

Saint Paul Ward 5 Update

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In the News

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[License study may brighten St Paul's open sign](#)

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Upcoming Events

[Railroad Island Task Force meeting](#), 9/27, Eastern District Police Station

[Octoberfest!](#) 10/12-10/13, Klub Haus

[District 10 Annual Elections](#), 10/16, Como Streetcar Station

[District 10 Halloween Pancake Breakfast](#), 10/27, Hubert H. Humphrey Job Corps Center

A Note from Amy on the 2013 Budget

Since Mayor Coleman released his proposed budget on August 13, the City Council has been meeting with department heads to discuss the details of their budget plans. The Council's responsibility is to review, adjust and ultimately pass the final 2013 budget in December.

The budget process includes a conversation about the property tax levy. The Mayor's budget recommends a levy increase of 1.9%. This increase covers inflation as well as key investments in infrastructure and public safety. It is important to note that even though the total levy will increase under this plan, some homeowners will see a reduction in their property tax bill. Likewise, other property owners in areas where home values have risen could see an increase of more than 1.9%. In addition to the City's levy, your property tax statement includes line items from Ramsey County, the School District, the Met Council and other entities.

In the proposed budget, the Police Department is slated to gain additional resources to fill 16 vacant officer positions in 2013. The budget also includes funding for an audit of the Department of Safety and Inspections' processes to determine ways to improve the customer experience for homeowners and businesses investing in Saint Paul, a measure I will continue to champion. Other highlights in the proposed budget include the Como Zoo and Conservatory's addition of a Gorilla exhibit (which is mostly state-funded) and a new Payne/Maryland Ave. combined Library and Rec Center.

In addition to these investments, the Mayor is recommending cuts in some areas. One cut is reflected in the proposal to seek partners to run two of Saint Paul's Rec Centers, including Ward 5's McDonough Rec Center. I will be paying special attention to the process for partnering our Ward's Rec Center to ensure there is no loss of core services for residents. The quality of our Parks and Rec programs is a top priority for me in particular in the currently underserved Payne-Phalen neighborhood.

Overall, my sense is that the proposed budget reflects our values of public safety and livability and is structurally sound. I expect to serve as your voice in these discussions, so please continue to share your feedback. Catch me at my Community Office Hours, weekly throughout the Ward. A schedule can be found at www.stpaul.gov/ward5 or by calling my office at 651-266-8651. More information on the budget can be found at www.stpaul.gov/budget.

Update on I-35E/Cayuga Project

The City Council recently voted to grant Municipal Consent to MnDOT for work on the I-35E/Cayuga project, a huge reconstruction of 35E from University to Maryland. Heavy construction will begin next year and will last through 2015. The project will add a full interchange at Cayuga, reduce congestion and add bike and pedestrian connections. Stay tuned for invitations to upcoming community meetings on what to expect during construction and detour planning. More at www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/cayuga/.

Construction is nearly complete on the Maryland Ave bridge over I-35E. The bridge has been open to traffic for several weeks. The upgraded bridge plans include new lighting, green features and improved pedestrian and bike crossings.

Spotlight on Railroad Island

Last month, the Ward 5 Council office hosted a community meeting in the Railroad Island neighborhood with the goal of spotlighting this off-overlooked nook of the city. Railroad Island is new to Ward 5 after the recent re-districting. The neighborhood has great qualities including large, historical housing, incredible views and proximity to downtown, rich diversity and popular historic establishments including Minnesota Music Café, Morelli's Market, Yarusso's Italian Restaurant and more. Unfortunately, Railroad Island has suffered in the economic downturn and housing crisis with excessive vacant and foreclosed homes, crime and poverty. The meeting brought more than 60 concerned residents, nonprofit and city representatives together to discuss issues and rally together for change. This work will continue through the Railroad Island Task Force, a citizen-led group in which the Ward 5 office will participate heavily. For more information on our Spotlight on Railroad Island initiative, please contact us at

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District 10 Board Elections

Now is the time to become a part of the District 10 Como Community Council board of directors! Submit an application by Wed., Sept. 26. Elections will be held Tues., Oct. 16 at 7:00 p.m. at the Historic Streetcar Station. Visit www.district10comopark.org.

Community Office Hours

I am holding office hours in the community on a weekly basis for constituents to conveniently drop-in to discuss neighborhood and city-wide issues. Thanks to those who have already taken the time to visit with me. To discuss your issue, please stop by and visit me the below times and locations. If you require a meeting lasting longer than 10-15 minutes, please contact my office to schedule an appointment.

- **Rice Street Public Library**--First Monday of the month, 4:30-6 p.m.
- **McDonough Recreation Center**--Second Monday of the month, 4:30-6 p.m.
- **North Dale Recreation Center**--Third Tuesday of the month, 4:30-6 p.m.
- **Wilder Recreation Center/City Academy**--Fourth Tuesday of the month, 4:30-6 p.m.

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