



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Longfellow, 9-19-13

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

Items:

- 1) Tree Roundtable October 7th
- 2) Low-Cost Trees Available
- 3) City About to Adopt Energy Vision
- 4) Trap-Neuter-Return Ordinance
- 5) Minnehaha Avenue Reconstruction
- 6) City Comments on Sherco Plant
- 7) Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements to Hiawatha
- 8) Vote November 5th
- 9) Plain Language Charter
- 10) 2014 Budget
- 11) Police Conduct Oversight
- 12) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) I have organized a Roundtable Discussion about the threats and opportunities facing our urban tree canopy, for **October 7**, 7-8:30pm, at Longfellow Park, 3435 36th Ave S. We will discuss the tree loss from this summer's storm, Emerald Ash Borer, the importance of watering trees, and the Longfellow Trees program. You can find out more about Longfellow Trees here: <http://www.longfellow.org/trees/>.
- 2) The City is offering about 500 low-cost trees to Minneapolis homeowners who lost trees on their properties during the June 21 severe storm. Ordering will begin at 8 a.m., Monday, Sept. 9, and end Sept. 20 (earlier if the trees sell out first). To order a tree or to get more information, visit www.treetrust.org.
- 3) Tomorrow, I expect the Trap-Neuter-Return ordinance I have authored to pass the Council. The purpose of this ordinance is to humanely and effectively reduce the populations of feral cats in Minneapolis by partnering with nonprofits that spay or neuter feral cats and return them to their environments.
- 4) Hennepin County has indicated that they will be holding two more public meetings on the Minnehaha Avenue reconstruction project, on **September 30th** and **October 2nd**, both from 6-8pm at Minnehaha Communion Lutheran Church, 4101 37th Avenue South. I continue to support a protected "cycletrack" facility for Minnehaha. Unfortunately, the current County cycletrack layout includes the unnecessary removal of around fifty trees and fifty parking spaces. The Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee has made clear that these impacts are not required, but are due to design decisions made by the County. Given the reactions at all three public meetings that have occurred so far – all of which I or my staff have attended – and the petitions that have been signed by almost a thousand Minnehaha road users, it is clear to me that there is strong public desire for a cycletrack and strong public concern about tree and parking loss. I am hoping that before the County proposes a layout to the City for municipal consent, they take the time and seek the necessary expertise to design a cycletrack layout that does not have these unnecessary impacts, so that all stakeholders can make a clear, apples-to-apples comparison between the two layouts. If that does not happen, it will be difficult for me to support granting municipal consent.
- 5) I also expect the Council to adopt comments on Xcel Energy's Sherco coal-fired power plant tomorrow. We are asking the PUC to compel Xcel to begin the planning process for replacing Sherco with cleaner, less polluting sources.

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

Deaf and hard-of-hearing persons may call 311 or 612-673-3000. TTY users may call 612-673-2157 or 612-673-2626.

Attention: If you want help translating this information in language other than Hmong, Spanish or Somali, call 311

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, llama 612-673-2700;

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

- 6) Tomorrow, I expect the Council to adopt a strong, future-focused Energy Vision, which you can read here: http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@_clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-113830.pdf. This document makes clear the sort of energy system the City would like to see in 2040: clean, reliable, affordable and with lots of local energy production and local economic benefit. This is a great start, and I look forward to using the opportunity we have next year – both at the State Legislature and through our energy franchise negotiations – to put us on a path to making this vision a reality.
- 7) Hennepin County, the City and MNDOT are developing a plan to improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities at six intersections along Hiawatha Avenue between 28th Street and 46th Street. The enhancements will include ADA improvements, radius and median adjustments to reduce crossing distances and revisions to the signal systems to accommodate the construction.
- 8) The City has launched a new website, vote.minneapolismn.gov, where voters can register to vote, find their polling place, fill out an application for an absentee ballot and use an interactive demonstration ballot to learn how to mark a ranked-choice ballot and see how the ballot-counting works. Voting absentee can be done in person at City Hall, or entirely by mail. If a voter chooses to cast an absentee ballot in person, that can be done beginning September 20 during regular business hours, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., or on the final two Saturdays before Election Day, Oct. 26 and Nov. 2, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. To vote absentee by mail, voters may request a ballot now. Ballots will be mailed out beginning Sept. 20. Additionally the city is in need of more election judges. We especially need judges who are fluent in a second language to provide additional language support in the polling place, including in Spanish, Somali, and Hmong. To find out more about becoming an election Judge, visit vote.minneapolismn.gov/volunteer or call 612-673-2296.
- 9) The Council has approved the ballot language for the Plain Language Charter amendment put forward by the Charter Commission that will appear on the ballot November 5th. If passed the new 63 page charter would replace the current 192 page charter with a more modern, common language version drafted for brevity and in plain language and reorganized into nine articles. While it makes no structural changes to how city government works and retains the current role and relationships of City boards and commissions, it does reorganize related provisions together and removes many provisions (many outdated) for possible enactment into ordinance. You can find a full report and read the new charter here: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-109178.pdf>
- 10) The Mayor has presented his 2014 proposed budget. It calls for a 1% reduction in the property tax levy, an increase in police and fire staffing to deal with expected aging and attrition, adding 311 services on Saturday, increased infrastructure spending, and an air quality study. Notable investments in the Second Ward include \$11 million to rehabilitate the 10th Ave Bridge, \$2.3 million for Bridge 9 improvements, \$1.4 million for long awaited lighting on the Hiawatha LRT Trail, and \$1.3 million for reconstruction of 15th Ave and 4th St near the Brian Coyle Center. I look forward to hearing and sharing more details and exploring ways to better align the city budget with my priorities and the needs and values of my second ward constituents. The Council will now consider the budget from now through December with final approval of the 2014 budget scheduled for Wednesday, December 11th. I expect there to be two public hearings on the proposed 2014 property tax levy and budget on November 19th at 6:05pm and December 11th at 6:05pm in room 317 of City Hall. Additional key dates in the 2014 budget process include Sept. 11, 4 p.m. for the Board of Estimate and Taxation meeting to set the maximum property tax levies, Dec. 4 and 5, 1 – 4 p.m. – Ways and Means Committee budget “mark-up” where amendments can be considered and approved and Dec. 11, 6:05 p.m. where there will be a public hearing, more potential amendments and the City Council final vote on budget. You can read Mayor Rybak’s 2014 budget speech here: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/mayor/news/speeches/WCMS1P-113009>, see the slides that accompanied his speech here: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@mayor/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-113013.pdf>, and find the complete proposed budget here <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/finance/budget/WCMS1P-113263> I welcome your thoughts and input.
- 11) On August 21 the Council’s Public Safety Civil Rights and Health committee received its first report on the newly formed Office of Police Conduct Review that has replaced the Police Civilian Review Authority that used to review citizen complaints about Police conduct. I was troubled to learn that of the over 400 complaints, and 71 dealing with excessive force, only 17 were found to have merit and not one resulted in the discipline of a police officer.
- 12) Applications are now being accepted for open positions on the following City boards and commissions: Animal Care and Control Advisory Board, Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, Minneapolis Workforce Council, Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Police Conduct Oversight Commission, Police Conduct Review Panel, Seniors Advisory Committee and Telecommunications Network. For a full list of appointment opportunities and position descriptions, go to www.minneapolismn.gov/boards/openings.