

**News from Cam Gordon  
Council Member, Second Ward  
August 2011**

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/council/ward2/>

**We Want You Back.** Once again this year, The Minneapolis Public Schools, Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board and City of Minneapolis are coordinating a campaign to get un-enrolled students back in school. “We Want You Back” invites un-enrolled young people to come back to school, complete their credits and get their diploma. The campaign’s strategy includes outreach at parks, libraries, and community events to generate awareness, culminating in a citywide door-knocking event on **Saturday, Sept. 10**. Minneapolis Public Schools staff will be available that day to help students with the re-enrollment process. To sign up to volunteer, or if you know a young person who would like to re-enroll, contact Jo Haberman with the Youth Coordinating Board at 612-673-2720.

**One Read.** This summer and fall the City is sponsoring a “One Read” effort that I hope will unite people by having us all read the same book and start deeper conversations about race, family and the history of our City. The book, ***The Grace of Silence*** by Minneapolis native and National Public Radio host Michele Norris, describes Norris’s experience as a child of the first black family on their block in a south Minneapolis neighborhood. For more info visit <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/oneminneapolisoneread.asp>, email [oneread@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:oneread@minneapolismn.gov) or call Cheyenne Erickson: (612) 673-2052, or Jenny Chayabutr: (612) 673-2509.

**Managed Natural Landscape Ordinance.** The Managed Natural Landscape ordinance I authored passed the Regulatory Energy and Environment committee on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. I expect it to pass the full Council as well. Once passed, it will allow our ordinances to catch up with the environmentally friendly practices being used by residents, including native prairie plantings and other purposeful, well-maintained yards that use something other than turf grass. For the first time, there will be the legal authority for inspections staff to allow grasses in yards over 8 inches in height. The ordinance will also help clarify the difference between turf grass lawns that are not being maintained and purposeful plantings. I directed staff to bring forward some related process improvements by March of next year. I see this as a major step forward in allowing and encouraging residents to use more ecologically sustainable plantings in their yards, with all the attendant improvements to storm water management, biodiversity, air quality and more.

**Food Policy Council.** A resolution I authored creating the City’s first-ever Food Policy Council has passed the Public Safety, Civil Rights and Health committee unanimously. This body will be a long term advisory committee that will be empowered to advise the City on all matters relating to food, especially local food issues. Formation of this group is one of the key recommendations of the Homegrown Minneapolis initiative, and it will take on the continuing work of Homegrown.

**Farmers Market Ordinance.** Since fall of last year, my staff has been working with farmers market managers and City staff on a comprehensive revision of the City’s farmers market ordinances. I have introduced this ordinance change, and expect it to come forward for a public hearing in September. This ordinance would make many overdue changes to the farmers market regulatory system, including:

- Creating our first-ever “Farmers Market” license type, which would require that at least 60% of market vendors would be selling food they had grown themselves.
- Codifying the existing “Mini Markets” in ordinance.
- Creating a new “Art and Produce” market type, which would include both self-made arts and crafts and fresh food.

I’m excited to be bringing these changes forward, and I’m optimistic that, given the support of both City staff and the community, my colleagues will support them as well.

**Bicycle Master Plan.** The Council has passed the City's first ever Bicycle Master Plan. It was considerably improved by input from the new Bicycle Advisory Committee (or BAC), with four bike facility corridors throughout the city being added as a result of their advocacy. This outcome has also significantly strengthened the BAC itself. As we passed the plan, the Council also directed staff to work with the BAC on finalizing the recommendations they've made for an implementation plan, and return to the Council in November. For more information, please see my blog.

**New City Domain Name.** The City has switched to an easier, shorter domain name: [www.minneapolismn.gov](http://www.minneapolismn.gov). All City emails have changed accordingly (although emails sent to the old email addresses should still reach us). My new email is [cam.gordon@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:cam.gordon@minneapolismn.gov), my Policy Aide's is [robin.garwood@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:robin.garwood@minneapolismn.gov), and my Associate's is [nancy.olsen@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:nancy.olsen@minneapolismn.gov).

**State Budget Deal.** The budget deal between Governor and legislature is not as bad as it could have been for the people of Minneapolis, but it wasn't very good, either. The City was hit hard with a decrease in Local Government Aid (LGA) and will be getting \$64 million instead of the \$87.5 million we are due under the state's own LGA formula. More importantly, due to the unwillingness to raise taxes on the wealthiest Minnesotans, the budget essentially borrows the whole difference between the two sides' positions, approximately \$1.4 billion. This structurally unbalanced approach virtually assures that the state will continue to face major deficits in future years, with significant consequences for state services and for municipalities across the state.

**2011 Budget Cuts and Fire Fighter Layoffs.** Earlier this year, the Council passed a "plan B" budget for 2011, to prepare for the possibility that the State legislature would not follow its own Local Government Aid formula. Sadly, it didn't. Among other things, the plan B budget required cuts to the Police and Fire departments, which together account for 46% of the discretionary General Fund, the part of the City budget supported by LGA. The total cut to the Fire Department was \$1.45 million. Had we been forced to make that cut in the beginning of this year, it would have equaled 17 firefighter positions; however, in order to achieve this level of savings when implemented in August, it would have equaled 44 firefighter positions. The Mayor proposed transferring \$1.1 million from the Contingency Account to the Fire Department. But because this plan would still have eliminated 13 firefighter positions, including 10 layoffs, I supported an alternative proposal that moved funds from unfilled positions in other City departments. The Mayor has vetoed this action. Unless there is an alternative put forward, I plan to vote to override his veto. You can read more on my blog.

**Police and Fire Pensions.** During the special session, legislation passed that would consolidate our old city Police and Fire pension programs. The agreement, outlined in the legislation, would not be effective until January 21 and still needs to be approved by the members of the programs and the City Council. It appears that this bill is generous to the pension recipients and offers slightly better terms Minneapolis tax payers than the previously passed legislation that was not signed by the Governor. This has the potential to save Minneapolis taxpayers millions of dollars over the long term, end a long drawn out litigation process and stabilize payments in the next several years until, eventually, the programs will be completely managed by the state's Public Employee Retiree Association. In the weeks ahead I will be watching what the pension program members do to prepare for making my final decision on this when it will be voted on by the Council sometime in the fall.

**Mayor's 2012 Budget Proposal.** On August 11 the Mayor delivered a written budget message to the City Council outlining his intention to request that the maximum levy increase be set at 2%. The levy is the total amount of property taxes we collect from all property tax payers combined. Last year's levy increase was 4.7%. Other highlights of his message included proposing that there be no salary increases and that he is using a new budgeting approach called "priority-based budgeting" this year. The Mayor's full budget proposal is expected to be presented to the Council, and made available to the public, on September 12 with the Mayor's Budget Address to the Council at 12 noon. On the 13<sup>th</sup> the Board of Estimate and Taxation will hold a public hearing and

vote on the proposed levy. These meetings constitute the beginning of the budget setting season (or process) that runs from September to December here in City Hall.

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator.** I am very supportive of a long-overdue move by Public Works to hire a full-time bicycle and pedestrian coordinator. I see this as an essential public safety position, especially in light of the tragic bicyclist fatality in Ward 2 earlier this year. This position was created by the Public Works administration by reallocating resources within their department, not with any new funding. In fact, I expect it to save the City money by more effectively coordinating our work on bicycling and pedestrian issues, taking advantage of opportunities as they arise, and finding outside resources to fund bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. I believe it is irresponsible for anyone to refer to this position as “fluff,” and will fight any attempt to raid this position’s funding for other departments. You can read more on my blog.

**Homicide in Longfellow.** Cooper neighborhood resident Shea Stremcha was tragically murdered July 20th in his home on the 2900 block of 45<sup>th</sup> Ave S. Thirty-six hours later, two arrests were made. Two men have been charged with first-degree burglary and second-degree homicide, though I hear from the County Attorney’s Office that they will be pushing for a first-degree murder charge, because homicides committed during the commission of certain other felonies can be elevated to a higher charge. My office worked with the Longfellow Community Coalition to put together a meeting the week after the homicide, attended by over one hundred nearby residents. I want to thank the Minneapolis Police Department in general, and Third Precinct commander Lucy Gerold in particular, for their handling of this tragic event. I also want to thank the more than 30 Cooper residents who filled out a Community Impact Statement that will have an impact on the Judge’s sentencing decision.

**New Bike Lanes in Ward 2.** Several new bike lanes have been installed in Ward 2, or will be installed shortly, including 15<sup>th</sup> Ave SE from Como to Elm, Como from 10<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>, Franklin Ave from the Mississippi to 18<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> Ave S from Riverside to the river. Many of these projects were partially funded by the federal Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot project.

**Bike Lanes on 25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup>.** The Seward Neighborhood Group has succeeded in convincing Public Works staff to consider bike lanes on the “S-curve” formed by 26<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Aves S north of Franklin Ave. The proposed facility would connect Franklin to Riverside. It is on the City’s new Bicycle Master Plan, and is being considered at this time as part of a repaving project paid for by the federal government in response to the extra wear on Minneapolis streets after the I-35W bridge fell. Adding bike lanes to the section between Butler Place and Riverside will require the removal of 8 parking spaces, 7 from the west side of the street and 1 from the east side. I will be working with various West Bank stakeholder groups on a community engagement process regarding this proposal.

**Community Attorneys.** A federal grant of \$420,350 from the Edward Byrne Memorial fund will help the City keep two of our community attorney positions. The Community Attorney Program allows a Community Attorney to office in each of the five police precincts in Minneapolis I believe that this is a very effective way to increase the City Attorney’s connection to the community and improves our ability to work with police and neighborhoods to more successfully prosecute crime.

**Enterprise Land Management.** The Council has approved a consulting pool of three technology firms to help us merge together various land-use databases. With some reluctance, I supported this action to help us complete work on an “Enterprise Land Management project” over the next four years, with a total contract amount for all firms combined not to exceed \$5,000,000. These firms will work with city staff to integrate land management, emergency response resource management, regulatory enforcement, inspections, permitting, development, planning, constituent self-service, and reporting processes. The funding plan for the project was already in place and the expenses for the consulting services are covered within the project budget in the Regulatory Services Department.

**Tree Canopy Map.** Earlier this year, the University and the City worked together on a study of the tree canopy in Minneapolis. The data from this study have now been made available via an intuitive and easy-to-use application on the City's website:

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/sustainability/mplsurbantreecanopymap.asp>. This application allows users to find the tree canopy percentages for individual parcels or for neighborhoods. The tree canopy coverage for Second Ward neighborhoods are as follows:

- Cooper: 46%
- Seward: 35%
- Prospect Park: 29%
- Southeast Como: 25%
- Cedar Riverside: 21%
- University: 19%

The Minneapolis Tree Advisory Committee made five key recommendations for what the City can do with this data: study the effects of the recent north side tornado; make the data readily available; analyze it with other information to find the best places to plant trees for energy efficiency, storm water management and other City goals; do outreach to residents, neighborhood groups, businesses and others to encourage tree plantings in the most advantageous locations; and repeat the study at least every five years. I am very supportive of all of these recommendations, and pleased to report that progress has already been made on several of them. I'd like to thank Ward 2 resident Peggy Booth for her role in pushing this study and these important recommendations forward, and so ably presenting them to the Council on behalf of the Tree Advisory Committee.

**STEP UP.** I attended the end of the summer celebration for the Summer Step Up program held at Willey Hall at the U of M. This year nearly 2,000 youth, ages 14-21, were employed through the program at 250 businesses and organizations throughout the city. This public-private partnership with local businesses and organizations significantly benefits low-income youth and youth of color, helps them gain valuable skills and work experience. Since 2002, more than 16,000 youth have been placed in summer jobs through City-funded programs. Some have finished college and have been hired back by the companies that previously had hired them as interns.

**Meet and Greet Returning U Students.** I will be joining other City and University staff and southeast residents to meet and greet new student renters in southeast neighborhoods Aug. 31 – Sept. 1, between 10:30am and 6:30pm, distributing welcome bags with resource information. This event is organized by the Student and Community Relations Office at the U of M.

**Riverside Easements.** As part of the Riverside Avenue reconstruction project, the Svea Triangle green space at the intersection of Riverside and 8<sup>th</sup> St S has been transferred from the Park and Recreation Board to the City of Minneapolis, in trade for an easement near Ryan Lake on the North side. From the discussions I have had with Public Works staff, I am confident that the Svea Triangle green space will be substantially improved by this change in management responsibility.

**Central Corridor Small Business Forgivable Loans.** There will be an informational meeting about The City forgivable loan fund to assist businesses that show a decline in revenue due to the construction of the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit line on Tuesday **August 30 from 8 – 9 am** in Room 114, at the Oren Gateway Center, Augsburg. The Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers is administering the program. To download an application or for more information please visit [www.mccdminn.org](http://www.mccdminn.org) or contact Dave Chapman at (612) 789-7337 ext.16.

**Central Corridor Affordable Housing.** I am to serving as a Project Team member for the Central Corridor Affordable Housing Coordinated Plan, co-convened by the cities of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, and Twin Cities LISC. The group is working to develop a set of strategies that government, community, finance, and development partners can work toward to achieve affordable housing options along the Central Corridor. Draft recommendations will be shared at a

community forum Wednesday, **September 21, 6 – 8 pm** at Goodwill Easter Seals (553 Fairview Ave. N. St. Paul).

**LOLA Art Crawl.** The third annual League of Longfellow Artists Art Crawl is this weekend, August 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>, from 10am-5pm. Artists throughout greater Longfellow will be displaying and selling artwork. See <http://lolaartcrawl.com/> for more information.

**Move In Move Out program.** The popular and successful Southeast Como MIMO program reopens Thursday, **September 1<sup>st</sup>**. The program includes a Move-In/Move-Out Free Store. This fall the temporary Free Store will be running out of the at the Southeast Como Improvement Association's (SECIA) parking lot at 1170 15th Ave SE. People are welcome to drop off items and/or pick up items to take home. A grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) is being used to support this innovative reuse, recycle project. Further funding has been provided by the McKnight Foundation and most recently, the Stadium Good Neighbor Fund through the University of Minnesota. The goal of MIMO is to address the large amounts of curbside waste left after the Move-In/Move-Out cycles. For more information contact the SECIA office or email [MIMO@comogreenvillage.info](mailto:MIMO@comogreenvillage.info) to arrange a pick-up of your unwanted household items. A listing of what can be accepted is at [www.comogreenvillage.info](http://www.comogreenvillage.info) The store will be open Sept 1<sup>st</sup> through Sept 18<sup>th</sup>, Thursdays (1<sup>st</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>) and Fridays (2<sup>nd</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>) from noon till 6 pm, and on Saturday the 17<sup>th</sup>, noon-4pm, and Sunday the 18<sup>th</sup> 1-5pm.

**Seward Market Mural.** A mural memorializing the three men who were killed in the Seward Market in January of 2010 and celebrating the resilience of the Seward neighborhood will be unveiled on **Sunday, August 28**, in an event from 3-5pm at the Seward Market, 2619 E Franklin Ave. The unveiling will include a slideshow showing the project process. Thanks to those who made this happen: COMPAS (<http://www.compas.org/>), ArtiCulture, the City of Minneapolis Great Streets grant program, Valspar, Arcstone, Seward Redesign, Bethany Lutheran Church, Sisters Camelot, Welna II Hardware, The Playwrights Center, Network Medics, Lake Street Target, West Photo, Talmud Torah School of St. Paul, Milios, Tracy's Saloon, Shabelle, Pizza Luce, Seward Cafe, and countless members of the community.

**Pedicabs.** Council Member Schiff is working on an amendment to the City's pedicab licensing ordinance. I am generally supportive of this move, especially lifting the ban on pedicabs in downtown during rush hour.

**Iftar Dinner at City Hall.** I was honored to be part of a dinner to celebrate the Muslim tradition of Iftar with a group of East African residents at City Hall. Iftar is a religious observance of Ramadan and is often done as a community, with people gathering to break their fast together. The dinner was sponsored by the Internally Displaced Somalis Advisory Council. During the dinner we learned about the work of the American Refugee Center that is providing food, constructing famine response camps for people who coming to Mogadishu. The Center has started a **Neighbors Initiative - Uniting Communities to Help Somalia** pilot program in partnership with the City of Minneapolis, Greater Twin Cities United Way, the Internally Displaced Somali Advisory Council, UCare to help provide desperately needed help in Somalia. You can learn more here [http://www.arcrelief.org/site/PageServer?pagename=programs\\_somalia](http://www.arcrelief.org/site/PageServer?pagename=programs_somalia)

**More Recycling Pilot Projects.** The City is moving ahead with two more recycling pilot projects. Unlike Seward's current two-sort project, both of these will be "single sort." This means that all recycling materials will be co-mingled together. I am eager to get the results of all of these pilots, to determine whether there are changes that we can make to the way we collect recycling that might increase the recycling rate. During the pilot, about 470 households in the Willard-Hay neighborhood and about 560 households in the East Calhoun neighborhood will not need to sort their recycling. They will simply separate the bottles, cans and papers from their trash and place them in a new recycling cart. The "one-sort" pilot kicked off Aug. 15 in Willard-Hay and Aug. 23 in East Calhoun. The program will measure the amount of recyclables that residents set out, the

marketability of the recyclables collected, and the costs of this type of recycling program compared with the current multi-sort recycling program. The results of the pilot program will be presented to the City Council for consideration in future recycling operations. By carefully monitoring and measuring the results of these pilots we will be better able to identify the most suitable future recycling program for Minneapolis residents.

**Tax Increment Financing.** The Council is considering making changes to its Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Policy. TIF is state established funding scheme that allows cities to borrow money and pay it back over time with the incremental increase in taxes after property improvements are made. The proposed amendment to the TIF Policy includes the following changes: added language encouraging proposals that accomplish objectives related to transit-oriented development, public infrastructure improvements, job creation and increasing the tax base; definitions of selected terms (transit-oriented development, public infrastructure improvements, job creation and increasing the tax base) and a new guideline stating the City may exercise the option to pool TIF revenue to assist qualified low-income rental housing anywhere in the city. You can read the full staff report here [http://www.minneapolismn.gov/council/2011-meetings/20110902/Docs/TIF\\_Policy\\_RCA.pdf](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/council/2011-meetings/20110902/Docs/TIF_Policy_RCA.pdf)

**Deadly Hit and Run in Seward.** On Tuesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, at 11pm, 39-year-old True Thai employee Anousone Phanthavong, 39, was hit and killed by what State Patrol officers believe was a Mercedes SUV that subsequently fled the scene. If you know anything about this incident, please call the Minneapolis Police Department at (612) 692-TIPS.

**Como Cookout,** The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Como Cookout is scheduled for **September 18<sup>th</sup>**, 2-5 pm, at Van Cleve Park. There will be free food, music, games and a resource fair this year!

**Como Green Village.** Congratulations to SECIA and The Como Green Village for being selected as one of 30 collaborations throughout the state being recognized for improving Minnesota's towns and neighborhoods. See <http://www.incommons.org/MCPS> for more. As part of this, the Como Green Village will be featured at Community Pride Day at the Minnesota State Fair on Saturday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011. There will be an exhibition of winning entries followed by a parade at 2pm.

**Please Consider Serving on a City Board or Commission.** In an effort to make it easier to learn about volunteer opportunities, ensure a more open process, and increase the diversity of the applicant pool, we now focus our appointments to boards and commissions once in the spring and once in the fall. **Applications are now being accepted for the over 80 open positions** on 16 boards and commissions that the City Council and Mayor will appoint this fall. Applications will be reviewed beginning September 30; however the positions are open until filled. For a full list of position descriptions see [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/boards-and-commissions](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/boards-and-commissions). There are openings on the following: Minneapolis Arts Commission, Basset Creek Watershed Management Commission, Board of Appeal & Equalization, Civilian Police Review Authority, Minneapolis Commission on Civil Rights, Minneapolis Capital Long-Range Improvement Committee (CLIC), Minneapolis Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, Minneapolis Ethical Practices Board, Minneapolis Housing Board of Appeals, Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC), Minneapolis Telecommunications Network (MTN), Minneapolis Planning Commission, Minneapolis Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, Senior Citizens Advisory Committee Vacancy, Shingle Creek Watershed Management Commission. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:cityclerk@minneapolismn.gov).

**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.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesdays, Hard Times Café (West Bank/University);
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesdays, Muddsuckers Coffee, 1500 Como (SE Como);
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays, Pratt School (Prospect Park);
- 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays, the Birchwood Cafe (Seward/Longfellow).

Yours, in peace and cooperation,

Cam Gordon  
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