



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

Cam Gordon

City Council Member
Second Ward

350 South 5th Street - Room 301M
Minneapolis MN 55415

Office 612-673-2202
Fax 612-673-3940
Cell 612-296-0579
TTY 612-673-2157

If you need this material in an alternative format, please contact Matt Bower at (612) 673-2188 or Matthew.Bower@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

If you want help translating this call – Hmong– Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2188;

Spanish – Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llama 612-673-2188;

Somali – Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' an wac 612-673-2188.

If you need disability related accommodations, please contact Matt Bower at (612) 673-2188 or Matthew.Bower@ci.minneapolis.mn.us. TTY: 612-673-2626.

cam.gordon@ci.minneapolis.mn.us

www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us
Affirmative Action Employer

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Southeast Como, 8-9-11

Cam's next Southeast Como Office Hours:
Tuesday, September 13th, 9:30-11:00am
Muddsuckers Coffee, 1500 Como Avenue SE

Items:

- 1) State Budget Deal
- 2) 2011 Budget Cuts and Layoffs
- 3) Managed Natural Landscape Ordinance
- 4) Tree Canopy Study and Recommendations
- 5) Farmers Market Ordinance
- 6) Bicycle Master Plan
- 7) Fire and Police Pensions
- 8) U Combined Heat and Power meetings
- 9) Openings on City Boards and Commissions

- 1) The budget deal between Governor Dayton and Republicans in control of the 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 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 Republicans' unwillingness to raise taxes on the wealthiest Minnesotans, the budget that will be adopted 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.
- 2) 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. We identified a "waterfall" of cuts that would be triggered if the State returned to us the same \$64 million in LGA that we received in 2010. Sadly, this preparation was prescient: the budget deal reached by Governor Dayton and legislative Republicans cuts Minneapolis by \$23.5 million. Among other things, this requires 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 in the waterfall is \$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 today, it equals 44 firefighter positions. I agree with Mayor Rybak that a cut of this magnitude is too deep. Instead, the Mayor proposed to transfer \$1.1 million from the Contingency Account to the Fire Department, and I am supportive. This transfer will still eliminate 13 firefighter positions, which includes 10 layoffs. We will also eliminate 9 police positions, though due to attrition this will not result in any layoffs. These are the consequences of the State's failure to effectively manage its budget, and the Republican campaign to destroy the last vestiges of the Minnesota Miracle.
- 3) The Managed Natural Landscape ordinance I am authoring will be coming before the Regulatory Energy and Environment committee on **August 22nd**. If 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 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.

- 4) 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.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/mplsurbantreecanopymap.asp>. Southeast Como has a tree canopy cover of **25%**. The Minneapolis Tree Advisory Committee (to which my Aide, Robin, is the Council's representative) has 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. In addition to being available on the City's website, a graduate student has completed a study that indicates which properties would get the most energy savings from tree planting. I encourage SECIA to work with residents, businesses and landlords to plant trees, making progress on greening, climate change, heat island effect, storm water management and more. I'd like to thank Southeast Como resident and active SECIA member 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.
- 5) 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.
- 6) 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, including the section of Johnson Street NE from East Hennepin to 18th Ave NE. 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.
- 7) 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 \$21 million next year, millions more 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 months ahead I will be carefully reviewing the specifics of the legislation and 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.
- 8) Following up on its recently released Twin Cities Campus Climate Action Plan that calls on the campus to reduce its carbon footprint by half by the year 2020, The University of Minnesota is proposing to build a new natural gas combined heat and power facility at the "Old Main" site just west of the Dinkytown Bikeway Bridge and the Education Sciences Building. The U is holding meetings on this proposal tomorrow, **August 10th**, from 5:30-7pm and **Thursday, August 18**, from 5:30-7pm, both at Sanford Hall Dining Room, 1122 University Ave SE.
- 9) There are openings on the Latino Advisory Committee and Planning Commission. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.