



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the West Bank, 6-18-14

Cam's next West Bank Office Hours:
Thursday, July 3, 9:30-11:00am
Nabo Café, 2211 Riverside Avenue

- 1) Green Line Opening
- 2) Cedar Avenue Sidewalks
- 3) Dania Hall Lease
- 4) The Yard
- 5) Cedar Riverside Townhomes Under Construction
- 6) New Bicycle Advisory Committee Rep from West Bank
- 7) Community Engagement Public Meetings
- 8) Blueprint for Equitable Engagement
- 9) Hennepin County No Longer Honoring ICE Detainers
- 10) University Community Relations Principles
- 11) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) I was thrilled to be honored with a spot on the first Green Line train from the West Bank towards downtown St. Paul this past Saturday. It was especially satisfying to walk down the stairs from Cedar Avenue that were not included in the original plan for the station, but were added due to the effective mobilization of the community. Congratulations to the WBBA and the WBCC for their great work on organizing the opening celebration – and all of their great advocacy over the years to make the Green Line a success.
- 2) A public hearing was held this last Tuesday, June 17th on the proposed improvements to the Cedar Avenue sidewalks. I am very supportive of this project, which I see as a vital need for pedestrians – residents, customers and visitors – on the West Bank. The Transportation and Public Works committee delayed action on the project for three weeks (until its next meeting on July 8th) in order to give Public Works staff additional time to assess the bid that the City received from a contractor to do this work. Given what I heard from Public Works staff at committee, I am confident that some of the concerns that some Cedar Avenue businesses have raised about areaways will be handled in a way that does not unduly impact those businesses, and I am open to formally including that in the motion to move this project forward.
- 3) The Nomad World Pub has received a temporary expansion of premises permit to use the Dania lot for the duration of the World Cup. Part of this permit allows for the closure of the walkway – which does not have a legal sidewalk easement – across the Dania lot. I am hoping that this event helps bring all necessary parties together to find a way to establish a public sidewalk easement in this location, because it is important to me that we retain pedestrian access along vacated 5th Street from Cedar to 19th Ave S.
- 4) I am concerned about the future of the new Downtown East park called “the Yard,” and fear that we are giving away too much control and too much time to private, commercial interests. If we don't change course this park could fall far short of its potential to be a real public jewel that serves all Minneapolitans – including residents of the West Bank – and will instead just serve the few who will use it as an extension of stadium events. You can read more of my concerns and solutions on the Second Ward blog.
- 5) Our new Ward 2 appointee to Bicycle Advisory Committee was approved for two-year term this month. I have appointed **Hayat Ahmed**. Hayat lives in the Riverside Park area of the West Bank. She is a member of the Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition board, and recently re-learned how to ride a bicycle through programs at SPOKES Bike-Walk Connect. I am thrilled to be appointing someone who can share this unique perspective. It is also great to see that the new BAC will be significantly more diverse than the existing BAC, including six women and five people of color.

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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, llame 612-673-2700;

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

- 6) I am delighted to see that the Cedar Riverside Townhomes are now under construction on the West Bank at the corner of 7th and 20th Avenue. Being built are 4 single family homes with up to 4 bedrooms, 3 ½ bathrooms, and 2-car tuck under garages. This Project was initiated by the Housing Economic Development and Infrastructure (HEDI) committee Cedar Riverside Neighborhood Revitalization Program (CRNRP). The funds used for the construction and development of the project were allocated during the Phase I process which mandated that 70 % of NRP funds had to be used for housing. Because owner occupied housing is scarce on the West Bank, the idea was formulated that CRNRP would purchase two city owned side by side lots, and develop a 4 unit townhome project for sale to owner occupied homeowners. Once the townhomes are sold, the funds will return to the community without the restriction that the funds must be used for housing. This plan was drafted in 2008 – and after years of obstacles, setbacks, legal negotiations over easements, and increased costs, the project is finally underway. The units are expected to be completed by fall of 2014. The sale prices for the units will range between \$225,000 and \$269,000.
- 7) The Health, Energy and Community Engagement Committee that I chair and the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission are holding two community meetings on community engagement on **Thursday, July 31**, 6-9pm at East Phillips Park, 2307 17th Avenue South, and **Saturday, August 2**, 9:30am-noon at Folwell Park, 1615 Dowling Avenue North, in the gymnasium. We will be exploring way to improve our community engagement system in Minneapolis to help make this a better, more engaged, more equitable city. We will be asking residents and community members: How can city leaders better support, engage and work with neighborhood and community leaders and organizations to help make Minneapolis more racially and economically equitable? What can city and neighborhood leaders do to help ensure that neighborhood organizations and all city boards and committees reflect our communities? What would get you more involved in your neighborhood organization and in the civic life of our city?
- 8) The Neighborhood and Community Relations (NCR) Department, and the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC) presented a proposal to improve community engagement in the city to a Council Committee in May. Called the Blueprint for Equitable Engagement it will focus on three areas. First, it will aim to help neighborhood organizations assess whether or not their outreach efforts, board decision making processes and distribution of resources is being conducted with a lens of equity and inclusion. The City intends to include the 70 neighborhood organizations as partners in addressing racial disparities in our community. With access to local political, social and financial resources, neighborhoods are able to utilize millions of dollars annually and become central places of empowerment for marginalized community members. Second, it will look at the City's boards and commissions with the goal of having the advisory and planning boards and commissions reflect the diversity in the community. The City Council charged both the NCR department and the NCEC with making recommendations on the best way to achieve this goal. Recommendations have been developed and are in either being considered or implemented. Third, it will look at the City enterprise's outreach and engagement efforts and the community engagement efforts of City departments and how they connect and involve residents. The committee approved a motion directing NCR staff and the NCEC to report back by December 1st with a summary of the findings, draft recommendations and performance measures regarding the Blueprint for Equitable Engagement.
- 9) The Hennepin County Sheriff and Attorney announced that as of midnight June 11, the Hennepin County Jail will no longer honor US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainers, absent judicial authority. Recent directives by Immigrations & Customs Enforcement that detainers are now considered discretionary along with subsequent Federal Court decisions articulating the same, are strong indicators that the legal landscape is changing on this matter. I want to thank Sheriff Rich Stanek and County Attorney Mike Freeman for taking this great step in the right direction.
- 10) At the Friday, June 13 meeting of the Board of Regents, Vice President for University Services and Vice President and Chief Financial Officer presented new principles of community engagement for the University. I appreciate that these build on efforts, like the Alliance, already underway and see it as a positive step making is clear that the institution recognizes the importance of having healthy, vital and safe neighborhoods near the campus area. The principles were more general in nature affirming that having safe, livable neighborhoods adjacent to campus supports the University's core mission, and that the University's active engagement with public, private, and community partners in Minneapolis is important. I am very supportive of this move by the U, and believe that it will help to continue the improvement in the U's relationship to its surrounding communities and strengthen the University Alliance.
- 11) Applications are now being accepted for a number of open board and commission positions that the City Council and mayor will appoint this spring. Applications will be reviewed beginning April 25, but the positions are open until filled. Visit the City's website at <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/boards/openings/index.htm> for more information.