



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

Cam Gordon

City Council Member
Second Ward

350 South 5th Street - Room 301M
Minneapolis MN 55415

Office 612-673-2202
Fax 612-673-3250
Cell 612-296-0579

Email: cam.gordon@minneapolismn.gov
www.minneapolismn.gov/ward2

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the Prospect Park East River Road Neighborhood, 1-23-12

**Cam's next Prospect Park Office Hours:
Pratt School, February 21st, 9:30-11am**

Items:

- 1) I-94 Sound Wall
- 2) 2012 Budget
- 3) Community Organizing in Public Housing
- 4) STEP-UP
- 5) "Trusted Advocate" Program
- 6) New Ward 2 Intern
- 7) Remittances Resolution
- 8) Taxis Forced to Take Credit Cards
- 9) Man Dies Near River
- 10) Fire Chief
- 11) 2011 Crime Rates
- 12) Utility Fee Changes
- 13) New Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator
- 14) Housing Resources Office Closes
- 15) New Solid Waste and Recycling Director
- 16) New Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator
- 17) 2011 Bicycling Account
- 18) Bicycle Master Plan
- 19) Minneapolis Food Council
- 20) Openings on Boards and Commissions

1) I have heard concerns from a number of Prospect Park residents on the northeast side of I-94 about the impacts of the new sound wall being built on the southwest side of the freeway. I will also note that I have heard many concerns about freeway noise over the years from folks living on East River Terrace and East River Parkway, for whom this wall is being built. I have heard that MnDOT has reached out to PPERRIA to convene a neighborhood discussion about how the sound wall could be improved, and I would be happy to attend and help facilitate that discussion.

2) On December 14, the City Council unanimously passed the 2012 budget. 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. Some positive results 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.
- There will be no layoffs of Community Crime Prevention Specialists, firefighters or police officers.
- 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 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

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

Deaf and hard-of-hearing persons may call 311 or 612-673-3000. TTY users may call 612-673-2157 or 612-673-2626.

Attention: If you want help translating this information in language other than Hmong, Spanish or Somali, call 311

Hmong - Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2800;

Spanish - Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llame 612-673-2700;

Somali - Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' aan wac 612-673-3500.

Community Services provide affordable health care services to uninsured Minneapolis residents.

- 3) 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 or February. I am hopeful that funding can still be found to support this work.
- 4) 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.minneapolismn.gov/news/WCMS1P-085161>. For more information or if you are a Minneapolis business interested in employing a STEP-UP intern contact Tammy Dickinson at (612) 673-5041.
- 5) 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 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.
- 6) In December we welcomed a new intern to the Ward 2 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 To contact Farhio call the office or her directly at 612-702-4913 or Farhio@aol.com.
- 7) The Council's Committee of the Whole has unanimously passed a resolution calling on all those who have played a role in the stoppage of money transfers through Hawalas from Minneapolis residents to relatives in Somalia to find a way to reopen this absolutely critical financial link. As Somalia suffers one of the worst famines in the world in decades, it is vital that Minneapolis residents continue to be able to send remittances to their relatives. Read more on the Second Ward blog.
- 8) Over my strong objections, the Council has forced taxis in Minneapolis to take credit cards. I opposed this action because it became clear that the credit card fees (amounting to 5-7% of each fare) will almost universally come out of the income of drivers. Taxi drivers tend to be some of the poorest members of our communities, and many are recent immigrants. I do not believe it is fair to place the convenience of taxi passengers and profits for Wall Street above the well being of taxi drivers. You can read more on the Second Ward blog.
- 9) As you may have heard, a man was found dead near the Mississippi River last Friday. It appears that he was homeless, and though I have not yet heard from the Police Department about a likely cause of death, it has been very cold over the last several days. If you notice persons who seem to be homeless and in need of help, please call **Street Outreach**, a joint project of Hennepin County, the City of Minneapolis and Saint Stephens church, at **612-879-7624**.
- 10) I was very sorry to learn that our Fire Chief, Alex Jackson, will be retiring. I was looking forward to supporting his renomination and voting to approve his appointment again this year. Chief Jackson has served as Minneapolis Fire Chief since 2008 and has been working for the City and as part of the Fire Department for 27 years. He was one of very few people of color among City Department Heads. His last day as chief will be February 29. The Mayor has nominated John Fruetel as the next chief.
- 11) 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. In the Third Precinct, which includes Prospect Park, violent crime is down 4.88%, but property crime is up 2.42%.

- 12) 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.
- 13) **Alyssa Banks** has been hired to replace Bass Zanjani as the City's 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.
- 14) 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. I am sorry to see them go.
- 15) 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.
- 16) 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'm very excited to welcome Shaun into this new role.
- 17) The City's Public Works department has put together a 2011 Bicycling Account, an in-depth report on our bicycling activities and accomplishments in 2011. You can read it here: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@publicworks/documents/images/wcms1p-085029.pdf>. It's exciting to read such a clear and compelling account of the progress we made over the last year. Kudos to Public Works for putting this together - I hope that they will continue to report out this effectively every year. Read more on the Second Ward blog.
- 18) 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
- 19) The City Council has voted to create the first-ever Minneapolis Food Council, an advisory group to the City on issues regarding food and food policy, especially regarding local food. This group will continue the work of the Homegrown Minneapolis initiative. There is real excitement in the community for this work – 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**, Prospect Park resident and 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.
- 20) There are openings on the Animal Care & Control Advisory Committee, Capital Long Range Improvement Commission, Family Housing Fund (McKnight), Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, Public Health Advisory Committee, Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners and Senior Citizens Advisory Committee. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@minneapolismn.gov.