

Second Ward March 2014 E-newsletter

News from Cam Gordon

Council Member, Second Ward

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

City Goals Approved. On March 29th the City Council formally adopted a vision and a set of values, goals and strategic directions to guide our work for the next four years. The vision statement is “Minneapolis is a growing and vibrant world-class city with a flourishing economy and a pristine environment, where all people are safe, healthy and have equitable opportunities for success and happiness.” The values state that we will be a city of Equity, Safety, Health, Vitality, Connectedness and Growth; and that we work by Innovating and being creative; Driving toward results; Engaging the community; Showing employees they are valued; Building public trust; and Collaborating. The five new goals are: Living well: Minneapolis is safe and livable and has an active and connected way of life; One Minneapolis: Disparities are eliminated so all Minneapolis residents can participate and prosper; A hub of economic activity and innovation: Businesses, big and small, start, move, stay and grow here; Great places: Natural and built spaces work together and our environment is protected; and, A City that works: City government runs well and connects to the community it serves. The Council also voted to develop measures for these and directed staff to report at least annually on progress and seek stakeholder and community perspective on measures, progress and implementation. You can find more at <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/citygoals/index.htm>

Racial Equity Action Plan. Part of the Council’s discussion about approval of new goals focused on the issue of equity. First we committed to develop a clear definition for the value “equity,” and then, more importantly, we formally approved moving forward with the creation of a Racial Equity Action Plan. The plan will set baselines for measurement, include goals and timelines, reference existing city policies and programs, recommend new policies and programs, and will be developed in cooperation with a range of engaged stakeholders. Council Member Glidden also introduced the concept of establishing a Racial Equity Commission, but that met with some opposition and was not formally moved forward at this time. I am hopeful that this idea can be further refined and approved by the Council in the future because I believe that a commission of community members and stakeholders with interest and expertise in this area could be essential to its success.

OUR MPLS. In March I joined several other Council Members for a meeting with the OUR MPLS coalition about their initiative. OUR MPLS is a coalition of over 20 Minneapolis organizations joining together to move forward a bold equity agenda for our city. It focuses on the adoption and implementation of a citywide Racial and Economic Equity Impact Framework, (similar to the Racial Equity Toolkit we are working on) that would include racial justice training for all city employees, accountability measures, investment in community opportunities to learn about city government, and a robust impact analysis of all proposed policies. Their plan also includes a call for city leadership that reflects our communities at all levels of government and a focus on authentic community engagement. You can find more information here <http://voicesforracialjustice.org/>. At the meeting in March they also advocated for the formation of an Equity Commission appointed and empowered by the Mayor and City Council to help guide this work.

Zero Waste. Along with the Mayor, several of my Council colleagues and Congressman Keith Ellison, I co-hosted a Zero Waste forum on March 20th, at Walker Church. There we learned more about San Francisco’s program, waste reduction legislative efforts of Representative Frank Hornstein, the connection between Zero Waste and Climate Change from Ward 2’s own Shalani Gupta and about the role of composting from Russ Henry, co-chair of the Minneapolis Homegrown Food Council. Following the forum the Mayor unveiled

her plan to hire a special Zero Waste coordinator to work out of her office. I support this and I am excited to see this conversation getting started. I look forward to focusing more on this effort in the months ahead.

Organics Collection. The Council has received a report from our Solid Waste and Recycling staff on the processes and policy decisions the Council will have to make in order to move forward with citywide collection of source-separated organics. You can read the report here: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-122108.pdf>. Staff's recommendation is that if we move forward with a citywide program, that would be paid for by all utility ratepayers (at a cost of \$2.38- \$3.25 per dwelling unit per month), should be opt-in for participants (meaning that residents would have to contact the City to get an organics cart), and that we should collect organics not commingled with yard waste. The upfront cost of the program will be at least \$5 million to pay for additional trucks, support facilities, and carts. The ongoing cost will be at least \$3.5 million per year, less the \$80,000 in annual savings from tip fees at the garbage burner. I looking to ensure that we will build a more robust education and outreach program into this effort, because I think that's what it will take to be successful. I'm also interested in exploring whether the City should give an organics cart to all customers from the start. The Council will hold a Study Session on this issue in the next month or so. I am enthusiastically supportive of putting this new program in place, and will push for the City to build the best program we can and roll it out as soon as possible.

Department Head Approvals. The City Council has now confirmed all the department head reappointments brought forward by the mayor. Confirmations included Patrick Todd to the position of City Assessor and Susan Segal to the position of City Attorney, Velma Korb as Civil Rights Director, John Fruetel as Fire Chief, Gretchen Musicant as Commissioner of Health and Steve Kotke as Public Work Director. I supported all of these appointments except the city attorney, primarily because of the questionable guidance she provided related to the football stadium funding decision. You can read more about my reasons on my blog. She was approved on an 11-2 vote. All the other appointments were unanimous except the Civil Rights director position which passed, with my support, on a 9-3 vote. The mayor has not proposed the reappointment of the City Coordinator or the Director of Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED). The search firm, Chandler Group, has been hired to assist in finding a new CPED director. The mayor has asked them think broadly and to move quickly. Below are more details on three reappointments.

Health Commissioner. I was happy to support Gretchen Musicant as Commissioner of the Minneapolis Health Department. Not one person at the public hearing expressed any concerns about her reappointment and I think this is an indication of the outstanding job she has done leading the department since 2005 after first starting with the city in 1999. On April 10, The University of Minnesota's School of Public Health will award Musicant the Gaylord W. Anderson Leadership Award, for her work as a visionary leader, teacher, collaborator and public health ambassador.

Public Works Director. I also supported the reappointment of Public Works Director Steve Kotke who has worked in the Public Works Department for 25 years, holding several professional positions before being appointed Public Works Director in 2006. At the public hearing on his reappointment a diverse group of stakeholders, including members of the Minneapolis Bicycle and Pedestrian Committees, the Sierra Club, the Minnesota Department of Health and others attended to speak in favor of Mr. Kotke's reappointment and also express their hopes for significant changes in the department. I laid out what I view as some major accomplishments Public Works has had under Mr. Kotke, as well as some areas where I see room for improvement. In my view, Public Works must become friendlier to innovation, more willing to collaborate with other City departments (especially Health and Community Planning and Economic Development) and

other stakeholders, and truly embrace the City's adopted goals for building a multi-modal transportation system. I look forward to working with Director Kotke to accomplish these goals.

Civil Rights Director. I voted, along with 8 of my colleagues, to reappoint Velma Korbel as Civil Rights Director, but I did so with reservations. This was not an easy decision, because serious concerns were raised during her reappointment public hearing. I have worked well with Ms. Korbel over the course of her time at the City, especially on issues of racial equity. I have also differed with her, most importantly on the destruction of the Civilian Review Authority. I not only opposed that policy outcome, but question the process that was used to put it in place. More concerning, however, was that during the public hearing – and in writing beforehand – the Council heard from the Association of Federal State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) union representative and a number of former City employees that there are serious concerns about the working environment in Civil Rights. As a result of this, following the Council confirmation vote, I made a motion that the Council unanimously approved to direct the City Coordinator to “consult with AFSCME representatives to consider the reinstatement or creation of a new Civil Rights Department labor-management committee; to work with the Mayor’s office, the Civil Rights Director and, if deemed appropriate, outside management consulting services to evaluate and, as warranted, improve management practices in the Civil Rights Department related to employee satisfaction and maintaining a healthy workplace environment, and; to report back to the Executive Committee on the status of these efforts by July 1, 2014.” It is my hope that the elevation of these concerns will help the Council and Ms. Korbel work more proactively to ensure that the employees serving in the department feel valued, better able to share their concerns with their superiors, policymakers and the Human Resources department, and like they have meaningful opportunities to shape the work of the department. I hope that when Ms. Korbel is next up for reappointment, we do not hear a repetition of these concerns but rather reports of significant improvements in the work environment.

Tenant Notification Ordinance. The Council has unanimously approved my ordinance revision that will require landlords notify their tenants of known environmental contamination. This was originally drafted to deal with the arsenic contamination site in south Minneapolis, but will now be a citywide requirement, due to the ongoing trichloroethylene contamination problem in Southeast Como.

Housing Fair. On Saturday April 5th from 10am to 3pm, the South Minneapolis annual housing fair will be held at the Midtown YWCA Minneapolis Sports Center, 2121 East Lake St. At the fair over 60 vendors will be on hand to share their knowledge and services focused on home improvement and housing in Minneapolis.

HOME Line. A widely respected nonprofit organization providing free legal, organizing, educational and advocacy services to tenants throughout Minnesota is finally expanding their service to Minneapolis residents. Beginning in April, renters in Minneapolis can use Home Line’s free service to get help with any rental issue, learn more about renters’ rights, or receive free legal advice by emailing Home Line attorneys at home@homelinemn.org or by calling their free Tenant Hotline at 612.728.5767. Learn more at homelinemn.org.

Ash Tree Replacement Plan. The Park Board is holding meetings to share its Ash Canopy Replacement Plan. The Board has partnered with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to safely detect and remove EAB-infested trees and has plans in place to aggressively plant trees to help offset the significant loss of the roughly 40,000 public ash trees that will be lost over the next 8 years. This year they plan to remove 5,000 ash trees from parks and boulevards. Here are the upcoming meeting specifics: Monday, March 31st – 6:30-8pm – East Phillips Community Center, Tuesday, April 1st – 6:30-8pm- Lyndhurst Recreation Center, Thursday, April 3rd – 6:30-8pm – Nokomis Community Center.

Food Policy Coordinator. With Jane Shey's departure as coordinator this spring a new Minneapolis Food Policy Coordinator had been hired. Tamara Down Schwei will be starting in May. Tamara is currently the Executive Director of Urban Roots, whose mission is to build vibrant and healthy communities through food, conservation and youth development. I look forward to working with her and the food Council on our Homegrown Minneapolis efforts.

Creative City Challenge. Balancing Ground has won this year's Creative City Challenge and will receive a \$75,000 commission to create a project for a summer-long presence on the Minneapolis Convention Center Plaza. The installation will debut June 14 as part of Northern Spark, an annual dusk-to-dawn festival taking place in Minneapolis this year, and the plaza will feature the installation at three other events this summer. The installation will consist of long rows of wood benches interrupted with a series of playground teeter-totters all surrounded by a large wood structure with a canopy of prisms and reflective fragments strung between rafters. You can learn more about it here: <http://www.minneapolis.org/minneapolis-convention-center/ccc/finalist/balancing-ground>.

911. Our 911 division is in the midst of a multi-year hiring and training program to improve the service it provides to residents. These changes are coming about in large part due to a number of concerns raised recently about staffing levels and response times. I take these concerns seriously, and that's why I am supportive of cross-training and adjusting staffing to meet levels of the demands for service. I want to make sure that 911 has the staff they need, adequate training, and is maintaining staffing levels so that all calls get answered and dispatched in a timely manner. In March, the Public Safety Committee received a report about this transition and we learned that the average answer time for calls to the Minneapolis 911 center so far in 2014 is 6.1 seconds, and that number is trending downward as more cross-training is completed. The average answer time so far in March was 5.5 seconds. The national standard which most 911 centers strive to meet is to answer 90 percent of calls within 10 seconds. Currently, Minneapolis is meeting that standard at some points in the day, and not at other points. We also learned that from 2009 to 2012, staffing remained steady, with 64 operators and dispatcher positions. The Council has authorized the 911 center to hire four additional operators and dispatchers in the last two years. Between new hires and filling vacancies, nineteen new employees have been hired in the 911 center since November, 2012. In the weeks ahead I will be doing a "sit along" in the center during the lowest staffing time of the morning and meeting the City Coordinator, Chair of the Public Safety Committee Blong Yang, and the 911 manager to learn more. I will work to determine if we are using the correct measures to set staffing levels and measure success as well as the need to make any policy changes to improve the situation. For more information, visit:

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/911/index.htm> and

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/www/groups/public/@citycoordinator/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-103386.pdf>

Who Do You Call? Call 911 any time you need police, fire, or ambulance to respond. Usually this will be when someone's life or property is in danger, or if a crime is in progress or just happened. Also call 911 to report suspicious activity that is happening now, such as suspected drug dealing, prowlers, suspicious packages, or something that just doesn't look right. Call 311 (612-673-3000) to report thefts, car break-ins, vandalism, animal and parking complaints, and to get information about city departments and services. 311 has online reporting capability on their website, and also has a mobile app you can download. If you call 911 and your call isn't answered immediately the best thing to do is to stay on the line so your call can be answered as quickly as possible. If you hang up, the 911 center will call back when an operator becomes available, but they will take incoming calls first, so the best thing to do is stay on the line. Even if you've called 911 by accident, please don't hang up, but stay on the line and tell the operator you've made a mistake. This will save time, because the operator won't have to take time to attempt to call you back.

Rain Garden Workshops. Metro Blooms is offering workshops about maintaining a healthy yard with expert help to put “rain gardening” in the hands of gardeners and non-gardeners alike. For more information and to register, go to www.myraingarden.org or call 651-699-2426.

Downtown East Development Over City-Funded Ramp. After evaluating the two responses to a request for proposals regarding building on top of the parking ramp that the city has “air rights” above, staff has recommended and the council has approved designating Ryan Companies as the developer of this parcel at 728 4th St. The City received two proposals, one from Mortenson Development and one from Ryan Companies. Mortenson proposed a 300-room hotel and Ryan Companies proposed a 150-room hotel and a 200-unit apartment tower. City staff worked with the proposers to refine and clarify their proposals and gave each an opportunity to provide additional information or modifications. Ryan Companies is offering to pay the City \$5,650,000 for the purchase of the liner parcel and air rights plane. City finance staff estimate that the Ryan project will generate approximately \$876,000 in upfront park dedication and building permit fees, as well as annual City taxes totaling \$1,240,000 by 2029. These annual taxes to the City include property taxes of \$796,000, lodging taxes of \$207,000 and entertainment taxes of \$237,000. I am hoping that some of these revenues will help ensure that the new nearby Park can be built and programmed to serve the needs of area families and youth and not just downtown visitors. The Council also voted to encourage Ryan Companies’ hotel operator to negotiate a labor peace agreement with the applicable labor organization(s) in the spirit of the Minneapolis ordinances that relate to city-owned or contracted endeavors.

Small Business Revolving Loan Programs. In March the Council received our annual report of the City’s small business lending programs. The city offers six different small business loan programs: 2% Loan Program, Alternative Financing Loan Program, Energy Efficiency Loan Program, Business Development Fund Loan Program, Working Capital Guaranty Program, Homegrown Business Development Center loans, Business Recovery Loan Program, and the Business Health and Safety Loan Program. Last year the city provided 49 such loans totaling \$2,426,000. These are estimated to have leveraged \$14,591,000 from private lending and helped create 273 new jobs and retain 339 jobs in 2013. Expected repayment with interest from all outstanding loans during 2014 is \$2,230,000. I believe that these programs play a critical role supporting business investment in neighborhood commercial districts. For more details you can find the full report here <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-121554.pdf>

Homeless Street Outreach. The Council has approved spending up to \$300,000 to fund for St. Stephen’s Human Services’ homeless outreach program using \$150,000 of this year’s federal funding from Emergency Solutions Grant funds and \$150,000 in city general funds. St. Stephen’s was selected from 3 entities who responded to a Request for Proposals issued last October. Since 2007 we have committed to funding an outreach effort targeted at connecting with and housing those who sleep outside in our city, which is a key strategy in our Heading Home Hennepin plan to eliminate homelessness. The approval is for outreach services at the level of approximately \$300,000 a year, renewable for five years based on annual evaluation of performance.

2013 Election Recap. The City Clerk has completed the report on the 2013 Municipal Election and recommended some changes in the process to help improve the next city election in 2017. In response the Council approved moving forward to prepare ordinance amendments to clarify the definition of “tabulation center”; and amend the process of mathematical elimination to account for greater availability of vote data and the use of automated ballot tabulators. Additional recommendations included: increasing the municipal

filing fee(s); authorizing additional precincts and polling places, or changes in polling places, as recommended by staff (at a future date); cross-training election staff; expanding efforts to diversify the City's corps of election judges, including efforts to identify, recruit, and train bilingual (multi-lingual) election judges; developing a Minneapolis-specific Election Judge Manual; preparing for the first use of "no-excuse" absentee voting in the 2014; expanding the Voter Outreach & Education Program; and forming a Ballot Design Workgroup to identify and address ballot design in order to provide greater options and flexibility in future municipal elections. You can find the report here:

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-122335.pdf>

Filing Fee Increase Proposed. The Minneapolis Charter Commission is holding a public hearing on municipal filing fees on Wednesday, April 2, at 4:30 p.m. at City Hall, in Room 317 (Council Chamber). The hearing is to consider a proposal that would increase the filing fee from \$20 to run for any office in Minneapolis to \$500 to file for Mayor, \$250 to file for Council Member, \$100 to file for Park Board or for Board of Estimate & Taxation. This would put the filing fee to run for Mayor comparable to that from running for Mayor in St. Paul which is also \$500, but higher than the fee required to file for Governor (\$400). No matter the fee, state law mandates that a potential candidate also has the option of submitting a petition in lieu of the candidate filing fee (500 signatures or five percent of the total number of votes cast in the election district at the preceding general election for that particular office, whichever is less). I am concerned that this large an increase might discourage good, viable candidates from running but I would be will to support the Commissions original proposal they made last year in April where the fee for Mayor was \$250, Council \$100, Park Board \$50 and Board of Estimate and Taxation \$20. The Charter Commission will likely forward their recommendation to the City Council for consideration. Changing the filing fees requires a change to the City Charter, which can occur by either a vote of approval by all 13 Council Members or by putting the measure on the ballot.

Potential Polling Place Changes. Minneapolis Elections staff are looking at some potential changes to polling places in Ward 2. In Longfellow/Cooper, there is a possibility that two current precinct (2-1 and 2-8) will be divided and two new polling places will be introduced to serve them because the numbers of voters at precinct 2-1 (Holy Trinity basement gym/assembly area) and precinct 2-8 (Brackett Park) are greater than state guidelines – over 2,500 registered voters in each location. The new polling places under consideration are Longfellow School at 3017 E 31st St, serving approximately 1,500 registered voters, and Minnehaha Academy at 3100 W River Parkway, serving approximately 1,300 registered voters. Elections staff are also considering moving the polling place for precinct 2-9 (east Seward, Riverside Park and Middlebrook Hall), currently at Augsburg College, to Matthews Park. I am looking for guidance from the Longfellow Community Council and the Seward Neighborhood Group on these proposed changes. If you vote in these areas and have an opinion, please share it with me.

Changes to Legislative Agenda. The City of Minneapolis has gone on record in our legislative agenda as supporting three new items: legislation mandating cell phones feature "kill switches" that will make them less attractive to thieves, legislation that would include e-cigarettes in our overall tobacco regulations, and legislation to legalize medical marijuana.

Conservation District Forum. There was a forum in March sponsored by the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs and the University District Alliance on conservation districts in general and on my proposed conservation district ordinance. Dr. John Smoley, City Planner and Historian with the City of Minneapolis, and Greg Donofrio, Assistant Professor and Director of Heritage Conservation and Preservation, University of Minnesota School of Architecture also presented. My proposed ordinance would amend the City's existing heritage preservation regulations, to allow property owners to request conservation district status

in areas with notable visual character, with design guidelines to be developed jointly by City staff and property owners. This forum was well attended and I hope moved this closer to being approved by the Planning Commission and then the City Council later this spring or in the early summer.

Ridesharing. Council Member Jacob Frey has proposed an ordinance change that will, if passed, allow “peer to peer” rideshare companies like Lyft and Uber to operate in Minneapolis. I am supportive of this ordinance. In my view, rideshare business have a place as an innovative transportation solution that can help us meet our goals for reducing the number of miles people drive alone. Rather than continuing to regulate them as taxicabs – which they clearly are not – or expressly prohibiting them, as some would prefer to do, I believe that we should regulate these services as what they are, and require them to meet high standards on insurance, driver quality, and more.

Earplugs at Venues. Council Member Frey has also proposed an ordinance that will, if passed, require holders of certain entertainment licenses to make free earplugs available to their customers. In turn, these earplugs will be provided at no charge to the venues by a foundation working with earplug manufacturer 3M. I am supportive of this idea. Hearing loss is a public health issue, and it is the City’s appropriate role to ensure that people can go to live music events in Minneapolis without putting their hearing at risk.

Boulevard Planting. The city Council has approved an ordinance amendment that allows more types of plants to be grown within boulevards, including fruits and vegetables, that were previously prohibited, provided they fall within certain safety parameters. It also clarifies that Department of Regulatory Services has the authority to enforce violations pursuant to established administrative processes.

Facing Race. I am excited to report that Pratt School Community Education will be offering two Facing Race classes this spring. On April 16, at “White Privilege Dialogue” attendees will explore the impact of racial identity on personal and systemic levels and look at ways white people can use their privilege to help eliminate racism. On April 23 attendees will explore 5 myths that support racism and learn to see racism and create action plans to make change.

The Environment and Natural Resources Finance Omnibus Bill. The State House’s Environment Omnibus bill has some promising law changes that could be a help to Minneapolis. Included in the bill is [Rep. Frank Hornstein’s](#) waste reduction measures from [HF 2564](#), which increases recycling goals to 60% of solid waste, establishes an organics composting target of 15% of solid waste by 2030 for Metro counties, and requires commercial buildings and sports facilities to source-separate and recycle at least three types of recyclable materials. Multiple provisions related to pollinators are also included in the omnibus bill, such as creating penalties for persons responsible for bee deaths, requiring compensation for bees killed by pesticides ([HF 2908](#)), establishing a market value for bee colonies, and creating a pollinator health response research team. I hope the State Senate will also include these provisions in their companion omnibus bill.

Change at Animal Care and Control. Animal Care and Control manager, Dan Niziolek, has resigned his position and has taken a new job with the City of St. Paul. I have enjoyed working with Dan and thank him for all his service to the city. I also look forward to seeing the new dog adoption initiative, started under Niziolek’s leadership, move forward in May that will change the way we do behavioral assessments to allow us to better place animals for adoption or with rescue agencies as appropriate

Pothole Repair Funding Increase. In response to the intense weather this winter and damage to our streets the Council is poised to vote to reallocate \$1,000,000 from the Contingency Fund for the purpose of providing additional resources to perform an accelerated level of pothole patching in 2014.

TCE Press and Partnerships. I was glad to join with the U of M's Minnesota Student Association and Southeast Como Improvement Association at a press conference earlier this month. Both groups are united in calling for more research and more efforts to address the concerns of the toxic air pollution in the neighborhood resulting from a decades old superfund site on the Northeast side of the SE Como neighborhood. I am also delighted to report that the University has created an option within its Master of Public Health program to help research this issue. Special thanks to the University District Alliance, Jan Morlock and faculty advisors Elizabeth (Betsy) Wattenberg and Peter Raynor, both in Environmental Health Sciences in the School of Public Health, for making this possible.

FairShare Como Garden. I was excited to learn this month that the FairShare Como garden program is looking to expand in southeast Minneapolis. They have applied for a Community-Driven Healthy Living grant from the Minneapolis Health Department. Three grant recipients will be announced in April. FairShare is unique because of its communal plot organization.

Midtown Farmers Market Site. Hennepin County is drafting a plan to redevelop the 6.4 acre property at 2225 East Lake Street, currently owned by Minneapolis Public Schools. The plan includes a Family Service Center along with new offices, retail, housing, parking, and space for the Midtown Farmers Market. There will be a public meeting on April 3 at 6:00pm at 2225 East Lake Street where people can learn more and share feedback. This is the April meeting of Corcoran Neighborhood Organizations Land Use & Housing committee. For more information, contact Eric at eric@corcoranneighborhood.org or 612-724-7457.

Riverside Extension. The Council has voted to give project approval, including assessments, for the Riverside extension project on 15th Ave S and 4th St S. The project is expected to be completed later this year.

Cedar Avenue Sidewalk Reconstruction. In April the Council will be asked to approve the funding and design and set a public hearing to be held June 17, 2014 to consider the project and the abandonment and removal of areaways in conflict with the project. Prior to Council approval the project will be reviewed by both the Transportation and Public Works Committee and the Planning Commission. The sidewalks will be reconstructed along Cedar Ave S from approximately 3rd St S to 7th St S. This includes full removal and replacement of the west side curb, sidewalk on the east and west side of Cedar Ave, and striping of the roadway to the new configuration. This area has been identified by the city as a Pedestrian Priority Corridor and serves 1,470 pedestrians per day. So, I am especially glad to see this long awaited project coming forward and appreciate how the additional funding provided by the county and city will help keep assessments low to area property owners. While I recognize that there some concerns remain about the design and loss of some street width, these sidewalks have been in need of repair for decades and are unacceptably narrow in several places. I hope the concerns can be addressed and we can move forward to no more delays. New pedestrian level street lighting will also be included in the project.

Green 4th SE. The City has been awarded a Metropolitan Council (LCDA-TOD) grant of \$1,000,000 to support the Green 4th Street project as part of the Cornerstone/Boeser proposed development in Prospect Park. I am excited to see how these funds can help create a state of the art model for a more innovative, sustainable and green street design and reconstruction.

Hotel Proposed on Essex. CPM Development has applied to build a new hotel at 1022 Essex St SE, near the University East Bank Campus. They are hoping to construct a five-story hotel with 122 rooms on the site. As part of the process they have submitted applications to rezone the property from R5 to C3A, for a

Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow for an increase in height from 4 stories to 5 stories, and for variances to allow for a decrease in the amount of green/open space required (increasing the floor to area ratio from 2.7 to 3.17), a smaller than standard setback on the west and south sides for driveway ramps below grade and to reduce the loading requirement from 2 spaces to 0.

U of M Engaging in Area Development. I have both hopes and concerns about comments in the University of Minnesota President's state of the University speech. You can find the speech here <http://www1.umn.edu/president/speeches-and-writing/state-of-university-2014/>. In it he outlined a "City Strategy" and stated that there is a "compelling need to be a more engaged institutional citizen and partner with the City of Minneapolis and our neighborhoods. For too long, we at the University have seemed not to care about development surrounding our Minneapolis campus..." and revealed plans to draft a set of guiding principles for working with the City and area neighborhoods. I am hopeful that the table we have worked so hard to set for these discussion at the University District Alliance will be seen as the place through which to develop these principles and the more engaged partnership the president and I believe the community is seeking.

U of M Buys Motel Near Campus. In January, in a joint venture with United Properties, the University acquired the property at University Ave SE and 25th Street SE that includes the Days Inn Hotel and the Tea House Restaurant. The joint venture will own and operate the hotel and be landlord of the restaurant. The purchase on this 2400 block of University Avenue Southeast also includes 170 parking spaces.

Openings on Boards and Commissions. Applications are now being accepted for a number of open board and commission positions that the City Council and mayor will appoint this spring. Board and commission members in the City of Minneapolis provide valuable insights, help shape key policy decisions and provide community-based input into administration of services. The City is seeking applicants with a diversity of backgrounds and experiences to strengthen the work of the City. There are more than 40 open positions on the following six City boards and commissions: Civil Rights Commission; Bicycle Advisory Committee; Workforce Council; Public Health Advisory Committee; Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission; Pedestrian Advisory Committee; Applications will be reviewed beginning April 25, but the positions are open until filled. Visit the City's website at <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/boards/openings/index.htm> for more information.