



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

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Second Ward

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the West Bank, 11-17-10

Cam's next West Bank Office Hours:
Tuesday, December 7th, 9:30-11:00am
Hard Times Café, 1821 Riverside Ave

Items:

- 1) Riverside Ave Reconstruction
- 2) Disparities Study
- 3) Redistricting Amendment Passes
- 4) Riverside Plaza Renovation
- 5) Bicycle Advisory Committee
- 6) Homegrown Minneapolis Meeting – December 9
- 7) Openings on Boards and Commissions

If you need this material in an alternative format please call Ahmed Muhumud at 612-673-2162 or email

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Deaf and hard-of-hearing persons may call 311 or 612-673-3000. TTY users may call 612-673-2151 or 612-673-2626.

Attention: If you want help translating this information in language other than Hmong, Spanish or Somali, call 311

Hmong - Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2800;

Spanish - Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llame 612-673-2700;

Somali - Ogow. Haddii aad dooneysa in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' aan wac 612-673-3500.

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- 1) The Riverside Avenue renovation project continues to move forward. The Council has authorized staff to ask the State for a variance of the Municipal State Aid standards for eight-foot parking lanes. The layout has been delayed by more than a month, but is coming to the Council's Transportation and Public Works committee on November 30th, and I expect it to move forward to the full Council on December 10th. The three major institutions on the avenue have made two requests that I am working with City staff to respond to. The first is for much of the on-street parking between 22nd and 25th Avenues to be removed, and replaced with larger boulevards and wider sidewalks. I am open to this request, but I would like the West Bank Community Coalition and West Bank Business Association to weigh in. The second request is for landscaped medians. I know that City staff have serious concerns about putting these in place, but I am willing to push for them to the extent possible. Again, it would be good to hear from the WBCC and WBBA about this proposal.
- 2) The long awaited Disparity Study to help the City understand how women-owned and minority-owned businesses compete for contracts offered by the City and in the private sector is now complete. The City commissioned the Disparity Study to examine evidence that would support the continuation of Minneapolis' Small and Underutilized Business Program and see whether any modifications of that program would be beneficial. The Study looked at the City's procurement process, the locations and ownership of companies that do business with the City, and at the overall marketplace and experiences of women-owned and minority-owned businesses that seek contracts in both the public and private sector. It found that discrimination was a contributing factor to obstacles in access to contracts in our marketplace. The study also made a number of recommendations to remedy the situation, including the enhancement of current City efforts to fight discrimination and the addition of new initiatives. These initiatives involve both race- and gender-conscious remedies as well as some race- and gender-neutral initiatives. On December 9, 2010, the Council will be asked to act on any recommendations based on the report. This is the second Disparity Study completed by the City. The original study was completed in 1995 and formed the basis for the creation of the current Small and Underutilized Business Program, which helps address the effects of past discrimination in contracting and to promote equal opportunities for all to participate in contracts generated by the City.
- 3) One bright point of an otherwise difficult election was the overwhelming support by the people of Minneapolis for a better way of changing ward boundaries after this year's census. By a vote of 55%, the voters of Minneapolis rejected the old, overtly politicized process in favor of allowing the Charter Commission to redraw the maps. I am proud to have helped to start this process a year ago.

- 4) The Council has voted to grant up to \$80 million in tax exempt multifamily housing entitlement revenue bonds and \$1.9 million in from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to the Riverside Plaza renovation project. This project has been one of the most important issues on the West Bank for most of this year. It has generated more discussion, controversy, and interest than anything I've seen in a long time. At its most basic, this is an affordable housing issue. There are more than four thousand people who rely on the affordable housing provided by Riverside Plaza. Unfortunately, the quality of that housing has been decreasing over time, and its long-term viability was threatened. This project stabilizes and improves the housing for all of these low-income residents. That's a very good thing.

The renovation will also employ a significant number of people (200) in an economy that has left many people desperate for work. It will significantly reduce the Plaza's carbon footprint through energy efficiency enhancements. But in addition to all of those benefits that are 'baked in,' the neighborhood group, with my help and the able support of Community Planning and Economic Development staff, has insisted on and received a very strong development agreement between the developer and the City. Some of the most important aspects of that agreement include:

- Ninety jobs for residents of Riverside Plaza, the West Bank, and surrounding neighborhoods. This includes \$50,000 from the contractor and the City towards job training over the course of the project, and a temporary resident and neighborhood employment and training office on the Riverside Plaza property.
- More money for safety. Together, the developer and the City have committed to contribute \$12,500 per year to police buy-back. These resources are to be controlled by the West Bank Safety Committee. In addition to these annual funds, the developer will be creating a Safety Center in cooperation with the Safety Committee and RPTA, which will serve as a community gathering space.
- A commitment by the City to fix some of the poorest-quality streets in Minneapolis: 4th St S and 15th Ave S.
- Pedestrian improvements on 6th Street, with \$10,000 coming from Sherman and matching funds from MPHA. This could include a pedestrian signal to facilitate crossing at old 17th Ave S.
- An on-street parking solution near the Plaza.
- Improvements to the privately-owned public plaza at the northwest corner of 6th and Cedar, worth \$60,000, and with the participation of the Cedar Cultural Center.
- A possible new community space on 4th St S, where there is currently a surface parking lot, with a right of first refusal for the Cedar Riverside Partnership.
- Continued funding for the Riverside Plaza Tenants Association, in the amount of \$150,000 annually.
- \$7 million worth of improvements to public areas inside the complex, including lighting, sidewalks, wayfinding and more.
- A NiceRide kiosk on Cedar.
- A comprehensive and well-funded relocation plan for tenants during construction, including temporary apartments within the complex.
- An agreement by the developer to be part of special service district.
- Allowance for a mural on wall of the African Mall facing the LRT Trail.

I realize that this is not everything that everyone in the neighborhood wanted, and that some will continue to believe that the project should have done much more to support safety, green space, youth programming and more. But I am convinced that this development agreement will ensure that this renovation project will make not only significant improvements to the affordable housing relied on by thousands of Second Ward residents, but the West Bank as a whole. I joined the West Bank Community Coalition, City staff, and all of my colleagues in supporting the project.

- 5) The Council has restructured the Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee. For the first time, it will be made up of a majority of community members. My office was instrumental in pushing these changes forward over the last two years, and I am thrilled to see our work come to fruition. Each Council Member will appoint one member from his or her ward. If you or anyone you know are interested in representing Ward 2 on the new and improved BAC, please contact the City Clerk's office at (612) 673-3358 or cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.
- 6) There will be a community meeting on in December on the Homegrown Minneapolis effort I have been leading, which aims to bring more healthy and local food and urban agriculture in Minneapolis. The meeting will be **Thursday, December 9th** from 5:30-7:30 pm at the UROC (Urban Research and Outreach Center), 2001 Plymouth Avenue North. Everyone is welcome. Look for more information here: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/homegrown-home.asp>.
- 7) There are openings on the Minneapolis Commission on Civil Rights, Public Health Advisory Committee, Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, Senior Citizens Advisory Committee, Youth Violence Prevention Executive Committee, and Zoning Board of Adjustment. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.