

**News from Cam Gordon  
Council Member, Second Ward  
November 2010**

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/ward2/>

**Thank You.** I am very grateful for the opportunity to serve and represent the people of the Second Ward. Every week, every year I see the enormous difference so many of you make in our communities. Informed and involved people who care about their homes, their neighbors, their neighborhoods, and their city are critical to making this a great place to live, work and raise our families. Thank you all.

**2011 Budget.** The 2011 budget and financial challenges facing our City are the most difficult I have experienced since taking office. By now, all property owners in Minneapolis should have received their notice for proposed property taxes for 2011. Many, if not all, have seen increases over 2010. These property taxes include taxes levied by Hennepin County, Minneapolis Public Schools, the City of Minneapolis and special taxing districts, such as Metro Transit and watershed districts. Understandably, I am most concerned with the City of Minneapolis' portion.

The second of three public hearings on the tax levy and budget was held in November and we heard many concerns about the proposed levy and budget. The biggest concerns related to a cut in funding for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (from \$10 million to 8) and the dramatic increase in property taxes. The typical increase, based on the comments, calls and emails I have received, is between 15 – 18%. Several factors play roles in this, including:

1. The poor economy and the decline in the overall tax base
2. A shift in the burden of property taxes from commercial and industrial properties onto residential properties
3. Increased obligations to closed pension funds,
4. Decreases in Local Government Aid, and
5. The recertification of Tax Increment Financing Districts.

Please allow me to share more thoughts on each.

1. The poor economy accounts for a major portion of many homeowners' property tax increases. The drop in value of both commercial and industrial property and the decline in residential property values due to foreclosure, short sales and the economic recession, have significantly reduced the property tax base. With a smaller tax base, even if the cumulative amount of the taxes being collected (the tax levy) remained constant, taxes per individual property would rise. Unfortunately, the poor economy does not reduce costs to the City – if anything, it increases them. More vacant homes and businesses mean a greater risk of fire, and more work for our inspectors and regulatory staff. Recessions tend to see increased crime rates, putting more pressure on police resources. Homelessness and unemployment make our employment, housing and economic development efforts more critical. More information on the connection between the economy and your property taxes is available here:  
<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/city-budget/value-history.asp>.

2. State law changes over the last decade have shifted the burden of property taxes from commercial, apartment building and industrial properties onto smaller residential properties. In 1997, residential property owners covered 33% percent of the total Minneapolis property taxes. Today they pay a 56%. This shift has caused residential property taxes to climb at a greater rate than taxes for other property types in the City.

3. The entire amount of money raised by the 6.5% proposed increase in the tax levy is proposed to go to meet our legal obligations to three closed pension funds. These contributions were "locked in" in the 1980s, when the City government agreed to pay pension amounts event when the investments of those pension funds could not. These programs are now closed, since they stopped accepting new members in 1978. The City has challenged overcharges in court and

when the judge sided with the City we were able to decrease taxes by \$10 million last year. Still, costs of covering the agreed to benefits to retirees and their survivors have grown dramatically in the last few years, and are projected to continue to grow in the years to come. Beginning in 2010 and for the next five years alone, market downturns have increased our responsibility to the funds by an estimated \$38 million. For more see <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/city-budget/closed-pensions.asp>

4. Minneapolis' Local Government Aid (LGA) has been cut by \$54 million over the last three years. LGA was established by the State in the 1970s as a revenue sharing program to ensure that all communities in Minnesota have quality basic services within a taxing system which allows the state government to impose income and sales taxes and limits local governments to collecting property taxes and only limited state-approved sales taxes. Under this scheme, local governments agreed to send the income- and sales-tax revenues generated within their boundaries to the state with the understanding that some of this revenue would be redistributed to local governments through a need-based formula. Many cities in states that have had no such agreement (such as Colorado, New York, Oregon, Ohio, Kentucky, Michigan and Pennsylvania) have instituted city income taxes. Minneapolis does not currently have this option. Instead, we have worked to keep City spending at pace with inflation and essentially flat since the cuts began and had to raise the property tax levy to make up the difference. In 2003 State Aid accounted for 40 percent of General Fund revenue, while property taxes accounted for only 29 percent. In 2011, if recent projections prove accurate, State Aid will account for only 22 percent while property taxes will make up 44 percent of General Fund revenue.

5. Part of the pressure the budget this year is due to the recertification of about ½ of the old "NRP" Tax Increment Finance (TIF) districts that for the 20 years from 1989 – 2009 were used to pay for the Neighborhood Revitalization Program. Starting in 2011 these funds will be used to: a) make payments to Hennepin County for their share of the property taxes lost to the TIF; b) pay for the City and County costs of administering the district. The remaining funds (or the "Net Tax Increment" of about \$10 million a year) will be divided evenly to pay debt service on the Target Center and the new neighborhood and community relations programs. This has taken roughly 15 million dollars out of total tax levy that was available for other purposes in 2010. Originally the Council approved twice as much funding for neighborhoods and Target Center debt but after the economic downturn and loss of LGA in 2008, this was cut in half. Unfortunately, selling Target Center is not a realistic option without a buyer, and while I would consider not paying down the debt as quickly as we could, this was a hard-fought Council decision, and paying down the debt quickly reduces the long-term burden on taxpayers and brings more money into the general fund sooner. In light of the ending of the 20 year long Neighborhood Revitalization Program and the end of the County's financial contribution to it, City funding for neighborhood organizations is absolutely critical.

It is important to note that we are cutting the City budget even as property taxes are increasing. Adjusting for inflation, the City's proposed budget for 2011 is 7% smaller than the City's budget in 2001. The City will have close to 80 fewer full time employees in 2011 than 2010 and 400 fewer than it did in 2001. As we expect other departments in the City to reduce costs, one thing that is important to me is that the City Council Ward budgets themselves must share in those reductions. There is currently a proposal that would require the Council offices to do that by cutting each office budget by \$5,400, through a combination of cuts to spending on things like office supplies, interns, mailings and travel as well as instituting a voluntary unpaid time off program. That proposal should be adopted.

There are other ongoing efforts to look at additional budget cuts in hopes that the levy and property taxes could be lowered. Each percentage point that we reduce the levy means a \$2.2 million dollar loss of revenue. With a general fund budget of \$390 million there may yet be places worth cutting, but more layoffs and lost services often have undesirable consequences. However, each percentage point that we reduce the levy will only yield a \$16 annual reduction in property taxes for the "typical" Minneapolis homeowner. Yes, that's only \$16 for the whole year

for a home valued at about \$195,000. If the tax rate is 7.5% the total overall property tax on that home is about \$3,159 and at 6.5% the total overall property tax would be is \$3,143.

One option I would be willing to reluctantly consider would be to borrow to cover some or all of our pension obligations. Borrowing, however, also adds costs over the long term and the less money we have to spend on interest, the more we have to cover ongoing operating costs or real improvements to our infrastructure in the future. Also, as pension obligations are set to increase in the next three years, this option may be better reserved for future years, if at all.

I am hopeful that the actual impact on taxpayers may be slightly smaller than stated in the notices we received by mail this month. The notices were based on a maximum 7.5 % levy increase passed by the Board of Estimate and taxation. The budget proposed by the mayor and what each departments have planned for, is based on a 6.5% increase. The Board set a higher maximum to avoid greater cuts if the State's economic forecast departs from previous estimates of what Minneapolis can expect from Local Government Aid.

The site, [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/city-budget/2011truthintaxation](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/city-budget/2011truthintaxation) answers many questions about the process and explains the City's different funding sources. To view the complete proposed 2011 budget, go to [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/city-budget/2011recc](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/city-budget/2011recc)

One more public hearing on the City's proposed 2011 budget to give the public a chance to share their thoughts on the proposed budget and tax levy will be held on Monday, Dec. 13, 6:05 p.m. in City Hall, 350 South 5th Street, room 317. Written comments are also welcomed.

Whatever we do this year, I am convinced that the annual tax increases levied in the last few years are not sustainable. I will continue to work to make sure we are managing this difficult financial situation in a way that balances the need to keep taxes down with the need to avoid drastic cuts in critical services that would lead to more expensive long term consequences. There is a dire need for state tax and pension reform, which I will continue to push for while keeping my primary focus on making sure that City departments are investing our money wisely for the short and long term benefit of all our residents.

**Redistricting.** One bright point of an otherwise difficult election was the overwhelming support by the people of Minneapolis for a better way of changing ward boundaries after this year's census. By a vote of 55%, the voters of Minneapolis rejected the old, overtly politicized process – in which our ward boundaries were drawn by a Redistricting Commission comprised of political party and City Council selected partisans – in favor of allowing the Charter Commission to redraw the maps. There is work to do to ensure that the Charter Commission will include diverse voices and viewpoints (geographic, ethnic, and political) when doing their work, and to ensure that the process they use is open, transparent, and inclusive. But I am convinced that this is a major step in the right direction, and I am proud to have started the process a year ago with Council Members Glidden and Benson.

**Disparity Study.** The long awaited "disparities" study is now complete. It examines the City's procurement process, the locations and ownership of companies that do business with the city and the overall marketplace and experiences of women-owned and minority-owned businesses that seek contracts in both the public and private sector. It has confirmed that we continue to have a significant problem with racial and gender discrimination on all levels of the contracting and procurement ladder in the region. Racism and sexism continue to pose serious obstacles in access to contracts in our marketplace. The study also made a number of recommendations to remedy the situation, including the enhancement of current City efforts to fight discrimination and the addition of new initiatives. The City Council is now seeking public comments on the Disparity Study. E-mail comments to [cynthia.govan@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cynthia.govan@ci.minneapolis.mn.us) by 4:30 p.m. December 3. Mail to: Minneapolis Civil Rights Department, Attn: Cynthia Govan, 250 S. 4th Street, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55415. The Council will likely act on any recommendations based on the report following the comment period. This is the second Disparity Study completed by the City. The

original study was completed in 1995 and the new study is required if we are to operate a Small and Underutilized Business Program to address the effects of past discrimination in contracting and to promote equal opportunities for all to participate in contracts generated by the City. . You can view the study here:

[http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/news/docs/NERA\\_Minneapolis\\_Disparity\\_Final.pdf](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/news/docs/NERA_Minneapolis_Disparity_Final.pdf).

**MPCA's Metro Solid Waste Plan.** I submitted comments on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Metro area Solid Waste Plan. I commended the agency for several things, including calling for limits on the total waste going to landfills, instituting a 'floor' for recycling, composting, and reduction; as well as calling for extended producer responsibility and mandatory recycling programs for commercial, industrial, and institutional sectors. I also criticized the plan and called for the MPCA to adopt stronger and clearer organics recovery goals; to clarify that burning waste, even when it is converted to energy, is not a preferred solution; and to put forward a bold long-term zero-waste vision for a Metro area in which all waste is treated as a resource.

**Homelessness and Outreach.** The number of homeless people in Minneapolis is rising even though, since 2007, the City's Outreach program (provided by St. Stephan's Street Outreach) has been able to house over 200 people directly from the streets, most of whom had been homeless for years. If you know about someone experiencing homelessness, call the street outreach team at 612-879-7624. In addition, the Office to End Homelessness organizes a biannual, one day event that links more than 1,500 homeless households with support services. The next Project Homeless Connect will be held on Monday, December 13, 2010 at the Minneapolis Convention Center. For more information please visit the website: [www.homelessconnectminneapolis.org](http://www.homelessconnectminneapolis.org).

**Emergency Shelter Grant.** The City of Minneapolis is soliciting development funding proposals for Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG). The ESG program funds may be used to renovate, rehabilitate, and convert buildings for use as either emergency shelters or transitional housing for people who are homeless. There is approximately \$465,365 available. Proposals are due no later than 4:00 pm. CDT, on Friday, December 10, 2010. Program guidelines and application materials are available at [http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/esg\\_rfp\\_home.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/esg_rfp_home.asp) Questions should be directed to Tiffany Glasper at 612-673-5221 or [Tiffany.Glasper@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:Tiffany.Glasper@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).

**Bicycle Advisory Committee.** The Council has restructured the Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee(BAC). For the first time, it will be made up of a majority of community members. Up until now, the majority of members have been City and other organizational staff. It will no longer be chaired by Public Works staff; instead, the group will choose its own chair and set its own agendas. My office was instrumental in pushing these changes forward over the last two years, and I am thrilled to see our work come to fruition. Each Council Member will appoint one member from his or her ward. If you or anyone you know are interested in representing Ward 2 on the new and improved BAC, please contact the City Clerk's office at (612) 673-3358 or [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).

**Nice Ride's First Year.** This month, the inaugural season of the Nice Ride bicycle sharing system came to a close. Nice Ride exceeded the 100,000-ride mark this year, and Blue Cross Blue Shield is committing an additional \$1.5 million to Nice Ride for Phase 2 expansion.

**Homegrown Minneapolis Community Meeting.** There will be a community meeting in December on the Homegrown Minneapolis effort I have been leading, which aims to bring more healthy and local food and urban agriculture to Minneapolis. The meeting will be **Thursday, December 9<sup>th</sup>** from 5:30-7:30 pm at the UROC (Urban Research and Outreach Center), 2001 Plymouth Avenue North. Everyone is welcome. Look for more information here: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/homegrown-home.asp>.

**Urban Agriculture Plan.** The draft Urban Agriculture Topical Plan will be released for public comment on December 9<sup>th</sup>, at the Homegrown meeting above. You can see a copy of the plan here: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/homegrown-home.asp>. Comments are due by the

end of January, 2011. A public meeting on the plan will be held in both North and South Minneapolis in the second week of January.

**Prepare for Snow Emergencies.** It would be great to see cleaner streets and fewer ticketed or towed cars this winter. Snow Emergencies cost the City money and towing and impounding vehicles is expensive and leads to plowing inefficiencies. The more ways you and your neighbors have to learn about a Snow Emergency, the better. Here are some options:

- **Call the hotline** - (612) 348-SNOW. hotline, The hotline includes information in Spanish, Somali, English and Hmong. TTY: (612) 673-2157
- **Check out the City's website** - Go to [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/snow](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/snow) to find out whether a Snow Emergency and check out the street lookup, which lets you put in an address or a neighborhood to see where you can park during a Snow Emergency.
- **Mail** - A Snow Emergency informational brochure was mailed to every house. Put this up.
- **Phone alerts** - Minneapolis uses a phone alert system to notify residents when Snow Emergencies are declared. It is an automated notification system that can place thousands of calls per hour.
- **E-mail alerts** - You can sign up to get Snow Emergency at [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/snow/esubscribe.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/snow/esubscribe.asp).
- **The media** - News releases are sent media outlets and the City Cable Channels 14, 79 and KBEM-FM (88.5 MHz) radio provide regular updates
- **Facebook** – “Go to [www.facebook.com/MinneapolisSnowEmergency](http://www.facebook.com/MinneapolisSnowEmergency).  
**Twitter** - [twitter.com/minneapolisnow](http://twitter.com/minneapolisnow).

**Sidewalk Shoveling Required.** Each time it snows our neighbors rely on us to shovel our sidewalks so we can all get around safely. Minneapolis ordinance requires property owners to clear sidewalks after a snowfall within 24 hours for houses and duplexes and four daytime hours for apartment and commercial buildings. When you shovel snow and clear ice, please shovel the sidewalks on all sides of your property, the full width of the sidewalk down to the bare pavement. This will help prevent injuries and make it possible for all our neighbors, including those in wheelchairs and with walkers to be safer getting around in the winter. The City offers 24-hour sites where residents can pick up free sand for their residential sidewalks. For sand, please bring your own pail and shovel to 6036 Harriet Ave. S. (on West 60th Street between Lyndale and Harriet), 1809 Washington St. NE (18th and Jefferson) or East 27th Street, just east of Longfellow Avenue near the Public Works gate. Salt on slippery sidewalks or streets helps melt away snow and ice. But the salt-and-water mixture can eventually contaminate soil or end up washing down storm drains and into our lakes and rivers. If you choose to use salt or another deicer, please use it sparingly and only after shoveling or plowing as fully as you can. Applying it evenly uses less of the stuff and still gets rid of icy patches. Before buying de-icing products, read the warning labels. Some de-icing chemicals can corrode metal, damage sidewalks, kill lawns and harm pets when they walk on it. To report a sidewalk that is not shoveled, file an online complaint or call 311. For more information on sidewalk shoveling rules and a downloadable flyer to inform and encourage others to shovel, visit [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sidewalks](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sidewalks).

**The Mississippi Watershed Management Organization** is offering a workshop on Winter Parking Lot & Sidewalk Maintenance December 9, 2010, 10:00 AM - 2:30 PM, Saint Anthony City Hall, 3301 Silver Lake Road, Saint Anthony Village, MN 55418. This workshop will present information on how to mitigate the effects of de-icing materials on the environment, without compromising safety or effectiveness. Participants will have the option of receiving Level One Certification in Snow & Ice Control Best Practices from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. This workshop is free (and lunch is included!), but registration is required by December 1st. More information is available at: <http://www.mwmo.org/educationtrainings.html>

**Healthy Corner Store Pilot.** This fall, 10 corner stores throughout Minneapolis became part of a new effort to provide their customers with more healthy, fresh foods as part of the City's larger effort to combat obesity and chronic disease. The program arose from an assessment the

Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support (MDHFS) staff made of 35 stores to determine availability and quality of fresh produce. Results showed that 36 percent of stores did not have any fresh produce in stock. In the other 64 percent of stores, produce was limited, expensive and often difficult to find in the store. The 10 stores that are part of the Healthy Corner Store pilot project include 2 Second Ward stores and were selected through an open application process. Working closely with the store owners and managers, MDHFS staff identified barriers they had in stocking and selling fresh produce. For more information, go to [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/ship-cornerstores.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/ship-cornerstores.asp).

**Smarter Parking Meters.** The first of a new generation of smart parking meters have been installed in downtown Minneapolis. The multi-space pay stations, similar to ones now in service in Chicago, Los Angeles and many other cities, allow parkers to use credit cards to pay for meter time. A total of 46 meter pay stations have been installed in the North Loop. The new meter pay stations will be used to pay for parking for approximately 450 on-street spaces. Next year, plans call for the installation of another 200 multi-space stations (approximately 2,000 metered spaces), with another 200 stations (2,000 metered spaces) going in the following year. Eventually, these meter pay stations will be the most common ones drivers use when parking Downtown. Unlike traditional meters, each parking space will not have its own meter. Drivers just need to input their space numbers, then pay for time using credit cards, debit cards or the usual cash options of quarters and dollar coins. The new meters have the ability to handle variable parking rates at different times of day. They can warn drivers of “tow away” zones during peak periods so they’ll know that they need to move their car by a certain time. They also will not allow drivers to pay the meter during these times. The meter pay stations are solar powered and will take advantage of the city’s WIFI network by transmitting real-time data on parking meter usage to the Traffic Control Agents and Minneapolis’ traffic and parking engineers. Because many transactions will be handled electronically, there will be less of a need to empty the meters. That, along with having just one meter pay station per side of the block, means crews will spend less time collecting money from the meters. Most of Minneapolis’ current single-spaced parking meters were installed in 1992 and are now approaching the end of their useful lives. The new multi-spaced meters were chosen as a result of a selection process that included written proposals and a six-month field test along Minneapolis streets.

**Site for I-35W Bridge Memorial.** The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has approved West River Parkway as the site for the Remembrance Garden – a memorial to the victims of the Aug. 1, 2007 collapse of the I-35W Bridge in Minneapolis. The site is directly across from Gold Medal Park, which became a gathering place and de facto memorial site in the days and weeks immediately following the bridge collapse.

**Radon Testing.** Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer in nonsmokers, but it is 100 percent preventable. Radon problems can be easily fixed. An invisible, odorless, radioactive gas, radon can be found in many homes across Minnesota but only by testing. Test your home for radon. Beginning Nov. 1, radon detection kits will be available for \$9 each at Minneapolis Development Review, 250 S. Fourth St., third floor, Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8am-4pm and Thursdays from 9am-4pm.

**’Tis the Season of Household Waste.** Previous years show a 25-percent increase in household waste between Thanksgiving and New Years. If you’d like to keep this time of year less wasteful, check out [www.doitgreen.org](http://www.doitgreen.org).

**The “New Normal.”** On October 29<sup>th</sup> the City Council heard from State Economist Tom Stinson and State Demographer Tom Gillaspay outlining how Minneapolis and the rest of the state will have to adjust to an aging population and a more efficient job force as the nation makes it way out of the recession. The report shared statistics about how the state’s economy has changed and how the state is forecasting future growth by predicting demographic changes. The state is projecting that the “new normal” could include higher interest rates, slower economic growth, an aging population, decreased consumption and more savings, a diverse population, and more

uncertainty in personal and national futures. To view the complete presentation, go here: [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/news/docs/StateDemographicTrendsOct2010.pdf](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/news/docs/StateDemographicTrendsOct2010.pdf).

**New Emergency Operations Center.** The City has opened its new Emergency Operations Training Facility, which will help emergency responders and other City staff better prepare for and respond to emergencies. The multi-purpose building helps meet the training and response needs of the Minneapolis Fire Department, the Minneapolis Police Department, and the City's Emergency Management Division, along with other regional partners, including the State of Minnesota Structural Collapse Team, and an emergency operations center that will be used during significant emergencies or disasters. The facility is built on a 12-acre site in Fridley that the City purchased in 1990, and since that time, the site has been built out as a training facility for Minneapolis Firefighters. The Emergency Operations Training Facility is built to a LEED Silver Quality Standard for sustainability and will also be used as a back-up Emergency Operations Center for the State, Hennepin County and the City of St. Paul

**Riverside Plaza Renovation.** The Council has voted to grant up to \$80 million in tax exempt multifamily housing entitlement revenue bonds and \$1.9 million from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to the Riverside Plaza renovation project. This project has been one of the most important issues on the West Bank for most of this year. It has generated more discussion, controversy, and interest than anything I've seen in a long time. At its most basic, this is an affordable housing issue. There are more than four thousand people who rely on the affordable housing provided by Riverside Plaza. Unfortunately, the quality of that housing has been decreasing over time, and its long-term viability was threatened. This project stabilizes and improves this housing.

The renovation will also employ a significant number of people (200) in an economy that has left many people desperate for work. It will significantly reduce the Plaza's carbon footprint through energy efficiency enhancements. But in addition to all of those benefits that are 'baked in,' the neighborhood group, with my help and the able support of Community Planning and Economic Development staff, has insisted on and received a very strong development agreement between the developer and the City. Some of the most important aspects of that agreement include:

- Ninety jobs for residents of Riverside Plaza, the West Bank, and surrounding neighborhoods. This includes \$50,000 from the contractor and the City towards job training over the course of the project, and a temporary resident and neighborhood employment and training office on the Riverside Plaza property.
- A commitment by the City to fix some of the poorest-quality streets in Minneapolis: 4th St S and 15th Ave S. These streets primarily serve the very dense population of low-income residents of the Plaza and the Cedars, and I have long believed that the level of underinvestment in them is basically immoral. I'm thrilled to see this commitment to invest in this infrastructure, and I want to personally thank the Mayor for making it possible. This project is anticipated to cost \$1 million.
- Pedestrian improvements on 6th Street. Since taking office, I have received numerous complaints about how hard it is to cross 6th. There is one long block, between Cedar and 16th Ave S, that has no adequate crossing. People cross illegally and unsafely where 17th Ave S used to be, before it was taken out as part of the Plaza's construction. The renovation project is dedicating \$10,000 to a new signal and other enhancements to right this historical mistake.
- More money for safety. Together, the developer and the City have committed to contribute \$12,500 per year to police buy-back. These resources are to be controlled by the West Bank Safety Committee, literally the only group in the neighborhood that coordinates between the West Bank Community Coalition, Cedar Riverside NRP, and West Bank Business Association. In addition to these annual funds, the developer will be creating a Safety Center in cooperation with the Safety Committee and RPTA, which will serve as a community gathering space.

- An on-street parking solution near the Plaza. People have been requesting this for a long time, and having a commitment spelled out in the development agreement will be very helpful.
- Improvements to the privately-owned public plaza at the northwest corner of 6th and Cedar, with public art that I hope will help augment the neighborhood-funded beacon right across the street. These improvements will be worth \$60,000, and the Cedar Cultural Center will be contracted to oversee them, which gives me confidence that they will be of high artistic quality.
- A possible new community space on 4th St S, where there is currently a surface parking lot. The developer has agreed to offer the right of first refusal to the Cedar Riverside Partnership, creating an opportunity for a great collaboration between the institutions in the area and the residents of the Plaza.
- Continued funding for the Riverside Plaza Tenants Association, in the amount of \$150,000 annually.
- \$7 million worth of improvements to public areas inside the complex, including lighting, sidewalks, wayfinding and more.
- A NiceRide kiosk on Cedar.
- A comprehensive and well-funded relocation plan for tenants during construction, including temporary apartments within the complex.
- An agreement by the developer to be part of special service district, which I believe is vital to the long-term maintenance of the improved streetscapes likely to be installed on Cedar and Riverside Avenues, and possibly 4th and 15th.
- Allowance for a mural on wall of the African Mall facing the LRT Trail.

I realize that this is not everything that everyone in the neighborhood wanted, and that some will continue to believe that the project should have done much more to support safety, green space, youth programming and more. But I am convinced that this development agreement will ensure that this renovation project will make not only significant improvements to the affordable housing relied on by thousands of Second Ward residents, but the West Bank as a whole. I joined the West Bank Community Coalition, City staff, and all of my colleagues in supporting the project.

**Dero Gets Commuter Choice Award.** Congratulations to Second Ward small business Dero Bike Racks for receiving a 2010 Commuter Choice Award. They were honored for developing Dero ZAP, a solar powered, wireless, web-based application that allows organizations to reward employees who commute by bicycle. The program was launched inside Dero itself, and they now provide a cash incentive of \$3 per day to each employee who uses alternative commuting options. I also want to welcome Dero to Southeast Minneapolis; for years, they have been operating in the Seward neighborhood, and have just recently moved to the Southeast Minneapolis Industrial area at 504 Malcolm Ave S.E.

**Riverside Reconstruction.** On November 5<sup>th</sup>, the Council authorized Public Works staff to request a variance from the Municipal State Aid (msa) standards to go down to an 8 foot parking lane on Riverside Avenue. The typical MSA parking lane width is 10 feet. The width we save will be reallocated to bike lanes, sidewalks and boulevards. The layout approval for Riverside has been delayed until the Transportation and Public Works committee meeting on November 30<sup>th</sup>, in order to give staff and my office a chance to respond to requests that have been made by the major institutions on Riverside: the U of M, Augsburg, and Fairview. Augsburg and Fairview have requested that some of the on-street parking between 22<sup>nd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Avenues be removed, for that space to be reallocated to wider sidewalks and more green space. I am open to this request, especially now that the West Bank Community Coalition and West Bank Business Association have formally supported it.

**Photo Exhibit on Health.** A photography exhibit exploring the impact of environment on health is on view in the City Hall Rotunda until Dec. 31. The exhibit — *Reflections: Health & My Community* — is the work of seven teens from diverse backgrounds, including some from Ward 2, who documented the barriers and supports to healthy living in their neighborhoods. The exhibit

is one element of a multi-faceted health initiative — the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) — that aims to help Minnesotans live longer, healthier lives by reducing the burden of chronic illnesses. When the exhibit closes in City Hall, the photos become part of a touring exhibit that will be displayed at community events where the youth live. City staff participating in the project include Ward 2's own Alison Moore, SHIP Project Specialist. The project is funded through the Minnesota Department of Health from a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Minneapolis Healthy Housing, Healthy Communities initiative, which reaches 8,500 people, includes these property management services and housing sites:

- Center for Asian Pacific Islanders - Glendale Townhomes & Riverside Apartments
- CommonBond Communities - Seward Towers East & West, New Village Co-Op
- Little Earth Residents Association - Little Earth of United Tribes Housing Corporation
- Pillsbury United Communities - Camden Apartments, Heritage Park, Legacy Village
- WellShare International - Riverside Plaza.

**There are currently openings** on the Bicycle Advisory Committee, Public Health Advisory Committee (PHAC), Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, Senior Citizens Advisory Committee, Youth Violence Prevention Executive Committee and Zoning Board of Adjustment. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).

Gratefully yours, in peace and cooperation,

Cam Gordon  
Minneapolis City Council Member, Second Ward  
673-2202, 296-0579  
<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/ward2/>