

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the West Bank, 12-17-08

Cam's next West Bank Office Hours:
Tuesday January 6, 9:30-11:00am
Hard Times Café, 1821 Riverside Ave
<http://secondward.blogspot.com>

Items:

- 1) Noise Ordinance
 - 2) Somali Youth Violence Prevention
 - 3) Bike Sharing
 - 4) West Bank Tour by PS&RS Chair
 - 5) New Home for Mosque
 - 6) Neighborhood Investment
 - 7) Washington Avenue Ramps
 - 8) Homegrown Minneapolis
 - 9) Binge Drinking
 - 10) Neighborhood Stabilization
 - 11) Target Center Green Roof
 - 12) Newspaper Box Ordinance
 - 13) Bluff Street Park
 - 14) LED Streetlight Pilot
 - 15) Openings on Boards and Commissions
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- 1) The new noise ordinance I sponsored has passed the Council with only one dissenting vote. I am hopeful that it will allow us to much more effectively address noise from bars, and I look forward to working with City staff and residents to make this change as successful as possible.
 - 2) I worked with the Mayor and Council Member Schiff to transfer \$75,000 within our Youth Violence Prevention Plan from funds for a Youth Hotline to fund Somali youth violence prevention efforts. While I am still supportive of an anonymous Youth Hotline, as called for in the plan, I am hopeful that another jurisdiction, foundation or agency can be found to fund this. I am convinced that it is critical that we put more targeted resources into youth violence prevention in our Somali communities next year.
 - 3) I strongly supported the Council's action to apply for up to \$1.75 million from the Non-Motorized Transportation Program to establish the first major bike-sharing system in the US. This system will cover the whole West Bank, providing a great people-powered connection both to downtown and the University. I hope that Transit for Livable Communities will fund the program, and that we can start getting it in place next year.
 - 4) Working with WBCC Safety Committee, this Friday I will be taking the Chair of Public Safety and Regulatory Services Committee, Don Samuels, on a tour of the Cedar Riverside area. The goal is for Don to get a chance to learn more about the community and some of our ongoing challenges and opportunities.
 - 5) I am working with Fine Associates and the Imam, Director and others from the Mosque on 15th Ave S to help them find a new temporary building. The current building they lease has been sold and is scheduled to be demolished in late December or early February. Any ideas you have for both a new temporary or permanent home for the Mosque in the neighborhood would be greatly appreciated.
 - 6) As part of this year's budget process, I strongly opposed the efforts to cut the \$500,000 the Mayor has recommended to support neighborhood organization administrative costs. I also fought for the maximum possible funding for the Neighborhood Investment Fund (NIF), which will replace NRP in 2010 and beyond. In the end, other Council Members succeeded in diverting the NIF funds for other purposes, including continuation of CPED's "Great Streets" program and increased debt relief for the Target Center. I was able to ensure that, if the income from the Tax Increment districts is less than we expect, there will be parity between the Target Center and neighborhood funding.
 - 7) The Central Corridor Project Office and City staff continue to explore modifications to the ramp configurations at Washington and Cedar Avenues on the West Bank as part of the Central Corridor LRT planning. At the most recent neighborhood meeting, my office asked the Project Office to explore consolidating all turning motions onto and off of Washington on the east side of Cedar Avenue, to free up additional space for development.

- 8)** I am strongly supportive of a new initiative we're calling Homegrown Minneapolis. Its purpose is to increase the amount of locally produced food being eaten and grown in our city. A large stakeholder group will hold its first meeting on December 10th, and will then break into subcommittees in which most of the work will be done. These smaller groups will focus on 1) increasing the number and successfulness of farmer's markets in Minneapolis, especially in underserved communities; 2) helping more people garden in community spaces, school properties, and their own backyards; 3) increasing the use of locally-grown foods in Minneapolis restaurants and grocery stores and; 4) fostering small business urban agriculture. I am thrilled that this is moving forward, and I have dedicated my Aide, Robin, to staff one of the subcommittees.
- 9)** I supported the Public Health Advisory Committee's (PHAC) recommendation that the City create a work group to examine the problem of binge drinking. Possible topics the group would address include current zoning and licensing standards, resources for and impact of current enforcement efforts, possible collaborative efforts between the City, neighborhood groups and schools, and possible legislative initiatives that would reduce binge drinking. This proposal was delayed until January, for the PHAC to meet with representatives of the hospitality industry to discuss common ground issues. I opposed this delay. It was unnecessary – liquor industry representatives would have been included on the group. I look forward to when this group will be formed, and be able to start meeting.
- 10)** The Council has approved using \$5.6 million in federal Neighborhood Stabilization funds to acquire and redevelop foreclosed properties in neighborhoods hardest hit by foreclosures. I am hopeful that this effort will help us weather the foreclosure crisis and stabilize the neighborhoods that have most affected.
- 11)** The Community Development committee has voted to contract with Stock Roofing Company to install a green roof on the Target Center. The roof type is called "Green-Green," because it will be 2.75 inches deep over the whole area of the roof, with a deeper 3.5 inch deep green roof perimeter, which dramatically increases stormwater retention. This contract will cost \$5,322,922, including installation and a 20-year warranty and maintenance agreement. I made the motion in a previous committee meeting to require that the new Target Center roof have a green roof, and I am extremely excited to see this moving forward.
- 12)** I supported Council Member Remington's ordinance regulating outdoor newspaper boxes. I share his concerns about the poor upkeep of these boxes, and especially about the fact that in many locations, sidewalks are cluttered to the extent that they do not comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- 13)** After years of good work by the Bluff Street Task Force, Park Commissioner Scott Vreeland and some help from my office, the Park Board's Planning Committee has voted to preserve the Bluff Street parcel as parkland and explore options for developing a sustainable park there. I'm thrilled that all of the community effort is beginning to pay off, and commit to help keep the momentum for this park going in whatever way I can.
- 14)** The Public Works department is testing Light Emitting Diode (or LED) streetlights on Washington Avenue. I'm very excited by this pilot project, which could prove that this new technology is right for Minneapolis streets. LEDs use much less energy than standard incandescent bulbs, even less than fluorescents. Given that streetlights consume more electricity than any other single service provided by the City, this could result in major energy savings in the future by reducing both the financial burden and the ecological costs of streetlights.
- 15)** There are openings on the Animal Care & Control Advisory Board (closes 12/17), Minneapolis Telecommunications Network (12/19), and Public Health Advisory Committee (12/19). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.