



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

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Attention: If you want help translating this information in language other than Hmong, Spanish or Somali, call 311

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

Spanish - Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llama 612-673-2700;

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, 2-15-12

Cam's next West Bank Office Hours:
Tuesday, March 6th, 9:30-11:00am
Hard Times Café, 1821 Riverside Ave

Items:

- 1) Tenants Rights Meeting
- 2) Redistricting
- 3) Funding for Cedar Sidewalks
- 4) 4th and 6th Streets and 15th Avenue
- 5) Riverside Avenue Reconstruction
- 6) Resolution on Remittances to the Horn of Africa
- 7) Compost Ordinance
- 8) Urban Agriculture Text Amendments
- 9) Vikings Stadium
- 10) Taxis Forced to Take Credit Cards
- 11) Oromo Cultural Exhibit at Augsburg
- 12) Congratulations Fartun Hassan!
- 13) West River Parkway Sewer Repairs
- 14) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) In light of the concerns I heard at the most recent meeting about the Riverside Plaza renovation project, my office has scheduled a public meeting for West Bank residents regarding tenants' rights on **Tuesday, March 27** at 7pm at the Brian Coyle Center. City staff and legal experts will be there to help people understand their rights as tenants and what they can do if they have concerns about their housing, maintenance, management or landlords.
- 2) As you likely know, the Redistricting Group of the Charter Commission is currently drafting new Ward maps for the City of Minneapolis. Various maps have been drafted both by the Commission and outside groups. The most recent map from the Commission (dated February 15), agrees in principle with the "Committee for a Fair Redistricting" map and would create a minority opportunity ward. The proposed Ward 6 would have very similar minority populations to the "Fair" group's proposed Ward 2, with an African American population of **39.4%**, a Hispanic population of **20.43%**, a Native American population of **4.44%** and a White population of **33.86%**. Both maps would divide the West Bank into two different wards. You can find the February 15 map here: www.minneapolismn.gov/redistricting2012.
- 3) The Council's Community Development and Transportation and Public Works committees have voted to allocate \$300,000 in Transit Oriented Development funds towards fixing the sidewalks on Cedar Avenue. These City funds match an existing \$300,000 grant from Hennepin County and a \$150,000 commitment from the Central Corridor project, for a total of \$750,000 to be spent on improving the Cedar Avenue streetscape. I expect the Council to support these committee actions on Friday. After that action is taken, Planning and Public Works staff will lead a community input process on the specific improvements to be made. I want to thank Joe Bernard in Planning for his work to find a source for these City dollars. The streetscape on Cedar has been in disrepair for far too long, and I look forward to seeing it dramatically improved.
- 4) The CHANCE students have started their review of the streetscape on 4th Street, 15th Avenue and 6th Street. I look forward to working with them on a community process to get broad agreement from the whole community on what these streets should look like. This agreement will include the idea of time limiting the parking on these three streets.
- 5) The resolution calling on all those who have played a role in the stoppage of money transfers through Hawalas from Minneapolis residents to relatives in Somalia to find a way to reopen this absolutely critical financial link has passed the full Council with my strong support. Read more on the Second Ward blog.

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- 6) Final approvals are moving forward for the second phase of the Riverside Avenue reconstruction project. The Council has designated the location and improvements proposed to be made (Cedar Ave S to 23rd Ave S); received the cost estimates of \$5,850,000 for the road reconstruction and \$272,800 for the lighting; authorized the acquisition of permanent easements for sidewalk and ramp expansions; and directed the City Engineer to prepare proposed special assessments against the list of benefited properties. There will be a public hearing on the project on February 28 at 9:30 am at City Hall. For more see: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-084582.pdf>
- 7) The ordinance amendments I have authored to the City's composting ordinance come before the Regulatory Energy and Environment committee on Monday, February 27th, at 1:30pm in Council Chambers. These changes would increase the allowable size for compost areas, clarify the requirements on compost bin construction and the types of materials that can be composted, require that compost areas be covered with a layer of odor-reducing material like dry leaves or straw, and authorize City staff to require people who violate the terms of the ordinance to take a course in composting. These amendments came from recommendations from the urban gardening community, have been vetted by City, County and MPCA staff, and are supported by both the Environmental Advisory Committee and new Food Council.
- 8) On January 25, the City Planning Commission unanimously voted to approve the zoning code amendments I have authored to help implement the Urban Agriculture Policy Plan the Council adopted last spring. This is an exciting first step in changing the City's land use rules to make urban agriculture possible. You can see the draft text amendments here: www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@cped/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-083823.pdf. The commission received 70 written comments and 13 people spoke at the public hearing and all were in favor of the amendments as proposed and recommended by staff. The amendments will now move to the Zoning and Planning Committee for consideration on **March 1**. Read more analysis on the Second Ward blog.
- 9) On January 26, the City Council discussed the Mayor and Council President's proposal for a new Vikings Stadium in Minneapolis. (See <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/cow/WCMS1P-084388>, and <http://v.qwikcast.tv/view.aspx?q=PVG6> for more). I was glad to see that the plan includes a way to remove the costs of the Target Center from property taxes and that the preferred location is the current site of the Metrodome. This site has already been assembled at great cost in east Downtown and is currently served by a light rail station that will soon grant access to two light rail corridors. But I was very concerned about the use of public funds, the amount of debt that would be taken on by the City and the use of local taxes as a funding source. Under this plan, the City would take on over \$300,000,000 in debt to be paid back with local hospitality, entertainment and sales tax revenue over 30 years. I am also very concerned about the plan to ignore our Charter. I believe that no city resources over \$10 million dollars should be used without a referendum, in keeping with the Charter. The state legislature should not pass any proposal that undermines our City's most fundamental legal document, essentially our Constitution.
- 10) Over my objections, the Council has voted to force taxis in Minneapolis to take credit cards. I opposed this action because it became clear that the credit card fees (amounting to 5-7% of each fare) will almost universally come out of the income of drivers, many of whom are low-income new Americans of East African origin living in my Ward. I do not believe it is fair to place the convenience of taxi passengers or profits for Wall Street above the well-being of taxi drivers. You can read more on the Second Ward blog.
- 11) On **February 25 and 26**, a photography exhibit and cultural presentation that documents the ways the Oromo women of Ethiopia cultivate beauty will be held at Foss Center, Augsburg College. The event is sponsored by Resources for the Enrichment of African Lives (REAL), with the support of Augsburg College Women's Resource Center, and Bareedina & Siiqqee (Beauty & Solidarity), which celebrates the Strength of the Oromo Women of Ethiopia through art. The free exhibit is open from 1-4pm each day of the program. For more see: bareedinafina.pdf.
- 12) Second Ward seventh-grader Fartun Hassan has won third place in the 2012 Martin Luther King Essay Contest. Great work, Fartun! More information is available here: <http://civilrightsminneapolis.wordpress.com/2012/01/25/2012-mlk-essay-contest-and-the-winners-are/>.
- 13) This month the Metropolitan Council is beginning work on a segment of its sanitary sewer that runs along West River Parkway in Cedar Riverside on the bluffs below the University Medical Center Riverside campus near 4th St. Work includes digging access tunnels and repairing damaged pipes. It is expected to be completed by the end of June. For more information contact Met Council staff: Seng Thongvanh at 651-602-4538, seng.thongvanh@metc.state.mn.us.
- 14) There are openings on the Animal Care & Control Advisory Committee, Capital Long Range Improvement Commission, Family Housing Fund (McKnight), Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, Public Health Advisory Committee, Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners and Senior Citizens Advisory Committee. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@minneapolismn.gov.