



City of Minneapolis — Council Member Sandy Colvin Roy

12th Ward Update

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WILL OUR COMMUNITY LIBRARIES BE OPEN?

Eloquent and heartfelt pleas to save our libraries have been in great supply recently. 12th Ward residents came through loud and clear with their message that community libraries need to stay open for our children, for our democracy, and for the opportunity they provide everyone to make the most of their life. I took that message to my colleagues and the Mayor this past Monday night but the results are not yet clear.

My work in the past two months to understand the library funding situation led me to believe that some ongoing funding would be necessary to keep all the community libraries open through 2007. I supported one-time funding to give us time for the work we have started with the Library Board and Hennepin County to create a more stable future for the library system.

I also supported, as did five of my colleagues, a transfer of \$250,000 a year from now on rather than an expansion of the new 311 service. Unfortunately, a majority of the City Council and the Mayor seem not to comprehend the magnitude of the problem. I'm afraid that the budget we adopted on December 11th will not be enough for the Library Board to keep all neighborhood libraries open in 2007.

The City Council did move \$1.2 million in one-time funding from other areas to the Library Board. I supported ongoing funding because it was clear to me that the predictability of funds would have an impact on how many libraries could be kept open next year. The Mayor and seven of my colleagues were successful in defeating that motion.

My fear is that all of the hard work during the budget process and the hundreds of phone calls to the City Council has resulted in little more than a feel-good action that won't keep Roosevelt, S.E. and Webber libraries open, or have long-term benefits. The Library Board has a very difficult decision to make when it meets on December 20.

If libraries close, I will be disappointed for my constituents and my city. The value we place on libraries is indicative of the value we place on the futures of the city and those who live here.

WALKING IN MINNEAPOLIS MADE EASIER

Two exciting actions passed by the Transportation and Public Works Committee on December 12th are focused on making it easier, safer and more pleasant to be a pedestrian in Minneapolis.

The first directs Public Works to develop a street furniture program that will coordinate the design and placement of different items of "furniture" (bus shelters, benches, garbage containers, newspaper corrals and maybe even public toilets) in the public right of way.

A city-led design process will result in a competitive RFP to coordinate the design of all street furniture elements and significantly improve the appearance and quality of these amenities. The goal is to create a distinctive set of street furniture, reflective of Minneapolis and its neighborhoods, to improve the ease and safety of public circulation on City rights-of-way, and achieve a higher level of service and maintenance at no cost to the City.

The second action approved my resolution to establish a Pedestrian Advisory Committee, patterned after the City's Bicycle Advisory Committee. It will advise the City Council and Mayor on policies and actions for improving pedestrian safety and mobility in the city at a time when health professionals are focused on walking as a great way to fight childhood obesity and improve health at any age.

This committee is long overdue and I am gratified by the amount of support this idea has garnered among my colleagues.

EVENTS & SPECIAL MEETINGS

2006 Night Before New Year's Eve Party

Saturday, December 30, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Nokomis Community Center

The seventh-annual Night Before New Year's Eve Party is just around the corner.

The DJ's of KidsDance will spin in the gym and the rest of the center will be filled with storytelling, facepainting, crafts, food, jazz and much more. Back by popular demand are old-fashioned hayrides behind beautiful white Percheron horses and our signature dogs dressed with Laura's Famous Chilidog Chili. Don't miss the noisemakers, cheering and raucous fun of the New Year's countdown at 8 p.m.

Volunteers to make this another successful family event please call the NENA office at 612-724-5652 or email us at nenan@nokomiseast.org if you can help.

OPEN APPOINTMENTS

Visit www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/boards-and-commissions/open/ for more information

- Youth Violence Prevention Steering Committee Vacancy (closes 12/22/2006)

50TH STREET RECONSTRUCTION UPDATE

50th Street, from Lake Nokomis to 43rd Avenue, will be reconstructed next year. Public Works has met with neighbors on three different occasions to develop the road design, including options for traffic calming, bike accommodations, lighting, and the other issues that surround tearing out and replacing the old roadway.

A number of layout options were presented at the public meetings, including roadway widening or narrowing, on-street bike lanes, bump-outs (like the parkway), and lighting options. A consensus was formed that the new road should stay at its current width to protect the boulevard trees with bump-outs at intersections whenever possible. They narrow the roadway at intersections, creating the appearance of parking bay; the benefits for residents include traffic calming, increased green space, and shorter crossing distance for pedestrians. And a "fog line" for bikers. Fog lines are a painted lines that distinguish the travel lane from the parking lane, guiding drivers and giving bicyclists an extra level of safety

The project page at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/public-works/cip/50thste/ includes detailed layout images as well as an frequently asked questions link. Please let me know if you have any questions or comments about the project.

HIAWATHA PUBLIC WORKS FACILITY TO BE FIRST MUNICIPAL LEED CERTIFIED BUILDING

When the Public Works facility at 26th and Hiawatha opens, it will be the first City project to attain the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified gold standard. LEED is the nationally recognized benchmark system for design, construction, and operation of green buildings. LEED offers different levels of certification, ranging from silver to platinum, depending on the level of number of credits the project earns through energy efficiency, reuse of materials, storm-water management and other environmentally responsible practices.

The Council has directed Public Works to achieve LEED gold certification because we see value for the city to be a leader in sustainable building design. Buildings use approximately 39% of primary energy in the US and our appetite for energy, especially imported, is not good for the long-term health of the country. As a public body we have a responsibility to use resources wisely, whether it's energy, land or taxes. It is also important that the city will receive a tangible return on the investments — they will pay for themselves over time thru energy and maintenance savings.

This landmark project puts Mpls. in the forefront of US cities' work on global climate change. I look forward to more LEED projects, both public and private, in the future.

NOKOMIS EAST AREA PLAN IS APPROVED BY CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

The 50th Street and VA LRT station areas are the last two station areas in Minneapolis to go through a master planning process. This process brings residents, planners, real estate and traffic specialists together to plan a long range vision that balances neighborhood desires and city goals (residential density along transit corridors.) Other factors in the balance are current and future infrastructure needs as well as the market.

50th St. and the VA station areas presented a number of unique challenges including the atypical LRT alignment down the middle of Minnehaha Ave, MnDOT owned land in the VA station area, and significant development pressure. Unlike other station areas that have gone through a master planning process, this area had already seen two approved/built projects with two other projects in the planning stages. These challenges colored the process and pushed the plan to accommodate the expected changes while protecting the historic character of the neighborhood. I think we are close to finding that balance.

The Planning Commission approved the plan (www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/citywork/planning/nokomis.asp) on November 27. The plan will go to the Zoning and Planning Committee on January 4th and then to the full City Council.