



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the West Bank, 9-15-10

Cam's next West Bank Office Hours:
Tuesday, October 5th, 9:30-11:00am
Hard Times Café, 1821 Riverside Ave

Items:

- 1) Riverside Ave Reconstruction
- 2) West Bank Station Area Open House
- 3) \$300,000 Grant to West Bank
- 4) West Bank Issues at Planning Commission
- 5) Wayfinding Beacons
- 6) Afro Deli and Coffee
- 7) County TIGER II Grant
- 8) Community Participation Draft Guidelines
- 9) Community Development Block Grant RFP
- 10) Bicycle Master Plan
- 11) 2010 Census
- 12) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) The public hearing and formal design approval on the Riverside reconstruction and design approval has been delayed. I have heard two main concerns from West Bank stakeholders about the proposed reconstruction, and I'm working to address them. The first has to do with staff's proposal to construct a cul-de-sac at the intersection of 5th Street, 20th Ave, and Riverside. I've heard from a number of nearby residents that they do not support that solution and I have encouraged staff to explore alternatives. Second, I've heard from a number of neighborhood businesses that they're concerned about losing parking on Riverside, especially between 20th and Cedar. I have informed staff that I'm very supportive of allowing parking on the north side of Riverside between 20th and Cedar in the right-turn lanes, in off-peak hours. They are studying this possibility, and I look forward to seeing this analysis. I will continue to work to preserve as much parking as possible, while also constructing a street that works for all modes of transportation.
- 2) The City and County have scheduled a second open house on infrastructure improvements to the West Bank on **Tuesday, September 21st**, 6:30-8:30pm at the Brian Coyle Center. The question they will be asking is: how can we take advantage of the opportunities over the next few years to advance the visions and plans of the community?
- 3) The Council is poised to accept a \$300,000 Hennepin County grant for a Cedar-Riverside LRT Public Realm Improvement project. A County-funded planning study (see above) is underway on the West Bank to identify and prioritize multi-modal infrastructure improvements around the Central Corridor LRT station.
- 4) There are two public hearings on variance requests on the West Bank at the next Planning Commission meeting next Monday, September 20th, at 4:30pm in Council chambers. One is a request from Hud Hud bakery for a conditional use permit for a shopping center at 607 Cedar Ave S. The second is a series of requests from Riverside Plaza, to rezone 1511 4th St S from Industrial to Residential, for a variance of the Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District standards to allow parking that is not located to the rear or interior of the site for property located at 1511 4th St S, and for a registered land survey. These requests stem from Riverside Plaza's need to construct a new driveway on 4th St S, part of the outcome of the lawsuit between Sherman and Fine. Planning staff have recommended approval of all of these requests.

If you need this material in an alternative format please call Ahmed Muhumud at 612-673-2162 or email

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- 5) Construction on the wayfinding beacons at 6th and Cedar should begin soon. The City's Public Arts Administrator expects that the sculptures will be installed sometime next month. There has been one change in the layout at Cedar. The artist suggested this, because he felt it would be easier to see the Cedar Beacon from 16th. There are some other benefits as well, including the construction of the long-overdue sidewalk, which will replace the cow path that has been there for years. The slight change in the location will also mean that the Beacon will be further back from the road, and therefore more protected during future construction on Cedar.
- 6) A new business, Afro Deli and Coffee, located in the African Development Center (ADC) building at Riverside and 20th, has applied for restaurant, catering and sidewalk café licenses. There will be a public hearing (continued from this past Monday) on Monday, September 27th, at 1:30pm in Council chambers, on the sidewalk café. I am helping convene a meeting in the neighborhood so that people can learn more about this new business at the ADC's Meridel Le Sueur Conference room on **Thursday September 23rd from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.** The restaurant can be approved by staff, administratively, without Council approval. The restaurant and catering license applications meet all of the City's requirements, and staff has indicated that they are prepared to sign off on it. The zoning code only requires off-street parking for restaurants that are larger than 1,000 square feet in area. The proposed deli and coffee shop is only 833 square feet, meaning that it is not required to provide off-street parking. I am generally supportive of this new business that will help bring neighborhood serving jobs and commercial activity into this key intersection on Riverside Avenue. It is my hope that the additional community meeting will make it possible for this project to move forward with the confidence and support of nearby residents.
- 7) I wrote a letter of support for the County's application for a federal (TIGER II) transportation project grant. If it is approved, the County will construct a northbound entrance ramp onto I-35W from 4th Street S, just to the west of the West Bank, and significantly improve the pedestrian and bicyclist experience on both the Washington Avenue bridge over 35W and the Cedar Avenue Bridge over the Washington Ave trench near the new West Bank LRT station. Together, these projects will reduce traffic pressure on Seven Corners, by diverting the northbound 35W traffic from Washington Ave, and make two important pedestrian connections work much better for residents and visitors.
- 8) The Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC) has approved draft guidelines for a new Community Participation Program that will support and help guide the work of neighborhood organizations in 2011 and beyond. You can view them at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/ncr/>. The guidelines include a funding formula which would allocate funds based on a set of 8 variables including population, income and crime statistics. The 45 day comment period ends Monday, October 11th at 5:00 pm. They anticipate presenting a final draft of the proposed neighborhood program to the Minneapolis City Council in early November.
- 9) The Department of Health and Family Support has issued a Request for Proposals for federal Community Development Block Grant funds to serve eligible individuals for the period of June 2011 through May 2013. Approximately \$400,000 will be available in grants of up to \$75,000. Approved projects may receive a second year of funding based on performance and availability of funding. Eligible applicants are not-for-profit agencies, for-profit organizations, or governmental agencies providing health services, human services, and community development services benefiting low and moderate income Minneapolis residents. Successful proposals must address one of the following three topic areas: 1. Youth Violence Prevention; 2. Teen Pregnancy Prevention; 3. Senior Health and Independent Living. You can download the RFP here: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs.
- 10) The City is seeking comments on our draft Bicycle Master Plan, which establishes goals, objectives, and benchmarks to improve safety and mobility for bicyclists and also increase the number of trips taken by bicycle. The comment period will last for 45 days and be open until October 1. For more information and to comment on the draft plan online, go to www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/bicycles.
- 11) Minneapolis had tremendous success this year in increasing our census participation rate. As of May, the City's mail back participation rate was 76%, up from 68% in 2000 and the highest response rate of any city with populations of 300,000 or more in the country. You can see a map of the response rate by census tract here: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/2010census/docs/2010v2000CensusParticipation.pdf>. I'd especially like to thank the CHANCE program for working to increase the census response rate from the West Bank.
- 12) There are openings on the Arts Commission, Citizen Environmental Advisory Committee, Commission on Civil Rights, Civilian Police Review Authority, Capital Long-Range Improvement Committee, Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, Housing Board of Appeals, Heritage Preservation Commission, Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Public Health Advisory Committee, Senior Citizens Advisory Committee, Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission, Telecommunications Network board, Youth Violence Prevention Executive Committee, and Zoning Board of Adjustment. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.