

## Second Ward Special E-newsletter

News from Cam Gordon

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

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**Murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis Police.** I was saddened, horrified and outraged by the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers. George Floyd's life mattered. He should still be alive. The actions of the police were inexcusable and unacceptable. I supported the firing and prosecution of the police involved. I was relieved that Chief Arradondo fired all four officers immediately, and that Mayor Frey supported that decision. It was good to see the first officer, Derek Chauvin, whose knee was on George Floyd's neck for over eight minutes, charged with murder. I am supportive of the decision to put Attorney General Keith Ellison in charge of the prosecution and am relieved that the other three officers who were present, and did not exercise their duty to protect George Floyd's life, have now been charged and will be prosecuted as well. Another preventable death has occurred due to the actions of public City of Minneapolis employees. This stands in direct opposition to the very purpose of our City government and the vision this Council and Mayor have for our city where, "Minneapolis is an intentionally compassionate city where each of us can reach our full potential while caring for one another, eliminating racial disparities, improving our environment and promoting social well-being." In this case, we failed, I have failed, and we must do better. We must radically transform the way we provide for each other's safety. We can't let this continue. The full statement I put out last Tuesday is available here:

[https://www.facebook.com/camgordonward2/posts/1562768367218850?\\_tn\\_ =K-R](https://www.facebook.com/camgordonward2/posts/1562768367218850?_tn_ =K-R).

**Transformational Change to Public Safety in Minneapolis.** As we turn towards the long task of healing, rebuilding, and recovering, we must work to make deep and lasting changes that will transform the way we see and approach public safety in Minneapolis. As a City Council Member, I have some power to effect change in the department and in City government – though the City Charter has historically prevented the Council from having direct oversight over police policies and practices. As we look forward to reforms and pathways for transformative, systemic change, I will need your input and involvement. While there is no policy or legislative change I can make on my own, there are four areas where I have more direct influence: the City Budget, the Labor Contract, our Code of Ordinances and the City Charter. Looking at those areas first, I have identified 6 strategies that my office will be focusing on in the days ahead:

1. Demand a dramatically better Labor Agreement/Contract with the Minneapolis Police Federation or ending our relationship with this union. We must explore options for decertifying the Minneapolis Police Federation.
2. Redraft the ordinances that govern the police department and police oversight to put community at the center. Institute implicit bias testing and assessments as part of every City employee's hiring and performance review.

3. Fight at the state legislature for civilian review to be able to take direct disciplinary action, for cities to be allowed to impose residency requirements for police officers, to shift liability for costs associated with misconduct and use of force more directly to officers, and for other flexibility we need to address our local needs.
4. Amend the City Charter to put the police department on the same footing as every other department and give the Council authority to set police policy and direct the chief.
5. Amend the City Charter to create a new department, outside of the police department, to respond to interpersonal and community conflict and to provide help to people who need it. Move as many responsibilities and resources as possible from the police department to this new department.
6. Move work, responsibilities, and funds from the Minneapolis Police Department to other City departments, and/or explore contracting with other agencies or organizations.

I believe that we need to construct an authentic community public safety model that empowers residents to direct public safety resources and accelerates all of our efforts to improve oversight of our law enforcement and safety personnel, policies and practices. I commit to working with you and all our partners in the days, weeks, months and years ahead to accomplish the systemic and fundamental transformation we so desperately require.

**Legislative Package of Public Safety Proposals.** I am hearing that there will be a package of public safety reforms for our state put forward by the DFL House and Senate caucuses. I am hopeful that these will include some of the legislative actions I described above. We need the legislature to stop preempting local governments from requiring that police officers live in our communities, or creating robust programs to improve oversight and control of police. We also need help from the state and federal governments for the businesses and other buildings on Lake Street and elsewhere that were damaged or destroyed by the violence that rocked our community over the last week.

**Community Response.** Communities in Ward 2 and across our city came together to support each other in truly inspiring ways over the last week. This included numerous meetings between neighbors in parks and on their blocks, to organize groups of neighbors to watch over their community – their neighbors, their beloved small businesses, and their homes. I heard many people express a sentiment that I shared: that in protecting our communities from violence, we must not respond violently, and we must understand that the root cause of the unrest in our city is systemic racism, and not perpetuate that racism as we keep our neighborhoods safe. Neighbors met each other, shared their contact information, built relationships, and volunteered to help each other through a difficult and sleepless few nights. I believe that this may have strengthened many of our communities, which is one bright spot in a very dark week. I want to thank my colleagues on the Council for their work in their communities, and the direct intervention of the other leaders who represent parts of Ward 2: Hennepin County Commissioner Angela Conley, State Representatives Jim Davnie and Mohamed Noor, and State Senator Patricia Torres Ray.

**Requests for Donations.** If you are able to give money at this time – recognizing that many people are already economically stressed by the recession stemming from the COVID-19 crisis – there are many great organizations in our community doing work at this time to help rebuild, and to advocate for the kind of systemic change we need to see. This is not intended to be an all-inclusive list – a lot of people are collecting donations and putting them to good work to help our community. To help rebuild our small businesses on Lake Street, go to <https://www.welovelakestreet.com/>. To specifically support small businesses owned by people of color, go to <https://www.gofundme.com/f/minnesota-poc-business-support>. To help provide food support, go to: <https://thefoodgroupmn.thankyou4caring.org/donate>. And there are a number of community organizations that are pushing for needed systemic change to the way that we provide public safety. The group Reclaim the Block has created a list of organizations to consider donating to, which you can find here: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yLWGTQle3967hdc9RSxBq5s6KKZHe-3\\_mWp5oemd7OA/preview?pru=AAABcpUiX3k%2AY6Q4I6UBtkH3lLz9GVLg0A](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yLWGTQle3967hdc9RSxBq5s6KKZHe-3_mWp5oemd7OA/preview?pru=AAABcpUiX3k%2AY6Q4I6UBtkH3lLz9GVLg0A).

**Other Entities Cutting Ties with MPD.** Several entities have ended or are working to end contracts with the Minneapolis Police Department, including the University of Minnesota, the Minneapolis Public Schools, and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. I fully support these decisions, and praise those who made them. I also have seen that a large number of small businesses and event organizers have called on the Licensing Department to allow block events and special events to use security services other than off-duty Minneapolis Police. They signed a letter, which you can find here: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1zkJ8rpY-vze8aGoP92MrkXgll\\_ZIMH5BEOGr4zTQNjc/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1zkJ8rpY-vze8aGoP92MrkXgll_ZIMH5BEOGr4zTQNjc/edit). I believe we should also look through all of the licenses that have special conditions on them, and remove any and all requirements to use off-duty police as security. I plan to move a staff direction this week to direct the Business Licensing Department to implement these changes, to provide businesses the flexibility to use their own private security services, rather than off-duty MPD officers, if they so choose.

**Police Response to Protests.** I joined with thousands of Minneapolis community members last Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, in protesting the murder of George Floyd. There was a lot of anger and pain in the community, but also a lot of love, mutual support, sadness, and a deep passion for making our city more just and more peaceful. I share people's outrage and disappointment at the Minneapolis Police Department's response to the protests. In my view, the police's decision to escalate the situation on Tuesday and Wednesday contributed significantly to the wave of violence, looting, and burning that started Wednesday night and culminated in lives lost and buildings damaged or destroyed in many parts of Minneapolis. It is horrible to see tear gas, flash-bang explosive devices, and rubber bullets being fired into crowds of people. A member of my staff was present at the moment MPD chose to escalate the situation both Tuesday and Wednesday nights, and saw the dangerous chaos that followed. It is important that we get transparency about the police department's handling of this protest on those critical first nights. I also strongly condemn the looting and destruction that followed this police escalation. This didn't just destroy property, it destroyed at least two more precious lives, several homes, countless livelihoods, and ripped the heart out of some of our most vibrant community spaces, like the area around 27<sup>th</sup> and Lake. You can find the text of the

statement I put out on Wednesday of last week here:

[https://www.facebook.com/MinneapolisWard2/posts/615552499066470?\\_tn=K-R](https://www.facebook.com/MinneapolisWard2/posts/615552499066470?_tn=K-R).

**Protests, Riots, National Guard Activation.** I was devastated by the violence and destruction I saw in our city and in our neighborhood over the last week. These have been among the most painful and challenging days our City has ever seen. The damage done to businesses, institutions and people who have invested their lives into them has been profound and the losses for these people is heartbreaking. The people who live in our neighborhoods are fearing for their lives and their families. Throughout this challenge, I continued to call for justice for George Floyd, and for deeper reforms to address the historic and persistent structural and institutional racism and injustice in our criminal justice and economic system. I called for time for healing rebuilding and recovery. And I was clear that, in order to start, that we needed the violence and destruction to stop. On Thursday of last week, the Mayor asked the Governor to activate the National Guard and declared an emergency that included overnight curfews. I supported these decisions, as I felt that they were the only way to get the violence to stop. Unfortunately, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights saw more violence and burning across our city, much of it clearly not part of a real community response to the pain and anger caused by George Floyd's murder, but due to an influx of people from outside of our community, bent on maximizing the destruction and turning us against each other. I am relieved that the National Guard presence has helped prevent further violence in the last few days, that the curfew has been scaled back and now ended, and that large, peaceful protests against police violence have continued during the day each day. I support lifting the curfew in the next few days. I also want to be clear that I have serious concerns about the way that some members of all of the law enforcement agencies conducted themselves during this period, including their targeting of journalists, people on their own front porches (which is not a violation of the curfew), and people who had come together to protect their homes and businesses from damage or destruction. The full text of the statement I put out last Friday is at

[https://www.facebook.com/MinneapolisWard2/posts/616652398956480?\\_tn=-R](https://www.facebook.com/MinneapolisWard2/posts/616652398956480?_tn=-R).

**State Human Rights Department Investigation.** The Minnesota Department of Human Rights has started a formal investigation into the Minneapolis Police Department focused on long term racist patterns and practices. I expect immediate short term stipulations, or restraining orders to be coming soon that will include judicial oversight of both short term and longer term action. I welcome the investigation and involvement of the state and judicial branch and hope that it leads to a deeper intervention in the policies and practices of the department, and removal of some of the state barriers to local action to increase accountability.

**White Supremacist and Other Outside Violence.** There are multiple credible reports that the unrest in Minneapolis became a target for people from outside our community to come into our city to cause destruction and chaos. This included multiple fires that were started far from any protest, including in north Minneapolis. It included at least one person from Illinois who has been accused of coming here to destroy things. It is unclear whether the incident where a

semi-truck drove into a peaceful protest on the I-35W bridge is related; the investigation is still ongoing.

**Police Federation Response.** Like most people who have seen it, I was appalled by Minneapolis Police Federation President Bob Kroll's response to the murder of George Floyd and the subsequent protests and unrest. You can read his statement here, along with a reaction from former Minneapolis Police Chief Janeé Harteau, who was also appalled by Kroll's response: <https://twitter.com/ChiefHarteau/status/1267460683408564225>. For the good of our community, I am convinced that he should not be the head of the Police Federation. This is just one more example of the toxic impact of the Police Federation on our communities, and underscores the need for the City to take any and every action we can to reduce their capacity to continue to harm our city.

**Resumption of Essential Services.** In some parts of Ward 2, garbage, organics and recycling delivery was skipped or delayed last week but as of June 3 Solid Waste crews have caught up on all routes and service is back to normal. Bus service has resumed normal (COVID schedule) service as of June 3<sup>rd</sup> and Metro Transit is set to begin LRT service (COVID schedule) on the 4th, contingent on completing inspections. Mail service has also resumed for all of south Minneapolis. The Postal Service has set up special windows at nearby post office locations for pickup, if your home was damaged or if you are unable to get mail delivered for any other reason. People in the 55406 zip code should pick up mail in person at the Minneapolis Main Post Office at 100 South 1st Street. Two locations in South Minneapolis – Minnehaha Station at Lake & 27th Avenue and Lake Street Station at 31st Street and 1st Avenue – were destroyed. The former is a leased building and the latter is a USPS-owned building. The USPS is working as quickly as possible to find new locations in these areas. Representative Ilhan Omar's office has asked USPS to work on setting up remote sites that can help with non-postal services such as money orders. The vast majority of mail was removed from the buildings before any damage took place. However, mail on hold & mail in PO boxes was destroyed. There is not yet have a solid estimate on how much mail was lost. If you need help replacing a stimulus check from the IRS, a benefit payment, or another type of correspondence from the government, please contact Nicky Leingang in Rep. Omar's office: [Nicky.Leingang@mail.house.gov](mailto:Nicky.Leingang@mail.house.gov).

**Clean Up.** City Public Works street crews continue to clean up debris, and sweep and flush in the right of way. There is a high need for private property debris removal and pick up and the City is working on longer term as well as emergency response options. Clean City crew continues to distribute bags and gloves to volunteers. We will continue to pick up bagged garbage that has been placed at the corners until Friday at 2:00 p.m. If necessary, we may be able to extend. Staff is supporting the food distribution centers as they are set up through the Mayor's Office/ Coordinator's Office. Staff continue to inspect and repair equipment in the right of way, such as street lights and traffic signals. They are beginning to survey damage to the streetscape/boulevards working together with Special Service Districts. The City has also closed streets around 38th and Chicago Avenue, and as of today are beginning to assist with garbage pick-up and supporting the site in general.

**COVID-19 Reminder.** With this recent crisis, it can be difficult to remember that we are still in a global pandemic that has claimed over 100,000 American lives. Please continue to take the actions that we all started taking in March to slow the spread of this disease: wash your hands frequently, stay physically distanced at least six feet from others, and remember that it is mandatory to wear a mask when indoors in commercial spaces like grocery stores. For more, please go to <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/coronavirus/>.

**Office Hours in the Ward.** My Community Office Hours in the Ward continue to be **suspended** due to COVID-19. Please reach out online and over the telephone.

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