



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

Cam Gordon

City Council Member
Second Ward

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If you want help translating this call – Hmong– Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2188;

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Southeast Como, 10-6-09

Cam's next Southeast Como Office Hours:
Tuesday, October 13th, 9:30-11:00am
SECIA Office, 837 15th Ave SE

Items:

- 1) Behavior Issues in SE
- 2) Game Day Enforcement Efforts
- 3) 901-903 Weeks
- 4) 600 Main
- 5) Public Health Advisory Committee
- 6) Parking Near U Stadium
- 7) Bike Sharing
- 8) Pedestrian Master Plan
- 9) University Sues Central Corridor
- 10) Recovery Act Funding
- 11) Hydrothermal Project
- 12) Ranked Choice Voting
- 13) Expansion of Premises Ordinance Passes
- 14) Sustainability Indicators
- 15) Openings on City Boards and Commissions

- 1) I have heard reports of increasing problems on weekends with unruly parties in Southeast Como, and I'm working with MPD and other City staff to explore more effective ways to address this behavior.
- 2) The City has crafted an agreement with the U of M, under which they are allocating \$60,000 for enhanced enforcement by Minneapolis police, primarily in the neighborhoods around the University campus on game days. I welcome this collaboration between the City and the U, and hope to see it continue.
- 3) The Planning Commission has, in keeping with the staff recommendation and the strongly stated preference of the near neighbors, denied the variance and expansion of nonconforming use applications that would have allowed new basement bedrooms at 901-903 Weeks Ave SE.
- 4) I voted to uphold the staff report and the decision of the Planning Commission and deny the appeal for a 79-unit building at 600 Main Street SE. Staff and Council Member Hofstede worked hard to craft a compromise that would have allowed the developer to build a structure of a size that would be allowed without a variance, but I also voted against that. If the developer would like to apply to build something that will not require a variance, he is free to do so.
- 5) Former Council Member Paul Zerby has decided not to seek reappointment for the Ward 2 seat on the Public Health Advisory Committee. I thank Paul for all his good work, on topics ranging from binge drinking to phthalates. If you or anyone you know might be interested in serving on this very important committee, please contact my office.
- 6) My office has been contacted by a number of businesses near the University Stadium who would like to begin using their parking lots as commercial parking lots on game days. The City, through a long neighborhood and community process, decided two years ago to place a "Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District" over much of the length of University Avenue. One of the reasons for this overlay was to protect nearby communities from the sprawl of surface parking lots that has surrounded other stadiums in the city, especially the Metrodome. I am open to working with business owners and the community to reopen this discussion, if the community believes that it should be revisited. I have asked the Stadium Area Advisory Group to start this discussion.

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- 7) Minneapolis is on track to launch *Nice Ride MN*, the first large-scale bike sharing system in the United States, next May. *Nice Ride* will put approximately 1,000 bicycles onto Minneapolis streets, locked in self-service kiosks. In addition to Seward, kiosks will be located in downtown, uptown, Eat Street, Midtown, the U area, Dinkytown, Cedar Riverside, and the Warehouse district. The input/comment period lasts through October 30th, so get your responses in before then to help determine the final location of these bicycle rental kiosks. If you'd like more information on the upcoming *Nice Ride MN* program, please visit www.niceridemn.com or call Bill Dossett at 612-926-9218.
- 8) The City's first-ever Pedestrian Master Plan that the Public Works department has worked on for quite some time is coming forward for final adoption this Council cycle. It is, for the most part, a very good plan, and will help us dramatically improve the pedestrian experience in our city. However, there are some comments I've heard from folks in the ward that are not addressed by the current plan. Examples include the difficulty of establishing a new mid-block crossing, lack of timely snow removal on city-owned sidewalks, and the desire to explore distinctive crosswalk styles. My office offered a number of amendments to strengthen the plan, and all but one has unanimously passed the Transportation and Public Works committee. I'm hopeful that between now and the Council meeting, we'll be able to strengthen the plan even more.
- 9) Despite reports that the University and Central Corridor project (with help from the City and the County) have been nearing an agreement on vibration, noise and electromagnetic disruptions to U research on Washington Avenue, the U has decided to sue the Metropolitan Council over the project. They claim that this is due to the timing – if they don't sue now, they'll lose the chance, along with whatever leverage it brings. The University appears to be the most significant potential obstacle to this important piece of environmentally sustainable transportation infrastructure. While I find it especially problematic that the University chose not to communicate with any of its partners on the Alliance – the City, the neighborhoods, or the business community – before taking this extraordinary step, I have asked for a meeting with a University Vice President to better understand the U's perspective. I will continue to work to be a cooperative partner with all the neighborhood, community, business, governmental and institutional partners concerned with the Central Corridor.
- 10) We have secured federal American Recovery & Reinvestment Act funding for a number of Projects including: \$3.2 million in Recovery Act funding to pay for 13 police officers from January 2010 through December 2012; \$10 million in Recovery Act funding to rehabilitate the Camden Bridge (and create about 90 construction jobs and add 35 years to the life of the bridge); and \$2 million for improvement to the City's Water Works Dewatering Plant in Fridley.
- 11) The Health, Energy and Environment committee has heard a report on a fascinating and exciting new hydrothermal energy facility to be located at the East Bank Mills project that could, if successful, heat and cool up to four million square feet of residential and commercial buildings with little or no carbon emissions. The technology would use water from the Mississippi as a heat exchange, similar to how geothermal projects use the ambient temperature of the ground. It is also proposed to use the existing drop shafts to generate enough electricity to power the heat pumps. City staff has recommended that the Council devote a \$30,000 planning loan to this project, and I was proud to move their recommendation in committee.
- 12) The Council has passed a non-controversial revision of the ranked choice voting ordinance that cleans up and clarifies the text, bringing it into alignment with how staff and outside experts agree the process should go. I commend elections staff for their work on this housekeeping change, as well as the work they've done to speed up the counting process. I look forward to a successful first ranked choice election this November.
- 13) The ordinance I authored, allowing businesses near the stadium to expand their premises up to twelve times per year, has passed the Council unanimously. It includes an amendment that allows the Licensing Director to deny applications based on poor past performance.
- 14) The Health Energy and Environment committee has passed some revisions of our twenty-six sustainability indicators. I'm impressed with the changes we're making, which make some of our indicator targets much more sophisticated and sets the first-ever targets for other indicators. Some of the highlights include a new Solid Waste indicator, improved targets for Healthy Lakes and River, and more. My office has been especially involved in strengthening the bicycling indicator, to aim for a 7% bicycling mode share by 2014, and in drafting a new target for measuring the percentage of Minneapolis workers living in poverty.
- 15) There are openings on the Civilian Police Review Authority (closes 12/31), Public Health Advisory Committee (open until filled), Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners (Closes 10/16), and Zoning Board of Adjustment (closes 10/16). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.