

**News from Cam Gordon
Council Member, Second Ward
December 2011**

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ward2>

2012 Budget. On December 14, the City Council unanimously passed the 2012 budget. This was an especially difficult budget for me to support because it included many layoffs and significant cuts to some very valuable programs and services. The Mayor and Council were forced to make a number of difficult choices because of cuts at the state and federal levels, and in order to avoid property tax increases. Positive results of the budget include:

- The property tax levy was not increased.
- The capital budget includes \$150 million for street repairs over the next five years, 60% more than expected.
- The Mayor's proposed cut of \$240,000 to the Minneapolis Telecommunication Network was trimmed back to a \$90,000 cut.
- The budget invests in the coordinated One Minneapolis initiative to reduce racial inequity in unemployment and a proposed position cut to Civil Rights, that could be central to this effort, was recovered.
- Although proposed, there will be no layoffs of Community Crime Prevention Specialists, thanks to a budget surplus in the Police Department.
- The Mayor's proposed budget was amended to keep the City Attorney's Domestic Assault Prosecution Partnership program and support the Domestic Abuse Project.
- There are also no layoffs to firefighters or police officers.
- The City will continue to support Restorative Justice, like the Seward Longfellow Restorative Justice Programs, to the tune of \$20,000.
- The Council approved \$50,000 (from the \$125,000 cut in the Mayor's proposed budget) to support the It's All About the Kids Collaborative that helps provide stable housing for families identified as homeless who have children at participating Minneapolis Public School.

More disappointing outcomes include:

- Layoffs of roughly 25 city employees with another 50 (or so) from the Convention Center being changed from permanent, full time staff to temporary, as needed employees.
- A last minute amendment that narrowly passed despite my strong opposition that transferred \$125,000 from 311 to the City Council. This will likely mean the loss of two 311 operators.
- The closing of our Housing Services office (see details below).
- A cut of \$ 200,000 to the Neighborhood Health Care Network that helps community clinics, like the People's Center, the Community University Health Center, Neighborhood Health Source, Indian Health Board and Southside Community Services provide affordable health care services to uninsured Minneapolis residents.
- No City funds for Senior programs like South East Seniors and the Seward/Longfellow Healthy Seniors.
- The Homegrown Minneapolis coordinator position was not funded and current funding will run out in March.

Public Housing Community Engagement Funding. The Mayor's proposed budget cut \$68,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars from community organizing in public housing communities. These funds pay for organizing resident councils, the crime prevention program Project Lookout, and helps fund the monthly *Highrise Lowdown* newsletter. These are essential services for the more than five thousand residents of public housing in Minneapolis. The City has devoted CDBG dollars to this essential work for the last 24 years. I worked with CPED and finance staff to find approximately \$67,000 in unspent CDBG community engagement funds from 2010 that we could dedicate to public housing organizing next year. This

motion was tabled and will be taken up at the Community Development committee in January. I am hopeful that funding can still be found to support this work.

New 2012 Utility Bill Charge. In previous years the City Council has increased rates charged for sewer and water services based on the amount, or volume, of water used during a month. This year the Council added a new fixed fee or rate and did not increase the rate based on volume. Most homes will see a change that adds about \$5 in fixed rates per month starting in January. This new fee will help cover the costs of maintaining the water distribution system and sewer lines that service all homes and businesses at all times. Recently during times when citywide water use is low, there has been less money available to maintain and operate these critical systems. These services require fixed maintenance, and adding fixed rate fees will allow the City to manage them more effectively.

2011 Crime Statistics Show Mixed Results. On December 23 the Police Chief reported that Minneapolis will continue to see flat or decreased violent crime numbers for the sixth year in a row. So far in 2011 Minneapolis has a 5% decrease in violent crime over 2010 and a 46% decrease over 2006. At the same time there are increases in property crimes. Violent crimes include homicide, rape, robbery (of a person) and assault. Nonviolent crimes include burglary, theft and arson. So far this year there have been 35 homicides, compared to 39 for last year. Robberies, however, are up 2.12%. Property crimes are up 5%, with arson's increase of over 16% leading the trend. Burglaries (usually including breaking in to a home or business) are up 5.21%. Here is a look at the Ward 2 Precinct statistics for this year up to December 19th compared to all of 2010:

- First Precinct which includes downtown and the West Bank: Violent Crime down 3.30%, Property Crime up 2.15%.
- Second Precinct which includes Prospect Park, the University and Southeast Como: Violent Crime down 4.88%, Property Crime up 2.42%.
- Third Precinct which includes Seward and Cooper: Violent Crime down 11.86%, Property Crime up 0.81%.

Gunfire Kills Minneapolis Toddler. On December 26, a 3-year-old boy was shot by an apparent stray bullet. The following day he died, becoming the youngest homicide victim of the year. Earlier this year the city experienced murders of three other young boys aged 11, 13 and 15. Clearly, we need to do more to prevent these senseless tragedies and control reckless gun use in our City.

Remembrance of Life and Call to Action for Victims of Gun Violence. Sunday, January 8, 3 – 6:00pm at Ascension Church (1723 Bryant Ave. N) all are welcome to join with those who have lost loved ones to gun violence and those who wish to stand in solidarity with them. This is part of a national event sponsored by Protect Minnesota, MAD DADS and From Death to Life/Two Mothers Healing Group.

New Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator. Alyssa Banks has been hired to replace Bass Zanjani as the new Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator. Prior to accepting this position she worked in the city Department of Health and Family Support and was the interim coordinator. I look forward to working with her to continue this critically important work.

\$1 Million Settlement Approved. In December the Council approved, with my support, the third largest settlement for a police incident that we have approved since I took office in 2006. It involved a police raid conducted in February 2010. In this case the police appear to have executed a search warrant incorrectly and the use of a "flash grenade" diversionary device in the process resulted in very severe burns to one individual. I am hopeful that design changes to the device, better training and new protocols in place can prevent this from occurring again.

Labor Agreements Reached. In December the Council approved a series of labor contracts that include over a third of the city's workforce, and the majority of our employees outside of the

Police and Fire unions. Much to the credit of the six separate unions, and clearly recognizing the challenging economic times, all the organizations have agreed to no wage increases for two years. They include the Machinists Unit I.A.M.A.W District Lodge #7; the 9-1-1 Unit Association of Federal, State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) District #5 Local Union #9; the AFSCME General Clerical & Technical Unit; the Laborers Local #363, the Minneapolis Foremen's Association and the Minneapolis City Supervisors Association.

Minneapolis Food Council. The City Council has voted to create the first-ever Minneapolis Food Council, an advisory group to the City on issues regarding food policy, especially regarding local food. This group will continue the work of the Homegrown Minneapolis initiative. There was great community interest in the Council – ninety-eight people applied for fifteen seats! Four Second Ward residents have been chosen to be on the Food Council: **Tracy Singleton**, owner of the *Birchwood Café*; **Kurt Schreck**, Chief Operating Officer of *At Last! Gourmet Foods*; **Rhys Williams**, Buyer for Coop Partners Warehouse, a fruit and vegetable distributor; and **Sarah Nelson-Pallmeyer**, Director of FoodShare for the Greater Metropolitan Council of Churches. I thank these folks for their willingness to serve, and thank all of the many other Second Ward residents who applied for seats on this commission.

Minneapolis Housing Services Office Closes. For decades the city has maintained a housing services office but in recent years it has been harder and harder to find funding for this program. For the past two years the city was able to fund the office with grants, but now those sources are depleted and, without additional funding provided in the budget, the housing services offices will be closing at the end of the year. Thanks are due to the Housing Services staff, Diana Buckanaga and Tanya Cruz who have provided valuable services to thousands of Minneapolis residents for many years. Their services have been in high demand and the City will be hard pressed through 311 to make up for this loss. Ms. Buckanaga and Ms. Cruz have assisted approximately 1,000 Minneapolis residents per month with housing advice and referrals; including an increase in foreclosure related services. In 2010, the two staff served 12,548 callers; including over 10,000 tenants and nearly 1,000 landlords. I am sorry to see them go.

An Ending to NRP As We Knew It. On December 31 the Joint Powers Agreement governing NRP expires and in January the offices in the Crown Roller Mill building will close and the remaining funds and contract oversight will be transferred to the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department. The four remaining Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) staff that have guided and supported the work of the program (some for the full 20 years) will no longer be working for NRP. Having worked on my neighborhood's first NRP plan, chaired its NRP Implementation Committee, served on the NRP Policy board and worked closely over the years with NRP Director Bob Miller and several of the staff, I know firsthand how incredibly valuable they have been to this City and what a difference their work has made in so many people's lives. Two former NRP staff (Robert Thompson and Stacy Sorenson) are already working for the City and it is my hope that more may be able to join as well. My sincere thanks and best wishes go to Bob Miller, Jack Whitehurst, Joe Horan, Carsten Slostad and Barb Lickness. I regret that the transition could not have been smoother and I wish them the best in the months and years ahead.

New NRP Ordinance and Policy Board. In December the Council approved revisions to the City's Neighborhood Revitalization (NRP) Ordinance and passed a resolution establishing a new NRP Policy Board and amended the resolution that established the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC). The Policy Board and ordinance changes were needed in order to legally spend the recaptured NRP Phase II dollars for future neighborhood efforts in 2012 and 13. I successfully amended the NRP Ordinance to preserve the 20% limitation on central office administration expenses and voted for the ordinance as amended. However, the new Policy Board resolution does not provide seats for neighborhood representatives that are elected by neighborhood organizations. I attempted to amend this in committee, to include elected neighborhood representatives, but was unsuccessful. I also supported a compromise that would have made only the members of the NCEC that are elected by neighborhoods eligible

for appointment to the new NRP Policy Board, but the compromise also failed. Only Council Members Schiff, Hofstede and Reich joined me in voting to make certain that people elected by neighborhoods serve on this new board. Instead, the neighborhood representatives will be appointed by and from the NCEC. In the end I voted against the enabling resolution because it failed to include elected neighborhood representatives and unwisely centralizes decision-making authority in City Hall.

NRP Severance. Differences of opinion about the severance arrangements for the few remaining NRP staff (who will lose their jobs at the end of the year) are delaying final agreement about the consolidation of the old NRP program and moving the program into the City's new Neighborhood Relations Department. The outgoing NRP Policy Board came forward with a severance package and final budget adjustment that met with resistance from some Council Members. I hope that this matter can be resolved quickly.

Snow Emergency Information. If it snows the City may declare a Snow Emergency to clear the roads of snow and ice. There are many ways to stay informed about the special, sometimes complicated, parking rules during a Snow Emergency. People can sign up for email and text alerts, automated phone calls, and alerts on Facebook and Twitter. For more information, visit www.minneapolismn.gov/snow. You can also call the Snow Emergency hotline, (612) 348-SNOW, to stay informed and prevent your car from being towed.

Farmers Market Ordinance. The amendments to the farmers market ordinance I authored has passed the Council. I was disappointed that my colleagues chose to strip out a new requirement that was requested and supported by **all** of the existing farmers markets in Minneapolis, that markets be nonprofit organizations or projects of nonprofits, but believe that these amendments are significant improvements.

Alcohol Spacing Requirements. After hearing concerns from residents and neighborhood organizations and getting incomplete and inaccurate information from city staff I voted (with the minority) against lifting the restrictions on alcohol-serving establishments within 300 feet of religious places of assembly that make more than 25% of revenues from alcohol sales and/or advertise liquor on the outside of their buildings. I voted (with the majority) in favor of allowing breweries to sell on-sale within 300 feet of religious places of assembly.

National Night Out – Minneapolis is #1. Minneapolis has been awarded First Place for cities with a population of over 300,000 by the National Town Watch Association for 2011's National Night Out (NNO). We are consistently one of the top cities in the country for NNO, and it's due to the efforts of neighbors, block clubs, and neighborhood organizations. For more information, go here: <http://nationalnightout.org/nno/award.html>.

Twin Cities Unemployment Rate. As you can read here (<http://www.bizjournals.com/twincities/news/2011/12/22/twin-cities-jobless-rate-third-lowest.html>), the unemployment rate in the Twin Cities is the third-lowest in the US. Our rate is **5.4%**, behind only Omaha and Madison. This is only 1.9% worse than our best rate for the last decade, 3.5%. Our unemployment rate is a full percentage point better than the state of Minnesota's as a whole, 6.4%. This is good news, but unfortunately employment is not equitable across racial and ethnic lines in Minneapolis. Unemployment for whites is very low, for African Americans and other minority communities, it is in the double digits. We can and must do better.

New Regulatory Services Director. The Council has approved the Mayor's appointment of Greg Stubbs to be the new director of the Regulatory Services department.

New Solid Waste and Recycling Director. The Public Works Director has appointed **David Herberholz** as the City's new Director of Solid Waste and Recycling. He is currently employed by the city of Tampa, Florida, as the Residential Services Manager for their solid waste department. He has also had fifteen years of experience in solid waste in the private sector. He

is originally from Michigan, so he is familiar with Midwestern winters. I want to thank Interim Director **Jeff Jenks** for his great work over the last few months.

Single-Stream and Dual-Stream Recycling. The Council has received a very interesting report on single-stream and dual-stream recycling systems. You can see the powerpoint here: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@council/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-081211.pdf>. The committee directed Public Works staff to return with a recommendation on a new recycling program that best balances the values of cost effectiveness, convenience for customers, and reducing total environmental impact. I look forward to this important discussion, which I hope will lead to an increase in the diversion of recyclable materials from the waste stream.

Bicycle Plan. The Implementation Plan for the Minneapolis Bicycle Master Plan has unanimously passed the Council. This document was developed by the Bicycle Advisory Committee, in conjunction with Public Works staff, and represents a major step forward for bicycle policy in Minneapolis. The Plan includes recommendations for City actions such as:

- Pass a Complete Streets Policy
- Advocate for Municipal State Aid (MSA) standards that allow Minneapolis to design streets that safely meet Minneapolis needs
- Support a study on the economic impact of bicycling
- Minimize both travel lane widths and number of travel lanes where possible and desirable
- Develop a process by which the City shall consider the conversion of low-volume roadways to "greenway"-style bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Create a specific permitting process for closing streets to motorized vehicles for "Open Streets" events

Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator. The Public Works Director has appointed **Shaun Murphy** as the City's first Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator. You may be familiar with that name, as Shaun has coordinated the incredibly successful Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot since 2007, and has been one of the public faces of the City's bicycle program. I think very highly of Shaun, having worked with him on several projects in the ward, including Riverside, 27th Ave SE, 26th Ave S, 15th Ave SE and Como Ave SE. His work in all parts of Minneapolis over the past few years has given him a wealth of knowledge about bicycling in this city, about the City's bureaucracy, and about our neighborhoods. He is quite adept at working with community members, and is focused on the right goal: making Minneapolis a place where everyone, no matter their level of comfort riding with traffic, can use a bicycle to get around. I'm very excited to welcome Shaun into this new role. It is important, especially as our resources don't keep pace with our needs, to coordinate the work of the various transportation departments in Public Works (Traffic, Transportation Planning and Engineering, and Maintenance and Repair) and across both City departments and outside agencies (the County, MnDOT, etc.). As you may recall, there was some controversy when this position was created earlier this year, but it was supported by eleven of thirteen Council Members earlier this fall (for more on that, see my blog: <http://secondward.blogspot.com/2011/09/2011-budget-firefighters-and-bicycle.html#links>.)

Hearings on "Hiawatha Project" High Voltage Power Lines. On January 10 and 12 the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission will hold public hearings on the 3rd floor of the Metro Square Building, 121 7th Place E., Suite 350, in Saint Paul. The hearings will start at 9:30am. Interested parties, including the Midtown Greenway Coalition, Xcel Energy, the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County, as well as individual community members will be able to address the commission. In 2010 an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) recommended that if the Hiawatha Project power lines were built, they should be routed underground under 28th Street, not overhead and not on the Midtown Greenway. For more information and background on the Hiawatha Project, visit the [Midtown Greenway Coalition](#), [Xcel Energy](#), or the [Public Utilities Commission](#) pages.

#

New Second Ward Community Relations Intern. In December we welcomed a new intern to the office, Farhio Khalif. Farhio will work on community outreach and neighborhood relations, with a focus on supporting neighborhood organizations in their community building efforts. I think she is a good addition to our team and I hope you get a chance to meet her soon. To contact Farhio call the office or her directly at 612-702-4913 or Farhio@aol.com.

Farewell Mike Christenson. In January 13 Mike Christenson will be leaving his position as Director of the Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) department. Mike has been wonderful to work with and his involvement and support of the University District Alliance and the Cedar Riverside Partnership have been especially helpful and valuable to me and Ward 2 residents. I look forward to working with Mike in the future in his new position as Vice President Vice President of Workforce Development at the Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC).

Search Begins for New CPED Director. The Mayor has begun the formal process for finding a new Executive Director of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED). The City has hired of Lyman Doran Executive Search to conduct the search. Feedback is being solicited from stakeholders to identify the key challenges facing the department, and the key leadership characteristics that will be needed to meet these challenges. The mayor expects the process to take approximately three month and to make his nomination of a new Director by March. The Mayor will be appointing Chuck Lutz, CPED Deputy Director, as Interim Director.

2012 STEP-UP Summer Youth Applications. The City of Minneapolis Employment and Training Program (METP) has announced that applications are now being accepted for summer youth employment STEP-UP opportunities. The application deadline is February 3, 2012. STEP-UP serves youth ages 14-21 who live in the City of Minneapolis, are not enrolled and actively attending college and come from lower-income households (for example, the annual maximum income for a family of 4 is \$64,000). Applications are available at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/www/groups/public/@cped/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-081310.pdf>. For more information or if you are a Minneapolis business interested in employing a STEP-UP intern contact Tammy Dickinson at (612) 673-5041.

Reduced Pet License Fee. Beginning January 2012, the annual license fee for a spayed/neutered pet will drop from \$30 to \$25. In December, with my strong support, the City Council also approved a \$15 discount was also created for those individuals with limited incomes or those receiving public assistance. This new license type mirrors the existing discount for seniors age 65 or older. Licensed pets that stray away from home are three times more likely than unlicensed pets to be returned safely to their owners. If a licensed stray pet is picked up by Minneapolis Animal Care & Control or brought to the Animal Shelter, the animal gets a free ride home. Pet license fees also help pay for basic veterinary and emergency care for all stray animals, animal cruelty and dangerous animal investigations and enforcement and efforts to find homes for stray and abandoned animals. You can apply through the City by going **online**, calling 311, or visiting Minneapolis Animal Care & Control or the Minneapolis Development Review. Pet Licenses can also be purchased at two veterinary clinics – Westgate Pet Clinic and Minneapolis Veterinary Hospital – as well as with Chuck & Don's Pet Food Outlet. For more information visit <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/animals/index.htm>

Route 7 Bus Service Reductions. The Met Council is moving forward with changes to the number 7 bus that could affect Second Ward bus users. The proposed changes include: Eliminating the "D" branch along Washington Ave. and four late-night trips that do not meet minimum standards for ridership. They plan to implement all proposed changes in March.

Our Town. Our Town, a National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) fund is currently taking applications. The deadline is March 1, 2012 for grants ranging from \$25,000 to \$150,000, for creative placemaking projects that contribute "toward the livability of communities and help transform them into lively, beautiful, and sustainable places with the arts at their core". Key to

this grant is partnership with committed governmental leadership. These partnerships must involve two primary partners: a nonprofit organization and a local government entity and one of the two primary partners must be a cultural (arts or design) organization. For more information, see: www.nea.gov/grants/apply/OurTown/index.html.

Central Corridor Trusted Advocate Program. As a part of the implementation of Central Corridor LRT, Metro Transit will be conducting a study in 2012 to investigate the best ways to integrate bus and LRT transit service in the corridor. The District Councils Collaborative of Saint Paul and Minneapolis (DCC) and Metro Transit have formed a partnership to implement a pilot “trusted advocate” community engagement model to ensure all communities have a voice in the study. The trusted advocate project focus is to reach communities of color, new immigrant communities, people with disabilities and low-income families and individuals. The District Councils Collaborative of Saint Paul and Minneapolis (DCC) is excited to share that we are accepting applications from individuals interested in being Trusted Advocates for their communities. Trusted Advocates are members of a community who have established themselves as leaders or advocates and have built confidence amongst their community.

Twin Cities Urban Sustainability Forum. I delivered the keynote address of the Twin Cities Urban Sustainability Forum in November. The Forum highlights emerging outcomes of sustainability research and cutting edge trends in sustainability practice and policy. My remarks focused on the strides Minneapolis has made on sustainability policy over the last five years, including the Homegrown Minneapolis initiative, our green purchasing policy, commercial recycling, natural landscapes, active transportation and more. For more information, go here: <http://www.tcusforum.umn.edu/>.

Youth Conference. The City of Minneapolis Employment & Training Program is inviting youth-serving professionals and youth advocates to the second annual Minneapolis PARTNERS for Youth Conference. This **free** conference will be held **February 10, 2011 from 8:30am – 4:00pm at the Allina Commons in the Midtown Exchange, 2925 Chicago Avenue, Minneapolis.** Workshop topics include: How to Engage Parents in Your Youth Programs, Teen Employment, Youth Program Evaluation, Addressing Bullying, Legal Issues for Older Teens, and Caring Adults in the Lives of Young People. People are encouraged to register before January 20. For more information contact Pat Behrend at pat.behrend@minneapolismn.gov, 105 5th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN, 5540, or 612-673-6220.

Conditional Use Permit for Apartment Buildings. Despite my vote opposed, the Council has approved the amendment to the Zoning Code that would eliminate the need for a conditional use permit for multiple-family residential buildings of 5 or more dwelling units in residential, office-residential and commercial zoning districts. This will mean that for these projects there will be no public hearing and less opportunity for community input, a reduction of staff involvement needed and a reduction in fees collected. These projects, however, will still go through the site plan review process and be subject to City Planning Commission site plan approval.

I-35W Sound Walls. As you may have heard, MnDOT (the Minnesota Department of Transportation) has proposed building sound walls on the east and west sides of I-35W as part of the project to add an on-ramp from 4th Street South. My office has received correspondence indicating that there is some resistance to sound walls on the west side of the freeway. If you have a position on these sound walls, I encourage you to communicate with MnDOT.

Prospect Park Station. In May 2010, Prospect Park passed a resolution asking that the name of the 29th Avenue station be changed to the Prospect Park station. The Central Corridor Project Office has now accepted that name change.

Funds for Touchstone. The Council's Community Development committee has voted to dedicate \$733,587 in Low Income Housing Tax Credits for next year to the Touchstone project at 2304 Snelling Ave S, part of the larger Seward Commons (or Bystrom Brothers) redevelopment.

Funds for Seward Commons. The Council's Community Development committee has authorized staff to apply for a number of outside grant funds for the second phase of the Seward Commons redevelopment site, including \$200,000 from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, \$102,542 from the Metropolitan Council's Tax Base Revitalization Account, and \$112,500 in Hennepin County Environmental Remediation Funds.

Openings on City Boards and Commissions. There are openings on the Civilian Police Review Authority, Minneapolis Ethical Practices Board, Family Housing Fund (McKnight), Public Health Advisory Committee, and Minneapolis Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@minneapolismn.gov.

Ward Office Hours. Every Tuesday morning I hold "Office Hours" in the Ward from 9:30-11:00am. Please feel free to call for an appointment or just stop by.

1st Tuesdays, Hard Times Café (West Bank/University);
2nd Tuesdays, Muddsuckers Coffee, 1500 Como (SE Como);
3rd Tuesdays, Pratt School (Prospect Park);
4th Tuesdays, the Birchwood Cafe (Seward/Longfellow).

Gratefully yours for the privilege of serving you and with best wishes to you for a happy, healthy and peaceful 2012,

Cam Gordon
Minneapolis City Council Member, Second Ward
673-2202, 296-0579
<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ward2>