



# Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the West Bank, 9-17-14

**Cam's next West Bank Office Hours:  
Thursday, October 2, 9:30-11:00am  
Nabo Café, 2211 Riverside Avenue**

## **Cam Gordon**

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- 1) **The 2015 City Budget**
- 2) **Utility Franchise Agreements**
- 3) **Farmstands**
- 4) **Military Exercises**
- 5) **Team Name Offensive**
- 6) **Minneapolis Sex Trafficking Study**
- 7) **U Overlay District Parking Requirements**
- 8) **Bird Safe Glass**
- 9) **Openings on Boards and Commissions**

- 1) Mayor Hodges has submitted her 2015 proposed budget to the City Council. The Council is currently reviewing the proposal and presentations from each department and is scheduled to give final consideration on Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2014. The total proposed budget for all City funds is \$1.2 billion. This represents a \$54.7 million, or 4.8%, increase from the 2014 Council Adopted Budget of \$1.1 billion in City fund appropriation exclusive of the City's independent boards. The General Fund that funds most city operations will increase from \$392 million to 406 million, a 3.6% increase. The Mayor is recommending an overall increase of 2.38% in the property tax levy for the City and its independent boards, raising the total amount of property taxes collected by \$6.7 million, from \$281.7 million in 2014 to \$288.4. Given the growth in both our tax base and the demand on city services and infrastructure to support this growth, I feel that a modest levy increase is appropriate. The City has scheduled two public comment hearings on the proposed 2015 property tax levy and budget: Nov. 18 at 6:05 p.m. and Dec. 10 at 6:05 p.m. both in Room 317 of City Hall. On December 2, the Ways and Means Budget Subcommittee will consider amendments to the Mayor's proposed budget and on Dec. 10, after the hearing at 6:05 p.m. the City Council is scheduled to take the final vote on the 2015 budget.
- 2) Progress is being made negotiating terms of new franchise agreements with both the electric and natural gas utility companies in the city. Renewal of the agreements will depend on the formation of a new, first in the nation, Clean Energy Partnership. In order to provide enough time before the end of the year to have the agreements reviewed and approved the all necessary agencies and entities, I will be moving this week to introduce the subject matter of our utility ordinances. These will be referred to the Health, Environment and Community Engagement Committee where I expect a Public Hearing to be set for October 6<sup>th</sup>.
- 3) The ordinance amendment I have authored to allow farmstands to operate more often at market and community gardens, as well as urban farms, is will be considered by the full Council on Friday the 19th. As drafted, a farmstand would be considered an "accessory use" at these locations. Only food grown at the garden or farm, or another garden or farm operated by the same producer, could be sold at the farmstand between 7 am and sunset up to 75 days a year. At the Zoning and Planning Committee the proposal was amended to extend the hours from 7 pm to sunset and to exclude community. I support the first amendment but am concerned about the second and will be working to amend the committee's recommendation when it comes before the Council to allow farmstands at community gardens.
- 4) I was surprised and concerned to learn last month that Department of Defense military exercises were being conducted in heavily populated areas of the City, including in Cedar Riverside and the Seward neighborhoods. I was particularly concerned because neither the general public nor the City Council were consulted or informed about this dangerous activity involving large helicopters flying near housing in densely populated urban areas. Working with Public Safety Committee Chair Blong Yang, we will be

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getting a report at the Committee where I hope to learn more next week at which time I intend to move a staff direction not to allow this in the future and to develop a clear process about how to approve such things in the future.

- 5) I was glad to learn the U of M president Kaler has called for the name of the Washington DC football not to be used when they play the Vikings at the U's stadium. <http://www.mprnews.org/story/2014/08/07/university-mccollum-wants-washington-team-name-change> At its next meeting on September 24 The Public Safety Civil Rights and Emergency Management Committee will have a presentation by the National Coalition Against Racism in Sports and Media and the American Indian Movement. They will share "A Declaration of Indigenous Equality" letter to the University of Minnesota. In the Staff Report: ["A Declaration of Indigenous Equality" Ltr to the UofM](#). The group is concerned that use of the name may actually violate civil rights laws and I want to be sure that, if this is true, this laws are appropriately enforced.
- 6) A research report release September 10 sheds light on a disturbing, elaborate, violent, serious and dehumanizing sex industry in Minneapolis. The research analyzed the victims, procurer/pimp or facilitator and buyers and tracked how and where victims were recruited and sold. Data came from Minneapolis police reports and Hennepin County Court records from January 2008 to October 2013. The study found that victims tend to be young girls of color from Minneapolis communities characterized by poverty. A significant number of victims are considered "runaways." The average age of the victims was 15. The study highlighted multiple types of vulnerability including: prior victimization and child abuse/neglect, poverty, running away from home, substance use, cognitive and behavioral disabilities, and friends or families involved in trafficking. Facilitators tend to be men of color, also from communities living in poverty. Sex buyers tend to be men from all communities and socio-economic backgrounds across the entire Twin Cities Metro area. The degree of purchasing power determines where and how they purchase and obtain sex with minor victims I believe that it will help if more us are willing to face and understand this hidden, underground and shocking commercial modern slave enterprise. The researchers recommend that we all deepen our understanding of child sex trafficking by reading "Walking Prey: How America's Youth Are Vulnerable to Sex Slavery," by Holly Austin Smith and watching Rachel Lloyd's internationally acclaimed Showtime documentary, "Very Young Girls." They also ask us to be aware of street activities and take note of girls we suspect may be at risk of harm and/or sexual exploitation. Trust your instincts and call 911 immediately. You can find more information the full report at <http://uroc.umn.edu/sextrafficking/>
- 7) On September 15 the planning commission has voted unanimously to recommend approval of the zoning code amendment I introduced back in February of 2013 to change the off-street parking regulations of the University Area Overlay District will be coming to the Council for Approval in October. The overlay was created in 2009 and included a change to the minimum off-street parking requirement for residential uses to one-half space per bedroom, but not less than one space per dwelling unit. The overlay district also includes specific provisions related to parking lot design for 1-4 unit buildings as well as increased bicycle parking standards and a shared vehicle incentive. To help form recommendations I worked with The University District Alliance. The Alliance formed the University District Parking Task Force, and was charged with considering changes to the UA Overlay District based on approximately five year of experience with ordinance implementation. City planning staff participated in the task force along with representatives from affected neighborhoods, business associations, the University of Minnesota, and developers. The task force recommended we eliminate the minimum off-street parking requirement of one space per dwelling unit while retaining the requirement of not less than 0.5 spaces per bedroom and allow a more substantial reduction in the minimum residential off-street parking requirement in the PO Overlay Districts. Citywide. The task force report recommends changing this standard to from 90% to 70% of the typical parking requirement in the PO Overlay Districts centered around Dinkytown as well as in the Prospect Park, Stadium Village, West Bank, and Cedar Riverside Transit Station Areas (TSA). In these areas the minimum multi-family residential parking requirement in these areas would be reduced to 0.35 spaces per unit. I expect this to be on the Zoning and Planning agenda on October 9th
- 8) Despite over 76,000 public signatures, a unanimous resolution by the Minneapolis City Council, and the efforts of multiple scientists and conservation experts requesting the use of bird safe and energy efficient glass in the stadium, MFSa squeezed in their order for an alternative highly reflective and completely transparent glass, evading the 2012 Leadership in Engineering and Environmental Design (LEED) program requirements. We find this unacceptable and in complete opposition to the values representative of this state and city. Vikings fans and members of local environmental groups, animal welfare groups, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, and City Council, will be gathering on Saturday, September 27th at 1:00pm at the Downtown East Light Rail Station Platform to let MFSa and Governor Dayton know that this is not representative of the people of Minneapolis. If he wants to stay true to his word in calling this a people's stadium, he must demand that it's built to be both energy efficient and safe for our nation's birds.
- 9) 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.