

News from Cam Gordon
Council Member, Second Ward
July 2007

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

Youth Violence Steering Committee public forums. The Youth Violence Prevention Steering Committee I helped form will present a first draft of our strategic plan for preventing youth violence, at two public forums: **Thursday, July 12th, 7-9 pm, YWCA, 2121 E Lake St;** and **Monday, July 16th 7-9 pm, North High School, 1500 James Ave N.** Your participation is encouraged.

Outreach Interns. I'm pleased to announce that my office has hired four talented young people to serve as Community Outreach Interns this summer and into the fall, leading efforts in the following neighborhoods: Annie Welch (Seward and Cooper), Mustafa Adam (Cedar Riverside), Paul Kristapovich (Prospect Park), and Adam Engleman (Southeast Como). They will work with neighborhood associations and police department crime prevention specialists to help organize block clubs, National Night Out events, "Welcome to the Neighborhood" events for new student renters, walking groups and work on problem areas as needed.

National Night Out. This year, one process makes it possible to register your NNO event and apply to close your street. To do one or both visit www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/nno or if you don't have Internet call 311 or 612-673-3000. If you register by July 24, you'll be eligible for a door prize drawing. Remember it's not essential to close your street to have a successful NNO event. Many groups meet in yards, parks, vacant lots, or inside. If you apply to close your street by July 24, street closure will be free. Between July 25 and August 2, street closure costs \$100. Applications for street closure will not be accepted after August 2.

Downtown Transportation Action Plan. The Council has passed a 10-year Transportation Action Plan for Downtown. It includes plans for increasing transit capacity on Marquette and 2nd, turning a number of one-way streets into two-way streets (including Hennepin and First Avenues), as well as various bicycle and pedestrian improvements. I moved an amendment that passed unanimously, requiring staff to explore what I am calling the "Copenhagen Model" in downtown – including curbed bike lanes between sidewalks and parking lanes and bicycle signalization. This final Plan, along with a summary of public comments received, is posted at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/public-works/trans-plan/> under the project documents section.

Bicycle Infrastructure. I'm extremely pleased by the many bicycle infrastructure projects in the Second Ward that will be funded by the recently-announced Non-motorized Transportation Grants. The City will add bike lanes on E Franklin Ave from Riverside across the bridge, along the whole length of Riverside from Franklin to the Cedar Riverside LRT Station, Minnehaha from 31st to Franklin, 20th Ave S from Minnehaha to Riverside, 19th Ave S from Riverside across the bridge to 10th Ave SE, the University bike trench, SE Como from 10th Ave SE to St. Paul, and 27th Ave SE from E River Parkway to University. I'd like to acknowledge the good work of City staff members Don Pflaum and Shaun Murphy for their work on these grants, and my Aide Robin Garwood for editing drafts of the projects in the Second Ward. I think that this represents a significant shift in how we think about transit in Minneapolis and throughout the country and shows that people really are making connections about how important it is to focus on, and invest in, making walking and biking more appealing and possible ways to get around in Minneapolis. I want this to be a beginning and plan to keep pushing to improve our system of bike and pedestrian transit in the City and the region. If we consider what has been done in some areas of the world we still have a long way to go before we have the kind of bicycling-friendly walkable City so many of us hope for. For more thoughts on these projects, and a map of all funded projects citywide, please see my blog.

We're Number Two! According to U.S. Census Bureau statistics released this month on the 50 cities with the most workers, Minneapolis has the second highest percentage of people who **bike to work**. The bureau said 2.4 percent of Minneapolis' 189,294 workers (16 and older) pedal to their jobs, which is second only to Portland, OR, and several times higher than the national average of 0.4 percent. It is my hope that the infrastructure projects above can help us move towards our goal of doubling bicycle commuting mode share in Minneapolis. We still have a long way to go, however. I believe we need to implement creative ideas like the ones employed by Copenhagen, whose bicycle mode share is a stunning thirty-plus percent, and build a reliable, high-quality bike grid in the whole metro area.

Community Engagement Task Force. The Minneapolis Community Engagement Task Force has been named, and began meeting weekly in June. I have been chosen as one of the Council's representatives on the Task Force. Second Ward residents Diann Anders (Seward) and Mohammed Ali (West Bank) have also been named as participants. The charge of the group is to help the Council define the following: How the numerous neighborhood, community, cultural and business organizations in Minneapolis should participate in local government decision-making; What expectations these organizations and the City should have of one another; What role the City should ask these organizations to play in City decision-making; How the City can broaden and enhance community participation in decision making.

Panhandling Ordinance. I opposed the Remington/Ostrow amendments that expand aggressive solicitation. While I do agree that aggressive solicitation is a problem I am convinced that expanding the ordinance will do nothing to improve the situation and is not an effective use of our resources. Intimidating, harmful behavior need not be tolerated and it is appropriate for the City to prohibit it through ordinance but the disruptive behaviors that were used as reasons for this new ordinance are already against the law. Better enforcement is more appropriate. Additionally, I think that we need to target our criminal justice resources to investigate and convict serious criminals and utilize other researched and proven avenues to find longer term solutions for issues related to poverty, homelessness, chemical dependency and mental illness. For a more thorough position on this issue, please see my blog.

Wind Energy Conversion Systems. My proposed zoning code amendments that broaden and expand the allowable and conditional uses of wind turbines in the City passed the Council unanimously June 29. This is a small step towards increasing renewable energy in our city.

Infill Housing Ordinance. Betsy Hodges' Infill Housing ordinance, establishing the first-ever limits on the size of single-family homes and duplexes in Minneapolis, has passed the Council unanimously. I fully supported this ordinance throughout the process, at the Planning Commission, Zoning and Planning Committee, and full Council. It is important that we protect neighborhoods from monster homes that are out of keeping with their overall character. I believe that this ordinance will also help Southeast neighborhoods protect themselves from de-facto "dorms." Lastly, the smaller the house, the smaller the carbon emission footprint – this ordinance will help us meet some of our aggressive carbon reduction goals.

Climate Change Innovation Funds. The City of Minneapolis is taking applications for grants to help people in Minneapolis take steps to reduce global warming. The City has issued an RFP for Climate Change Innovations Funds, focused on meaningful, measurable climate change actions. Eligible applicants may request up to \$10,000. Applications are due July 10, 2007. To learn more about the grants, to get an application, and to see project ideas, visit the City's sustainability Web site at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/. I encourage neighborhoods and organizations in the Second Ward to apply for these grants.

Central Corridor Public Meetings. The Metropolitan Council is holding a series of public meetings related to the Central Corridor LRT project to let the public know that they are starting Preliminary Engineering: June 27, 6:30-8:30 PM at the Central Corridor Resource Center 1080 Lexington Avenue, St. Paul; June 28, 6:00-8:00 PM at the Camphor Memorial United Methodist

Church 585 Fuller Avenue, St. Paul; July 8, 2:00-4:00 PM at the Center for Hmong Arts and Talent, 995 University Avenue, Suite 220, St. Paul; July 17, 6:00-8:00 PM at the South St. Anthony Park Rec. Center 890 Cromwell Avenue, St. Paul. For more information see <http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/CCcalendar>.

New CPED Director. Mayor Rybak has appointed Mike Christenson to take Lee Sheehy's place as head of the Community Planning and Economic Development department. Mike has served as Director of Economic Development since 2003. I support this appointment, and I expect it to move through the Council easily.

29th Ave SE Pedestrian Oriented District. The 29th Ave SE Pedestrian Overlay District rezoning study has been adopted by the Council. I believe that this overlay will help the neighborhood and the City better guide development along the University corridor, taking advantage of the Central Corridor LRT line to produce a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

U of M Stadium Street Realignment. The Council has authorized execution of the required documents to convey new street easements for Oak St SE and Huron Blvd SE to allow roadway realignments as required as part of the U of M Stadium project, and vacated portions of Oak St SE, 4th St SE and Huron Blvd SE.

Bedlam Theater. Bedlam is in the process of applying for a variance of the zoning code's "Enclosed Building" requirement, in order to add outdoor theater as an accessory use to their indoor theater. My office is helping them navigate the City process.

Morningstar Coffee. Morningstar has committed to install an afterburner on July 16, to mitigate their offensive odors.

Sale of City-Owned Parking Ramps. There will be a public hearing on the proposed sale of nine City-owned parking ramps, including the Seven Corners ramp, at the next Transportation and Public Works committee meeting, July 10, 9:30 AM in the Council Chambers, room 317 of City Hall. For more information, please go here: http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2007-meetings/20070629/Docs/08_Parking_Ramp_Set_PH.pdf

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

Yours, in peace and cooperation,

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