

## News from Cam Gordon

### Council Member, Second Ward

April 2011

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

**Urban Agriculture Policy Plan.** The Urban Agriculture Plan unanimously passed the City Council this morning. I see this plan as a major step towards making Minneapolis a leader in the local food movement. It recommends allowing people to grow food commercially in Minneapolis for the first time, along with a host of recommendations that will make it easier for residents to start community gardens and grow food in their own backyards. I want to thank all of the community members who helped shape this plan, and who got engaged to make sure it made it through the Council process without major alterations. The plan will provide guidance for specific food-related land use, regulatory and zoning ordinance amendments that I hope to see in place by next year's growing season.

**Spring street sweeping** has begun. Each spring and fall, Public Works crews sweep every mile of the City's more than 1,100 miles of streets – curb to curb – to help keep our neighborhoods clean and livable and to protect our waterways. Leaves and other debris on the streets can clog storm drains and pollute our lakes and rivers. Street sweeping usually takes about five weeks to complete. **“No Parking signs”** – City crews will post “No Parking” signs at least 24 hours before sweeping any streets. Parking will be banned from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on the day a street is swept. Vehicles not removed will be towed to the [Minneapolis Impound Lot](#). **Use the Street Sweeping Schedule Lookup** to find out which week your street is scheduled to be swept. The application is available for the duration of the sweep. The schedule is updated frequently during the sweep to reflect the actual progress of street sweeping. **Phone calls to residents** – During the spring and fall sweeps, in addition to the “No Parking” signs that will be posted the day before sweepers come through, the City will make about 3,500 automated phone calls each evening to let residents know their street will be swept the next day. Listed, residential telephone numbers will be called.

**Second Ward to Shrink.** Demographic shifts over the last decade have left the Second Ward much more populous than the average ward. According to the 2010 Census, 33,457 call Ward Two home, more than 4,000 more than average. This is due to several factors. More than 800 new dwelling units were built in the last decade, mostly in the areas around the U of M's east bank campus. Ward Two has a comparatively low housing vacancy rate of 4.7%. And many of the other wards in Minneapolis have gotten substantially smaller. Due to these factors, the Second Ward is going to get significantly smaller after the next redistricting. You can find more information and analysis of the 2010 Census results here:

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/census/2010.asp>, and on my blog.

**Asian Carp.** In April the Council heard a report from U.S. National Park Service and MN department of Natural Resources staff on the potential threat the spread of these invasion species of fish pose to commerce, recreation and natural systems on the Mississippi River. In response to this information the Council voted to request that federal and state agencies take immediate action to protect the upper Mississippi River at and downstream of Minneapolis from the spread of Asian carp species and implement an ongoing monitoring and detection program to determine the extent of Asian carp breeding populations within the Mississippi, St. Croix and Minnesota Rivers. We also requested that the State of Minnesota establish an Asian Carps Task Force for the Mississippi River and its watersheds.

**Hours of Operation.** The Council has shifted regulation of business' hours of operation from the Zoning Code to the Licensing Code. This change was made for several reasons, chief among them the fact that our Licensing staff are much better equipped to enforce hours of operations and catch businesses operating outside of their licensed hours.

**Resurfacing.** A number of roads will be resurfaced in Ward 2 this year. Hennepin County is planning to mill and overlay Franklin Avenue from Hiawatha to the river and Cedar from Washington Ave to I-94. The City is planning to resurface Butler Place, and the renovation of streets in Prospect Park will be completed. This is in addition to the construction work beginning on the Central Corridor, and the complete reconstruction of Riverside, from Franklin to 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave S. It will be a busy year, and I ask that everyone remain patient as we take these necessary – and in some cases long overdue – steps to improve our transportation infrastructure.

**Riverside Reconstruction.** The tentative date for the start of construction work on Riverside is early to mid July. City staff have organized a number of public meetings: a paving assessment meeting on **April 28<sup>th</sup>** 7pm, and a lighting assessment meeting on **May 12<sup>th</sup>** at 7pm. Both meetings will be held at the Seward Towers East Advantage Center. There will be public hearings before the Council's Transportation and Public Works committee on **May 3<sup>rd</sup>** on the general assessment and **May 15<sup>th</sup>** about the lighting assessment. Both of those meetings will start at 9:30am, in room 317 of City Hall. My office has been involved in discussions about keeping a good ambulance access route open to Fairview Hospital.

**Waiver of Domestic Partnership Ordinance.** I voted against granting a waiver of the City's domestic partner ordinance to Life Time Fitness. This ordinance requires City contractors to provide the same benefits to same-sex domestic partners that they provide to married employees. Life Time Fitness does not provide these benefits. The City's current contract with our Police and Fire unions obligates the City to provide health club memberships to these employees, and Life Time is the clear favorite of many. However, I believe that in order for our ordinances offering equal rights to all to have any meaning, we must actually use them. I fear that the Council's decision to grant this waiver will set a precedent that no contractor should worry about losing the City's business for not providing the domestic partnership benefits we've mandated by ordinance. This situation was especially problematic, because it became clear that one of Life Time's competitors – the YMCA – does provide domestic partnership benefits. Joining me in voting to uphold our domestic partner ordinance were Council Members Schiff, Lilligren and Tuthill.

**Unisys Contract.** Early in April, the Council, with my strong support, rejected a list of "change orders" that would have increased the City's contract with Unisys Corporation by \$750,000. This is in addition to the \$34 million contract for 2010 through 2012 and the over \$3 million in "change orders" the Council has agreed to over the life of this contract. I joined Council President Johnson in speaking against moving forward with these change orders, in large part because I continue to believe that the City would be better served by going out for public bids for our information technology contract, and exploring how we could a) do without some IT services, b) bring some of these services in-house, rather than continuing to pay Unisys to do them, and c) utilize open-source software. In a time when the City is reneging on the commitments we've made to neighborhoods and considering laying off vital City staff, I believe that we simply cannot continue to give more and more money to Unisys. Unfortunately, two weeks later, the Council voted to reverse this decision and to allow this additional \$750,000 expense. I again voted no.

**Central Corridor Lighting.** The City is moving forward with pedestrian-level street lighting on the portions of University and Washington Avenues impacted by the Central Corridor LRT project.

**Central Corridor and small businesses.** The Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, the Met Council, the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative and Living Cities philanthropic collaborative have increased the amount of aid available to businesses along the route of the Central Corridor LRT to \$11 million, with more than \$6 million in forgivable loans and grants. The purpose of this program is to help businesses weather the impacts of construction. I have been very involved with Community Planning and Economic Development staff in the City's work on this proposal, and I hope that it helps keep our small businesses open through the construction of this important improvement to our transportation infrastructure.

**Elections.** The Council's Elections committee has approved a plan to study about the Elections Department during this year, in part due to the fact that this year will not have an election. A report back to the Council that will explore partnerships with County and other ways to make our Elections department as efficient as possible is due in June.

**Piccadilly Circus.** The Council has upheld the decision of our Animal Care and Control staff to deny the requested "Animal Exhibition Permit" for Piccadilly Circus. While this is an indication that the circus animal regulations adopted last term are working, I continue to believe that it would be significantly easier – and use less of our limited staff resources – to simply prohibit wild animal circuses in Minneapolis.

**STD Prevention.** The City has applied to the US Department of Health and Human Services for \$1,350,000 to reduce sexually transmitted diseases in Minneapolis, especially in communities that are disproportionately affected by these diseases.

**Mobile Vending.** The Council has adopted amendments to the Mobile Food Vending ordinance that will, among other things, allow these vendors to operate from parking spaces in areas outside of downtown. The ordinance does not spell out exactly where the vendors will be allowed, instead establishing a process for staff, in consultation with policymakers, to define these districts. I have heard from the West Bank that the neighborhood would like to allow mobile food vendors on its commercial corridors, and I will ensure that this is allowed. One change that was made to the ordinance that I think will assuage the concerns of some current restaurant owners is that mobile vendors will be prohibited from selling food within one hundred feet of the front door of any restaurant. I look forward to seeing some entrepreneurs taking advantage of this new opportunity, and making the West Bank even more pedestrian friendly.

**Additional Funding for Pothole Repair.** On April 1<sup>st</sup>, the Council allocated an additional \$1 million to accelerate the City's pothole repair work to address the significant pothole problem resulting from this year's winter. Crews have been working all winter to temporarily patch potholes when they could, with the bulk of the work occurring since February. With warmer weather and asphalt plants open for the season, Public Works crews began making more permanent patches April 5. This additional funding means we will double the number of repair crews out patching potholes at the beginning of the summer construction and maintenance season. To report a pothole, please call 311, Monday through Friday, 7am-7pm. Public Works uses reports that come in from the public, as well as their observations in the field, to prioritize work and address street issues as efficiently and effectively as possible with the given resources.

**Hiawatha Facility goes "Platinum."** The City's Hiawatha Public Works Facility has received the highest certification awarded by Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). The \$11 million Hiawatha facility, which houses several divisions of the Public Works Department, earned LEED Platinum certification in part because of its water-efficient landscaping and extremely efficient energy use, among other things. It was constructed on a site that included a main building, which originally served as an infirmary for sick horses for the Fire Department and the City Engineer's Office. This building was stripped down to its brick-and-mortar shell and renovated as office space. More than 90 percent of the material from the demolition of previous buildings was recycled and used in construction of the new facility and around 90 percent of the space inside the facility is lit by daylight, reducing the amount of electricity needed during the day. The building's heating and cooling uses a geothermal system that will pay for itself in four years. The facility was designed by RSP Architects and built by Knutson Construction Services. Sustainable materials not available from existing materials at the site are from local companies such as Vast, Wood from the Hood, and Shetka Stone.

**Resident Survey.** The results of the 2011 Minneapolis Resident Survey are now available. The survey builds off those conducted in 2001, 2003, 2005, and 2008 (available here: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/results-oriented-minneapolis/citizensurvey.asp>). It attempts to measure resident opinions, perceptions, expectations and priorities on a variety of issues related

to the City. It also offers us one way to compare changes over the years and see how we compare with other cities and national norms. The survey was administered by phone in February and March to a representative sample of 1,172 residents. A majority of residents continue to rate Minneapolis and their neighborhoods as “good” or “very good” places to live with ratings similar to or higher than ratings in jurisdictions across the country. The top three unprompted answers most frequently given about the three biggest challenges Minneapolis will face in the next five years were: education (35%); public safety (28%); and maintaining public infrastructure (23%). Other responses, mentioned by about one in five respondents, were: property and real estate taxes; job opportunities; economic development; and transportation related issues. You can find the full report here [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/ncr/docs/2010Residentsurvey.pdf](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/ncr/docs/2010Residentsurvey.pdf)

**Yard Waste Pick Up.** If you’re a City of Minneapolis Solid Waste & Recycling customer, you can now set out your bundles of branches and bags of yard clippings and leaves by 6 a.m. on your garbage day. Yard waste collection is a special service to our customers, and is included in your monthly fee. Brush, leaves and other yard trimmings are collected weekly on garbage day through mid-November, weather permitting. Yard waste must be bagged or bundled. See how to prepare it at [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/solid-waste/yardwaste-preparation.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/solid-waste/yardwaste-preparation.asp). The yard clippings are then composted. If you are interested in making your own compost, you can read more about it at [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/solid-waste/compost.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/solid-waste/compost.asp).

**Compostable Yard Bags.** Starting in 2013, Minneapolis residents will be required to use compostable bags for leaves and clippings. The requirement is in place now for all of the communities surrounding Minneapolis. Using paper and compostable bags rather than traditional black plastic bags will greatly reduce the amount of plastic being sent to local composting facilities. Local composters will have less plastic to screen out of their finished compost, leaving a more desirable compost product. For more information about compostable bags and to become familiar with the logo for compostable bags, visit [www.rethinkrecycling.com/compostablebags](http://www.rethinkrecycling.com/compostablebags).

**Equitable Economic Development and Jobs in the Central Corridor.** The Central Corridor Community Agreements Coordinating Committee has organized two community forums on the Central Corridor LRT project’s impacts on jobs and economic development. The first is on May 5<sup>th</sup>, from 6-8pm, on Equitable Transit-Oriented Development Models. The second is on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 6-8:30pm, on Jobs and Careers, Central Corridor and Beyond. Both sessions will be held at the Central Corridor Resource Center, 1080 University Ave W, Saint Paul.

**New Ward 2 Intern.** I am delighted to inform you that this week we welcomed Mike Morris as a new program assistant based out of the Ward 2 Office in City Hall. Mike will provide administrative support to assist the Equity in Employment Community Engagement Committee and Metro Talking Circle in our efforts to engage community stakeholders and develop our “10 Point” strategic plan to reduce economic and employment racial disparities in Minneapolis.

**Tree Canopy Study.** The City has partnered with the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources on a study of our tree canopy. This report will be presented to the Regulatory Energy and Environment committee on April 18<sup>th</sup> at 1:30pm. You can read the executive summary here: [lidar.gis.umn.edu/flexviewer/assets/images/MinneapolisUrbanTreeCanopyMappingSummary-7.pdf](http://lidar.gis.umn.edu/flexviewer/assets/images/MinneapolisUrbanTreeCanopyMappingSummary-7.pdf). I’m excited to have this work completed. It will provide a baseline for our efforts to keep the tree canopy stable as we deal with Emerald Ash Borer, and help direct resources to where they’re most needed.

**Emerald Ash Borer.** An additional 78 ash trees in Tower Hill Park have been confirmed to have EAB. They range in size from 3 inch diameter to 18 inch diameter and are primarily on the Malcolm Avenue SE side of the park, at the base of and below the water tower. They will all be removed by Park Board crews. In addition, 5 trees are confirmed infected in Seward, along the top of the bluff between 33rd Avenue South and East 27th Street along West River Road Parkway along with an additional 13 ash that are suspected of being infected. All 18 of these

trees will also be removed by MPRB Forestry staff. If you have an ash tree in your yard, please only prune it before May 1 and after Labor Day. The emerald ash borer, an invasive beetle that attacks and kills ash trees, has now been spotted in Minneapolis and is active between May 1 and Labor Day. Only work on your ash tree when the emerald ash borer is dormant, because transporting any part of an ash tree (firewood, branches, etc.) helps spread the pest.

**Emergency Shelters.** The Council has passed the latest version of the Housing and Urban Development Consolidated Plan that I attempted, unsuccessfully, to change. Approval of the plan is needed to qualify for federal dollars to support shelters and other housing efforts. We heard from basically the entire community of emergency shelter service providers that the City's policy of restricting these federal dollars to only pay for capital improvements is out of step with the homelessness crisis the recession has created. Still, my effort to amend the plan to allow us the flexibility to use some funds to help cover some of the costs to operate and staff the shelters failed on a 3 – 3 vote in committee.

**Meeting on the Future of Neighborhood Programming.** The Neighborhood and Community Relations department has scheduled four focus groups to gather input from neighborhood organizations around the City during the last two weeks of April. One of these meetings will take place on **Wednesday, April 27<sup>th</sup>**, from 6:30-8pm at Matthews Center. The purpose of these focus groups is to consult with neighborhood organizations prior to development of recommendations to the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission and the City Council about neighborhood programs in 2012 and 2013. I have communicated to NCR staff that it is very unfortunate that they scheduled this meeting to talk to neighborhood organizations on the same day and time as the Seward Neighborhood Group board meeting.

**Historic Survey Meeting.** City staff have organized a second round of community meetings to discuss historic surveying work underway of properties, themes and development patterns in three geographic areas of the city. The meeting for Southeast Como and Prospect Park will be on **Thursday April 21**, from 6:30-8pm, at Van Cleve Recreation Center, 901 15th Ave SE. The City was first surveyed for historic resources in the 1970s and many of today's designated landmarks and historic districts are a result of the original survey. Since 2001, the City has conducted a re-survey of historic resources in Minneapolis that has been funded by grants from the Minnesota Historical Society and matched by City dollars. The City has undertaken the re-survey because the aging of properties, changing attitudes about which types of historic resources need to be identified, e.g. historic landscapes, cultural and ethnic group resources. The survey will help achieve the City's goal of documenting historic resources throughout the entire city over a ten-year period, which is scheduled for completion this year.

**Talmage Ave Reconstruction Project.** There will be a public hearing regarding the assessments for the Talmage Ave SE reconstruction project on **Tuesday, June 7**, at 9:30am in room 317 of City Hall, 350 S 5<sup>th</sup> St.

**Transit Oriented Development Grants.** The Council has approved an application for \$67,765 in Met Council Transit Oriented Development grants for the Seward Commons (formerly Bystrom) site, for pedestrian lighting, bicycle facilities, and street reconstruction.

**Somali Youth Citizens Academy.** I was delighted to attend the graduation ceremony for the Minneapolis Police Department's first all-Somali class from a youth citizen's academy this afternoon. It's an interesting twist, given that a lot of young people in the Cedar-Riverside area have complained about police harassment. The concerns seemed to escalate once the police added more beat officers to the neighborhood and stepped up enforcement. The idea for the academy came from youth workers at the Brian Coyle Community Center, who sensed a need for better outreach between the kids and the cops, says Officer Jeanine Brudenell, the Somali liaison for Minneapolis police.

**West Bank “Forum on Foot.”** The University District Forum committee is planning its next forum as a walking tour on **April 26**, from 5:30-6:45pm in the West Bank Central Corridor station area. The West Bank Business Association and Cedar Riverside Partnership are co-sponsors. Haila Maze, Andrew Gillett of Hennepin County, and Adrienne Peirce of WBBA will be the tour narrators.

**MPCA Solis Waste Plan.** The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has approved its latest Solid Waste Management Policy Plan (2010-2030) that will set goals and establish plans for managing the metropolitan area’s solid waste through 2030. I was glad to see that some of the comments I made were taken seriously, but I wish more emphasis had been given to organics and other recycling, moving towards becoming a zero waste region and moving away from burning as a viable option for managing grabage. You can see the full plan, and response to the comments I and other made, here:

<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/waste/waste-and-cleanup/waste-management/solid-waste/integrated-solid-waste-management/metropolitan-solid-waste-management-policy-plan-2004-2023.html>

**2011 Minneapolis & Saint Paul Home Tour.** The Seward and Longfellow neighborhoods are included in this year’s free, self-guided tour Saturday, **April 30**, 10am-5pm and Sunday, **May 1**, 1-5pm. The tour gives homeowners inspiration and ideas on how to improve their homes. Thirty-eight Minneapolis homes and 17 in Saint Paul will showcase a variety, from new kitchens, baths, and suites to whole-house makeovers, and everything from energy efficiency to additions that blend with the neighborhood. Even some rental properties and historic homes. To plan your tour, visit [www.MSPHomeTour.com](http://www.MSPHomeTour.com) or pick up a copy of the Home Tour Guide with maps and descriptions of all the homes at local libraries in Minneapolis.

**LRT Station Area Open Houses.** The City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County and University of Minnesota invite everyone to discuss the future of the area between the U of M Campus and St Paul along Washington Ave and University Ave at two upcoming open houses: **Wednesday, April 27**, from 3-5pm at Rapson Hall, 89 Church St SE, or **Tuesday, May 3**, from 7-9pm at the Profile Event Center, 2630 University Ave SE. Come share your thoughts on parking and transportation challenges, market realities and development opportunities and growth and change, while keeping what we value. Meeting will include a brief presentation, followed by time for questions and discussion.

**The Prospect Park/29<sup>th</sup> Avenue LRT Station Funders Collaborative Grant.** I was glad to learn that the Prospect Park East River Road Improvement Association’s (PPERRIA) was successful in securing a Central Corridor Funders Collaborative grant to develop a comprehensive predevelopment framework for the area surrounding the Prospect Park / 29<sup>th</sup> Ave SE Central Corridor LRT station. The area around this station is widely recognized as one of the best opportunities in Minneapolis for transformative redevelopment. I am very hopeful that PPERRIA’s leadership in bringing together the participation of the appropriate stakeholders: property owners, residents, businesses, the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, developers (including a community developer) and academic experts will help ensure that the development around the station will better serve the neighborhood and the City for years to come. In my time on the Minneapolis City Council, I can say that it is rare for a neighborhood to organize proactively to bring more density to their area. I view the leadership of PPERRIA through this proposal to be absolutely invaluable to the success of this district.

**I-94 Project.** The I-94 upgrade project, which includes the sound wall along East River Terrace, is among the projects that Governor Dayton has declared funded. See more here: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/construction/2011/lists/2011Metro.pdf>

**MN Arts Count.** If you are an artist of any kind the Minnesota State Arts Board wants to know more about you and your creative work. By answering a few questions for the MN Arts Count, you’ll help represent our state’s thriving arts community. The MN Arts Count is a census of

everyone in Minnesota who engages in creative expression, and of businesses, facilities, and organizations that promote and support creative expression. It's open to anyone who, professionally or personally, sings, acts, dances, writes, draws, paints, sculpts, illustrates, photographs, films, knits, weaves, directs, plays an instrument, composes, shares stories, designs or engages in any other form of creative expression. To get involved, take an online survey at [www.mnartscount.com](http://www.mnartscount.com). A paper survey is also available for those without Internet access or who would prefer to complete the survey offline. Just call 800-748-3222, extension 225. The census will be conducted through April 30, 2011.

**Record Store Day at Hymie's.** Hymie's Vintage Records is holding a Record Store Day celebration at the intersection of Lake Street and 39<sup>th</sup> Ave S on Saturday, April 16<sup>th</sup> from 11am-7pm. I coauthored a resolution honoring Hymie's for 25 years in business. Find out more at <http://hymiesrecords.com>.

**Openings on City Boards and Commissions.** There are openings on the Animal Care & Control Advisory Board, Charter Commission, Capital Long-Range Improvement Committee, Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, Latino Advisory Committee, Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission, Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Planning Commission, Public Health Advisory Committee, Advisory Group for Redistricting 2011-2012 of the Charter Commission, Senior Citizens Advisory Committee, Thinc.GreenMSP Steering Committee, Workforce Council and Zoning Board of Adjustment. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).

**Ward Office Hours.** Every Tuesday morning I hold "Office Hours" in the Ward from 9:30-11:00am. Please feel free to call for an appointment or just stop by.

1<sup>st</sup> Tuesdays, Hard Times Café (West Bank/University);  
2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesdays, Muddsuckers Coffee, 1500 Como (SE Como);  
3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays, Pratt School (Prospect Park);  
4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays, the Birchwood Cafe (Seward/Longfellow).

Yours, in peace and cooperation,

Cam Gordon  
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