receiving transportation assistance, 135 receiving childcare services, and over 100 households enrolling in basic education, high school equivalency (GED), or English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Further youth and school stability services were offered as youth transitioned to new schools and engaged in summer and year-round recreational activities.
- CSS staff logged a total of 4,128 individual contacts and over 18,000 household contacts. These included home and office visits, phone consultations, and mailings.
- CSS staff facilitated employment assessments, linked residents with employment services, provided construction training opportunities, and developed an intensive program for hard-to-serve working able households.
- In addition, 103 construction/construction-related positions were created. HOPE VI residents, along with other Section 3 low-income community members, benefited from this employment.
- 51 households enrolled in HAP's GOALS (Greater Opportunities to Advance, Learn, and Succeed) program, which helps participants work toward independence from public assistance and, if desired, prepare for homeownership. Of these, 25 completed homeownership preparation classes, and 10 purchased homes.



\* August 2007. Third of four reports based on surveys of former Columbia Villa residents by Karen J. Gibson, Ph.D., tenured professor, Portland State University.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION

The New Columbia redevelopment procured approximately \$117 million in construction-related activities and professional services. A key project element was to foster local economic development and opportunities by generating new jobs, wages, and small business income. This was accomplished by setting a number of goals and providing supportive measures to help achieve them.

- HAP set a goal of having at least 20 percent of construction and services contracts go to qualified disadvantaged, minority-owned, women-owned, and emerging small businesses (D/M/W/ESB). This goal was exceeded, with 24 percent of all contracts—\$27.6 million—going to these businesses.
- Another goal was to make construction trade jobs available to local community members, with first priority given to graduates of the Evening Trades Apprenticeship Preparation (ETAP) program for HAP residents and local low-income community members. ETAP graduates and local residents filled 103 jobs, and apprentices accounted for 20 percent of the total construction hours.
- The project used a type of construction management and general contracting that involved a partnership among the owner (HAP), architects and engineers, Walsh Construction (construction manager/general contractor), and other stakeholders. This collaborative approach enabled the project to be completed on time and on budget. It also ensured that HAP's goals for economic participation and sustainability were achieved by integrating them into the building program and project schedule from the beginning.
- HAP promoted affirmative contracting and workforce diversity through a number of means, including comprehensive and targeted community outreach, technical assistance for D/M/W/ESB businesses, diversity incentives, expansion of the ETAP program, and rigorous compliance monitoring and reporting. Minorities and women worked 45 percent of the construction hours at New Columbia.
- HAP and Walsh Construction defined a specific scope of work that enabled a minority builder to gain experience as a general contractor for two blocks of New Columbia. Walsh conducted a select bidding process for D/M/W/ESB firms, and CJ Jackson was selected to serve as general contractor for the two blocks, including construction of 20 apartment units.

## LIVABILITY

A sense of community and well-being is of primary importance in New Columbia. To achieve this, the redevelopment concept incorporated features that would contribute to the health, safety, and livability of the new community.

- The site layout fosters interaction among people, with neighborly front porches and easy access to shared community spaces.
- Street and sidewalk patterns make it safe and easy to get around, with plentiful walkways and well-lit streets and alleys. The community is bike- and pedestrian-friendly.
- New Columbia is well served by Tri-Met buses and just two miles from the Interstate MAX line.
- McCoy Park—a new four-acre city park at the center of New Columbia—includes a children’s play area, basketball court, event area and plaza, community garden, open lawn areas, and water feature. Four pocket parks provide children’s play areas close to home. In addition, common greens are spread throughout the 82-acre site, mature trees were preserved, and new landscaping provides additional greenspace.
- Local artists created original public artworks in McCoy Park and common areas that reflect the variety of residents’ cultures and traditions. These are some of the first examples of public art incorporated into an affordable housing development.
- The New Columbia History Exhibit, a permanent installation in the Kandis Brewer Nunn Community Education Center, captures the essence of four main periods of human history at the site, from the Chinook Indians, who lived nearby on the Columbia River, to the current residents.



◀ Heron sculpture at community center



▶ Entry gates to community garden at McCoy Park

## SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainable development is a holistic approach that provides for current needs while also safeguarding human health and the environment in the future. Sustainable measures were incorporated into construction activities and were integrated into the overall design of New Columbia.

- As Columbia Villa was torn down, materials were salvaged and recycled as much as possible. Local house-moving companies purchased 23 duplex buildings and moved them offsite. Two four-unit buildings were deconstructed, and every component (except plaster and insulation) was salvaged for resale. Demolition contractors salvaged and recycled 82 percent of the building materials onsite. One hundred percent of the concrete and asphalt rubble was ground into gravel-sized pieces and reused onsite as road base and structural fill.
- A sustainable stormwater management system retains 98 percent of stormwater onsite, treating and infiltrating water into the ground, avoiding piping overflows into local waterways. The system includes 101 pocket swales, 31 flow-through planter boxes, and 40 public infiltration dry wells.
- Over half of the 430 trees at New Columbia were preserved, many with diameters greater than 48 inches. The trees that could not be saved onsite were donated to streambed restoration projects or relocated to McCoy Park. A street realignment was discarded in order to save the biggest tree on the site—a silver maple with a breast-high diameter of 64 inches. In addition to their beauty, mature trees reduce stormwater runoff, lower ground and air temperatures, provide shade, improve air quality, and provide protection from the wind.
- The two mixed-use buildings on Main Street on Trenton are the first two HOPE VI redevelopments to achieve LEED certification, and the new elementary school also has been LEED certified.
  - Other sustainable measures include the use of building and landscaping materials that reduce resource consumption; water and energy conservation measures; solar water and heating equipment for two townhouses, which will collect data for future projects; and solar preheating of water in the two mixed-use buildings on Trenton.



◀ Swales help capture stormwater onsite.



A grocery store offers local produce. ▲

## BUILDING COMMUNITY

Main Street on Trenton—the heart of the community—is six blocks of mixed uses designed to bring neighbors together to socialize, work, and play. It includes a variety of educational, commercial, and service facilities that help build New Columbia into a complete community.

- The WorkSource Center supports resident employment and self-sufficiency by offering education and workforce training through the Oregon Employment Department, Portland Community College, and HAP's GOALS program.
- The Kandis Brewer Nunn Community Education Center offers cultural and recreational events such as movies, lectures, and neighborhood get-togethers.
- A grocery store and coffee shop provide services for residents.
- The Community Campus, built with the help of \$2.7 million in private philanthropy, exceeds original hopes for an elementary school that was needed to accommodate the projected increase in students. The Rosa Parks Elementary School opened in September 2006, welcoming about 450 students to a LEED gold-certified, state-of-the-art facility. In addition, a Boys & Girls Club shares recreation facilities with the school and offers after-school and recreational activities for youth aged seven to 17. The adjoining City-owned University Park Community Center built a new recreation wing, including a new double gymnasium that is used by the club and the school.

## HOMEOWNERSHIP

A primary goal for New Columbia was to offer homeownership opportunities as well as rental housing. Homeownership was especially targeted for first-time homebuyers, members of minority groups, and residents of North and Northeast Portland.

- 232 new houses were built, priced at both market and affordable rates. Sales prices ranged from \$145,000 to \$278,000. As of December 2007, 226 homes were completed, with six lots remaining to be finished.
- Through partnerships with the City of Portland (Bureau of Housing and Community Development), the Portland Development Commission, Portland Community Land Trust, and the Portland Housing Center, HAP provided homebuyer counseling, education, and assistance with down payments. This was especially helpful for first-time homeowners, who constituted 79 percent of the homebuyers in New Columbia.
- 47 percent of homebuyers in New Columbia are people of color. This has helped the City of Portland toward its goal to bridge the minority homeownership gap in Portland. HAP partnered with community-based organizations to reach minority homebuyers.
- 48 percent of homebuyers are from North or Northeast Portland, and 56 percent are families with children.
- The affordable homeownership goal of 30 homes was exceeded. Fifty-five homes were purchased by households at 60 percent of median family income or lower.

### HOMEBUILDERS AT NEW COLUMBIA

TOTAL HOMEOWNERSHIP GOAL = 232	Homes completed as of December 2007	Homes purchased by households at 60% MFI and lower*	Lots to be completed
<b>MARKET RATE BUILDERS</b>			
Legend Homes	82	6	
Tom Walsh and Company	46	4	
SUBTOTAL	128		
% OF 232 TOTAL	55%		
<b>NONPROFIT BUILDERS</b>			
HOST Development	79	26	2
Peninsula Community Development Corp.	4	4	
Portland Habitat for Humanity	15	15	
SUBTOTAL	98		
% OF 232 TOTAL	42%		
<b>OTHER SPECIALTY BUILDERS</b>			
Orange Splot LLC—Cohousing Development			4**
<b>TOTAL TO DATE</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>6</b>

\*Data as of October 2007, with 199 households reporting \*\* Developer is proposing 8 homes on 4 lots, using cohousing model.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNITY PROCESS

Public involvement substantially influenced every aspect of the New Columbia project: financing strategies, relocation and return procedures, master planning and housing design, communication with neighbors, social service planning, and community economic participation. The goal was to be transparent and inclusive throughout the entire planning and development process.

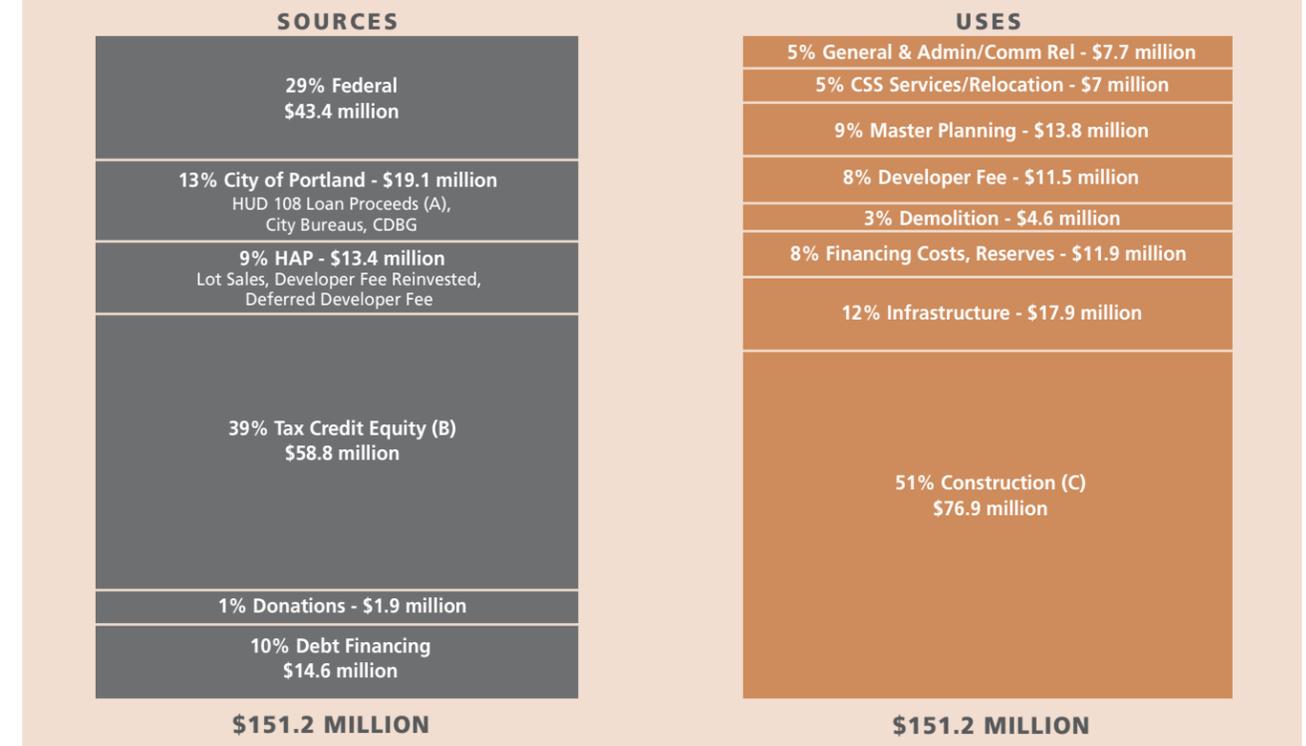
- A Community Advisory Committee (CAC) was created in 2002 to advise HAP board and staff members on all aspects of the project over a three-year period.
- Three CAC task forces focused on specific project elements: relocation and services, neighbors, and design.
- Over a 10-month planning process, a design team led by the project architect and the CAC design task force hosted community workshops to create a master plan for New Columbia.
- Newsletters, design workshops, media information, community meetings, and public events informed and engaged all stakeholders early and often.

## LEVERAGING OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The transformation of Columbia Villa into New Columbia was budgeted at \$151 million. The Community Campus cost an additional \$20.2 million. A project of this size and complexity required many financial partners to make it work. HAP's goal was to form community partnerships and commitments to leverage federal funds with public, private, and philanthropic sources.

- The \$35 million federal HOPE VI grant leveraged other funds from a variety of sources: the City of Portland, HAP, bond financing, low-income housing tax credits through Oregon Housing and Community Services, conventional financing, and foundation grants.
- To help achieve the community's vision for New Columbia's Main Street and Community Campus, HAP enlisted the help of the philanthropic community. This was a first for HAP, and it found generous support, raising \$1.3 million for its two Main Street buildings. Another \$2.7 million in private funds was contributed to the Community Campus.
- Through sound financial and construction management and favorable market conditions, HAP was able to complete New Columbia both on time and on budget.
- Rosa Parks Elementary School was the first public elementary school in the country built with New Market Tax Credits, a financing tool to help spur redevelopment in designated areas. This creative financing attracted foundations and grants. The blend of non-profit, profit, and public dollars supported housing and community development goals while reinforcing the educational mission of the school district.

## NEW COLUMBIA SOURCES/USES OF FUNDING

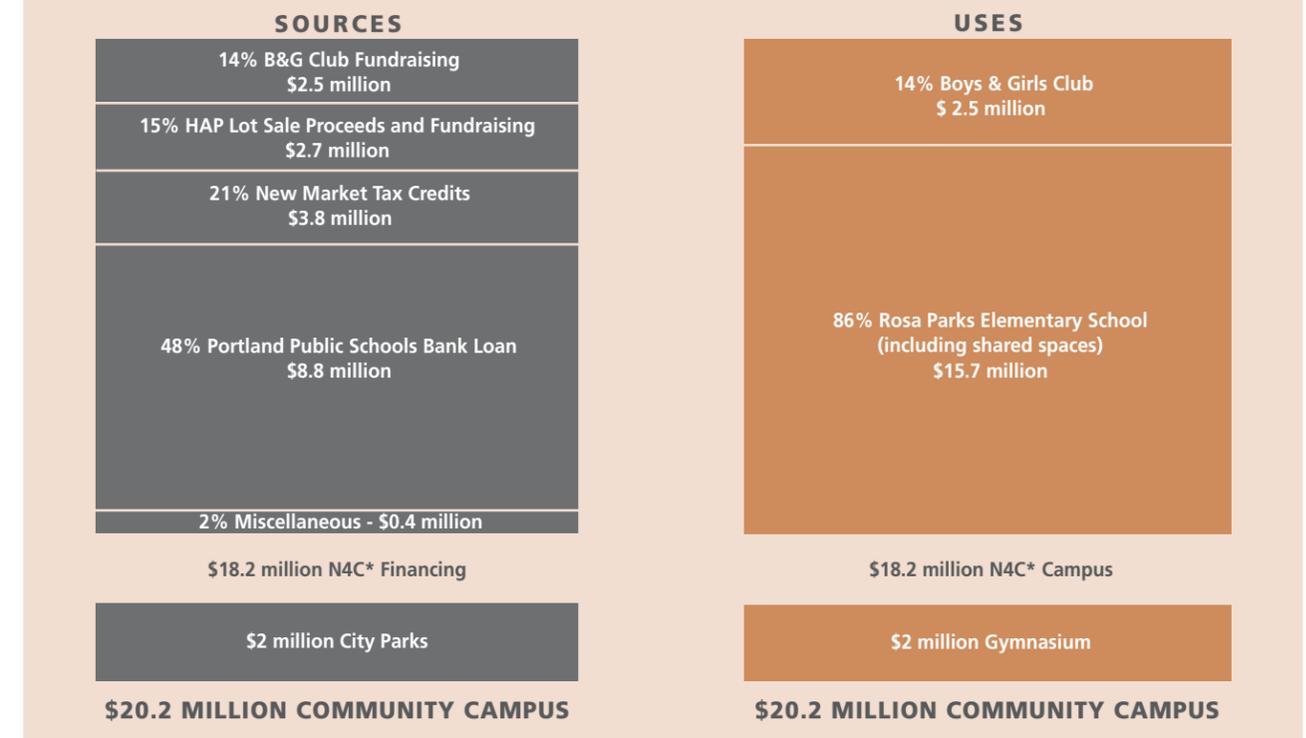


(A) Repayment of this loan provided by several sources, including Tax Increment Financing (Portland Development Commission), and Community Development Block Grant (Bureau of Housing and Community Development).

(B) Currently an estimate as final tax credit amounts are being determined.

(C) Total does not include cost of for sale homes.

## COMMUNITY CAMPUS SOURCES/USES OF FUNDING



\* The New Columbia Community Campus Corporation

# NEW COLUMBIA AWARDS

## Local and National Recognition

### Learning By Design – Grand Prize for Design Excellence for Rosa Parks School

Rosa Parks Elementary School was selected as the winner by a jury of leading educators, educational architects and facility planners. The 2008 issue of the journal *Learning By Design* will highlight the award and is distributed to 65,000 educational leaders, school board members and superintendents. The award will also receive recognition at the upcoming National School Boards Association meeting in March 2008 in Orlando, Florida.

### EPA National Award for Smart Growth Achievement – 2007 Winner in Overall Excellence

The United States Environmental Protection Agency recognized New Columbia for overall excellence in smart growth. Specifically, the award highlighted the community design process that resulted in a healthy, vibrant, and diverse community with environmental leadership demonstrated by LEED certification, innovative stormwater management, and a design that ensures pedestrian and bicycle connections to mass transit.

### Richard Riley 2007 Award – Rosa Parks School at New Columbia Community Campus

Named in honor of former US Secretary of Education Richard Riley, this annual award recognizes a school that best exemplifies the growing national trend of building schools as centers of community. Rosa Parks School at New Columbia's Community Campus was selected unanimously by a jury representing the American Architectural Foundation and KnowledgeWorks Foundation and honored at a ceremony in Washington DC in November 2007. In addition, the school will receive a \$10,000 prize.

### Portland Chapter American Institute of Architects (AIA) – 2007 Mayor's Award for Design Excellence for Rosa Parks/Regence Boys and Girls Club (Community Campus at New Columbia)

The Community Campus was recognized with the Mayor's Award during the 2007 Design Awards sponsored by AIA and the International Interior Design Association (IIDA) in a ceremony during October 2007.

### Columbia Slough Watershed Council 2007 Achievement Award

New Columbia's stormwater management system has been recognized as an "extraordinary project" and the largest green streets site in Portland that is contributing to improving water quality in the Columbia Slough. An awards celebration is scheduled on February 1, 2008 in northeast Portland.

### Readers' Choice Awards – Planned/Mixed Use Award (*Affordable Housing Finance Magazine, August 2007*)

Readers selected New Columbia from three finalists in this awards program category. The Readers' Choice Awards recognize developments that illustrate the diversity and quality of affordable housing being built today. The developments are home to working families, formerly homeless individuals, veterans, disabled people, and frail seniors.

### Regional Erosion Prevention Awards (awarded by the City of Portland)

New Columbia was recognized on June 8, 2007 for demonstrating exceptional performance in the field of erosion prevention and sediment control. This award recognizes HAP and its construction/design partners (especially Walsh Construction and KPFF Engineering) for ensuring that construction activities met the prevention goal of "Keeping the Dirt Where It Belongs."

### Affordable Housing Tax Credit Coalition – Charles L. Edson Tax Credit Excellence Awards: Honorable Mention

New Columbia was recognized with an honorable mention certificate during the 13<sup>th</sup> annual awards process administered by the Affordable Housing Tax Credit Coalition (AHTCC). With over 30 nominations in the "Metropolitan/Urban Housing" category, New Columbia was honored as one of the top five programs in the country at a Capitol Hill reception in Washington, D.C., on June 5, 2007.

### Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs (OAME) – Agency of the Year Award

The Housing Authority of Portland (HAP) was recognized as OAME's 2007 Agency of the Year at the annual OAME convention on May 10, 2007. During the luncheon awards ceremony, HAP was praised for achieving a 24 percent contracting rate with targeted D/M/W/ESB firms at New Columbia, representing over \$24 million dollars in the local economy. In addition, the award recognizes HAP's effort to exceed the agency's 20 percent targeted business contracting goal in its next HOPE VI redevelopment: Humboldt Gardens.

### Oregon Housing and Community Services Department (OHCS) – Excellence in Housing Awards: Housing Revitalization

New Columbia was recognized with a Housing Revitalization Award at the April 25, 2007 annual conference luncheon in Salem, Oregon. The award commended HAP's work in transforming an isolated, underdeveloped, and distressed 82-acre public housing site into a mixed-use community that has gracefully blended into the neighborhood.

### National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) – Three Merit Awards: Community Revitalization, Design for Transformations, and Transforming Lives During Community Revitalization

New Columbia has received recognition in three categories (overall revitalization, design and resident services) at the July NAHRO summer conference in Chicago, Illinois. In addition, judges forwarded each of the three New Columbia nominations on the "Award of Excellence" category—with additional review by both a regional jury and national jury members prior to the National Conference. New Columbia was one of five top award winners announced in October 2007.

### City of Portland, Office of Neighborhood Involvement – Spirit of Portland Award: Outstanding Partnership

The Community Campus of New Columbia's partners (HAP, Boys & Girls Club, Portland Public Schools, and Portland Parks & Recreation) were recognized at a ceremony at City Hall on December 13, 2006. Projects are evaluated in five categories: 1) assisting with implementing outstanding projects; 2) enriching and revitalizing community; 3) providing special services to citizens; 4) demonstrating responsiveness, creativity and civic values; and 5) raising cross-cultural awareness.

### National Association of Home Builders – 2006 Best In American Living Awards: Best Urban Smart Growth Neighborhood, Gold Award

In February 2007, New Columbia was honored as one of many recipients of the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Best in American Living Awards (BALA) presented in conjunction with the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) annual convention. The New Columbia design team was honored with a Gold Award in the Best Urban Smart Growth Neighborhood/Community category. Jointly sponsored by *Professional Builder* magazine and NAHB, these awards showcase homes that exemplify the "Best in American Living." A total of 106 award winners in 41 categories were chosen from more than 559 entries.

### Northwest Construction Magazine Best of 2006 Awards: Best Urban Planning

Walsh Construction was honored in December 2006 for its work as the Construction Manager/General Contractor (CM/GC) for New Columbia. The award recognized New Columbia as the "Best Urban Planning" development in Oregon and Washington.

### American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) – Engineering Excellence Awards: National and Statewide Recognition (2006)

KPFF Consulting Engineers was recognized for its work at New Columbia, "Oregon's largest green street neighborhood." Features that were noted include: a pioneering stormwater management system and a street system that now serves as threads to weave the community back into the larger urban fabric.



135 SW Ash Street  
Portland, Oregon 97204  
503-802-8300  
[www.hapdx.org](http://www.hapdx.org)