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## An ideal downtown day for Sen. Al Franken

November 9, 2015

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(Editor's note: Sen. Al Franken lives in Elliot Park. For our special [Elliot Park guide](#), we asked him to share his agenda for an ideal day in the neighborhood.)

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Elliot Park is the perfect neighborhood for me and my wife Franni. First, we're within walking distance from so many of the great parks, restaurants, and shops that Minneapolis has to offer. Second, as a Senator representing our state, the location is unbeatable. Not only am I near downtown Minneapolis so I can meet with great local businesses and constituents, but we can easily jump on 35W or I-94 on our way to anywhere in the state. Finally, I'll be mere blocks from U.S. Bank Stadium, where — if everything goes according to plan — I'll watch the Vikings become the first team in NFL history to win the Super Bowl at home when we host it in 2018.



So, now let's imagine a perfect day in our neighborhood. First of all, let's make it a Sunday sometime in the future. That way I can go to the new stadium with my son Joe, who has come to visit me and Franni for the weekend. The Vikings are in the middle of an undefeated season and are about to play a home game against the Green Bay Packers. Here's our plan for the day:

1. Normally on a crisp, autumn morning, I like to get up and ride my bike down to the river. Minneapolis is the most bike-friendly city in the country, and light cycling is a great way for me to enjoy the river and do some serious thinking. But since this is a perfect day, I'd sleep in. Joe's yellow lab, Charlie, would wake me up by jumping in the bed. Franni's already up and brings me a cup of coffee while I snuggle Charlie. Then Joe and I walk over to Elliot Park and throw the football. This Sunday, I'd wear my Jim Kleinsasser jersey because he's the type of player I would have been if I were just 8 inches taller, more muscular, and very athletic. I happen to have an extremely accurate, if not terribly strong arm, and throwing the ball on game day has been a Franken tradition since Joe was little.
2. After we're nice and warmed up, we'll stroll over to Segue Café, 811 11th Ave. S., to get a cup of coffee, some fresh local pastries, and read the Sunday Star Tribune.
3. Properly caffeinated, we are now ready for game time. We grab our tickets and walk over to

U.S. Bank Stadium. I remember going to games at the Met with my dad back in the days of Bud Grant, Fran Tarkenton, and the Purple People Eaters. But this is now — or rather next year — and the Vikes are back! It's always great to be among other Vikings fans and the atmosphere in the stadium today is electric. We settle in to our seats and watch Teddy Bridgewater lead the Vikings in a career-defining, home-field-advantage-clinching win against the Packers. Skol!

4. Once the game is over, we head to Hubert's Café and Sports Bar to celebrate the big win with our fellow fans. One young man has had a little too much to drink, but before the situation turns ugly, I say just the right thing, and his friend gives him a ride home.

5. Since Charlie has been inside during the game, we need to come home and take him out (Franni took Charlie for a walk in the morning, while I slept in. It's a perfect day.) Joe and I decide to take Charlie to the dog park a block away on 11th Street where he can play with other dogs from around the neighborhood. I always meet the best people at the dog park. Everyone is happier when they're around dogs.

6. Now that Charlie is nice and worn out, Franni, Joe, and I will go to our favorite weekend spot: Hell's Kitchen. I even feature their Mahnomon Porridge at my weekly constituent breakfast in D.C. But tonight, I'll be getting the Bison Burger with Sweet Potato Fries.

7. After we eat, we'll head back home. Usually, I'll head back to Washington, D.C. late Sunday afternoon. But since this is a perfect Sunday, Franni and I will head over to the Dakota on 10th and Nicollet for some music. Usually it's jazz, but for some reason, the Grateful Dead have decided to reunite for a one-night acoustic show at the Dakota. We call Joe and he comes over and joins us. Inexplicably, the owner, Lowell, lets Charlie in too.

8. We head home. Franni and I watch DVRs of all the Sunday news shows, and then head off to bed.

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*Sen. Al Franken was first elected to the U.S. Senate in 2008.*