

12th Ward News

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[January]

2009 Budget Adds Much Needed Funding to Transportation and Public Safety

The City Council has approved a 2009 budget that includes increased investments in transportation and public safety. Of \$374 million in the unrestricted General Fund, \$210 million will go to public safety: Police Department, the Fire Department, 911/311 and the City Attorney's criminal division. That's an increase from just under \$200 million spent last year. The results of the City's investment in public safety are being seen on the street.

This year, Sandy Colvin Roy led support on the Council for a Mayor's recommended Infrastructure Acceleration Program, seeing investment in infrastructure as another tool to reduce long term debt. Speaking at the adoption of the budget she said, *"We've been running a deficit that doesn't show up on the balance sheets. We have done so much to reduce the city government's long term debt and get our financial house in order, but we need to remember that unmet public infrastructure needs are also a debt that we can't just pass on to our kids."*

Here's how the funds will be invested over the next five years:

- \$19.5 million to resurface 43 miles of streets and parkways and seal cracks and patch potholes in another 26 miles of streets – repairing one third of the roads that carry the highest traffic volume.
- \$5.25 million to replace 900 traffic light and street light poles that are corroded beyond repair, and repair 3,800 other poles that are at risk of corrosion.
- \$2.5 million to make infrastructure improvements in Minneapolis parks, including construction of a new pedestrian bridge in Minnehaha Park.
- \$500,000 to maintain bike trails throughout the City, including snow removal and resurfacing of the Midtown Greenway and other trails that are becoming regular commuter routes.

Maintaining City services is hampered by Minneapolis' obligations to closed pensions. For its' closed funds, losses due to stock market drops in the 2008 calendar year are expected to exceed \$38 million over the next five years. The Mayor and most of the Council worked to have less than an 8 percent increase to taxes for the first time in years, but it was not possible to achieve while maintaining public safety due to the pension obligations looming. The City will continue to lobby the legislature for pension reform that will protect retirees' benefits while also protecting property tax payers.

Committee Recommends Rain Garden for Lake Hiawatha Flooding

A citizen advisory committee, that has worked with City staff over several months, recommends a rain garden just south of 43rd Street and east of 19th Avenue, to handle the flooding and combined services overflow problems. Adjustments will also be made to minimize golf course flooding.

The land in question is owned by the Park Board and there are still some issues to resolve regarding its' use. The citizen advisory committee will report to the community at large in February. Details of that meeting will be in the February 12th Ward News.

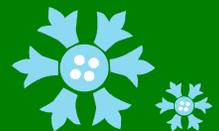
No Sledding at Wabun Park this Year

The sledding hill at Wabun Hill Park is closed this winter. Hay bales were laid down in the fall and secured with metal staples. Due to safety concerns, the hill is not available for sledding.



School Information Fair

Select the right school for your child by speaking with teachers and staff at the Minneapolis Public Schools Information Fair, January 10. See calendar for details.



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Hiring Freeze Prepares City for Rough Economic Road Ahead

At its last meeting of 2008, the City Council approved a hiring freeze and job bank structure similar to that created after the 2003 state cuts. The move will help place Minneapolis in the best position possible to face the future financial uncertainty of difficult economic times and a state budget deficit.

The hiring freeze will give Minneapolis' elected officials and department leaders the opportunity to evaluate the extent of its effectiveness and to pursue additional measures that may be necessary for the City to deal with future financial impacts.

Since 2003 when Minneapolis faced a \$35 million annual cut in local aid from the State of Minnesota, the City has taken significant steps to streamline its organization, find efficiencies, improve accountability and address its own financial challenges.



Deadline Approaching for STEP-UP Summer Jobs

The STEP-UP program is an opportunity for Minneapolis youth ages 14-21 to take part in a summer work experience.

Youth ages 14 and 15 work 9 weeks for an average of 30 hours per week, earn minimum wage, and are placed in jobs in Minneapolis non-profits organizations. Youth ages 16-21 work 8-12 weeks for 20-40 hours per week, earn from \$7-10 per hour, and are placed at private businesses, government or educational institutions.

Applications have been distributed to Minneapolis schools and community organizations. They are also available at Minneapolis Libraries or online, at:

http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/docs/SU_Application.pdf

The deadline for applications is January 30, 2009. Completed applications can be returned to the Career and College Center in any Minneapolis Public High School, the North or South Minneapolis Workforce Centers, the Minneapolis Central Library or the Franklin Library. For more information, contact Tammy Dickinson at 612-673-5041 or tammy.dickinson@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Events & Special Meetings

Town Hall Forums; 2009 Legislative Session– Hosted by Representative Jim Davnie & Senator Patricia Torres Ray

January 10 10:30am-12:00pm Matthews Park 2318 29th Ave S

January 13 6:30-8:00 pm Corcoran Park 3334 20th Ave S

NENA Town Meeting – Proposed Demolition of Bldg No. 9 on Veteran's Home Campus

January 15 7:00 pm Keewaydin Community Center, 3000 53rd St. Proposal calls for razing the old red brick structure & constructing a replacement building.

Chris & Rob's Chicago's Taste Authority Community Meeting

January 28 6:00-7:00 pm Lake Hiawatha Park, 2701 E. 44th St. City licensing staff will be present to hear your comments & concerns related to Chris & Rob's, located at 3101 E. 42nd St. This meeting is a condition of Chris and Robb's wine and beer license.

Winter Fun Days

January Saturdays 1:00-4:00 pm Lake Hiawatha Park, 2701 E. 44th St. Kids aged 6-13, \$6 each. Make cookies, do arts & crafts, watch movies.

Riverlake Greenway Open House

February 4, 2009, 6:30 – 8:30pm, Roosevelt High School Auditorium

At this meeting, the public will see the results of work by a citizen's advisory committee. Comments received will help determine the final design for the bicycle/pedestrian route stretching from Lake Calhoun to the Mississippi River. For more information about the project, visit: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/public-works/cip/riverlake>