

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, 5-3-11

Cam's next Southeast Como Office Hours: Tuesday, May 10th, 9:30-11:00am Muddsuckers Coffee, 1500 Como Avenue SE

Items:

- 1) Bicyclist Fatality in Second Ward
- 2) Talmage Public Hearing
- 3) Second Ward to Shrink
- 4) Urban Agriculture Plan Passes
- 5) Water Stewardship Fund Mini Grants
- 6) Emerald Ash Borer
- 7) Central Corridor Forums
- 8) Construction Underway on Central Corridor
- 9) More Funding for Potholes
- 10) Domestic Benefits Waiver
- 11) Unisys Contract
- 12) Tree Canopy Study
- 13) Openings on City Boards and Commissions
- 1) As you have likely heard, a young woman was hit and killed on her bicycle at the corner of 15th Ave SE and 4th St SE. There is a very clear pattern emerging: of the last six bicycle fatalities in Minneapolis, four were caused by large trucks making turns. My office is organizing a meeting between members of Public Works, the Police Department, and the Attorney's Office to begin an interagency discussion about how best to address this deadly conflict between bicyclists and trucks. I also plan to hold a community meeting to get ideas from cyclists, truck drivers and others about how to prevent future deaths.
- 2) There will be a public hearing regarding the assessments for the Talmage Ave SE reconstruction project between 29th Ave SE and 33rd Ave SE on **Tuesday**, **June 7**, at 9:30am in room 317 of City Hall, 350 S 5th St.
- 3) Demographic shifts over the last decade have left the Second Ward much more populous than the average ward. The Second Ward is going to get significantly smaller after the next redistricting. You can find more information and analysis of the 2010 Census results here: http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/census/2010.asp, and on my blog.
- 4) The Urban Agriculture Plan has unanimously passed the City Council. I see this plan as a major step towards making Minneapolis a leader in the local food movement. It recommends allowing people to grow food commercially in Minneapolis for the first time, along with a host of recommendations that will make it easier for residents to start community gardens and grow food in their own backyards. I want to thank all of the community members who helped shape this plan, and who got engaged to make sure it made it through the Council process without major alterations. The plan will provide guidance for specific food-related land use, regulatory and zoning ordinance amendments that I hope to see in place by next year's growing season.
- 5) The Mississippi Watershed Management Organization is now accepting applications for Stewardship Fund Mini Grants up to \$2,000 each to fund projects that address the following goals: 1) Improve water quality or improve water and natural resource management; 2) Build community understanding, knowledge, and initiative related to water and natural resource issues and solutions. Nonprofit organizations, officially recognized neighborhood groups, schools, local units of government, and business and professional associations are eligible to apply. Letters of interest due Wednesday, June 1, by 3pm. For information about the application process, visit www.mwmo.org/stewardshipfund.html.

- 6) Additional ash trees in Prospect Park and Seward have been confirmed to have Emerald Ash Borer. All of these trees will also be removed by MPRB Forestry staff. If you have an ash tree in your yard, please only prune it before May 1 and after Labor Day. Only work on your ash tree when the emerald ash borer is dormant, because transporting any part of an ash tree (firewood, branches, etc.) helps spread the pest.
- 7) The Central Corridor Community Agreements Coordinating Committee has organized two community forums on the Central Corridor LRT project's impacts on jobs and economic development. The first, which I will be moderating, is on May 5th, from 6-8pm, on Equitable Transit-Oriented Development Models. The second is on May 10th, 6-8:30pm, on Jobs and Careers, Central Corridor and Beyond. Both sessions will be held at the Central Corridor Resource Center, 1080 University Ave W, Saint Paul.
- 8) In mid-May, Central Corridor construction will close Washington to vehicle traffic between Pleasant and Oak streets until fall 2012. Metro Transit bus services will continue during construction but there will be detours to University Avenue and Fourth Street and major bus stop closures. For more construction updates, see www.centralcorridor.org.
- 9) On April 1st, the Council allocated an additional \$1 million to accelerate the City's pothole repair work to address the significant pothole problem resulting from this year's winter. Crews have been working all winter to temporarily patch potholes when they could, with the bulk of the work occurring since February. With warmer weather and asphalt plants open for the season, Public Works crews began making more permanent patches April 5. This additional funding means we will double the number of repair crews out patching potholes at the beginning of the summer construction and maintenance season. To report a pothole, please call 311, Monday through Friday, 7am-7pm. Public Works uses reports that come in from the public, as well as their observations in the field, to prioritize work and address street issues as efficiently and effectively as possible with the given resources.
- 10) I voted against granting a waiver of the City's domestic partner ordinance to Life Time Fitness. This ordinance requires City contractors to provide the same benefits to same-sex domestic partners that they provide to married employees. Life Time Fitness does not provide these benefits. The City's current contract with our Police and Fire unions obligates the City to provide health club memberships to these employees, and Life Time is the clear favorite of many. However, I believe that in order for our ordinances offering equal rights to all to have any meaning, we must actually use them. I fear that the Council's decision to grant this waiver will set a precedent that no contractor should worry about losing the City's business for not providing the domestic partnership benefits we've mandated by ordinance. This situation was especially problematic, because it became clear that one of Life Time's competitors the YMCA does provide domestic partnership benefits. Joining me in voting to uphold our domestic partner ordinance were Council Members Schiff, Lilligren and Tuthill.
- 11) Early in April, the Council, with my strong support, rejected a list of "change orders" that would have increased the City's contract with Unisys Corporation by \$750,000. This is in addition to the \$34 million contract for 2010 through 2012 and the over \$3 million in "change orders" the Council has agreed to over the life of this contract. I joined Council President Johnson in speaking against moving forward with these change orders, in large part because I continue to believe that the City would be better served by going out for public bids for our information technology contract, and exploring how we could a) do without some IT services, b) bring some of these services in-house, rather than continuing to pay Unisys to do them, and c) utilize open-source software. In a time when the City is reneging on the commitments we've made to neighborhoods and considering laying off vital City staff, I believe that we simply cannot continue to give more and more money to Unisys. Unfortunately, two weeks later, the Council voted to reverse this decision and to allow this additional \$750,000 expense. I again voted no.
- 12) The City has partnered with the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources on a study of our tree canopy. This report will be presented to the Regulatory Energy and Environment committee on April 18th at 1:30pm. You can read the executive summary here: lidar.gis.umn.edu/flexviewer/assets/images/MinneapolisUrbanTreeCanopyMappingSummary-7.pdf. I'm excited to have this work completed. It will provide a baseline for our efforts to keep the tree canopy stable as we deal with Emerald Ash Borer, and help direct resources to where they're most needed.
- 13) There are openings on the Animal Care & Control Advisory Board, Capital Long-Range Improvement Committee, Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, Latino Advisory Committee, Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission, Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Planning Commission, Public Health Advisory Committee, Advisory Group for Redistricting 2011-2012, Senior Citizens Advisory Committee, Minneapolis Telecommunications Network, Thinc.GreenMSP Steering Committee, Workforce Council and Zoning Board of Adjustment. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.