

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the Southeast Como Improvement Association 2008 Annual Meeting

Cam's next Southeast Como Office Hours:
Tuesday, November 11, 9:30-11:00am
Muddsuckers Coffee, 1500 Como Ave SE

Items:

- 1) Party Patrol Grant
- 2) School Board Reform Successful
- 3) Emerald Ash Borer
- 4) 2030 Transportation Policy Plan
- 5) Proposed Noise Ordinance
- 6) Construction & Air Quality Code Amendments
- 7) Waste Hauling Contract
- 8) Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy
- 9) "All Plastics" Recycling
- 10) Planetarium
- 11) Restorative Justice Contract
- 12) Bike Sharing
- 13) Torture Resolution
- 14) Armistice Day Resolution
- 15) Step-Up Program
- 16) Fall Street Sweeping
- 17) Ranked Choice Voting 2009 Implementation
- 18) Progress on Sustainability Goals
- 19) Community Engagement and NRP
- 20) New No-Heat/Low-Heat Ordinance in Effect
- 21) Openings on City Boards and Commissions

- 1) Using a grant from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety for \$5,000 for enforcing underage drinking laws in the 2nd Precinct and addressing party house issues in the University-area neighborhoods, the City conducted two major party patrols in the University area on October 24th and 31st.
- 2) Last Tuesday, Minneapolis voters chose to change the way that we elect school board members by passing the Accountable, Balanced, and Connected amendment. I actively supported this initiative throughout the year, and I'm thrilled that it passed. I believe that it will help us elect a school board that is more geographically, ethnically and politically diverse, and that will result in better policy. I was also happy to see voters pass the Strong Schools, Strong City referendum, increasing the levy for schools.
- 3) If you're planning to get some wood for your fireplace this winter, please be aware that there could be a destructive stowaway in your logs. The emerald ash borer is an invasive pest that attacks ash trees, has already killed more than 40 million ash trees nationwide, and has spread as far east as Wisconsin. You can help slow the spread by:
 - **Buying or harvesting your wood near the area where you are going to burn the wood.** Avoid moving firewood from its area of origination; especially avoid bringing wood into Minnesota from out of state.
 - **Watching your ash trees carefully.** The earlier the emerald ash borer is found, the sooner it can be addressed. Residents should examine ash trees in their neighborhood for tree canopy thinning or small D-shaped exit holes left in the bark by the borer. If there is any suspicion that a tree is infested, residents can contact the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's "Arrest the Pest" hotline at (651) 201-6684 for the metro area or 1-888-545-6684 for greater Minnesota.

- 4) Working with Council Members Lilligren and Glidden, I helped strengthen the City's comments on the Metropolitan Council's 2030 Transportation Policy Plan. We incorporated many of the great comments from other transportation groups such as Transit for Livable Communities. In my role as the City's representative to the Red Rock transit corridor planning group, I successfully urged them to add several of these items to their comments to the Met Council's plan as well, helping to build a regional consensus that we need to more aggressively push for more environmentally friendly transportation.
- 5) I have introduced several changes to the City's noise ordinance amending and clarifying noise regulations, standards and definitions. These will go to the Public Safety & Regulatory Services Committee for a public hearing on December 3rd. The old City ordinance was found unconstitutionally vague, and staff has been enforcing the state noise statute, which significantly reduces our capacity to respond to complaints. The proposed new code will provide clearer ways to measure noise and allow us to more effectively control bass-heavy noise from bars.
- 6) Last Friday I also introduced amendment to Title 3 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances relating to Air Pollution and Environmental Protection that would delete outdated language, and add new sections relating to construction activities, permitting, enforcement and on-site remediation regulations, standards and definitions. This has been referred for a public hearing to the Public Safety & Regulatory Services Committee.
- 7) The Council voted to contract with Minneapolis Refuse, Inc, and Aspen Waste System for trash hauling. However Aspen did not agree to sign the City's required Labor Peace agreement prior to the deadline so, MRI ended up getting the whole City contract again. I still support having gone out for open bids on this contract, and will push for the City to use the same open, transparent process in the future.
- 8) The Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy that I wrote about last month has passed the Council. I was able to improve the policy by including in the update to Council Members and others a comparison between the City's total environmentally preferable purchases and non-environmentally preferable purchases. I believe this level of accountability will help us reach the goal of the policy, which is City government that is greener in its operations, and helping to create demand and lower cost for more ecologically-friendly products.
- 9) The City has extended the "All Plastics Pilot Program" in Northeast, which accepts plastic for recycling that is not accepted in standard pickup. I am very excited about this program, and I look forward to broadening it to more locations citywide.
- 10) The City has pledged \$5 million in Urban Development Action Grant funds to endowment fund for the Minnesota Planetarium and Space Discovery Center, which we hope will be built on the top of the Central Library in downtown.
- 11) The Council has voted to release a request for proposals for restorative justice services. The total amount the City is dedicating towards restorative justice through this process is \$77,100.
- 12) The City of is working to bring bike sharing to Minneapolis. Last week, *Stationnement de Montreal* and *8D Technologies* brought the Public Bicycle System that they recently launched in Montreal to Minneapolis. This system is based on European bike share programs with new solutions for northern climates. I am working with Public Works and the Mayor's Office to help this great initiative move forward.
- 13) I am working with Council Member Glidden and the Center for Victims of Torture (which has been based in Minneapolis since 1985), on a resolution calling for a Declaration of Principles for an Executive Order clearly outlawing torture, inhumane treatment and cruelty towards prisoners of the United States.
- 14) I authored a resolution recognizing Armistice Day, honoring veterans and helping to publicize the first annual "Partners for Peace" Armistice Day Dinner on November 11th at 7:00pm at Brit's Pub, 1110 Nicollet Mall.
- 15) Minneapolis youth, ages 14 -21, who would like to participate in the 2009 STEP-UP summer jobs program should submit an application now through Jan. 30, 2009. STEP-UP is a paid, summer jobs program that teaches students age 14-16 good work habits and provides them their first job experience with wages and an opportunity to contribute to a local community based organization. STEP-UP for 16- to 21-year-olds is operated by [AchieveMpls](#) and provides youth with paid positions with local employers, government, and educational institutions and teaches them the skills they need to succeed on the job. Youth interested in the STEP-UP program will need to complete a competitive application process and attend a work readiness training session to be considered for a summer position. More information and applications are available on the Web at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/stepup.asp> or by calling (612) 673-5041.

- 16) Fall street sweeping began on Tuesday, October 21, 2008 and is nearly completed for Southeast Como. Still, please be on the look out for temporary 'No Parking' signs that will be posted at least 24 hours before a street is swept. For a schedule and more information see: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/streetsweep/>
- 17) The Minneapolis Elections Director has recommended that the City implement ranked choice voting in the 2009 municipal election, by using a combination of our existing machines and a hand count. This recommendation came at the same time she rejected both proposals to machine-count the vote next year. I'm thrilled by this historic opportunity, and I believe that the hand count will be an open, transparent celebration of democracy. There will likely be a delay on reporting final results for some close races, but in my opinion this is more than offset by the benefits of not paying for new equipment, not holding the costly, low-turnout nonpartisan primary, and implementing ranked choice voting in a timely manner – responding to the more than 65% of Minneapolis residents who voted for the IRV charter amendment in 2006.
- 18) Minneapolis has been ranked the **seventh** most sustainable large city in the US by SustainLane.com, up from #10 last year. Additionally, according to the census, we are within .1% of being the US city with the highest bicycle mode share – we're up to **3.8%**, just behind Portland's 3.9%.
- 19) The Council has voted to establish a new Department of Neighborhood and Community Relations, and a new City commission, the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission. These lay the foundation for what will likely be a similar, but significantly different, neighborhood revitalization program and a potentially much more effective City community engagement system.
- The department will function under the supervision of the City Coordinator and is intended to both serve residents directly and support all other City departments to engage the community. It will be charged with strengthening our City's quality of life through vigorous community participation, promoting resident involvement in neighborhood and community organizations, and supporting clearly defined links between the City and these organizations.
- The Commission will provide overall direction to a next phase of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program, and be responsible for the review of neighborhood plans and recommendation of their approval to the City Council. It will also make recommendations on, and monitor the distribution and use of the basic Citizen Participation Services funds and the new Neighborhood Investment Fund. It will also help guide and improve all aspects of community involvement and civic participation in the City and carry forward the work Community Engagement Task Force's recommendations started last year. The Commission will be made up of at least 16 city residents. Eight of these will be selected by the City's officially recognized neighborhood organizations through a process that is yet to be defined by those officially recognized neighborhood organizations. Seven will be appointed by the City and one by the Park Board.
- We were unable to convince a majority of Council Members to support giving the Commission the power to appoint (with Council approval) the Director of the new department, the authority to set neighborhood boundaries and hear neighborhood grievances.
- Even with this setback, however, I think this is an important step forward for the City. Through these actions and the identification of a funding source for a new Neighborhood Investment Fund that will be used by neighborhoods to implement their plans, the Council has made clear that support for neighborhood groups, both in terms of administrative funding and project-based dollars, is an essential City responsibility.
- 20) Starting October 1, landlords in Minneapolis are required to keep interior temperatures at 68 degrees or above. If you're a renter, and your unit is cooler than 68 degrees, you can call 311 and make a complaint to housing inspections. My office spearheaded the effort to get this new ordinance passed, replacing the old, complicated external-temperature formula that was so difficult for our staff to effectively enforce.
- 21) There are openings on the Minneapolis Arts Commission (closes 11/14/2008), Minneapolis Citizen Environmental Advisory Committee (closes 11/7/08 but may be reopened), Minneapolis Housing Board of Appeals (closes 11/21/2008), Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (Closes 11/19/08), Public Health Advisory Committee (closes 11/21/08), Youth Violence Prevention Executive Committee (closes 11/14/08). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.