



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the West Bank, 8-19-09

**Cam's next West Bank Office Hours:
Tuesday September 1, 9:30-11:00am
Hard Times Café, 1821 Riverside Ave**

Items:

- 1) Central Corridor Gets Federal Funding Approval
- 2) TIF Districts
- 3) Dania Hall Advisory Group
- 4) Parade of Community Gardens
- 5) 2010 Budget
- 6) Central Corridor Station Art Meeting
- 7) New Crime Alert Service
- 8) Neighborhood Policing Plans
- 9) Downtown Garbage Burner
- 10) 2008 Bicycle Counts
- 11) Ranked Choice Voting
- 12) New Sister City: Najaf
- 13) University Area Ordinance Changes Pass
- 14) Openings on City Boards and Commissions

- 1) The Federal Transit Administration has released the Record of Decision on the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit project, which means that the project will go forward. Negotiations will continue with the University around vibration and electromagnetic interference, but this action by the FTA makes clear that this critical project will indeed be moving forward.
- 2) The Council has voted by a narrow margin to delay a decision on whether or not to renew the Tax Increment Financing (or TIF) districts that were established in 1979, to continue to fund our neighborhood groups and debt relief for the Target Center, until after the Mayor proposes a 2010 budget. This was a compromise between those Council Members, like me, who want to keep the agreement we reached during the last budget negotiations and renew the TIF districts, and those who want to "preserve our flexibility" to not renew the districts. I strongly support renewing the districts, for three main reasons. First, I feel that the Council committed to ourselves and the public, during our deliberations about the next phase of neighborhood revitalization, that we would continue to use the TIF districts to fund our neighborhoods. This is why we successfully advocated to the Legislature to allow us to renew them. Second, given the budget constraints the City faces, I fear that if we force neighborhood funding to compete for general fund dollars, we will not live up to the commitments we've made to continue funding neighborhoods. And third, setting aside some money for neighborhood associations to invest is smart during tough times, just as it is during more flush times. I will continue to argue in the strongest possible terms to renew these districts, to provide a defined and reliable revenue stream for neighborhoods. You can read more about the history behind this decision and further analysis at my blog.
- 3) The Dania Hall Advisory Group is engaged in a community outreach until November to help provide context for the future of the city owned Dania Hall site for development. A document has been drafted to assist organizations in reaching out to stakeholders in the next several months. More details are on the city's website (http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/dania_hall_site.asp).
- 4) Congratulations to the 5th Street Community Garden and the Augsburg Community Garden for being honored in this year's Parade of Community Gardens.

If you need this material in an alternative format, please contact Matt Bower at (612) 673-2188 or Matthew.Bower@ci.minneapolis.mn.us

If you want help translating this call – Hmong– Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2188;

Spanish – Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llame 612-673-2188;

Somali – Ogow. Haddii aad dooneysa in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' an wac 612-673-2188.

- 5) Mayor Rybak has delivered his 2010 budget address. As expected, the budget is severely strained due to significant cuts in State aid (cut by \$40 million in 2009-10), mounting pension obligations (\$25 million in 2010) and growing health insurance costs (\$48 million in 2009). I am happy to see that the Mayor is keeping our commitment to jobs, an especially important issue in this time of high unemployment and financial turmoil. The mayor has proposed a total of \$19 million in cuts to the general fund since last December and this will lead to about 225 position eliminations. However, I am hopeful that the actual number of layoffs will be much lower, because many positions have already been eliminated, and because of the hiring freeze we imposed last November. I will be working with the Mayor to preserve jobs where possible by promoting the use of voluntary unpaid time off. I will also be fighting to make sure some of our smaller but still extremely important departments like Civil Rights and Health and Family Support are not harmed unduly. My largest point of disagreement with the Mayor relates to the funding of our neighborhood organizations. It is good that he is willing to support recertifying some of the tax district (see below for more) used to pay for NRP, but he is recommending that we reduce overall neighborhood funding by at least 25% from the levels we committed to last year (which were, for me, a significant compromise in themselves). I will be working throughout the budget process to bring whatever cuts we must make to neighborhoods more in line with the cuts we're willing to make to our city departments.
- 6) The Central Corridor LRT project is holding a public meeting to unveil the station art and design on **Thursday, August 20, 5-7pm** at Goodwill Easter Seals, 553 Fairview Ave N in St. Paul. The five artists who designed the fifteen Central Corridor stations used public input, research, and interviews to create unique station art that reflects the community and history surrounding each station.
- 7) The Minneapolis Police Department has launched a new crime alert service that you can receive by cell phone, through e-mail, or online. Anyone can sign up to stay connected with important public safety news in their area, including crime alerts, community updates, and important advisories. Signing up is easy—just go to www.nixle.com. On the page, you can find Minneapolis under the “featured cities” section.
- 8) Residents in every Minneapolis neighborhood have unique opportunities to work with police to help shape their Neighborhood Policing Plan. Beginning in 2007, every neighborhood in Minneapolis has its own plan, which is developed by the police and community working together. The plans are updated each year, so you'll have a chance later this year to attend a meeting in your neighborhood to create the 2010 policing plans. To find out when and where the meeting is in your neighborhood, call 311 or visit the City's Web site at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us and type “neighborhood policing plans” in the search box.
- 9) The HERC conditional use permit application has been held over in the Zoning and Planning Committee until early September. No decision was made in July regarding the appeal of the Planning Commission's denial of the requested amendment to the conditional use permit that would allow them to burn more garbage. The Committee ended up not taking public testimony after learning that the County intends to agree to suspend the time limit on this matter while they work with state officials from the MPCA and the state attorney general's office to determine if an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) (which could then lead to an Environmental Impact Statement or EIS) might be required.
- 10) The 2008 Bicycle Count Report is now available. Among other things, the study found that the number of bicyclists *increased 15%* between 2007 and 2008. Many locations in and near the West Bank have high bicycle ridership and mode share, including over 2000 riders measured at the terminus of the Hiawatha trail. More info is available at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/bicycles.
- 11) This fall, Minneapolis voters will be able to rank our choices for Mayor, City Council, Park Board and Board of Estimate and Taxation. To learn more about the system and see a sample ballot, please check out <http://voteminneapolis.org>.
- 12) The proposal I worked on with Council Member Betsy Hodges to form a new sister city relationship between Minneapolis and Najaf, Iraq, has passed the Council unanimously. I look forward to meeting with elected officials from Najaf and strengthening this relationship over the coming years.
- 13) The U-area ordinance changes that the University Alliance supported and that I moved forward unanimously passed the City Council on August 14.
- 14) There are openings on the Civil Rights Commission (closes 8/14) and Public Health Advisory Committee (open until filled). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.