

**News from Cam Gordon
Council Member, Second Ward
September/October 2010**

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

Street Sweepers Coming. The 2010 comprehensive fall street sweep and leaf collection program will begin later this month. The first day of posting will be Monday, October 25 and **the first day of sweeping will be Tuesday, October 26**, and it will last about 4 weeks. Please watch for signs, warn your neighbors and check the city website at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/streetsweep/> for more detailed schedules to help prevent cars from being ticketed and towed.

Commercial Recycling. I have taken the first formal step to get my proposed new commercial recycling ordinance into the City Council process by giving notice of intent to introduce the ordinance that would require commercial entities to recycle. Prior to that, working with the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce, I helped produce a survey to businesses on current recycling practices and their opinion on a mandate. The results were very favorable:

- Over 90% of businesses currently recycle, with the supermajority recycling paper, cardboard, glass, metal and plastic.
- Over 90% of businesses have had no issues with their recycling service.
- The plurality of businesses – 48% – support a recycling requirement for businesses.

I have also had several discussions with business owners and business associations and believe that the business community is open to a fair and understandable recycling mandate. It's also clear that the City has the capacity to enforce this new requirement. The Fire Department has been charged with inspecting all commercial buildings in Minneapolis and could easily include compliance with the recycling requirement as one of the things they look for. St. Paul and Bloomington both have mandatory commercial recycling ordinances and the adoption of one in Minneapolis will be a significant step in the direction of diverting a greater percentage of the waste to recycling, decreasing the amount of material going into landfills and the garbage burner.

Solar System on Convention Center. The installation of the Upper Midwest's largest solar photovoltaic system is underway at the Minneapolis Convention Center. The solar array, which has 403 of its 2,613 panels installed, will connect directly to the convention center's internal electrical system and produce 750,000 kWh of renewable energy per year when completed. The system, being built by a local development team led by Best Power International and Westwood Professional Services, will produce the equivalent of powering 85 homes annually, while offsetting 539 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions (the amount given off by 60,587 gallons of gasoline). In a unique and somewhat complex agreement, the photovoltaic systems will be owned by Best Power, which will lease the roof for the system from the City of Minneapolis. The City will lock into a long-term contract with a fixed energy cost as a hedge against future energy price increases. For more information visit: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/news/20101006MCCSolarArrays.asp>.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) Results. In September we learned that 100% of the \$14 million of the federal foreclosure recovery grant (known as NSP1) has been spent or obligated. So far 96 properties have been purchased for rehabilitation and redevelopment, 68 properties have been acquired for future redevelopment, and 111 have been condemned and demolished. I was glad to learn that NSP contractors included 26% minority-owned businesses, 8% women-owned businesses, and 28% low-income contractors. NSP provided over 15,000 hours of employment to minority (87% unskilled hours and 52% skilled hours worked) and female (9% of all hours worked) contractors.

Community Participation Program Guidelines. The Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC) has put forward a draft of the Community Participation Program Guidelines that outline how \$3,000,000 will be provided to neighborhood organizations in 2011. Preliminary allocations based on the proposed formula were released as well. For second ward neighborhoods they are as follows: Cedar-Riverside - \$58,613.12, Como - \$33,968.00, Cooper - \$20,941.84, Prospect Park - \$39,908.50, Seward - \$50,774.48. The NCEC expects to make its final recommendations to the City Council in November. For further information on the draft guidelines and allocations see <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/ncr/>

Judge Recommends Burying Hiawatha Powerline. The Administrative Law Judge, Beverly Jones Heydinger, has formally recommended to the Public Utilities Commission that the Xcel Hiawatha Powerline, proposed to be above ground along the Midtown Greenway, be buried under E. 28th Street. I am very supportive of this recommendation, although I continue to question the need for the powerline itself and would prefer to see an investment in conservation, alternative energy sources and upgrading the existing lines. The judge also recommended that the substations be at Xcel preferred locations. The one nearest Ward 2 would be east of Hiawatha Avenue adjacent to the greenway where there is current green space. The PUC will now accept comments disagreeing with Heydinger's recommendations. They will wait to make a decision, however, until after the required Certificate of Need process has been completed. Because Xcel has not applied for the certificate of need it looks like the earliest the PUC could act is November, 2011.

Home Energy Visits. Home energy visits are being conducted throughout Minneapolis as part of the Community Energy Services program, offered by the Center for Energy and Environment and the City of Minneapolis. The program, funded by the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, will help an additional 4,000 Minneapolis homeowners identify ways to save on their energy bills. Funding for this program has also created 34 jobs for our local economy. For more information visit http://www.mncee.org/programs_residential/community_energy_services/index.php

FBI Raids in Minneapolis. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has served subpoenas on local peace activists, including at least two Second Ward residents. They FBI is investigating "activities connected to the material support of terrorism" by the "Joint Terrorism Task Force." I have released a statement in support of the activists, which you can read at the Second Ward blog, and spoke at a protest against these raids. I am very concerned about the chilling effect these kinds of actions have on our ability and willingness to organize and speak out for better government. A website has been set up in response to this here <http://stopfbi.net/>

Community Development Block Grant RFP. The Department of Health and Family Support has issued a Request for Proposals for federal Community Development Block Grant funds to serve eligible individuals for the period of June 2011 through May 2013. Approximately \$400,000 will be available in grants of up to \$75,000. Approved projects may receive a second year of funding based on performance and availability of funding. Eligible applicants are not-for-profit agencies, for-profit organizations, or governmental agencies providing health services, human services, and community development services benefiting low and moderate income Minneapolis residents. Successful proposals must address one of the following three topic areas: 1. Youth Violence Prevention; 2. Teen Pregnancy Prevention; 3. Senior Health and Independent Living. You can download the RFP here: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs.

Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) – The City is soliciting development funding proposals for the ESG program funds that may be used to renovate, rehabilitate, and convert buildings for use as either emergency shelters or transitional housing for people who are homeless. There is approximately \$465,365 available. Proposals are due no later than 4:00 pm. CDT, on Friday, November 19, 2010. ESG program guidelines and application materials are available at

http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/esg_rfp_home.asp Questions about the ESG program should be directed to Tiffany Glasper at 612-673-5221 or Tiffany.Glasper@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

2010 Census. Minneapolis had tremendous success this year in increasing our census participation rate. The City's mail back participation rate was 76%, up from 68% in 2000 and the highest response rate of any city with populations of 300,000 or more in the country. You can see a map of the response rate by census tract here:

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/2010census/docs/2010v2000CensusParticipation.pdf>.

We Want You Back Campaign. On September 11, I joined over 300 volunteers and participated in a door knocking effort to encourage those who have dropped out of school to return, or find alternative ways to graduate. This was the culmination of a summer long citywide effort led by the Minneapolis Public Schools and the City of Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board. Early estimates suggest that over 340 people have been connected to schools and put on the path to graduation because of this effort. For more information about We Want You Back visit www.wewantyoubackmpls.org

Support to Neighborhood Organizations for Translation and Outreach. The Neighborhood and Community Relations Department had formed a new Access and Outreach team that specializes in addressing and removing barriers to participation and meaningful engagement where cultural norms, practices or language limit access. These services are available to both City departments and neighborhood organizations. The Access and Outreach team has the cultural experience and the ability to communicate in Spanish, Somali, Oromo, Amharic, Hmong and American Sign Language. To learn more about how to take advantage of this visit <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/ncr/access-and-outreach.asp>

Green Building Policy. The City Council is developing a new City Green Building Policy. We have formed an interdepartmental green building policy work team to be chaired by the Green Building Policy Manager and Director of Economic Development with representatives from various other relevant divisions and departments including the offices of the City Council and the Mayor. The work group will review best practices supporting green buildings in other communities as well as relevant policies, procedures and practices and report back to the Council with policy options and recommendations of how the City can further support green buildings. As part of this effort the City has hosted a series of lectures on the following green building topics: GreenStar; the Hiawatha LEED certified public works facility, and on the International Green Construction Code. We will hold one more lecture, open to the public on LEED and LEED for Homes on October 26, 10-11:30am in City Hall room 319. All are welcome to attend.

Parkland Dedication Ordinance. After years of work the Park Board and the City Council have developed a new parkland dedication ordinance, which will require developers to either provide public open space as part of new developments or contribute to a fund that will be used to establish new park infrastructure. This will offer us a new way to help meet the needs for a park system that grows along with our city.

Extension of Small and Underutilized Business Program (SUBP). The Council has extended our SUBP ordinance, to give time for the results of our Disparity Study to be shared this fall and to continue to mandate that contractors working on City-financed projects do business with minority and women-owned contractors. I am extremely supportive of this program; the City needs to do more to close the gap in employment and income between the minority and majority populations in our city.

Thinc.Green. Minneapolis and St. Paul have joined together to form Thinc.Green, an economic-development partnership to retain, grow and attract green-manufacturing businesses and jobs in the Minneapolis Saint Paul region. I am very supportive of this effort, and worked to ensure that the steering committee for the partnership includes a representative from organized labor.

Youth Gang Prevention Grant. The City has been awarded a \$325,000 grant from the Department of Justice for youth gang prevention. This will provide much needed support for our ongoing work to implement the Blueprint for Action to Prevent Youth Violence and stop youth violence in Minneapolis. .

Met Council Transportation Plan. The Metropolitan Council is working on a 2030 regional transportation policy plan. The City Council has commented on the plan, advocating an additional emphasis on rail and calling for a regional bicycle master plan. You can learn more here <http://www.metrocouncil.org/planning/transportation/TPP/2010/index.htm>

U Funds Neighborhood Safety. The Council has formally accepted \$60,000 from the University to provide enhanced police enforcement in neighborhoods around U and \$14,200 to provide security the Gopher Football Stadium. I thank the University for working with the City to increase the livability of U-area neighborhoods.

Temporary Event Parking Ordinance. The Council has unanimously passed my ordinance that creates a new category of commercial parking lot licenses to permit the issuance of temporary event parking lot licenses near the University of Minnesota Gopher football Stadium. A Class C commercial parking lot license would be available to parking lot owners for up to 15 events per year. Eligibility is limited to nonresidential properties with approved on-site accessory parking lots.

Ancient oak tree. The ancient oak tree that died this year in Riverside Park on Franklin Terrace had its limbs removed on October 13. A new plaque has been installed on the boulder near it. The top branches of the tree were removed by Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board arborists and will be used by local groups and artists for carving bowls, cups, ornaments and other items. The 17-foot lower portion of the tree trunk will remain. A young Bur Oak tree has been planted near the ancient tree trunk and additional oaks will be planted next spring to establish an oak grove in the park. According to Ralph Sievert, director of the Park Board's Forestry Division, the tree's estimated year of germination was 1677, making it approximately 333 years old when it died.

Riverside Reconstruction. Approval of a final design for this project was delayed in September so staff could resolve some issues. After a new design was drafted, the City held two more neighborhood meetings in October. I have heard several main concerns from stakeholders about the proposed reconstruction, and I have been working with staff to address them. The first has to do with the proposed cul-de-sac at the intersection of 5th Street, 20th Ave, and Riverside. An alternative has been found. Second, I've heard from a number of neighborhood businesses that they're concerned about losing parking on Riverside, especially between 20th and Cedar. After further analysis some on street parking has been added into the design, although there will still be fewer than exist today. I am continuing to advocate for a left turn from Franklin eastbound onto Riverside northbound, and staff have assured me that the current layout allows even the largest vehicles to safely execute the turn. However, we will need to engage Hennepin County in a conversation about opening this up to left turns, because Franklin is a County road. To see the latest design look here <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cip/riverside/index.asp>

County Funds for Cedar Ave. The Council has accepted a \$300,000 Hennepin County grant for a Cedar-Riverside LRT Public Realm Improvement project. The City will need to find matching funds. I am confident that it will do so and that we will be able to make needed improvements to the West Bank Cedar Avenue streetscape and sidewalks in the next year or two.

West Bank Wayfinding Beacon. Construction on the wayfinding beacon at 6th and Cedar should begin soon. The City's Public Arts Administrator expects that the sculptures will be installed sometime next fall. There has been one change in the layout at Cedar the artist suggested because he felt it would be easier to see the Cedar Beacon from 16th. The change in

the location will also mean that the Beacon will be further back from the road, and therefore more protected during future construction on Cedar.

Afro Deli. The City Council has approved the application for Afro Deli and Coffee's sidewalk café at Riverside and 20th Avenues. I put together a meeting between neighbors who had concerns about the proposed sidewalk café and the African Development Center and near neighbors. Deli staff and the building owner have committed to work closely with my office and the near by neighbors to address any concerns.

Seward and Longfellow Solid Waste Pilots. Two solid waste pilot projects will begin in the Seward and Longfellow neighborhoods this fall. The City has notified residents about the first, an organics collection program that includes much of the east part of the Seward neighborhood. I plan to set up a meeting with the Director of Solid Waste and Recycling, County staff, and interested Seward and Longfellow residents, to discuss outreach regarding this program. I plan to help produce a flier for the neighborhood to use to inform residents of this opportunity and encourage them to take advantage of it. The second pilot project will begin after a "waste sort" is completed in the part of the neighborhood included in the pilot. Once the sort is done, these homes will be offered new carts to use for a two (or dual) sort system. Plastic, glass and metal will go in one container and paper and cardboard in the other. The amount of recycled materials will be monitored during the study to see if the simpler sorting system results in more items being recycled.

Construction on Hiawatha Trail. Met Transit has started work on the maintenance facility between 24th and 26th streets just east of the Hiawatha line. This work requires a silt fence to control erosion, according to federal law. This may have an impact on how much of that trail can be plowed by City crews this winter, possibly reducing the usable width of the trail. In addition, there will be at least one closure of the trail. Met Transit will be working with my office to find a good detour route and communicate about the closure to the neighborhood and trail users. Lastly, Met Transit has agreed to install lights on the trail between 26th and 24th, one of the portions of the trail I have heard the most complaints about.

Washington Ave Transit Mall. The City has formally agreed to remove general traffic from Washington Avenue from the east end of the bridge to Walnut, for the Central Corridor transit mall. We have entered into an agreement with the Met Council and the University relating to the ongoing maintenance and operations of the mall.

Murphy Warehouse Solar Installation. I was delighted to learn that Southeast Como-based Murphy Warehouse is making a \$1 million investment (though after state, federal and utility rebates the cost to the business will only be \$90,000) in solar panels for its facilities. The panels are being installed on the roofs of the company's facilities in Fridley and, later this fall, on the company headquarters in Southeast Como. The company expects to save \$22,000 annually in energy costs and will recoup its investment within four years. This, combined with the outstanding efforts Murphy has made to manage storm water, makes it one of the greenest businesses in the City.

Riverside Plaza. Sherman Associates and City staff have been working on a development agreement for this project. The draft agreement is being shared with the community before this matter returns to the City Council in late October for consideration of an affordable housing trust fund request of over 1 million dollars and final approval of up to \$80 million of housing development bonds. I am generally supportive of this project and recognize the need to stabilize and rehabilitate this apartment complex. At the same time, as we make these significant public investments, I want to be sure this benefits the larger neighborhood as well as the residents of the building.

Seward Commons Redevelopment Phase I (Bystrom/Touchstone). The City has accepted an award of \$290,472 from the state Department of Employment and Economic Development to

make roadway improvements, storm water management boulevard improvements within the public right-of-way, pedestrian facilities, and connections to trails and bike paths to support this project. The Touchstone mixed use (housing/office) project at 2304 Snelling Avenue will be the first phase of the redevelopment of the Seward Commons/Bystrom Brothers site. The project will provide 40 units of supportive housing for individuals with chronic and persistent mental illness, along with 10,000 sq. ft. of office/commercial space for Touchstone. Touchstone will provide on-site services for building residents. The office space will serve as Touchstone's regional offices and will include a wellness center providing services for clients from outside the building.

U of M Bike Trail. The Council has approved an additional \$247,765 in funding to make completion of the bike trail in the Dinkytown trench possible next year. Known as The U of M Trail, Phase III, it was conceived in the 1990s to provide an off-road bicycle and pedestrian trail between downtown Minneapolis and the University of Minnesota's Minneapolis & St. Paul campuses. The project limits are the east approach of Bridge #9 to the intersection of 5th Street SE and Oak Street SE. The project will also provide additional trail access at East River Road and a pedestrian access at 17th Avenue SE / 5th Street SE. The entire project will cost over 3 million dollars.

Stadium Village LRT Area Planning Grant. The City has recently been awarded a \$60,000 grant from the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative (working through the St Paul Foundation) to support planning around the Central Corridor LRT Stadium Village station area. Until now, this has been the only CCLRT station without an adopted city plan. I am pleased that this will be a joint venture with the U of M and Hennepin County, with all partners providing both funds and staff time toward the project. A community Steering Group is being established now to help guide the plan. If you are interested in being part of this group and live in the Stadium Village area let me know.

There are currently openings on the Arts Commission, Basset Creek Watershed Management Commission, Citizen Environmental Advisory Committee (CEAC), Commission on Civil Rights, Civilian Police Review Authority, Capital Long-Range Improvement Committee (CLIC), Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC), Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Public Health Advisory Committee (PHAC), Senior Citizens Advisory Committee Vacancy, Shingle Creek Watershed Management Commission, Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission, Minneapolis Telecommunications Network (MTN), Youth Violence Prevention Executive Committee and Zoning Board of Adjustment. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

In peace and cooperation,

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