

East Calhoun Community Organization



January 11, 2018

Peter Crandall, City Planner, City of Minneapolis
Department of Community Planning & Economic Development, Planning Division
250 South 4th Street, Room 300
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Minneapolis City Council President Lisa Bender
350 South 5th Street, Room 307
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Re: Sons of Norway Redevelopment Project

Dear Mr. Crandall and Council President Bender:

On January 10, 2018, the East Calhoun Community Organization (ECCO) electronically voted to oppose the request by Ryan Companies to increase the zoning for the south building of the Sons of Norway redevelopment from R4 to R6. This opposition also includes any related exceptions to the zoning ordinance that could be granted by the Planning Commission to increase the maximum height of structures in the Planned Unit Development application process.

The majority of residents of our neighborhood are very concerned about the proposed increase of residents that this very large project would bring to the neighborhood. We are currently experiencing excessive traffic and lack of on-street parking and believe that the present R4 designation recognizes this reality.

The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth designates this location to be R4 (four stories). The Uptown Small Area Plan calls for it to be mixed use and to be “carefully integrated into the existing residential fabric by stepping down in scale as they (the buildings) approach existing residential buildings on the side streets.”

The first purpose listed in the Minneapolis Ordinances for zoning (520.30 – Purpose) is “To implement the policies of the comprehensive plan.” What can be the purpose of adopting a city comprehensive plan and a small area plan if they are to be ignored?

On April 2, 2010, the City Council adopted the Midtown Greenway Rezoning Study, which down zoned 3016 Holmes Avenue from MULTI (split zoning of C3A and OR1) to R4. While we understand that the development of this site is inevitable, we request that the city hold any developer to the current zoning, follow the Uptown Small Area Plan and ensure that there will be a thoughtful transition from the commercial district and commercial corridors into our neighborhood.

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We are also very concerned with the physical effect on our neighborhood of the proposed building massing (with the R6 zoning) facing Holmes Avenue and 31st Street. As planned, the development would create a canyon effect on Holmes from Lake to 31st Street.

Parking is another concern for residents of East Calhoun and adjacent neighborhoods. The plan is for the development residents to rent parking located in the basement. Many renters will choose to park for free on the nearby streets, as will their visitors. Next year the City will eliminate parking on Hennepin Avenue from Lake to 31st Street and on the west side of Hennepin from 31st Street to 36th Street, which will cause many persons to seek parking within the East Calhoun neighborhood. Combined with the proposed massive development this will turn our neighborhood into a parking lot.

Traffic has also become a major concern for East Calhoun. The enormous traffic coming in from the west on Lake Street often chooses to go through East Calhoun rather than trying to go through the Hennepin/Lake intersection. The Travel Demand Management Plan conducted by Swing Traffic Solutions says that the 340 new parking stalls will not significantly increase the levels of traffic or the length of cars waiting in line. We find this hard to believe, and note that the study actually says that the eastbound PM queue at Humboldt Ave. and Lake St. will decrease from 392 feet to 351 feet with this development! The traffic study was conducted mid October and it does not take seasonal traffic into account. The study also neglects other planned construction projects and the upcoming changes to Hennepin Avenue from 31st Street to 36th Street.

The effects of these traffic and parking items, when combined, will dramatically and negatively shift driving patterns into the neighborhoods surrounding Hennepin and Lake.

East Calhoun is a neighborhood of single and multi family dwellings; 76% of our residents rent their homes, duplexes or apartments (source: Minnesota Compass, 2011-2015). While we recognize the desire of the City to facilitate new housing construction, we feel developers are excessively targeting this desirable neighborhood such that it will become undesirable.

We urge you to reject the proposed rezoning and ask Ryan Companies to come back with an alternative proposal that accomplishes the goals of the Uptown Small Area Plan and creates an appropriate transition from high density along Lake Street to residential single family homes and duplexes on 31st Street.

Thank you for hearing our concerns.

Sincerely,



Ralph Knox, President, East Calhoun Community Organization

ECCO Board members:

Gary Farland	Rhoda Reighard	Luke Schaan	Caroline Vaaler
Bobbie Keller	Amy Rutherford	Judy Shields	Jenny Walter
Marya Morstad	Mary Sabatke	Lee Todd	

cc: Tony Barranco, Ryan Companies