

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Southeast Como, 4-1-08

Cam's next Southeast Como Office Hours:

Tuesday, April 8, 9:30-11:00am

SECIA Office, 837 15th Ave SE

Items:

- 1) April Roundtable: Free Speech and the RNC
- 2) 18th Ave SE Resurfacing postponed
- 3) NRP
- 4) Solar Cities Grant
- 5) Earth Hour
- 6) Bicycle Master Plan Open House
- 7) Bicycles on Marquette and Second
- 8) Central Corridor
- 9) Ranked Choice Voting
- 10) No-Heat/Low-Heat
- 11) Rock-Tenn Community Check-In
- 12) Public Water Collaborative
- 13) Appointments to Boards and Commissions
- 14) Tree Trust Deadline
- 15) Environmentally Preferable Purchasing
- 16) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) Please join me for my April roundtable discussion on free speech during the Republican convention, **Monday, April 14 7-9PM, Augsburg College, Christensen Center, East Commons**. The Public Safety and Regulatory Services committee will discuss the City's free speech policies in April. I have consistently advocated a voluntary registration process that protesters could use to get City resources and services for their events. I've just as forcefully opposed any attempt to create a mandatory permit process that would enable police officers to arrest anyone taking part in a free speech event without a permit. Come hear more about this and other Convention-related policy discussions, and share your ideas and concerns.
- 2) 18th Ave SE have been removed from the list of roads to be resurfaced in 2008. The City has been informed by MnDOT that these streets may be eligible for state funding, due to their use as reliever routes for I-35W since last year's bridge collapse. Given this possibility, it makes no sense to assess property owners for this work this year.
- 3) Working with my colleague Scott Benson, I successfully convinced my colleagues to support a resolution calling for an extension of the pre-1979 tax increment financing districts in the Minneapolis Common Project that have been used to fund the Neighborhood Revitalization Program. It directs staff to work with the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners, the Minneapolis Legislative delegation, and other partners in neighborhood revitalization efforts to develop a bill to extend the pre-1979 tax districts to: (1) \$100 million to allow the City to fund the administrative and programmatic needs of a neighborhood revitalization program that includes support for neighborhood organizations and neighborhood-directed action plans after 2009 in the City of Minneapolis); (2) \$100 million to fund repayment of the Target Center bonds and the capital improvements necessary for Target Center to remain a first class facility as required by contract; and (3) Provide continuing support for discretionary development investments by the City of Minneapolis, and if Hennepin County decides to participate in the funding of a future neighborhood revitalization program, provide funding support to County investments that benefit the County and City.
 - 4) Minneapolis and St. Paul will share a \$200,000 Federal Department of Energy Solar Cities grant this year, to help us integrate solar into energy planning, zoning and facilities; streamline our regulations and practices that affect solar adoption by residents and businesses; create programs to help residents and businesses defray the capital costs of solar panels; and promote solar technology among residents and local businesses through outreach, curriculum development, and incentive programs. I'm very excited about this tremendous opportunity, and will be working to make sure we make the most of it.

- 5) Council Member Benson and I cosponsored a resolution committing the City to turn off all lights that are not absolutely necessary on Earth Hour, last Saturday from 8-9pm. Some major downtown buildings went dark, including Wells Fargo, IDS, Thrivent Financial, US Bancorp and the State, Orpheum and Pantages theaters, as well as the lights on the underside of the Stone Arch Bridge. The idea was to demonstrate how much impact just an hour of energy conservation can have on carbon emissions, to inspire others to conserve.
- 6) Please come down to City Hall room 333 on April 16th for an open house for the City's Bicycle Master Plan. Public Works staff and members of the Bicycle Advisory Committee will be on hand to answer your questions about the plan and get your input on what it should include.
- 7) Working with allies in the bicycle community (including members of the City's Bicycle Advisory Committee) and Council Members Lilligren and Schiff, I helped lead an effort to increase the width of Marquette and Second Avenues in downtown, to accommodate future bicycle lanes. The existing bicycle lanes are slated to be removed as part of the downtown transportation action plan, partly to make way for double-wide bus lanes which will triple bus volume on both streets. My hope is that in the near future, the City can approach the state for a waiver of their street standards, to narrow the two traffic lanes enough to put five-foot bike lanes on the right-hand side of the street.
- 8) As expected, the Central Corridor Management Committee voted in February to take the Washington Ave tunnel off the table. I am working extensively with City staff, the Mayor's office, the University and community members to come up with a Washington Ave at-grade option that will have the least negative impacts on the surrounding community. This will include a significant investment in mitigation (up to \$20 million in the last CCMC action), possible commitments from the Legislature for 'reliever' projects such as Granary Road, and ensuring to the extent possible that the project holds affected property owners harmless during construction and beyond. I am strongly advocating that local-service busses remain on the Washington transit mall, despite the University's stated wish to move them to other city streets.
- 9) Earlier this month, I successfully pushed for a Request for Proposals for election equipment and/or services that will allow Minneapolis to implement Ranked Choice Voting in 2009. I will be pushing for this RFP to include enough flexibility to allow us to receive good responses. Council Member Glidden has introduced an ordinance establishing vote counting rules and procedures for Ranked Choice Voting elections. I will be following this ordinance very closely, to ensure that it conforms to best practices used in other jurisdictions that use ranked choice voting.
- 10) Council Member Remington has introduced an ordinance requiring that landlords provide adequate heat for their tenants between September 15 and May 15. This replaces an unclear and less enforceable code that based enforcement on external temperature. My office has worked extensively on this ordinance with CM Remington's office, and I plan to move it in committee.
- 11) A date and location has been set for a Minneapolis Community Check-in for the Rock-Tenn project: **Luxton Recreation Center on April 26th, at 10 am**. Bill Kahn will present the latest information from the energy study and the work of the Community Advisory Panel, followed by Q&A and a facilitated listening session.
- 12) My office is participating in a collaboration between Eureka Recycling, the Ramsey County Water Authority and others, to educate the public about the benefits of drinking public water and the waste associated with bottled water.
- 13) My Aide Robin is participating in an effort to fix the broken system for appointing people to City Boards and Commissions, to make the interface between the City and applicants fairer and more transparent, and to ensure that we have effective and empowered citizen input boards.
- 14) The deadline for ordering a tree from Tree Trust is **April 11**. The trees are \$25 each, are 6-10 feet tall with a 1 inch trunk. Place orders online at www.treetrust.org, or pick up an order form from the SECIA office or the library.
- 15) With the leadership of our Citizens Environmental Advisory Committee and building on the success of the City's new Green Cleaning policy, I am helping to spearhead the development of a comprehensive set of Environmentally Preferable Purchasing policies.
- 16) There are openings on the Minneapolis Planning Commission (closes 4/4/08). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.