

News from Cam Gordon
Council Member, Second Ward
June 2010

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

Construction Coordination. I am interested in setting up a meeting with the Prospect Park neighborhood and representatives of the City, the County, the Met Council and MnDOT, to present information to the community on all of the construction projects that we expect over the next few years. I look forward to working with PPERIA to organize this.

Riverside Reconstruction. Public Works is planning to reconstruct Riverside Avenue starting in 2011 and continuing until 2012. Last night, they presented their initial plans at a meeting with the Seward and West Bank neighborhoods. The plans include several positive changes: bike lanes from Franklin to 20th Ave S, bump outs in numerous locations, the capacity to make a left from eastbound Franklin onto Riverside. There are also some aspects of the plans that I am concerned about, including a gap in the bike facility from 20th Ave to Cedar and a reduction of parking on the east side of Riverside between Franklin and South 9th. There are also some locations in which midblock refuge islands would help people, especially people with disabilities, cross the street safely. I am interested in exploring a "cycle track" model of bike facility, which creates a protected bike lane between the parking lane and the sidewalk. I have heard that the Seward business community has concerns about the two-year construction timeline, and I am raising these concerns with staff. I look forward to staying engaged on this extremely important project, and encourage SNG to do so as well.

Central Corridor Construction. Construction related to the Central Corridor Light Rail project is already underway in the Prospect Park East River Road area. The Central Corridor Project Office has taken steps to reduce construction-related impediments to businesses and property owners. These steps include: a contractor incentive program to encourage responsiveness, create a partnership between contractors and the community and promote cooperation, weekly emailed construction updates (sign-up to receive e-updates at: <http://tinyurl.com/29kjwm8>), public construction meetings for businesses and the public to get updates and a look ahead from project staff and utilities and a construction 24 hour hotline at **651-602-1404**. For current construction information you can also visit <http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/centralcorridor.asp>

Diversity Audit Complete. The Diversity Audit of the City's many boards and commissions that I initiated last year has been completed. While I wish we had had better participation (we got 194 of roughly 400 members of boards and commissions to complete the survey) it is good to have the results. The City has more than 50 advisory groups that it supports. The results seem to confirm that our boards and commissions need to be more diverse if they are to better reflect the diversity of our city. It will be interesting to see how this data compares to the forthcoming census data. You can see the survey results here: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/ncr/docs/2009boardsandcommissionsurvey.pdf>. Hopefully this audit will be a resource that we can use to help set goals, guide future outreach efforts and to measure ourselves against in the future.

Commercial Recycling. I am continuing to work on strengthening Minneapolis recycling regulations to increase recycling at business and commercial properties and reduce the amount of recyclable material going into the garbage burner and into landfills. I have already strengthened the City's multifamily dwelling recycling ordinance, and plan to use that as a model for a similar commercial recycling ordinance that would require recycling services to be provided at all commercial properties. I have prepared a survey in conjunction with the greater Minneapolis area Chamber of Commerce, and they will be putting it before their members this summer.

Nice Ride. The NiceRide bicycle sharing system is now up and running, with kiosks at several locations in and around Seward, including the Birchwood Café, Seward Coop, and the intersection of Franklin and 21st Ave. I'm excited to see this move forward, and I encourage Seward residents to take advantage of it. For more information, go to <http://www.niceridemn.org>.

StreetWerks Crews Available. The City's StreetWerks summer youth employment program has offered cleanup crews to the commercial corridors in the city. I am interested to know what services the Seward community would like StreetWerks to perform on Franklin. Please communicate with my office about any regular (weekly or monthly) cleanup needs, as well as any special time-sensitive requests.

Spalling Sidewalks in Seward. As you know, some of the sidewalk panels that were installed by City contractors since 2005 have not worn well. A significant amount of work has been completed, and will continue, to replace panels that are still covered by warranty. Public Works has plans in place to address the work that is no longer covered under warranty. Public Works has conducted an inventory of sidewalk work complete since 2003 to determine the scope of the problem. They have identified approximately 1200 sidewalk panels that we believe merit replacement at no additional cost to the property owner (constructed in 2005 or 2006 and showing spalling on at least 10% of the panel). A letter is being sent to residents who have sidewalk panels that meet this criteria, notifying them of the planned work and that they will not be charged for the replacement. Public Works expects work to begin this summer and be completed in 2011.

RENEW Project. The City's Employment and Training Program, in participation with Ramsey County Workforce Solutions, was recently been awarded \$4 million in federal money for the Renewable Energy Network Empowering Workers (RENEW) Project. This project will focus on providing sustainable pathways out of poverty through job training and placement for 500 adults, while ensuring that area businesses have access to a well-trained workforce that is prepared to carry out the work of greening the local economy. For more information visit www.renew.org.

Purposeful Planting Ordinance. Last Friday, I gave notice of intent to introduce subject matter of an ordinance that will clarify that property owners may grow purposefully planted grasses, whether native or not, above eight inches in height. This is in response to a steady stream of incidents over the past five years in which City Inspections staff have cited people for "tall grass and weeds" when in reality the grass in question was a purposeful planting. My view is that the City should be encouraging property owners to plant these sorts of grasses, which help storm water flow into the ground rather than running off into our lakes and river. For too long, the City has been an obstacle to people doing the right thing, and I aim to change that.

Proposed Prospect Park Historic District. City Preservation and Design staff are finishing their work on the Prospect Park historical designation study. They have presented it to the Planning Commission's Committee of the Whole, and plan to bring it before the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) on Tuesday, July 13th, at 4:30 in Council Chambers. You should be receiving a mailed notice for this public hearing, and will be given a chance to address the commission if you so choose. The HPC will make a recommendation on the designation to the Zoning and Planning Committee (Z&P) of the City Council. I have not seen a staff report, and do not know whether staff will be recommending that the district be established or not. The Z&P Committee will meet on July 29th at 9:30am, and will make a recommendation to the full City Council. I sit on Z&P, and have the opportunity to help shape what recommendation comes out of the committee. The Council will make the final decision on the designation on Friday, August 6. I have heard very clearly from Prospect Park residents that you do not want to move forward with this sort of local historic designation at this time, and would like to explore the idea of a Conservation District instead. I look forward to working on a Conservation District ordinance once this process is behind us and the U of M study that PPERRIA is working on is complete.

Station 19/Buffalo Wild Wings. My office has heard from a Buffalo Wild Wings franchisee that they are interested in locating in Station 19. They will be asking for a full liquor license. My staff are prepared to work with the neighborhood and the applicant, if necessary, to craft a set of conditions that works for all parties.

Central Corridor American Indian Business Workshop. The Central Corridor project has organized an American Indian Business and Employment Workshop for Wednesday, July 7, from 5-7pm at the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Center, 1308 East Franklin Avenue. The workshop's aim is to help people learn about the minority-owned women-owned small business inclusion program and learn what type of

skills workers will need to help build the light rail. RSVP to Monica Potter at 651-789-6533 or mpotter@maicc.org by July 1.

Openings on Boards and Commissions. There are openings on the Minneapolis Ethical Practices Board and the Public Health Advisory Committee (PHAC). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

In peace and cooperation,

Cam Gordon
Minneapolis City Council Member, Second Ward
673-2202, 296-0579
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