



WEST CALHOUN
neighborhood council

3537 Zenith Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55416

December 15, 2017

Rob Bader
President
Bader Development
3020 France Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55416

Dear Mr. Bader,

Thank you very much for taking the time to bring your architects and planners to explain the concept plan for the Calhoun Towers site. While we recognize that the plan may change for a number of reasons, including the still uncertain fate of light rail, we wanted to raise our concerns at an early date to give time for proper due diligence, review, design and public input as follows:

Traffic – The additional traffic that the project would bring to an already congested and poorly designed neighborhood is a key concern for all stakeholders living in the neighborhood, as well as people visiting or passing through.

Unfortunately, our roads simply cannot absorb any more cars, especially during rush hour. The location of this project would mean a major increase in traffic — slowing on-off traffic on Excelsior Boulevard. If light rail comes to West Calhoun there will be massive increases in Abbott Avenue traffic heading to the station, for both buses (that do not use the street now) and cars.

We ask that the scope of the traffic study examine the capacity of the following streets to handle the traffic from the development, both with and without a light rail station: Excelsior Boulevard, 32nd Street West, Abbott Avenue and Chowen Avenue. Based on the results of the traffic study, we ask that the developer make an appropriate financial contribution toward improving the alignment of Abbott, Chowen and 31st streets to enhance safety and traffic flow to the main road. Depending upon the findings of the study, traffic signals and medians should be considered for the Abbott/Excelsior intersection, addressing rush hour congestion, as well as off-hour traffic speeds.

Parking – Today's young professionals cannot give up cars because many work in areas not served by public transit, and use cars to visit family and friends outside the metro. In fact, inadequate parking is the leading cause for young renters to move out of West Calhoun. We cannot absorb even one more car parking on our streets, and the new LRT station would likely mean one-side only parking through the entire Abbott-Chowen- 32nd loop—a huge loss of parking based on current residences and infrastructure. The project could easily increase the numbers of cars in West Calhoun by a third or more. We recognize that more parking spaces will likely result in more automobile use, but until such time that the region has a fully

612-584-9166
info@westcalhoun.org
westcalhoun.org

developed public transit and car share system, automobile ownership and adequate on-site parking is an absolute necessity for current and future residents of the project.

The parking issue is not only an infrastructure issue but a critical safety issue. When cars are parked tightly (and, at times, illegally), it detrimentally affects access for emergency vehicles, especially during winter. This is the case for all surrounding roads of the project, namely Abbott, Chowen and 32nd. With limited parking already, reductions will mean longer walks for residents, visitors, and people who drive to work in our neighborhood, which at certain times of day, can be unsafe.

We ask that the traffic study use both baseline and increased assumptions about number of parking stalls to examine the number of residents' cars that would be parked on streets relative to current street parking capacity.

We ask that the City consider this concern in deciding how many parking stalls to allow in the proposed multi-story parking garage, especially given the uncertainty of LRT and the current need for residents to own a car. We recommend 1 stall per 1 bedroom (1:1) with a minimum percentage of parking stalls equipped with Level II electric vehicle charging capability.

While it is our hope as a neighborhood that LRT is eventually built and utilized by residents and visitors alike, we cannot continue new development under that assumption, especially in the current political climate and uncertainty of public funding, grants, tax credits, etc. We must be proactive, yet diligent, with thoughtful use and design in relation to urban density in an established neighborhood.

In view of uncertainty about the timing of the light rail line, as well as the long-term potential for a lower ratio of vehicle ownership per resident (as self-driving vehicles and car sharing become prevalent), we ask that the parking structure be built at a ratio of one parking stall per bedroom for the initial phase of construction, subsequently bringing the ratio down by adding more apartments without adding more parking, if in fact light rail and changing automobile ownership trends make additional parking space unnecessary.

We'd also like to see a proposed plan for displaced parkers during the construction period.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure – The concept plan outlines proposed pedestrian and bicycle paths through the development site.

We ask that the final plan show a network of such paths to ensure that residents and light rail users will have safe and convenient passage between all residential structures, the light rail station, Calhoun Commons, the Greenway/Lake Calhoun bikeways, and bus stops along Excelsior Boulevard.

The plan should also provide for a minimum of one indoor bicycle parking stand for each bedroom in each building.

Public Spaces (indoor or outdoor) – Looking to its' peers planning ahead for future LRT, we'd point to a Doran Companies development (the Moline) at the planned Hopkins LRT station which has built a bike/commuter lounge attached to the building.

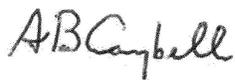
We ask that Bader Development consider such an amenity for this project. We'd also ask Bader to consider reserving some of its' ongoing capital improvement reserve funds for other public space/beautification if and when the West Lake LRT station is built given the proximity, and for enhancing the street level experience whether or not the LRT station is built

Stormwater Management – The site has a high and fluctuating water table and is served by antiquated storm sewers. We ask that the Environmental Assessment Worksheet fully consider potential impacts of the development on the existing storm sewers, drainage, groundwater table and lake water quality.

Architecture – The existing Calhoun Tower, with or without the colored lights on the roof, is a dull, boring building that is not an addition to the neighborhood or the skyline.

We strongly recommend that Bader pursue a design direction that is not just “classic”. With three tall buildings grouped together this project will have a large presence on the skyline and the neighborhood. The design needs to be strong enough to make this presence positive and additive to the city. The design should also not merely follow the cookie cutter style of newer apartment buildings in the area, which employ a mix of blocks of colors and materials. The design needs to create an urban community. When completed, this project should be a Class A complex with the potential to set a new bar for urban tower old and new.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Allan Campbell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Allan Campbell, WCNC President
On behalf of the WCNC

CC: Linea Palmisano, Marion Greene