

**News from Cam Gordon
Council Member, Second Ward
September, 2009**

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/ward2/>

Next Year's Budget. We are holding a public hearing to gather input that should help us consider amendments to the budget before we approve a final budget on December 7. The **public hearing on the 2010 City budget will be held on Thursday, Nov. 19, 6:05 p.m. at City Hall**, 350 South 5th Street, room 317. You can review the proposed budget at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/city-budget. Serious fiscal challenges we face include state funding cuts of \$13.2 million in 2008, \$8.5 M in 2009, and \$21.3 M in 2010; health insurance costs close to 40 million this year that are expected to continue to go up: increases in required funding for pensions to a projected \$25.1 million in 2010. To balance the budget, the Mayor has proposed a total City spending cut of \$100 million, including \$19 million in cuts to the general fund that will lead to about 225 (out of nearly 4,000) position eliminations including roughly 49 fewer police officers and 21 fewer fire fighters. He is also proposing an overall property tax increase of 11.3% for 2010, dropping to 5.5% in 2011, and then 6% in 2012. Tax payers will get some relief in 2010 because a large number of properties not currently paying into our general fund (but into a special fund for NRP instead) will contribute some \$20 – 24 million. That means that even though the overall amount of taxes we can collect will increase by 11.3% (under the proposed budget), the real impact on individuals will be closer to 6%. Please let me know what you think of this and if you need more information.

Ward 2 Policing Staff Changes. The retirements of Second Precinct (covering Southeast Como and Prospect Park East River Road) Commander Bob Skomra and Deputy Chief for Investigations Valerie Wurster (who ably commanded the Second Precinct during my first year in office) have led to a number of police staffing changes that effect parts of the Second Ward. Skomra has been replaced by Bryan Schafer who previously led the very effective Juvenile unit. Deputy Chief Rob Allen will take over the position Wurster is leaving. First Precinct (covers Cedar Riverside) Commander Janee Harteau, whose work on crime issues on the West Bank I have appreciated very much, has been promoted to Allen's old job as Deputy Chief of the Patrol unit. She will be replaced as Inspector of the First Precinct by Kristine Arneson, who has headed the Fifth Precinct in Southwest Mpls. Also, longtime Crime Prevention Specialist (CPS) for the First Precinct Luther Krueger is moving to the MPD's Strategic Information / Crime Management unit and Renee Allen, who has already been working as CPS in the West Bank, will serve the whole precinct.

Meeting on Pruning of Boulevard Trees. Every 5 – 10 years Xcel Energy cuts away branches and limbs from the power lines that run in our neighborhoods. Recently tree work was completed in Seward and several people contacted my office upset by the dramatic loss of tree canopy. Because of this and the likelihood that tree trimming will continue in area this year and next I am convening a meeting with Xcel representatives Fletcher Johnson, Vegetation Management Supervisor, and Paul Adelman, Community Relations Manager so people can share your concerns and learn more about why and how this is done on **Tuesday, September 15, 7-8:30 pm at Matthews Park**, Multi Purpose Rm., 2318 29th Ave. S.,

Tree Advisory. My motion passed directing the City's Tree Advisory Commission to work with Xcel Energy, the Park and Recreation Board Forestry Department and tree trimming contractors to improve communication with Minneapolis residents and neighborhoods about tree trimming associated with electric utilities. I look forward to hearing their report.

Park Board Charter Amendment. Last month, I voted against a motion to prevent the Park Board charter amendment from being placed on the ballot primarily because I wanted to respect the valid work done by the petitioners. Subsequently, a judge has concurred with the City Attorney and ruled the charter amendment unconstitutional and in violation of state law and so it will not be on the ballot unless the group appeals this decision and prevails in a higher court. I

hope it is not appealed and believe it is time we return to the spirit of the agreement reached earlier this year to form a blue ribbon committee to study the relationship between the City and the Park Board, and come up with more thoughtful and constructive recommendations for improving it.

Central Corridor Making Tracks. The Federal Transit Administration has released the Record of Decision on the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit project, which means that the project will go forward. This action by the FTA makes clear that this critical project will now move forward. I will continue to work with city staff, other elected officials, residents, businesses, institutions and community groups from both Minneapolis and St. Paul to make sure this great new service benefits those who live, learn and work near its path, as well as the region.

Homicide in Prospect Park. The first homicide in southeast Minneapolis during my term occurred early in the morning on September 4th. My office is exploring the connection of this event to the Profile Music Center, which has received many complaints from nearby neighbors in recent years, and has been the site of past violent incidents.

MPD Policy Manual. The Police Department has made a presentation to the Public Safety and Regulatory Services (PS & RS) committee about how changes are made to the Police Policy Manual. This was prompted by a staff direction back in April that I helped pass, after several changes for the worse have been made in recent years. These include changes to the Taser policy and the squad car video policy that I believe endanger the public and make it harder to hold individual officers accountable. The committee ultimately passed a fairly weak “request” that the Police Department inform Council members who sit on PS&RS, along with the Mayor, when policy changes are finalized. I was pushing for a stronger action that would have allowed the Civilian Review Authority and policymakers to review proposed policy changes and give input before the changes are finalized. I will continue to work to include more input from the Council in the Police Department’s work.

Supervision of the Police Force. The City Charter is clear, and the City Attorney recently reminded the City Council during our discussions about who sets police policy, that the Mayor has full supervisory authority over the Minneapolis Police Department. While the Council does approve the appointment of the Chief and the department’s budget every year, it appears likely to that the residents of Minneapolis might benefit from a more direct role for the City Council in the supervision and policy-level management of the department. So, this month I began more formally exploring possible changes to our charter that would give the City Council, as well as the Mayor, the powers “connected with and incident to the establishment, maintenance, appointment, removal, discipline, control and supervision of its police force.”

Minneapolis juvenile police program wins international award. The Minneapolis Police Department has been awarded the 2009 International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Webber Seavey award for its innovative and effective approach to reducing juvenile crime. Created in 2006 as part of our Youth Violence Prevention Plan, the approach emphasizes cooperation among stakeholders; investigation and prosecution of crime; intervention in the lives of low-level offenders; and putting officers into the school environment to provide a meaningful resource for students and staff. The Division has established strong working relationships with community organizations and I am very supportive of these efforts to find new ways to address both first-time juvenile delinquency and ongoing serious offenders.

Anonymous, City-wide Tip Line for Youth. Another one of our Youth Violence Prevention strategies (recommended by many of the youth we consulted) will be implemented this month. We are cooperating with the national *Speak Up* campaign, created in 2002 by PAX, a nonprofit organization working to prevent gun violence among children and families. Minneapolis will be the first city to utilize PAX’s innovative text messaging technology. The texting service allows students to send anonymous text messages to the hotline and communicate with a crisis counselor via text. Professionally trained crisis counselors respond to texts and telephone calls

24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Counselors will compile a report of circumstances from calls or texts and will send the report to MPD and MPS district emergency management staff, if necessary, for further investigation. A public awareness campaign including outdoor advertising, television and radio public service announcements will begin within the next month. Please visit www.speakup.com for more information.

No Primary in Minneapolis on September 15. While voters across Minnesota will be taking part in Primaries on September 15, there will be no Primary here in Minneapolis this year because we will be using Ranked Choice Voting for the first time on November 3. For more information on Ranked Choice Voting, including instructions on how to cast your ballot this November, go to voteminneapolis.org.

School Closings and Changes. The Minneapolis Public School District is considering closing some schools and changing attendance boundaries for others. Programs likely to be closed include, unfortunately, Pratt School in Ward 2. The School Board and MPS administration have been working on this plan since January, 2009 and the Board will vote on the full plan on September 22. Detailed information is available at www.mpls.k12.mn.us/. Upcoming meetings include a presentation and meeting on **September 14, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.** and a Public Hearing on Schools Recommended for Closure in 2010 on **September 15**, Both will be held at Washburn High School 201 West 49th St | 6 p.m.

Gopher Game. The first regular season football game in the new U of M stadium will start at 6 pm, Saturday, September 12. Pre-game events are expecting to begin earlier. For more on game-day activities, see http://stadium.gophersports.com/gameday_other_campus_activities.html Tailgating will be allowed in many of the surface lots on the East Bank, West Bank and can begin as early as 12:00 noon and will end at or before 12:00 midnight. There will be a flyover of military planes before the start of the game, a pre-game fireworks display and, if the Gophers win, another fireworks display after the game. The schedule for other football games this season is at http://stadium.gophersports.com/schedule_promotions.html The Stadium area Advisory Group I serve on is very interested in getting feedback about the first game. Please call or email me with any input before our meeting on the 14th if you have anything to share. If you are interested, tours of the stadium will be available on Sunday, October 4, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., as part of Homecoming festivities.

Target Center Green Roof. The new green roof on this city-owned arena is finished. It is the largest green roof in Minnesota and the first green roof installed on an arena in North America. The 2.5 acre roof will capture nearly 1 million gallons of storm water annually by to prevent drainage into the Mississippi River and possible sewage overflow. In addition to storm water drainage prevention, the roof will help mitigate the heat island effect in downtown and provide plant and animal habitat. It is planted with a variety of Minnesota prairie plants, including Columbine, Prairie Coreopsis, Wild Strawberry, Dotted Blazing-Star, and Lupine. Lupines target the Karner Blue Butterfly, a federally listed endangered butterfly that needs them to survive.

Tornado Response. I'm proud of the response by our police, fire and public works staff to the tornado touchdown in south Minneapolis last month. I'm also pleased that the City has retooled the Tree Trust program focused first on the blow-down area (which suffered the loss of at least 250 trees just on public land).

Trees Now Available Citywide. There are 125 trees left from the tornado re-leaf effort available to all Minneapolis residents for planting this fall. The trees are available first-come, first-served through Sept. 18 at a reduced cost of \$25 each. Five varieties of trees are available: triumph elm, autumn splendor buckeye, Valley Forge elm, ironwood and blue beech. The trees are approximately six to 10 feet tall with a one-inch trunk. Residents can order one tree per household. Minneapolis residents can order a tree at www.treetrust.org/orderhere or (651) 644-5800.

Bike/Walk Counts. Public Works is gearing up to conduct its 3rd annual Bicycle and Pedestrian Count, and you can volunteer to help. Volunteers will be asked to count the number of bicyclists and pedestrians at several locations around the city. The main day for counting will be **Tuesday, Sept. 15**, although other days are available. Volunteers will sign up for various two-hour time slots, and are particularly needed from 4 to 6 p.m. on the 15th. If you're interested in volunteering, [register online](#) at or contact Shaun Murphy at shaun.murphy@ci.minneapolis.mn.us or (612)275-5128. To learn more about how bicycle and pedestrian counts are used, you can visit the City's [bicycling Web page](#) to see a [report on the 2008 counts](#).

Federal Funds to Help Public Safety and Public Works. We have secured federal American Recovery & Reinvestment Act funding for a number of Projects including: \$3.2 million in Recovery Act funding to pay for 13 police officers from January 2010 through December 2012; \$10 million in Recovery Act funding to rehabilitate the Camden Bridge (and create about 90 construction jobs and add 35 years to the life of the bridge); and \$2 million for improvement to the City's Water Works Dewatering Plant in Fridley.

Green Jobs Economic Recovery Strategy. We applied for a \$4 million "Pathways Out of Poverty / Green Job Training Grant" in cooperation with Ramsey County Workforce Solutions. If we receive the grant, it will be used to integrate training and support services into cohesive programs that will help residents out of poverty and into economic self-sufficiency through employment in the energy efficiency and renewable energy industries.

American Clean Energy and Security (ACES) Bill. I strongly supported a recent Council action to take a firm position on the ACES climate change bill (also known as "cap and trade"). I believe that climate change is one of the most important crises of our era, and that we must take significant, meaningful action. I supported the language in the City's position that opposes specific "carve-outs" for certain favored industries, such as agriculture.

Alliance. The University District Partnership Alliance-supported ordinance changes I authored regarding off street parking requirements and the administrative review for new homes unanimously passed the City Council on August 14.

Expansion of Premises Near Stadium. A public hearing has been set for **September 23rd**, at 1pm, to discuss the ordinance I have introduced, which will increase the allowable opportunities for on sale liquor, wine and beer establishments near the University of Minnesota football stadium to temporarily expand their licenses and premises for special events. I am supportive of this idea provided there are strict conditions placed on the bars and the geographic area is limited to within a block or two of the stadium.

Homegrown Minneapolis. The implementation task force that the Council created in June is holding its first meeting on September 15th. Over the last several months, my office and the Mayor's office have been meeting with participating City departments to set expectations for this important work. I'm very hopeful that this group will make good progress, with our first set of policy changes to be presented back to the Council by spring.

Student Ambassadors in Southeast Como. I had the opportunity to go doorknocking in the Southeast Como neighborhood with the University Student Liaisons, attempting to reach new student renters and welcome them to the neighborhood. Some of the major points we stressed were that this is a mixed neighborhood of long-term homeowners and student renters, that there are good ways for renters to avoid conflicts with their neighbors, and that resources, including my office and SECIA, are out there to help. I'm thrilled that this initiative – which I have supported since taking office – is getting off the ground.

Street Lighting Fee. The proposed street lighting fee that I opposed was voted down by the Council. The \$3 million a year needed to keep the street lights on in the city will continue to be

paid for with property tax revenue. I will continue pushing us to find and use the most energy efficient lighting standards, fixtures and bulbs possible.

600 Main. The Stone Arch Phase II project is moving through the Council process. I voted against the applicant's variance request in committee. The Council is set to vote on this on September 18.

Fall Festivities in the Ward. Please join me at:

- **Pratt Pancake Breakfast and Sale.** Saturday September 12 at Pratt School. The Sale, 8:30am-12 will be in the parking lot and the Breakfast 8:30-11:30am, inside Pratt, 66 Malcolm Ave.
- **Kings Fair.** The biannual celebration of the Seward neighborhood, King's Fair, on September 12th, from noon to 5pm in Matthews Park.
- **The West Bank Revival.** Friday and Saturday Sept. 18 – 19 with music at venues throughout the West Bank including Acadia Cafe, The Red Sea, The Nomad Pub, and the Bedlam Theater and food specials at Hardtimes Cafe & The Weinery. See www.frontporchsetter.com/westbankrevival for details and updates.
- **Como Garage Sale Days and Cookout.** Sales will be happening through the neighborhood September-Thursday 17th, Friday 18th, Saturday, 19th...with the Cookout following on Sunday, the 20th from 2-5pm at Van Cleve Park.

Augsburg College will likely receive the liquor license they were seeking, in order to serve wine and beer at selected events. The license was approved at the committee level and will go to the full Council for a final vote on September 18.

Koyi Shushi, Too, the new restaurant that will be locating in the old Seward Co-op building, has received a beer and wine license. The license was approved at the committee level and will go to the full Council for a final vote on September 18.

Openings on City Boards and Commissions. There are openings on the Stadium Village Special Service District Advisory Board (closes 9/25) and Zoning Board of Adjustment (closes 9/25). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Yours, in peace and cooperation,

Cam Gordon
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<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/ward2/>