

**News from Cam Gordon
Council Member, Second Ward
February 2013**

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

Help Fight Hunger In Minneapolis. Each March, Minnesota FoodShare directs the largest food drive in the state. As part of the month's activities there will be a Westminster Townhall Forum, March 14 from Noon - 1 p.m., Nicollet Mall & 12th Street in Minneapolis, MN. Anna Lappe, author of Diet for a Hot Planet, educator and sustainable food advocate, will discuss the root causes of hunger and poverty around the globe. This event is free and open to the public. Please consider donating to one or more of our area food shelves including: the Glendale Food Shelf at 92 Saint Mary's Avenue SE, the Brian Coyle Community Center Food Shelf, 420 15th Avenue S, and the Center for Asians and Pacific Islanders (CAPI) Food Shelf at 3702 E Lake Street.

Building Energy Disclosure Ordinance. The Council has unanimously passed the new building energy disclosure ordinance that will require all City and other public buildings over 25,000 square feet and eventually all commercial buildings over 50,000 square feet to disclose the energy performance of each building, as rated by the EPA's Portfolio Manager program.

Business Licensing Conditions. The Council voted February. 22 to amend our ordinances to allow the City to impose business license conditions on businesses with significant and documented violations that threaten public safety and community livability. In most cases when a business has violations, the City and business owner have been able to work together to negotiate conditions to correct the problems. However, a very small number of troublesome business owners have been unwilling to negotiate conditions. In those instances, the City's only course of action has been to begin the license revocation or denial process. This amendment gives the City an additional tool to correct problems. Among other things, it will allow the City to limit hours of operation, restrict where liquor can be sold, limit occupancy levels, limit the means of ingress or egress, and/or restrict where people under age 21 can be admitted. The process includes checks and balances to ensure that the business is afforded due process and includes the opportunity for an independent third party review. In order to impose license conditions, a quasi-judicial hearing is required and the conditions must be approved by the full City Council.

Violence Against Women Act. In February the Council Committee of the Whole voted unanimously to support Congressional reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act and to support specific legislation that protects American Indian women living on reservations, college students, and members of the LGBT community. The Violence Against Women Act was enacted by Congress in 1994 and reauthorized in 2000 and 2005 but not in 2012. The Violence Against Women Act has helped improve the criminal justice response to violence against women and spurred legislators in Minnesota – and across the country – to adopt legislation to address domestic violence and stalking. The action must still be formally approved at the City Council's official meeting on Friday, March 7.

Garbage Burner/HERC. Consideration of Hennepin County's application to amend their conditional use permit to allow them to increase the amount of garbage they may burn at the Energy Recovery Center in downtown Minneapolis was discussed in February at the Zoning and Planning Committee. The County requested that the matter be postponed for another year, then withdrew the request saying it was not necessary but that they wanted the Council to delay any decision until after the a review by the state Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) was completed. When this came to the Planning Commission over 3 years ago they denied the application. The County then appealed that decision and this has been stuck at the committee level ever since. It was clear at the committee that we had the authority to deny the appeal. I favored this position in part because of the long delay, but also, more importantly, because the evidence supports the findings of the Planning Commission that increasing the capacity of the garbage burner could be detrimental to public health, safety, comfort or general welfare, that it could be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the vicinity and, in all probability, could impede the normal or orderly development and improvement of surrounding property for uses permitted in the district. Additionally, this use is not consistent with some policies of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Despite my opposition, the committee supported a continued postponement until after the review is complete which

may be in as soon as April 2013 or as late and April of 2014. If and when new information is presented as part of that process I will certainly consider it carefully before taking another vote in the future and will be careful to base my vote on the information in the public record. At this point I am very concerned about the long term health concerns related to the burner. I support more aggressive goals to move us to a no- or zero-waste city and working harder to reduce waste. It is worth noting that under the current practices, even as Minneapolitans reduce waste, increase composting and recycle more, the amount of waste burned at the downtown facility will not change because the county continues to bring waste in from other cities including St. Louis Park and Minnetonka.

Minneapolis Wins Roadmaps to Health Award. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has awarded Minneapolis their inaugural Roadmaps to Health prize. This prize celebrates Minneapolis' community-wide efforts to promote a culture of health. Minneapolis is one of only six cities to receive this prestigious award, which comes with a cash prize of \$25,000. The award honors the City for work led by the Minneapolis Health Department, including:

- Increasing access to healthy foods, opportunities for physical activity, and smoke-free living. This includes all of the work of Homegrown Minneapolis; increasing the variety, quality and affordability of fruits and vegetables at 37 corner stores; creating healthier, more active work environments at 225 worksites; and instituting a new smoke-free building policy at Riverside Plaza in Ward 2, home to over 5,000 people (many of them children).
- Connecting clinics and communities to prevent chronic disease. The Health Department worked to improve patient care at clinics affecting 60,000 patients, to ensure that patients receive regular assessments of risk factors like body mass index, nutrition, physical activity, and tobacco and alcohol use. After assessments, patients are now being referred to effective clinic- and community-based resources.
- Making Minneapolis a leader on bicycling. This includes investments in bicycling infrastructure like bike lanes and trails, the Midtown Greenway, Nice Ride, the Midtown Bike Walk Center, Venture North Bike Walk Coffee Shop, and Spokes Bike Center in Seward. In addition, the Health Department is leading a conversation about an exciting new Northside Greenway.
- Closing the educational achievement gap. The Northside Achievement Zone works with more than 50 organizations, including the City, to improve educational outcomes for kids on the northside, to ensure that all youth are college ready when they graduate from high school. To date, 166 families with 450 children have enrolled, with 144 families expected to join by the end of 2013.

I'm proud to say that my office has been very involved with nearly all aspects of this work. I serve on the Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council, helped lead Homegrown Phase II, and authored most of the Homegrown legislation that has passed to date. I also pushed for the strong Staple Foods ordinance that provided a foundation for the healthy corner stores work the Health Department has done. My Policy Aide, Robin, serves on the Community Leadership Team that oversees the State and Federal grant programs that have funded most of these interventions, has helped push for progress on bicycling policy as the Council's representative on the Bicycle Advisory Committee, and attended the local meeting with representatives of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation about this award. Ward 2 is home to many of the residential buildings that have gone smoke free, including Riverside Plaza and Glendale Townhomes.

Single Sort Recycling Already Increasing Recycling Rate. Minneapolis residents have dramatically increased the amount we recycle, since one-sort recycling started rolling out across the city this year and the city started accepting more types of plastic last April. Results are in for the first six weeks of one-sort recycling. The four collection routes that switched to one-sort last fall show a **63%** increase in recycling over the same period a year ago, when they still used the older multi-sort process. That's **396** more tons of waste recycled. One-sort recycling, where people can combine glass, plastic, paper, aluminum and cardboard into one container, began in the fall for 30,000 homes. The other 80,000 households will enter the program later this year. The City aims to double the 2012 recycling rate by 2015. Although residents using one sort no longer need to separate their recyclables, it is important to rinse recyclables and not to mix in garbage or other materials such as yard waste, plastic foam or plastic bags.

2013 Election. The Council's Elections committee has taken a number of actions regarding the 2013 municipal election. Among the most important, the committee:

- Directed Elections staff to participate with Hennepin County on purchasing new voting machines, capable of exporting the data from ranked-choice ballots for election judges to tabulate with our existing spreadsheet-based system. This is hugely important, because it will allow us to avoid a handcount that would add cost and time.
- Formally asked the Secretary of State's Office for clarification on their process for certification of voting machines. This is important because we need the SOS to use the most expedited process possible, to ensure that we will have certified machines to use.
- Formed a Polling Place Work Group evaluate the City's polling places, and directed staff to return with final recommendations for modifying the number of precincts and/or polling places.
- Directed staff to come back in May with final plans for a voter outreach and education campaign for this year, including translation of materials into the multiple languages spoken by Minneapolis voters.
- Directed staff to come up with a plan for how to evaluate this year's election.
- Directed staff to begin work on amendments to our ranked choice voting ordinance, including a) allowing the City to declare unofficial winners when one candidate gets more than 50% of the vote (without having to go through every write-in, etc.), b) only counting unique votes for registered write-in candidates, and aggregating the rest into a broad category of "write-ins," and c) allowing staff to keep more types of voter errors (skipped or duplicate rankings, etc.) in the count.

I will be giving notice of intent on the ordinance changes. The Council will also consider a supplemental budget request for this year's election as part of the City's standard "roll-over" process. This additional funding is for more voter education, evaluation, and as a backup plan for a hand count in the unlikely scenario that we don't have voting machines available. I look forward to working on all of these elections issues in the coming months to ensure that we will have a successful election this fall.

Ranked Choice Voting Bill. A bill that would allow smaller, "statutory" cities without charters of their own to use ranked choice voting as their election method has moved out of a key committee at the Legislature. I support this bill, and attended the hearing on it. Some individuals have attempted to argue that the existence of "voter errors" in the 2009 Minneapolis election somehow disenfranchised a large number of voters. I pointed out through a memo to the legislative committee that this is inaccurate: only one voter in all of Minneapolis cast a "defective" ballot in 2009. You can view my memo at the Second Ward blog.

Proposed Filing Fee Increase for City Candidates. We are moving forward with a recommendation to increase the filing fees or require a petition for individuals wishing to file to be on the ballot for city elections. Candidate filing fees for Minneapolis are established under Minnesota Statute §§205.13. The original statutory fee was \$10; however, that amount was increased in 1967 to \$20, and has not been adjusted in Minneapolis since, although some cities, including, St. Paul and Rochester, have increased their fees. Under the proposal (and State law), a potential candidate also has the option of submitting a petition in lieu of the candidate filing fee (500 signatures or five percent of the total number of votes cast in the election district at the preceding general election for that particular office). The City Clerk has recommended fees of \$500 for mayor, \$250 for City Council, \$20 for the Board of Estimate and Taxation and \$50 for Park and Recreation Board. To accomplish this for this will require a charter amendment which could be done in time for this year's election by a unanimous vote of the Council.

Bike Walk Counts. In February, Transit for Livable Communities released their counts of bikers and walkers for 2012. This annual report, the 2012 Bike Walk Twin Cities Pedestrian and Bicycle Count Report, provides a detailed view of bicycling and walking at numerous locations across the Twin Cities. Counts at 40 locations indicate that bicycling increased 50.5% and walking 23.5% between 2007 and 2012. Between 2011 and 2012, bicycling increased only 1.8%, and walking 2.4%. Once again Ward 2 locations had some of the highest number of bikers. The top location was at 15th Ave SE with one of the highest shares of nonmotorized traffic of any benchmark location. From 2011 to 2012, the share increased from 67% to 74%, with an estimated 17,569 trips a day. Other Second Ward locations in the top 10 list for the most estimated daily trips on bike are, at number 5, the Lake St. Bridge, (3,319), 6,

Franklin Ave. Bridge (3,306) and, 7, Riverside Ave. (2,917). You can see the full report here <http://www.bikewalktwincities.org/sites/default/files/bwtc-2012-count-report-final-web2.pdf>

2012 Minneapolis Resident Survey. The 2012 resident survey results conducted by National Research Center, are available online and were presented at the City Council's Feb. 20 Committee of the Whole meeting. In general, a majority of the respondents, 91%, rate the city as a very good (57%) or good (34%) place to live. Additionally, nearly all residents (96 percent) said they were satisfied (79%) or very satisfied (17%) with the overall quality of City services. Among City services, residents gave their highest satisfaction ratings to fire protection and emergency services (98% were either satisfied or very satisfied), sewer services (96%), 311 for City services and information (96%) park and recreation services (95%), and Animal Control programs (92%). Although a majority of residents were satisfied or very satisfied with all City services, the services that received the lowest ratings were repairing streets (70%, up from 40% in 2011), affordable housing development (70%) and mortgage foreclosure assistance (60%). Because this is the 6th resident survey we can also see trends in some areas, and it appears that in most areas there is improvement. In 2012, for example, more respondents than in previous survey years reported that Minneapolis has gotten better as a place to live. The survey also indicates some areas of concern. These are revealed most clearly when Minneapolis results are compared with results from other cities. As the report says, "Certain kinds of services tend to be thought better of by residents in many communities across the country...Where possible, the better comparison is not from one service to another in Minneapolis, but from Minneapolis services to services like them provided in other jurisdictions." Using a national benchmarking system shows that, for example, the overall direction that the City is taking ranked above the national comparison, providing value for tax dollars was below and providing opportunities for citizens to give input was similar. Additionally, using this measure, of 13 services that could be compared to other communities only two were above the national benchmark, 4 were similar and 7 were rated much below the national norms. The report calls out two particular areas of focus based on services ranked of very high importance but that were below the national benchmarks: snow removal and providing park and recreation services. Additionally, discrimination continues to be a problem for a percentage of residents. As in previous years (2001 -2011), about one in 6 respondents reported experiencing discrimination in Minneapolis. Most was identified as discrimination based on race or economic status. It was discouraging to learn that more than last year (14% vs 7%) reported experiencing discrimination in dealing with the City enterprise itself. While one must be cautious using and interpreting data from a survey of only 1,378 residents, this does offer us a rare opportunity to get specific data about how resident view our city and city services that we can compare with other years and other communities. Used properly, and with other measures it can inform our planning and priorities for the future. To find the full report and do your own analysis visit <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/coordinator/rm/WCMS1P-104458> and let me know what you learn.

Homeownership counseling now offered at City Hall. Whether you need to make repairs to your home, are struggling with mortgage payments and need foreclosure counseling, or interested in buying a new home, the City of Minneapolis can help. The City is teaming up with the Homeownership Center and its network partners—PRG, Inc., Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity, Hmong American Partnership and Neighborhood Development Alliance –to help current homeowners stay in their homes and inform buyers of the various programs available to help them purchase a home. Counseling is available to everyone, free of charge. Office hours will be held in City Hall from 10 a.m. – noon and from 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. on the first and third Thursdays of the month, beginning in February. Spanish interpreters will be available in the morning on the first Thursday; Hmong interpreters will be available in the morning on the third Thursday. Counseling will take place in City Hall, Room 333, 350 South Fifth Street, Minneapolis. No appointment is needed. For more information on foreclosure prevention and homebuyer resources, see www.hocmn.org and www.minneapolismn.gov.

Everybody In Supports Minneapolis' Fair Hiring Proposal. I have been working with City Council Member Glidden on an ordinance change that would extend the City adopted fair hiring practices to businesses and organizations that have city contracts in excess of \$50,000. The change would require a city contractor to remove questions regarding criminal history from its job application, continuing to allow background checks in the later stages of the hiring process once an applicant is selected for an interview or any offer of employment is expected to be made. In February the regional Everybody In committee

formally supported this and similar policy changes for St. Paul, Ramsey County and Hennepin County that would require companies that receive government contracts to remove questions about criminal history from their employment applications

Self-Managed Special Service Districts. Public Works staff have presented a first draft of a City policy for self-managed Special Service Districts. You can find it here:

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-104644.pdf>.

In most cases, this policy fits with the stated desires of the interested business stakeholders. I am aware of one difference of opinion around the “governance” policy, which could potentially require the creation of new nonprofit entities to self-manage these service districts, rather than allowing existing entities (like existing business associations) to do so. I am working to find a solution that will meet the City’s interest in having a clear line of accountability while also allowing business associations to do this work, if that’s the will of the district in question. Meanwhile, I am continuing to work with staff and the West Bank Business Association to meet their timeline for getting petition signatures signed and turned in, so that they can start the process of forming the West Bank Improvement District. Businesses and other who are interested are invited to attend a meeting with City staff to discuss the Self-Managed Special Service District draft at the Hiawatha Maintenance Facility located at 1901 East 26th Street on **Thursday, March 7th starting at 3:30 PM.**

Urban Scholars Program. The City of Minneapolis is once again offering an internship program for college students interested in public service careers. The City is now accepting applications for the 2013 Urban Scholars program, which aims to help young people from diverse backgrounds build their skills for the future, with a focus on careers in public service. Interested students should apply online by Monday, March 25 at www.minneapolismn.gov/jobs/jobs_before. Students who are enrolled and in good standing at a two- or four-year college or university are eligible to apply. They must also be a permanent resident of Minneapolis, although they can be attending a school anywhere, not just in Minnesota. The 12-week program is a full-time paid internship experience that runs from May 20 – Aug. 9. Urban Scholars will work in a City of Minneapolis department and also complete a team-based community project that will be presented to government and community stakeholders. The Urban Scholars Internship and Leadership Development Program is one component of the One Minneapolis Equity in Employment initiative, which aims to close the employment gap in a city and metro area that suffers from one of the highest disparities between white and non-white unemployment in the country. For more information, go to www.minneapolismn.gov/civilrights/one/urbanscholars.

Small Business Training Opportunity. For the third year, the Minneapolis office of the Small Business Administration has been selected to offer a free intensive training course to area businesses. E200 Emerging Leaders is an intensive training initiative to accelerate growth of high potential small businesses located in America’s cities. Developed by the U.S. Small Business Administration, e200 offers qualified business owners powerful benefits including innovative strategies to grow, acquire financing, access new markets and leverage networking. The e200 training is open to small businesses located in the City of Minneapolis or City of Saint Paul and surrounding suburbs with annual revenues between \$400,000 to \$10 million that have been in business for at least three years. This training is not for start-up businesses. The only costs are your time and commitment to complete the curriculum. Anticipate 100 hours of combined classroom, homework and peer-to-peer mentoring. To request a letter of interest form, contact Cindy Collett at 612-370-2312 (Cynthia.Collett@sba.gov).

Hennepin County Fix-it Clinic on Saturday, March 9. Hennepin County is now holding Fix-It Clinics throughout the community. At these events, residents bring in small household appliances, clothing, electronics, mobile devices and more. With free guided assistance from a volunteer with repair skills, you can disassemble, troubleshoot and fix your item. Fix-It Clinics reduce the amount of stuff that gets thrown in the trash, teach valuable troubleshooting and basic repair skills, and build community connections. The March Fix-it Clinic will be held at the TC Maker Hack Factory. <http://www.hennepin.us/fixitclinic>

Registration for Neighborhoods, USA Conference. On May 22-25, the 2013 for Neighborhoods, USA’s 38th Annual Conference will be held in Minneapolis. The conference is expected to bring over 800 people to Minneapolis from across the country to share experiences and learn from each other and will include

tours and workshops of potential interest to residents, neighborhood leaders and community activists alike. <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/index.htm>

Community POWER Program. Community POWER is offering \$5,000 and \$12,000 grants through the 2013 to applicants who will provide new and innovative ways to educate and actively engage residents in changing their purchasing, reusing, and hazardous waste disposal behaviors to reduce garbage in the six metro county area. Non-profit organizations and schools are eligible to apply. Applications are due Friday April 1. <http://www.rethinkrecycling.com/grants>

Gardening Matters Spring Resource Fair on Saturday, March 9. The Gardening Matters and Resource Fair will be held Saturday March 9 at Metropolitan State University in St. Paul. LaDonna Redmond from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, will provide the keynote address: "Reconstructing Our Relationship with Land," with a local panel to follow. <http://www.gardeningmatters.org/2013-community-garden-spring-resource-fair>

Climate Action Plan Discussion. As Minneapolis' updated Climate Action plan near completion there will be the Minneapolis League of Woman Voter's is holding a Forum on Climate Change on Thursday, **March 14, 5:30-9PM** Mayflower Church 106 East Diamond Lake Road. The forum is the fifth in the Healthy Legacy series the Minneapolis League has presented. The forum will explore and discuss reasons for climate change and measures to consider in dealing with it. Presenters include Mark Seeley, University of Minnesota climatologist, J. Drake Hamilton of Fresh Energy, Paul Aasen, Minneapolis City Coordinator, and Gayle Prest, City of Minneapolis Sustainability Coordinator.

Big Picture Project. In February I agreed to co-chair the team focused on implementing the objectives of the Big Picture Project. The aims of the effort are focused on preserving and producing affordable housing along the Central Corridor, stabilizing neighborhoods and investing in activities that help low-income people stay in their homes and strengthen families through coordinated investments. The Boeser site near the Prospect Park station has already been identified as a major opportunity area as part of this project. There is more information here http://tclisc.org/PDFs/big_picture.pdf

Prospect Park Freeway Noise Meeting. URS, the consultant hired by the Minnesota Department of Transportation to assess the impact of the new sound wall on the west side of I-94, has concluded that the new wall has created an average 4.3 decibel increase in noise for 222 homes to the east of I-94. MnDOT has scheduled another neighborhood meeting to discuss next steps for dealing with this impact on **Tuesday, March 5th**, from 6-7:30pm, at Saint Frances Cabrini Church, 1500 SE Franklin Ave.

New U of M Physician Buildings Being Planned in Motley. The University of Minnesota, UM Physicians, and UMMC Fairview are developing a predesign for an Ambulatory Care Center on the site of what is now a surface parking lot on the north side of Fulton Street, between Ontario and Erie Street. To learn more you are invited to attend a Community Information Meeting **Tuesday, March 12, 2013** 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at Dinnaken House Great Room, 900 Washington Avenue SE (between Ontario and Huron Blvd)

New U of M Building on Riverside Ave. The Office of Community Relations at the University of Minnesota will host a community meeting to share information about a new building being planned for in the West Bank campus. The University is developing a predesign for a U of M recreation facility on the site of what is now a surface parking lot on the north side of Riverside Avenue, between 21st and 22nd Avenues S. The meeting will take place on **Monday, March 4 at 6 p.m. in Room 1-142 Carlson School of Management**, 321-19th Ave. S on the University of Minnesota West Bank campus.

Street Resurfacing in Cooper. There will be a meeting to discuss the extensive street resurfacing that will occur this year in the Cooper neighborhood between Lake and 34th Streets east of 36th Ave. on **Wednesday, March 27th, 6:30 p.m.** at Longfellow Park. You can find more details at <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/cip/all/WCMS1P-102052>

Mixed Blood Receives Mellon Grant. Congratulations to Mixed Blood Theatre for receiving a Mellon grant that will enable them to hire full-time playwrights for three years! The grants cover salaries and benefits and are for \$175,000 to \$200,000. Mixed Blood is one of only two theaters in Minneapolis to be awarded a Mellon grant, and Minneapolis is the only city outside of New York to have two theaters chosen.

Minnehaha Avenue Reconstruction. As you may have heard, Hennepin County will be reconstructing Minnehaha Avenue in 2014, from Lake Street to 46th Street (in addition, the City will be reconstructing from 46th to Godfrey Parkway). One of the key questions to be resolved before a final layout is approved is whether the bike facility should remain the standard bike lanes that are on Minnehaha currently, or change to a physically separated and protected “cycle track” facility. I have been very supportive of the concept of physically separated, protected bike facilities for some time. In Europe these have been found to substantially increase the percentage of trips made by bicycle, and are being installed by increasing numbers of North American cities, including New York, Chicago, Portland, Vancouver and Montreal. The current draft of the Minneapolis Climate Action Plan, which I expect to pass the Council in April, includes a recommendation that the City install a network of 30 miles of protected, separated bicycle facilities. The Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee has taken a position in favor of a cycle track on Minnehaha and I am eager to see this concept realized in Minneapolis and excited to see it being so seriously considered for Minnehaha.

Apply to Serve on a Boards or Commission. There are openings on the Arts Commission, Police Conduct Oversight Commission, Police Conduct Review Panel, and the Minneapolis Telecommunications Network. 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).

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