



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

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Hmong - Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2800;

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Somali - Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' aan wac 612-673-3500.

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the West Bank, 3-16-11

Cam's next West Bank Office Hours:
Tuesday, April 5th, 9:30-11:00am
Hard Times Café, 1821 Riverside Ave

Items:

- 1) Mobile Food Vending
- 2) Central Corridor Betterments
- 3) Clean Sweep
- 4) City Trees Now Available
- 5) Court Watch Proposal
- 6) New Opportunity for Small Businesses
- 7) Solar Energy Systems
- 8) Dynamic Signs
- 9) Tiered Inspections
- 10) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) The West Bank Business Association (WBBA) has taken a formal position asking for vendors to be allowed on the commercial corridors in Cedar Riverside. My office has worked with WBBA staff to create a draft plan for which areas would be opened to vendors. This draft includes the east side of Cedar Ave from 7th St to Riverside, both sides of Riverside from Cedar to 25th Ave, both sides of 4th St from Riverside to 15th Ave, the south side of Washington Ave in Seven Corners, both sides of Washington Ave just east of 19th Ave (near the old Grandma's site), and both sides of 15th Ave just south of Seven Corners. In addition, there are two plaza areas that could accommodate vendors: between the Cedar Cultural Center and Palmer's Bar, and near the Hub Bike Coop and Mayday books. I am asking for input on this draft plan from both WBBA and the West Bank Community Coalition. There will also be a public hearing at the Regulatory Energy and Environment committee on April 4th.
- 2) The Council has adopted a list of "betterments" for the Central Corridor project, which may be funded if the contingency funds not all be needed for construction overruns. In addition, the Council has requested a seat on the project's "Change Control Board," the body that will make decisions on which betterments to fund. The "betterments" are things not already paid for in the project but located along the line. A number of improvements have also been agreed to by project partners: the U of M will pay for an inter-track fencing upgrade, Hennepin County will upgrade the Cedar bridge, etc. The betterments we have requested include upgrading the fencing on the Cedar and 19th Ave S bridges, improving the streetscape for Cedar, and installing traffic signals and wayfinding signage.
- 3) Minneapolis CleanSweep is a program offered through our Solid Waste and Recycling department. During it local organizers provide the volunteers, residents provide the excess trash from garages, sheds, basements etc. and the City provides the trucks, drivers and disposal for a flat fee of \$96 per truck per hour. There is no additional fee for disposal for any of the materials collected. To participate, fill out an application (at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/police/first/docs/2011csp.pdf) and return it as soon as possible. Possible dates begin on April 23rd, 2011 and run through October 15th, 2011 (excluding May 28th, June 4th, July 2nd, July 9th, September 3rd or September 10th.)
- 4) The City is offering good-sized trees for sale this spring. Trees being offered for sale are between 6 to 10 feet tall. As of March 14, residents and, for the first time, business owners and nonprofit organizations, can order one tree for their property at a cost of \$25 each on a first come first served basis. Trees must be picked up on May 21-23 at the City of Minneapolis Impound Lot, 51 Colfax Avenue North. To place an order: <http://treetrust.org/orderhere/>.

- 5) Working with the City Attorney and the Police, I have developed a West Bank Court Watch proposal that would create a Court Watch group of community members and members of the criminal justice system including: police officers, prosecutors and social service providers. Each month the collaborative group would discuss the community's most prolific offenders and work on a strategy to address the offender's crime pattern. This work could ensure a more coordinated plan by the criminal justice stakeholders. Sophisticated Court Watch groups have expanded their work into addressing systemic issues in the criminal justice system. The work of other local Court Watch groups has been credited with enhancing safety and livability within their respective communities.
- 6) Minneapolis has been selected as one of the cities to host the US Small Business Administration's e200 program, an initiative to boost small business growth. The eight-month program offers approximately 100 hours of training per participant and provides the opportunity for small business owners to work with experienced mentors and develop connections with their peers, city leaders, and financial communities. Classes begin the week of April 18th at Thrivent Financial for Lutherans in downtown Minneapolis and will be held every other week through early November. Local recruitment for the 2011 training cycle has begun. Small businesses that are located in Minneapolis, generate revenues between \$400,000 and \$10 million, and have been in business for at least three years, are eligible to participate. Interested small business owners are invited to learn more about the initiative by contacting the SBA office at 612-370-2312 (Cindy Collett or cynthia.collett@sba.gov).
- 7) The Council has adopted new definitions and protections for solar energy systems. The new ordinance provides much greater clarity for dealing with solar energy. It defines and sets standards for building mounted and freestanding solar systems and makes clear that solar access easements may be purchased by property owners. For the first time, it provides specific guidance to the Planning Commission that existing solar energy systems should be given special consideration if and when a proposed development would shadow them. Some amendments from the Council improved the proposal by raising the percentage of a residential lot that could be covered by a freestanding system from 3% to 5%. This means that for a standard 5,000 square foot city lot, the maximum allowable freestanding system went from 150 s.f. to 250 s.f. The committee also chose to completely do away with lot coverage maximums for commercial and industrial parcels. I believe that both of these amendments were steps in the right direction. My staff worked with solar advocates and City staff on an amendment that would clarify that "passive" solar systems would be included in the protections we're giving to other types of solar systems. These include systems that are specifically intended to capture and store direct solar heat, but are not broad enough to allow any window to be considered a "passive solar" system.
- 8) The Council has adopted new regulations regarding "dynamic signs," signage that incorporates large LCD TV-style screens. For the most part, I support these new standards. However, the Council also undid some good work from the Zoning and Planning committee. The committee, acting on a motion I made, voted to restrict these new signs from Pedestrian Oriented (or PO) Overlay Districts. Unfortunately, the Council majority voted to strip out those protections on an 8-5 vote. I believe that dynamic signs are not in keeping with the intent of PO districts. They are clearly aimed at drivers. Tellingly, the only types of businesses that have approached the City looking to install these signs are gas stations. This restriction was also in keeping with the existing signage regulations in PO districts. We already prohibit "pole signs, backlit awning and canopy signs and backlit insertable panel projecting signs" in PO districts, because these signs are aimed primarily at drivers, just like dynamic signs. Ignoring all of this, the Council majority voted to eliminate these protections for PO districts. They even rejected a compromise that would have allowed new dynamic signs in PO districts at sites that currently have manually changeable electronic signs.
- 9) Regulatory Services Housing Inspection Services staff have come forward with a new "tiered" inspections plan for rental license inspection schedules based on the conditions and maintenance of rental properties. Rental properties/license will be divided into 3 tiers based on criteria developed with input from stakeholders including rental property owners, tenants, neighborhood associations, City Council, Police, and the city attorney's office. The criteria includes: excessive nuisance conditions; excessive housing code violations; a history of non-compliance; and excessive police calls. The program is expected to be launched this April.
- 10) There are openings on the Charter Commission, Animal Care & Control Advisory Board, Minneapolis Capital Long-Range Improvement Committee (CLIC), Minneapolis Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, Latino Advisory Committee, Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission, Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Minneapolis Planning Commission, Public Health Advisory Committee (PHAC), Advisory Group for Minneapolis Redistricting 2011-2012 of the Minneapolis Charter Commission, Senior Citizens Advisory Committee, Thinc.GreenMSP Steering Committee, Minneapolis Workforce Council, Minneapolis Zoning Board of Adjustment, To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.