



Opportunity Center : A Community Celebration

A MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL MEMBER WARSAME



Greetings,

I couldn't express with words the gratitude and pride I felt when I saw community leaders and residents celebrating the groundbreaking for the Cedar Riverside Opportunity Center on Friday, October 28. This was a celebration to praise community partnership and collaboration to make this initiative a reality.

The Opportunity Center is a one-stop shop for education and job training resources. The center is scheduled to open during Spring 2017 and it will be located in the first floor of the new Five15 on the Park building. It will serve as a pipeline to job opportunities with the public and private sector with a special focus on the neighborhood's East African community.

Jobs are critical to improving conditions in East African communities. The greatest challenge we face in Cedar Riverside is that, while Minnesota generally has an unemployment rate of 3-4%, in our East African community the unemployment rate is 17-23%. We need every resident here to have a good job with a livable wage, and this Opportunity Center will help us get there.



Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin said the Opportunity Center will be a significant asset for the neighborhood and provide a direct path for jobs. "We hope to attract nine employer partners with a total combined workforce of over 30,000 employees and 2,100 live job postings to Cedar Riverside". Mayor Betsy Hodges spoke about Minneapolis' long-time support and commitment to the Opportunity Center. State Senator Kari Dziedzic praised the collaboration and partnership between City, County and State. Augsburg President Paul Pribbenow spoke about the important role that the Cedar Riverside Partnership played to live out the vision of the Opportunity Center. EMERGE President Mike Wynne and Associate Director Mohamed Ali noted the impact that the Opportunity Center will have in the Cedar Riverside neighborhood. Mohamed Ali talked about the role of the center to enable workforce development and creation of educational resources for the community. Finally, MCTC President Sharon Pierce talked about her organization's commitment to creating opportunities for everyone by improving access to education.

Visit:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qYowX2z7QbM>
to watch highlights of the groundbreaking event.

We have spent two-and-a-half years working on this vision and today, it is a reality.

Together, we made it happen.

Council Member Abdi Warsame

New Fire Department's Program:

Helps Finding Missing Children and Vulnerable Adults

It was an honor for me to join Mayor Hodges and our Fire Department in a press conference where we launched a new program to help locate missing children and vulnerable adults. The SafetyNet Tracking Systems program allows firefighters to more effectively find and rescue people at risk if they wander and become lost, eliminating the need for time-consuming traditional searches.

Parents and caregivers could participate by giving children and vulnerable adults a bracelet to wear. Fire assigns each bracelet a frequency and unique digital ID number. The bracelets emit a signal that can be picked up by special devices on three Minneapolis fire rigs if someone goes missing.

As the program was being presented, I thought about our parents who care for children with Autism and about those who care for vulnerable seniors. Time is of the essence in search-and-rescue operations, and every minute saved decreases the risk of a tragic outcome.

You can call 311 to sign up for this program and to learn about cost. The costs of this device may also be covered by your health insurance provider or a waiver provided by your county social worker. I will work with our staff and SafetyNet to ensure that we are helping families where cost is a barrier.



Strengthening Enforcement of Anti Discrimination Laws in Public Accommodations

During the October 19 Committee of the Whole session, the Council approved a Public Accommodation Anti-Discrimination Enforcement Resolution introduced by Council Member Warsame.

The City of Minneapolis has a long history of furthering anti-discrimination in public accommodations. But when the public accommodations ordinance was enacted in the late 60s, discrimination looked very different. Today, alleged discrimination action ranges from refusal of entry to refusal of service. Today, discrimination is less conspicuous. In the City's most recent resident survey, 13% of respondents indicated they had been discriminated against while getting service in a restaurant or store.

Because currently there are no single charging parties regarding all of these various discrimination mechanisms, this resolution allows the Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights not only investigate and enforce the law but also go out and educate businesses about their rights and obligations to consumers and also educate customers about prohibitive behavior and recourse.

This resolution affirms our City's commitment to civil rights and ensuring equity for all people in Minneapolis

Proposed 2017 City Budget: Upcoming Public Hearings

On Wednesday, Dec. 7, the City Council plans to approve the City's 2017 budget. Before that happens, there are two public comment hearings you can attend to share your thoughts about the proposed budget and property taxes. You can also share comments online at the City's website. The two public hearings are:

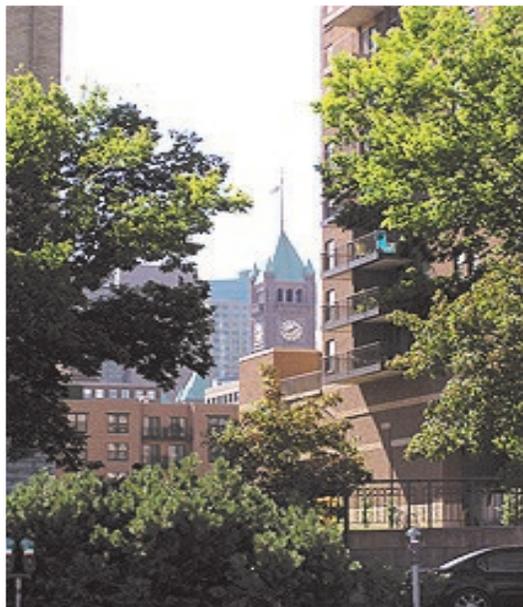
- ◆ 6:05 p.m. Nov. 30 at Room 317, City Hall
- ◆ 6:05 p.m. Dec. 7 at Room 317, City Hall

If you can't attend the Nov. 30 or Dec. 7 hearings, you can submit comments on the proposed budget online at: (www.minneapolismn.gov/budget/wcms1Q-079198). All comments submitted online by 3 p.m. Dec. 6 will be entered into the public record and shared with the mayor and council members.

There are lots of ways you can learn about the City's proposed 2017 budget. You can see the proposed budget on the City website. The proposed budget is also posted on the City's Financial Transparency website, which provides an interactive search feature to access particular parts of the budget. Hennepin County has also mailed out truth in taxation forms to all property owners, who can also look up their property tax information online.

The City Council held a series of budget hearings as part of the budget approval process. Back-to-back rebroadcasts of those hearings will be on Minneapolis 14 (Comcast channels 14 and 799, CenturyLink channel 14) every weekend until a few days before the budget is approved on Dec. 7.

This gives everyone the opportunity to learn more about the budget proposal and its potential impact in advance of the two public hearings. A schedule of the weekend budget hearings "marathon" is available at www.minneapolismn.gov/tv/minneapolis14schedule. All of the budget hearings can also be watched online at www.minneapolismn.gov/tv/minneapolis14.



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Metro Transit Assistance Program Offers \$1 Rides

Metro Transit launched the Transit Assistance Program (TAP), a pilot program to provide \$1 rides to qualified low income resident of the Twin Cities. This test program offers participants \$1 rides on all buses and light rail, including transfers (one card per person). All participants who sign up will receive \$5 for rides on their new card. Those who already have a registered Go-To Card can transfer their balance to the TAP card to take advantage of the discount.

To enroll you must be a low-income Twin Cities resident between the ages of 13 and 64 and have your income verified through a non-profit or another government agency. Visit www.metrotransit.org/TAP for more information.



United Against Islamophobia Town Hall

On November 02, the Our Saviour's Lutheran Church was filled with about 150 community members attending the United Against Islamophobia Town Hall hosted by Council Members Jacob Frey (Ward 3) and Abdi Warsame (Ward 6). Islamophobia is increasingly rising to the front of national attention; establishing trust and building relationships among people of different faiths and cultures is a priority for Council Members Warsame and Frey.

The goal behind the event was to enable an open and honest dialogue about Islamophobia and how to work collectively as community to combat it. The prestigious panel included:

- ◆ The Honorable Judge LaJune Lange (Ret.), a senior fellow with the Roy Wilkins Center for Human Relations and Social Justice. A retired State of Minnesota trial court judge, Lange is an expert on legal and constitutional standards for discrimination in state and federal courts.
- ◆ Pastor Laurie Eaton, pastor to Our Saviour's Lutheran Church since 2009. She is an active leader in ISAIAH, a coalition of approximately 100 congregations committed to living out faith values in the public realm, seeking racial and economic equity in our state.
- ◆ Imam Asad Zaman; a distinguished leader in the education and non-profit sectors. He is the Executive Director of the Muslim American Society of Minnesota and a frequent speaker at Islamic conferences and Islam Awareness Weeks.

Panelists addressed stereotypes and they engaged with attendees to discuss the challenge of Islamophobia. Despite differences associated to race, ethnicity, religion, etc., the town hall enabled a very engaged conversation that revealed the path to combat Islamophobia: by embracing diversity and differences as well as understanding our similarities.

For those who missed this Islamophobia Town Hall, a second event is coming up in December. Stay tuned for more details. Deeply appreciation and gratitude to our sponsors that helped promoting the event and contributed to its success:

