

**Community Participation Program
2012 Annual Report**

Neighborhood Organization: West Calhoun Neighborhood Council

Contact Person: Rhea Sullivan, Coordinator

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1. Stakeholder Involvement

What outreach and engagement activities did you carry out in 2012?

WCNC outreach in 2012 included:

- Periodic e-news and monthly meeting notices
- A Spring and Fall *Wavelength* newsletter mailed to every resident
- A “Businesses at the Edge of Lake Calhoun” brochure mailed to every resident
- Regular updates to www.westcalhoun.org website

How did you reach out to and involve under-represented communities in 2012?

WCNC successfully engaged more business owners through the creation of “Businesses at the Edge of Lake Calhoun” business association which meets regularly to address issues important to businesses and the neighborhood. The association created decals that were brought to neighborhood businesses and distributed them through one-on-one personal contacts by a volunteer and then by the Coordinator. WCNC has also continued to work to build the business email list.

Through mailings email notices and posting notices in building lobbies, WCNC has reached more renters. We currently have more renter representation on our Board of Directors.

Did you find any strategies to be particularly successful? Why?

The newsletter is probably our most successful tool for reaching residents because it goes to everyone in the neighborhood.

What did not work so well? Why?

The decals, though good in theory, were difficult to disseminate. There was a membership form to sign off on to get a decal and it was necessary to reach the manager or owner in order to get the form signed. Often the manager or owner was not available and so it required a return trip to get the form signed.

How many people did you reach through direct contact (door knocking, meetings, one-on-ones)?

I estimate that we reached approximately 25 people through direct contact.

How many individuals volunteered in organization’s activities?

Approximately 31.

How many individuals participated in your organization’s activities?

Approximately 85.

How many people receive your print publications?

1,560 households receive our print publications.

How many people receive your electronic communications?

180 people receive our electronic communications.

2. 2012 Highlights

One of the 2012 highlights was the Walking Workshop that was held on October 22, 2012. The West Calhoun neighborhood has a very high level of traffic and it can be dangerous for pedestrians to navigate the area. The purpose of the workshop was to bring together neighborhood stakeholders and City and Hennepin County staff to actually walk the neighborhood to take note of challenges for pedestrians. Hennepin County Commissioner Gail Dorfman and Ward 13 Councilmember Betsy Hodges attended, along with key County and City staff people who deal with transportation issues.



Hennepin County Commissioner Gail Dorfman will be giving us an update on outcomes from the Walking Workshop at our Annual Meeting in May 2013.

Another highlight was the Joint Neighborhood Coalition that was formed by Cedar -Isles- Dean Neighborhood Association (CIDNA), West Calhoun Neighborhood Council (WCNC), Kenwood Isles Area Association (KIAA), Cedar Lake Park Association (CLPA), Calhoun Isles Condominium Association (CICA) and Cedar Lake Shores Townhome Association (CLSTA). The group spent several months working together to craft a joint response to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Southwest Transitway. This was a huge undertaking, with a thousand pages to be read and analyzed. The pages were split up between members of the coalition. This work also informed the individual responses that the neighborhood associations made to the DEIS. It was a great example of team work and what neighborhoods can accomplish if they work together.

3. 2012 Accomplishments

What were your organization's major accomplishments in 2012?

One of our key accomplishments was the formation of the Businesses at the Edge of Lake Calhoun business association. The association grew out of a SW LRT Stakeholders Group that was formed to engage neighborhood businesses in planning for the Southwest Transitway. The business association was formed in Spring of 2012. One of the first activities was a day-long Wellness Event held on April 21, 2012. Located at the northwest edge of Lake Calhoun and adjacent to the Midtown Greenway, Businesses at The Edge largely focus on health and wellness-related activities. More than a dozen businesses participated through demonstrations and special promotions. There was also a bloodmobile.

Other business association activities included the printing and distribution of a shopping guide brochure to promote the businesses in the neighborhood and the installation of four marketing sails. The association also held meetings to keep businesses apprised of the progress of the Southwest Transitway. The association also responded to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

The impact of the business association has yet to be seen. One of the key goals is to build awareness of the shops in the neighborhood and to encourage residents to shop locally. The hope is also that with an increase in events and activities, the Edge will become a more active partner in West Calhoun planning and policy decisions.

We also coordinated an Earth Day Clean Up on the west side of Lake Calhoun (20+ residents). After the event, neighborhood residents and visitors to the lake were able to enjoy a cleaner, trash-free environment.

Volunteers this year also participated in many SW LRT-related activities (advisory groups, the Joint Neighborhood Coalition, DEIS comments and related meetings, support for the Capstone studies that were still ongoing, sponsoring the Walking Workshop and participating in the Park Board's design charrette.) Our involvement in all of these activities helped to keep us informed and proactive regarding the Southwest Transitway planning.

4. Housing

What percentage of time did your organization spend on housing-related activities?

0%. West Calhoun is a unique neighborhood in that there are few homes. Most of the neighborhood housing units are apartment buildings or condominiums.

5. Financial Reports

See separate document.

In addition to your annual report, please take time to describe your interactions with City departments and other jurisdictions.

1. **Impact**

What interactions with City departments occupied a major part of your time? What worked well? What could be improved?

Most of our interactions were with NCR or with the Development Finance Division for contracting NRP strategies and completing CORF reports. City staff were very helpful in answering questions and helping with these things.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate your overall experience with your interactions with the City? ___4_____

2. **City Communications – effectiveness**

Is the information that you receive from the City understandable and useful?

Generally. Long policy documents are difficult to wade through and I often wish for a Cliff Notes version that highlights the key points.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate overall communications from the City? ___3_____

3. **City Communications – timeliness**

Do you receive adequate notice of City activities in your neighborhood? If not, did your organization inform somebody at the City of this? Did the City respond in a positive manner? Please explain.

The only notices the neighborhood receives are for Planning Applications, which are always timely.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate the timeliness of communications from the City? ___4_____

4. **City Departments**

How can City departments improve the way in which they function in your neighborhood?

Continue communication about issues that affect West Calhoun.

5. **City Assistance**

How can the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department improve the assistance it provides to your organization as a community participation group?

It would be great to see our NCR Specialist at at least one meeting per year.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, how would you rate the assistance provided to your neighborhood by NCR? ___4_____

6. **Other comments?**

None.