

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Cedar Riverside, 11-28-07

Cam's next Cedar Riverside Office Hours:
Tuesday December 4, 9:30-11:00am
Hard Times Café, 1821 Riverside Ave

Items:

- 1) West Bank LRT Station Public Meeting
- 2) National Night Out – Minneapolis is #1
- 3) Youth Violence Prevention
- 4) Domestic Violence Pledge
- 5) School Board Elections
- 6) Entertainment licensing change
- 7) Employee Non-Discrimination Act
- 8) Administrative Review Reform
- 9) Lurking Repeal
- 10) Internal Affairs Audit
- 11) Ex-Offender Reentry
- 12) Investigative Unit Staffing
- 13) Contract Compliance
- 14) Streetcars
- 15) Immigration Issues
- 16) Hybrid Buses
- 17) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) Please join me and Met Council representatives for a community meeting to discuss options for the West Bank Central Corridor station location, date and time yet to be determined.
- 2) Minneapolis has been recognized as having the highest participation in NNO among cities of 300,000 people or more for 2007. I'm proud of the role my intern Mustafa Adam played in organizing an NNO party on Cedar Riverside.
- 3) The work that started with the Resolution recognizing youth violence as a public health problem that I introduced last November is approaching completion. Last week, a draft of the City's plan to reduce youth violence came before the Health Energy and Environment Committee. This has been one of my top priorities throughout the year and it is exciting to be a part of this effort to help reduce the tenacious and tragic problems of youth violence. For more information see http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/communications/YouthViolencePrevention_home.asp
- 4) The Public Safety & Regulatory Services committee signed on to a pledge to reduce domestic violence in Minneapolis. I am very interested in working on this critical problem, which I view as inseparable from my ongoing work on youth violence prevention.
- 5) I encourage residents to consider supporting a school board election reform proposal (known as the "Davnies Bill") that will be coming to the School Board next month and possibly, if they do not approve it, to the voters in 2008. I think the proposal offers us a way to improve representation, help hold elected officials accountable and make them more responsive, simplify our government structure, improve possible collaboration between jurisdictions and open up the system to political diversity. If enacted, it would change the School Board from the current 7 at large seats to 9 seats voted in by 3 at large seats and 6 district seats. The six districts would mirror the Park Board districts (although district lines could be redrawn after 2010). The enabling legislation states that the School Board can implement this law or let it go to on the 2008 election ballot. The School Board is scheduled to vote on this issue during their **December 11** meeting.
 - 6) The Public Safety and Regulatory Services committee has voted to eliminate the requirement that small restaurants and coffee shops have a "Place of Entertainment" license for storytelling, readings, and music performed by 3 or fewer non-amplified musicians. I think this is a step in the right direction for supporting small businesses and local artists. I am also interested in allowing more musicians to play at once and changing our regulatory scheme from prohibiting amplified musicians (no matter how quiet) and allowing acoustic musicians (no matter how loud) to focusing on the actual sound levels being generated.

- 7) I coauthored a resolution with Council Member Glidden calling on Congress to restore the gender identity protections that have been stripped out of the current ENDA bill. Minneapolis has a long and distinguished history of supporting transgender persons, as the first city in the country to include gender identity in our laws against employment discrimination. The resolution passed the Council unanimously last cycle.
- 8) I am starting work on an amendment to the Administrative Review process for new housing under four units. There are three main options I am exploring: **1)** using the same 24 design standards, but increasing the number of points necessary for approval; **2)** reviewing, expanding and raising the standards, with community input, to help limit construction of some of the most objectionable houses from being built, **3)** adding a new design standard for formal community review and/or support, and increasing the points required for approval by the same amount that this design standard would be worth. I will be working with staff and my colleagues to find an option that seems workable, with the goal of introducing this item by early next year.
- 9) I am working with the Coalition for Lurking Ordinance Repeal to introduce a package that will repeal this ineffective and discriminatory ordinance by the end of this year. This package will, unfortunately, have to include expansions of the Loitering ordinance, in order to get the repeal passed. I view this as a very incremental step towards a fairer criminal justice system.
- 10) The Minneapolis Police Department has received approval from the Public Safety & Regulatory Services committee to enter into a contract with the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF). This is a different contractor than MPD was poised to hire in April, before the Council directed them to issue an open Request for Proposals. I consider this a very positive development, given PERF's national stature and track record and clear independence from MPD.
- 11) As ex-offenders are released from prison with limited education and work history, employers are increasingly reluctant to hire them and landlords are increasingly refusing to rent to them. The City has approved Empowerment Zone grants to The Network, Emerge Community Development Collaborative and 180 Degrees, Inc for offender re-entry programming. The goal is to serve over 1,000 Minneapolis residents, helping them find decent work and housing and reducing the chance that they will return to criminal activity. For more information, go here: http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2007-meetings/20071019/Docs/OffenderReentry_RCA.pdf.
- 12) Prompted by the recent City Pages article, the Public Safety and Regulatory Services committee has received a report from the Police Department on staffing levels of our investigative units, especially the Sex Crimes Unit. The committee directed the MPD to come back in December with a report on the 3-year clearance rates (a case is 'cleared' when someone is charged with the crime) and annual staffing history and clarification on the increase in reported rapes (especially the difference in increase between acquaintance and stranger rapes). I continue to believe that we must make investigations a higher priority. For more of my thoughts on this, please see my blog.
- 13) Responding to a report by the Humphrey Institute, the Civil Rights Director has reported back with further analysis recommendations about how to improve the City's Contract Compliance processes. The recommendations for improvements include: staffing changes to better handle the work; moving forward with a long overdue "Disparity Study" to help determine the extent of current disparities; better coordination with other City Departments and prime contractors; and capacity building activities with small and underutilized businesses. The report also presented clearer processes for holding accountable companies who fail to meet goals.
- 14) The Council has authorized staff to release an RFP for technical engineering assistance to address street design issues and develop street design guidelines to accommodate the potential future construction of streetcar lines along existing streets that are being reconstructed or rehabilitated.
- 15) The Council has passed a resolution limiting the participation of MPD officers to working with Immigration and Customs Enforcement only on matters relating to human trafficking and narcotics. I am working with civil rights advocates to bring the issue of human trafficking to the Public Safety & Regulatory Services committee.
- 16) Responding to the Council's urging and in support of our Downtown Transportation Action Plan, the Met Council has recently added 19 new hybrid electric buses to its system. The new buses, along with 150 more to follow over the next four years, deliver 22 percent better fuel mileage and produce 90 percent fewer emissions than the buses they replace. When the new 19 buses are placed in service Monday better than one-third of all local bus trips on the Nicollet Mall will be operated with hybrid electric models.
- 17) There are openings on the Civilian Police Review Authority (closes 12/7/2007), Heritage Preservation Commission (12/14/2007), Latino Advisory Committee to the Mayor and City Council (11/30/2007), Public Health Advisory Committee (11/30/2007), Minneapolis Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners (11/30/2007), Rental Dwelling License Board of Appeals (11/30/2007), Senior Citizen Advisory Committee (11/30/2007) and Zoning Board of Adjustment (11/30/2007). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.