



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Seward Neighborhood 6-23-10

Cam's next Seward Office Hours:
Tuesday, July 27, 9:30-11:00am
Birchwood Café, 3311 E 25th St

Items:

- 1) Neighborhood Engagement Meeting
- 2) Riverside Ave Reconstruction
- 3) Commercial Recycling
- 4) NiceRide Now Open
- 5) StreetWerks Opportunity
- 6) True Thai
- 7) Grants to Seward
- 8) Hub of Heaven Garden
- 9) TOD Grants to Seward
- 10) Spalling Sidewalks
- 11) Permeable Paving
- 12) RENEW Project
- 13) Purposeful Planting Ordinance
- 14) Openings on City Boards and Commissions

- 1) Please join me, Marcea Mariani (8th District Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commissioner) and other community leaders, for a roundtable discussion **tomorrow, Thursday, June 24th 7-9pm** at Matthews Park, 2318 29th Ave S, about the state of neighborhood organizations in Minneapolis today. We will look at how changes in neighborhood funding will impact neighborhood work, explore strategies for influencing the development of new policies, and ways to improve and strengthen these critically important organizations through the new Neighborhood Relations Department and Engagement Commission (NCEC).
- 2) Public Works is planning to reconstruct Riverside Avenue starting in 2011 and continuing until 2012. Last night, they 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 parking on the east side of Riverside between Franklin and South 9th. 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 Seward business community has concerns about the two-year construction timeline, and I am raising these concerns with staff. I look forward to staying engaged on this extremely important project, and encourage SNG to do so as well.
- 3) I am working 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.

If you need this material in an alternative format please call Ahmed Muhumud at 612-673-2162 or email Ahmed.Muhumud@ci.minneapolis.mn.us

Deaf and hard-of-hearing persons may call 311 or 612-673-3000. TTY users may call 612-673-2157 or 612-673-2626.

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Hmong - Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2800;

Spanish - Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llama 612-673-2700;

Somali - Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' aan wac 612-673-3500.

- 4) The NiceRide bicycle sharing system is now up and running, with kiosks at several locations in and around Seward, including the Birchwood Café, Seward Coop, and the intersection of Franklin and 21st Ave. I'm excited to see this move forward, and I encourage Seward residents to take advantage of it. For more information, go to <http://www.niceridemn.org>.
- 5) 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 Seward community would like StreetWerks to perform on Franklin. Please communicate with my office about any regular (weekly or monthly) cleanup needs, as well as any special time-sensitive requests.
- 6) The City has approved \$22,000 in Great Streets grants to Seward Redesign to develop a tenant recruitment packet, recruit businesses, direct work with property owners along Franklin Ave. The purpose of the Great Streets program is to strengthen neighborhood businesses throughout the city. The Program supports a range of activities that help provide important goods and services for residents, and retain significant number of jobs located in neighborhood business districts.
- 7) The Met Council has decided to rescind the \$6,000 Sewer Access Charge they had been demanding from True Thai restaurant in Seward, for 20 outdoor seats that were in use for three months. This is a very big deal for this small business, and is the result of the diligent work of City staff, Seward Redesign, and my office.
- 8) The Community Planning and Economic Development staff's proposal to sell the Hub of Heaven garden to Seward Neighborhood Group has run into opposition from Council Members. I am working with staff and SNG to find an alternate solution that will preserve this great community garden for the long term.
- 9) The City has applied for several Transit Oriented Development grants from the Met Council for projects in Ward 2, including \$168,000 for pedestrian and street lighting near the Franklin Ave LRT Station.
- 10) As you 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.
- 11) I have introduced an amendment to the Zoning code that will allow residents to use more types of permeable paving for driveways and parking areas. Staff are beginning the process of bringing this through the City's approval processes, including meeting with our Environmental Advisory Committee and the Planning Commission. I look forward to communicating more specifics on this environmental initiative in the months ahead.
- 12) 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.
- 13) Last Friday, I gave notice of intent to introduce 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.
- 14) There are openings on the Latino Advisory Committee (open until filled), Public Health Advisory Committee (open until filled), Senior Citizens Advisory Committee (open until filled – priority given to applicants received by July 9th, 2010). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.