

**News from Cam Gordon  
Council Member, Second Ward  
November 2007**

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

**NRP.** The Council has taken two small but significant steps forward in our effort to make decisions about the present and future of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program and public support for neighborhood organizations. The first step we took was to help assure the promised 70% level of funding for the remainder of NRP Phase II. The second step was to create a task force consisting of Council President Johnson, Vice President Lilligren, CMs Hodges and Ostrow, a Mayoral representative and the NRP Director, to frame options and proposed actions by December, establishing a City position on:

1. A proposed administrative structure to support community engagement activities;
2. Expectations of services community or neighborhood organizations would provide through citizen participation contracts; and
3. Extending or not a formal program of using discretionary funds for community-initiated projects.

I am very hopeful that these efforts, although small steps in and of themselves, will help us grapple with the challenging issues involved in the future of NRP and supporting our neighborhood organizations. I continue to support giving City (and hopefully other jurisdictions') funds to neighborhoods for both administrative support and discretionary investment.

[http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/communications/CETrack3\\_home.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/communications/CETrack3_home.asp)

**Youth Violence Prevention Plan.** The work started with the resolution recognizing youth violence as a public health problem that I introduced last November is approaching completion. The resolution called for the creation of a 30-member Youth Violence Prevention Steering Committee to develop a comprehensive plan to address youth violence. On November 5<sup>th</sup> a draft of that plan will come before the Health Energy and Environment Committee. I am hopeful that it will receive a formal public hear on December 10<sup>th</sup>. The group, made up of City, County and community experts, has drafted an impressive multi-year approach, coordinating education, outreach, funding and policy across the City and County. This has been one of my top priorities throughout the year and it is exciting to be a part of this effort to help reduce the tenacious and tragic problems of youth violence in Minneapolis. For more information see

[http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/communications/YouthViolencePrevention\\_home.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/communications/YouthViolencePrevention_home.asp)

**Library Consolidation meeting.** The Council and Library Board will meet jointly to hold a public hearing on November 7 at 6pm at the Central Library, 300 Nicollet Mall on the proposed consolidation between Minneapolis Public Library and Hennepin County Library systems. The public is invited to attend; a 3-minute limit per person is set to allow all members of the public to have an opportunity to ask questions.

**Library Funds.** The Council has transferred remaining funds from the construction of the new Central Library to Hennepin County as part of the library system merger, along with all other financial rights related to the project. The Council has also approved over \$16 million in bonds that the City had committed towards community libraries, which will be used to reopen the three libraries that closed in late 2006, including Southeast.

**I-35W Bridge.** Construction has begun on the replacement I-35W bridge. Workers will be demolishing concrete and drilling test shafts Monday through Saturday, 7am-4:30am. Pile driving will begin on November 5, but due to the noise of this work, it will only occur between 7am and 5:30pm.

**Administrative Review.** I am starting work on an amendment to the Administrative Review process for new housing under four units. The current process features a list of 24 design

standards of quality housing, and requires builders to get at least 15 points. This process does not have any time for formal comment by neighborhood groups. There are four options I am exploring: 1) using the same 24 design standards, but increasing the number of points necessary for approval; 2) reviewing, expanding and raising the standards, with community input, to help limit construction of some of the most objectionable houses from being built, 3) adding a new design standard for formal community support, and increasing the points required for approval by the same amount that this design standard would be worth; 4) creating a bifurcated process by which certain 'gold standard' projects (for example, those that get over 20 of 24 points) do not require neighborhood review and approval, but houses in the 'acceptable' range (15-20, for instance) must obtain formal approval from the appropriate neighborhood group. I will be working with staff and my colleagues to find an option that seems workable, with the goal of introducing this item by early next year.

**Lurking Repeal.** I am working with the Coalition for Lurking Ordinance Repeal to introduce a package that will repeal this ineffective and discriminatory ordinance by the end of this year. This package will, unfortunately, have to include expansions of the Loitering ordinance, in order to get the repeal passed. I view this as a very incremental step towards a fairer criminal justice system.

**Employee Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) Resolution.** I coauthored a resolution with Council Member Glidden calling on Congress to restore the gender identity protections that have been stripped out of the current ENDA bill. Minneapolis has a long and distinguished history of supporting transgender persons, as the first city in the country to include gender identity in our laws against employment discrimination. The resolution passed the Council unanimously today.

**Domestic Violence Pledge.** Last week, the Public Safety & Regulatory Services committee signed on to a pledge to reduce domestic violence in Minneapolis. We also reviewed a plan to reduce domestic violence (<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2007-meetings/20071102/docs/Domestic-Violence-Plan.pdf>) and directed staff to report back on November 28<sup>th</sup> with specific measure and goals; and a review of possible financial and budget implications of the elements in the pledge. I am very interested in working on this critical problem, which I view as inseparable from our ongoing work on youth violence prevention.

**Gun Turn-In Program.** The Police Department is launching a new initiative in domestic violence prevention, the first of its kind in Minnesota. Federal law requires anyone who has been convicted of a domestic violence crime to surrender all firearms and ammunition in their possession. Beginning November 1, all Minneapolis police precincts will be able to accept these firearms surrendered by court order. In fact, **anyone** who wishes to turn in an unwanted gun or ammunition may also bring it to a police precinct—no questions asked. Police ask that you unload the firearm, put the firearm and ammunition in separate bags or containers, and bring them to any police precinct. Once there, simply tell any officer you are there to turn in a gun. To find your nearest precinct, visit the Minneapolis Police Department Web site at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/police/> and click on "Police Precinct Finder."

**Internal Affairs Audit.** The Minneapolis Police Department has received approval from the Public Safety & Regulatory Services committee to enter into a contract with the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF). This is a different contractor than MPD was poised to hire in April, before the Council directed them to issue an open Request for Proposals. I consider this a very positive development, given PERF's national stature and track record and clear independence from MPD. The external IAU Audit is one of the recommendations that grew out of the police reform efforts I helped lead last year and I am hopeful that it will help us improve police practices in the future.

**Fall Street Sweeping.** Public Works has started fall street sweeping. The City's website features a "Street Lookup," where you can see the sweeping schedule online to learn exactly when your street is scheduled for cleaning: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/streetsweep/streetsweeplookup.asp>. (The schedule dates

shown on the web based mapping application can sometimes change due to weather or other unforeseen factors. Public Works does its best to keep these schedule changes to an absolute minimum. Residents are always responsible to be aware of any parking restrictions, and move their vehicles when needed.) Temporary "No Parking" signs will be posted at least 24 hours in advance to allow streets that are posted for sweeping to be clear of cars, and the City will make about 3,500 automated phone calls each evening to let residents know their street will be swept the next day. Anyone who parks on the street will need to follow street sweep parking rules or their cars may be ticketed and towed to the Minneapolis Municipal Impound Lot. Call 311 to find out whether or not a vehicle has been towed. Please note the new Impound Lot hours of operation effective October 14, 2007. They are:

- Monday - Saturday from 8am to 10pm
- Sunday from 9am to 5pm

Lastly, please don't push leaves, grass clippings, or other debris into the streets – it's bad for our lakes and waterways, can cause safety hazards, and is against the law. Anything that goes down a storm drain flows directly into our lakes and river, and decomposing plant material in the water encourages the growth of harmful aquatic plants and algae.

**Minneapolis ranked first for National Night Out efforts.** The National Association of Town Watch gave Minneapolis its "National Night Out 2007 Award" (<http://www.natw.org/nno/award.html>) for cities with a population greater than 300,000. This year, more people than ever participated in NNO events. 62,000 Minneapolis residents gathered at more than 1,117 confirmed NNO celebrations citywide. At many events this year, residents also paid their respects to the victims of the Aug. 1 I-35W Bridge collapse by observing a citywide minute of silence at 6:05 p.m., the exact time when the bridge fell. I'm proud of the work done by the Second Ward Interns along with block leaders to help organize additional NNO parties.

**Midtown Greenway bridge opening.** A ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Greenway pedestrian and bicycle bridge crossing Hiawatha Avenue has been set for November 8th. The event will start at 4pm with a brief program and bridge lighting at 4:30. I hope to see you there.

**Curfew Truancy Center.** The City has contracted with The Link to provide a new center in City Hall for curfew/truancy violators and juveniles picked up by law enforcement officers for offenses that do not meet the admission criteria of the Hennepin County Juvenile Detention Center. This center will help connect youth to support and services. For more information, look here: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2007-meetings/20071102/docs/Curfew-Truancy-Center-Contract.pdf>.

**Bicycle/Pedestrian Counts.** Public Works and Transit for Livable Communities conducted a new round of bike and pedestrian counts in September, which show some dramatic increases over the 2003 counts in many locations. For example, bicycle traffic on the Third Avenue Bridge increased 96% between the two counts, and the numbers increased 76% on the Hennepin Avenue Bridge. Bicycle traffic was up 62% on Hennepin Avenue between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> streets, and up 35% on Marquette Avenue between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> streets. The opening of new phases of the Midtown Greenway has also dramatically increased bicycling through those parts of southwest and south Minneapolis.

**Arsenic.** The Environmental Protection Agency is soliciting community input on the Risk Assessment they are using to guide their efforts to clean up arsenic contamination in South Minneapolis. They have stated that the cleanup level will not be below 16 parts per million (ppm), but that the final number has not been chosen. There will be Risk Assessment Open House on November 13, 4-6pm at the East Lake Library, 2707 E Lake St.

**Offender Re-entry Program.** As ex-offenders are released from prison with limited education and work history, employers are increasingly reluctant to hire them and landlords are increasingly refusing to rent to them. The City has approved Empowerment Zone grants to The Network, Emerge Community Development Collaborative and 180 Degrees, Inc for offender re-entry

programming. The goal is to serve over 1,000 Minneapolis residents, helping them find decent work and housing and reducing the chance that they will return to criminal activity. For more information, go here: [http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2007-meetings/20071019/Docs/OffenderReentry\\_RCA.pdf](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2007-meetings/20071019/Docs/OffenderReentry_RCA.pdf).

**Investigative Staffing.** Prompted by the recent City Pages article, the Public Safety and Regulatory Services committee has received a report from the Police Department on staffing levels of our investigative units, especially the Sex Crimes Unit. The committee directed the MPD to come back in December with a report on the 3-year clearance rates (a case is 'cleared' when someone is charged with the crime) and annual staffing history and clarification on the increase in reported rapes (especially the difference in increase between acquaintance and stranger rapes). I continue to believe that we must make investigations a higher priority. For more of my thoughts on this, please see my blog.

**Streetcars.** The Council has authorized staff to prepare release an RFP for technical engineering assistance to address street design issues and develop street design guidelines to accommodate the potential future construction of streetcar lines along existing streets that are being reconstructed or rehabilitated.

**Contract Compliance.** Earlier this summer, a report by the Humphrey Institute ([http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2007-meetings/20070629/docs/CCU\\_Report\\_5-24-07.pdf](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2007-meetings/20070629/docs/CCU_Report_5-24-07.pdf)) raised significant concerns about how well our City has been doing at ensuring that our contractors with outside companies utilize small, minority and woman-owned business. In October, the Civil Rights Director reported back with further analysis recommendations about how to improve the Contract Compliance processes. (See here for more info: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2007-meetings/20071102/HEE20071022agenda.asp#TopOfPage>). The recommendations for improvements include: staffing changes to better handle the work; moving forward with a long overdue "Disparity Study" to help determine the extent of current disparities; better coordination with other City Departments and prime contractors; and capacity building activities with small and underutilized businesses. The report also presented clearer processes for holding accountable companies who fail to meet goals.

**Seward Coop Expansion Financing.** Community Planning and Economic Development staff are recommending \$536,000 in City financing for the Seward Coop expansion project, in the form of restructuring their Community Economic Development Fund loan for their 1997 expansion (giving the Coop access to more of the proceeds of the sale of their existing building), \$150,000 in a new Great Streets loan, \$150,000 in 2% loans and \$75,000 in a Business Development Fund loan. The existing 2% loan of \$18,119 and NRP loan of \$85,000 for the Coop's current building will be paid off when it is sold. This recommendation will come before the City's Community Development committee on Tuesday, November 6, 1:30pm, in the Council Chambers. I am supportive of it.

**Grand Rounds.** I'm pleased that the Community Advisory Committee has voted not to pursue the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> routes through Southeast Como for the Missing Link, and concentrate on the east options.

**Cedar Riverside NRP meeting.** On November 5, the Cedar Riverside community will take its final vote on its NRP Phase I plan. The meeting will take place from 6-7:30pm at the Brian Coyle Community Center.

**WBCC Annual meeting.** The West Bank Community Coalition annual meeting and election of the 2008 Board of Directors is on November 28, 6-8pm, at the Brian Coyle Community Center.

**SNG Annual Meeting.** The Seward Neighborhood Group annual meeting and election of the 2008 Board of Directors is on November 7, 6:30pm at the Matthews Center.

**Seward Arts Fair.** The Eighth Annual Seward Arts Fair is on November 10<sup>th</sup>. Go to <http://www.sewardarts.org> for more information.

**Doran Dinkydome Project.** Local developer Doran Companies is pursuing purchase of the Dinkydome and the buildings to the north, for a proposed multi-storey student housing development, which would incorporate and refurbish the Dinkydome.

**Hard Times.** I am continuing to work with the Hard Times to help them navigate the City's processes and reopen.

**West Bank School of Music.** I am also working with the West Bank School of Music on their purchase of their building from the City.

**Station 19.** A small piece of land contiguous to Historic Station 19 has been rezoned to allow an expansion, with the full support of the neighborhood group and my office.

**CLIC Appointee Needed.** I am still searching for a new appointee to the Capital Long Range Improvement Committee (CLIC) appointee. CLIC makes recommendations to the City Council and Mayor on capital improvement program development and annual capital improvement budgets. It meets on the first and third Tuesdays of each month, with additional meetings at the call of the chair.

**Openings on City Boards and Commissions.** There are openings on the Minneapolis Arts Commission (closes 11/9/2007), Minneapolis Advisory Committee on People With Disabilities (closes 11/9/07), Latino Advisory Committee to the Mayor and City Council (closes 11/16/2007), Public Health Advisory Committee (PHAC) (closes 11/9/2007), Rental Dwelling License Board of Appeals (closes 11/16/2007), and the Senior Citizen Advisory Committee (closes 11/9/2007) To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).

Yours, in peace and cooperation,

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