

**News from Cam Gordon  
Council Member, Second Ward  
March, 2010**

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

**Goals and Priorities.** The City Council and Mayor are conducting a strategic planning process to identify new five year goals. We have met several times and our new goals will likely be based largely on our previous goals with some variations and approved early in April.

These goals help guide further planning citywide, within each department and the development of our Results Minneapolis outcomes and measures. I am hopeful that as we work to agreement on these goals it will help set the course for better work in the future. It is unfortunate that we can't do more of this and also more that includes our partners in neighborhoods organizations, schools, parks and county government. To see the goals here

[http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2010-meetings/20100402/Docs/CityGoals-and-StrategicDirections\\_RCA.pdf](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2010-meetings/20100402/Docs/CityGoals-and-StrategicDirections_RCA.pdf)

In the discussion I have been advocating for one goal that focuses on the environment and more of an emphasis on making sure our city is a great place to make a family raise kids.

It has helped that I took time earlier this year to ask Second Ward residents to help me set my priorities for the next year. After analyzing the responses I developed the following list of 2010 priorities that I have helped me as I have participated in the process with the Council and Mayor:

- Make Minneapolis an international leader in environmental sustainability and fighting climate change while creating green jobs and cleaning up our soil, water and air.
- Close the racial disparities in poverty and employment by raising the income and employment levels of poor people in Minneapolis.
- Make Minneapolis a great place to raise children and a city that supports young families, prevents youth violence, promotes early childhood development, and provides abundant and meaningful educational, cultural, career and employment opportunities for youth.
- Realize the hope and promise of a strengthened and more permanent community involvement system in Minneapolis that empowers and builds the capacity of neighborhoods and neighborhood organizations, enfranchises everyone and establishes an effective model of how city government and communities can use shared democracy in decisions making.
- Find and implement ways to better value and support small businesses in Minneapolis.
- Improve the cooperation between the work of the City Council and City staff and the County, School, and Park Board.

I have used these priorities to help guide me in the larger strategic planning and I feel confident that these priorities will fit in well with both the City's Strategic Planning and the goals the Mayor and Council will likely approve in late March or April.

**The Mayor's State of the City address.** In March the Mayor presented his 2010 state of the city address and brought a welcome focus on jobs, education, and the environment. I am excited about his push for better transit, a bike sharing program that will include a large part of the Second Ward, and for support for the local food economy through the Homegrown Minneapolis initiative. It's heartening that the Second Ward is still receiving substantial citywide interest, as shown by the Mayor's specific mention of a science research park in SEMI. He also focused the difficult economic times we are facing and signaled a warning as the City will likely have to draft a

new budget based on the governor's proposed 29 million dollar cut to local government aide this summer.

**Winter Parking Restrictions Expire.** The winter parking restrictions that Public Works put in place in February **expired on March 5<sup>th</sup>**. Parking on the even sides of all streets is again allowed citywide.

**Be Counted in the 2010 Census.** Watch your mailbox in the coming weeks for your copy of the 2010 Census questionnaire, and make sure to fill it out and return it so you'll be counted. We need everyone to participate, so that Minnesota will receive the resources, representation and recognition we deserve. Census data is used to find the best way to distribute nearly \$400 billion in federal program funds as well as a variety of social services. It's estimated that Minneapolis will lose around **\$1 million** over the next decade for every **100** residents who are not counted in the 2010 Census. The census is also used to distribute congressional seats to states, and Minnesota is on the cusp of losing one. A number of questionnaire assistance centers will open in mid-March to help residents answer any questions they may have about the Census. People at these centers will also have questionnaires for anyone who didn't get one in the mail, and they'll offer translation services. To find the center nearest you, call 311.

**Social Host Ordinance.** The "Social Host" ordinance I authored passed the Council unanimously. My office is working with the City Attorney's office and Communications Department to develop a communications piece for informing residents of this new law. We will be happy to provide this piece to the University Ambassadors and others who can help communicate about this new set of expectations to student renters. I look forward to hearing in about a year about how the law has been enforced.

**Police Chief Reappointment.** I voted against the reappointment of Police Chief Tim Dolan. In large part, I based this vote on the "Safe City Resolution" that the Council passed when we first appointed Chief Dolan in 2006, which lays out an accountability framework for the Chief. My office did a thorough analysis of the ten performance measures included in that resolution, and found that on five of the measures the Chief's performance was either unsatisfactory or unacceptably poor. These include his handling of citizen complaints sustained by the Civilian Review Authority, the continuing lawsuits against the City for police misconduct and other police-related issues, and the Department's pattern of unresponsiveness to the Council. You can read the full analysis on my blog.

There is one other major problem I have had with the Chief's performance, that was not included in the Safe City Resolution but that is an expectation I have of all of our department heads: the Police Department has had an extremely poor record when it comes to staying within their budget. Last year, they spent \$3 million the Council never allocated. This is unacceptable.

There are also positive things to report on the Chief. He has appointed some very good people to lead the precincts that serve the Second Ward, crime has been trending downwards, and he has done great work on issues that are of real importance to me, such as youth violence prevention and increasing the diversity of the police force. I deeply appreciate his personal attention to the triple homicide in Seward earlier this year. However, on balance, I could not support his reappointment, given the significant unmet expectations I had for him and for the Police Department under his leadership.

**Civil Rights Director Search.** As I mentioned in my last newsletter, the Mayor declined to reappoint Michael Jordan as Director of Civil Rights. The position is now posted on the public website and is open for those who wish to express interest in the position. Please go to the following link <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/jobs/> for application details and the full position description. The deadline for submitting resumes is Friday, March 12, 2010. If you know of anyone who may be interested in this opportunity, please direct them to the website or have them submit their resume and cover letter to [kendallm@keystonesearch.com](mailto:kendallm@keystonesearch.com).

**Homegrown Minneapolis.** The Homegrown Minneapolis initiative continues to move forward. There will be a report to the Public Safety and Health committee on March 24<sup>th</sup>, on the progress we've made on implementing the Homegrown recommendations. There are also a number of related events coming up, including a Jams and Jellies workshop put on by the University of Minnesota Extension on March 30<sup>th</sup> from 1-4:30pm in Rogers, MN. The registration fee is \$25. For more information, visit the Homegrown Minneapolis website at [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/homegrown-home.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/homegrown-home.asp).

**35W Detour Repaving Project.** As a result of the I-35W bridge collapse, a number of Minneapolis streets took significantly more traffic than normal for more than a year. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has funded a project to resurface these streets this year, to repair the damage that this increased traffic caused. This project includes Cedar and 19<sup>th</sup> Avenues on the West Bank, Washington Ave west of 7 Corners, and 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue north of Franklin in Seward. It also includes a significant number of downtown streets. My office was instrumental in ensuring that the City did not miss this opportunity to add bike lanes in downtown. Public Works staff is recommending that we add bike lanes to Fourth and Fifth Avenues and 6<sup>th</sup> Street, and I am highly supportive of this move.

**Emerald Ash Borer in Minneapolis.** Unfortunately, but not unexpectedly, Emerald Ash Borer has been found in Minneapolis, in Tower Hill Park in the Prospect Park neighborhood. In response, the Park Board's Forestry Division will begin removing trees with the infestation, and an intensified search of all ash trees in the surrounding area will begin. This infestation is a major problem for our tree canopy, because approximately 20 percent of the tree canopy in Minneapolis consists of ash trees. The City and Park Board have been preparing for this anticipated challenge, developing policies for removing not-yet-infested but unhealthy or unattractive Ash throughout the city, so that the loss to canopy does not come all at once. My policy aide is the Council's new appointee to the Tree Advisory Committee, and Ward 1 Council Member Kevin Reich's policy aide Shannon McDonough is the alternate. They will help us to coordinate between the City and the Park Board on this emerging challenge. Please continue to restrict the movement of firewood as much as possible, to help slow the spread of this infestation, and if you have an ash tree on your boulevard or private property that you would be willing to have removed so that a different species of tree could be planted, please call 311.

**Municipal ID.** I am working community groups to explore the creation of a municipal identification card system that would make it easier for undocumented persons to do certain things, like open bank accounts, verify their identity at school, rent apartments, buy homes, access health care, and feel more confident reporting crimes, housing violations and working with the police and other city staff. Without a bank account, these folks often have to carry around large amounts of cash, making them easy targets for crime. By helping meet these basic needs for this community, the City would be helping reduce crime and promoting the welfare of all residents. This identification card would **not** be a driver's license, and could not be used as proof of residency for employment or any other federally-regulated activity. Clearly there is a problem for many people in our City because they cannot get a state ID. Perhaps, as Oakland, San Francisco and some other cities have done, a municipal ID could work here as well.

**Great Streets Support in Ward 2.** The City's Great Streets façade improvement grant program is funding several organizations in the Second Ward, including the West Bank Business Association, and Seward Redesign's work on both Franklin Avenue in Seward and University Avenue in Prospect Park. I'm a strong supporter of this partnership between the City and our small business districts, and look forward to seeing the improvements in these important commercial areas.

**Recovery Act Funds.** The City has sought and received over \$60 million in federal Recovery Act funds. Some of the most notable awards include:

- \$3.9 million for Energy Efficiency Community Block Grants that will fund energy audits by the Center for Energy and the Environment, provide loans for small businesses to make energy efficiency upgrades, and fund our ongoing climate change community micro grants.
- \$5 million for efficiency upgrades to City buildings.
- \$3.6 million for community development projects all through the City, including removal of lead paint, the Shubert theater, and more.
- \$5 million for homelessness prevention, including providing legal services and relocation services to tenants in foreclosing rental properties.
- \$20 million to combat the impact of foreclosures, including down payment and closing cost assistance to help people purchase foreclosed properties and funding for rehab of foreclosed houses.
- \$8.1 million to keep 56 police officers on the street.

**Energy Efficiency in Legislative Agenda.** The Council has voted to update our legislative agenda to include support for legislation that allows local governments to create tax assessment systems to help property owners to make energy efficiency and renewable energy investments. This would allow us to use the “Berkeley Model” of helping homeowners who can’t afford to pay cash for these sorts of environmentally-friendly improvements. In the long run, it will decrease the energy use in the City, increase property values, and help people spend less on their energy bills. I have been advocating for such a system for years, and I’m glad to see the Council finally taking a position in favor of it.

**Solar Rebates.** There are now two easy ways you can get rebates on solar energy systems for your home. The State’s Office of Energy Security is offering rebates of up to **\$10,000** on solar electric and solar hot water system installations. For applications, go to [www.energy.mn.gov](http://www.energy.mn.gov) and type “solar electric rebate” or “solar hot water rebate” in the website’s search engine. Also, Xcel Energy has launched a Solar Rewards program, to help customers afford solar panel installations on their homes or businesses. For conditions and other details of the program, go to [xcelenergy.com/solar](http://xcelenergy.com/solar), and select “Minnesota” from the drop-down list on the left. You can also request information by sending an e-mail message to [SolarProgramMN@xcelenergy.com](mailto:SolarProgramMN@xcelenergy.com). By installing a solar energy system in your home, you’ll save money on your monthly utility bills and also help reduce your environmental footprint by using fewer resources. In addition, you could be eligible for a 30-percent federal tax credit. For more information on the tax credit, go to [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov).

**New Youth Violence Prevention Program.** The City, Hennepin County, and area hospitals and community organizations are working together to end youth violence. A new hospital-based initiative has been developed to identify and address the needs of youth victims of violence who present to the emergency departments of Hennepin County Medical Center and North Memorial Medical Center. The protocol is triggered when a juvenile gun shot victim is admitted to the emergency room. A hospital social worker is notified upon arrival of the patient. After the medical condition has been stabilized, the social worker meets with the youth and parents and performs a detailed psychosocial assessment. Specific areas explored include issues related to safety concerns, retaliation risk, family, peer group, school/truancy, life skills (anger management/conflict resolution), mental health, chemical dependency, legal concerns and employment. Based upon this evaluation, the social worker makes appropriate referrals to community-based agencies that provide services to troubled youth. To date, nearly 40 agencies in the metro area have agreed to offer their services in partnership with this program.

**Sustainable Yards Workshops.** The Longfellow Community Council is hosting a series of workshops on sustainable practices for your yards and gardens. Workshops will be on Saturday, March 20th from 10am – 3pm at Sanford Middle School. Workshop topics will include Rain Gardens, Landscaping with Native Plant Species, Composting, Fruit Trees and Shrubs, Vegetable Gardening and Organic Lawn Care. At the event, you can also learn what’s behind the City’s stormwater fees and the “Do’s and Don’ts” of boulevard planting. Longfellow residents are eligible to save energy, water and time with an array of door prizes - such as rain barrels, compost bins,

native plants, fruit trees, green cleaning products, low-flow shower heads and MORE! The event is FREE, but please go to [www.longfellow.org](http://www.longfellow.org) to RSVP.

The **Teen Job Fair** is coming up on **Saturday, April 10<sup>th</sup>** from noon-3pm at the Downtown Library. If you are an employer, or if you know of any employers who might be interested in the opportunity to connect with young people who are eager to learn more about current and future employment opportunities, please visit [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/docs/Teen\\_Job\\_Fair\\_Employer\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/docs/Teen_Job_Fair_Employer_Brochure.pdf) to check out the brochure for participating businesses. If you know teens who are looking for a summer job, please encourage them to attend the Fair.

**Prospect Park Historic Preservation.** The Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) has voted to extend interim historic protections in the proposed Prospect Park historic district for another six months. I was disappointed in this decision, which was made despite the outpouring of opposition from the neighborhood and a letter I wrote to the commission requesting that they not take this action, for several reasons. The interim protections and disagreement between the neighborhood's guidelines and the staff's interpretation of the Secretary of Interior's guidelines have contributed to a situation in which I believe it is extremely likely that the neighborhood would vote to not have historic designation, if that vote is held in the next six months. There is also a very interesting opportunity to explore creating a "conservation district" ordinance, that could give neighborhoods a wider range of options for adopting historic protections that meet their needs. My office has helped the Prospect Park East River Road Improvement Association apply for an appeal of the HPC's decision to the City Council. I am optimistic that my colleagues will agree to overturn this ill-considered decision, and preserve the options for historic designation of some kind for Prospect Park in the future.

**Bike Lanes in SE Como.** The Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot project has suggested a layout for bike lanes in Southeast Como that would include a bike lane from 10<sup>th</sup> Ave SE to 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave SE (where the existing bike lane begins), and from the termination of the existing bike lane on 15<sup>th</sup> at Rollins Ave up to Como. This proposal would require the removal of parking on the east side of 15<sup>th</sup> Ave from Rollins to Como, and along the north side of Como Ave from 18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>. Staff studied the utilization rates of both areas, and found low usage of the Como Ave section and high usage of the 15<sup>th</sup> Ave section, much of it by people parking to take the bus. The node at 15<sup>th</sup> and Como, all the way to 18<sup>th</sup> Ave, will not see any reduction in parking, and neither will the section of Como west of 15<sup>th</sup>. I have heard that the Southeast Como Improvement Association voted to

**Greenway Rezoning.** I have worked hard to find the consensus of the Seward neighborhood, especially those who live just north of the Midtown Greenway, on the proposed rezoning of parcels along this premier non-motorized path. Working from the neighborhood's planning efforts, I have made some amendments to the staff's proposals that I think better reflect the wishes that the community has expressed. One area is the so-called "island of residential" between 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenues. I was able to convince the Planning Commission, with the help of my colleague Gary Schiff and Planning Commissioner (and School Board Member) [x] to support a medium-density Office Residential district on the north side of the Greenway just south of the existing residential, rather than staff's proposed R4 zoning. Near 36<sup>th</sup> Ave S, I successfully moved to change the staff's rezoning of existing industrial parcels to low-density residential, to a medium density R3 residential that will facilitate positive reuse of these parcels. I am continuing to look for a consensus solution to the west of 36<sup>th</sup>, where staff are recommending keeping the industrial zoning and adding the "industrial living overlay district."

**Environmental Remediation Grants.** 2600 Minnehaha Ave has received a Redevelopment Program Grant for \$303,566 and a Hennepin County Environmental Response Fund (ERF) Grant for \$55,500. The Como Student Community Co-op also received an ERF grant for \$429,063.

**Redistricting Task Force.** The Charter Commission's Redistricting Task Force is holding a public meeting to discuss the principles of a fair redistricting process and outcome, on Thursday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, at 7pm in room 333 of City Hall.

**Parking Near Riverside Park.** The West Bank Community Coalition has agreed to the City staff recommendation that parking without a permit on the streets around Riverside Park will be prohibited from 8am-10pm. I expect that staff will make this change to the signage in the area as soon as they can.

**I-94 Sound Walls.** The project to add a lane to I-94 is having some positive side-effects. Most notably, the Department of Transportation will be building a sound wall along the whole length of East River Terrace, something residents have been requesting for decades. Unfortunately, the East River Mews development is not proposed as a site for sound walls. My office is working with Mews residents, Minneapolis Public Works staff and MNDOT to explore options that will allow us to get that sound wall built as well, potentially including allowing the residents of the Mews to voluntarily assess themselves for part of the costs.

**Placemaking Signs on the West Bank.** The West Bank Business Association is looking to include their City-funded website on their proposed City-funded placemaking banners. They have been told that this is not acceptable, because the inclusion of the website makes the banners "advertising," under the zoning code. They appealed this interpretation of the code to the Zoning Board of Adjustment, which ruled against them on a 3-2 vote. They have appealed this decision to the Council, where it will come forward for a public hearing before the Zoning and Planning committee on April 6<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am. I have not made a decision yet on this matter, but I am sympathetic to the interests and arguments of the business association.

**Stadium Good Neighbor Fund.** Applications are now being accepted for grants from the 2010 Good Neighbor Fund. Grant applications are due by 4:00 p.m. on March 15, 2010. You will find the Request for Applications and Application Form on the web at <http://www.community.umn.edu/gnf>.

**Touchstone Project.** The Touchstone Supportive Housing project at 2304 Snelling – in the old Bystrom Brothers site – has been given a million dollar loan from the City's Affordable Housing Trust Fund. I have had the chance to see the design that Touchstone, Project for Pride in Living and Seward Redesign have been working on, and it incorporates some great environmentally friendly design elements. I'm very supportive of this project moving forward.

**West River Parkway.** The bicycling and pedestrian paths on West River Parkway from Franklin to I-35W are slated to be reconstructed by the Park Board as part of a Transportation Enhancement grant sometime in 2014-2015.

**Tea House Restaurant.** With help from my office, the Tea House restaurant and Prospect Park residents were able to come to a consensus set of conditions on the new restaurant's liquor license. I am hopeful that they will allow the restaurant to be successful and address the community's concerns about the proliferation of liquor-serving establishments along University Avenue.

**Ward 2 Reps on City Committees.** Thank you to Second Ward residents Margot Imdieke Cross and Lee Perish for continuing to serve on the City's Disability Committee, for Lonnie Nichols for his service on the Civil Rights Commission and to Pam Franklin for her service on the Civilian Review authority. .

**Openings on Boards and Commissions.** There are openings on the Citizen Environmental Advisory Committee (closes 2/19), Capital Long-Range Improvement Committee (closes 2/26), and Public Health Advisory Committee (open until filled). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).

In peace and cooperation,

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