

Second Ward December 2013 E-newsletter

News from Cam Gordon

Council Member, Second Ward

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/council/ward2>

2014 Budget Passes Unanimously. Next year's budget passed with little controversy in December. I was glad to support amendments that restored funding for the City's Employment, Training and Great Streets Programs (\$2.5 million); as well as those that increased funding for the Health Department's Business assistance program to help businesses meet health standards (\$139,000), for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (\$1.5 million), for body cameras for police (\$400,000), for streetcar line planning (\$2.75 million) and for new equipment for the Minneapolis Television Network (\$25,000). The most significant thing about the 2014 budget is that it decreases the total amount of property taxes (the tax levy) the city collects for the first time in 30 years. In 2014, in part because of this, it is expected that 67 percent of Minneapolis taxpayers will see a decrease in their property taxes. This decrease in property taxes, coupled with a 6% increase in overall spending, was possible primarily because the State Legislature restored some of the cuts to local government, providing Minneapolis with \$12 million more in Local Government Aid and because the City Council created a Property Tax Relief Fund with money that the City saved in 2012. The 2014 budget basically maintains the level of staffing and city services we had in 2013 while hiring new classes of cadets in the Police and Fire departments in anticipation of expected retirements and providing \$121 million to fund improved public infrastructure, road, transit, bike and pedestrian improvements and maintenance. In Ward 2 significant projects approved include, among other things, the rehabilitation of the 10th Avenue Bridge, a new roadway connection from the West bank to downtown, improvements for Bridge 9, a new connection from the Dinkytown Greenway to the northeast corner of 15th Ave SE and 4th St SE, and lighting the Hiawatha LRT Trail.

New Ward Office Hours. The boundaries of the Second Ward have changed due to redistricting, and that change takes effect on January first. I am also expecting to serve on at least one different committee starting in 2014 that meets Tuesday mornings. For these reasons, I will be changing some office hours locations, and possibly also the day and time. I currently hold ward office hours on Tuesday mornings, from 9:30-11am, at the Hard Times Café (West Bank/University), Muddsuckers Coffee (SE Como), Pratt School (Prospect Park) and the Birchwood Café (Seward/Longfellow). Due to most of the West Bank having been moved into the new Ward 6 and a large piece of Longfellow being added to Ward 2, I will no longer be holding office hours on the West Bank, and will be looking for a space in Longfellow. If you have any suggestions for dates, times or locations that you think would work well for Second Ward office hours, please email them to my Policy Aide, Robin Garwood, at robin.garwood@minneapolismn.gov. Because the new locations and times are not yet set, I will not be holding my usual office hours in January, and will start the new system in February.

Park Board Urban Agriculture Plan. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is working on an Urban Agriculture Activity Plan. You can see the plan, take an online survey and more here: <http://www.minneapolisparcs.org/default.asp?PageID=1399>. Surveys must be finished by December 31st to be considered. You can also make comments directly to Ginger Cannon by mail to 2117 West River Road, Minneapolis MN 55414, or by email to feedback@minneapolisparcs.org. I commend the Park Board and their staff for working on this plan. The City's Urban Ag plan has had tremendous positive effects, and I think that the Park Board's plan will have a similar effect. The Plan as written makes some great recommendations, from exploring greater roles for community gardens and fruit trees in our parks to expanding composting in the whole part system. It is extremely important for everyone who wants to see more urban agriculture activities in our parks to get engaged in this process. The Minneapolis Food Council will be sharing comments that strongly support the plan, while suggesting ways it could go even further.

STEP-UP 2014 Youth Application now available. The [STEP-UP Application](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/cped/metp/STEP-UPIntern) for youth is now available here: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/cped/metp/STEP-UPIntern>. The City of Minneapolis STEP-UP program trains and matches Minneapolis youth ages 14-21 in summer internships at local businesses. STEP-UP is focused on serving youth from low-income families or youth that have risk factors making it challenging to find employment on their

own. Internships are generally 20-40 hours per week for 6-10 weeks from mid-June to August. Depending on the age and skill level of the intern, interns may work in subsidized jobs at a non-profit organizations or employer paid positions in the business community. All youth must apply online. If a youth requires assistance completing an application, please contact Tammy Dickinson at 612-673-5041. The deadline to apply is **February 21, 2014**. All applicants must live in Minneapolis, be 14-21 years old by June 1, 2014, not be currently enrolled in college (PSEO is ok), be eligible to work in the US by June 1, 2014 and have proper documentation. In addition, applicants' families must meet guideline incomes: \$45,500 for 1 person, \$52,000 for 2 persons, \$58,500 for 3 persons, \$65,000 for four persons, \$70,200 for 5 persons, \$75,400 for 6 persons, \$80,600 for 7 persons or \$85,800 for 8 persons.

Air Quality Monitoring. The Council has authorized a two-year, \$143,500 contract with Pace Analytical Services for an exciting new initiative led by the Health Department to monitor air quality in Minneapolis neighborhoods. I look forward to seeing the results of these tests.

Snow shoveling. Please help keep sidewalks clear of snow and ice. Because they are so critical to our transportation system, city ordinance requires that property owners clear sidewalks after a snowfall within 24 hours for houses and duplexes and four daytime hours for apartment and commercial buildings. Clean sidewalks greatly help your neighbors who are walking, pushing strollers and using wheelchairs. If you use salt or other chemical de-icers, the city recommends that you use as little as possible because when they dissolve, they release harmful chlorides that may get into the nearby lakes, rivers or streams. Garbage and recycling collection crews are also out working in snow. A clear three feet wide path from your garbage and recycling containers to the alley or street is greatly appreciated. To help some people unable to shovel their walks the City is working with the Neighborhood Involvement Program to find volunteers or volunteer to help with shoveling for at least one client for one month. It's a great way make a difference in your community. Visit the Neighborhood Involvement Program website for more information and contact Jeanne Rasumssen at srvolunteer@neighborhoodinvolve.org or 612-746-8549 to sign up

Star Tribune Building. I was the sole vote on the Council against allowing the demolition of the Star Tribune building, in keeping with the decision of the Heritage Preservation Commission. The HPC believe the building should be studied for its historic significance. There is much more information here, under item number eight: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/meetings/hpc/WCMS1P-116859>.

Downtown East Development. I voted in favor of the downtown east development that includes a new park, thousands of square feet of new office buildings, and a parking ramp. I view this as a very different project than the Vikings Stadium deal, because the City's contribution is bonding for the parking ramp, which will be repaid by expected parking revenue. I continue to have questions about the ownership, programming and maintenance of the new park, and have been clear that I want to see this space be available for active use by all types of people, including people on the West Bank who need access to more parkland.

Healthy Bees, Healthy Lives. A new group has formed around protecting bees and other pollinators in Minneapolis. Bees pollinate about a third of the food we eat, and they are severely threatened. Colonies are collapsing at an accelerating rate around the country, and pesticides seem to be one of the major causes. This affects Minneapolis: this last fall, several Minneapolis hives were killed by what was likely a legal application of pesticide. Unfortunately, the State has preempted all local regulation of pesticides, meaning that Minneapolis can do nothing about this problem. To address these problems, the Healthy Bees, Healthy Lives initiative will launch with a kickoff event on the evening of **January 16, 2014**, location to be determined. Their goals are to push the State Legislature to devolve some decision-making authority to local units of government for non-agricultural uses of pesticides, open up the information the State already receives about pesticide applications to the public, and educate residents about the dangers of pesticides and the benefits of bee-friendly plantings. I encourage everyone who cares about pollinators and the health of our urban environment to attend.

2014 Legislative Agenda. The Council has adopted our Legislative Agenda for 2014. Several items were removed from older agendas, almost all because they had been accomplished. A good example is the City's support for marriage equality in Minnesota. We also added several new items. Among the most exciting new things we

support: raising the State minimum wage, workforce goals for state franchise agreement holders to create increased employment opportunities for women and people of color, and lowering the amount of lead in a child's bloodstream that would trigger an intervention by the City. The Legislative Agenda continues to support things I care about deeply, including giving local governments more flexibility to address climate change by working directly with energy utilities.

Park Dedication Fee. In December the City Council and the Park and Recreation Board both approved a new Parkland Dedication Ordinance that applies a contribution of land or a fee to new development as a tool in creating and improving parks in the City. The ordinance, which goes into effect on January 1, 2014, The ordinance requires that new residential and commercial development projects in the City of Minneapolis dedicate a reasonable amount of land for park creation, or pay a fee to the Park Board for future land acquisition or park development within one-half mile of the development project. Funds generated through the Parkland Dedication Ordinance will be spent on the development of new parks, playgrounds, recreational facilities, wetlands, trails, and open space areas within the nexus of where the development occurs (.5 miles). Funds may also be used to upgrade existing neighborhood and community parkland, trails, equipment, etc. Funds may not be used for programming or maintenance activities. More detailed information on the Parkland Dedication Ordinance can be found on the City of Minneapolis website at

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@regservices/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-118221.pdf>

Chief Harteau Advisory Council. A Citizens Advisory Council formed by the Police Chief has identified key areas for the Police to focus on in order to improve community relations. The Chief's includes police officers personnel and community members. 2014 action items organized by sub-committee include: Bill Ziegler, co-chair of Community Engagement and Outreach will focus informing the community on the processes, procedures and policies of the department; Arnetta Phillips, co-chair of Hiring and Recruitment will help refresh the recruitment process and add a community member to the interview process for new hires; Shane Zahn, co-chair of Training, will help new recruits and current patrol officers receive 4 hours of customer service training that focuses on listening, de-escalation and building trust; Harry Davis, co-chair of Accountability will focus on creating dialog and by scheduling quarterly meetings with police supervisors to visit neighborhood churches of all denominations throughout the city. The Chief's Citizens Advisory Council will continue to meet in 2014 to discuss the current action items and identify other areas of focus as needed. For more information visit

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/police/council/index.htm>

Franklin Bridge Rehab. Hennepin County has applied for a Certificate of Appropriateness to allow rehabilitation work to take place to the Cappelen Memorial Bridge (Franklin Avenue Bridge). The city's Heritage Preservation Commission will meet on **Tuesday, January 7, 2013, at 4:30 p.m.**, in Room 317 City Hall, 350 South 5th St. to consider the application. Planning Department staff will issue a recommendation to the Heritage Preservation Commission and people are invited to attend and speak if they like. Please visit

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/hpc/index.htm> for the agenda with the staff report.

Regulatory Services Reorganization. The Council has amended tens of licensing ordinances to reflect the reorganization that placed the Licensing Department within the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development.

Nicollet-Central streetcar project moves forward. The City Council voted unanimously to invest \$4 million for the completion of planning and engineering work for a line through downtown Minneapolis along Nicollet and Central avenues. This work includes completing environmental review, refining stop locations, and finding a site for a streetcar operations and maintenance facility. The Nicollet-Central line will cost approximately \$200 million, and the City has already secured roughly a third of the funds needed. The City is now preparing to compete for Federal construction dollars. The \$4 million investment will help refine the current streetcar plans to increase the likelihood of receiving this needed federal funding. For more information on the Nicollet-Central project, go to www.minneapolismn.gov/nicollet-central.

Road Work in 2013. In 2013 city crews improved the driving surfaces roughly 52 miles of streets and parkways: 1.87 miles of streets reconstructed, 28.83 miles of streets and parkways resurfaced, 22 miles of roadways and alleys seal coated. The City of Minneapolis investment in street surface improvements in 2013 was around \$33.5 million, surpassing the previous year's investment by more than 42 percent. The City's overall 2013 transportation investment totals \$52 million and in addition to street paving includes traffic improvements, bridge work, and pedestrian and bicycle projects. There were five street reconstruction projects in 2013 and a new section of Van White Memorial Boulevard was constructed, which now provides a new connection between the City's North Side and the South Side. In addition, nearly 29 miles of streets and parkways were resurfaced and another 22 miles were seal coated. Highlights of second ward work: street resurfacing in the Cooper neighborhood and the North Dorman area of the Seward neighborhood and restoration work the Dinkytown Greenway Bridge (Bridge 9) over the Mississippi River. The old rail bridge is now part of the Dinkytown Greenway, which connects downtown Minneapolis to the U of M East Bank campus and the U of M Transitway. For more information about Minneapolis' 2013 construction projects visit www.minneapolismn.gov/public-works.

Nicollet Mall Survey. The City is updating and re-envisioning Downtown's Nicollet Mall prior being redesigned and reconstructed in 2015 and 16. To help in this project, please consider taking a brief survey about how you use Nicollet Mall and how you'd like to see it improved. The survey can be found on the project webpage: www.nicolletmallproject.com.

Better Building Initiative. The City and Xcel Energy have been selected to join the U.S. Department of Energy Better Buildings Energy Data Accelerator initiative. The initiative is part of President Obama's Climate Action Plan to engage leaders in state and local governments, utilities and industry to demonstrate innovative policies and programs that will transform the energy efficiency market and cut building energy waste. We are one of 19 city-utility pairs across the U.S. that have committed to developing tools to help building owners understand their energy use to save energy and money. The U.S. Department of Energy will support Better Buildings Energy Data Accelerator partners with training, technical assistance, tools and resources. For more information about Better Buildings Energy Data Accelerator, go to www.eere.energy.gov/buildings/betterbuildings/accelerators/. You can also find out about the City's Climate Action Plan at www.minneapolismn.gov/sustainability/climate/.

Business Technical Assistance Program Award 2014 Grants. Eleven non-profit service providers have been awarded city contracts to work with business owners and entrepreneurs as part of our city's small business assistance program next year. Second Ward service providers include the African Development Center, Seward Redesign and the Lake Street Council. For a complete list of service providers and the services they have, go to www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/business/B-TAP. The services are provided at no or low cost to businesses looking to start or expand in Minneapolis. Several of the providers selected specialize in serving ethnic and minority populations and offer in-language business consultations. City staff may also provide guidance on which organization to contact for services. For more information contact City of Minneapolis Business Development staff member Daniel Bonilla at 612.763.5253 or daniel.bonilla@minneapolismn.gov.

Southwest Light-Rail Kenilworth Corridor Meetings. The Metropolitan Council will host two community meetings focused on studies that are currently underway in the Kenilworth area of Minneapolis, where the proposed Southwest Light-Rail Transit Project would extend LRT from downtown Minneapolis to St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka, and Eden Prairie. The first will be on Tuesday, Jan 7, 5 – 7:30 p.m. at Kenwood Community Center 2101 Franklin Ave. W. and the second will be Thursday, Jan. 9, 5 – 7:30 p.m. St. Louis Park Recreation Center 3700 Monterey Drive. The studies are to focus on the location of freight rail service in the Kenilworth Corridor, impacts of LRT construction on Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles and landscaping in the area. These meetings will provide opportunities to learn about these studies, talk to project staff and discuss the study scopes with invited elected officials. More information about the Southwest LRT is available at www.swlрт.org.

Conservation District Ordinance Update. A draft of the new conservation district ordinance I have been working on with staff and a work group of community advisors is ready to draft to be brought forward for public review. A public meeting, prior to it coming forward for a formal public hearing has tentatively been set for Tuesday, January 28, from 4:30- 6:30 pm in City Hall room 319.

Name Proposed for New West Bank Crossing. The Minnesota Department of Transportation has decided to close I-94 entrance ramp that currently exits onto 5th Street in downtown and construct a new exit onto 7th. As part of the process the ramp will become city property, and the 2014 budget includes money to repurpose that ramp into a much smaller road and significant pedestrian connection from the West Bank, near the Cedar Riverside Hiawatha LRT station, into downtown near the football stadium. The Mayor is proposing that we name this new link between Downtown and the West Bank "**Samatar Crossing**" in honor of Hussein Samatar, who came to the West Bank from Somalia speaking no English, became a successful banker, helped many small businesses through his African Development Center, and served on the Library Board and School Board before dying earlier this year. I am supportive of this idea and also of fully utilizing the additional land on the ramp. One potential use for excess land includes a skateboard park. The advisory committee working on the public realm around the stadium is expected to take this up as part of their considerations.

Franklin/Minnehaha/Cedar Intersection. Hennepin County plans to repave the segment of Franklin Avenue between 16th Ave S and 21st Ave S next year. I see this as a key opportunity to make progress on cleaning up the "No Man's Land" intersection of Cedar, Minnehaha, Franklin and 20th Ave S. Specifically, I will be pushing for the closure of the short section of Minnehaha between Franklin and Cedar. This is called for in the Seward Neighborhood's plan for the area, which the City has formally adopted. From what my office has heard, Hennepin County is willing to entertain this idea. I will be working with the City's Community Planning and Economic Development staff (specifically the Transit Oriented Development Coordinator), Public Works staff, and the Sixth Ward Council Member-elect Abdi Warsame to move this idea forward.

Parking Lot Near ADC. The City is moving forward with a proposal to lease the city-owned surface parking lot at 1927-29th 5th St. to the African Development Center to maintain and operate an accessory parking lot for its headquarters. If finally approved by the Council in early December it will be good for 3 years.

Seward Towers. I do not support the idea of refinancing the Seward Towers in such a way that the Seward Neighborhood Group, Seward Redesign, and the residents of the Seward Towers themselves lose decision-making authority over the management of the buildings. I commend SNG, Redesign and those Towers residents who serve on the Seward Towers board for making clear that this is an unacceptable outcome, and for being willing to work with the other partners in managing the buildings on a better alternative that will allow necessary capital improvements to be made without destroying this community-friendly ownership structure that has worked so well for so long. I pledge to do everything I can – even after these buildings both move into the Sixth Ward next year – to get the City to help. The City has already taken a first step to help with this by recasting the City's loans from the original rate of 5.47% to 1%, retroactively to 4/23/2003. This saves the buildings approximately \$1.3 million in accrued interest.

Hauenstein Burmeister Building. The Hauenstein Burmeister buildings at 2629 30th Ave S and 2608 30th Ave S have been demolished. The information I have received from City staff is that the owner of the property, Kraus Anderson, was unable to find an industrial tenant for the building and decided to raze it before winter. The parcel is zoned industrial, with the Industrial Living Overlay District which would allow housing to be built on this site without a rezoning. I will encourage the owner and any prospective developers to meet with the Seward Neighborhood Group before finalizing plans for the reuse of this property.

TCE in Southeast Como Update. So far, over a hundred parcels in the TCE contamination area have granted access to the General Mills contractor to test their properties. 97 properties have been sampled, and 84 of the results are available. Of these, 51 have been over 20 micrograms per cubic meter (the level that triggers mitigation, paid for by General Mills), 17 have been between 2 and 20 µg/m³ (the level that triggers a resample) and 16 have been below 2 µg/m³. You can see updates here: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/waste/waste-and-cleanup/cleanup/superfund/investigation-into-tce-soil-vapor-in-the-como-neighborhood-of-minneapolis.html>. I am working to schedule a neighborhood meeting to give residents a venue to discuss the problem and potential responses.

Chef Shack Ranch. Chef Shack Ranch, the brick-and-mortar version of the popular Chef Shack mobile food truck located at the intersection of Franklin and 31st Ave S, has received a permit for a Class E beer/wine license. I wish them luck in this new endeavor.

Apply to Serve on a Board or Commission. There are openings on the Board of Appeal and Equalization, Ethical Practices Board and Minneapolis Telecommunications Network. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@minneapolismn.gov.

Happy New to you all. I hope you have a happy, healthy and prosperous 2014.

Cam Gordon

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