



Minneapolis
City of Lakes

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Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Longfellow, 7-18-13

Cam's next Cooper/Seward Office Hours:
Tuesday, July 23rd, 9:30-11:00am
Birchwood Café, 3311 E 25th St

Items:

- 1) June 21 Storm
- 2) Energy Options Public Hearing
- 3) Minnehaha Reconstruction
- 4) Car Sharing Pilot
- 5) Climate Action Plan
- 6) Energy Pathway Study
- 7) Funding for Streetcars
- 8) Large East Downtown Development Project
- 9) Voter Ambassadors
- 10) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) Greater Longfellow was heavily impacted by the storm of June 21, which toppled over three thousand trees throughout Minneapolis – as many or more than the tornado that hit North Minneapolis a few years ago. Tens of houses in greater Longfellow suffered some damage from falling trees, some of it severe. I commend the Park Board for their diligent work to remove fallen trees from roadways and houses. If you still have tree debris in your boulevard that you placed there before July 12th, I have heard from the Park Board that they will remove it when they can.
- 2) On June 28, the City Council voted to hold a public hearing on **August 1, 2013**, to discuss placing a question on this fall's general election ballot regarding the City's energy future. If passed by the voters of Minneapolis, this question will authorize the City to form a municipal power utility. I view this as a necessary step to meeting the City's aggressive climate change mitigation goals. Approximately two-thirds of the greenhouse gas emissions in Minneapolis come through our existing electricity and natural gas utilities. A vote to authorize the creation of a municipal utility will not *require* the City to form one, but will give us that option – which I think will help in the ongoing electrical and natural gas franchise negotiations with Xcel and Centerpoint. I will work hard to make sure that Minneapolis will only form a municipal utility after we make certain that we can provide energy services as or more affordably and reliably as the incumbent utilities, and with a greater focus on renewable energy, energy efficiency and local generation. For more information, visit: <http://www.minneapolisenergyoptions.org>.
- 3) I attended one of the public meetings over the last two weeks to discuss the reconstruction of Minnehaha, and my staff attended both. I continue to support the protected bikeway facility for Minnehaha, because I think it will do the most to improve safety and increase the number of people choosing to bike to meet their daily needs. This is why the City's recently-adopted Climate Action Plan includes a goal to build 30 miles of new protected bike facilities in Minneapolis by 2020. However, I am concerned about the details in the current Hennepin County protected bikeway layout, which removes more trees than necessary and doesn't incorporate some of the safety improvements used in many protected bikeways around the country. I encourage the County to work with national experts and local stakeholders – including the Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee, which has taken a position in favor of the cycle track concept and made some good suggestions for improving the current design – to craft a safe, inviting facility that does not have unnecessary impacts on trees.
- 4) The City Council has voted to add Hourcar and Zipcar to the city's new two-year car sharing pilot program. These companies, along with Car2Go, will have car-sharing vehicles throughout town using on-street parking spaces as well as off-street ones. There is no City funding in this expansion of car sharing options and the three car-sharing companies will need to pay for use of each on-street parking space.

If you need this material in an alternative format please call Ahmed Muhumud at 612-673-2162 or email Ahmed.Muhumud@ci.minneapolis.mn.us

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Hmong - Ceeb toom. Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais cov xov no rau koj dawb, hu 612-673-2800;

Spanish - Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para traducir esta información, llama 612-673-2700;

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

- 5) The Council has unanimously passed the Minneapolis Climate Action Plan (www.minneapolismn.gov/sustainability/climate). The Plan, subtitled “a roadmap to reducing citywide greenhouse gas emissions,” offers goals and potential strategies to help achieve a 15 percent reduction in emissions by 2015 and a 30 percent reduction by 2025 from 2006 levels. The strategies are grouped into four categories: improving the energy efficiency; increasing our use of local, renewable energy; reducing vehicle miles traveled in Minneapolis and reducing waste. The Plan includes many intriguing recommendations for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, including the use of property-assessed and on-bill financing to fund energy efficiency and renewable energy retrofits for residential and commercial building; encouraging net zero buildings; creating more walkable “complete neighborhoods;” constructing 30 miles of on street, protected bike facilities by 2020 and identifying products and packaging that are neither recyclable or compostable. This plan is a great step in the right direction and I look forward to helping implement many of its ideas and strategies.
- 6) The City Council has approved hiring the Center for Energy and Environment to draft a report that explores the various paths the City could take to achieve its energy goals, including examination of potential utility partnerships, changes to how the City uses energy utility franchise fees, and municipalization of one or both energy utilities. The study will help frame the future franchise negotiations with Xcel Energy and CenterPoint Energy. The City has utility franchise agreements with Xcel Energy for electricity and CenterPoint Energy for natural gas that were signed in the early 1990s and expire at the end of 2014. The Center for Energy and Environment is charged with drafting “energy vision” goals and an overview of the various paths the City could take to achieve them. The study should include a review of the current legislative and legal landscape; an examination of existing municipal utilities in Minnesota and across the country, a report on a “municipalization pathway,” to include a description of the process, schedule and preliminary cost estimates for forming a municipal utility under Minnesota law. The report will also include information about forming utility partnerships, as well as potential state legislative or Public Utilities Commission regulatory changes. More information can be found at www.minneapolismn.gov/energyfranchise
- 7) The Council has voted to establish a Value Capture District to finance our first streetcar line, on the Central Ave-Nicollet Ave route. This was enabled by the legislature’s creation of the Value Capture District funding mechanism, which grants authority to the City to establish a project area including one block to either side of a streetcar line, and place certain taxable parcels into the Value Capture District. The future tax revenues from these parcels may be used to fund the construction of the streetcar line. One of the reasons for taking this action at this time was to enable the City to request – and hopefully receive – federal transit funding to help us build this first streetcar line.
- 8) The City Council is poised to approve a framework and direct staff to negotiate terms based on it (here: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@clerk/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-110756.pdf>) for participation in a large 5 block, development project near the Stadium in Downtown East. The blocks, currently owned by the Stair Tribune, currently consist of surface parking lots and three buildings. Ryan Companies is proposing to buy the land and construct one million square feet of office space in two 20-story office towers, a parking ramp of approximately 1,300 stalls approximately 320 housing units, approximately 40,000 square feet of retail space and a one –two block public park. City participation would include assuming a \$65 million dollar debt to help Ryan pay for the parking ramp and to purchase the park land from them. The debt would be paid back from parking fees. While I support many aspects of this, I have concerns about the lack of funding for developing the park and did not support this in committee. I plan to bring an amendment forward at the Council meeting.
- 9) The City is looking for volunteers to work in the community to raise awareness and engage voters about the election in November. Voter ambassadors will create a network of community volunteers who will provide resources and information about this year’s election directly to their neighborhoods and civic circles. Ambassadors will be trained in election law fundamentals, voting procedures, and how ranked-choice voting works. Each ambassador will be supplied with maps to polling places, pamphlets, sample ranked-choice ballots, and guides to answer frequently asked questions about ranked-choice voting. In addition, ambassadors will have access to videos that show how to vote using a ranked-choice ballot, receive regular updates about the election, and be asked to make presentations within their community about the municipal election. Anyone interested in volunteering for this program should contact the program coordinator, Anissa Hollingshead by at anissa.hollingshead@minneapolismn.gov.
- 10) Applications are now being accepted for open positions on the following City boards and commissions: Animal Care and Control Advisory Board, Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities, Minneapolis Workforce Council, Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Police Conduct Oversight Commission, Police Conduct Review Panel, Seniors Advisory Committee and Telecommunications Network. For a full list of appointment opportunities and position descriptions, go to www.minneapolismn.gov/boards/openings.