

News from Cam Gordon
Council Member, Second Ward
June 2008

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/ward2/>

Central Corridor. The Governor and legislative leaders made an end of the session deal that includes \$70 million in state funding for the Central Corridor LRT project. Lawmakers also passed a measure that will exempt the Central Corridor from state sales tax. The exemption is worth about \$9 million. Additionally, the Metropolitan Council has voted to proceed with the Washington Ave alignment, rather than the Northern alignment alternative. This decision was driven in large part by the data that showed that the number of anticipated riders did not justify the cost of Northern Alignment and it would not fit into the federal government's Cost Effectiveness Index. I am hopeful that this decision will now allow this project to go forward. The central corridor has the potential to be of great benefit to the neighborhoods in the area, the city of Minneapolis and to the larger region. Thanks in part to the studies of the tunnel, at-grade on Washington and the Northern Alignment options, we now have a clearer understanding of what kind of mitigation will be required if the Washington Avenue alignment is to be successful. I am convinced that the only way the Washington at-grade alignment will work is if it is closed to vehicles, other than buses and emergency vehicles, and if adequate improvements are made to area roads. I look forward to working with the University, impacted neighborhoods, City staff and others to craft a mitigation plan that will address the expected traffic impacts of closing Washington Ave and ensure that plans and resources are in place to address potential traffic problems and improve safety, walkability, and neighborhood-friendly development.

The Council held a public hearing today, June 3, but you may submit written public comments until June 9 to kelly.moriarty@ci.minneapolis.mn.us. The Transportation and Public Works committee will discuss this project at their regularly scheduled meeting on **June 10**, at 9:30am, and the Council will make a final decision about local approval on **June 20**. The County will also hold a public hearing on **June 17, 1:30 pm** - Hennepin County Government Center A-2400, 300 S. 6th St., Minneapolis. Open house in Room A-2350 at 12:30 pm.

Neighborhood Revitalization Funding. Thanks to the great work of neighbors organizing and our state legislators, including Patricia Torres Ray, Jim Davnie and Scott Dibble, the state legislature approved allowing the City to continue to use tax increment funds to pay principal and interest on bond obligations issued by the city of Minneapolis or the Minneapolis Community Development Agency for the Target Center, including payment of principal and interest on any bonds issued to repay bonds or loans and for neighborhood revitalization purposes. The legislation leaves it in the City Council's hands to determine what percentage of the tax increment goes to Target debt relief and what to neighborhood revitalization and we have yet to see how the City Council will respond to this, but clearly it makes an extension or continuation of NRP (reformed or not) possible.

NRP Framework for the Future. The Council will hear a report back from the NRP Framework for the Future Task Force and City staff at Committee of the Whole on **June 19th**, 10am.

Grand Rounds Missing Link Hearings on Recommended Route. The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) has recommended a route for the completion of the Grand Rounds (from St. Anthony Boulevard, down Industrial Boulevard, through the industrial property in SE Minneapolis, over the rail yard and connecting south to 27th Ave SE) to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. See here www.minneapolisparcs.org/documents/design/missing/draft_gr_study.pdf. The Park Board has set two Public Hearings for **June 18**, to be held at MPRB Headquarters and on **June 23**, at Van Cleve Park (at this point, a time has not been set for either meeting).

The Midtown Eco Energy (MEE) biomass power plant proposed for the Phillips neighborhood may be stopped. Last month Xcel Energy decided not to buy power from the project, and without

a power purchase agreement in place the developers will be unable to purchase the land from the City. Unless the City Council approves another extension this project cannot happen. Additionally, the legislature passed a bill to require a cumulative impact study of all pollution sources in the burner site area to see if the totality before any permit can be signed allowing any power plant to be built.

Free Speech and the RNC On Friday, June 6th, the City Council will vote on a resolution which could significantly change the way people assemble and protest on City sidewalks. While many things about the proposed resolution are fine, I have serious concerns about the following particular aspects that would: 1. require any person or group planning on holding a public assembly of greater than 50 persons “in a location and in a manner” that will prevent others from using sidewalks to provide notice and obtain plan approval, if they wish to “obtain priority” over other groups; 2. allow City staff to determine whether an unregistered public assembly prevents other pedestrians from using sidewalks, providing a rationale for enforcement actions against groups that have not received the City’s permission to exercise their First Amendment rights; 3. give registered groups sole claim to public right-of-way, creating a new tool for opponents to preempt demonstrations; 4. become a permanent policy of the City of Minneapolis, despite being billed as preparation for the Republican National Convention. I have proposed an alternative approach that uses the best of Ostrow’s proposal but addresses its deficiencies. (in two parts <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2008-meetings/20080606/Docs/Gordon-Voluntary-Registration-Resl.pdf> and <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2008-meetings/20080606/Docs/Police-Policy-During-RNC-Resl.pdf>)

Lurking and Loitering. On **Wednesday June 11** the Public Safety and Regulatory Services committee will continue the Public Hearing that started at its May 21 meeting on my proposal to repeal the City’s Lurking ordinance and increase the scope of the Loitering ordinance. Arrest records show that the Lurking ordinance disproportionately impacts homeless persons, people of color, and the poor. It rarely leads to convictions or long terms solutions to the livability concerns some hope it is addressing. I believe that we must redirect our precious law enforcement resources to behaviors that actually harm someone, strategies that actually make our communities safer and laws that carry meaningful consequences.

Pre-Employment Drug Testing. I voted against a Human Resources proposal to require pre-employment drug testing for all City employees when it came before the Executive Committee earlier this month. I am unconvinced that this sort of policy would serve any purpose other than intruding unnecessarily into the private lives of City employees. It is unclear whether this will pass when it comes before the full Council on June 6th.

No-Heat/Low-Heat. The No-Heat / Low-Heat ordinance I cosponsored has finally passed the Council. The new ordinance simplifies regulations about when landlords must keep rental units adequately warm by basing them on date rather than external temperature. Landlords must now provide an indoor temperature of at least 68 degrees between October 1 and May 1, and an indoor temperature of at least 65 degrees September 15 through October 1 and May 1 through May 15. We are also raising the fine amount for no heat and low heat offenses, and writing language that will allow City staff to cite landlords who repeatedly violate this ordinance without ‘reasonable notice.’

The City’s annual sustainability report was published last month. The report tracks 24 indicators that reflect the over all health and well being of the city. You can read it here: http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/docs/LivingWell_2008AnnualReport.pdf

National Night Out Planning Week is June 16-22. If you have NNO or Planning Week questions, or wish to pick another date to plan your event, visit www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/nno or call 311. NNO event registration and street closure application is free! There is no charge to request a street closure for an NNO event before July 22, and you’ll be eligible for a door prize

drawing. From July 23-July 31, there is a \$100 late fee. Applications for street closure will not be accepted after July 31.

Community Meeting on Police Internal Affairs Unit. As a result of work I help start two years ago, the Minneapolis Police Department has contracted with the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the department's internal affairs operations and practices. PERF is examining each component in the internal investigation process of police misconduct and complaints for both effectiveness and efficiency. As part of its assessment, PERF will facilitate two public forums to hear directly from the community their personal experiences with the department's Internal Affairs Unit. The meetings will be facilitated by PERF staff and no members of the Minneapolis Police Department will be in attendance. The two meetings are scheduled for: **Monday, June 16th**, 6-8pm at the Minneapolis Urban League, 2100 Plymouth Avenue N; and **Tuesday, June 17th**, 6-8pm at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, 2501 Stevens Avenue S.

Homeownership Workshops. The African Development Center is hosting Homeownership Workshops on **June 7th and 14th** and **July 5th and 12th**, at Seward Tower West, 2515 S 9th St. For more information please contact Stephen Wreh-Wilson at 612-333-4772, ext 106, or 763-443-5914.

Anti-Idling Ordinance. The Council is considering an ordinance making it illegal to idle any gasoline vehicle for more than 3 minutes, or any truck more than 5 minutes. This builds on the anti-idling ordinance focusing solely on trucks that passed last year. I strongly support this ordinance. It is not necessary to idle modern cars for performance reasons, and idling significantly negatively impacts air quality. Additionally, a reduction in vehicle idling will help the City meet our sustainability goals regarding carbon emissions and air quality.

Booting and Towing. I am supportive of a ban on "booting" vehicles in private lots, except in instances in which towing is not an option for the private property owner (like Theater in the Round). I am also very supportive of a move to cap towing fees at 150% of what the City pays towing companies for public tows.

Air Quality Ordinance. The Council has amended the City's Air Quality Ordinance to a) adopt the State's rules by reference, b) strengthen our regulation of commercial and industrial spray painting and c) include new regulations for all new coffee roasters. This last item responds to the overwhelmingly negative experience of the Seward neighborhood with an area coffee roaster since 2005.

Bicycle Rules Statute. Partly due to a request by my office, Representative Phyllis Kahn has introduced a bill, for consideration next year, to substantially improve the traffic laws with regards to bicycles. For cyclists, the proposal would make stop signs function like yield signs, and stop lights function like stop signs. I will be working within the City to support this on our legislative agenda. To see the bill, look here:
www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/revisor/pages/search_status/status_detail.php?b=House&f=HF4245&ssn=0&y=2008

Bicycle Master Plan Public Open House. The City is hosting an open house to solicit public input for a new Bicycle Master Plan on **Wednesday June 18**, 4:30–8pm, in City Hall room 319. Unlike the last bicycle plan, policies, and design guidance in addition to a map of future facilities, and a prioritized list of projects and initiatives. A brief presentation will be given at 5PM, 6PM, and 7PM. Members of the City of Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee will be present to answer questions.

The Future of Arts Minneapolis. On **Thursday June 12, 5:30 - 7 p.m.** the Minneapolis Arts Commission will convene a panel discussion on Minneapolis' artistic future. Discussion will begin

at 5:30pm in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts' Pillsbury Auditorium and include audience participation.

Green Institute and Lead. My office put together a meeting of City staff and the leadership of the Green Institute to discuss the issues around lead paint in old reused building components, especially windows. This meeting has launched a longer-term collaboration between the City and the Institute, which has the promise of creating a pilot project for selling old parts of buildings in lead-safe ways.

Phthalates and BPA. As you may have heard, the Governor has vetoed the bill phasing out Bisphenol-A and certain phthalates that I sponsored a resolution supporting. I hope that the legislature takes up this important issue again next year.

Commuter Choice Awards. Congratulations to the U of M Twin Cities campus, Minneapolis Community and Technical College, Minneapolis-based engineering firm Dunham and Thomas Ruffaner of Augsburg College for winning prizes in the 2007 Commuter Choice Awards.

Minneapolis Riverfront. The City of Minneapolis can create a nonprofit corporation to "facilitate and support coordinated revitalization of the Mississippi riverfront within the city." The law establishes a board of directors with between 10-24 members, including two representatives each from the city and the park board, with no more than half representing government entities. While it is effective the day after the City and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board meet the terms relevant state statutes, the compliance must occur by August 1st, 2008 or the act is deemed to be disapproved. Additionally, a report is required to the Legislature by January 15th, 2010.

Levy Limits and Local Government Aid. Under the final tax bill passed by the state legislature, Minneapolis will be subject to levy limits for the next three years. The limit will allow for a 3.9% inflationary increase based on a city's previous year levy plus LGA. Additionally, the limits provide a growth of one-half of a percent in households and one-half of a percent increase in new construction for commercial/industrial property. Several special levy exceptions will be excluded from the limit including certain debt, emergencies, costs associated with non-reimbursed bridge collapse expenses, foreclosure costs, and some police and fire expenditure. Also as part of the final tax bill LGA appropriation includes an increase of \$6 million that will go to Minneapolis with a two percent increase in 2010, followed by a four percent increase in 2011.

Farmer's Market season is fast approaching. This year Ward 2 offers two farmer's markets to help you buy local produce and be healthier and more environmentally friendly. They include **University of MN Farmers Market**, Church Street Mall, East Bank Campus, Wednesdays 11am-2pm, July 9 – August, and the **West Bank Farmers' Market**, Brian Coyle Center, Mondays 3-7pm, July 7 - Sept 29. For a full list of other Farmer's Markets, visit <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/MplsFarmersMarkets.asp>. Nearby, at Lake St and 22nd Ave, the **Midtown Farmers' Market** will open June 7 Saturdays, 8:00am-1:00pm, May 3rd - Oct. 25th and Tuesdays, 3:30-7:30pm, July 8th - Oct. 21st

SEMI Funded. The just Legislature also approved \$3,500,000 in State bonds for infrastructure in a State Bio-Science zone in close proximity to a higher education research institution (SEMI). The Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) has sent us a draft agreement that we are in the process of reviewing and expect soon to execute. I want to thank Carl Robertson and Michael McLaughlin for taking the time to testify in support of these funds at the Legislature, it worked. I'm expecting this summer to be a very busy one. With any luck we'll have near final infrastructure designs and perhaps a redevelopment proposal that can be shared.

Winners of this year's Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Awards include **Grace University Lutheran Church**, at 324 Harvard St. SE., for its newly renovated nursery and community hall and new office, kitchen and classroom spaces for a Gothic Revival church on a hemmed-in space alongside the University of Minnesota's east bank campus. Congratulations also to the **Howe**

School Reuse Task Force, who received the "Good Luck and Godspeed" award for their efforts to preserve the 1927 building.

Bystrom LCDA Application. The City has ranked the Bystrom Brothers/Franklin Station Redevelopment project's application for \$550,000 in Livable Community grants second of eight projects Citywide. I am working with Economic Development and Public Works staff, along with Seward Redesign, to close a substantial funding gap for the necessary and major changes to the intersection of Cedar, Minnehaha and Franklin.

Arsenic Public Hearings. A public comment period on the proposed plan for the South Minneapolis Residential Soil Contamination Site will start on June 2 and end at midnight on July 1, 2008. There will be a public meeting at the YWCA on **June 11 at 6:30pm**, where we will accept comments verbally, or in writing. People may submit comments to Cheryl Allen at allen.cheryl@epa.gov or fax them to 312-353-1155. You can also submit comments online at <http://www.epa.gov/reg50opa/sites/cmc/index.htm>.

Shootings on the West Bank. There have been several shootings over the past month on the West Bank. I am staying in close contact with First Precinct Inspector Janee Harteau. These incidents strengthen my resolve to continue to push for more police response to the West Bank and to continue to work collaboratively with the MPD and the neighborhood, including the quarterly safety meeting.

Como Safety Walk. Please join me, my intern Annie Welch, and the Como Safety Committee for one of three safety walks in June. The walks are an excellent opportunity to meet your neighbors, see the community and get some exercise. Bring the family dog, or even the whole family. June 5th, June 12th and June 19th. We will meet at 6 pm at Joe's Market on Como Ave.

Planning Commission Actions in Prospect Park. The Planning Commission (CPC) has approved Hubbard Broadcasting's application to subdivide the parking lot behind their property, on the condition that any potential development on the site will meet the requirements of the zoning code. The CPC has also approved a Conditional Use Permit to allow Debbie Allen, owner of Gopher Cleaners, to relocate her business on the ground floor of 2910 University Ave SE.

Dinkydome Project. The Doran Companies Dinkydome project will come before the Planning Commission on **Monday, June 16, 2008, at 4:30pm**, in Room 317 of City Hall. The CPC will consider rezoning the parcel to C3A (Community Activity Center), adding the Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District to part of the project, a conditional use permit to allow 198 dwelling units, a conditional use permit to increase the height from 4 stories to 13 stories and from 56 feet to 135 feet, and several variances. For more information, go here: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/agendas/planning-commission/.

University Episcopal. The City has issued up to \$1,060,000 in bonds to refinance the acquisition, construction, and equipping of the University Episcopal Center Project, at 331 17th Ave SE.

Blue Goose Bonds. The Council has voted to finish the action begun last year to dedicate \$3,300,000 in Tax Exempt Multi-family Rental Housing Entitlement Revenue Bonds to Blue Goose Cooperative for repairs.

Renovation of Sherman Properties. Riverside Plaza and Seward Flats, both large multifamily affordable housing complexes owned and managed by Sherman Associates, are slated to be significantly renovated over the next year.

Coyle Center. Pillsbury United Communities is in negotiations with the Park Board to possibly buy the Brian Coyle Center, for possible expansion or replacement by a larger community center.

Dania Hall Site. I am working with CPED staff to define a process that will lead to the eventual sale and development of the Dania Hall site. I am determined to ensure that the community is involved in the development of the criteria that will be used to judge proposals, in the drafting of the Request for Proposals itself and in the final selection of a proposal. I am welcome to any and all suggestions about how we make this as inclusive and successful a process as possible.

Please feel free to contact me and my office anytime if you have any questions or concerns. We welcome your thoughts and feedback on any of these issues and my positions.

Yours, in peace and cooperation,

Cam Gordon
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<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/ward2/>