

# Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Seward Neighborhood 7-23-08

Cam's next Seward Office Hours:  
Tuesday, August 26, 9:30-11:00am  
Birchwood Café, 3311 E 25th St  
<http://secondward.blogspot.com>

## Items:

- 1) Non-Motorized Transportation Grants
- 2) NRP Framework for the Future Final Report
- 3) Hiawatha Bike Trail Lighting
- 4) Franklin/Cedar/Minnehaha/20<sup>th</sup> Project
- 5) Hiawatha Station Extensions
- 6) Water Festival and Fountains
- 7) Native Planting Registration Process
- 8) Council Associates
- 9) Pentachlorophenol
- 10) Youth Violence Executive Committee
- 11) New Fire Chief Alex Jackson
- 12) Central Corridor
- 13) Street Furniture Vendor Selected
- 14) Pedicabs
- 15) Taxi Fare Increase
- 16) Openings on City Boards and Commissions

- 1) Transit for Livable Communities has released the first list of funded 2008 Non-Motorized Transportation projects, and the 29<sup>th</sup> Ave S bike/walk street is not included, and is likely not to be funded by these grants. I'm optimistic that once bike/walk streets are built in other parts of the City, we will be able to convince Public Works to pursue this great project.
- 2) The NRP Framework for the Future work group will give its final report to the Committee of the Whole tomorrow at 10am. The Council will hold a special meeting on August 21, at 5pm, to take public comment on the report's recommendations for the future of NRP. You can read the full report here:  
<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2008-meetings/20080725/Docs/RCA-ProgramProposal.pdf>.
- 3) The City's Capital Long-Range Improvement Committee (CLIC) has recommended that the City not fund lighting the Hiawatha Corridor bike trail in 2013, which Public Works brought before them as part of a larger trail extension project. I have made clear to the Mayor's Office that I strongly support this lighting project, which was voted the most important bike infrastructure improvement for 2013 by the City's Bicycle Advisory Committee, and that I would be willing to put off the trail extension to a later year if that will make the lighting project easier to fund.
- 4) My office continues to work with Public Works to find a way to close the financing gap for the proposed project to disentangle the intersection of Minnehaha, Cedar, Franklin and 20<sup>th</sup> Ave S.
- 5) Metro Transit plans to increase the size of many of the Hiawatha LRT stations to accommodate 3-car trains. This is great, because it makes clear that we have far exceeded our initial ridership projections. The construction project will begin next spring, and end in the spring of 2010. They are projecting three or four closures of the station during that period. The current expansion plans may possibly exacerbate pedestrian/cyclist conflict in the area of the station. I have asked that Metro Transit staff attend the next SNG Community Development Committee to discuss the project, especially ideas for preventing this increased conflict.
  - 6) Responding to a number of instances of "tall grass and weeds" violations being written for residents with native prairie gardens, my office is working with Inspections to create a registration process and signage for purposeful native plantings.
  - 7) My office is working with residents on 38<sup>th</sup> Ave S who are concerned about a newly-installed utility pole containing pentachlorophenol, a chemical that is banned for most uses in the US (and all uses in other industrialized countries) and is almost certainly a human carcinogen. I am working to develop a City position against Xcel's use of penta, either through a resolution, our legislative agenda, or our franchise agreement with Xcel which will expire in 2014.

- 8) I am very supportive of the surprisingly controversial decision to install 10 artist-designed water fountains throughout the City. I believe that we must do more as a City to resist the commodification of water and defend its status as a “commons” – a right and responsibility we all share. I see these fountains as a fun, aesthetic part of this broader work, and a way to get just a little more public art into our City. If you're free this Saturday, please consider joining me at **In the Heart of the Beast Theater's water festival** on Lake Street and 15<sup>th</sup> Ave S, **1-6pm**. Thanks to Birchwood Café owner Tracy Singleton for helping with this important work.
- 9) I voted against a proposal at Executive Committee last week to change Council Associates from civil service to appointed positions. I disagree with this proposal for a number of reasons, including concerns about completely politicizing this position, and the impact of this decision on the City employees currently doing this work. Most importantly, I simply do not believe that the Council can honestly make the findings that we are required to make in order to create new appointed positions. Unfortunately, I think there are the votes to pass this proposal at the full Council meeting on Friday.
- 10) The Health, Energy and Environment committee has passed a resolution I authored creating a Youth Violence Prevention Plan Executive Committee and a Youth Violence Prevention Citizen Advisory Committee for oversight of the implementation stage of the Youth Violence Prevention Blueprint for Action. I continue to be very involved in this critically important work.
- 11) I am very supportive of Alex Jackson, Mayor Rybak's nominee to lead the Minneapolis Fire Department. He was unanimously supported both by the Executive and Public Safety committees, and I expect his nomination to pass the Council easily.
- 12) The City Council approved a resolution June 20 that grants approval of the Metropolitan Council's proposed layout for the Central Corridor Light Rail line, with an understanding that the Met Council will satisfactorily resolve several issues outlined in the resolution related to the preliminary design plan. The layout includes LRT at-grade on Washington Ave through the University East Bank campus and creation of a transit mall between Walnut and East River Road. The City is also continuing to work on a Memorandum of Understanding with the University, County and Met Council on traffic and other necessary mitigations to make sure that negative impacts to the surrounding communities are minimized. There will be an open house and public hearing on this project on **August 7, 5pm** at the Coyle Center.
- 13) The City has selected Clear Channel Outdoor as the vendor for our Coordinated Street Furniture plan, which will increase the quantity and quality of street furniture. Staff will bring a proposed contract back to the Council.
- 14) I am excited to work with Council Member Schiff on reforming our outdated regulations regarding pedicabs, which are so stringent as to basically regulate them out of existence in our City. I hope to create an environment in which pedicabs are common, as they are in other large cities, and in which pedicab operators can earn a decent living.
- 15) I am supportive of a move to increase the fare rate that taxicab operators can charge in Minneapolis. I believe that rising fuel costs make this necessary, given the fact that most drivers are independent contractors who pay for fuel out of their own wages.
- 16) There are openings on the Minneapolis Commission on Civil Rights (closes 07/31/08), Civilian Police Review Authority, Minneapolis Ethical Practices Board Vacancy (closes 08/01/08) and Minneapolis Workforce Council (closes 7/25/2008). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).