

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Southeast Como, 7-1-08

Cam's next Southeast Como Office Hours:

Tuesday, July 8, 9:30-11:00am

SECIA Office, 837 15th Ave SE

Items:

- 1) NRP Framework for the Future
- 2) Central Corridor
- 3) MPD Diversity Plan
- 4) Truck Size and Weight Resolution
- 5) Booting and Towing
- 6) Good Jobs, Green Jobs Resolution
- 7) Dinkydome/Sydney Hall
- 8) Malcolm Reconstruction
- 9) Lurking
- 10) Free Speech
- 11) Pre-Employment Drug Testing
- 12) Anti-Idling Ordinance
- 13) Bilingual Election Judges
- 14) Street Furniture Vendor Selected
- 15) Openings on City Boards and Commissions

- 1) 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 scheduled to return to the Council for consideration and possible 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. My priority is 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>.
- 2) 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.
 - 3) 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>.

- 4) 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.
- 5) 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.
- 6) 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.
- 7) 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 10. I am generally supportive, but expect improvements to be made before or during the committee meeting.
- 8) 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.
- 9) 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.
- 10) 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.
- 11) 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.
- 12) The Council has unanimously passed the anti-idling ordinance I wrote about last month, with my strong support.
- 13) 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.
- 14) 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.
- 15) 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.