

A LOOK AT THE FUTURE OF BUSINESSES AT CALHOUN SQUARE:

BY JAKE WEYER

The Minneapolis Planning Commission approved redevelopment plans for Calhoun Square after its third review of the project March 31 at a regular meeting in City Hall.

The commission postponed a decision on the project in early February when it needed more time to review a travel demand plan and again later that month because of concerns about whether the development's public amenities were adequate.

Developers came to the March meeting with significantly revised plans and left with smiles and a great sense of relief knowing they could get started on the long-awaited redevelopment of the Hennepin & Lake shopping center.

"We're thrilled," said Jim Larson, senior vice president of leasing for Calhoun Square's property manager, Minnetonka-based Capital Growth Madison Marquette. "We think the project is better than it was and we're really excited. We can't wait to move forward."

Larson said work on the center, which will combine new and existing infrastructure, should commence this spring or early summer, starting with an addition to the existing parking ramp that would increase its capacity by 300 spaces.

Other development features include a completely remodeled mall interior with more retail space and two public seating areas, redesigned entrances with a "red carpet" motif made of brick pavers, a public plaza along Girard Avenue and a larger public gathering space outside the Hennepin Avenue entrance.

A later phase of the project calls for a seven-story, 84-foot building along Lake Street to the East of the mall and a five-story, 62-foot building at Hennepin Avenue and 31st Street. The buildings would contain a total of 108 residential units.

Most of the latest revisions involved improving the Girard plaza and hiding the parking ramp. The newest plaza design includes five multicolored clay pavers, new landscaping and planters and a parking ramp hidden behind large, colorful art panels and a green screen.

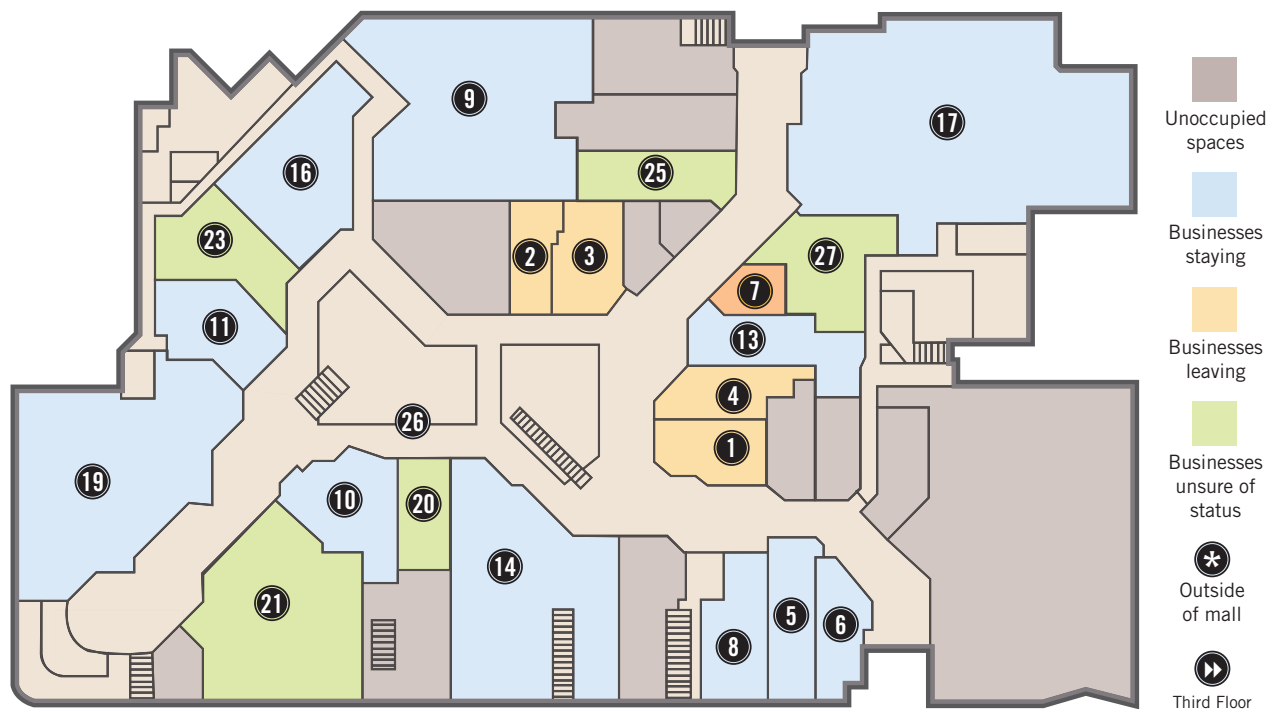
"We have taken to heart the comments that we heard a month ago and we have really put our design efforts into it to reconnect Girard to the neighborhood, to the street, and activate that space and really turn Calhoun square inside out so we could provide an engaging space on all sides of the property," said John Dietrich, a principal land development specialist with RLK Inc. in Minnetonka, which is part of the Calhoun Square design team.

Calhoun Square tenants and neighborhood representatives were also at the meeting. Some residents were still concerned that the development lacked enough amenities to warrant height variances, but said the plans have improved and the developers have been easy to work with so far.

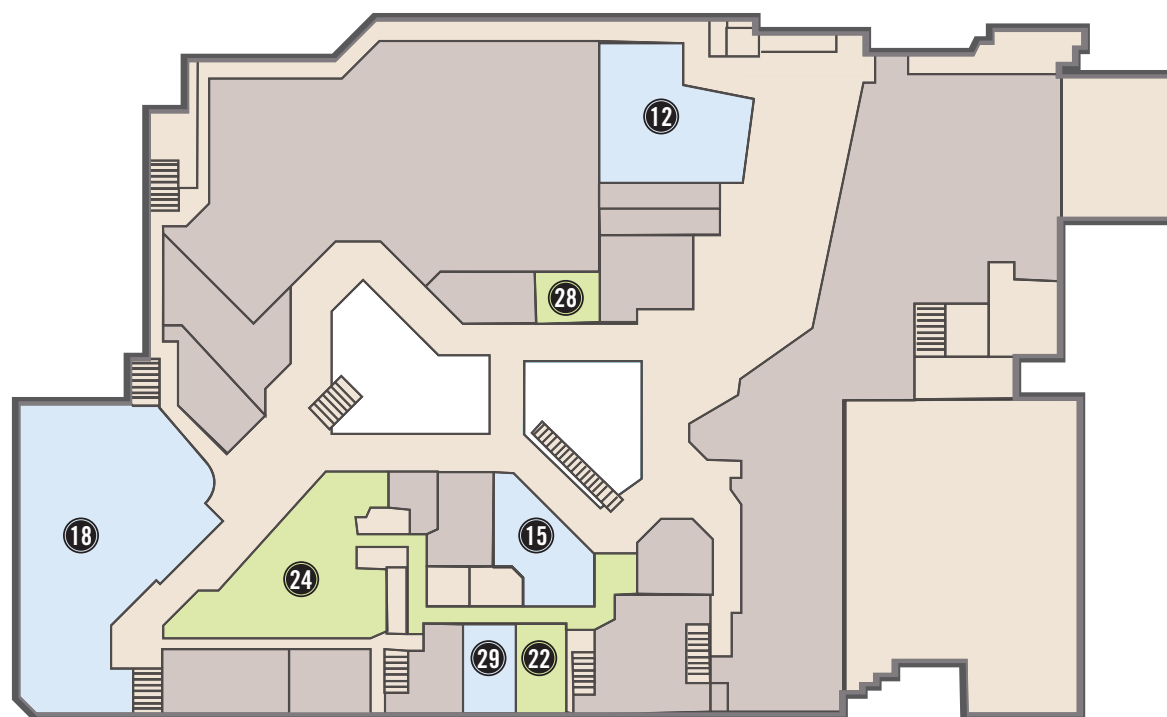
Planning Commissioner Lara Norkus-Crampton, who lives in Uptown, said the delay in approving Calhoun Square was necessary and worth it to get the community feedback and design changes that led to the final plan.

An earlier redevelopment plan for Calhoun Square

First Floor • Existing Calhoun Square floorplan



Second Floor • Existing Calhoun Square floorplan



MAPS BY SAMANTHA DUCAS

was approved in 2005, but former owner Principal Financial Group of Des Moines, Iowa, opted to sell the mall after the housing market imploded. Current owner BlackRock, a New York-based investment firm, bought the mall in August for more than \$47 million and retained Capital Growth Madison Marquette as the property manager.

As the mall's makeover nears, some tenants are preparing for their last days in the center. Others are eagerly awaiting new spaces and some don't know what

the future holds.

Calhoun Square management declined to comment on individual lease agreements or why some tenants have been asked to leave — though several were vacated from buildings slated for demolition. New tenants including a large fitness center are also planned, but names haven't been disclosed yet.

The Southwest Journal checked in with Calhoun Square's existing tenants to see what they know so far. *Note: The mall will remain open during renovations.*

Rapport Law Offices

Description: law office

Plans: The Mankato-based law office is on a month-to-month lease and is not sure whether it will keep its Calhoun Square office.

Magnetic Originals

Description: hand crafted magnets and art retailer

Plans: Owner Jeff Gauss said his lease ended April 1 and he expected to switch to a month-to-month lease afterward. But he said his time in Calhoun Square was probably limited. "I'm planning to stay until they kick me out," he said.

Status

Description: shoe retailer

Plans: Owner Sly Peoples said he was "just waiting it out." He said he's been in negotiations with management somewhat but is waiting to see what new businesses are coming to Calhoun Square.

Seasons in Calhoun

Description: apparel retailer

Plans: The kiosk would like to stay in Calhoun Square but has no agreement to do so yet.

WHO KNOWS?

WHO'S GOING?

4 Paws Boutique 1

Description: dog clothing and supply store

Plans: 4 Paws was given notice to leave and closed March 31. The store sold its remaining inventory to another local pet store. The owners have no plans to open elsewhere at this time.

Lotus *

Description: Vietnamese restaurant

Plans: Lotus closed its 3037 Hennepin Ave. S. location in late March after receiving a letter to vacate Calhoun Square. Owners were looking for a new space in the area.

Agan Traders 2

Description: clothing, jewelry and accessories retailer

Plans: The business was told to be out of the mall this spring. The owners were looking for a new space in Uptown.

Passage to India *

Description: Indian restaurant

Plans: The 1401 W. Lake St. business closed March 31 after receiving a letter to vacate Calhoun Square. Owners were looking for a new space in the area.

TCM Health Center *

Description: traditional Chinese medical clinic

Plans: The 1403 W. Lake St. center will close this spring and move to a new location in the Lumen on Lagoon condominium building at Lagoon and Emerson avenues.

ZRS Fossils 3

Description: fossil and stone gift store

Plans: ZRS was given notice to leave and will close its Calhoun Square store April 20. Owner Kelly Lund said the store would reopen in May in the much larger former French Antiques building at 3018 Lyndale Ave. S.

URBAN Traveler 4

Description: travel goods retailer

Plans: Owner Willy van Dooijeweert said earlier this year that he received notice to leave the mall. He has an agreement for a new space at 1426 W. Lake St. and hopes to move his business there this month.

Rotisserie *

Description: Greek and pizza restaurant

Plans: The business, in a building slated for demolition, closed its 1409 W. Lake St. location in February, shortly after opening a new restaurant at 1532 E. Lake St. Owner Kino Hamshari said he was looking at other Uptown spaces in the hopes of opening another restaurant there someday.

Jimmy Johns 5

Description: sandwich shop

Plans: Jimmy Johns plans to stay.

Kuhlman Outlet 16

Description: men's and women's clothing retailer

Plans: The business plans to remain in Calhoun Square.

Leaving temporarily

Sox Appeal 7

Description: socks retailer

Plans: Store manager Wade Lehmann said the store would close by April, but it has an agreement to return when construction is finished.

Aura

Description: American restaurant

Plans: Aura will be staying in Calhoun Square and expanding its existing space.

Chiang Mai Thai 9

Description: Thai restaurant

Plans: The restaurant will stay in its existing location.

Sushi Tango 12

Description: sushi restaurant

Plans: The owners still have a long-term lease and plan on staying in the mall.

Bay Street Shoes 10

Description: shoe retailer

Plans: The business will stay in Calhoun Square, but move into a new space that is roughly double its current size.

Eyedeals 11

Description: eyewear retailer and optometry clinic

Plans: Owner David Daly said Eyedeals has a long-term lease and will be staying at its present location.

VisionWorld 13

Description: eyewear retailer and optometry clinic

Plans: The store will get a new space in the revamped shopping center.

Kitchen Window and Kitchen Window's 14

Description: kitchenware retailer and cooking school

Plans: Owner Doug Huemoeller said Kitchen Window and its school will be staying but moving into a new, expanded space.

Starbucks 6

Description: coffee shop

Plans: Starbucks will stay.

Famous Dave's BBQ & Blues 17

Description: barbecue restaurant

Plans: The business will stay in its existing location and is looking at remodeling options.

Figlio 19

Description: Italian/American restaurant

Plans: Figlio will stay in the same area, but undergo a major remodel.

The Independent 18

Description: American restaurant and bar

Plans: The business plans to stay in Calhoun Square.

Atmosfere and Vstate 21

Description: men and women's clothing retailer

Plans: The recently merged businesses hope to stay in Calhoun Square through the end of the year or longer, but don't know if that will be possible. They are not actively looking for a new location.

"It'll be a tough spot to leave when it comes down to it," said Vstate owner Dan Vargas.

Minneapolis Rolfling Center/Radiant Life Eating 22

Description: bodywork and chiropractic services provider and educator/healthy eating program

Plans: Owner Mark Powell said he would like to stay, but has no agreement to do so yet.

Moxie Inc. 25

Description: coaching, consulting and medication services

Plans: Couldn't be reached for comment.

Comedy Sportz 24

Description: comedy theater

Plans: Owners undecided.

Bremer Bank 20

Description: bank

Plans: The bank will stay in the mall during construction and plans to be part of the new development.

Ivy 23

Description: women and men's clothing retailer

Plans: The business would like to stay in Calhoun Square, but has no agreement to do so yet. Ivy president Ini Iyamba said he has been in negotiations with Calhoun Square management and has been looking at spaces outside the mall. He said his ultimate goal is to stay in Uptown.

WHO'S STAYING?

General Nutrition Center 25

Description: nutrition center

Plans: Employees were not certain whether the center would stay in Calhoun Square.