



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Longfellow, 1-19-12

**Cam's next Cooper/Seward Office Hours:
Tuesday January 24th, 9:30-11:00am
Birchwood Café, 3311 E 25th St**

Items:

- 1) Hiawatha Transmission Line
- 2) Remittances Resolution
- 3) Taxis Forced to Take Credit Cards
- 4) McDonalds Site Plan
- 5) New Fire Chief
- 6) Utility Fee Changes
- 7) 2011 Violent Crime Rate
- 8) New Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator
- 9) Housing Services Office Closes
- 10) New Solid Waste Director
- 11) New Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator
- 12) 2011 Bicycling Account
- 13) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) The Public Utilities Commission has ruled that Xcel's proposed Hiawatha Transmission Line should be buried beneath 28th St E, as the City and Midtown Greenway Coalition had advocated. The PUC has yet to decide whether the costs of burying the line will be borne by Minneapolis ratepayers or Xcel's entire Minnesota rate base, but the City and Xcel are both advocating for the broader option.
- 2) The Council's Committee of the Whole has unanimously passed a resolution calling on all those who have played a role in the stoppage of money transfers through Hawalas from Minneapolis residents to relatives in Somalia to find a way to reopen this absolutely critical financial link. As Somalia suffers one of the worst famines in the world in decades, it is vital that Minneapolis residents continue to be able to send remittances to their relatives. Read more on my blog.
- 3) Over my strong objections, the Council has forced taxis in Minneapolis to take credit cards. I opposed this action because it became clear that the credit card fees (amounting to 5-7% of each fare) will almost universally come out of the income of drivers. Taxi drivers tend to be some of the poorest members of our communities, and many are recent immigrants. I do not believe it is fair to place the convenience of taxi passengers and profits for Wall Street above the well being of taxi drivers. You can read more on my blog.
- 4) Despite my no vote, the Council majority voted to grant the appeal filed on behalf of McDonalds related to the site plan for their new store at 31st and Lake and the location of their drive through lane. This overruled the Planning Commission's approved conditions that the building be relocated to comply with the Zoning Code and be located within 8 feet of the property lines along E Lake St and 31st Ave S.; and that the main entrances to the building connect to the sidewalks along E Lake St and 31st Ave S.
- 5) I was very sorry to learn that our Fire Chief, Alex Jackson, will be retiring. I was looking forward to supporting his renomination and voting to approve his appointment again this year. Chief Jackson has served as Minneapolis Fire Chief since 2008 and has been working for the City and as part of the Fire Department for 27 years. He was one of very few people of color among City Department Heads. His last day as chief will be February 29. The Mayor has nominated John Fruetel as the next chief.

If you need this material in an alternative format please call Ahmed Muhumud at 612-673-2162 or email Ahmed.Muhumud@ci.minneapolis.mn.us

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Hmong - Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2800;

Spanish - Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llame 612-673-2700;

Somali - Ogow. Haddii aad dooneyso in lagaa kaalmeeyo tarjamadda macluumaadkani oo lacag la' aan wac 612-673-3500.

- 6) On December 23 the Police Chief reported that Minneapolis will continue to see flat or decreased violent crime numbers for the sixth year in a row. So far in 2011 Minneapolis has a 5% decrease in violent crime over 2010 and a 46% decrease over 2006. At the same time there are increases in property crimes. Violent crimes include homicide, rape, robbery (of a person) and assault. Nonviolent crimes include burglary, theft and arson. So far this year there have been 35 homicides, compared to 39 for last year. In the Third Precinct, which includes Seward and Cooper, violent crime is down 11.86%, but property crime is up 0.81%.
- 7) In previous years the City Council has increased rates charged for sewer and water services based on the amount, or volume, of water used during a month. This year the Council added a new fixed fee or rate and did not increase the rate based on volume. Most homes will see a change that adds about \$5 in fixed rates per month starting in January. This new fee will help cover the costs of maintaining the water distribution system and sewer lines that service all homes and businesses at all times. Recently during times when citywide water use is low, there has been less money available to maintain and operate these critical systems. These services require fixed maintenance, and adding fixed rate fees will allow the City to manage them more effectively.
- 8) Alyssa Banks has been hired to replace Bass Zanjani as the City's new Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator. Prior to accepting this position she worked in the city Department of Health and Family Support and was the interim coordinator. I look forward to working with her to continue this critically important work.
- 9) For decades the City has maintained a housing services office but in recent years it has been harder and harder to find funding for this program. For the past two years the city was able to fund the office with grants, but now those sources are depleted and, without additional funding provided in the budget, the housing services offices will be closing at the end of the year. Thanks are due to the Housing Services staff, Diana Buckanaga and Tanya Cruz who have provided valuable services to thousands of Minneapolis residents for many years. Their services have been in high demand and the City will be hard pressed through 311 to make up for this loss. Ms. Buckanaga and Ms. Cruz have assisted approximately 1,000 Minneapolis residents per month with housing advice and referrals; including an increase in foreclosure related services. In 2010, the two staff served 12,548 callers; including over 10,000 tenants and nearly 1,000 landlords. I am sorry to see them go.
- 10) The Public Works Director has appointed David Herberholz as the City's new Director of Solid Waste and Recycling. He is currently employed by the city of Tampa, Florida, as the Residential Services Manager for their solid waste department. He has also had fifteen years of experience in solid waste in the private sector. He is originally from Michigan, so he is familiar with Midwestern winters. I want to thank Interim Director Jeff Jenks for his great work over the last few months.
- 11) The Public Works Director has appointed Shaun Murphy as the City's first Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator. You may be familiar with that name, as Shaun has coordinated the incredibly successful Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot since 2007, and has been one of the public faces of the City's bicycle program. I think very highly of Shaun, having worked with him on several projects in the ward, including Riverside, 27th Ave SE, 26th Ave S, 15th Ave SE and Como Ave SE. I'm very excited to welcome Shaun into this new role. It is important, especially as our resources don't keep pace with our needs, to coordinate the work of the various transportation departments in Public Works (Traffic, Transportation Planning and Engineering, and Maintenance and Repair) and across both City departments and outside agencies (the County, MnDOT, etc.).
- 12) The City's Public Works department has put together a 2011 Bicycling Account, an in-depth report on our bicycling activities and accomplishments in 2011. You can read it here: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@publicworks/documents/images/wcms1p-085029.pdf>. It's exciting to read such a clear and compelling account of the progress we made over the last year. Kudos to Public Works for putting this together - I hope that they will continue to report out this effectively every year. Read more on my blog.
- 13) The Neighborhood and Community Relations department is hosting a Communities Connections Conference, "Building Better Communities Through Neighborhoods", **on Saturday, Feb. 11**, at the St. Mary's University Event Center – 2540 Park Avenue South (formerly known as the Zuhrah Shrine Event Center). Angela Glover Blackwell, president and CEO of PolicyLink, a national research and action institute working to advance economic and social equity, will give the keynote address. For more information see <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/conf/index.htm>
- 14) There are openings on the Animal Care & Control Advisory Committee, Family Housing Fund (McKnight), Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, Public Health Advisory Committee, Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners and Senior Citizens Advisory Committee. To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@minneapolismn.gov.