

News from Cam Gordon

Council Member, Second Ward

January 2011

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

Urban Agriculture Plan. The draft Urban Agriculture Topical Plan is moving forward. The comment period will end on **January 31st**, and a revised plan will be presented to the Planning Commission on **February 22nd**. I see this plan as a major step towards making Minneapolis a national leader in the local food movement. You can view the draft plan here:

www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/urban_ag_plan.asp.

Solar Energy Systems. The Council is considering changes to our zoning code that would add regulations to Solar Energy Systems. I successfully moved to postpone this amendment for two weeks at the Zoning and Planning Committee in order to get more time to gather input on the proposed standards. The proposal would provide greater clarity for City staff as well as solar installers and property owners; set standards for building-mounted and freestanding (i.e., ground-mounted) systems; clarify that solar access easements may be purchased from nearby property owners, consistent with state statute, and; require that the City Planning Commission, when evaluating new development projects, consider whether requests for increased allowable building height would result shadowing of existing solar energy systems. I am generally supportive of these changes and very supportive of making solar energy more viable for homes and businesses, but want to make sure these changes help, and do not hinder, more use of solar energy in Minneapolis.

New Drainage Regulations. The Council has a new ordinance intended to better regulate stormwater, including snow melt, to help prevent it from damaging adjacent properties. The proposal would establish clear drainage standards for construction activity and grading, snow melt from snow storage, sump pumps and downspouts and create penalties including administrative citations, assessments, license revocation and stop work orders. This proposal, which I support, centralizes accountability for enforcement within Regulatory Services.

Central Corridor Light Rail (CCLRT) Project Court decision. On January 26 Judge Donovan ruled on a federal civil rights complaint filed by a group led by the NAACP's St. Paul branch, several other groups, neighborhood activists, and small businesses accusing the Met Council and the federal government of ignoring the history of previous adverse impacts on the African-American Rondo neighborhood and the adverse impacts the project's construction would have on area businesses. The Judge found that the Environmental Impact Statement inadequately addressed the loss of business revenues as an adverse impact of the construction of the CCLRT, but denied plaintiffs' request for an order to stop the CCLRT Project. For more see news articles at <http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2011/01/27/central-corridor-rondo-lawsuit/> http://www.twincities.com/ci_17218499?nclick_check=1

Mobile Food Vending. The Mobile Food Vending ordinance that passed last year is being reopened for revisions. As you may recall, the ordinance was only open to vendors in downtown Minneapolis. During that discussion, I heard from a number of small businesses that they would be interested in having parts of Ward 2 included in any possible expansion. Before March of this year, we have the opportunity to discuss whether to expand the mobile vending ordinance to cover other parts of the city. It is also possible that, as part of this change, mobile vendors could operate from parking spaces, rather than just on sidewalks and in commercial parking lots. I am asking Ward 2 neighborhoods and business associations to let me know whether they would like this opportunity to be opened on their commercial corridors, and to give input on the following questions:

- Should mobile vending be allowed only on sidewalks and in commercial parking lots, or in on-street parking spaces as well?

- Should mobile vending be allowed adjacent to residential uses, or only commercially or institutionally zoned lots?
- Should there be a limit on the number of mobile vendors allowed per commercial parking lot?
- Should mobile vending be allowed near events?
- Should there be a limit on the proximity of mobile vendors to other sidewalk uses, such as sidewalk cafes?
- What limits should be put in place on hours of operation for mobile vendors?
- Should mobile vendors be required to be open a certain number of days per year (as they are in downtown)?

Resident Survey. Beginning January 31 and continuing through February, the City will be conducting a resident survey gather information about how residents view the quality of services the City provides. Approximately 1,100 residents will complete a telephone survey, which is being conducted by the National Research Center, Inc., an independent research firm. People contacted to complete the survey will be selected randomly, with the goal of reaching a diverse cross-section of Minneapolis residents. If you are contacted to participate in the survey, please take the few minutes necessary to provide your honest opinions about how we're doing in Minneapolis. For most people, the survey will take about 20 minutes. The results can be very helpful in tracking progress and guiding upcoming planning and budget decisions. The survey will be translated for people who prefer to take it in Spanish, Hmong, Somali, Laotian, Oromo or Vietnamese. We have conducted similar surveys in 2001, 2003, 2005 and 2008. More information and past survey results are available on the City's website.

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/news/20110126ResidentSurvey.asp>

Department 5-year Plans. In January and February each City department is presenting its five-year plan to City Council committees. This is a great opportunity to see department goals, performance measures and upcoming plans. So far I have heard reports for the Health and Family Services, Police, Intergovernmental Relations, City Attorney, Neighborhood and Community and Relations, and Regulatory Services departments. These are very useful for the Council, staff and city residents alike to help us understand how departments prioritize services, effectively manage resources and measure progress. Departments create plans with a five-year perspective but update them annually. The last plans were for 2007 to 2011 and these will run to 2014. Departments are presenting their business plans to their home Council Committee, and will be available on committee agendas as they come forward. Let me know if you are interest in a particular plan and I can send it to you.

Low-cost Radon Test Kits. Radon is an odorless, colorless, tasteless gas that occurs naturally in Minnesota soils and can enter homes primarily through cracks and openings in basement or foundation floors and walls. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States and more than 21,000 deaths are attributed to radon each year. Now, radon detection kits are available for purchase for \$9 each, at the City of Minneapolis Development Review, 250 S. 4th St., Room 300. The Minneapolis Development Review's hours of operation are: Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) recommends that all homes in Minnesota be tested every two – five years for radon. For more information on testing, mitigation and the new radon-resistant new construction measures, visit www.health.state.mn.us/radon or call the Minnesota Department of Health Indoor Air Unit at 651-201-4601 or 1-800-798-9050.

Community Gardeners Needed. The City has 13 vacant lots available for qualifying groups to lease for community gardens. These City-owned lots were selected because they are not appropriate for development. This means that they will remain available for years of gardening even as the economy changes and redevelopment picks up. The Community Garden Pilot Program began in 2010 with 18 lots. Last year five of the lots were leased to community groups. Experienced community garden groups may be eligible for three- to five-year leases, while groups gardening for the first time will start with one-year leases. A qualifying group will be a not-

for-profit or a group with a not-for-profit sponsor. The garden will need to have liability insurance. Applicants should be ready to discuss the layout of the community garden, how it will be managed and how it will engage and benefit the community. For more information on the Homegrown Minneapolis Community Gardens Pilot Program, visit www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/homegrown-home.asp or call (612) 673-2597.

Martin Luther King Essay Winners. Congratulations to Seward resident Bruktawit Zewdie and West Bank resident Ibrahim Somo, both in the seventh grade, for being among the winners of the citywide Martin Luther King essay contest. Both Bruktawit and Ibrahim were honored by the City Council at our meeting on January 28th.

Sexual Exploitation of Youth. I was strongly in favor of amending the City's legislative agenda to support efforts to end the sexual exploitation of youth by building a system that responds effectively to their needs, including sufficient resources and training for law enforcement and service providers at the legislature. Current proposed legislation (endorsed by the State Human Trafficking Task Force) would resolve the conflict that exists in current law that treats youth under the age of 18 who engage in prostitution as both victims deserving of protective services, and as criminals to be prosecuted. It would divert all youth to the CHIPS (Child in Need of Protective Services) program, rather than to the criminal justice program. It would also expand statewide a current pilot diversion project that has been successful in Ramsey County.

Pro-gun Efforts at the Minnesota Legislature. A number of new pro-gun bills are being brought forward in the state legislature. One bill, known as "shoot first" would allow people to shoot anyone they don't know if they set foot on your property and eliminate the "rule of retreat" that means if a person can safely walk away from a situation, they are not entitled to kill someone just because they seem threatening. It would also allow the killing of anyone in a public place who seems "threatening." A second bill would prohibit state colleges and universities - including the University of Minnesota, located in the Second Ward - from banning concealed guns on campus. Some law makers are also trying to push through a Minnesota Constitutional amendment to "keep, bear and use arms" and a house committee recently approved an amendment that would completely repeal the law that established Minnesota's background check system. I believe that these proposals are moving us in the wrong direction and will put residents, visitors and police in greater danger. In the weeks ahead, working through the Youth Violence Prevention Executive Committee, I will be pushing for the City's legislative agenda to make fighting these efforts a higher priority. To learn more from a group also opposed to these efforts see <http://www.endgunviolence.com/>

Mississippi River Critical Corridor. State legislators are also working to repeal a state law that required the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to work on rules to implement restrictions on different types of land use near the Mississippi River as it passes through Minneapolis. The proposed legislation would completely eliminate the Mississippi River Critical Corridor Area as an area of special state designation or protection. SF 39 (Sen. Benjamin Kruse, R-Brooklyn Park)/HF 95 (Rep. Melissa Hortman, DFL-Brooklyn Park) would eliminate the a program that has provided planning and management for the 72-mile stretch of the Mississippi from Anoka County to Hastings in southern Dakota County since the 70s. I am very concerned that repeal of this program and designation could drastically limit our ability to protect this treasured natural resource.

Neighborhood Funding Work Group. The Council has formed a neighborhood funding work group to facilitate decision making relating to the actions the Council will need to take on neighborhood funding this year. This work group includes the Council President and Vice President, the chairs of the Ways and Means/Budget Committee and the Intergovernmental Relations Committee, as well as a Mayoral representative, the City Coordinator, the Neighborhood and Community Relations Director, the Finance Director, the Communications Director and the Intergovernmental Relations Director. The Work Group's charge is to frame options and proposed actions for consideration by the Committee of the Whole and Ways &

Means Committee relative to the 2011 Budget action that froze Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) spending. I would have preferred that the meetings of this group be open to the public and included representation from the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission and the NRP Policy Board.

2011 Great Street Grants. In January the Council authorized contracts with Seward Redesign and the Lake Street Council (LSC) to administer the City's Great Street Façade Improvement Grants. Staff reported that Seward Redesign has also developed a highly effective façade improvement program that yields high-quality investments. They completed a 2008-awarded \$25,000 contract for Franklin Avenue between 13th Avenue and the Mississippi River in just over two years and have less than \$1,000 remaining in a \$25,000 2010-awarded contract. Redesign's \$25,000 contract from 2010 funded nine projects. Redesign requested \$50,000 this year, citing enhancing pedestrian safety, business turnover, and growing needs of immigrant businesses as increasing the demand for façade grants on Franklin Avenue, but the Council approved a contract of \$40,000. Staff also reported that the Lake Street Council has developed a successful façade improvement program with demonstrable gains each year. They completed a \$25,000 contract from 2008 in less than two years and fully expended a 2010-awarded \$50,000 contract. The City Council approved another contract of \$50,000 for the Lake Street Council for 2011.

Surveying for Historic Resources. The City of is holding community meetings to discuss historic surveying work underway in the Camden area, Central Core (including Downtown, Como and Prospect Park) and 3 Southwest neighborhoods. The survey will identify unknown historic properties, recommend properties for further study, make future decisions about the significance and protection of historic resources and develop goals and strategies for preservation and neighborhood planning. Residents can help by completing an online survey at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/hpc/. Three meetings will be held for: 1) the Camden Community Survey Area on Thursday February 24, 2011 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. at Webber Community Center: 4400 Dupont Avenue North, 2) the Central Core Survey Area on Thursday February 17, 2011 6:00 – 7:30 pm at Our Lady of the Lourdes: 1 Lourdes Place, 3) for the Downtown portion of Central Core Survey Area on Monday February 28, 2011 4:30 – 6:00 pm in City Hall, Room 319: 350 South 5th Street, and 4) for the Windom, Kenny, and Armatage Survey Area on Wednesday February 23, 2011 6:30 – 8:00 pm at Kenny Recreation Center: 1328 58th Street W. The City was first surveyed for historic resources in the 1970s and many of today's designated landmarks and historic districts are a result of the original survey. Since 2001, CPED has conducted a re-survey of historic resources in Minneapolis. The Seward and Longfellow areas were surveyed in 2009.

Ward 2 Appointees to Boards and Commissions. Cooper resident and former Mayor's Office staff Cara Letofsky has been appointed to the Minneapolis Public Housing Board of Commissioners. Como resident, Tom Leavey was reappointed to the Senior Citizens Advisory Committee. I am grateful to these two residents for serving the City and our communities in this way.

Prospect Park Resurfacing, Phase II. The Council has approved some additional streets in Prospect Park for resurfacing in 2011. These include Williams, St. Mary's and Delaware in the Glendale Housing area and will conclude the larger project started last year.

University and Washington Ave Improvements. The Council has approved moving ahead with possible lighting improvements on streets that are part of the Central Corridor LRT project. This will include a special street lighting assessment. Before a final decision is made, however, there will be a public hearing March 22 as part of the Transportation and Public Works Committee meeting that begins at 9:30.

Alternative Finance Program. The City Council has authorized an allocation of \$40,000 to the African Development Center ADC to continue operating the Alternative Finance Program in

partnership with the City in 2011. First approved in 2006, the Alternative Finance Program provides Sharia compliant loans to business owners in Minneapolis.

Seward Recycling Pilot Project. In January the Council formally accepted \$100,000 from Hennepin County to implement the neighborhood group initiated dual-sort recycling pilot project in a portion of north east Seward in 2011. Residents included in this area will likely receive a mailing with more information in February or March.

The South Minneapolis Housing Fair, in its 17th year, will be held Saturday, Feb. 26, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at South High School. This event, sponsored in part by several neighborhood organizations, serves as a great way to meet contractors, network with neighbors and attend workshops. For a list of last year's participating contractors and more information visit www.housingfair.org.

The 14th Annual Prospect Park Fire & Ice Festival will be held on Saturday February 12, 5:30 – 8:00 p.m. at Luxton Park Neighborhood Community Center and Ice Rink. There will be a bonfire, ice skating, horse-drawn hayrides, music, book exchange / sale and refreshments. This is sponsored by the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board-Luxton Park, PERRIA, CACA, Pratt Council, and Luxton Park Council.

Seward Longfellow Restorative Justice Partnership is offering two upcoming fundraising events. **Saturday, February 12, 6:30-9:00 pm**, Zipps Liquors will host a wine, beer and liquor tasting at the Eagles Club, 2507 E. 25th St. and **Sunday, March 13, 2:00-4:00 pm** there will be a 2nd Annual Benefit Concert at Faith Mennonite Church with local musicians Bret Hesla, Larry Dittberner, Ray Makeever, Linda and Sophia Breitag, Chris Jones and Robin Nelson. For more information or to find out how you can get involved in SLRJP contact Michele Braley at 612-338-6205 x108 or michele@sng.org

The Matthews Park Ice Follies will be **Saturday, February 5, 12:30-2:30 p.m.** and will include games, prizes, food, and entertainment for everyone. For more information call 612-370-4950

Pedestrian Improvement Grant. My staff worked with the Cedar Riverside Partnership and the West Bank Community Coalition to draft an application for Non-Motorized Transportation funds from Transit for Livable Communities. If successful, this application will fund a plan for improving the pedestrian experience on 6th St from Cedar to 15th, 15th Ave from 6th to 4th, and 4th from 15th to Cedar. This plan will help inform the City's planned reconstruction of 15th and 4th, and the improvements to 6th St that were funded by the Riverside Plaza renovation project. I am hopeful that TLC will fund this strong proposal, and glad that my office could play a central role in exploring this opportunity.

National Export Initiative Small Business Tour comes to Ward 2. On February 17, Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke, U.S. and other federal officials will host a daylong conference at the McNamara Alumni Center showcasing [tools](#) for US businesses to identify international partners, conduct due diligence on market opportunities, and finance and insure export orders. Governor Dayton and Mayor Rybak will also speak at the event, highlighting local business export stories. If you have a story to share about your experiences expanding your business through international trade, please contact Kristin Guild in the City's Economic Development department (Kristin.guild@ci.minneapolis.mn.us, 612-673-5168). Registration is online at http://www.export.gov/newmarketsnewjobs/eg_main_024190.asp. The event will be at the McNamara Alumni Center at the U of MN from 8:30-3:00. There is a \$40 fee - breakfast and lunch are included. The US Department of Commerce believes the event will sell out – there is room for 400.

Free Consultation with an Architect. Thanks to the University District Alliance, Saturday, March 5th, 10:30 – 3:30, at the Bell Museum of Natural History. Architects and contractors will be available for free consultations. Consultations will be made by appointment, to discuss

remodeling and landscaping ideas for upgrading homesteaded property in University District neighborhoods. In addition to architects, contractors will be available to advise on cost and timing issues. You'll need to bring scale drawings (1/4" to 1' preferred) and any relevant photos or other information about your home, so begin planning now. Online registration will begin on Monday, February 7th; watch neighborhood e-lists and web sites for links to the registration form.

Minneapolis Charter Commission Vacancy. There is currently one (1) vacancy on the Minneapolis Charter Commission for a four-year term beginning February 26, 2011. The Commission is comprised of 15 members appointed by the Chief Judge of Hennepin County, the Honorable James T. Swenson. The basic job of the Charter Commission is to gather, receive, review, and/or propose amendments to the Charter, and then to determine if they are appropriate to submit to the voters or to the City Council for 13-0 passage. The Charter Commission, with the assistance of an Advisory Group, is responsible for redrawing Ward boundaries in the City after every census. For more info and to apply see <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/boards-and-commissions/open/Charter%20Commission%20Vacancy%20Notice.asp>

There are currently openings on the Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, Public Health Advisory Committee, Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, Senior Citizens Advisory Committee, Thinc.GreenMSP Steering Committee and the Zoning Board of Adjustment. For more information visit <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/boards-and-commissions/open/index.asp> To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Ward Office Hours. Every Tuesday morning I hold "Office Hours" in the Ward from 9:30-11:00am. Please feel free to call for an appointment or just stop by.

1st Tuesdays, Hard Times Café (West Bank/University);
2nd Tuesdays, SECIA Office (SE Como);
3rd Tuesdays, Pratt School (Prospect Park);
4th Tuesdays, the Birchwood Cafe (Seward/Longfellow).

Yours, in peace and cooperation,

Cam Gordon
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673-2202, 296-0579
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