



West Calhoun Neighborhood Council
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West Calhoun Neighborhood Council's Action Requests
for the proposed **Dwell at Calhoun Greenway Land Use and Redevelopment Plan**
Voted on and Approved by WCNC board on June 12, 2012

ACTION REQUEST:

- West Calhoun Neighborhood Council (WCNC) opposes the limited parking capacity planned for the proposed development, Dwell at Calhoun Greenway, at 3129 Chowen Avenue South, Minneapolis. We advocate for one new parking space per new bedroom. The best practices in the rental industry of immediate demographically similar area support this as well, e.g. the recently opened The Ellipse at 3920 Excelsior Blvd., 2011 Minnesota Multi-Housing Award: MADACS Winner - Best New Development, has one parking space per bedroom.

ACTION REQUEST:

- WCNC requests a thorough traffic and parking study be done before moving forward on this development to quantify the present day vehicular as well as non-vehicular safety issues. WCNC has implemented two traffic Capstone studies through the University of Minnesota in anticipation of compounded non-vehicular and vehicular safety issues with SW LRT. The studies were of West Lake Street, Excelsior Blvd., and West Calhoun Parkway and severe non-vehicular issues are present today, even without the presence of the Dwell at Calhoun Greenway or the SW LRT West Calhoun Station.

ACTION REQUEST:

- WCNC has continuing concerns about the construction staging and parking accommodations. The proposal of contractors parking off-site or at a "distance" from the site is unrealistic since very few streets exist and other options are approximately a mile away. If the Dwell at Calhoun Greenway is built, SW LRT construction staging parking becomes virtually impossible. WCNC has continuing concerns about adequate guest parking.

1) The City's decision should be considered in light of the proposed SW LRT Line and Station adjacent to this proposed development. The City's philosophy of encouraging transit use and reducing dependency on vehicular transport, WCNC supports. Yet, the infrastructure, traffic configuration, transit parking options, transit connections and environmental impacts have not been addressed (nor even identified to date, due to the delayed release of the SW LRT Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)). While the goal is desirable, this approach puts the cart before the horse, especially if it is applied well before light rail is in place to siphon off commuters.

The Metropolitan Council has stated that the West Lake Station is very different and has put out to bid a request for contract consultation to identify circulation, land use changes, bike, walk and transit circulation, optimal platform location and integrated land use within the 1/2 mile radius of each SW LRT station. The contract is expected to begin in September. These findings would be beneficial to this parcel of land.

2) In response to WCNC's support for one new parking space per bedroom, the developer of Dwell at Calhoun Greenway to his credit offered to do so and the City Planning Staff advised against this. WCNC continues to oppose anything less than one new parking space per bedroom and supports this equation to provide a better chance for the development to succeed and stay successful.

3) WCNC stance is that the Dwell at Calhoun Greenway and the City need to respond to today's present infrastructure. It may be short-sighted to decrease parking before the creation of accessible mass transit. It is easier to start with ample parking spaces, and then reduce them than the other way around. Responding to today's transit limitations, will also lessen demand on public funding for future multi-modal capacity.

4) Currently, bus transport is limited to two in the area of the proposed development, Dwell at Calhoun Greenway. The density and transit options are out of proportion in the area of Dwell at Calhoun Greenway, like the Linden Corner development proposed in Linden Hills. This is not Uptown where there are 19 bus line options nor Downtown where there are 95 bus line options.

This neighborhood is adjacent to the number two most visited area in the State of Minnesota, the Chain of Lakes with 5,122,900* visitors in 2011. Fifty-five percent of all visits to regional parks and trails are considered "local" visits. A local visit is defined as a visit to a park or trail by a person who lives within the jurisdiction of the park agency that owns or operates that park or trail. Conversely, 45 percent of all visits to regional parks and trails are "non-local" visits, which clearly demonstrates that the system serves a regional audience.*

(*<http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/parks/ParksUseEstimate2011.pdf>)

The impact of these 45% on neighborhood parking, traffic congestion, pedestrian and biker safety at intersections has been tragically obvious. The safety and security of those visitors and these regional users as well as the health of the business community's vibrancy needs to be balanced with the City's desire for density and increase in non-vehicular transportation use in present day conditions.

5) Compound this with the land mass of The Minikahda Club and Lake Calhoun, unlike the Hiawatha LRT Line where the stations are set in "expandable" communities, the proposed West Lake LRT Station parking is finite - land locked with little opportunities for "excess" parking options. The one size fits all of zoning does not take into consideration the finite streets in the area. Dwell at Calhoun Greenway proposes to be built where there are few streets at all.

6) Based on the fact that all of the nearby parking spaces on Chowen Avenue South and all along West 32d Street are used by its current residents, it appears that the existing 440+ BR Calhoun Greenway does not have enough on-site parking for its current 450-500 residents, the great majority of whom have vehicles. Add to this the fact that users of the Midtown Greenway trail regularly park along Chowen toward Calhoun Commons, and users of Lake Calhoun also park on Chowen and 32nd because there is often no parking available nearer the lake at high-use times. There is clearly a severe parking problem that needs to be studied and addressed.

WCNC believes that not only does this feel like a "gamble" that residents at the Dwell at Calhoun Greenway will change their mentality towards having a car six years down the road, it also ignores the demographics of today where people that can afford to live in a new building by Lake Calhoun most likely have at least one car per person.

WCNC supports density and non-vehicular transportation. Although in light of the pending SW LRT development, while this may be outside of our jurisdiction, WCNC requests a moratorium on new development until the SW LRT DEIS is released, Metropolitan Council 1/2 mile radius identification study enlisted, appropriate response given and real infrastructure known.

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