

# Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the West Bank, 10-15-08

**Cam's next West Bank Office Hours:  
Tuesday November 4, 9:30-11:00am  
Hard Times Café, 1821 Riverside Ave**

## Items:

- 1) Another Tragedy on the West Bank
  - 2) Sherman Associates Donation
  - 3) Grandma's Site Redevelopment
  - 4) Ranked Choice Voting 2009 Implementation
  - 5) Sustainability Successes
  - 6) Environmentally Preferable Purchasing
  - 7) Community Engagement and NRP
  - 8) Proposed New Noise Ordinance
  - 9) Low-Heat No-Heat in Effect
  - 10) Central Corridor
  - 11) People's Center Receives Medica Award
  - 12) All Plastics Pilot Program
  - 13) Planetarium
  - 14) Openings on Boards and Commissions
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- 1) On September 22, Ahmednu Ali was shot near 420 15<sup>th</sup> Ave S outside Riverside Plaza and the Brian Coyle Center in Cedar Riverside. The 20-year-old Augsburg College student had just finished his first day as an intern for the Center. On Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>, Minneapolis police arrested a 16 year-old male in connection with this shooting. This is the third tragic homicide of a young person in the neighborhood this year. The First Precinct Commander has committed to add night beat cops on the West Bank. We are trying to extend this coverage to seven days a week, and are in the process of identifying officers who would be the "right fit." In the meantime, we have added extra police presence to be assigned specifically near Brian Coyle from 4pm until midnight daily. I am exploring ways to work with the larger community to support the call from the Brian Coyle Center, Augsburg and the Somali Confederation of Minnesota for more security cameras outside, hiring a security officer or police liaison from 5-10pm nightly, working to increase police presence in Currie Park and surrounding streets and hiring two Somali outreach workers focused on connecting with Somali young adults. I am also working to make the West Bank one of the City's target neighborhoods for our Youth Violence Prevention work and to support efforts, spearheaded by the Cedar Riverside Partnership, to duplicate a model developed downtown that would make the entire neighborhood a SafeZone and include better coordination and communication of public safety efforts from the institutions, large property owners, MPHA and the City.
  - 2) Sherman Associates has donated \$20,000 to the City for police buyback. The PS&RS committee voted to accept this donation today, and I expect the Council to agree to the same next Friday. The MPD will set up a special account to use these funds for beat officers, which will make it easier for other area landowners and institutions to match Sherman's donation so that we can have the best possible coverage next year.
  - 3) Alatus Partners has come before the City's Development Review for their redevelopment project at the old Grandma's site on the West Bank. My office has encouraged the developer to work with the West Bank Community Coalition.
  - 4) The Minneapolis Elections Director has recommended that the City implement ranked choice voting in the 2009 municipal election, by using a combination of our existing machines and a hand count. This recommendation came at the same time she rejected both proposals to machine-count the vote next year. I'm thrilled by this historic opportunity, and I believe that the hand count will be an open, transparent celebration of democracy. There will likely be a delay on reporting final results for some close races, but in my opinion this is more than offset by the benefits of not paying for new equipment, not holding the costly, low-turnout nonpartisan primary, and implementing ranked choice voting in a timely manner – responding to the more than 65% of Minneapolis residents who voted for the IRV charter amendment in 2006. The only remaining obstacles to implementation next year is the ongoing lawsuit against the City, which I expect us to win.
  - 5) Minneapolis has been ranked the **seventh** most sustainable large city in the US by SustainLane.com, up from **#10** last year. Additionally, according to the census, we are within **.1%** of being the US city with the highest bicycle mode share – we're up to **3.8%**, just behind Portland's **3.9%**.

- 6) The Council approved the City's first-ever Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy at its last meeting. I have championed this issue since being elected. It passed with the support of City departments through the Environmental Coordinating Team, and from the Citizen's Environmental Advisory Committee. The comprehensive policy represents a serious step towards a greener City. For example, the City will begin purchasing 100% post-consumer copier paper for all of our regular copying needs, evaluate products based on health and environmental impacts. We will now track and compare, on an annual basis, the total purchases of both environmentally preferable and un-preferable products.
- 7) The Council has voted to establish a new Department of Neighborhood and Community Relations, and a new City commission, the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission. These lay the foundation for what will likely be a similar, but significantly different, neighborhood revitalization program and a potentially much more effective City community engagement system.

The department will function under the supervision of the City Coordinator and is intended to both serve residents directly and support all other City departments to engage the community. It will be charged with strengthening our City's quality of life through vigorous community participation, promoting resident involvement in neighborhood and community organizations, and supporting clearly defined links between the City and these organizations.

The Commission will provide overall direction to a next phase of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program, and be responsible for the review of neighborhood plans and recommendation of their approval to the City Council. It will also make recommendations on, and monitor the distribution and use of the basic Citizen Participation Services funds and the new Neighborhood Investment Fund. It will also help guide and improve all aspects of community involvement and civic participation in the City and carry forward the work Community Engagement Task Force's recommendations started last year. The Commission will be made up of at least 16 city residents. Eight of these will be selected by the City's officially recognized neighborhood organizations through a process that is yet to be defined by those officially recognized neighborhood organizations. Seven will be appointed by the City and one by the Park Board.

We were unable to convince a majority of Council Members to support giving the Commission the power to appoint (with Council approval) the Director of the new department, the authority to set neighborhood boundaries and hear neighborhood grievances.

Even with this setback, however, I think this is an important step forward for the City. Through these actions and the identification of a funding source for a new Neighborhood Investment Fund that will be used by neighborhoods to implement their plans, the Council has made clear that support for neighborhood groups, both in terms of administrative funding and project-based dollars, is an essential City responsibility. Still, there is a great deal of work to do to make sure that the new commission is effective; that the new department improves civic participation, that it supports, empowers and improves the ability of neighborhood organizations to improve their communities; and that there are sufficient funds to make sure that neighborhood-driven planning is as inclusive, inspiring, accountable and effective as possible. Paramount to this will be creating trusting relationships of mutual respect and improving how we work as a city government in partnership with all residents, neighborhood groups and all our community stakeholders to make this a better City for everyone.
- 8) Environmental Management staff is working on a new noise ordinance. The old City ordinance was found unconstitutionally vague, and staff has been enforcing the state noise statute, which significantly reduces our capacity to respond to complaints. The proposed new code would use a "C weighting" rather than an "A weighting," allowing us to more effectively control bass-heavy noise from bars. In principle, I'm strongly supportive of these changes.
- 9) Starting October 1, landlords in Minneapolis are required to keep interior temperatures at 68 degrees or above. My office spearheaded the effort to get this new ordinance passed, replacing the old, complicated external-temperature formula that was so difficult for our staff to effectively enforce.
- 10) City staff continues to work with the University and the County on the design for the Washington Avenue transit and pedestrian mall. Outstanding issues include whether buses and emergency vehicles should operate on the train tracks and whether there should be an "amenity zone" in the middle of the street, which could include benches, tables, and greenery, at the expense of sidewalk space on the sides of the street.
- 11) Congratulations to the Cedar Riverside People's Center for receiving the Medica "Raising the Bar" Award, one of only eight organizations to receive this recognition for innovation in health care services. They were recognized for the "Clinic Redesign" project at the People's Center Medical Clinic.
- 12) The City has extended the "All Plastics Pilot Program" in Northeast, which accepts plastic for recycling that is not accepted in standard pickup. I am very excited about this program, and I look forward to broadening it to more locations citywide.
- 13) The City has pledged \$5 million in Urban Development Action Grant funds to endowment fund for the Minnesota Planetarium and Space Discovery Center, which we hope will be built on the top of the Central Library in downtown.
- 14) There are openings on the Citizen Environmental Advisory Committee (closes 11/7/08), Civilian Review Authority (10/17/08) Disability Advisory Committee (10/17/08), Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (11/19/08), Public Health Advisory Committee (10/17/08), Senior Citizens Advisory Committee (10/17/08), and Youth Violence Prevention Executive Committee (10/31/08)). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).