

# Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Seward Neighborhood 4-23-08

Cam's next Seward Office Hours:  
Tuesday, April 27, 9:30-11:00am  
Birchwood Café, 3311 E 25th St

## Items:

- 1) Dining Out for Life
- 2) Bike/Walk to Work Day
- 3) 29<sup>th</sup> Ave S
- 4) Great Streets Grant Reduction
- 5) New Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator
- 6) Community-Wide Workshop Saturday
- 7) Minneapolis Advantage Program
- 8) Solar Cities Grant
- 9) Ranked Choice Voting Victory
- 10) No Heat / Low Heat
- 11) Midtown Eco Energy
- 12) 20<sup>th</sup> Ave S Resurfacing
- 13) Central Corridor
- 14) TOD Grant Request for Franklin/Minnehaha/Cedar
- 15) New Restaurant on Franklin
- 16) Openings on City Boards and Commissions

- 1) I'm participating in Dining Out for Life again this year, by hosting a lunch on **Thursday, April 24**, at noon, at Tam Tam's African Restaurant at 605 Cedar Ave S in the Cedar Riverside neighborhood. Tam Tam's will donate 20% of proceeds to the Aliveness Project, a community center for people living with HIV/AIDS. Other Second Ward restaurants participating in Dining Out for Life include: Birchwood Cafe, Cliquot Club Cafe, the Cupcake, Pi Bar and Restaurant, the Seward Pizza Luce, St. Martin's Table, and the Seward Cafe. The Council passed a resolution honoring the Aliveness Project and endorsing this event last Friday.
- 2) My Aide Robin will again be leading a commuter convoy from the Seward neighborhood into downtown on Bike/Walk to Work Day, **Wednesday, May 14<sup>th</sup>**. Meet at the Birchwood Café for free breakfast items starting at 7:00. The ride leaves at 7:30. For more info on Bike/Walk Week activities, go here: <http://www.bikewalkweek.org>.
- 3) The City's application for the 2008 round of Non-Motorized Transportation grants includes a proposal (submitted by my office, among others) to make 29th Ave S a "Bike Walk Street" from E Franklin to Minnehaha. If this project is approved by Transit for Livable Communities (the organization empowered to make these grants), I will work with the neighborhood to ensure that this project reflects the wishes of Seward residents, especially those living on 29<sup>th</sup>.
- 4) The Community Development committee has voted, over my concerns, to reduce the Great Streets grant to Seward Redesign to work on business façade improvements on Franklin Avenue from \$50,000 to \$25,000.
- 5) The City has hired Bass Zanjani to serve as the Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator for the City of Minneapolis. Mr. Zanjani's chief role will be to work with the City's Youth Violence Prevention Committee to implement the Blueprint for Action to Prevent Youth Violence, a multi-faceted action plan launched this year to reduce youth violence and crime. Zanjani brings to the city's Youth Violence Prevention team a broad and diverse public policy background. Previously, he served as Chief of Staff at NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center and has been a policy aide to two United States Senators (including Paul Wellstone). I believe that this is an important step forward on an initiative that has long been on the top of my list of priorities for the Ward and the City.
  - 6) I plan to attend Community-wide Workshop that will be held on **April 26<sup>th</sup>, 10:30-noon** at Matthews Center, 2318 29<sup>th</sup> Ave S, to review the results of the Franklin Avenue walks and identify areas and topics that will be the focus of work in the weeks ahead. I was very impressed with these walks, and commend the neighborhood group and Seward Redesign for your good work on this planning process so far.
  - 7) I strongly supported a program that passed the Council recently, which will give downpayment assistance to homebuyers in the neighborhoods hit hardest by the foreclosure crisis.

- 8) Minneapolis and St. Paul will share a \$200,000 Federal Department of Energy Solar Cities grant this year, to help us integrate solar into energy planning, zoning and facilities; streamline our regulations and practices that affect solar adoption by residents and businesses; create programs to help residents and businesses defray the capital costs of solar panels; and promote solar technology among residents and local businesses through outreach, curriculum development, and incentive programs. I'm very excited about this tremendous opportunity, and will be working to make sure we make the most of it.
- 9) The City has sent out a Request for Proposals for Ranked Choice Voting equipment and/or services, and passed an ordinance containing our RCV election rules. I worked to make sure that this ordinance conformed to national best practices for ranked choice elections, and that the RFP includes enough flexibility to get good responses, but a specific enough timeline. I continue to push for Minneapolis to conduct its first ranked choice election in 2009.
- 10) The No-Heat / Low-Heat ordinance I've cosponsored with Ralph Remington has stalled in committee, and will come back again on May 7<sup>th</sup>. We are attempting to simplify regulations about when landlords must keep rental units adequately warm by basing them on date rather than external temperature. The rental industry is fighting us on this, so we need all the support we can get from renters who want their apartments to be adequately heated.
- 11) The proposed Midtown Eco Energy (MEE) biomass facility has failed to meet the terms of their purchase agreement with the City. If this plant comes back before the Council for action, I will very likely oppose it.
- 12) As part of a new City program, 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue will be resurfaced this year from its intersection at Minnehaha up to Riverside. I expect that Public Works staff will conduct a neighborhood input process before this project begins, and that it will be combined with the bike lane improvement funded by last year's Non-Motorized Transportation grants.
- 13) Despite Governor Pawlenty's line-item veto, which will kill the Central Corridor project if he does not undo it, staff continue to work towards the September deadline for submissions to the Feds. The University continues to pursue a "Northern Alignment," which would route the LRT line down the existing rail trench through Dinkytown. I have some concerns about this alignment, especially with regards to its impacts on the West Bank. It will substantially increase the width of the Cedar bridge over the Washington trench, further separating Seven Corners from Cedar Riverside. It will impact Riverview tower and the scattered-site Section 8 housing nearby, as well as creating a new trench that will parallel 19<sup>th</sup> Ave S, cutting between the road and the law school through what is almost certainly contaminated soil. The most important question, however, is whether this alignment can fit within the Federal Government's funding formula. If it can, I am open to pursuing it. If it cannot, I believe that we should submit our application this year for the Washington Avenue alignment, which would include a pedestrian, transit, and bicycling mall. I steadfastly oppose any attempt on the University's part to reroute buses to take them off of Washington, especially any plan that would send them across the 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue bridge.
- 14) The City has requested \$425,000 in Hennepin County Transit Oriented Development program funds for property acquisition for street realignment at the corner of Minnehaha, E Franklin and Cedar. This project is ranked second of fourteen.
- 15) As you may have heard, a new restaurant called the Himalayan Restaurant has opened on Franklin Avenue, in the space that used to house Kilimanjaro Café, El Gaucho and Big Olaf's. They're open Monday-Sunday for lunch and dinner. Let's help make them successful.
- 16) There are openings on the Latino Advisory Committee (4/25/2008), Minneapolis Workforce Council (5/9/2008), Public Health Advisory Committee (4/25/2008), Minneapolis Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners (4/25/2008), Rental Dwelling License Board of Appeals (4/25/2008), and Zoning Board of Adjustment (4/25/2008). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).