

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the West Bank, 2-18-09

**Cam's next West Bank Office Hours:
Tuesday March 3, 9:30-11:00am
Hard Times Café, 1821 Riverside Ave**

Items:

- 1) March Roundtable: Our Parks, Our Schools, Our City
 - 2) West Bank Tour with Don Samuels
 - 3) Charges Filed in September Shooting
 - 4) Crime Down Citywide
 - 5) 2009 Great Streets RFP
 - 6) 2009 Budget Woes
 - 7) Off-Street Parking Requirements
 - 8) Commercial Property Registration
 - 9) Street Lighting Policy
 - 10) Youth Violence Prevention Executive Committee
 - 11) Internal Affairs Audit
 - 12) University Alliance Report to Legislature
 - 13) Homebuyer Incentive Program
 - 14) Openings on Boards and Commissions
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- 1) The first in a series of City-facilitated meetings regarding the future of the City owned Dania Hall Site in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood will be held **January 27th, 7:00pm to 8:30pm** at Cedar Apartments Community Room at 630 Cedar Ave. Come learn about the steps needed for redevelopment to occur. Give input on community needs and goals of redevelopment, and discuss a timeline for possible sale and redevelopment.
 - 2) Please join me for a **Roundtable Discussion** on priorities and challenges for 2009 on **February 11, 6-8pm** at Matthews Recreation Center. In this time of economic uncertainty, how can we work better together to keep making progress towards our shared goals? Come discuss your hopes and concerns for our city.
 - 3) Unfortunately, Public Safety and Regulatory Services Committee Chair Don Samuels is again unable to attend the rescheduled tour of the West Bank. My office is working with his to set another date.
 - 4) Charges have been filed in the September 2008 shooting death of Ahmanur Ahmed Ali near 420 15th Av S. A 17-year-old has been charged with murder in the second degree. Minneapolis detectives Holthusen and Granger put together the case working closely with community members to develop suspect information through eyewitness accounts. Thanks to everyone who helped. The 17-year-old has been certified as adult for purposes of the trial and is currently in custody.
 - 5) We've seen our second straight year of reductions in crime. Violent crime in Minneapolis was down 13 percent citywide in '08 when compared to '07 and down 24 percent compared to '06. Homicides were down 22 percent from '07 and down 39 percent from '06. Robberies decreased 18 percent, aggravated assaults are down 8 percent, and juvenile crime dropped 17 percent in '08. Violent crime fell 12 percent in the First Precinct, which includes the West Bank. It is worth noting that this data is only as good as our system of reporting and tracking. Just as we need to encourage our officers and dispatchers to follow up on calls and complete reports so that we have good data and can hold criminals accountable, we also need to encourage one another to call to 911 when crimes are in progress and 311 to report crimes. If you have had trouble reporting a crime, please let me know. It is also important to note that the overall reductions in crime citywide do not lessen the tragedy of any one act of violence, especially the three homicides that occurred on the West Bank this past year.
 - 6) The **2009 Great Streets Business District Support Grant** Request for Proposals (RFP) has been issued. There is \$500,000 available to fund activities that revitalize and strengthen business districts. Eligible activities may include technical assistance for businesses, marketing, planning, market studies, promotional events, and more. The target grant amount is \$5,000 - \$50,000. There will be an informational meeting on January 26th at 11:00 a.m. at CPED's office. This meeting is not mandatory but will be an opportunity to ask questions as well as hear from some organizations that received funding in the last round. Proposals are due by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, February 27, 2009. The Request for Proposals and more information are available at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/rfp.asp>. **Proposals are due February 27, 2009 by 4:00 p.m.** Questions can be directed to [Kelly Hoffman](mailto:kelly.hoffman@ci.minneapolis.mn.us) at kelly.hoffman@ci.minneapolis.mn.us or 612-673-5079.

- 7) A majority of Council Members joined me in voting to send the proposed commercial property registration and inspection program back to staff for more work. I argued against moving this forward because I am not convinced that this is the right time to initiate this new program and think other approaches need to be studied. I was especially concerned that the funding plan placed an unfair and unwarranted burden on small and good businesses. Thanks to all the business owners and organizations who've communicated with me on this matter. A related Vacant Commercial Property Registration proposal has also been sent back to staff for further work. It is scheduled to return to the Public safety Committee on February 25.
- 8) After years of effort, the Council voted to finalize our new street lighting policy. With the adoption of clear policies, the moratorium on new pedestrian scale lighting will end. The new rules clarify how residents, with City staff assistance, may petition for pedestrian lights. Working with Council Member Glidden and others, we were also able to amend the new policy to state that all new streetlights will be full-cutoff, unless the Council approves a variance. This will reduce glare, light pollution and energy usage. The policy also calls for use of Light Emitting Diodes when possible, a much more energy efficient lighting technology, which will both reduce the carbon emissions of city operations and save the City a significant amount of money. Street lighting represents roughly 40% of the City's electric bill.
- 9) The Council has amended the City's standards for the number of off-street parking and loading spaces that must be provided when establishing or expanding land uses in Minneapolis. Parking requirements for residential uses outside of downtown will not change. The changes will reduce the financial burden on new small businesses, give the City the tools we need to prevent overly-large seas of parking, and help to discourage auto-oriented development in favor of more walkable, community-oriented commercial areas. Some of the highlights include: reductions for most commercial uses to one space per 500 sq. ft. of floor area, while retaining a four-space minimum; elimination of minimum parking requirements in the downtown zoning districts; lower off-street parking requirements for non-entertainment food and beverage uses, the first ever establishment of bicycle parking for most uses; requirement that uses over 1,000 sq. ft. (an increase from 100 sq. ft) must provide off-street parking; and limits on the amount of parking that can be provided for new development.
- 10) The Council has created a new Youth Violence Prevention Executive Committee to continue implementing our plan to reduce youth violence. I am honored to be serving on this committee, and excited to keep our momentum going.
- 11) In 2006 the Civilian Review Authority work group I helped establish issued several recommendations that were approved by City Council. One called for an external audit of the MPD Internal Affairs Unit. In 2008 the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) was awarded the contract to conduct the audit. It is now complete and offers several recommendations that might improve our complaint investigation process and better inform and educate the community. I succeeded in convincing my colleagues to require that the MPD come back to the Public Safety and Regulatory Services committee on a quarterly basis to report on their progress on implementing these recommendations.
- 12) The University District Partnership Alliance is working on our report back to the Legislature in February. This report will go before the Council's Intergovernmental Relations committee on February 3. Also, throughout January and February neighbors in the University District area will be reviewing a draft report of the Alliance's Zoning Planning and Regulatory Review Committee. This will form the basis for any changes we make in conjunction with the demolition and development moratorium put in place last August. All comments are welcome. For more see http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/University_District_ZPRR_public.asp
- 13) We are launching the University District – Home Buyer Incentive Program this month. The program provides down payment or closing cost assistance through \$10,000 two-percent interest loans that requires no monthly payment and are forgivable over five years. All area realtors are invited to a meeting about this on January 16, 1-3 pm at Van Cleve Park. The program offers loans to new buyers in the Cedar Riverside, Southeast Como and Prospect neighborhoods. For more information contact the Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation Housing Resource Center, at 612-378-7985 or visit http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/prod/groups/ohr/@pub/@ohr/@relocation/documents/asset/ohr_asset_069659.pdf
- 14) There are openings on the Latino Advisory Committee (2/27). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.