

## **Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Cedar Riverside, 4-16-08**

**Cam's next Cedar Riverside Office Hours:  
Tuesday May 6, 9:30-11:00am  
Hard Times Café, 1821 Riverside Ave**

**Items:**

- 1) Homicide on the West Bank
- 2) Quarterly Safety Meeting
- 3) City Hires Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator
- 4) Pedestrian Improvements
- 5) CRNRP/WBCC
- 6) 20<sup>th</sup> Resurfacing
- 7) Small Area Plan
- 8) Augsburg Master Plan
- 9) University District Partnership Alliance
- 10) Central Corridor
- 11) Sergeant Preston's
- 12) Earth Hour
- 13) Ranked Choice Voting
- 14) No-Heat/Low-Heat
- 15) ADC's Great Streets Survey
- 16) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) As you're probably aware, a young 18 year old man, Abdullahi Awil Abdi, was murdered near Cedar and 7<sup>th</sup> last Friday evening. The details are unclear but some reports indicate that he was mistaken for someone else. The victim was well known throughout the local Somali community. He was the youngest son of one of the first African entrepreneurs in the neighborhood, a former owner of the West Bank Grocery. This incident reinforces for me how important is for us to have support for our families and youth and develop a holistic, effective and focused approach to prevent youth violence in Cedar Riverside and throughout our City. I have heard from the Inspector from the First Precinct that there hasn't been an arrest yet and the investigators are working around the clock following every lead. They are working with community members in hopes of them sharing information as to what they know or might have seen in order to help.
- 2) To learn more about this incident and the investigation, share data regarding growing concerns about possible increased gang activity in the area as well as learn about the great work of the safety committee and how to get more involved in helping make this a safer community please come to the next Quarterly West Bank Safety Meeting on **May 14, at 7pm at Augsburg College.**
- 3) The City has hired Bass Zanjani to serve as the Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator for the City of Minneapolis. Mr. Zanjani's chief role will be to work with the City's Youth Violence Prevention Committee to implement the Blueprint for Action to Prevent Youth Violence, a multi-faceted action plan launched this year to reduce youth violence and crime. Zanjani brings to the city's Youth Violence Prevention team a broad and diverse public policy background. Previously, he served as Chief of Staff at NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center and has been a policy aide to two United States Senators (including Paul Wellstone). I believe that this is an important step forward on an initiative that has long been on the top of my list of priorities for the Ward and the City.
- 4) City staff have recommended that the Council apply for several Non-Motorized Transportation Grants in Cedar Riverside, making significant improvements to the connection between Seven Corners and Downtown on Washington Ave, the connection between Seven Corners and Cedar Riverside on Cedar (across the Washington Ave trench), the intersection of Cedar and Riverside (which has the highest pedestrian/auto crash rate in the City) and the intersection of 5<sup>th</sup> and Cedar. Excitingly, this proposal includes a new sidewalk to be constructed on vacated 5<sup>th</sup>, to the east of Cedar. The Council will vote on this recommendation on Friday. Please note that these are only proposals, and that Transit for Livable Communities will have the final say on whether or not to fund them.
- 5) I am continuing to work with the WBCC and Cedar Riverside NRP Steering Committee to help negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding between the organizations on how they will relate in the future. My goal is still twofold: to implement the NRP plan and to strengthen the WBCC.

- 6) As part of a new City program, 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue will be resurfaced this year from its intersection at Minnehaha up to Riverside. I expect that Public Works staff will conduct a neighborhood input process before this project begins, and that it will be combined with the bike lane improvement funded by last year's Non-Motorized Transportation grants.
- 7) The Cedar Riverside Small Area Plan will be coming before Council on Friday for approval, after unanimous approval by the Planning Commission and Zoning and Planning Committee.
- 8) Augsburg College is embarking on a Master Planning process for their campus that includes the construction of some new buildings, specifically an academic building on the block bordered by 6<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. It sounds at this point as if they may request the vacation of 7<sup>th</sup> St S between 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Avenues. My office has informed them that vacations are explicitly prohibited in the Small Area Plan, and I have personally asked them to contact WBCC, specifically the Land Use Committee.
- 9) The University District Partnership Alliance Steering Committee is poised to vote on a demonstration project tomorrow. It is likely to focus mainly on housing, specifically on preserving and increasing homeownership in neighborhoods surrounding the U.
- 10) Despite Governor Pawlenty's line-item veto, which will kill the Central Corridor project if he does not undo it, staff continue to work towards the September deadline for submissions to the Feds. The University continues to pursue a "Northern Alignment," which would route the LRT line down the existing rail trench through Dinkytown. I have some concerns about this alignment, especially with regards to its impacts on the West Bank. It will substantially increase the width of the Cedar bridge over the Washington trench, further separating Seven Corners from Cedar Riverside. It will impact Riverview tower and the scattered-site Section 8 housing nearby, as well as creating a new trench that will parallel 19<sup>th</sup> Ave S, cutting between the road and the law school. The most important question, however, is whether this alignment can fit within the Federal Government's funding formula. If it can, I am open to pursuing it. If it cannot, I believe that we should submit our application this year for the Washington Avenue alignment, which would include a pedestrian, transit, and bicycling mall. I steadfastly oppose any attempt on the University's part to reroute buses to take them off of Washington, especially any plan that would send them across the 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue bridge.
- 11) Sergeant Preston's bar has received a citation for a noise violation that occurred last week. I am working with nearby residents, including people living above the bar, to bring this business into compliance and am not encouraged by the intensity of the complaints I have received so far. I am strongly encouraging staff to continue aggressively enforcing noise codes, and to take the adverse license actions that I insisted we put on Sergeant Preston's license. These sanctions include permanently taking away a night of live music if the bar receives two more noise citations.
- 12) Council Member Benson and I cosponsored a resolution committing the City to turn off all lights that are not absolutely necessary on Earth Hour last month. The lights of some major downtown buildings went dark, including Wells Fargo, IDS, Thrivent Financial, US Bancorp and the State, Orpheum and Pantages theaters, as well as the lights on the underside of the Stone Arch Bridge. The idea was to demonstrate how much impact just an hour of energy conservation can have on carbon emissions, to inspire others to conserve.
- 13) Tomorrow, I expect the Elections Committee to vote to send out a Request for Proposals for Ranked Choice Voting equipment and/or services, and to pass an ordinance containing our RCV election rules. I am working hard to make sure that this ordinance conforms to national best practices for ranked choice elections, and that the RFP includes enough flexibility to get good responses, but a specific enough timeline.
- 14) The No-Heat / Low-Heat ordinance I've cosponsored with Ralph Remington has stalled in committee, and will come back again on May 7<sup>th</sup>. We are attempting to simplify regulations about when landlords must keep rental units adequately warm by basing them on date rather than external temperature. The rental industry is fighting us on this, so we need all the support we can get from renters who want their apartments to be adequately heated.
- 15) Last week I attended a meeting convened by the African Development Center (ADC) where they presented the results of a market survey of immigrant entrepreneurs in the West Bank. The survey was part of ADC's participation in the City's Great Streets Neighborhood Business District Program. The information will be helpful and I think also served as an organizing tool to get more businesses informed about the local business association and the small area plan in the neighborhood. Survey results can be seen at <http://www.adcminnesota.org/files/ADCsurvey-CedarRiverside.pdf>
- 16) There are openings on the Latino Advisory Committee (closes 4/25), Minneapolis Workforce Council (4/25), Public Health Advisory Committee (4/25), Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners (4/25), Rental Dwelling License Board of Appeals (4/25), and Zoning Board of Adjustment (4/25). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).