

## Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Southeast Como, 2-3-09

Cam's next Southeast Como Office Hours:  
Tuesday, February 10, 9:30-11:00am  
SECIA Office, 837 15th Ave SE

### Items:

- 1) February Roundtable
- 2) Joint Ward Meeting February 18<sup>th</sup>
- 3) More 2009 Budget Woes
- 4) Proposed Charter Amendments
- 5) Ranked Choice Voting – City Wins Lawsuit
- 6) University Master Plan
- 7) Commercial Property Inspection Process
- 8) Internal Affairs Audit
- 9) Unpaved Alley Report
- 10) New Parking Meters
- 11) Street Lighting Policy
- 12) Alliance Report
- 13) Alliance Homebuyer Incentive Program
- 14) Bike Sharing Open Houses
- 15) Openings on City Boards and Commissions

- 1) Please join me to discuss priorities and challenges for 2009 on **February 11, 6-8pm** at Matthews Recreation Center. In this time of economic uncertainty, how can we work better together to keep making progress towards our shared goals? Come discuss your hopes and concerns for our city.
- 2) Please join me, along with Council Members Hofstede and Ostrow, Second Precinct Inspector Robert Skomra, and representatives of the University for a **Joint Ward Meeting on February 18<sup>th</sup>**, 7-8:30pm, at Van Cleve Park. The meeting will discuss traffic, parking, tailgating and clean-up for game days at the new U Stadium.
- 3) Under the Governor's budget proposal, Minneapolis would be cut by **\$17 million** in 2009 and **\$35 million** in 2010. This represents a nearly **40%** permanent cut to Minneapolis. To put that cut in context, \$35 million is equal to Minneapolis' entire budget for all street and bridge maintenance and repairs, traffic operations, street lighting and maintenance of our malls and plazas. The Governor is also recommending reducing the renters' credit appropriation by **\$50 million** in the second year of the biennium. This would heap financial pain on the most vulnerable in our society, including a large number of Second Ward residents. Lastly, the budget proposes a \$650,000 reduction in the summer youth employment programs, which funds City and Park Board work. In a worsening jobs climate with dramatic increases in unemployment, this is exactly the wrong direction to go. These proposals reinforce the need to make significant changes to our budget in 2009.
- 4) I oppose the proposal by Council Members Ostrow, Remington and Samuels to scrap the independent Park Board, and plan to vote against putting it on the ballot this fall. I am also concerned about putting the proposal to eliminate the Board of Estimate and Taxation and the proposal to create a City Administrator, on the ballot. All three proposals would benefit from a larger community discussion.
- 5) The City, supported by FairVote Minnesota, has won the lawsuit regarding Ranked Choice Voting brought by the Minnesota Voters Alliance. Hennepin County Judge McGunnigle clearly and forcefully rejected all of the plaintiff's claims, including that Ranked Choice Voting is unconstitutional and that the City is preempted by State law. The Voters Alliance has appealed this decision. The Council Elections Committee will meet this Thursday to discuss the implications of the lawsuit for implementing Ranked Choice Voting this fall.
  - 6) The University will be holding two more open houses on their master plan: **Wednesday, Feb. 4**, 1:00 to 2:30 p.m., Room 33 McNeal Hall, on the St. Paul campus and **Thursday, Feb. 5**, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m., Van Cleve Park, 901 - 15th Avenue SE. Draft Campus Master Plan and the invitation to comment will be published and available on the Campus Master Plan website at [http://www.cppm.umn.edu/master\\_planning.html](http://www.cppm.umn.edu/master_planning.html). I hope you will be able to attend and/or comment on the plan, and would be very interested in reading and hearing your thoughts and reactions.

- 7) A majority of Council Members joined me in voting to send the proposed commercial property registration and inspection program back to staff for more work. I argued against moving this forward because I am not convinced that this is the right time to initiate this new program and think other approaches need to be studied. I was especially concerned that the funding plan placed an unfair and unwarranted burden on small businesses.
- 8) The external audit of the MPD Internal Affairs Unit is complete and offers several recommendations that might improve our complaint investigation process and better inform and educate the community. I succeeded in convincing my colleagues to require that the MPD come back to the Public Safety and Regulatory Services committee on a quarterly basis to report on their progress on implementing these recommendations.
- 9) Public works staff has prepared a report on how the City might address paving of remaining unpaved residential alleys. If the Council adopts the report and recommendations, a program will be introduced into the 5-year Capital Improvement Program, for construction starting in 2014. This would be the first year of a 10 year program under which the City would pave about eight alleys per year. Staff is also recommending that the City explore vacating some alleys, which will require shared use agreements between users to ensure continued access. The alleys in Southeast Como covered by this report include: East of 21<sup>st</sup>, near Talmadge Ave (possible vacation); East of 22<sup>nd</sup>, between Talmadge and Como; South of Como, between 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> (the western portion could be vacated); South of Rollins, east of 15<sup>th</sup>; South of Winter between 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>; East of 25<sup>th</sup>, south of Cole; North of Elm, between 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> (could be vacated).

The current stance of staff and the Transportation and Public Works committee is that all unpaved alleys should be paved at some point, and that the process should follow historical practices, such as assessing 100% of the cost for new alley construction to the benefiting property owners. In addition, staff is recommending that the City should establish a uniform rate for "normal" alley construction. If costs are incurred due to difficult conditions, any costs above the established uniform rate will be funded by the City. The City will assume the paving costs that would be borne by any non-assessable property. Costs for any retaining walls that are needed to pave an alley would be an additional assessment to those benefiting property owners, but this assessment will be limited to 25% of the uniform rate. Any Alley storm drains that are needed should continue to be funded by the City through the miscellaneous storm drain fund.

- 10) In December, the City started a six-month-long test of several new types of parking meters. Our current parking meters will need to be replaced in the next few years, and this will help us determine what kinds of meters we want. I am very interested making sure new meters accept credit cards. Six different types of meters are being tested on six separate blocks around the city. There are test areas in Stadium Village, Dinkytown, Old St. Anthony, Elliot Park and downtown. Staff will evaluate the performance of the meters and you can help by sharing your feedback with [tim.drew@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:tim.drew@ci.minneapolis.mn.us) and filling out a short survey at [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/parking](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/parking).
- 11) After years of effort, the Council voted to finalize our new street lighting policy. With the adoption of clear policies, the moratorium on new pedestrian scale lighting will end. The new rules clarify how residents, with City staff assistance, may petition for pedestrian lights. Working with Council Member Glidden and others, we were also able to amend the new policy to state that all new streetlights will be full-cutoff, unless the Council approves a variance. This will reduce glare, light pollution and energy usage. The policy also calls for use of Light Emitting Diodes when possible, a much more energy efficient lighting technology, which will both reduce the carbon emissions of city operations and save the City a significant amount of money. Street lighting represents roughly 40% of the City's electric bill.
- 12) The University District Partnership Alliance is working on our report back to the Legislature in February. This report will go before the Council's Intergovernmental Relations committee on February 3. Also, throughout January and February neighbors in the University District area will be reviewing a draft report of the Alliance's Zoning Planning and Regulatory Review Committee. This will form the basis for any changes we make in conjunction with the demolition and development moratorium put in place last August. All comments are welcome. For more see [http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/University\\_District\\_ZPRR\\_public.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/University_District_ZPRR_public.asp)
- 13) We launched the University District – Home Buyer Incentive Program this month. The program provides down payment or closing cost assistance through \$10,000 two-percent interest loans that requires no monthly payment and are forgivable over five years. For more information contact the Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation Housing Resource Center, at 612-378-7985.
- 14) I'm excited about a new bike sharing system that I hope will be installed over the next year or so, using Non-motorized Transportation Project funding. You can learn more at one of three public meetings cosponsored by the City and the Nordic Ski Foundation (our consultants on the system): **Tuesday February 10**, 7pm Coffman Memorial Union, The Whole Music Club (basement level); **Thursday February 12**, 5:30pm Central Library, Pohlad Hall, 300 Nicollet Mall.
- 15) There are openings on the Latino Advisory Committee (Closes 2/27) and Minneapolis Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners (closes 2/13). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).