

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the West Bank, 8-20-08

**Cam's next West Bank Office Hours:
Tuesday September 2, 9:30-11:00am
Hard Times Café, 1821 Riverside Ave**

Items:

- 1) 2009 Budget
- 2) Zoning Study and Moratorium in U District
- 3) Bike Infrastructure
- 4) Hiawatha LRT Station Extensions
- 5) Police Practices During RNC
- 6) Email Utility Bills
- 7) NRP
- 8) Native Plantings
- 9) Public Drinking Fountains
- 10) Farm Stands
- 11) U of M Bike Trail
- 12) Fundraiser at Coyle Center
- 13) Youth Violence Prevention
- 14) Solar on Convention Center
- 15) Cedar/Minnehaha/Franklin/20th
- 16) Remanufactured Printer Cartridges
- 17) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) Mayor Rybak has presented his proposed 2009 budget to the Council. It includes welcome new investments in infrastructure, continued attention to preventing youth violence and a smaller than expected property tax increase of 6.9% (less than the 8% increases of past years). The 2009 budget will be adopted in December. I look forward to learning and sharing more in the weeks ahead and I encourage you to share your budget priorities and concerns with me.
- 2) On Friday, I plan to move to establish a moratorium on demolition of single family homes, duplexes and triplexes, and of new 1-4 unit residential construction in the University District. This moratorium will be in place while City staff work with the University District Partnership Alliance and the neighborhoods on a study to address land use and development concerns in the University district, including parking, occupancy, design standards, zoning, inspections and the development review process. Haila Maze, Principal Planner with the CPED Planning Division and the East Sector Planner (and one of the staff who drafted the Cedar Riverside Small Area Plan), will be leading the effort for the City.
- 3) I am extremely supportive of the portions of Mayor Rybak's budget relating to bicycle infrastructure. He has recommended that we invest \$2.1 million in lighting and extending the Hiawatha LRT Bike Trail starting in 2013. My office is also working with Met Transit and Public Works to discuss lighting improvements that could be made before then. The Mayor is also recommending that we spend \$100,000 per year on maintaining our bicycle infrastructure, a move I support.
- 4) Metro Transit plans to increase the size of many of the Hiawatha LRT stations, including the Cedar Riverside station, to accommodate 3-car trains. This is great, because it makes clear that we have far exceeded our initial ridership projections. The construction project will begin next spring, and end in the spring of 2010. They are projecting three or four closures of the station during that period. I have asked that Metro Transit staff attend meetings in Seward and the West Bank to discuss the project, especially ideas for preventing conflict between pedestrians and cyclists in the station areas.
 - 5) At the July 25th Council meeting, I succeeded in significantly strengthening the resolution laying out police policies for public assemblies. It is now clear that the City's policy is never to use conventional rubber bullets, that officers may not tamper with or destroy people's cameras, that officers will not target law-abiding protest observers, and that they won't subject protest organizers to disparate treatment. The vote to add these protections was unanimous. I am hopeful that by going on record laying out our expectations for the MPD, we will avoid the sort of escalating confrontations that have occurred in the past.

- 6) Save paper and money on postage by signing up to receive your utility bills online! Visit www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/forms/utility-billing, fill out the form on the back of your next billing stub and mail it in with your payment. If all Minneapolis utility customers signed up for electronic billing, each year the City would save 44 tons of wood (equal to 302 trees) and enough energy to power seven homes. It's also a great way for us to make your tax dollars go further.
- 7) We've made real progress towards ensuring a healthier future of our neighborhood organizations and a continued but different neighborhood revitalization program. The most significant recommendations in the report include the creation of a new resident-controlled Neighborhood and Community Advisory Board, and a new Neighborhood and Community Relations Department under the City Coordinator. The report recommends that the City fund approximately 3 million dollars per year to neighborhood organizations to support administrative work. There is also an emerging consensus, made possible by the Legislature's decision to enable us to continue funding it into the future, that there will be additional discretionary funding for neighborhood priorities. You can read the full report here: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2008-meetings/20080725/Docs/RCA-ProgramProposal.pdf>. The Council held a special meeting tonight to take public comment on the report's recommendations for the future of NRP. You can submit written comments on the Framework until September 11, to Committee Clerk Anissa Hollingshead at anissa.hollingshead@ci.minneapolis.mn.us or by mail to Council Committee Clerk, 350 South 5th Street, Room 304, Minneapolis, MN 55415.
- 8) Responding to a number of instances of "tall grass and weeds" violations being written for residents with native prairie gardens, we are working with Inspections staff to create a registration process and signage for purposeful native plantings.
- 9) I am supportive of the decision to install 10 artist-designed drinking fountains throughout the City as part of our Art in Public Places Program. I believe that we must do more as a City to resist the commodification of water and defend its status as a "commons" – a right and responsibility we all share. Better access to good drinking water for everyone and quality public art are two things we can do to make this a better city.
- 10) The execution of the new farm stand permit process that I worked so hard to create last year was, unfortunately, not very good. Applicants did not receive applications until very close to the time they wished to open, and completed applications were not turned around in a timely manner. My office, along with CM Johnson, had to intervene to get permits out without an even greater delay. I will be following up with staff to ensure that similar delays do not occur next year.
- 11) The City is pursuing legal agreements with MnDOT that will allow us to move forward with the University of MN bike trail, connecting the east end of Bridge 9 through the Dinkytown trench to Oak Street and the U of M Transitway. Our hope is to begin building this important project next April.
- 12) If you're available, please stop down to the Brian Coyle Center this **Saturday, August 23rd** from 2-5pm for a fundraiser car (and bike) wash.
- 13) The Council has passed a resolution I authored creating a Youth Violence Prevention Plan Executive Committee and a Youth Violence Prevention Citizen Advisory Committee for oversight of the implementation stage of the Youth Violence Prevention Blueprint for Action. Additionally, this month the City of Minneapolis has issued a request for proposals for youth violence prevention services. Up to \$200,000 in federal funds will be available in grants of up to \$50,000 per year. The purpose of the funds is to develop programs to provide support, education and opportunities for skill-building to parents of teens. Eligible applicants are 501(c)(3) not-for-profit agencies or governmental agencies serving Minneapolis Empowerment Zone residents. Proposal requirements are detailed in the full Request for Proposals, (<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/procurement/EZRFP.pdf>). Call 612-673-2301 for more information or to have a copy mailed to you.
- 14) Unexpectedly, there is some controversy on the Council on whether or not to enter into a 20-year power purchase agreement with EyeOn Energy for renewable solar power generated on the roof of the Convention Center, supported by a \$2 million award from the Public Utilities Commission. I continue to strongly support this project, and will do everything I can to convince my colleagues to move forward on it.
- 15) The Mayor's recommended budget includes \$910,000 for disentangling the intersections of Cedar, Minnehaha, 20th Ave S and E Franklin. My office continues to work with Public Works to find a way to close the financing gap for this proposed project.
- 16) My office will be conducting a pilot project for the use of remanufactured printer toner cartridges, with the hope that we can use them citywide, saving the City money and preventing waste.
- 17) There are openings on the Civilian Police Review Authority (closes 9-12-08). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.