

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

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

Pedestrian Master Plan. Public Works has presented a draft of the City's first Pedestrian Master Plan to the Transportation and Public Works committee. You can read the plan here: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/pedestrian. This marks the first time that the City has taken a comprehensive look at how our infrastructure and planning affect the walkability of our neighborhoods. I'm hoping that it will help us improve on the existing strengths in our pedestrian system, and close some of the gaps that I know are out there. Staff has scheduled a public meeting next **Thursday, July 16**, at the Minneapolis Central Library, with the following planned events: 5:30pm Walking Workshops, 6:00pm Meeting, 6:30pm Presentation.

Street Lighting Fee Meetings. Public Works staff has scheduled two public meetings to gather input on a proposed street lighting fee. Currently, the \$3 million a year needed to keep the street lights on in the city comes from the general fund, which gets around 20 percent of its money from LGA, which has been cut by \$21.3 million. The meetings are on **Tuesday, July 14**, 6:30-8:30pm at Farview Park, 621 29th Ave N; and **Thursday, July 16**, 6:30-8:30pm at Martin Luther King Park, 4055 Nicollet Ave S.

Homegrown Minneapolis. The Council has unanimously passed a resolution I authored putting the City on record as supporting locally grown food, and creating a Homegrown Minneapolis Implementation Task Force. I will co-chair this group, which will focus on putting into action the recommendations of the Homegrown Minneapolis report: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/homegrown-home.asp.

Impact of Unallotment. As you've likely heard, Governor Pawlenty has "unallotted" \$2.7 billion in State spending. Government Aid to Minneapolis will be cut by **\$8.5 million** in 2009 and **\$21.3 million** in 2010, for a total cut of **\$30 million** through 2010. With the Governor's recent action, the City of Minneapolis receives **43 percent** less from the State than we did six years ago. The State collects about \$74 million from our property taxes, and \$390 million in sales taxes generated in Minneapolis. The State now only returns **15%** of those dollars back to Minneapolis.

Downtown Garbage Burner. The City Planning Commission has denied Covanta Energy's application to amend the conditional use permit for the downtown's Hennepin Energy Recovery Center (HERC). Covanta has appealed this decision to the Council, and this will come before the Zoning and Planning committee on July 23rd.

Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission. The membership of the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC) has been decided. Cooper resident and Longfellow Community Council President Marcea Mariani is the neighborhood representative for District 8, which includes all of the neighborhoods in Ward Two. You can also find information on the NCEC at: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/ncr/NCEC_Home.asp. It's my hope that this commission will help lead to better communication and community involvement in all City decisions, improved and consistent funding to build the capacity of our neighborhood organizations, and effective oversight of the City's new Neighborhood and Community Relations department.

Civil Rights Investigations. It is becoming increasingly clear that it is neither wise nor necessary to eliminate the investigations unit of the Civil Rights Department in order to balance the City's budget. A report from a special Task Force formed to study this is expected to come before the Health Energy and Environment Committee on July 20. I am hopeful that they will recommend keeping this small but important staff team that investigates cases of possible discrimination and helps protect civil rights in our city.

Use of Tasers. In 2006 the City Council directed the Police Department and the Minneapolis Civilian Police Review Authority (CRA) to collaborate to develop a policy on the use of Conducted Energy Devices (or Tasers) before the release of funds to purchase them was approved. At the time I was very pleased with the process and the result, which appeared to provide careful guidance for the use of these dangerous devices, intended only to be used in place of more lethal force. Then in 2007 the policy was significantly changed by the Police Department without any consultation with the CRA or the City Council. I am very concerned about both the process used to change this policy and the poor new policy that resulted from that process. Recently the Public Safety and Regulatory Services Committee voted to direct the Police Department to “report back to us no later than July 22nd with a report on the current procedure for changing the Police Policy and Procedure Manual; and propose a process for including input from the City Attorney’s Office, Police Federation, MPD Staff, the Minneapolis Civilian Police Review Board, City Council and Mayor’s Office.” The CRA has been leading this effort and will hold a public forum on Minneapolis Police Departments Taser policy at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 15 in Room 319 of City Hall, 350 S. 5th St. (use after-hours entrance: the center doors on 4th St. – north side of building). More information about this issue is available at <http://www.tcdailyplanet.net/article/2009/07/08/reporters-notebook-tasers-minneapolis.html>

Franklin, East River Pkwy, 27th Ave SE. Hennepin County is leading the effort to improve this complex intersection in anticipation of increased use due to the Central Corridor Light Rail project. In June, the County presented a number of options which included 1) a modified five-leg intersection, which would leave the current intersection basically unchanged but use state of the art signaling technology to improve conditions; 2) a four-leg conventional signal that would require the rerouting of north bound traffic on East River Parkway; 3) creation of a roundabout with 3 different alternatives; and, 4) a grade-separated pedestrian-bicyclist trail that would flow over and/or under vehicular traffic along the parkway. Please see <http://www.sehinc.com/online/franklin/public.htm> or contact my office for more information and expect a third open house with more final recommendations in late July or August.

Xcel Hiawatha Project. Xcel has applied to the Public Utilities Commission to move forward with a project that includes two substations, (one adjacent to the Greenway on the east side of Hiawatha) and an above ground high voltage transmission along the Midtown Greenway. I serve on a committee formed by the Public Utilities Commission to make recommendations for the required Environmental Impact Statement. I am opposed to the current proposal and am on record supporting burying the line if one is determined to be needed. On July 17 I expect the Council to authorize filing a petition that will give the City “intervener status” and put us in a better position to present our case to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.

Zoning, Planning, Regulatory Review (ZPRR) Ordinance Changes. The proposed ordinance changes resulting from the ZPRR committee’s work will be going before the Planning Commission next Monday, July 13, at 4:30pm. This includes the proposed University Overlay District, increased parking requirements for new construction, and improvements to the Administrative Review process for new single family, duplex and triplex construction.

Comedy in the City. The Public Safety and Regulatory Services committee, on July 8, paved the way for more humor in the City. The City currently requires that an establishment have a class A license – the most expensive and difficult to receive – in order to feature live comedy. The proposed changes that passed the committee unanimously will allow solo live comedians to perform in venues with class D, C, B and A licenses. A class D license already allows solo musicians. I think this is a great move for both comics and the cultural landscape of Minneapolis. It also resulted in a rather entertaining committee meeting you can see on the web at: <http://www.ci.mpls.mn.us/webcasts/>

National Night Out will be on **Tuesday, August 4**. The following are some important deadlines: Your event will be eligible for additional door prizes if you register by **July 14**. You can close your street for free if you register by **July 21**. (It will cost you \$100 to close your street if you miss this

deadline!) All registered NNO events will receive Mystery Point Passes for Nickelodeon Universe at the Mall of America and vouchers (each good for 2 tickets) for Minnesota Twins games to use as door prizes. There is a single online process to register your NNO event and apply to close your street. If you want to close your street for your event, you will need permission of 75 percent of your neighbors to be approved for street closure. Please have their names and addresses with you when you apply. (You do not need their signatures.) Get started at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/nno. If you don't have Internet access or you prefer to speak to someone, you can register your event and apply for street closure by calling 311 (or 612-673-3000).

Ranked Choice Voting. The Council, with my strong support, has voted to use ranked choice voting for this November's municipal election. This was made possible by the unanimous decision by the Supreme Court on June 11th that ranked choice voting is constitutional. My office has worked hard since 2006 to make this happen, and I'm excited to move forward.

Fleet Cars. The City has ended its pool car program. Instead, City employees who need a car for a short time will be able to use the HourCar car sharing program. HourCar offers hybrid Toyota Prius vehicles that average nearly 50 mpg, which helps the City fight air pollution and climate change.

Sandwich Board Signs. The Zoning and Planning committee has unanimously adopted a compromise amendment I introduced allowing sandwich board signs outside of downtown, but only where they don't impede pedestrian traffic. I'm glad we could find this middle ground, first crafted by my Aide, Robin Garwood, which will allow Second Ward small businesses to let passersby know more about where they are and what they offer.

Najaf Sister City. I am working with the Iraq and American Reconciliation Project on an exciting proposal for Minneapolis and Najaf, Iraq, to become sister cities. I am lead coauthor, with Council Member Betsy Hodges, of the resolution creating this relationship. It will be the City's first such relationship in the Middle East, and help create a positive, peaceful, and non-imperial relationship between Najaf residents and Minneapolitans. The Najaf City Council has already signed on.

SECIA Gets MPCA Grant. Congratulations to the Southeast Como Improvement Association on getting a Minneapolis Pollution Control Agency Environmental Assistance Grant of \$25,769 for a Solid Waste Reduction and Reuse Project. I've been excited for some time about the prospect of reusing the furniture and appliances that student renters discard, and it's great to see the state supporting an effort to make progress on this. Programs like these have helped give SECIA a well-earned reputation as one of the most ecologically conscious neighborhood groups in Minneapolis.

Historic Designation in Prospect Park. I am working with the Prospect Park East River Road Improvement Association to set up a neighborhood work group, supported by my Aide and staff from the City's Department of Preservation and Design, to work through issues related to local designation of a Prospect Park historic district. The group's goal will be to come up with some ideas for specific guidelines for the district and organize a community meeting in August.

Youth Violence Prevention. The City's Department of Health and Family Support has decided to devote \$40,000 of the \$75,000 in this year's budget for preventing Somali youth violence to a contract with Pillsbury United and the Somali Youth Neighborhood Council (SYNC) to create outreach jobs for Somali youth to engage youth at risk for violence in more positive activities. A Request for Proposals has been issued that will make approximately \$35,000 available for the provision of Youth Violence Prevention services in the Somali community of Minneapolis between Aug. 1 – Dec. 31, 2009. The City is seeking a collaborative of experienced youth and violence prevention service providers to provide parent training and community building initiatives to reduce youth violence in the Somali community of Minneapolis. There will be a pre-proposal

conference on **Thursday, July 16, 2009**, starting at **9 a.m.** at the **Humphrey Institute, Stassen Room 170***. The completed application is due by noon on **Monday, July 27**. Information is available on line at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/rfp.asp>

Security at Coyle Center. The Cedar Riverside Partnership has helped develop a framework of security priorities at the Brain Coyle Center. Thanks to the generous support of CPED, Pillsbury United Communities, Augsburg, Fairview, and Target, we are able to fund part time security at the Coyle Center at least through September 30. This progress shows how valuable the Partnership is, and it's my hope that, along with the beat cop funded by Sherman Associates, we can make this a quieter and safer summer at Coyle.

Xcel Tree Trimming. Many of the boulevard trees in the Second Ward have been trimmed to make room for the electric lines the run above and through them. The results have been shocking and disturbing to many residents. I am working with Xcel, the City's Tree Advisory Committee, the Park Board and the Seward Neighborhood Group to explore ways to improve this in the future.

Health Improvement Grant. The City has been awarded \$2,650,000 in State Health Improvement Program (SHIP) grant funding. SHIP funds will be used to implement voluntary smoke-free housing policies in multi unit housing, increase opportunities for walking and biking access to recreation facilities, promote healthy eating and activity in childcare and preschool settings, improve access to nutritious foods, support quality school-based physical education, promote school gardens and farm-to school initiatives, and increase access to tobacco use cessation programs.

Diversity Survey of Minneapolis Boards and Commissions. A resolution I introduced authorizing staff to conduct a diversity audit of all out city boards, commissions and advisory committees passed the Health Energy and Environment Committee. I expect the Council to approve it on July 17 and the surveying and data collection process to be completed this fall.

Citywide Transportation Action Plan. The Citywide Transportation Action Plan drafted in 2007 passed the Transportation and Public Works Committee this month with added details to pedestrian, bicycle, traffic calming/arterial speed management, and implementation actions. It was delayed to give more time for the development of the pedestrian and bicycle master plans which will be added to the full 10 year plan when they are approved. The Plan includes over 60 actions related to the following eight objectives:

1. Make transportation design decisions based on place type in addition to street function.
2. Ensure that all streets in the City are safe, convenient and comfortable for walking.
3. Provide a well-connected grid of bike lanes.
4. Provide the best possible transit service on a Primary Transit Network (PTN).
5. Encourage people to walk, bike and take transit rather than drive.
6. Optimize the use, safety and life of the street system.
7. Manage and operate streets to support all modes of transportation.
8. Make consistent decisions for curbside uses.

The plan is posted on at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/public-works/trans-plan/> under the Citywide Transportation Action Plan section.

Falun Dafa Demonstration. I was proud to join a group of Falun Dafa (also know as Falun Gong) practitioners July 8 to protest and educate others about the 10 year long persecution of Falun Dafa practitioners in China. A group, including at least one Ward 2 resident, will carry a letter from me and others to the national memorial event to take place in Washington, D.C. July 20, calling on the United States government to speak out more clearly for the rights of Falun Gong members in China.

Dania Hall Advisory Group. June 10 marked the first meeting of an advisory group set up to guide the potential sale and development of the City-owned lot on Cedar Ave near 5th Street. The discussion was helpful and plans are underway to move forward with an inclusive and well

defined public engagement process that will outline the future of the Dania Hall site. I expect the City to move forward with both a letter looking for interested parties and a full Request for Proposals. For more details: http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/dania_hall_site.asp

Blue Green Alliance. The Blue Green Alliance has opened its new national headquarters in Minneapolis' Second Ward at 2828 University Ave. SE. I was delighted to attend their open house in June and see this unique collaboration of labor and environmentalists as a key partner in creating the quality jobs, cleaner environment and new green economy we need for Minneapolis' future. To learn more see http://www.bluegreenalliance.org/about_us?id=0001

Openings on City Boards and Commissions. There are openings on the Minneapolis Commission on Civil Rights (Closes 07/10/2009) Public Health Advisory Committee (PHAC) (open until filled) Youth Violence Prevention Executive Committee (closes 07/17/09) To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Yours, in peace and cooperation,

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