



West Calhoun Neighborhood Council

Wavelength

November 2008

Newsletter for the West Calhoun Neighborhood by the West Calhoun Neighborhood Council

- West Calhoun boundaries are West Calhoun Parkway on the East, West Lake Street on the North, West 36th Street on the South and France Avenue on the West.
- The neighborhood includes Lake Calhoun's northern shoreline, Calhoun Commons and surrounding businesses, many residential buildings and 32 homes.

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New Meeting Location

WCNC meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at The Bakken, W. 36th St. & W. Calhoun Pkwy.

For more info, see page 2

SW Transitway May Include Park-and-Ride

Since May, members of the WCNC have been following developments in the proposed Southwest Transitway, a proposed light-rail commuter corridor from Eden Prairie to downtown Minneapolis. After years of study and discussion, the Southwest Transitway is quickly moving toward a reality.

The Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority has launched a formal Environmental Impact

Statement (EIS) process and is beginning to seek federal funds for the Transitway. The final route for the proposed light-rail line has yet to be determined. However, in all of the proposed routes, the Transitway will include a "West Lake Street" station in the West Calhoun neighborhood.

Preliminary designs place this train depot behind Whole Foods, where currently there is a bicycle and pedestrian access point to

the Midtown Greenway. Notably, early materials provided by the Railroad Authority indicate that the proposed West Lake Street station would also host a Park-and-Ride commuter facility (i.e. a parking ramp).

WCNC has joined with our neighbors, the Cedar-Isles-Dean Neighborhood Association (CIDNA), to voice concerns to the Railroad Authority over a parking ramp in our neighborhood.

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West Calhoun Park Board Update



In mid-September, the Executive Committee of the West Calhoun Neighborhood Council (WCNC) met with Alexander Zachary, the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board (MPRB) Planner for our area. We

discussed a number of issues that have been of concern in the neighborhood in recent years.

Traffic Calming

This summer, WCNC, working with the Minneapolis Park Police, looked into the possibility of installing a permanent, solar-powered speed radar sign on West Calhoun Parkway to help reduce traffic speeds. Ultimately, the Park Board had significant concerns about the ongoing maintenance of the sign, which

seemed to make it an impractical solution to the problem.

Our traffic calming concerns remain. The key issues that WCNC would like to address are: 1) The fact that there is no traffic calming for over one mile between Xerxes Avenue and Excelsior Boulevard, which creates dangerous conditions for pedestrians and 2) There are dangerous pedestrian crossings at the Lake Calhoun Executive Center

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With members of CIDNA's transit committee, members of WCNC have met with Councilmember Betsy Hodges to discuss the potential problems of such a facility. We have also provided comments to the Railroad Authority in the first stage of the EIS process (the "scoping phase" of the project).

We will continue to follow the development of the Transitway, comment at each stage of the process, and work with our neighbors and councilmembers to assure that a light-rail depot in West Calhoun befits the character of the neighborhood and improves – rather than obstructs – traffic flow in the area. WCNC believes that an LRT can be an important asset to the neighborhood and has high hopes the Railroad Authority will amend its early proposals.

Anyone who is interested in following the Southwest Transitway project more closely can attend a WCNC monthly meeting, call the WCNC hotline at 612-928-3511, e-mail WCNC at info@westcalhoun.org, or contact the Southwest Transitway Project Manager Katie Walker at Katie.Walker@co.hennepin.mn.us or call 612-348-9260 or write to Hennepin County Housing, Community Works and Transit, 417 North 5th St., Suite 320, Minneapolis, MN 55401.

For more information about the project, visit the Southwest Transitway website at www.southwesttransitway.org.

- Todd Wildermuth,
WCNC Vice Chair



New Meeting Space: The Bakken

We are very excited about our new meeting space, located at **The Bakken Library and Museum**, at the intersection of W. 36th Street & West Calhoun Parkway. The meeting rooms are cozy and inviting. Parking is available in the parking lot on the north side of the building and on West 36th Street. We hope to see you at future meetings. Everyone is welcome.

The Bakken is an independent, nonprofit educational institution that collects archival materials related to the history of electricity and magnetism in medicine and the life sciences. It was founded in 1975 by Earl E. Bakken, inventor of the first transistorized cardiac pacemaker and founder of Medtronic, Inc. For more information about The Bakken, visit their website at www.thebakken.org.

WCNC meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Gather in the lobby and we will be guided to our meeting space. Questions? Call 612-928-3511 or e-mail info@westcalhoun.org.

Park Board from page 1

and West 32nd Street. Alexander Zachary agreed to work with us on different options to control traffic speeds and the crossings noted.

Tree Planting/ Stump Removal

Paul Domholt of the Minneapolis Park Board Forestry Division has developed a tree planting and stump removal plan for the neighborhood for \$20,000. The plan is to remove 81 stumps in the neighbor-

hood, beginning this fall, and plant 34 new trees in Spring 2009. Any funds not spent in Spring 2009 will be carried over to subsequent years.

To help address the issue of adequate watering for the new trees on public lands, the Park Board will use "gator bags" on trees that will be planted along the lake or in the park. The bags are quickly filled, but allow water to be slowly dispersed to each tree. Other trees will require supplemental watering

next summer by adjacent residents or property owners.

Shoreline Restoration

The Park Board does not currently have funding for shoreline restoration. The estimate to make a difference at Lake Calhoun is \$350,000. WCNC has asked Alexander Zachary to be sure that West Calhoun stays in the queue for potential state funding for shoreline restoration.

Fishing Pier

MPRB Lakes District Manager Paul Hokeness

estimates that a new fishing pier (to replace the pier that was removed several years ago) would cost \$15,000. Alexander Zachary will keep us apprised of options to apply for grant funding in partnership with the Park Board or independently. WCNC would like to see a replacement pier in the neighborhood.

If you have questions or feedback about this article, please contact us at 612-928-3511 or at info@westcalhoun.org.



Get on Board!

Your West Calhoun Neighborhood Council is made up of five talented individuals who volunteer their time to make a difference in the neighborhood. Many thanks are due to Mari Taffe (Chair), Todd Wildermuth (Vice Chair), Barb Stevens (Treasurer), Rosemary Lundell and George Effrem. **There are up to 9 seats on the Board, so 4 seats are currently open.** Being on the Board gives you an opportunity to impact what happens in our neighborhood. Upcoming issues include SW LRT and a potential transit station behind Whole Foods and the Lake Calhoun Master Plan. To get involved, contact us at 612-928-3511 or info@westcalhoun.org.

Wanted: Community-Spirited Gardeners



We're looking for a few green thumbs to help maintain the community garden at the Midtown Greenway access point behind Whole Foods, starting in Spring 2009. If you're interested in joining other neighborhood gardeners in this effort, please contact us at 612-928-3511 or info@westcalhoun.org.

Council Member's Corner

Future of NRP

by Ward 13 Council Member
Betsy Hodges ♦ 612-673-2213

For years now it has been an open question what would happen to neighborhood organizations and funding when the current Neighborhood Revitalization Program sunsets in 2009. At the September 26th City Council meeting, my colleagues and I answered a big part of that question. Following the recommendations of the Framework for the Future developed by the NRP Working Group (on which I served), we agreed to create the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department (NCR) and the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC).

The new city department will be charged with encouraging vigorous community

participation, promoting resident involvement in neighborhood and community organizations, and supporting clearly defined links between the City, City services and neighborhood and community organizations. The creation of the NCR department allows the city to better manage and improve all the interactions our departments have with residents and community organizations.

The Commission will be an all-resident board that will oversee all of the city's community engagement work, including NRP. The NCEC will provide direction to the next phase of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program. The NCEC will comprise sixteen city residents: eight appointed by neighborhood organizations, five appointed by the Council, two by the Mayor, and one by the Park Board.

The next step in the process will be to determine the funding for the program after 2009. The Mayor recommended in his budget that \$8 million per year from the new TIF districts authorized by the Legislature this year be directed toward neighborhoods, both for basic neighborhood services and for neighborhood-directed projects. This is in addition to \$10 million a year to pay down debt on the Target Center, the only other authorized use for funds from the new tax districts.

I have been proud to work on this issue for the last year, both on the NRP Work Group and advocating for the funding at the Capitol as Chair of the Intergovernmental Relations Committee. The actions the City is taking now will ensure long-term, stable funding for neighborhoods

while increasing transparency and accountability to residents and taxpayers. At the same time, we are maintaining and increasing the capacity created in neighborhoods in the first two phases of NRP. As I said at the Council meeting, it is a new day for neighborhoods in Minneapolis – but the same sun is rising.

As always, please call me if you have any questions at 612-673-2213.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Betsy Hodges".

Ward 13 Breakfast

3rd Wednesday
of each month
Pearson's Restaurant
50th St. & Ewing Ave. S.
8:00 a.m.



**West Calhoun
Neighborhood Council**

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*West Calhoun Neighborhood
Council meets the second
Tuesday of each month at 7:00
p.m., at The Bakken. All
business and residential neigh-
bors are welcome to attend.
You can leave a message with
comments, questions or concerns
on the West Calhoun
Neighborhood Council
Voicemail Hotline at
612-928-3511 or at
info@westcalhoun.org.*

West Calhoun is online!



www.westcalhoun.org

Check out our website for updates on neighborhood issues, the WCNC Calendar, meeting information, interesting historical facts, and contact information.

Let us know what else you would like to see online. What would be most helpful for you as a resident or business owner? Send your feedback to info@westcalhoun.org or call us at 612-928-3511.