
12TH WARD UPDATE

Council Member Sandy Colvin Roy

March 2003

**Sign up for the monthly Update by sending an e-mail with "Update" in the subject line to:
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State Cuts to Local Government Aid Mean Drastic Changes

Governor Pawlenty's budget proposal has a number of impacts on Minneapolis. The most disastrous are his cuts to Local Government Aid (LGA) which, along with property taxes, comprise the discretionary funds (General Fund) the city uses to pay for departments that have no way of creating revenue to support themselves. Examples include the Police Department, the Fire Department, Public Works, City Clerks Office, Elections, and Human Resources. Contrary to the Governor's public statement that his proposal would equal a 5% cut, his proposed cut to LGA means a 20% reduction in Mpls' general fund by 2004. Without Police, Fire, and Public Works, the departments eligible for budget cuts total 18% of the general fund budget. The practical effect of having three departments comprising so much of the general fund is they must be part of the budget solution. To give an extreme example, if Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments were not cut, all other general fund departments (except Licenses and Inspections – they receive fees to cover services) would have to be cut 107% by 2004. The difficulty for the city is we need to act now. As each week passes with money spent at current levels, the cuts get harder to make because we will have to cut more people. For example, Chief Forte has stated that as each week passes, he will have to cut an additional fire fighter to meet the state's cuts. So although we would like to wait for a final budget from the state, the city has no choice but to make the cuts for 2003 now and hope for a reduced LGA cut in future years.

Cuts to LRT

Along with the proposed cut to Local Government Aid, another fight we are taking to the capitol is the operational funding for Hiawatha LRT. In the Governor's budget, the State backs off their commitment to fully fund the operations of LRT. As the operating budget for LRT stands today, there is an \$8.22 million gap between the governor's proposal and the operating budget needed to run the line for 2004 and 2005. The Governor proposes local units of government "in the area benefiting from the LRT line" provide the gap funding.

This portion of the budget is very disturbing for multiple reasons and the city is making a strong case at the legislature:

1. A commitment was made to the federal government that Minnesota would provide operating funds if the Feds built the line.
2. This funding proposal is different than the established public policy of state funding for transit and roads.
3. Extending the logic that municipalities who benefit from State projects should help with funding has far-reaching consequences. State hospitals, highway projects, prisons, and MNSCU Universities should all receive operating funds from local sources if this policy were to be universally applied.

I have met with both the House and Senate Chairs of the Transportation Committees at the State Capitol to express the importance of the State's first LRT line to the region. The tremendous amount of time and money already invested should be respected with a good faith effort to operate the line.

First Snow Emergency of the Year Launches Minnstat Pilot Project

Joining students in eager anticipation of the first big snowstorm of the year were members of the Minnstat Pilot Project team. Unlike their younger counterparts, city staff were not hoping for a day off, but instead were waiting for the opportunity to test a new management system with the goal of improving the snow emergency experience for citizens.

Minnstat is a variation of New York's Comstat, our own CODEFOR, and Baltimore's CitiStat. All of these programs focus on detailed data gathering and regular information sharing to improve services. For Minnstat, the specific goals are to improve customer satisfaction, increase public understanding and cooperation, minimize the impact of operations on residents, and do a better job of plowing the streets during snow emergencies.

To reach these goals, specific performance measures were identified. Each of the 26 performance measures is tracked closely during a snow emergency, the data is collected, formatted, and reviewed at a reviewing session. Top managers from across the city listen to presentations by the departments involved in a snow emergency. The reviewing session goal is to find specific areas for improvement which then are translated to action steps. These actions steps are implemented and the results get reported back to the reviewing committee.

Despite having only one snow emergency this winter, there have already been positive results from the pilot project. The Police Department will drive down each block with their lights on as a warning before they start ticketing to give residents a chance to move their car. A new partnership with the county is providing a wealth of information on parking tickets. The ultimate goal is to build Minnstat into a citywide management tool to improve service and reduce cost to taxpayers.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

LONGFELLOW GARDENS OPEN HOUSE

Citizen Advisory committee members and Park Board experts will present their exciting plans for public review and comment. The plans include a new formal garden on the Hiawatha land bridge and less formal paths by the creek and lagoon planted with native species. This is your chance to see and comment on the plan before formal approval.

Nokomis Community Center
March 8th, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

LRT PARKING COMMUNITY MEETING

Ericsson School
March 19th, 7 p.m.

OPPIDAN CUB STORE PROPOSAL COMMUNITY MEETING

Hiawatha Park School, 4220 44th Avenue South
March 27th, 7 p.m.

MONTHLY NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS

SENA BOARD MEETING

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, 4000 28th Avenue S
March 10th, 7:00 p.m.

For more information, visit www.standish-ericsson.org

LCC BOARD MEETING

Longfellow Park, 3435 36th Avenue S
March 20th, 7:00 p.m.

For more information, visit www.longfellow.org

NENA BOARD MEETING

3000 East 50th Street
March 27th, 7:00 p.m.

For more information, visit www.nokomiseast.org

OPEN APPOINTMENTS

Deadline for application is March 14th.

Call City Clerk's Office (612-673-3358) for application

- Minneapolis Public Housing Authority
- Civilian Review Authority
- Charter Commission

For more information, visit

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/citywork/clerk/boards/open/index.asp>

Your Suggestions Please!

The "12th Ward Update" is a work in progress. Please let me know what topics interest you or how this publication can be more useful.

Snelling Motel

Over the course of the past few months, I have received some complaints about possible illegal activity at the Snelling Motel. I passed these complaints along to the community policing team in the area. The team has actively worked with the Third Precinct and Officer Ron Reier was able to update me on their success to date. Three arrests were made at the end of January for prostitution and narcotics with the police confiscating possible crack/cocaine and heroine. Anyone seeing suspicious activity should call 911 and the police will continue to investigate and make arrests.

Police Department Offers Citizens Academy

Have you ever wondered "Why do police officers do what they do?" If so, the Minneapolis Police Department offers a Citizens Academy where you can hear directly from our investigators, trainers, precinct commanders, and officers about police procedures.

This is an 11-week course that allows Minneapolis residents to see what types of training police officers receive. Learn what it takes to be a police officer and get some "hands on" experience, including participating in a 'simulations' exercise (much like splat ball). Topics include Use of Force, Investigations, K-9 Unit, 911 Operations, Emergency Response Unit among others.

There is no charge and the class will be limited to 15-25 participants. Participants will need to pass a criminal background check.

Feedback from past Academy participants has been very positive. Most residents that have participated say they have learned to appreciate police work and are more willing to assist MPD as necessary.

The next Citizens Academy will meet on Tuesday evenings, from 6 - 9 p.m., April 1 through June 11, 2003, with one Saturday class tentatively scheduled for May 4th.

Call 12th Ward Resident Pat Behrend at 673-2859 for an application.

2002 Crime Statistics

Thanks to the hard work by the men and women in the Police Department, Minneapolis saw its fifth successive year of reductions in reported crime, placing crime levels at their lowest point since 1966. Here are some highlights from the year end report:

- Biggest advance was in auto theft, a priority for the 12th Ward, which dropped 14% from last year.
- Robbery and rape saw citywide reductions of 7%.
- Burglaries increase by 450 over last year. Although burglary numbers are well below 1997 numbers, the department will focus on this crime this year.
- The 3rd Precinct led the five Precincts in having the highest reduction in crime at 4.37%.

Block Club Awards for National Night Out

The Minneapolis Police Department is looking for block clubs that make a big difference in their neighborhood. To celebrate the 20th Anniversary of National Night Out, 20 blocks will be selected for the 5th annual Building Blocks Awards. If you know of a block club that excels at getting neighbors involved, building connections between people, taking initiative to solve problems, improving the quality of life, or celebrating National Night Out, please nominate them by contacting the 12th Ward Office and we will get you an application form.