

Second Ward September 2015 E-newsletter

News from Cam Gordon

Council Member, Second Ward

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

<http://secondward.blogspot.com>

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Mayor's 2016 Budget Address. On August 12 Mayor Hodges gave her budget address, Transforming the Basics of the Twenty-First Century City, and outlined initiatives and priorities for next year's spending. I was glad to see the Mayor continue to emphasize equity and to identify climate change, racial and economic injustice, transportation alternatives and a healthy economic future as priorities. I am generally supportive of her proposed levy and overall budget increase. She is recommending a budget for all City funds of \$1.22 billion. This is a \$31.7 million, or 2.7%, increase from last year's budget of \$1.19 billion. I believe that this is reasonable and is consistent with basic "cost of living" increases and will allow us to maintain basic services and address growing demands on city government. When the Park and Recreation Board and Board of Estimate and Taxation are included, the overall recommended increase in the property tax levy is 3.4%, raising the total amount levied by \$9.8 million, from \$287.6 million in 2015 to \$297.5 million in 2016. The recommended budget uses the growth in the "tax base" (from the increase of the property value of property owners paying taxes); accumulated, unspent funds from previous years; growth in city sales and entertainment tax revenues; federal and state grants; and Local Government Aid (LGA) funds from the State, while minimizing the impact on the property taxpayers. The Mayor and finance staff project that, because of these factors, nearly two-thirds of property owners in the city will see a reduction in city property taxes next year. The proposed budget increases the number of city employees by 35 (3,925 to 3,960) from this year's level. Still, the 2016 budget includes over 100 fewer full time employees than in 2007, just before we made significant cuts to our staff and services in response to the financial conditions at that time. You can watch the mayor's budget address and upcoming budget hearings on Minneapolis 79 (Comcast Cable channel 79) or by visiting the City of Minneapolis website at www.minneapolismn.gov/tv/79.

Budget Meetings. From September 18-November 3 the City Council will conduct a series of budget meetings to review each department's budget (for dates see www.minneapolismn.gov/finance/budget). We will hold two public comment hearings on the proposed tax levy and budget. The first will be held November 18 at 6:05 p.m. in Room 317 of City Hall, and the second will be on December 9 at 6:05 p.m. at the same location. For more information and to see the full budget proposal visit <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/budget/index.htm>

Budget Top 20. While I have yet to do a full analysis of the proposed budget, so far I have found a lot to like. Some of the noteworthy budget highlights that I am most supportive of include the following:

1. \$10 million for the City's portion of the 10th Avenue bridge rehabilitation.
2. \$400,000 to accelerate Minneapolis' conversion of City-owned streetlights to LED technology and save about \$113,400 per year over their life cycle, paying for the upgrade in three and a half years.
3. Ongoing funding for the Clean Energy Partnership to execute the 2016 work plan and meet goals to decrease greenhouse gas emissions in Minneapolis.
4. \$50,000 to help more communities and residents engage in the City's Zero Waste programs.
5. Green Business Investment Matching funding to provide money for businesses that work with hazardous substances to reduce pollution.

6. \$50,000 to create a Green Zone pilot program using economic development to catalyze environmental and economic justice in vulnerable neighborhoods.
7. Funding for police body cameras and civilian staff to implement the program.
8. \$13 million for affordable housing, which includes an increase of 2 million for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund in general, \$1 million in flexible dollars to help create affordable housing options for large families, targeted rental assistance for families leaving shelters, and \$800,000 targeted to support stable senior housing.
9. A new Americans with Disabilities compliance position to help ensure we are complying with the letter and spirit of the American with Disabilities Act and that our city is accessible all.
10. \$15,000 for the City Attorney's office to expand their driver's licenses diversion program.
11. Funding for a pilot program that gives the Attorney's Office the responsibility to charge misdemeanors and ensures more direct feedback to officers.
12. Tripling the investments the City makes in restorative justice to break the cycle of recidivism and negative community impact.
13. \$112,000 to bolster the City's BUILD Leaders program which takes young men of color and puts them in leadership roles where they also learn employment skills.
14. Funding for two positions in for the next three years to focus on redrafting the City's Comprehensive plan with a focus on sustainability and equity.
15. \$200,000 for the Fire Department to implement innovative new programs to connect youth and of diverse backgrounds to jobs in the EMT and firefighter fields.
16. \$85,000 for the implementation of the Business Made Simple working group recommendations to make it easier for businesses to invest in Minneapolis.
17. Funding for four new construction inspectors and
18. Funding for six new housing inspectors.
19. \$155,000 to support Upper Harbor Terminal redevelopment along the river.
20. Funding for 30 "TechHire" Initiative scholarships to provide job training focusing on technology skills. (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/technology/techhire>)

Pollinator Resolution. The Council unanimously passed the Pollinator Friendly Community resolution I coauthored with Council Member Linea Palmisano. The resolution declares Minneapolis a pollinator friendly community and commits Minneapolis to increase bee-friendly planting and to decrease and ultimately eliminate pesticide use on city-owned and managed property. With the passage of this resolution the City commits to planting more pollinator forage in appropriate locations (including stormwater management ponds and large land areas) that are currently turf grass; adopt clear guidelines against the use of pesticides and pesticide-treated plants; incorporate pollinator-friendly amendments to its land management policy; planting pollinator forage on vacant land the Community Planning and Economic Development Department controls and encouraging private developers to incorporate pollinator-friendly plantings into required landscaping. Our Property Services Division will pursue planting more pollinator forage on City facilities including at pilots, already underway, at four Minneapolis Fire Department facilities. The Health Department's Environmental Services Unit will maintain resources for other City departments including a list of pollinator-friendly plants, and the Convention Center will incorporate more pollinator forage into its plantings and phase out the use insecticides. The resolution also urges all Minneapolis property owners, residents, businesses, institutions and neighborhoods to become more pollinator friendly by committing to not use pesticides, avoiding planting flowering plants that are treated with insecticides, discontinuing the sale of pesticides and plants that are treated with insecticides, planting more pollinator forage on their property and using organic or chemical-free lawn and landscaping practices. You can read the resolution here:

<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1q-079170.pdf>.

“Bring Your Own Bag” Ordinance. In August, Council Member Warsame and I formally introduced the subject matter of a new ordinance that would regulate carry-out bags in retail establishments. The ordinance would prohibit the use of the standard carry-out, handled plastic bags and require retailers to charge a fee (that the retailer would keep) for paper bags. The aim of the ordinance is to motivate shoppers to bring their own environmentally friendly reusable bags. We are working on this to reduce litter and other negative environmental impacts, reduce the impact of plastic bags on our recycling system (which is significant), reduce the amount of plastic burned at the county garbage burner and move Minneapolis a step closer to a Zero Waste future. We plan to do significant public engagement on this ordinance in the next few months, including broad-based resident outreach and specific targeted conversations with businesses that will be impacted, and with operators of recycling facilities, and environmental groups. I am also working to coordinate efforts with St. Louis Park, where a similar ban is also being considered. If your group would like to get a presentation and give feedback, or if you would like to help educate others about this initiative, please let me know.

Overnight & Emergency Shelter Community Meeting. Council Member Bender and I are concluding the research and stakeholder engagement phase of our ordinance amendment regulating Overnight Shelters. We are preparing a more specific proposal to address the need to allow shelters that are not an accessory use of a church, mosque, synagogue, temple or other place of religious assembly. Among other details, the proposal would create a new category of small shelter, called an Emergency Shelter, that would be required to be licensed and would be allowed in more areas of the city. We will be sharing the details at a community meeting on Monday, September 28th at 6 pm in the Doty Meeting Room at the downtown central Library, 300 Nicollet Mall.

Car Sharing. The City Council has approved short extensions to February 2016, of our Car Sharing contracts with Car2Go and Hourcar to allow them to continue operating while discussions continue about possible changes to future contracts. One of the key discussion points is providing services citywide. When I voted to support this in committee, I stressed that making the service available in all parts of the city should be our goal, even as the demand for services is higher in some parts of the city than others.

New Community Indicators. The City Coordinator’s office presented to the Council a new set of Community Indicators in August. These would replace the current Sustainability Indicators (http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability/indicators/sustainability_indicators) with the intention of aligning them better with the approved city goals and our Results Minneapolis program. I supported this goal, but led the effort to delay approval of the indicators for several weeks because I felt some were incomplete and inadequate. With additional time and work a number of improvements were made and, with my support, the 30 indicators were approved by the Council on September 11. I look forward to seeing them further refined over time and put into use quickly as we restart our Results Minneapolis program that has been suspended while these were being developed. You can find more details and see the final 30 indicators at <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/legislation/WCMS1Q-078824>

Southwest LRT. The Transportation and Public Works Committee will hold a Public Hearing on the Southwest Light Rail project on September 15, 2015 at 9:30 am in the Room 317 of City Hall. This follows the Metropolitan Councils decision to reinstate the municipal consent process after making \$250 million in reductions to the project. This means the City Council will vote again on this project. Earlier I

voted against municipal consent (http://secondward.blogspot.com/2014_08_01_archive.html) and so will be carefully re-evaluating that in light of the Environmental Impact Statement that has now been released. and other information. I welcome your guidance on this decision.

Body Camera Policy Report. The Police Conduct Oversight Commission's (PCOC) body camera report was released and approved by the Commission on September 8. The report is the result of community meetings and extensive research and will likely include best practices, community input, and a recommended policy. The entire report and appendices (800+ pages) can be found at <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/civilrights/conductcomm/rs/index.htm>. I expect them to present it to the Public Safety Committee on September 30.

Low Level Offenses and other Police Stops. I am also expecting that on September 30 the City Attorney and Police Department will report back to Public Safety and Civil Rights Committee on City Council's action, I initiated to gather detailed information on misdemeanor arrests, charging, prosecution and diversion by race, gender, age, geography, and offence for the years 2010-2014, and also to make recommendations concerning the development of a policy and potential protocol for the recording and reporting of demographic information, especially race and location, of police stops that do not necessarily lead to an arrest. This represents an important opportunity to better understand and address institutional racism, racial profiling and discrimination in Minneapolis' criminal justice system.

Working Family Agenda. On September 11, Council Members Glidden and Bender gave notice of intent to introduce a new ordinance that would require employees in Minneapolis to have earned sick time and fair scheduling. I am glad to see the Council taking this next step towards having the City being more active in assuring better working conditions for people who work in our city. I am hopeful that these ordinance amendments will be heard and approved later this year. The Council has also created a workgroup focused on the minimum wage issue. This workgroup is expected to bring a recommendation for a study to the City Council in September. For more information see <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/WorkingFamiliesAgenda> . For questions or comments, please contact workingfamilies@minneapolismn.gov . Comments submitted before October 16, will be more carefully considered in the drafting of the new ordinances.

SCORE Funds for Recycling. In August the Council approved amending our Hennepin County Recycling Refund Policy agreement to extend the expiration date and add funds for organics recycling. This will allow us to use State SCORE (Select Committee on Recycling and the Environment) funds to support our new organics recycling program. Because the legislature dedicated additional funds to SCORE last year, the County has \$813,764 more in SCORE this year and will have approximately \$600,000 more in 2016, to award to cities for recycling and organics programs. Fifty percent of the additional funds must be spent on organics. So, for Minneapolis it is anticipated that the additional SCORE allocation will be \$200,000 for recycling and \$120,000 for organics for 2015.

Tree Failure Follow Up. Back in February when the Council received a tree study conducted by the University of MN that clearly indicated that sidewalk repair and construction put trees at risk I moved, and the Council approved, a motion that directed our staff to work with the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board Forestry Division, the Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission, and the Minneapolis Pedestrian Advisory Committee on recommendations for changes to City policy and practice that will limit the impacts to trees from City sidewalk repair work. Staff reported back in late July (<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/legislation/WCMS1Q-078627>) with an update but no recommendations and without having met with the advisory committees. So, I moved, and the Council

unanimously approved, an additional direction in August for staff to “return no later than January 15, 2016 with a recommended policy to replace the 2004 Urban Forestry Policy, to be considered for adoption by the City Council and a report on best management practices for trees being incorporated into Construction Standards and Specifications. Staff was further directed to seek the formal input of the Minneapolis Tree Advisory Commission, the Minneapolis Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, and the Pedestrian Advisory Committee on the content of this policy.”

Blueprint for Equitable Engagement. All the comments that were offered during the 45 day review period of the first draft of this plan are being reviewed by Neighborhood and Community Relations staff and the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC). They will be used to redraft the blueprint and another public comment period will be opened later this fall for additional input on the redrafted document. I am grateful to everyone who participated in an information sessions or provided input. This plan has the potential to significantly improve how the city supports and benefits from neighborhood organizations for decades to come. To learn more visit: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/initiatives/EquitableEngagement>.

Equity Work Featured in Blog. The City’s Neighborhood and Community Relations department was recently featured in a national blog on race and equity in local government. You can read it at <http://racialequityalliance.org/2015/08/18/the-twin-cities-boards-and-commissions-leadership-institute-using-board-and-commission-appointments-to-advance-racial-equity/>

Renter Input. This summer the City’s Innovation Team has been examining reducing racial and placed-based housing disparities in Minneapolis. As part of that effort, the team wants to hear from people who rent their homes. If you are a renter please consider sharing your thoughts about “home” by tweeting @CityMinneapolis using the #HomeIsThePlace hashtag.

Minneapolis Energy Fair. There will be a family-friendly event focused on making your home energy efficient and learning more about solar options. The event features free LED light bulbs, free Home Energy Squad visits, a grand prize give-away and a complimentary continental breakfast. It will be held October 10 from 9:30 –12:30 at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

Lead Poisoning in Rental Property. The Council has approved strengthening our rental housing licensing standards to add a provision that would allow the City to revoke the rental license of a property owner if their property were found to be responsible for a second lead poisoning case. While most rental properties pose little-to-no lead risk for children, 4,500 Minneapolis children have been poisoned by lead-based paint since 2005 and 75% of these children lived in rental properties. This ordinance gives us an additional tool to address non-compliant landlord and hopefully motivate them to make their properties lead safe.

Our Town Arts Grants. The Council has approved submitting two applications, as the local government partner, to the National Endowment for the Arts Our Town program, one for the Pangea World Theater for Lake Street Arts! (LSA!) Phase 2 in the amount of \$200,000; and one for the West Broadway Business and Area Coalition for West Broadway Creative Hub: An Art Engagement and Cultural Planning Project in the amount of \$200,000. For more see <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/legislation/WCMS1P-147654>

Downtown East Commons. On September 11, despite my opposition, the Council voted to approve the concept design for the new plaza that will be located on most of two blocks near the new football

stadium downtown. We also authorized a new entity called “Green Minneapolis” to undertake a fundraising campaign to support the design, construction and operation of the Commons, authorized agreement(s) with Green Minneapolis and Ryan Companies for construction of an initial phase of enhancements, and approved making the \$2 million of the design and project management costs already authorized by the City will not be replenished from the fundraising campaign. You can find more information here <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/legislation/WCMS1P-147659> . At the Council meeting, I supported some amendments and a staff direction which offer hope that we could reopen the park use agreement but I opposed the overall action for three main reasons. First, I believe that design does not do enough to provide amenities to area residents, especially children and teenagers. As I have said before (<http://secondward.blogspot.com/search?q=the+yard>), this space represents (or represented) a great opportunity to provide an additional downtown park that could serve nearby by residents, as well as event visitors and downtown workers. Second, I believe that we should not make any further commitments or investments in this plaza until we are able to fix serious problems within the park use and parking agreements we made with the Vikings and MSFA. Finally, I am concerned that we are rushing this in order to make a deadline set by the National Football League and the Vikings, and not one that is in the best interests of the people of Minneapolis. At this point we do not have the funding to even build the design we have approved, much less a plan for maintaining, programming and operating the plaza. We appear to be putting the interests of NFL, the Vikings and Wells Fargo ahead of the interests of the general public. As a result, I fear, the general public is losing out.

Youth Congress Opportunity. The Minneapolis Youth Congress (MYC) is now accepting members for the 2015-2016 school year. MYC is a representative body of 45-50 youth leaders from grades 8-12. Each MYC member sits on a committee (Health, Education, Housing, Safety, Transportation, Health, and Green) and works in collaboration with elected officials for the welfare of Minneapolis youth. As Chair of the Youth Coordinating Board and of the Health, Environment and Community Engagement Committee, I have worked with the MYC and seen firsthand what a difference this group can make. The position offers a stipend in addition to other great incentives. For more information contact LaToya Balogun at latoya.balogun@minneapolismn.gov or Evan Barnett at Evan.Barnett@minneapolismn.gov or download the applications here http://assets.ngin.com/attachments/document/0081/7626/youth_congress_app_FINAL_2013_2014.pdf Applications are due September 25, 2015.

New Deputy City Coordinator. Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde began her new role as Deputy City Coordinator on September 8. She previously was director of the City’s Regulatory Services Department and many of us will miss her in that position. I look forward to seeing how she brings her positive energy, data-focused solutions-oriented approach and open, honest and inclusive communication style to the coordinators office.

Curbside Organics Collection. City crews began delivering the first green organics recycling carts to Minneapolis residents in August. Crews will continue dropping off the carts through Sept. 18 to about 7,000 households signed up and living in the first phase areas of citywide organics collection. More than 31,000 households overall have signed up for green organics recycling carts. The second phase of the rollout begins in the spring. I encourage to sign up now if you haven’t already.

Bicycle Advisory Committee. I have appointed Hilary Lovelace to the Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee. I am thrilled to be able to put such a bright resident of the Southeast Como neighborhood on such an important, influential City commission. Hilary is also a member of the Southeast Como

Improvement Association and a student at the University of MN pursuing a Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning. I am very grateful for her willingness to serve.

Xcel Resource Plan. Two Council committees will consider making formal comments to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission's request for comments on Xcel Energy's proposed 2016-2030 Resource Plan on September 17 and 21. The Resource Plan is a 15-year planning document that Xcel Energy is required to submit to the Public Utilities Commission. It forecasts anticipated electricity usage and the type and amount of necessary generating sources – such as wind, solar, nuclear and coal. The plan ultimately adopted by the Commission will significantly impact Minneapolis' ability to meet our Climate Action goals, including overall greenhouse gas reductions, renewable energy targets and energy efficiency goals. While I commend Xcel for making significant reductions in the planned use of coal in its generating mix, I do not believe the plan goes far enough or fast enough in phasing out coal. I am hoping the city's comments will call for the closing of Xcel's Sherburne County Generating Station (Sherco) coal-fired power plant Units 1 and 2 – the largest soot and carbon polluter in Minnesota and for significant increases the use of clean energy from wind and solar.

Percent for Public Art. Council Members Reich and Glidden's ordinance amendment to establish dedicated funding source for public art will be coming forward for a Public Hearing on September 17, at 9:30 am at the Zoning & Planning Committee. The proposal, I support, would dedicate an annual allocation of 1.5% percent of the equivalent of the annual net debt bond (or the property tax supported bonds issued to finance general infrastructure improvements) to the commissioning, siting, placement, maintenance, and conservation of public art. If approved, this would guarantee a predictable funding stream for public art projects, while at the same time allowing for fluctuations based on the City's annual budget. For further information on the proposal see <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-148646.pdf>

National Voter Registration Day. Please join me and my Council colleagues to celebrate the struggle to protect and promote the right to vote in the City Hall rotunda on Tuesday September 22 at 11:30 am. Speakers will recall the passage of the Voting Rights Act and will include Secretary of State, Steve Simon, former Mayor Don Fraser, who was in congress in 1965 when the Act was passed.

Fall Street Cleaning. Heads up. Mark your calendars. Don't get ticketed or towed. The city will be posting the first streets on Monday October 19, for sweeping (and enforcement) to begin on Tuesday, October 20. It will take the usual 4 weeks to complete.

I-94 Long Range Planning. I met recently with staff from The MN Department of Transportation to discuss a planning effort they are starting, that would ultimately lead to a reconstruction of I-94 through Minneapolis and St. Paul. According to information shared at the meeting, "While there is some project funding in 2020 and 2021, and there are some locations that will need rehabilitation in the short term, the goal of this project is to truly engage a wide variety of people regarding the needs associated with this corridor. The, using that grassroots information, we can develop an approach to address the corridor issues in a more comprehensive, long term and community based way." This is an opportunity to improve, and hopefully mitigate the harms from, this major piece of national infrastructure that cuts through the Second Ward. I see potential for us to recover lost land, secure dedicated and state of the art transit Bus Rapid Transit in the corridor and deck over some of the freeway trench to reconnect communities with added amenities. I commend the department for reaching out to local residents and

groups early and am hopeful that this will not result in simply maintaining the status quo or worse yet adding more lanes. For more visit www.mndot.gov or contact brian.isaacson@state.mn.us .

Welcome Back. As home to the University of Minnesota, Augsburg College and the Minneapolis Campus of the University of St. Catherine's, the end of August and beginning of September, is always a busy time in the ward. This year, as in years past, we have worked hard to accommodate all people moving out of the area and all the new people moving in. In addition to supporting the Pack and Give Back program (<https://facm.umn.edu/reuse-program/packandgiveback>) and extra garbage and trash removal, the city was once again delighted to join others from the University District Alliance in door knocking and passing out information to new residents. This year I was glad to spend a few hours welcoming students moving in to the Motley, or stadium village area. To learn more see <https://www.facebook.com/umnsr/timeline>

Second Precinct Police Advisory Committee (PAC). The 2nd Precinct PAC is meeting in Southeast in September 6 pm, September 14 at the University Lutheran Church of Hope, at 6 St. and 13th Ave SE, just outside of Dinkytown. Second Precinct Inspector Kathy Waite and the University of Minnesota Police Department Chief, Matt Clark, will share updates, do a special presentation on how you can better keep yourself, your home, and your car, safe and secure and answer questions. There will also be updates from the City and County Attorney's Offices about the Second Precinct Courtwatch program.

Grain Elevators. I am working to put together a Grain Elevator Task Force of City staff from multiple departments to talk about the concerns and opportunities that come with the old, vacant grain elevators in Minneapolis, many of which are in Ward 2. I am very concerned about the ongoing safety issues posed by these buildings, and want to find ways to honor the important contribution they make to our history while also moving them to either adaptive reuse or demolition in a timely manner. Following the staff meeting I hope to reach out to others concerned about this issue, including preservationists and owners of grain elevators in Minneapolis.

Bunge Site. I understand that Project for Pride in Living has approached City staff and is more aggressively examining alternatives for complete or partial demolition of the Bunge Grain Bins and Head House and redevelopment at the site. I am exploring the use of federal funding through a Higher Density Housing Corridor Program, and the possibility of using funds from the program for the city to acquire the property after some of all of it is demolished and then reselling it to a housing developer chosen through a Request for Proposal process. At this point looks it appears that any demolition would require review and approval from the Minneapolis Historic Preservation Commission.

Electric Steel. The Council has denied the appeal by the owners of the Electric Steel grain elevators in the University District of the Heritage Preservation Commission's denial of a Demolition of Historic Resource application. This establishes interim protection for the property while a mandated a historic designation study is completed. That could take up to 18 months to complete. At that time demolition could again be considered.

Closure of 29th Ave S at the Midtown Greenway. The temporary closure of 29th Avenue South at the Midtown Greenway has generated a lot of contacts to the City, and they have been overwhelmingly positive. I hear that staff will leave the closure in place until November 1, to get a good idea of how the closure operates when Seward Montessori is in session. Given the broad-based support for this closure, I will be advocating for Public Works to put a permanent closure into effect as soon as possible. I will

also continue to push for the other traffic changes SNG has requested in the area, including flipping the stop sign at 30th Ave S and the Greenway.

Franklin/Cedar/Minnehaha. As you may have seen at the Franklin Avenue Open Streets, Hennepin County and the City have come up with a possible design for the intersection of Cedar, Franklin and Minnehaha that will dramatically improve the intersection's operation for all modes, but especially for pedestrians and bicyclists. It involves closing Minnehaha north of Franklin and opening 22nd St E for left turns from Cedar. I applaud staff for working on these creative solutions, and look forward to seeing them implemented.

Oak Street Protected Bikeway. Open Streets University included one of the first protected bikeways in Minneapolis being installed in Ward 2, on Oak Street SE. This new two-way protected bikeway on the west side of the street connects East River Parkway to the Washington Avenue bike lanes. Some of the features of this new facility include a concrete median in the block south of Fulton, a bike signal at Fulton, and great intersection markings to ensure safety. I want to thank Public Works staff for all of their great work on this, especially project coordinator Simon Blenski.

Huron Hotel. The City Council has approved accepting two funding awards for the Huron Hotel project at 2510 Essex Street SE and 501 Huron Boulevard SE totaling \$451,078. One is from the State Department of Employment and Economic Development of \$270,678 and one from the Metropolitan Council for \$180,400 CPM Development plans to convert an existing two-story 20,144 square foot building, which was constructed in 1911 for manufacturing uses, into a hotel. The projected total development cost is \$25,115,000. The awarded grant funds will be used primarily for soil remediation and the abatement of asbestos and/or lead based paint in the existing building.

Seward Towers. The City has accepted funding awards on behalf of the Seward Towers for \$517,950 from the Metropolitan Council and \$221,250 from Hennepin County and have voted to give preliminary approval to the issuance of up to \$50,000,000 in Tax Exempt Multifamily Housing Entitlement Revenue Bonds. The Seward Towers ownership entity intends to convey the buildings to a tax credit limited partnership as part of an effort to renovate the existing buildings to a 20-year standard in order to preserve the existing federal Section 8 contracts. The planned renovations include new replacement windows and building systems/code upgrades. The projected total development cost is \$93,779,104. The awarded grant funds will be used primarily for the abatement of asbestos in the existing buildings.

Award for Surly Cleanup. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has named the environmental cleanup for Surly Brewery project as the best Brownfields redevelopment project in Minnesota for 2015. This project transformed a heavily polluted vacant industrial site into a popular regional attraction, with a brewery, restaurant and events center. The cleanup involved a partnership of Surly Brewing, Barr Engineering, the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County. The project received funding from Hennepin County, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and the Metropolitan Council. This turned an underutilized and degraded piece of land into a successful, neighborhood serving business with 200 new full time jobs and an increase of \$200,000 annually to the tax base.

Railroad Abandonment in Prospect Park. Canadian Pacific Railroad has filed for abandonment of a short portion of railroad in Prospect Park that crosses Interstate 94 and up to Essex Street near Stadium Village. I would like to see this preserved as a potential bike and pedestrian transit corridor which could provide a good connection from Stadium Village and the U of MN campus into Prospect Park, to St. Paul and potentially to the Midtown Greenway should more of this line be abandoned in the future. I am

concerned because there is already a proposed development of a 215-unit apartment building on the corridor between Essex St and 27th Ave SE.

(<http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@cped/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-147336.pdf>). I am working with city staff and communicating with the County and others to see what how we can leverage this to best serve the public good.

2720 University Avenue SE. The City Council has approved rezoning this building on this significant commercial corridor from OR2 (High Density Office Residence), to C2 (Neighborhood Corridor Commercial District). Rezoning to C2 will make the property more commercially-viable again. No development is proposed at this time, but the C2 zoning would expand the number of commercial uses that would be allowed in the existing building. The site will retain the Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District which prohibits auto-oriented uses and fast-food facilities that would otherwise be allowed in the C2 district. The UA, University Area Overlay district will also be retained. I supported this change because it allows for more retail uses fronting along University Avenue, near the LRT station, expands the commercial options available, and is consistent with the small area plan.

Openings on Boards and Commissions. Applications are now being accepted for a number of open boards and commissions positions that the City Council and mayor will appoint this fall. 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. Applications will be reviewed beginning Oct. 23. However, the positions are open until filled. There are open positions on the Charter Commission, Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council (application review will start after Oct. 2), Minneapolis Advisory Committee on Aging; Minneapolis Arts Commission, Minneapolis Commission on Civil Rights, Minneapolis Planning Commission, Minneapolis Police Conduct Oversight Commission, Minneapolis Police Conduct Review Panel, Minneapolis Public Housing Authority Board, Public Health Advisory Committee. Visit <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/boards/openings/index.htm> for a list of appointment opportunities, position descriptions and the applications.

Open Office Hours in the Ward. I usually hold open “Office Hours” in the ward every Thursday morning from 9:30 to 11:00 am. Please feel free to call the office at 673-2202 to reserve some time or just stop by for a visit.

First Thursdays at the Oren Gateway Center, Nabo Café, 2211 Riverside Avenue;

Second Thursdays at Black: Coffee and Waffles, 1500 Como Ave SE;

Third Thursdays at Overflow Café, 2929 University Ave SE;

Fourth Thursdays at Blue Moon Coffee Café, 3822 E Lake St.

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

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