



THE 5TH WARD LOWDOWN



Minneapolis City Council Member Blong Yang

August 2014

Dear Residents of Ward 5,

It has been an honor serving you at City Hall. This is a tough job, but it is important work. Niki Mitchell, Yer Yang, and I are working hard to change things for the better in our community. We have done our best to be responsive and if we can be of assistance, contact us at (612) 673-2205.

There are a number of initiatives that we are working on. I want to highlight one specifically. It is the goal of the City to create and/or help to create 1,000 new jobs on the Northside in the next five years. I also ask that you help create jobs by encouraging your employer to hire more workers or by starting your own business. We, at the City, have programs that can help new and/or existing businesses. If you have a great idea, we might be able to help.

There has been a rash of gun crimes post-July 4th that have received a lot of attention from the local media. In response, the City approved a plan to increase police staffing in the 4th Precinct (North Minneapolis) by paying overtime to additional officers: four police officers and a supervisor. These officers will work 4 p.m. to 2 a.m. seven days a week through Labor Day. In addition, the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) will be adding 26 new officers in August and 27 in September. Currently, the MPD is staffed at 779 officers, which is the lowest in years.

The recent incident between the MPD and Al Flowers has caused some in our community to question my commitment to civil rights. I strongly believe that we can create a safer community with more police, while ensuring that our police respect the civil rights of all of our citizens. I support an independent investigation into the altercation and arrest of Al Flowers. I want the facts to come out and I want our citizens to have faith that city government is working for them.

I want to close with these comments from Brian Finstad (a constituent and a friend) who responded to a question about why he continues to live in North Minneapolis (Ward 5). Brian stated:

I could die a lot of ways every single day, so I just don't worry about it. And I live here because it is affordable, great proximity to downtown, well-built century old houses, beautiful parks, great friends, and it expands your knowledge of life to live in a community where most people are very different from you. Violence like this exists in large part because people like me moved away, further concentrating poverty and the despondency in which crime and violence thrives. I'd rather be a force against that current, not with it.

To all of you in Ward 5 who make our community a great place to live, thank you!

Sincerely,

JET on the Streets

Public safety is my number one priority. This summer in Ward 5, the MPD will work as part of Joint Enforcement Teams (JET) with the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office and Metro Transit Police to address violence, especially gun violence. School resource officers also will be on additional bicycle patrols. Community members are pitching in to work with the police to keep our neighbors safe. For example, Bishop Richard D. Howell of Shiloh Temple is leading the faith patrol which will reach out to community members in the spirit of engagement, friendship and conversation.

"No one should have to run from the community to be safe," said Bishop Howell. "This is about bringing hope to where [people] live."

To complement increased police patrols and presence, the City is expanding the ShotSpotter Program which picks up audio files of gun shots and then relays the exact location of the shots to officers who are able to get to the crime scene more quickly.

These joint teams will operate during additional shifts; officers are not being taken from other areas to beef up police presence on the Northside. Police Chief Janee Harteau delivered a strong message that violence—particularly gun violence—will be dealt with directly and decisively on all levels of enforcement and prosecution. "This is no longer a conversation, this is about action," said Harteau.

Council President Barbara Johnson and Council Member Andrew Johnson have said they, too, support increased police patrols in North Minneapolis. This is the type of cooperation between levels of government and the community that I want to see in Ward 5. It's important that we work to reduce and eliminate crime if we want to attract more businesses, families and stability to our neighborhoods.

Racial Equity Moves Forward

On August 1st, 2014, the Minneapolis City Council approved the definitions of Equity and Racial Equity as part of the adoption of the City's goals, values, and strategic directions.

Equity: *Fair and just opportunities and outcomes for all people.*

Racial Equity: *The development of policies, practices, and strategic investments to reverse racial disparity trends, eliminate institutional racism, and ensure that outcomes and opportunities for all people are no longer predictable by race.*

"History teaches us that change is often made when an organized segment of those most affected, leading in solidarity with allies, disrupt business as usual."

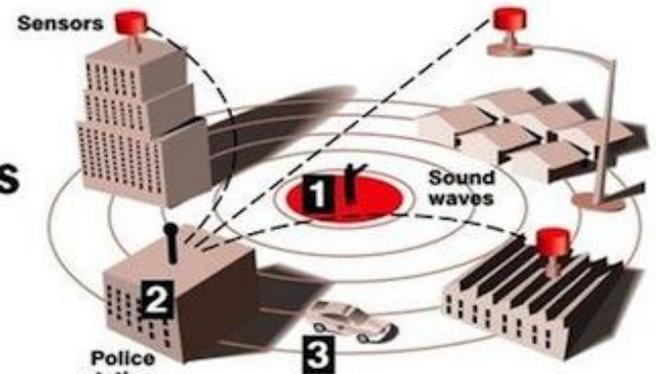
-Makani Themba, racial justice advocate

Over the last few years, the City has been working on a plan to reduce the disparities between white people and people of color in areas such as employment, home ownership, and health care. The work ultimately is aimed at providing fair and equitable access to opportunities for traditionally disadvantaged populations. By necessity, this work will include both short term and long term plans. Short term the city can look at current practices that might need reform like how it recruits, promotes, and distributes information for city jobs. Long term plans can target larger systemic and institutional policies and practices that disadvantage certain groups over others.

Finally, we'll need to measure our programs to ensure that we are tracking and evaluating real change. Our work is in the early stages but our commitment to a truly egalitarian, multiracial opportunity city is real. If you are interested in this issue, please write to all members of the City Council and the Mayor.

How it works

1 When a shot is fired, the sound is picked up by sensors that triangulate the origin of the noise.



2 Police dispatchers and patrol officers in squad cars receive GPS data pinpointing the location and a recording of the sounds.

3 Police respond to the scene.

SOURCE: ShotSpotter Inc.

MCT and DAN JACALONE/THE SAGINAW NEWS

BRINGING BROADWAY BACK

We sponsored a summit on the revitalization of West Broadway. From that, we learned some best practices to breathe new life into the West Broadway business environment. Right now we're meeting with all groups working on some aspect of revitalization so we can streamline the work to target and deploy scarce resources to the most promising strategies. Developers are already planning new residential and commercial mixed use developments on Broadway. These new developments present a ripe opportunity for us to market West Broadway and attract new businesses. Broadly, we need to recruit more stores per square mile.

Constituents have said they would love to see a Costco, a bakery, clothing boutiques, a book store and a nice sit-down restaurant. Also, we need to attract a mix of different businesses to appeal to a wider variety of consumers. Thirdly, we need to find the right mix of parking spaces to optimize ease of access to Broadway's new attractions. If you have more ideas about the revitalization of West Broadway, please let us know.

The West Broadway Alive is a plan for the revitalization of West Broadway Avenue in North Minneapolis. Check out the link here: http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/planning/plans/cped_west-broadway



Affordable Housing Recap

Our office convened a summit on affordable housing. The audience's plea for actionable outcomes sounded louder in the sanctuary of Shiloh Temple than thunder roaring on that rainy day.

Our office heard your call. We will continue to research the issue of vacant houses and lots. We hope to create strategies to get more people into houses and bring more stability to our neighborhoods. Here are some things that we will be doing:

1. Accelerate the current and pending projects – by putting money where it matters and moving people into houses.
2. Investigate and clear property titles – by holding owners/banks accountable for the impact of their vacant property/lot.
3. Drive development that is fair and desirable – by understanding the needs of the community and make housing accessible to current families.
4. Grow Minneapolis – by ensuring that the proposals we receive are aligned with the goals and strategies of the City.

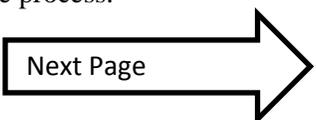
If you have more ideas on how to improve the housing situation in Ward 5, please let us know.

Problem Properties

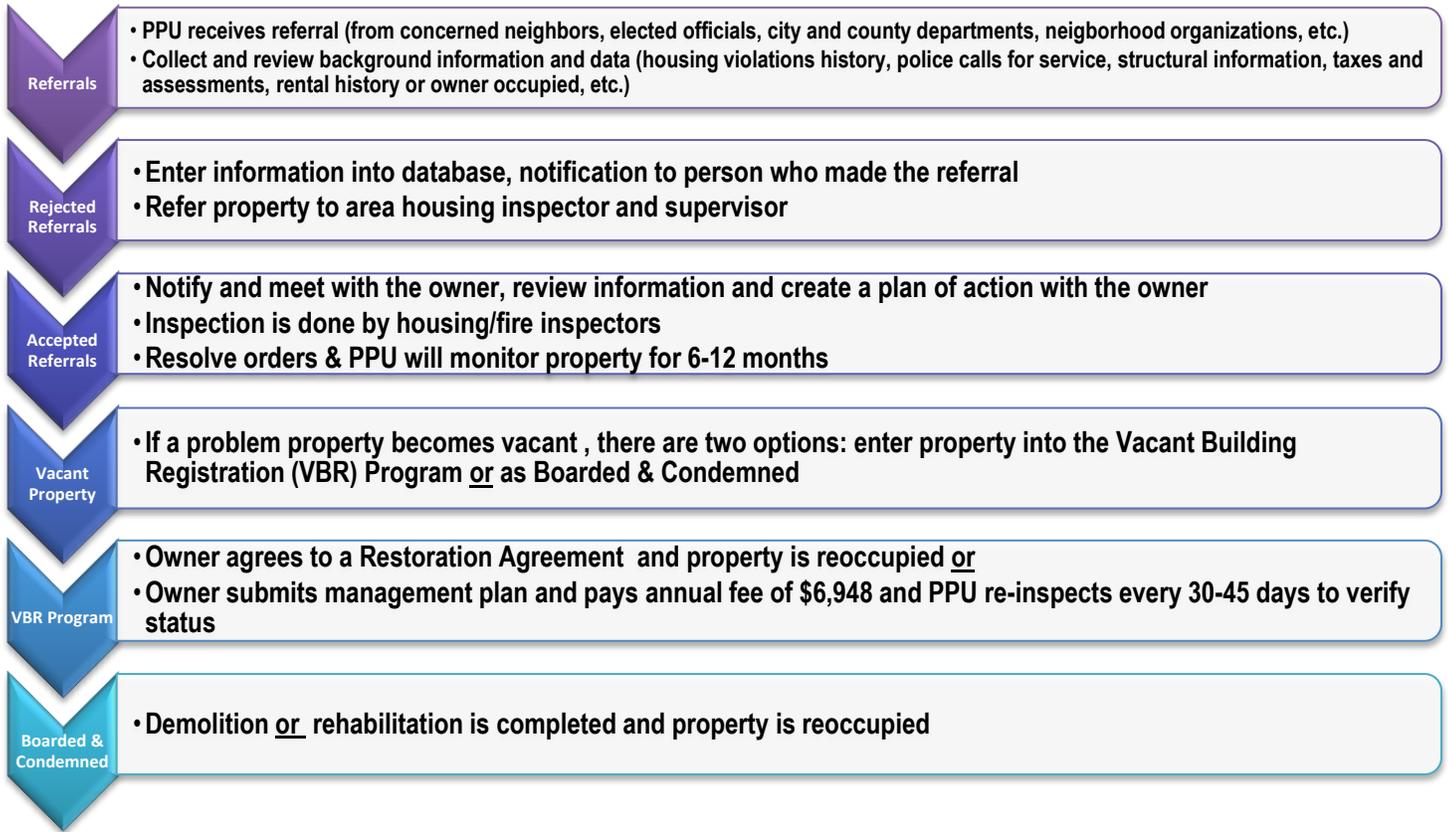
We received a lot of calls from community members about problem properties. We held a problem properties townhall with Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde, Director of Regulatory Services, and Luther Krueger, Crime Prevention Analyst, to clarify how the City deals with problem properties all over the city and in the ward.

The City defines **problem properties** as those with open housing violations, like disruptive behavior on premises notices and/or Hennepin County nuisance letters; serious health or safety concerns (fire-damaged structures, collapsed garages, etc.); chronic and ongoing problems such as numerous police calls; escalation of criminal behavior on property; properties with severe neighborhood impact; or with multi-department/agency involvement.

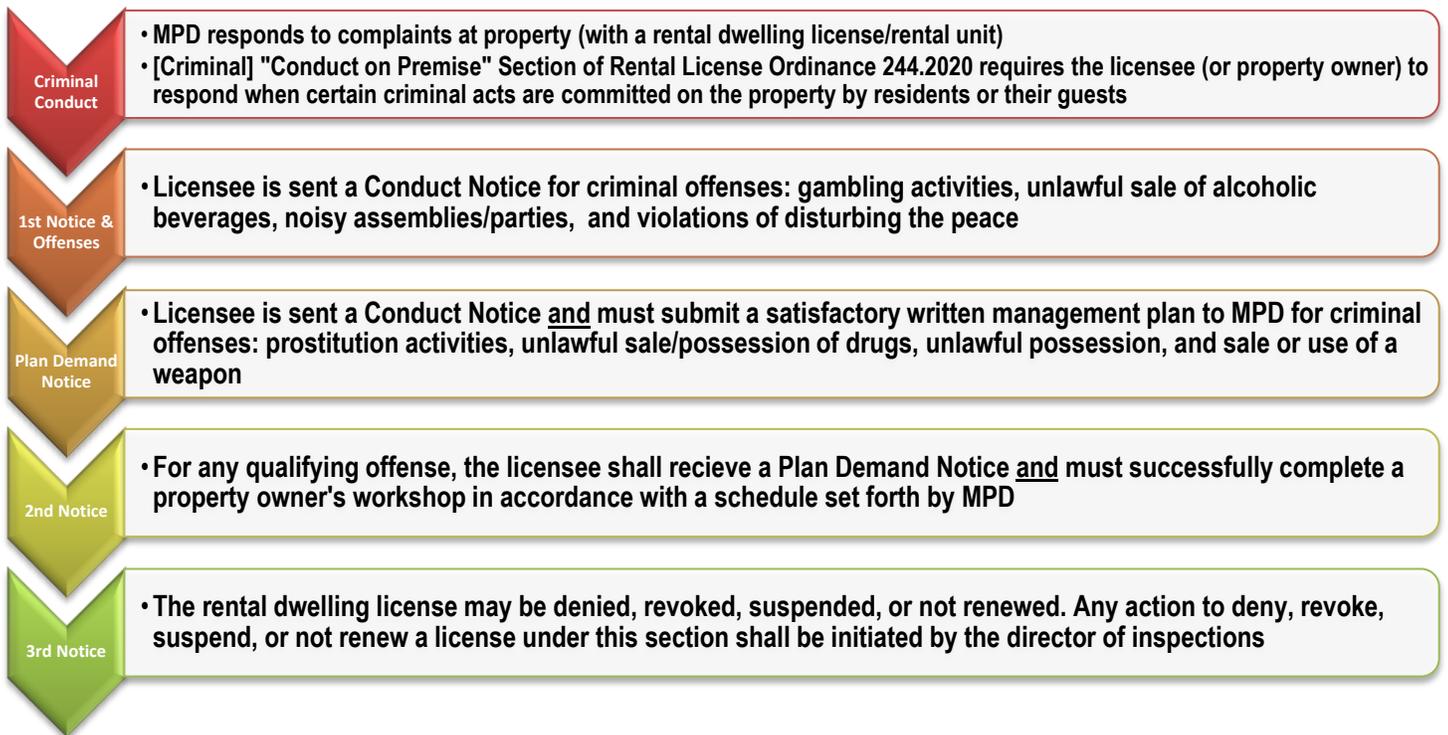
Depending on the nature of the call, a case will be created for each problem property and referred to the Problem Properties Unit (PPU) with Regulatory Services, or to the precinct's Crime Prevention Specialists with Minneapolis Police Department (MPD). We have provided you with a guide to help you understand the process.



The PPU Process



The MPD Process



If you have any questions or would like to report a problem property, please call 311. Then call our office.

Sidewalk Assessments and Repairs in Ward 5

Just so everyone knows, I'm being assessed too. –BlongYang

Recently we have received a number of complaints from Ward 5 residents about sidewalk assessments and repairs happening this summer. The Sidewalk Inspections Office of Public Works inspects all city sidewalks on approximately a 10-year cycle. Sidewalk repair or replacement happens if the sidewalk in question is broken, uneven, projecting and/or settled. Any condition that could cause someone to trip and fall or makes it difficult to traverse in a wheelchair is cause to repair or replace. In principle, this is a public safety issue that the city could be liable for if a sidewalk injury occurred.

The decision to approve recommendations for work from Sidewalk Inspections for our Ward were made in the fall of 2013 so work could begin during this construction season. The sidewalk assessment decisions happened before I took office, and there is no way to stop work going forward at this point. I think we could have calmed a lot of community concern with more and accurate information earlier in the process. Many residents ask why the City does not just pay for sidewalk replacement. The simple answer is: because it costs property owners less to be assessed than taxed. In addition, there seems to be confusion about whether the City pays for tornado-damaged sidewalks. It does not. However, we did work out with the Sidewalk Office that the city will reimburse people whose sidewalk, curb, and/or gutter were damaged by uprooted boulevard trees. If you need more information about sidewalk assessments and repairs they can contact the Sidewalk Office at 612-673-2420.

Council Action Highlights for Ward 5

January 23 – Accepted \$250,000 grant award for the John Biggers Seed Project, a public art initiative where established African-American artists mentor younger artists.

February 21 – Passed resolution for civil rights activist, William Matthew Little.

April 25 – Approved \$200,000 in Grow North funding and a TIF package of \$451,500 to support the DC Group's expansion which resulted in 30+ new jobs in North Minneapolis.

April 25 – Accepted a \$250,000 grant from the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency for the Green Homes North Program.

April 29 – Approved the business plan for the West Broadway Improvement Special Services District where local businesses pay for additional improvements on West Broadway.

May 9 – Approved a pilot project expanding program eligible areas to include three community corridors (Lowry Avenue, Glenwood Avenue, and Nicollet Avenue) and authorized CPED staff to execute \$40,000 total in two Great Streets Façade Improvement Matching Grant contracts.

June 27 – Approved land sales on 2201 Golden Valley Rd & 1823 Penn Ave to Commons at Penn Limited Partnership for affordable housing.

July 18 – Approved the pilot project with Better Futures Minnesota to pursue deconstruction on two City-owned properties and demolition services for up to \$30,000 per property.

August 1 – Approve the appointment of Craig Taylor to the appointed position of Director of CPED for a two-year term beginning January 2, 2014, and ending January 2, 2016.

Link to City Council meetings: <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/meetings/index.htm>

Filing Fee for City Elected Offices

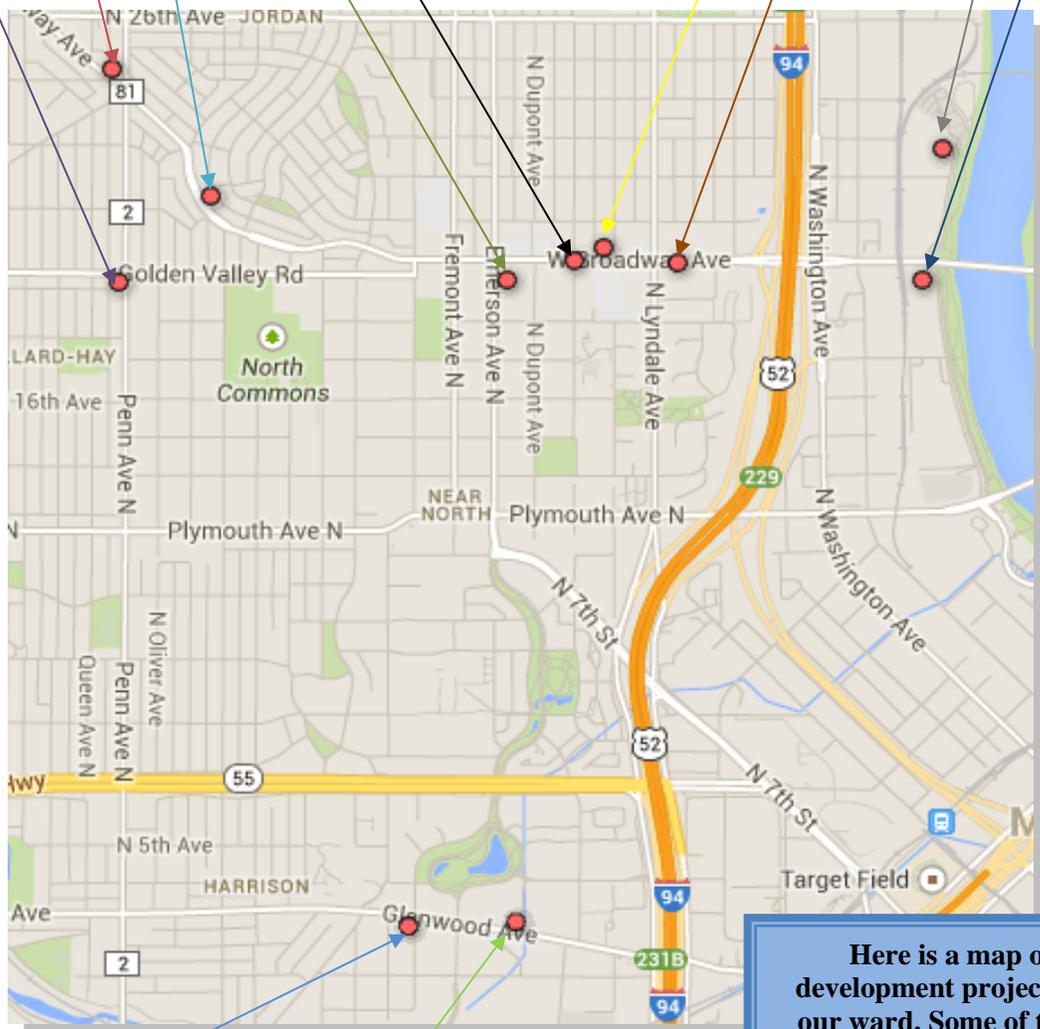
On Election Day, November 4th you will see the following on your ballot:

Shall the Minneapolis City Charter be amended to increase the filing fees for candidates seeking City elected offices from the current fee of \$20 for each office to \$500 for the office of Mayor, \$250 for the office of Council Member, \$100 for the office of Board of Estimate and Taxation Member, and \$100 for the office of Park and Recreation Commissioner and, as an alternative to payment of a filing fee, allow a candidate to submit a petition of voter signatures as provided in state law?

I will vote no on this question in November.

Ward 5 Development Projects

- Broadway Flats (new mixed-use multi-family 103-unit building)
- West Broadway Crescent (54-unit residential building)
- Emerge Technology Center
- Satori (*proposed* new mixed-use site)
- Commons at Penn Avenue (*proposed* mixed-use multi-family building 45-unit building)
- DEED Workforce Center (*pending*)
- Walgreen's (new building)
- Life Source (new office building)
- DC Group (building addition)



- The GAV (new office building)
- Washburn Center for Children (new building)

Here is a map of current development projects and sites in our ward. Some of these projects have begun construction and some are pending proposals. Developers are working with the Community Planning and Economic Development staff.

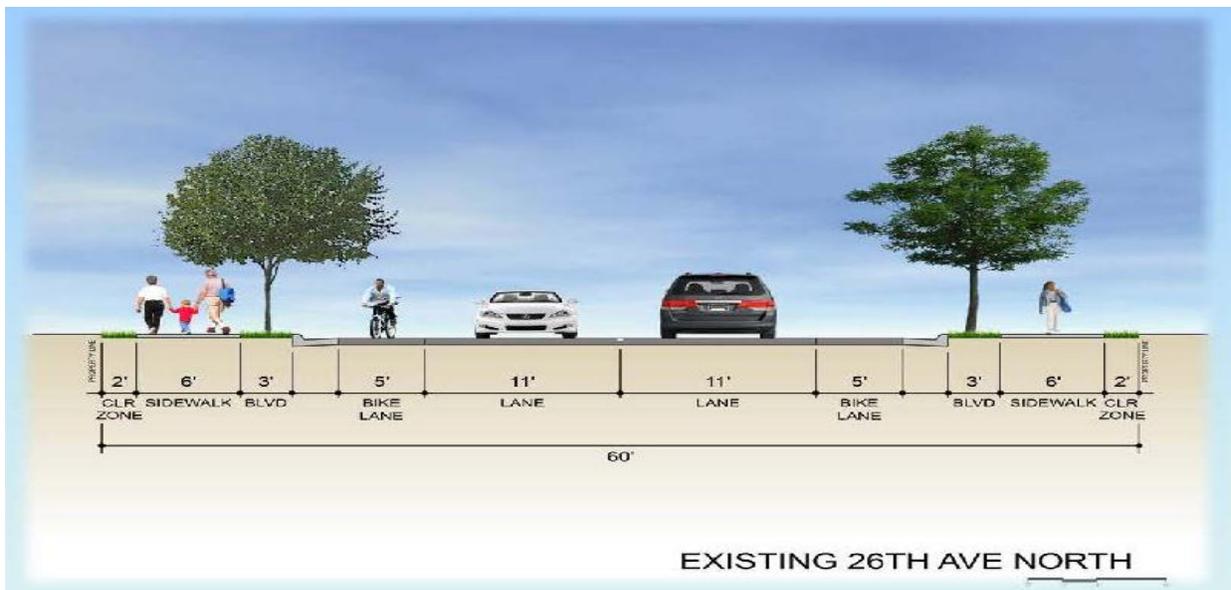
Streets Reconstruction/Resurfacing Project: 26th Ave N

The Public Works Department held an informational meeting regarding the proposed reconstruction/resurfacing of 26th Avenue between Theodore Wirth Parkway and the Mississippi River in June. The City has identified this corridor for roadway, sidewalk and trail improvements. Construction is schedule to begin in 2014. It may take two years to complete the project.

This first meeting introduced the project to the neighborhood and solicited input to help guide the design process in the upcoming months. The City plans to conduct follow-up meetings over the summer and fall prior to seeking City Council action in the fall of 2014. If you would like information, please contact John Morast at 612-373-6465 or Greg Brown at 612-373-6479.

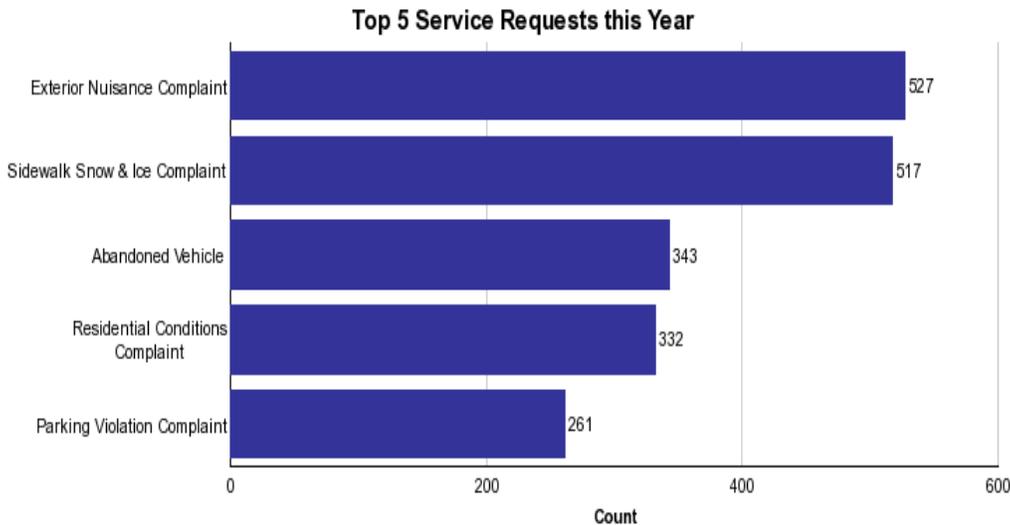
SAVE-THE-DATE:

**The next meeting will be held on Thursday, August 14th at 6:30PM
New Millennium Academy, 2620 Russell Ave N, Minneapolis**



311 Requests in Ward 5

New hours! Call 311 weekdays between 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM & weekends 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. If you are outside the Minneapolis city limits or are unable reach 311, call (612) 673-3000. TTY/TDD customers dial (612) 673-2157.



Top 5 Complaints made to our office:

- 1. Problem properties**
- 2. Sidewalk repairs**
- 3. Trash Dumping**
- 4. Dogs and feral cats**
- 5. Loud music/parties**

Constituent Calls: Yes, We Heard You...

This feature is where we highlight your calls to our office and how we helped you. We want Ward 5 residents to know that we take your calls seriously and will do everything we possibly can to resolve your issue in a timely manner to your satisfaction.

“Snowplow came through and did not plow our alleys.” – Bill

We got in touch with the street and maintenance crew right away to de-ice and take care of it.

“I don’t speak good English...kuv hais lub Hmoob xwb.” –Cha

We called 311 and they found an agent who spoke Hmong to return the call and answer his question.

“Is it a public safety issue if the house on the corner has a fence that’s too high?” - Jill

An illegal fence on Upton was reported and proved to be a problem because it posed a safety hazard by blocking the sightline between the street and the alley. The city issued an order to lower the height of the fence. We supported the resident’s application.

“They’re not cutting the grass at Golden Valley Road.” –Yvonne

We called Regulatory Service. PPU sent a housing inspector to the property and found that not only was the grass uncut, but there was trash all over the yard. A clean-up order was issued.

“A city crew member hit my waterstop, and I’ve been without water all day.” –Mrs. Harper

We contacted Public Works and city staff responded to the broken waterstop right away. Let’s hope this doesn’t happen again.

CONTACT INFORMATION
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