



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

Cam Gordon

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Southeast Como, 1-11-11

Cam's next Southeast Como Office Hours:
Tuesday, February 8th, 9:30-11:00am
SECIA Office, 837 15th Ave SE

Items:

- 1) 2011 Budget
- 2) Snow
- 3) Urban Agriculture Topical Plan
- 4) Bicycle Advisory Committee
- 5) Summer Jobs for Teens
- 6) Healthier Corner Stores
- 7) Environmental Education Grants
- 8) Federal Fund for Streetcar Plans
- 9) Openings on City Boards and Commissions

- 1) For the first time as Council Member, I voted against a budget last month. I do not take this vote lightly. In all past budgets, there have been things I would have liked to change and fights that I have lost. These issues have not been important enough for me to vote against the final budget. This year's amendment supported, by the Mayor and Council majority, to take already-allocated Neighborhood Revitalization Program Phase II funding is fundamentally different. I could not in good conscience vote for a budget that reneges on the commitments the Council unanimously made to our partners in neighborhoods this past June.

I am saddened that neighborhood organizations will no longer be able to rely on the commitments – or even the formal actions – of the Council majority. I am disappointed in my colleagues' decision that will, in my strongly-held opinion, fundamentally damage both the capacity of neighborhoods to serve Minneapolis residents and their capacity to collaborate with the City.

The action to freeze Phase II dollars has no impact whatsoever on the **2011** budget, the **only** action the Council was required to make this December. Rather, this decision improperly presupposes that the cuts in the **2012** budget will come from neighborhoods. Rather than taking the time to explore all options and work with our neighborhood partners, the Council decided on these cuts to neighborhoods this December.

City of Minneapolis leaders decry the decisions at the State level to renege on commitments made to local governments through Local Government Aid. Yet, when budget times get difficult, the Council majority makes clear that it will break its word just as readily as Republican governors.

Preliminary estimates are that \$122,142 of Southeast Como's allocated Phase II dollars will be frozen, and almost certainly taken from the neighborhood. It is very important to note that the neighborhoods most impacted by the freeze in Phase II dollars are among the poorest in Minneapolis.

I am strongly in favor of cutting property taxes. But I believe that there are deeply unpopular and unsustainable decisions that the City has made and should do what it takes to reconsider. One major example is the Target Center. It is critical for every resident to understand that while the Council majority was voting to damage neighborhood organizations by freezing their funds, Target Center debt payments were held completely harmless.

I will note that the Council majority and Mayor also held **ourselves** harmless, even as we were forcing cuts to neighborhood organizations. Neither the Council nor Mayor took a dollar in cuts. In fact, the Council amended the Mayor's proposed budget to shift a proposed one-time cut to the Clerk's Office. I find this highly objectionable.

I am deeply disappointed to have to disagree with my colleagues and the Mayor on this fundamental decision. But I am more saddened by the prospect of the very real damage that this budget will have on neighborhood organizations.

If you need this material in an alternative format, please contact Matt Bower at (612) 673-2188 or Matthew.Bower@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

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;

Spanish – Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llama 612-673-2188;

Somali – Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' an wac 612-673-2188.

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- 2) This winter has been one for the record books. According to Public Works staff, in a typical winter season we will have some 20 to 25 minor precipitation events that require moderate responses, and 3 to 4 Snow Emergencies – for an entire season. That’s about a 6:1 ratio of minor to major events. So far this year, **five of the eight** snow events have resulted in Snow Emergencies and one of them (the 17 inch snowstorm) resulted in two back-to-back Snow Emergencies. This ties the record of six in a season, and it is still December. This has led the city to declare Winter Parking Restrictions, which prohibit parking on the even side of all Non-snow-Emergency routes until enough snow thaws to allow good access to all residential streets. Please help your neighbors comply with these restrictions, and with any further Snow Emergencies that are declared. Thank you for your patience and help as we get through this snowier-than-usual winter.
- 3) The draft Urban Agriculture Topical Plan has been released. This is a major step forward in the work of Homegrown Minneapolis. The plan recommends some significant policy changes such as allowing commercial growing of food in Minneapolis and allowing more community gardens. You can view the draft plan here: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/urban_ag_plan.asp. Two community meetings will be held to discuss the content of the plan: **Tuesday, January 11th**, 6:30-8pm at the Sabathani Community Center, 310 E 38th St; and **Thursday, January 20th**, from 2-3:30pm at North Central Library, 1315 Lowry Ave N. There will be a public hearing on the plan in February at the Planning Commission.
- 4) I have appointed **Bob Hain** to be the Ward 2 representative on the new Bicycle Advisory Committee (or BAC). Bob has been active on the previous BAC for several years, as well as participating in various ways in the Seward Neighborhood Group. It was a difficult decision, because there were four great applicants from the Second Ward. My Policy Aide, Robin Garwood, will be seeking the Council Staff position on the new BAC. I’m optimistic that he will be appointed.
- 5) Teenagers can start applying for summer jobs through the Minneapolis STEP-UP Program. Business owners and managers can also get involved by helping provide much needed jobs. All Minneapolis youth, ages 14-21, are eligible to apply. The program trains and places youth in paid internships at local businesses. Youth selected for STEP-UP must attend work readiness training in April to be considered for a summer position. Applications will be accepted until February 4, 2011. Call 612-673-5041 for more information or see the website (www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/stepup.asp) for more information.
- 6) Ten Minneapolis corner stores became part of a City effort to provide more healthy, fresh foods as part of the City’s larger effort to combat obesity and chronic disease. The program arose from an assessment the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support (MDHFS) staff made of 35 stores to determine availability and quality of fresh produce. For more information, go to www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/ship-cornerstores.asp.
- 7) Congratulations to the Somali Confederation of MN, Eastside Neighborhood Service and the Longfellow Community Council for applying for and getting Hennepin County grants to implement environmental education projects in 2011. The Eastside Neighborhood Services will facilitate environmental classes and implement service learning projects in order to empower youth and foster intergenerational relationships.
- 8) Minneapolis will receive a \$900,000 federal grant to study the best transit improvements on two of the city’s long-term streetcar network corridors, Nicollet and Central avenues between Columbia Heights and 46th Street South. The Alternatives Analysis grant program is the first key milestone in the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA) New Starts process which is the primary source for federally funded transit projects. This is an important first step towards possible future federal funding. In the last 14 months, the U.S. Department of Transportation has awarded \$408 million to build streetcar lines in several other U.S. cities that had already completed the alternatives analysis. The “Nicollet-Central Urban Circulator Alternatives Analysis” project will evaluate and select the best transit improvements for Nicollet Avenue from the 46th Street Bus Rapid Transit station to Nicollet Mall in downtown and Central Avenue from the Columbia Heights Transit Center to Nicollet Mall via Hennepin and First avenues north.
- 9) There are openings on the Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, Public Health Advisory Committee, Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, Senior Citizens Advisory Committee, and Zoning Board of Adjustment. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.