



# 9th Ward E-News

From Minneapolis Council Member Gary Schiff

December 21, 2007

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## Roosevelt Library reopens January 3<sup>rd</sup>

After a year of closed doors, [Roosevelt Library](#) will reopen on January 3rd as a result of the merger of the Hennepin County and Minneapolis library systems. Final votes this week by the Minneapolis City Council and the Hennepin County Board clears the way for a new future for all of Minneapolis' 15 branch libraries.

"Hennepin County has stepped up for our neighborhoods in a major way and should be applauded for providing a stable, sustainable financial footing for libraries," Council Member Gary Schiff said. "Without the merger, more libraries would have closed due to chronic under-funding."

"Our libraries are the cornerstone of our communities, said County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin. "The goal of this consolidation has been to strengthen and improve access to our fabulous library resources. We believe this step will ensure the vitality of our libraries for decades to come."

Under terms of the merger, all employees will maintain their jobs, and the city will continue to contribute financially to the operation and capital improvements of libraries in Minneapolis. City operating support will total \$18 million in 2008, reduce to \$11 million by 2017, and end in 2018. City taxpayers will continue to cover the costs of the voter-approved 2000 library capital referendum at \$11 million dollars annually through 2032.

All library cards will continue to work as the catalog and computer systems are consolidated. Click [here](#) to learn more about the new Hennepin library system.

## Court upholds taxi reform law



The Roosevelt Library as it appeared after opening in 1927. The library was built in response to a booming neighborhood immigrant population from Sweden.



A New Star Taxi and Limo, based in the 9<sup>th</sup> Ward, is one of four new Minneapolis cab companies.

A [decision](#) by a federal judge upholds the Minneapolis City Council's plan to increase taxi licenses in Minneapolis. In a reform bill authored by Council Members Paul Ostrow and Gary Schiff in 2006, a cap on taxi licenses was lifted, allowing new companies to incorporate. The bill also made Minneapolis the first city in the country to require taxi fuel efficiency standards.

Objections to the reforms were filed by large taxi companies who claimed the city owed them compensation for potential losses resulting from competition. As said succinctly by the magistrate judge, "there is no constitutional right to freedom from competition."

"Studies conducted before the reform showed Minneapolis had one of the lowest numbers of cabs per capita and customers experienced long wait times," said Councilmember Schiff. "More competition will bring new

opportunities for small businesses and better service for customers."

Schiff says the reforms will also curb worker exploitation. "Because of the limited license supply in the past, big taxi companies would buy a license from the city for \$475, and then turn around and sell them to drivers for \$25,000. This stops that practice, and now anyone who qualifies can go into business."

## New bike station to open in Midtown Greenway

After years of starts and stops, final funding was approved this week by the City Council for a new bike station in the Midtown Greenway. Construction will begin in 2008 and the new station will open by summer.

The station will include space for bicycle sales, rentals and repair, bike storage, and restrooms complete with showers for commuters. "This station makes the Midtown Greenway an even better route for bike commuters and shows the city's commitment to developing alternative modes of transportation," said Council Member Schiff.



The new Midtown Greenway bike station will be located near Chicago Ave and operated by [Freewheel Bike](#).

The \$1.3 million dollar facility was funded with the help of a \$276,000 federal grant and \$120,000 in private dollars from [Allina Hospitals and Clinics](#), [Ryan Companies](#), and the [Midtown Greenway Coalition](#).

## East Phillips Park proposal picks up city support



A proposed community center for East Phillips Park would be located at 17<sup>th</sup> Ave S and 23<sup>rd</sup> Street.

The recently approved 2008 city budget includes more funds for a proposed [East Phillips Park](#) Cultural and Community Center, but falls short of total funding necessary.

"The neighborhood will go back to the state legislature and the city next year to fully fund

our vision for a community center," said Brad Pass, neighborhood activist. Center supporters

recently met with U.S. Rep. Keith Ellison to ask for federal help.

The complete \$6.1 million center will include gathering spaces, indoor recreation space, and a children's play area. A field house is proposed for a future expansion, allowing wintertime athletics.

"East Phillips Park ranks as one of most undercapitalized parks in the city," said Council Member Schiff. "In a neighborhood with deep poverty and too many gangs, investment in spaces for kids is one of the best ways we can reduce health disparities and reduce youth violence."

The Council action adds \$319,000 in earmarked capital funds, in a motion made by Council Member Gary Schiff. Previously the state legislature authorized \$3.50 million.

## **Season's greetings from the Ninth Ward**

*Wishing all of you a safe, healthy holiday season and peace in the New Year.*

*Please join me for the sixth annual State of the Ward Address and 2007 Ninth Ward Awards on Friday, January 25, 2008. It will be a time to celebrate the successes of all the residents who are making the Ninth Ward such a great place to live.*

*Peace,*



To make a nomination for the Ninth Ward Awards, write a brief description of the accomplishments that you think deserve recognition. Awards will be given for the Leader of the Year; Block Club of the Year; Neighborhood Project of the Year; and Youth Leader of the Year. Submit your nominations via [e-mail](#), fax (612-673-3940) or by mail to Ninth Ward Office, 350 South 5th Street, Room 307, Minneapolis, MN 55415 by Friday, January 18th.

The State of the Ward Address and 2008 Ninth Ward Awards will take place Friday, January 25, 2008 from 7:30 to 8:45 a.m. at [Mercado Central](#), 1515 E. Lake Street. Food is \$7. RSVP encouraged: (612) 673-2209 or via [e-mail](#).



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