

# Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the West Bank, 8-19-15

**Cam's next West Bank Office Hours:  
Thursday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 9:30-11:00am  
Nabo Café, 2211 Riverside Avenue**

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- 1) Tobacco Ordinances Pass
- 2) Protected Bikeway Plan
- 3) Funding for Protected Bikeways
- 4) Rental License Tiers
- 5) Parking Reform
- 6) Single-Use Bag Ordinance
- 7) Community Innovation Fund
- 8) West River Parkway Construction
- 9) Ward and Neighborhood Profiles on Housing
- 10) Openings on Boards and Commissions

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Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' aan wac 612- 673-3737.

- 1) The Council has unanimously adopted the tobacco regulation ordinance changes I authored with my colleague Blong Yang. These changes will become effective on January 1, 2016 and set a minimum price of \$2.60 per stick for cigar products, (which currently sell for as little as three for 99 cents) and prohibits the sale of flavored tobacco products except at specialty, adult only, tobacco shops (stores for which tobacco accounts for over 90% of what they sell). This ordinance was based on the recommendations of our Youth Congress that these types of tobacco products are the most common entry point into tobacco use and nicotine addiction for our youth. I want to thank the advocates – especially the youth – and our Health Department staff for making this ordinance change possible.
- 2) The Council has approved a Protected Bikeway Plan that calls for more than thirty miles of new protected bikeways to be built by 2020. I strongly supported this plan, and have advocated for years for more protected bikeways. Protected bikeways are physically-separated bike lanes that make more people – old and young, men and women – more comfortable riding a bike for transportation. When we look at the best bike cities in the world, like Copenhagen, it is clear that a network of protected bikeways is a large part of what has made them so successful. This plan responds to a recommendation from the Climate Action Plan, making clear that this is part of our ongoing work to fight climate change, as well as having major benefits for health and community vitality. This plan's adoption follows a year-long planning process and staff analysis of bicycle demand, traffic conflict and network integration along various corridors. Staff worked with the Bicycle Advisory Committee to identify 19 corridors for further evaluation. Of the 19 corridors, 17 were further evaluated by a team of Minneapolis Public Works and Hennepin County staff. The approved plan prioritizes three tiers of potential future protected bikeways. Tier one projects will be put in first and include 15 miles of new bikeways. Some of the projects in and around the West Bank include the 10th Avenue Bridge, 19th Ave S, 20th Ave S, and Washington Ave S.
- 3) The City has received over \$3.8 million in federal transportation funding through a Met Council solicitation to build protected bikeway infrastructure. This includes funding for the routes near the U of M (19th and 20th Avenues S, 10th Ave SE, 15th Ave SE, Rollins Ave SE, and 18th Ave SE). I consider this a great example of the importance of adopting the Protected Bikeways Plan. I expect that we will get more funding from outside sources, along with the funding already committed by the City, to implement this plan.

- 4) The City has completed ranking all the rental properties in the city into the new three tier system first approved by the Council in 2011 and recently strengthened this spring to include increased fees for tier 2 and 3 properties. The results show that, of a total of 17,104 single family, duplex and triplex rental properties, 82% are in tier 1, 16% are in tier 2 and 3% are in tier 3. Of the 6,477 larger apartment buildings, 95.8% are in tier 1, 3.7% in 2 and only 0.5% (or 34) are in tier 3. Tier 1 properties have no or few problems and are considered to be well maintained and managed. Tier 2 properties are maintained to minimum standards but have some issues that require some city services. Tier 3 properties are ranked as poorly maintained or managed and require excessive city services. Properties in the higher tiers will be inspected more frequently and charged higher fees. Properties in the lowest tier will be inspected less frequently and have lower fees. All properties will be evaluated annually to determine the tier they will be assigned to.
- 5) I was happy to support Council Member Lisa Bender's change to parking minimums along transit corridors and reduce the amount of required off-street parking in certain areas. The change passed unanimously. In most zoning districts, the City requires that apartment and condominium buildings provide parking spaces equal to the number of dwelling units in the building. Exceptions apply in selected areas of the city. With this action, smaller-scale (50 units or less), multifamily residential developments within one-quarter mile of frequent bus service and one-half mile of rail service will have their off-street parking requirement eliminated. For larger-scale multifamily residential developments in those same geographic areas, parking requirements will be reduced by 50 percent, to one-half space per dwelling unit. Since 2009, the City has not had parking requirements in its downtown zoning districts. I view this as a step towards making it easier to build more affordable housing, and a useful reorientation of our society away from cars and towards walking, biking and transit. I know that there were advocates for this change who would have liked to see it extended to the University District, which has its own parking overlay. However, the University parking overlay was just made significantly more flexible in October of 2014, after a year-long community engagement process. It was simply too soon to have a new parking discussion in the district. I will also note that the University District rules are actually more lenient and progressive for many projects, especially large projects with small unit sizes (one and two-bedrooms) than the newly-adopted City rules.
- 6) Council The Minneapolis Community Environmental Advisory Commission (CEAC) has formally made recommendations for a plastic bag ban (and single-use paper bag fee). I will be formally introducing the subject matter of an ordinance about this on Friday. I plan to do significant public engagement on this ordinance, including both broad-based resident outreach and specific targeted conversations with businesses that will be impacted, recycling facilities, and environmental groups. I am also working to coordinate efforts with St. Louis Park, where a similar ban is also being considered. I believe that it would be valuable to move forward in conjunction with peer cities, both in terms of passing and implementing single-use bag regulations.
- 7) The Health Environment and Community Engagement Committee has approved is the first round of funding for the Community Innovation Fund (CIF). This program provides funding to neighborhood organizations for projects that address City goals. Unlike the Community Participation Program, which provides funding to neighborhoods on a formula basis, the CIF allocates funding on a competitive basis. The source of the \$300,000 in funding is from the Consolidated Tax Increment Financing District. Thanks to the West Bank Community Coalition for working with the Lyndale, Corcoran, Powderhorn Park, and Central neighborhood associations, as well as HOME line, on a \$30,000 grant to develop the Minneapolis Renters Coalition.
- 8) Construction is scheduled to begin this month repairing the riverbank and opening the West River Parkway where the mudslide occurred last year. The road is expected to re-open, and work to be completed by the end of October. The plan includes construction of a series of retaining walls. I know this has been an enormous inconvenience for many people and have been impressed by the general understanding, tolerance and patience of people while the city and the park board have worked to assemble the financing, expertise and company to restore this valued recreational and transit corridor. The MPRB's Board of Commissioners awarded Veit & Company the contract to repair the slope.
- 9) The Department of Regulatory Services unveiled a new initiative that makes a wealth of data available to the general public. Reports, interactive maps and profiles can be used to see trends, to obtain specific information, to learn more about what the department does and to find further resources and tools. This includes very informative and detailed ward-level and neighborhood-level profiles. It is a gold mine of information for policy makers and community activists alike. I encourage you to dig in and use it. Get started at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/regservices/WCMS1P-135530>
- 10) Visit the City's website for a [full list of appointment opportunities](#) and position descriptions for City boards and commissions. Appointments to boards and commissions are made twice a year — in the spring and fall. This streamlined appointment process makes it easier for folks to learn about volunteer opportunities, ensures a more open and understandable process for residents and staff, and increases the diversity of the applicant pool.