

ECCO Neighborhood Name Change Report, June 2021

Executive Summary

In early 2021, the ECCO Neighborhood Board, responding to Board members and the broader community, decided to initiate discussions about potentially changing our neighborhood name. It formed a Naming Committee, which drafted an engagement plan (see appendix) and undertook a program of neighborhood outreach. This resulted in a vote in April, with online and mail-in options, that asked two questions:

- Do you wish to change our neighborhood name, ECCO? yes/no
- Please vote on an alternative neighborhood name: East Bde Maka Ska, Uptown Lakeside, or East Lakeside. (These three options were chosen as they were top vote-getters during the second round of voting in 2019.)

Results

547 valid votes were cast, with 75% voting yes to change the neighborhood name. On the second question, the winning name was East Bde Maka Ska with 43.7% of the votes, followed by Uptown Lakeside with 37.5% and East Lakeside with 14.1%. 4.7% of voters did not select a name choice.

Success of Outreach

During a similar election in 2019, the number of votes was 504, which we exceeded significantly. More generally, we conducted a virtual town hall in late January 2021 with dozens of attendees and vigorous discussion, nearly all in favor of a new name. Simultaneously, we opened an online comment form, to which over 100 residents contributed comments, the vast majority desiring a new name for the neighborhood. We also received many emails from residents, which we read and discussed. We have sent regular updates and communications around this issue through our email listserv.

The Naming Committee then developed a six-page informational mailer, which was mailed to every ECCO household in early March (see appendix). We held an online informational session later that month to engage with the neighborhood on questions around the voting process.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank those who helped support the committee's work:

- Authorization and Budget: ECCO Board
- Mailer and Flyer Designs: Caroline Vaaler
- Persons who served on the panel to tabulate results: Lee Todd, Sarah Buchlaw, Monica Smith
- The volunteers associated with the Naming Committee who donated hundreds of hours of work.

Expenses

The cost of two mailings was \$3,108. Expected expenses include: legal fees of \$355 for changing the organization's name in the Articles of Incorporation, State of Minnesota and IRS; neighborhood boundary signs (printing and labor to hang signs) of up to \$2,000; and graphic design fees for new logo (TBD) .

Background and Timeline

In 2019, the East Calhoun Community Organization (ECCO) engaged in an extensive process to change our neighborhood name. It involved significant community outreach and three rounds of voting. In retrospect, the ECCO Board felt that mistakes were made in this 2019 process. There was confusion about what our neighborhood name actually was prior to 2019; city documents referred to it as "East Calhoun," but also simply as "ECCO." ECCO had also been in common use as the neighborhood name, along with East Calhoun. The ballot questions and options didn't make these ambiguities clear. The question of whether to change or keep "East Calhoun Community Organization" as our name was thus flawed, but resulted in 63.7% of neighbors desiring a name change. The non-acronym option "ECCO" came in as one of the top two choices in a second round of voting, and the third and final ballot resulted in a narrow 52.6% victory for ECCO over East Bde Maka Ska.

Since that vote in late 2019, much happened. The state Supreme Court upheld the renaming of Lake Calhoun to Bde Maka Ska. Many area businesses removed Calhoun from their names. The murder of George Floyd occasioned a local and national reckoning over systemic racism. Many neighbors felt that ECCO still contains an implicit reference to Calhoun, and are aware that this causes pain for indigenous and Black people. For these reasons, the ECCO neighborhood board reopened the name change process.

In January 2021, the ECCO Board created a new Naming Committee to oversee a potential name-change process. The Naming Committee developed an Engagement Plan, which was shared with our City Council representative, Council President Lisa Bender. NCR approved our plan, and we then began its implementation, which included:

- Frequent email communications to the neighborhood.
- January-February 2021: a virtual Town Hall Forum held on January 28 with 45 attendees and over 100 response to an online comment form that asked residents to respond to three questions:
 - How do you feel about the neighborhood's current name, "ECCO"?
 - What values should our neighborhood name represent?
 - The 2019 name change process identified ten alternate potential neighborhood names, and those that got the most votes were, in order: East Bde Maka Ska, Uptown Lakeside, and East Lakeside. How do you feel about these names?
- March 2021: a mailer to all residents introduced the process for reconsidering the neighborhood name, provided information about the indigenous history of the neighborhood, shared information about the names under consideration, included a FAQ section and invited residents to attend an Information Session held on March 29.

- April 2021: a mailer to all residents with a ballot and voting instructions to vote either by mail or online for two questions:
 - Do you wish to change our neighborhood name, ECCO? yes/no
 - Please vote on an alternative neighborhood name: East Bde Maka Ska, Uptown Lakeside, or East Lakeside.

Unfortunately, someone clearly tampered with the online vote. ECCO consulted with representatives from the City's NCR and Elections departments and shared the data. The representatives agreed that there were clearly identifiable patterns of fraudulent voting. Using these patterns and following up with a rigorous screening process to validate that the votes were in fact fraudulent, we were able to set aside these votes as invalid and proceed with a proper count.

- June 2021: We presented the above information to the ECCO Board at its regular Board meeting on June 3, and also presented the option for a re-vote. After extended discussion, the Board voted 9-2 to accept the verified results, and to move forward with the name change process and request that the City Council approve East Bde Maka Ska as our new neighborhood name. An email announcing the results was sent to our distribution list.

Appendices

1. Engagement Plan
2. Informational Mailer
3. Ballot

Engagement Plan for the ECCO Neighborhood (relating to a potential neighborhood name change)

In 2019, the East Calhoun Community Organization (ECCO), now named the ECCO Neighborhood Association, engaged in an extensive, consultative process to change our neighborhood name. It involved significant community outreach and three rounds of voting. Please see a full report [here](#).

In retrospect, the ECCO Board feels that mistakes were made in this 2019 process. There was a considerable amount of confusion about what our neighborhood name actually was prior to 2019. City documents referred to it as “East Calhoun,” but also simply as “ECCO.” ECCO was generally understood by neighbors to be the name of the neighborhood organization, the East Calhoun Community Organization (ECCO), but ECCO had also been in common use as the neighborhood name, along with East Calhoun. The ballot questions and options arguably failed to make this all sufficiently clear. The initial question posed to the neighborhood--whether to change or keep the name “East Calhoun Community Organization” as a neighborhood name--was thus flawed, but in any case resulted in 64% of neighbors desiring a name change. The option “ECCO” problematically came in as one of the top two choices in a second round of voting, and the third and final ballot resulted in a narrow 52.6% victory for ECCO (it was stated this was not an acronym, and thus supposedly devoid of any meaning) over East Bde Maka Ska.

Since that vote in late 2019, much has happened. The state Supreme Court ruled that the name Bde Maka Ska could indeed replace Lake Calhoun. Many area businesses and organizations have removed Calhoun from their names. Perhaps most importantly, the murder of George Floyd has occasioned a national reckoning over the issue of racial inequality. The ECCO Neighborhood Association Board issued a [statement on June 29, 2020](#) that the organization will “work against racial inequities and make our neighborhood more open and welcoming to all people.” At a racial justice rally on the lake in July 2020, speakers communicated that our name ECCO angered and alienated them by its continuing reference to John C. Calhoun, known for his racism and cruelty towards Black and indigenous people. Many neighbors feel that ECCO still contains an implicit reference to John C. Calhoun, and are aware that this causes pain for indigenous and Black people.

The ECCO Board thus began a new process to consider changing the neighborhood name in January 2021. It formed a Naming Committee, which has organized initial engagement with the neighborhood. Informed by these interactions, it has come up with the following Engagement Plan, approved by the Board on February 4, 2021.

January 28: A Zoom Town Hall was held, advertised in advance with informative framing language through two neighborhood email communications. Forty-six participants discussed the following questions:

- How do you feel about the neighborhood's current name, "ECCO"?
- What values should our neighborhood name represent?

- The 2019 name change process identified ten alternate potential neighborhood names, and those that got the most votes were, in order: East Bde Maka Ska, Uptown Lakeside, and East Lakeside. How do you feel about these names?

January 25-February 7: The same email communications (referenced above) invited neighbors to answer those three questions through an online google form. As of February 1, we had received nearly 100 responses.

March: A mailer will be sent to all households that will provide information on the history of the neighborhood's current and prior names. Background on the leading alternate names from 2019 will be provided. This mailer may also include a timeline of the rest of any engagement activities and a description of the ballot, which they will receive as part of the second mailer. A website will be developed to outline the same engagement process/timeline, track relevant progress, and most importantly, provide information to neighbors on John C. Calhoun and the indigenous history of the area.

March/April: A mailer will be sent to all households with a condensed version of the information contained in the prior mailing, and also containing a tear-off paper ballot that can be mailed in (we are exploring the option of a drop-off site, but are as yet unsure of this option due to COVID concerns), and will also offer information on how to vote electronically as an alternate method of voting. (We will endeavor to follow the voting procedures from 2019 except that we will not have in-person voting due to COVID.) This ballot will have two questions (precise language to be worked out):

- Do you wish to change our current neighborhood name, ECCO? (Yes/No)
- Please vote on an alternate neighborhood name. (Note: We will decide in February and early March what these alternate names will be--likely the top two or three options decided on by neighborhood vote in 2019 [East Bde Maka Ska, Uptown Lakeside, and East Lakeside].)

Voters will be asked to vote on both questions, irrespective of how they vote on the first. If the "no's" have the majority on the first question, then the results of the second are irrelevant, and our neighborhood name will remain ECCO.

Our neighborhood maintains an active neighborhood name landing webpage (described above), and will post all relevant information there. We also send out regular e-newsletters (recipient list has 761 members), and they will feature this process prominently. We also maintain a neighborhood Facebook page, where this will all be featured prominently.

Why do some of our neighbors want to revisit the naming process?

“I have been a resident of our neighborhood for the past five years. Given that the ECCO name continues to refer to John Calhoun—a vociferous defender of slavery and an architect of ethnic cleansing against indigenous people—and that the name continues to be unacceptable to the Dakota Community, I strongly urge our neighborhood to drop the name.”

“Loving stories stretch far before Calhoun and colonization. Stories of love between people and land, when their skin matches its dirt too. If Calhoun had his way such stories wouldn’t stretch either way. If he had his way, my family and I would not be cooking and dancing, lighting the fireplace or watching the birds here. I don’t think we should have to say, nor reference his name, when we reference our home. I believe acknowledging and honoring our neighborhood’s history before it was colonized is an important step to write out a better, more loving and just future for it.”

“The neighborhood name represents our neighborhood’s image and values to the rest of the city (and country). After the devastating murder of George Floyd, our society’s sensitivity to historical injustice has increased and that shift has amplified the pain of using a name aligned to our former neighborhood name East Calhoun. Our adjacent neighborhoods...have already made this choice. For our neighborhood to retain ECCO leaves us woefully out of step.”

“I bought a house in the neighborhood in summer 2019, and I was excited to learn that the East Calhoun name was up for a change. Words matter. And changing the lake name to honor the indigenous people who first named it, rather than an irrelevant racist historical figure, was a good change. Thus, I was disappointed when the neighborhood voted to keep an acronym and pretend it didn’t still hold its original racist meaning.”

March 2021

Next steps on considering our neighborhood name.

The ECCO Neighborhood Association will send out a ballot shortly after you receive this mailer. It will contain two questions:

1. Would you like to change the neighborhood name from ECCO?
2. Please choose one of the following options:
East Bde Maka Ska, Uptown Lakeside, or East Lakeside.

No matter your answer to question 1, please do answer question 2! If more than 50% of neighbors vote “no” on question 1, the neighborhood name will remain ECCO.

Please go to ecconeighborhood.org to sign up for neighborhood updates, including updates on the name change process. **We will hold an information session on Monday, March 29 at 7 PM;** see the website for details and the Zoom link.



2751 Hennepin Avenue S, Box 13
Minneapolis, MN 55408
ecconeighborhood.org

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Please join us in reconsidering our neighborhood name!

In 2019, the East Calhoun Community Organization (ECCO) engaged in an extensive process to change our neighborhood name. It involved significant community outreach and three rounds of voting.

In retrospect, the ECCO Board feels that mistakes were made in this 2019 process.

- Confusion about what our neighborhood name actually was prior to 2019; City documents referred to it as “East Calhoun,” but also simply as “ECCO.”
- ECCO had also been in common use as the neighborhood name, along with East Calhoun. The ballot questions and options didn’t make these ambiguities clear.
- The question of whether to change or keep “East Calhoun Community Organization” as our name was thus flawed, but resulted in 63.7% of neighbors desiring a name change. The non-acronym option “ECCO” came in as one of the top two choices in a second round of voting, and the third and final ballot resulted in a narrow 52.6% victory for ECCO over East Bde Maka Ska.

Since that vote in late 2019, much has happened.

- The state Supreme Court upheld the renaming of Lake Calhoun to Bde Maka Ska.
- Many area businesses have removed Calhoun from their names.
- The murder of George Floyd has occasioned a national reckoning over systemic racism.
- At a racial justice rally on the lake in July 2020, speakers communicated that our name ECCO angered and alienated them by its continuing reference to John C. Calhoun.
- Many neighbors feel that ECCO still contains an implicit reference to Calhoun, and are aware that this causes pain for indigenous and Black people.

For these reasons, the neighborhood board has reopened the name change process, including an online survey and virtual town hall in January 2021, this informational mailer, and a second mailer (including a new name ballot) to be sent out in March or April.

Indigenous History of the Neighborhood

For thousands of years, the Dakota people have lived in Mni Sóta Makȫce, the words used by Dakota to describe this land as the “Land Where the Waters Reflect the Clouds.” Although that area was much larger than our state’s current boundaries, the state of Minnesota got its name from the Dakota language and one of the areas important to that population is the land where our neighborhood rests today.

In the late 1820s, a village was established on the eastern shores of Bde Maka Ska, most of it within our current neighborhood boundaries, that was called Heyate Otunwe (village to the side) or Cloud Man Village. It was led by Mahpiya Wicasta, or Cloud Man. This settlement was an agricultural experiment that melded Native American ways with farming practices introduced by non-native settlers. Around 1830, the lake was renamed by surveyors after John C. Calhoun, a prominent politician and slaveholder from South Carolina, who as Secretary of War had sent out the survey team. In 1834, the missionaries Samuel and Gideon Pond built a cabin close to where we’re living today, which was the first European home on the lake. The Pond brothers were missionaries who wanted to convert the Dakota. It is here, in our neighborhood, that they developed the system of letters to be able to commit the Dakota language to paper. Later in the 1830s the Dakota left Cloud Man Village, and after the 1862 war, were expelled from the state.



Names Under Consideration

During the 2019 process, the leading neighborhood name options besides ECCO were **East Bde Maka Ska**, **Uptown Lakeside**, and **East Lakeside**. The Board has decided to offer these names as alternatives to ECCO. We are supplying selected quotes our neighbors submitted to the online comment form and other submissions to the ECCO Board.

East Bde Maka Ska

“The name East Bde Maka Ska Neighborhood acknowledges the Dakota people and their importance to the area in the past, present and future – that is a step towards justice.”

“It only makes sense that our neighborhood would update our own name to match the lake, with a name that’s still clear about our location in the city. East Bde Maka Ska is logical. It has both meaning and history.”

Uptown Lakeside

“I love ‘Uptown Lakeside’ because it is accurate, descriptive, attractive and memorable. It usefully locates our neighborhood in Uptown.”

“Uptown Lakeside has a nice ring to it and provides a good geographical description of where we live.”

East Lakeside

“East Lakeside is... short and sweet.”

“East Lakeside resonates with me because of its clear tie to our previous neighborhood names with the ‘East’ modifier, and relationship to the shores of Bde Maka Ska, which is what so many of us identify as the defining feature of our neighborhood.”

FAQs

Who was John C. Calhoun and why is his legacy being questioned?

- John C. Calhoun was a 19th century U.S. statesman and slave owner known for his racism and cruelty toward Black and indigenous people. He was a staunch supporter of slavery and Indian removal.
- In 2017, the Minneapolis Park Board affirmed calls to reject Calhoun’s legacy and voted unanimously to recommend changing Lake Calhoun back to its original Dakota name, Bde Maka Ska. The lake and parkways surrounding the lake have now officially been renamed.
- Local neighborhoods and businesses have followed suit and removed any reference to Calhoun from their names.

ECCO is no longer an acronym for East Calhoun Community Organization, so why doesn’t that disassociate our neighborhood from Calhoun?

- For many, John C. Calhoun will always be associated with the name ECCO, implicit in the first “C.”
- At a racial justice rally on the lake in July 2020, speakers communicated that our name ECCO angered and alienated them by its continuing reference to John C. Calhoun.

We just voted on the neighborhood name in 2019, so why are we voting again?

- The 2019 process preceded both the Supreme Court’s ruling that Bde Maka Ska could indeed replace Lake Calhoun as the official lake name and the murder of George Floyd, which catalyzed a national movement for racial justice.
- Problems with the previous name change process have been identified, as outlined earlier in this mailer.
- In a January 2021 online survey of neighborhood residents, over 2/3 of respondents indicated that they would like to change the name. Some who voted for ECCO in 2019 also expressed that they have since changed their minds.

Why is one option “East Bde Maka Ska” rather than “East Maka Ska?”

Joe Bendickson, a Dakota speaker, says of the importance of including “Bde:” “The Dakota language is very descriptive. When you say the words, you are describing a scene... The Dakota language describes the landscape, so I think it’s important we preserve the whole name.” (TPT, “Almanac,” May 5, 2017) We don’t want to inflict new harm by imposing English name norms, effectively anglicizing the Dakota language.

It's time to vote on the future of our neighborhood name!

This January, the ECCO Board reopened the neighborhood name change process in response to continued conversations about our name and significant developments of the last 1.5 years, namely, the Supreme Court's upholding of the restoration of "Bde Maka Ska" and the national racial justice movement catalyzed by the murder of George Floyd. This ballot is the final step of the 2021 name change process—please let your voice be heard!

The neighborhood will be notified of the results via e-blast and mailer. More info on this process at: ecconeighborhood.org/name.

VOTING INSTRUCTIONS

Please answer **both** questions on your ballot by checking the box of your choosing irrespective of how you vote on the first question.

If more than 50% of respondents vote "no" on question #1, the neighborhood name will remain ECCO. If fewer than 50% of respondents vote "no" on question #1, votes on question #2 will be tallied to determine the neighborhood's new name.

Eligible Voters: Those age 18+ who live within the ECCO neighborhood boundaries—the area south of Lake St., west of Hennepin Ave., north of 36th St., and east of Bde Maka Ska.

Requirements for Valid Voting: Your ballot must include your full name, address, and signature to be counted as a valid vote. Again, you may only vote for one of the three name options listed under question #2 for that part of your vote to be valid.

Voting Options (choose one):

► **Postcard (attached):** return attached postcard with ballot —
First-Class postage required

► **Online:** go to ecconeighborhood.org/vote to answer ballot questions online

Please note that because of the COVID-19 pandemic, there will be no in-person voting.

*** Each eligible voter may only vote once. ***

Voting Deadline: All votes must be received by Friday, April 30, 2021. Please allow up to a week for your mail-in ballot to be received.

What's Next: All ballots will be counted by a three-person panel appointed by the ECCO Board. Your ballot will remain confidential.

After all ballots are counted, the results of the vote will be announced and the ECCO Board will take appropriate next steps to honor the neighborhood's decision.

Questions: Contact ECCO Neighborhood Association Coordinator Monica Smith at info@ecconeighborhood.org or 612-821-0131.

ECCO Neighborhood Association
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Minneapolis, MN 55408



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ecconeighborhood.org

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CAST YOUR VOTE

It's time to vote on the future of our neighborhood name! OFFICIAL BALLOT

Please go to ecconeighborhood.org to sign up
for neighborhood updates, including updates
on the name change process.

ECCO NAME BALLOT It's time to vote on the future of our neighborhood name!

See the Voting Instructions inside to make sure your ballot is valid.

Eligible Voter #1 (must be 18 years or older)

FIRST AND LAST NAME _____

ADDRESS OF ELIGIBLE VOTER #1 _____

APT # (REQUIRED, IF APPLICABLE) _____

Please answer both questions

Do you wish to change our current neighborhood name, ECCO? (check one)

- Yes
 No

Please vote on an alternate neighborhood name (check one):

- East Bde Maka Ska
 Uptown Lakeside
 East Lakeside

By signing below you attest and declare that you are a resident of ECCO.

Signature (required): _____

Eligible Voter #2 (must be 18 years or older)

FIRST AND LAST NAME _____

ADDRESS OF ELIGIBLE VOTER #2 _____

APT # (REQUIRED, IF APPLICABLE) _____

Please answer both questions

Do you wish to change our current neighborhood name, ECCO? (check one)

- Yes
 No

Please vote on an alternate neighborhood name (check one):

- East Bde Maka Ska
 Uptown Lakeside
 East Lakeside

By signing below you attest and declare that you are a resident of ECCO.

Signature (required): _____

For households with more than two eligible voters, please vote online.

Voting Deadline: All votes must be received by Friday, April 30, 2021.

Tear off this portion, add a First-Class stamp, and mail this ballot.