

**News from Cam Gordon
Council Member, Second Ward
August 2009**

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

2010 Budget. Mayor Rybak has delivered his 2010 budget address. As expected, the budget is severely strained due to significant cuts in State aid (cut by \$40 million in 2009-10), mounting pension obligations (\$25 million in 2010) and growing health insurance costs (\$48 million in 2009). I am happy to see that the Mayor is keeping our commitment to jobs, an especially important issue in this time of high unemployment and financial turmoil. The mayor has proposed a total of \$19 million in cuts to the general fund since last December and this will lead to about 225 position eliminations. However, I am hopeful that the actual number of layoffs will be much lower, because many positions have already been eliminated, and because of the hiring freeze we imposed last November. I will be working with the Mayor to preserve jobs where possible by promoting the use of voluntary unpaid time off. I will also be fighting to make sure some of our smaller but still extremely important departments like Civil Rights and Health and Family Support are not harmed unduly. My largest point of disagreement with the Mayor relates to the funding of our neighborhood organizations. It is good that he is willing to support recertifying some of the tax district (see below for more) used to pay for NRP, but he is recommending that we reduce overall neighborhood funding by at least 25% from the levels we committed to last year (which were, for me, a significant compromise in themselves). I will be working throughout the budget process to bring whatever cuts we must make to neighborhoods more in line with the cuts we're willing to make to our city departments.

NRP Funding Plan at Risk. Nearly two weeks prior to the budget delivery, the Council voted by a narrow margin to delay a decision on whether or not to renew the Tax Increment Financing (or TIF) districts that were established in 1979, to continue to fund our neighborhood groups and debt relief for the Target Center, until after the Mayor proposes a 2010 budget. This was a compromise between those Council Members, like me, who want to keep the agreement we reached during the last budget negotiations and renew the TIF districts, and those who want to "preserve our flexibility" to not renew the districts. I strongly support renewing the districts, for three main reasons. First, I feel that the Council committed to ourselves and the public, during our deliberations about the next phase of neighborhood revitalization, that we would continue to use the TIF districts to fund our neighborhoods. This is why we successfully advocated at the Legislature that they allow us to renew them. Second, given the budget constraints the City faces, I fear that if we force neighborhood funding to compete for general fund dollars, we will not live up to the commitments we've made to continue funding neighborhoods. And third, setting aside some money for neighborhood associations to invest is smart during tough times, just as it is during more flush times. On the neighborhood level people can and do make wise choices about where money should go to make the most difference. This is why NRP was so successful in its first phase: it brought people together, allowed them to identify needs and set funding priorities and then provided them with the funds to address those needs and meet those priorities. That is one of the reasons why the City is in such great shape today, because some funding choices have been decentralized and determined by a grassroots democratic process at the neighborhood level. Our parks, schools, homes and businesses are better off because of it. I will continue to argue in the strongest possible terms to renew these districts, to provide a defined and reliable revenue stream for neighborhoods. You can read more about the history behind this decision and further analysis at my blog.

Street Lighting Fee. Public Works staff has proposed a new 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. This proposal has passed the Transportation and Public Works committee, and will come before the full Council on August 14th. I am generally hesitant to approve new fees, rather than raising the revenue we need through our established tax system. It is also important to note that the Mayor

has not counted on this revenue as part of his 2010 budget. I will be arguing against imposing this new fee on city residents.

Police Policy Manual. The Police Department will make a presentation on September 2nd to the Public Safety and Regulatory Services committee about including more input from non-MPD sources in future changes to their Policy and Procedure Manual. After several changes for the worse have been made in recent years, including changes to the Taser policy that I believe endanger the public, it is vitally important that people outside the Department, including the Council, the Mayor's Office, the Civilian Review Authority and the Attorney's Office, have an opportunity to weigh in before future changes are made.

Service Availability Charges. I testified at a public meeting hosted by the Metropolitan Council on August 11th, to discuss their proposed changes to the Service Availability Charge or SAC fee system for outdoor seating. The Met Council has, for the last few years, been requiring that new outdoor seating pay a full SAC fee (a onetime cost of \$800 per four chairs). The City, led by Council Member Lisa Goodman and me, has advocated that this be reduced. Outdoor seating does not see as much use as indoor, because it is used at most half of the year and not commonly during inclement weather. The Met Council, responding to our concerns, has proposed to reduce the fee to 50% of the standard. I do not believe that reduction is enough, and advocated for a 25% rate.

Garage Requirement. Council Member Schiff has proposed a requirement that new single family homes and duplexes must have a garage –either attached or detached. This will come before the Zoning and Planning Committee on **August 20th**. There will be a variance process for this new requirement, which will allow houses to be built without garages where a genuine hardship can be proven. I will also be advocating with staff that we change the Administrative Review portion of the Zoning Code to reflect that detached garages are no longer optional. I hope this will allow us to require higher quality design throughout the city.

Crime Rate Continues to Drop. For the third straight year crime in our city is on the decline, and it's falling to the lowest level in years. Minneapolis violent crime rates half-way through the year are at the lowest level in eight years and the city's homicide rate is the lowest in 25 years. Through June 2009, citywide violent crime is nearly 17 percent lower than this point in 2008, nearly 28 percent lower than in 2007, and nearly 39 percent lower than in 2006. Violent crime in Minneapolis is more than 20 percent lower than it was ten years ago. Along with violent crimes, part 2 "livability" crimes have consistently fallen over the past decade. Part 2 crimes last year were 22 percent lower than in 2001 and 13 percent lower than in 2006. Minneapolis has focused on proactive policing, targeting the most violent criminals and reducing youth violence to drive down crime rates, and that work is paying off.

Youth Violence Prevention Work Continues. The tragic homicide of a 7 week old infant in July, is the first homicide of a juvenile in Minneapolis. His 19 year old father has been charged in the case. In general juvenile violent crime arrests are showing a downward trend. A YTD comparison from 2007-2009 reveals a 30% city-wide reduction in violent crime arrests while total violent crime reports for juveniles are down 37% during the same time period. We recently submitted Byrne grant proposals for federal stimulus funds to support "shovel ready" community-based programs in their youth development/ violence prevention activities. Additionally, on September 8, the city and Minneapolis public school system will launch a new youth hotline, 1-800-SPEAK-UP, where youth can report (via voice or text) weapons possession or potential threats in a confidential manner. See <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/yv.asp> for the full quarterly reports.

Minneapolis Crime Alerts. The Minneapolis Police Department has launched a new crime alert service that you can receive by cell phone, through e-mail, or online. Anyone can sign up to stay connected with important public safety news in their area, including crime alerts, community

updates, and important advisories. Signing up is easy—just go to www.nixle.com. On the page, you can find Minneapolis under the “featured cities” section.

Neighborhood Policing Plans. Residents in every Minneapolis neighborhood have unique opportunities to work with police to help shape their Neighborhood Policing Plan. Beginning in 2007, every neighborhood in Minneapolis has its own plan, which is developed by the police and community working together. The plans are updated each year, so you’ll have a chance later this year to attend a meeting in your neighborhood to create the 2010 policing plans. To find out when and where the meeting is in your neighborhood, call 311 or visit the City’s Web site at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us and type “neighborhood policing plans” in the search box.

Downtown Garbage Burner. The HERC conditional use permit application has been held over in the Zoning and Planning Committee until early September. No decision was made in July regarding the appeal of the Planning Commission’s denial of the requested amendment to the conditional use permit that would allow them to burn more garbage. The Committee ended up not taking public testimony after learning that the County intends to agree to suspend the time limit on this matter while they work with state officials from the MPCA and the state attorney general’s office to determine if an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) (which could then lead to an Environmental Impact Statement or EIS) might be required.

Fringe Festival Resolution. I sponsored a resolution honoring the Minnesota Fringe Festival, which has locations in Seward including the Playwrights’ Center, and declaring July 30th “Fringe Day.”

1934 Truckers Strike Resolution. I also sponsored a resolution marking the 75th anniversary of the 1934 Minneapolis truckers strike, and the events coming up to commemorate it: a film and panel discussion on July 23rd, a “street festival for the working class” on July 25th, a picnic on July 26th, and a walking tour on August 6th.

Franklin, East River Pkwy, 27th Ave SE. The County, in response to the input received from Prospect Park residents, has decided to forego major changes to this five-legged intersection. Instead, they will install new traffic lights with a more sophisticated timing system that will better manage all modes of transportation. The proposed plan that they will bring to a public meeting being scheduled later in August will include bike lanes on the Franklin Avenue Bridge and 27th Avenue, an increase in the total time offered to pedestrians, and a decreased delay for auto commuters. There will be an Open House about this on **August 25th** at St. Frances Cabrini Church.

The 2008 Bicycle Count Report is now available. Among other things, the study found that the number of bicyclists *increased 15% between 2007 and 2008*, 15th Avenue SE north of 5th Street is the busiest location for bicyclists, with an estimated *3,570 bicyclists per day* and East River Parkway north of Franklin Avenue carries the *highest bicyclist mode share (17%)*, when compared to pedestrian, auto, and transit counts. You can read the [full report](#) (pdf), or for a brief summary, view the first edition of the [Minneapolis Bicycle Traffic Map](#) (pdf).

Central Corridor Station Art. The Central Corridor LRT project is holding a public meeting to unveil the station art and design on Thursday, August 20, 5-7pm at Goodwill Easter Seals, 553 Fairview Ave N in St. Paul. The five artists who designed the fifteen Central Corridor stations used public input, research, and interviews to create unique station art that reflects the community and history surrounding each station.

Clock Tower Café. The current foodservice vendor on the first floor of City Hall has decided not to renew his contract. I have worked with Council Member Betsy Hodges and staff from the Metropolitan Building Commission and Department of Health and Family support to craft a request for proposals that gives additional weight to vendors who will serve healthy, locally grown, and sustainably produced foods. My office has also worked to publicize this opportunity,

especially to the local-food entrepreneurs who participated in the Homegrown Minneapolis initiative.

Hiawatha Transmission Line. After three meetings, the Hiawatha Transmission Line Advisory Task Force, on which I served, adopted a resolution that recommends prohibiting some routes and substation locations if the lines go in, and addresses other issues including exploring energy conservation and other alternatives. In addition to the Environmental Impact Statement as a tool for the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission to evaluate Xcel's permit request for the lines, there will be hearings before an Administrative Law Judge because the project has been defined as a contested case, with the City joining as an "intervener." The judicial hearings will take place from January 2010 through early March 2010. There will also be opportunities for the public to comment and there is still more time for parties to petition to become interveners. I am growing more convinced that more effort should be made to determine if this line is necessary and if there are conservation and renewable energy alternatives we could use instead.

City Web-Searches Now Easier. The City of Minneapolis website, www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us, now uses Google Site Search as a way to find information on the site more effectively than ever before. The search box will also make it easier for Web site visitors to make service requests online by using the Minneapolis 311 system on the Web.

University Alliance Activities. The University District Partnership Alliance has a number of activities coming up in the next month. The U-area ordinance changes that the Alliance has supported and that I have moved forward have unanimously passed the Zoning and Planning committee and I expect them to pass the Council on August 14. The Alliance will hold a workshop on Saturday, August 15 to look at future trends for the District. And the first home purchased by the Alliance, at 405 Fifth Street SE, will go on the market this month. The \$10,000 homebuyer assistance forgivable loans are still available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Ranked Choice Voting. This fall, Minneapolis voters will be able to rank our choices for Mayor, City Council, Park Board and Board of Estimate and Taxation. To learn more about the system and see a sample ballot, please check out <http://voteminneapolis.org>.

New Sister City: Najaf. The proposal I worked on with Council Member Betsy Hodges to form a new sister city relationship between Minneapolis and Najaf, Iraq, has passed the Council unanimously. I look forward to meeting with elected officials from Najaf and strengthening this relationship over the coming years.

Bars Near Stadium May Expand Premises. I have been asked by two bars owners (Sally's' and Stub and Herbs) near the new U of M Stadium to help change City ordinances to allow them to increase the number of times (currently four) they can apply to expand their bars so that they can sell alcohol in their parking lots outside during gopher games. I have asked the owners to talk to neighborhood association leaders and the Stadium Area Advisory group. I am supportive of this idea provide there are strict conditions placed on the bars and the geographic area is limited to within a block or two of the stadium.

Business Day. The City's first "Business Day" event will be held on September 25th. This is an opportunity for businesses of all sizes and types to speak to city officials – including Council Members – about issues of importance to them.

Domestic Abuse Advocate Lucky Farah, who speaks Somali, English and Kiswahili, has office hours at the Midtown Safety Center at 2949 Chicago Avenue South on Thursdays, from 1-4 pm. She can answer questions about domestic abuse, write orders of protection and help with safety planning. She is available to help anyone who is experiencing abuse at home.

Downtown Improvement District. Whether you work downtown or just come downtown for an occasional evening out, you're bound to notice the new Clean and Safe Ambassadors — the folks

in those neon green shirts. In their first week of work, they helped nearly 2,000 pedestrians and picked up 13,000 pounds of trash. The ambassadors are a very visible sign of the launch of the new Downtown Improvement District.

Parade of Community Gardens. Congratulations to the gardens in the Second Ward being honored in this year's parade of community gardens, including the 5th Street Community Garden at 1813 S 5th St, the Augsburg Community Garden at 601 20th Ave S and the Accord Community Garden at the corner of 15th and Como Avenues. For more information, go here: <http://www.gardeningsmatters.org/Events/2009Parade/brochure.pdf>.

Roll Out the Wagons Event. On Saturday, August 8th I joined many others for Seward Neighborhood's rollout of the new pedestrian-oriented shopping wagons, starting at Welna II Hardware, 2201 E Franklin Ave. The purpose of these wagons is to make it easy for Seward residents to meet their daily shopping needs on foot. This initiative is part of a larger climate change program funded by the City's climate change micro-grants that I pushed to initiate in 2007. It includes two heavy duty wagons available for check out from Welna and the Seward Coop Grocery.

Be Seward Event. The Seward Civic and Commerce Association (SCCA) is sponsoring a "Be SEWARD Challenge." It's an effort to help ensure that the places that help make Seward great continue to thrive, and it's your chance to host a fun event, or think up some other creative way to support the local businesses that are vital strands in the fabric of our community. If you decide to host an event, tell the SCCA about it and they may stop by, take pictures, and write about it in the SCCA newsletter. If your event is chosen as the most creative, you'll win a gift certificate at your favorite Seward business: \$100 for the winner and two \$50 runner-up prizes. I will be hosting my own Be Seward brunch event at the Seward Café. Please join me **Sunday, August 30th** at 12:30 pm.

Prospect Park Historic District. My office has heard a number of concerns from Prospect Park residents about the interim historic protections that are currently in place. I want people to know that the experience of homeowners going through this *interim* process is not necessarily indicative of the experience that folks will have with the proposed local designation. Part of the process of local designation will be to craft design guidelines that are specific to Prospect Park. This may authorize staff to allow some projects to proceed without going through Heritage Preservation Commission, which is difficult for them to do while we are relying on the more general guidelines established by the Secretary of the Interior. For instance, if the guidelines are written to only apply to the front of houses, a deck project in someone's back yard would not have to go through HPC. That same deck project would likely be required to go through HPC today, because the guidelines have not been written. A subcommittee has been formed to work on coming up with some draft guidelines that includes my Aide, Robin, and Aaron Hanauer from Preservation and Design as well as PPERIA representatives. I hope that the subcommittee will come out with draft guidelines soon, enabling the neighborhood to decide whether to move forward with local historic designation and get out of the interim process that is clearly less than ideal.

Granary Road is ranked third of eight projects on the City's bonding requests to the Legislature for next session.

University Village at 2515 University Ave SE is looking to amend their conditional use permit to let them enclose a 608 square foot breezeway/walkway between the Fairview Clinic and U Salon in order to allow for a proposed expansion of Fairview Clinic, to enclose the current outdoor seating area at the Leaning Tower of Pizza to create an additional 267 square feet of indoor seating area, to add a single-level, 450 square foot open air deck adjacent to the Leaning Tower of Pizza along 25th Avenue SE, and to add an additional freestanding sign for Fairview Clinic along the eastern most entrance along University Ave SE. Planning staff are recommending approval. This is coming before the Planning Commission on Monday, **August 10th** at 4:30pm.

Sydney Apartments/Dinkydome. The Zoning and Planning committee has rejected the appeal brought by the Chi Psi fraternity, which sought to block the approval of some modifications to the already-approved, and now smaller, Sydney Hall redevelopment, which had already passed the Planning Commission. I supported rejecting this appeal, and continue to support this project, which will preserve the historic Dinkydome and result in 125 new student residential units and first floor commercial space in a 6 story building right on the doorstep of the University.

600 Main. The Stone Arch Phase II apartment project appears to be in limbo. After the developers appealed the decision of the Planning Commission to deny the necessary applications for a 79 unit, 6 story residential building just east of the stone arch bridge, the matter came to the Zoning and Planning committee. After learning that the park board was interested in buying the site and that a citizens group had petitioned calling for an Environmental Assessment Worksheet, the committee voted to postpone any decision until September 3 or later.

Kings Fair. Please stop by and visit me at King's Fair, the Seward neighborhood's biannual community get-together, on **Saturday, September 12**, from 12-5pm at Matthews Park. This year's theme is "Celebrating Art and Diversity."

The League of Longfellow artists (LOLA), along with participating galleries and neighborhood businesses are sponsoring the first annual LoLa Art Crawl in the Longfellow neighborhood on **August 29-30**, 2009; 10am-5pm. Visit www.lolaartcrawl.com to see a complete list of artists and their products, along with directions and maps (including light rail stops).

Dania Hall Advisory Group is engaged in a community outreach to November to help provide context for the future of the city owned Dania Hall site for development. A document has been drafted to assist organizations in reaching out to stakeholders in the next several months. More details are on the city's website (http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/dania_hall_site.asp).

Augsburg College has requested a Wine, class A with beer liquor license. There will be time at the West Bank Community Coalition (WBCC) Board of Directors' meeting, at Brian Coyle Community Center, 420 15th Ave. S. to present information and solicit comments on the application **Wednesday, August 19**, 2009, 6:00 PM

The University Business Center (2635 4th Street SE) owners have petitioned to rezone their property to add it to the Industrial Living Overlay District, to allow for a martial arts/kick boxing, school. I supported this at the Zoning and Planning Committee and expect it to pass the full Council.

Garage Requirement for New Homes. Councilmember Schiff has proposed an ordinance amendment that would require construction of a garage—either attached or detached—when building or relocating any new single-family dwelling or duplex in the city. This will come before the Zoning and Planning Committee on 8/20/09. More info is at http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2009-meetings/20090814/Docs/10_RPT-TextAmend-BE.pdf

Environmental Remediation Grants have been awarded by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Contamination Cleanup and Investigation Grant Program and the Hennepin County Environmental Response Fund (ERF) Funding for projects in the Ward include:

- Bystrom/PPL – Phase I (2304-2310 Snelling Avenue) for \$420,500 to build 40 affordable one-bedroom supportive housing units with office and dining space. Remediation funds will be used for the disposal of contaminated soils.
- Huron Flats – (2428 Delaware St. SE) for \$998,180 for Republic Ventures LLC (or affiliated entity) to prepare the site for construction of an proposed, but yet to be approved, 8-story, 100-unit building for student housing, with first floor commercial

space. Remediation funds will be used for soil and groundwater cleanup and vapor mitigation.

- Como Student Cooperative – (1024 27th Ave. SE) \$712,437 to the University of Minnesota The project site consists of three existing student housing buildings and adjacent green space. Contaminated fill material was discovered during recent waterproofing work on the buildings and during rain garden construction.

Koyi Shushi, Too, the new restaurant that will be locating in the old Seward Co-op building, has applied for a beer and wine liquor license.

Southwest LRT routes (alignments) decisions will soon be made. Several [potential routes](#) have been studied for the Southwest LRT corridor. Open houses this month are an opportunity to learn more about these routes (also known as alignments). One will be in Minneapolis - **Thursday, August 13** 11:30am-1:00pm at Minneapolis Central Library 300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, MN 55401. The Policy Advisory Committee is scheduled to make a recommendation on the locally preferred alignment after a public hearing on September 17. For more go to www.southwesttransitway.org.

Openings on City Boards and Commissions. There are openings on the Minneapolis Commission on Civil Rights (closes 8/14) and Public Health Advisory Committee (open until filled). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Yours, in peace and cooperation,

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