



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

Cam Gordon

City Council Member
Second Ward

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If you want help translating this call – Hmong– Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2188;

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Southeast Como, 7-7-09

Cam's next Southeast Como Office Hours:
Tuesday, August 11th, 9:30-11:00am
SECIA Office, 837 15th Ave SE

Items:

- 1) MPCA Grant
- 2) Pedestrian Master Plan Public Meeting
- 3) Street Lighting Fee Meetings
- 4) Homegrown Minneapolis
- 5) Impact of Unallotment
- 6) Ranked Choice Voting Moves Forward
- 7) Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission
- 8) Downtown Garbage Burner
- 9) TIF Plan
- 10) Civil Rights Investigations
- 11) Sandwich Board Signs
- 12) New Second Precinct Inspector
- 13) Openings on City Boards and Commissions

- 1) Congratulations to SECIA on getting a Minneapolis Pollution Control Agency Environmental Assistance Grant of \$25,769 for your Solid Waste Reduction and Reuse Project. I've been excited for some time about the prospect of reusing the furniture and appliances that student renters discard, and it's great to see the state supporting an effort to make progress on this. Programs like these have helped give SECIA a well-earned reputation as one of the most ecologically conscious neighborhood groups in Minneapolis. Keep up the good work!
- 2) Public Works has presented a draft of the City's first Pedestrian Master Plan to the Transportation and Public Works committee. You can read the plan here: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/pedestrian. This marks the first time that the City has taken a comprehensive look at how our infrastructure and planning affect the walkability of our neighborhoods. I'm hoping that it will help us improve on the existing strengths in our pedestrian system, and close some of the gaps that I know are out there. Staff has scheduled a public meeting on **Thursday, July 16**, at the Minneapolis Central Library, with the following planned events: 5:30pm Walking Workshops, 6:00pm Meeting, 6:30pm Presentation.
- 3) Public Works staff has scheduled two public meetings to gather input on a proposed street lighting fee. Currently, the \$3 million a year needed to keep the street lights on in the city comes from the general fund, which gets around 20 percent of its money from LGA, which has been cut by \$21.3 million. The meetings are on **Tuesday, July 14**, 6:30-8:30pm at Farview Park, 621 29th Ave N; and **Thursday, July 16**, 6:30-8:30pm at Martin Luther King Park, 4055 Nicollet Ave S.
- 4) The Council has unanimously passed a resolution I authored putting the City on record as supporting locally grown food, and creating a Homegrown Minneapolis Implementation Task Force. I will co-chair this group, which will focus on putting into action the recommendations of the Homegrown Minneapolis report: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/homegrown-home.asp.

- 5) As you've likely heard, outgoing Governor Tim Pawlenty has "unallotted" \$2.7 billion in State spending. Government Aid to Minneapolis will be cut by **\$8.5 million** in 2009 and **\$21.3 million** in 2010, for a total cut of **\$30 million** through 2010. With the Governor's action today, on top of his previous draconian cuts to LGA, the City of Minneapolis receives **43 percent** less from the State than we did six years ago. The State collects about \$74 million from our property taxes, and \$390 million in sales taxes generated in Minneapolis. Given Pawlenty's action, the State now only returns **15%** of those dollars back to Minneapolis.
- 6) The Council, with my strong support, has voted to use ranked choice voting for this November's municipal election. This was made possible by the unanimous decision by the Supreme Court on June 11th that ranked choice voting is constitutional. My office has worked hard since 2006 to make this happen, and I'm excited to move forward.
- 7) The membership of the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission has been decided. Cooper resident and Longfellow Community Council President Marcea Mariani is the neighborhood representative for District 8, which includes Southeast Como. You can also find information on the NCEC at: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/ncr/NCEC_Home.asp. It's my hope that this commission will help lead to better communication and community involvement in all City decisions, improved and consistent funding to build the capacity of our neighborhood organizations, and effective oversight of the City's new Neighborhood and Community Relations department.
- 8) The City Planning Commission has denied Covanta Energy's application to amend the conditional use permit for the downtown garbage burner, known as the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center (HERC). Covanta has appealed this decision to the Council, and this item will come before the Zoning and Planning committee on July 23rd. I welcome SECIA's formal input on this appeal. Please submit any communications to committee coordinator Anissa Hollingshead at anissa.hollingshead@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.
- 9) The proposal to establish a new tax increment financing (TIF) district to help pay off Target Center debt and fund neighborhood revitalization activities will be coming up for review, possible amendments and final approval this summer. You can read the plan here: http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/Consolidated_Redevelopment_TIF_Plan.asp. This is made possible by the legislation many of us worked to get passed in 2008. I'm a strong supporter of the TIF district and believe that it is essential to future funding of neighborhood controlled planning and revitalization efforts in Minneapolis. I support funding Target Center debt relief (which will help our general fund and lighten the load on property tax payers) and neighborhood revitalization equally and will fight hard to ensure the neighborhoods get their share. The official public hearing for this will likely be at the Community Development Committee at **1:30 pm** on **Tuesday, July 21**, in Room 317 City Hall. Comments are due by noon July 20 to be part of the official record.
- 10) I oppose eliminating the investigations unit of the Civil Rights Department. I am not convinced that the State can adequately enforce our local civil rights ordinance, and wonder if this move will negate the purpose of the local ordinance. I am also concerned that we will no longer be the leaders on civil rights that we have been at least since Hubert Humphrey in the 1940s. If we give up our position of leadership - as the most diverse and one of the most progressive communities in the state - and instead follow the State's lead, what effect will that have on the future of Civil Rights for all Minnesotans? If there are concerns about the quality and timeliness of our investigations, we should both raise our expectations and increase the support for the department.
- 11) Council Member Lisa Goodman has introduced language that would ban all sandwich board signs from the public right of way. This proposal has been sent back to the Zoning and Planning committee, and will be discussed this Thursday. I know that a number of businesses in the Second Ward use sandwich board signs without negatively impacting the pedestrian environment, and I'm reluctant to go along with this motion. I hope to be able to craft a compromise that could deal with some of Council Member Goodman's concerns (mostly regarding sidewalk congestion downtown) while also preserving the right of small businesses to let the public know where they are.
- 12) Second Precinct Commander Robert Skomra has retired, and has been replaced by Bryan Schafer. I've had the opportunity to work with Mr. Schafer on youth violence prevention, in his role as head of the Juvenile unit, and I'm optimistic about the direction he'll take the Precinct.
- 13) There are openings on the Civil Rights Commission (closes 07/10), Public Health Advisory Committee (open until filled) and Youth Violence Prevention Executive Committee (closes 07/17). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.