

News from Cam Gordon
Council Member, Second Ward
July 2008

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

The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth will come before the Council on July 11th. I am supportive of the direction of this plan, especially the significantly increased focus on environmental sustainability.

A report from the **NRP Framework for the Future** Task Force on June 19th calls for the creation of a new Neighborhood and Community Relations Department that would be housed in department of the City Coordinator. It would both serve residents directly and support other City departments to improve neighborhood and community relationships. It also calls for the creation of a new 18 member Neighborhood and Community Advisory Board to provide direction to the NRP program; approve neighborhood action plans; advise the City Council on community participation policies; provide feedback to City Departments; oversee use of administrative funds and implementation of a community participation program; and advise the Mayor, City Council and City Departments on community issues and needs related to community participation. The report builds on several recommendations of last year's community engagement task force and suggests significant changes to the current structure of the NRP program. It is schedule to return to the Council for approval in September. I would greatly appreciate any comments or advice about how I can best use this report to bring both resources and real grassroots democratic decision-making to neighborhoods. As the discussion continues my priority will be on developing a more permanent system of funding and accountability for recognized neighborhood groups, and providing the support, education, oversight and resources they need to ensure that neighborhood driven planning and decision-making are as effective as possible. To see the full report go here:

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2008-meetings/20080620/CoWAgenda20080619.asp#TopOfPage>.

Central Corridor. 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, including Southeast Como, are minimized.

Homicide on the West Bank. A young man named Joe Sodd III was fatally stabbed at 2am on the West Bank two weeks ago. Joe's family lives in the Cooper neighborhood. There are no suspects in custody at this time and investigators with the Minneapolis Police Department Homicide Unit are following leads. Anyone with information about the incident is asked to call the Minneapolis Police Department tip line at 612-692-8477. The Inspector of the First Precinct has committed to me that the Sector 2 (which includes the West Bank) will receive four additional officers from the 32 recently hired.

MPD Diversity Plan. The Minneapolis Police Department has drafted a plan for diversifying the force. I believe that this is an incredibly important goal for our city, especially for the public's trust in the department. The plan establishes a recruitment coordinator and multicultural team and offers other recommendations to follow up on. It also shows that we have a long way to go before the diversity of the police force is an accurate reflection of the diversity of the city. To read the plan, go here: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/2008-meetings/20080711/docs/MPD-Comprehensive-Diversity-Plan.pdf>.

The Midtown Eco Energy (MEE) power plant will **not** be built in East Phillips, thanks in large part to growing neighborhood opposition. Kandiyohi Development Partners formally withdrew the air quality permit filed with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency in early June and the City attorney's office also confirmed that the development contract expired on June 10th.

Truck Size Resolution. Last week, the Council passed a resolution I have been working on for some time, calling on the Legislature not to increase the allowable size and weight of freight trucks on our roads and bridges, unless and until they are proven safe. As the one-year anniversary of the I-35W bridge collapse approaches, it's important to recognize the damage that increasing truck sizes do to our roads and bridges. It's also essential that the State do more to help local units of government repair and maintain our infrastructure, which continues to deteriorate.

New Fire Chief. 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.

Booting and Towing. I supported a ban on "booting" vehicles in private lots, except in instances in which towing is not an option for the private property owner. I also supported a move to cap towing fees at 150% of what the City pays towing companies for public tows. Both of these actions have passed the Council.

Good Jobs, Green Jobs. Last week, the Health, Energy and Environment committee passed a resolution I coauthored supporting the Good Jobs, Green Jobs initiative started in Mayor RT Rybak's office, and directing City staff to work towards establishing Minneapolis as a national leader in green manufacturing.

Lurking. My proposal to repeal the Lurking ordinance failed in Council on a 6-6 vote. I am proud that I led this effort, which was supported by the City's stated goals and numerous plans, including the plan to end homelessness. The testimony provided by advocates for civil rights, for the poor, and for persons experiencing homelessness was extremely important for the Council to hear. It is my hope that this public discussion about the ways that our city criminalizes poverty, homelessness and racial minorities will lay a foundation for steering our policing model in a more constructive and effective direction in the future.

Free Speech. A mandatory protest registration process passed the Council in June. I and other free speech advocates were able to win a victory, however, by creating a "sunset" clause that means it will only be in place for the week of the Republican National Convention. I still voted against the proposed process, and I am continuing to work to strengthen a resolution setting forth clear MPD policies for the convention this summer and other political demonstrations.

Pre-Employment Drug Testing. The pre-employment drug testing policy that I voted against in Executive committee has also failed in Ways and Means on a 4-2 vote. The policy has been sent back to Executive, where I will continue to oppose it.

Hiawatha Maintenance Facility. The City has taken the first step towards building our new public works facility at 26th and Hiawatha by closing the current fueling site so the underground fuel tanks can be removed - they're located where the new building will stand. When completed, the Hiawatha Maintenance Facility will be LEED certified and house the people and equipment who build and maintain our sewers, bridges and streets. A new fueling station will also be constructed at the site.

Anti-Idling Ordinance. The Council has unanimously passed the anti-idling ordinance I wrote about last month, with my strong support.

The City is seeking **bilingual election judges**. If you are eligible to vote and are fluent in English and a second language, please call Minneapolis 311 or apply on-line to be an election judge at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/elections.

Street Furniture Vendor. 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.

4am Bar Close During RNC. I voted against the proposal to allow liquor establishments to stay open until 4am during the Republican National Convention, responding to the concerns of residents and the lack of compelling reasons for taking this action. As passed, the proposal gives only downtown area bars and restaurants the option to stay open until 4 am if they apply and pay for a special permit. No businesses in the Second Ward are included.

Pedicabs. 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.

Taxis. I am also 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.

Lead. The City is seeking \$300,000 from the HUD to increase enrollment of the housing of low income, at risk children and pregnant women into lead abatement and treatment programs, a \$3 million lead hazard control grant, and a lead technical research grant for up to \$1 million.

Dogs in Sidewalk Cafés. The Council has voted to create a new process for restaurants with sidewalk cafes to allow patrons to bring their dogs with them.

Hiawatha LRT Station Extensions. Metro Transit is planning to extend the platforms at the Cedar Riverside and Franklin LRT stations, to accommodate 3-car trains. This is good news, because the need for 3-car trains is driven by the phenomenal ridership along the line. The construction will begin in March of 2009 and is expected to last until spring of 2010. Metro Transit is predicting that these two stations will be offline for three weekends over the course of the year, with backup service by bus. My office is working to ensure that the proposed changes help to mitigate congestion and bicyclist/pedestrian conflict in the station areas.

Dinkydome Project. The Doran Companies Dinkydome / Sydney Hall project did not get approval from the Planning Commission, and will be coming before the Zoning and Planning committee on July 17.

Alley Behind Seward Coop. The work of the subcontractor hired to build the new alley behind the Seward Coop, serving residences on 28th and 29th Avenues between Franklin and 22nd St, and the 2800 block of 22nd St, seems not to be up to the Public Works Department's standards. Specifically, it seems not to be deep enough to withstand the weight of garbage trucks and other heavy vehicles. Until this issue is resolved, no vehicular traffic is allowed on the alley. I realize that this is a significant hardship to the residents on this block, and my office has made clear to Public Works that I want this taken care of as soon as possible.

East Lake Special Service District. The Transportation and Public Works committee has voted to formally establish the East Lake Street Special Service District: Lake St E from Hiawatha Ave to West River Road; and 27th Ave S from Lake St E to Minnehaha Ave.

20th Resurfacing. There will be a community meeting on the proposed resurfacing of 20th Ave S on **Tuesday, July 8th**, at 7pm at the Brian Coyle Center. There will also be a public hearing on

this project at the Transportation and Public Works committee meeting on **Tuesday, July 15**, at 9:30am. Residential properties along 20th will be charged 13 cents per square foot within what the City calls the “street influence zone.”

The **Malcolm Ave SE** construction project has been approved by the Council. This is a first step towards the planned revitalization of SEMI and the construction of Granary Road.

Sergeant Preston’s bar in Seven Corners has applied for a downgrade of their liquor license to a Class E. This application went through the Public Safety & Regulatory Services committee last week, and I expect it to pass Council on July 11th.

Openings on Boards and Commissions. There are openings on the Ethical Practices Board (closes 7/3/08) and Workforce Council (closes 7/11/2008). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Please feel free to contact me and my office anytime if you have any questions or concerns. We welcome your thoughts and feedback on any of these issues and my positions.

Yours, in peace and cooperation,

Cam Gordon
Minneapolis City Council Member, Second Ward
673-2202, 296-0579
cam@camgordon.org
<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/ward2/>