

News from Cam Gordon
Council Member, Second Ward
July 2010

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

National Night Out is **August 3rd**. NNO is an annual event that involves all segments of the community in building a healthier, safer community. NNO generates support for anti-crime programs and strengthens police/community relations. NNO is not just one night of the year, but the culmination of year-long crime prevention activity in all Minneapolis neighborhoods: people working together in block clubs and other networks to prevent and address crime and other neighborhood problems. It is an occasion to celebrate past successes, discuss current challenges or issues, and re-dedicate to collaborative efforts with neighbors, police, businesses and others to improve the quality of life in our city. To register your block party, call **311**. It's free to close a street if you call by **July 14th**.

Redistricting. The Charter Commission has voted to put a question on this fall's ballot that will, if passed by the voters, do away with the Redistricting Commission and empower the Charter Commission to draw Ward boundaries. While I do not believe the Charter amendment as proposed is perfect, it is a significant improvement over the Redistricting Commission process, which allowed a small group of unelected, unaccountable party insiders to draw maps based on an overtly politicized process. I hope that Minneapolis voters approve this amendment, and that we can have a fairer and more transparent redistricting process in 2012. I understand that there are some significant concerns being raised by good government groups such as Common Cause and the League of Women Voters, about both the criteria that will be used to draw ward boundaries and the transparency of the process that will be followed. I am working with the City Attorney's Office to see if there is any way for the Council to set these criteria by ordinance.

Commercial Recycling. I am continuing to work on strengthening Minneapolis recycling regulations to increase recycling at business and commercial properties and reduce the amount of recyclable material going into the garbage burner and into landfills. I have already strengthened the City's multifamily dwelling recycling ordinance, and plan to use that as a model for a similar commercial recycling ordinance that would require recycling services to be provided at all commercial properties. I have prepared a survey in conjunction with the greater Minneapolis area Chamber of Commerce, and they will be putting it before their members this summer.

2010 Climate Change Grants. The City is once again offering grants to help save energy and find innovative ways to fight climate change. Nonprofits, neighborhood associations, businesses, and parks and libraries and others may apply. Grant amounts range from \$7,500- \$10,000 (no match required) and applications must be in by 4 p.m. Monday, July 26. To learn more visit www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/ (under "what's new," click "2010 Climate Change Grants".)

2010 Bike Lanes. I have heard from staff that the following bike lanes will be striped this year in Ward 2: Minnehaha Ave from 31st St to Cedar, 20th Ave S from Cedar to Riverside, 19th Ave S from Riverside to the Mississippi, Como Ave SE from 10th Ave SE to 22nd Ave SE, 15th Ave SE from Rollins to Como, and 27th Ave SE from Franklin to University. It sounds like the U of M trail is less certain to move forward this year, but staff are continuing to work towards getting it built.

We Want You Back. As a member of the Youth Coordinating Board I am excited about a new joint effort the Board is embarking on this fall with the Public School to enroll youth who have dropped out of school and get them on the path to graduation. The program's goal is to attract back 200 youth and put them on a path where they can be successful. Up to 1,900 young people dropped out of school between 2008 and 2010. The campaign is looking for volunteers to help reach young people who did not finish school this summer at various events and on Saturday, September 11 to join hundreds of people walking together, dropping information fliers, and talking to neighbors around the city. For info and to sign up to volunteer visit www.wewantyoubackmpls.org

Nice Ride. The Nice Ride bicycle sharing system is now up and running, with kiosks at several locations in and around the Second Ward. I'm excited to see this move forward, and I encourage residents and businesses to take advantage of it. For more information, go to <http://www.niceridemn.org>.

StreetWerks Crews Available. The City's StreetWerks summer youth employment program has offered cleanup crews to the commercial corridors in the city. I am interested to know what services the community would like StreetWerks to perform. Please communicate with my office about any regular (weekly or monthly) cleanup needs, as well as any special time-sensitive requests.

Central Corridor Construction. Construction related to the Central Corridor Light Rail project is already underway in the University area. The Central Corridor Project Office has taken steps to reduce construction-related impediments to businesses and property owners. These steps include: a contractor incentive program to encourage responsiveness, create a partnership between contractors and the community and promote cooperation, weekly emailed construction updates (sign-up to receive e-updates at: <http://tinyurl.com/29kjwm8>), public construction meetings for businesses and the public to get updates and a look ahead from project staff and utilities and a construction 24 hour hotline at **651-602-1404**. For current construction information you can also visit <http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/centralcorridor.asp>

Diversity Audit Complete. The Diversity Audit of the City's many boards and commissions that I initiated last year has been completed. While I wish we had had better participation (we got 194 of roughly 400 members of boards and commissions to complete the survey) it is good to have the results. The City has more than 50 advisory groups that it supports. The results seem to confirm that our boards and commissions need to be more diverse if they are to better reflect the diversity of our city. It will be interesting to see how this data compares to the forthcoming census data. You can see the survey results here: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/ncr/docs/2009boardsandcommissionsurvey.pdf>. Hopefully this audit will be a resource that we can use to help set goals, guide future outreach efforts and to measure ourselves against in the future.

Institutional Food License. I have introduced subject matter of an ordinance, written by Regulatory Services staff, that will create an "Institutional Food" license type. This license would apply to charter and private schools, food shelves that prepare food, shelters and employers with cafeterias. This license will be less expensive than the existing Food Manufacturer and Restaurant licenses. As proposed, it will not apply to community kitchens. I am interested to see if there is any way that we can use this new license type to support the goals of Homegrown Minneapolis, and will be asking the Homegrown Implementation Task Force to weigh in on the ordinance as written.

Internal Auditor Hired. The City's Audit Committee has voted to approve the appointment of Magdy Mossaad to the position of Internal Auditor. Before being appointed, Mr. Mossaad was the Senior Auditor for the Mayo Clinic. His responsibilities will include planning, directing and coordinating the internal audits for the City of Minneapolis and our independent boards and commissions. I continue to believe that the Board of Estimate and Taxation should help with the City's audit function, and I hope that Mr. Mossaad will work collaboratively with them.

Northern Lights Express. The Council has authorized \$48,000 to allow us to continue to participate in the planning process for the Northern Lights Express high-speed train between Minneapolis and Duluth.

Streetcars. The Council has voted to apply for funding from the federal Alternatives Analysis Program and/or TIGER II planning grants, to conduct an analysis of the initial streetcar line for Minneapolis on Nicollet and Central Avenues. I'm excited to see the City take such concrete steps towards beginning to rebuild our streetcar network.

Opportunity Centers. The Council has approved a multi-jurisdictional program for two opportunity centers to prevent homelessness. This is part of our Heading Home Hennepin program with the County, and it is especially necessary in these tough economic times.

Park Board Participation Survey. During the month of July the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is asking the public how you would prefer they engage you when they make changes in the parks. This is your chance to weigh in. They are holding meetings but would be just as happy to hear from you online. The survey is on our homepage at <http://www.minneapolisparcs.org> just click on the box in the lower left hand corner marked **2010 Public Participation Survey**. If you do take the survey please make sure to include your zip code.

Riverside Reconstruction. Public Works is planning to reconstruct Riverside Avenue starting in 2011 and continuing until 2012. They have presented their initial plans at a meeting with the Seward and West Bank neighborhoods. The plans include several positive changes: bike lanes from Franklin to 20th Ave S, bump outs in numerous locations, the capacity to make a left from eastbound Franklin onto Riverside. There are also some aspects of the plans that I am concerned about, including a gap in the bike facility from 20th Ave to Cedar and a reduction of on-street parking. There are also some locations in which midblock refuge islands would help people, especially people with disabilities, cross the street safely. I am interested in exploring a "cycle track" model of bike facility, which creates a protected bike lane between the parking lane and the sidewalk. I have heard that the business community has concerns about the two-year construction timeline, and I am raising these concerns with staff.

Riverside Reconstruction Public Meeting. Transit for Livable Communities, working with several local groups, has scheduled a public meeting to discuss the options for Riverside Avenue: **Monday, July 12th** 6:30-8:00pm at the African Development Center, 1931 South 5th Street. Outside non-motorized transportation experts Michael Moule and Michael Ronkin will report on their finding of the current design and possible ways to improve upon it. This is an opportunity to brainstorm about the proposed plan and discuss other techniques used nationally to find the best design to meet the needs of the community.

Riverside Plaza. On **July 13th** at 1:30pm, there will be a public hearing at the Council's Community Development Community regarding preliminary approval of up to \$80 million in tax-exempt multifamily housing entitlement revenue bonds for the Riverside Plaza stabilization and rehabilitation, a reimbursement agreement settling the City's indemnity and access obligations, and project financing restructuring. "Preliminary approval" is an administrative 12-month hold on \$80 million of housing revenue bonds. This approval does not obligate the City to provide the bonding authority to the developer, allowing the sale of the bonds. However, this approval is important for Sherman to demonstrate progress with his investors and it is important for the City to demonstrate progress with Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA). The actions on the 13th will go forward to the Council for possible approval on the 25th. "Final approval" would likely be considered in September. I am working with the West Bank Community Coalition and others to ensure that this project is the best it can be for the community.

Spalling Sidewalks in Seward. As many Seward residents know, some of the sidewalk panels that were installed by City contractors since 2005 have not worn well. A significant amount of work has been completed, and will continue, to replace panels that are still covered by warranty. Public Works has plans in place to address the work that is no longer covered under warranty. Public Works has conducted an inventory of sidewalk work complete since 2003 to determine the scope of the problem. They have identified approximately 1200 sidewalk panels that we believe merit replacement at no additional cost to the property owner (constructed in 2005 or 2006 and showing spalling on at least 10% of the panel). A letter is being sent to residents who have sidewalk panels that meet this criteria, notifying them of the planned work and that they will not be charged for the replacement. Public Works expects work to begin this summer and be completed in 2011.

RENEW Project. The City's Employment and Training Program, in participation with Ramsey County Workforce Solutions, was recently been awarded \$4 million in federal money for the Renewable Energy Network Empowering Workers (RENEW) Project. This project will focus on providing sustainable pathways out of poverty through job training and placement for 500 adults, while ensuring that area businesses have access to a well-trained workforce that is prepared to carry out the work of greening the local economy. For more information visit www.renew.org.

Purposeful Planting Ordinance. I have introduced the subject matter of an ordinance that will clarify that property owners may grow purposefully planted grasses, whether native or not, above eight inches in height. This is in response to a steady stream of incidents over the past five years in which City Inspections staff have cited people for "tall grass and weeds" when in reality the grass in question was a purposeful planting. My view is that the City should be encouraging property owners to plant these sorts of grasses, which help storm water flow into the ground rather than running off into our lakes and river. For too long, the City has been an obstacle to people doing the right thing, and I aim to change that.

ADA Celebration. Please join me on **Monday, July 26**, from 10am-2pm at the Nicollet Island Pavilion for a celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. On July 26, 1990, the ADA became law. It has expanded opportunities for Americans with disabilities, but we have yet to reach its full promise. Join us in celebrating progress under the ADA and rededicating ourselves to the fight for full ADA compliance.

Construction Coordination in Prospect Park. I am interested in setting up a meeting with the Prospect Park neighborhood and representatives of the City, the County, the Met Council and MnDOT, to present information to the community on all of the construction projects that we expect over the next few years. I look forward to working with the Prospect Park / East River Road Improvement Association to organize this.

Proposed Prospect Park Historic District. City Preservation and Design staff have recommended that the proposed Prospect Park local historic district **not** be put in place. They will present this recommendation to the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) on **Tuesday, July 13th**, at 4:30pm in Council Chambers. Residents of the proposed district should be receiving a mailed notice for this public hearing, and will be given a chance to address the commission if you so choose. The HPC will make a recommendation on the designation to the Zoning and Planning Committee (Z&P) of the City Council. The Z&P Committee will meet on July 29th at 9:30am, and will make a recommendation to the full City Council. I sit on Z&P, and have the opportunity to help shape what recommendation comes out of the committee. The Council will make the final decision on the designation on Friday, August 6. I have heard very clearly from Prospect Park residents that you do not want to move forward with this sort of local historic designation at this time, and would like to explore the idea of a Conservation District instead. I look forward to working on a Conservation District ordinance once this process is behind us and the U of M study that PPERIA is working on is complete.

Station 19/Buffalo Wild Wings. My office has heard from a Buffalo Wild Wings franchisee that they are interested in locating in Station 19. They will be asking for a full liquor license. My staff are prepared to work with the neighborhood and the applicant, if necessary, to craft a set of conditions that works for all parties.

West Bank Station Area Implementation Study. The City and Hennepin County have joined forces to hire a team of professionals to examine how the addition of light rail can stimulate new development near the station, and "stitch" together the two sides of Washington Avenue. This design team will build on the hard work of many community members and the plans and reports that have previously been completed. They have given an introductory presentation at a neighborhood open house, and are continuing to work on the study. I am hopeful that this effort will help us maximize the benefit of the Central Corridor to the West Bank area.

Bill Hinkley Resolution. I sponsored a resolution honoring the life of Bill Hinkley, an iconic West Bank musician and teacher, and was honored to present it at a celebration of his life on July 7th.

Ancient Oak Resolution. I sponsored a resolution honoring the oldest tree in Minneapolis, which died this spring. There will be an event to celebrate the tree on **Sunday, July 11**, at 6:30pm in Riverside Park, a block north of Franklin on Franklin Terrace.

Joe Baker Property. Hennepin County has decided to allow Joe Baker to repurchase the property he used to own at 1721-1733 Como Ave SE. However, the County seems to have heeded the concerns that

my office and SECIA raised in the hearings, and has placed a number of stringent conditions on the repurchase. I am grateful that the County has taken the community's input on this repurchase into account when crafting these conditions. I am hopeful that Mr. Baker will find a buyer who will build a business that will better serve the neighborhood. My office will be working with CPED to ensure that the City is prepared to exercise our right of first refusal, if necessary.

Become a Voice of the University District. Voices of the University District is a project to collect stories from the people who "live, work, learn, and play" in the University District (the neighborhoods of Marcy-Holmes, Prospect Park, Southeast Como, West Bank/Cedar-Riverside, and the Minneapolis campus of the University of Minnesota). This is an opportunity to voice your community pride: what you like about living here, why you choose to work here, how you play and learn here. If you have a story or thought you'd like to share, visit <http://udistrictvoices.com> and submit online, send it in an email to submit@udistrictvoices.com, or leave it in a voicemail at 612-259-8424. Be sure to let us know if we may identify your quote by name. For more information, visit <https://www.myu.umn.edu/public/VoicesoftheDistrict.pdf>.

Dania Hall Lot. CPED will begin installation of the fencing at 427 Cedar during the week of July 12th. They are hoping that surveillance cameras will be installed simultaneously so any acts of vandalism can be captured digitally. This fence is a temporary solution to secure the lot while the City considers the application by the Cedar Riverside People's Center to develop the parcel.

Alley Behind SECIA Office. My office is continuing to push Public Works staff to find a solution for the alley behind the SECIA office. I believe that this would be a great opportunity to try out some creative, innovative systems for sequestering stormwater onsite.

Openings on Boards and Commissions. There are openings on the Minneapolis Ethical Practices Board and the Public Health Advisory Committee (PHAC). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

In peace and cooperation,

Cam Gordon
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