

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Seward Neighborhood 9-23-09

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

Items:

- 1) Bike Sharing System Coming
- 2) University Sues Central Corridor
- 3) Park Board Charter Amendment
- 4) Recovery Act Funding
- 5) Youth Violence Prevention: "Speak Up"
- 6) Police Policy Manual
- 7) Council Oversight of Police Department
- 8) Najaf Delegation Visits Minneapolis
- 9) Hydrothermal Project
- 10) Target Center Green Roof
- 11) Climate Change Bill
- 12) Homegrown Minneapolis Implementation Begins
- 13) Openings on City Boards and Commissions

- 1) Minneapolis is on track to launch *Nice Ride MN*, the first large-scale bike sharing system in the United States, next May. Right now, the program is planning kiosk locations, and there are several proposed to be installed in Seward, at Franklin and 21st, 26th, and 29th, as well as near the Cabooze. *Nice Ride* will put approximately 1,000 bicycles onto Minneapolis streets, locked in self-service kiosks. In addition to Seward, kiosks will be located in downtown, uptown, Eat Street, Midtown, the U area, Dinkytown, Cedar Riverside, and the Warehouse district. The input/comment period lasts through October 30th, so get your responses in before then to help determine the final location of these bicycle rental kiosks. If you'd like more information on the upcoming *Nice Ride MN* program, please visit www.niceridemn.com or call Bill Dossett at 612-926-9218.
- 2) Despite reports that the University and Central Corridor project (with help from the City and the County) have been nearing an agreement on vibration, noise and electromagnetic disruptions to U research on Washington Avenue, the U has decided to sue the Metropolitan Council over the project. They claim that this is due to the timing – if they don't sue now, they'll lose the chance, along with whatever leverage it brings. The University appears to be the most significant potential obstacle to this important piece of environmentally sustainable transportation infrastructure. While I find it especially problematic that the University chose not to communicate with any of its partners on the Alliance – the City, the neighborhoods, or the business community – before taking this extraordinary step, I have asked for a meeting with a University Vice President to better understand the U's perspective. I will continue to work to be a cooperative partner with all the neighborhood, community, business, governmental and institutional partners concerned with the Central Corridor.
- 3) Last month, I voted against a motion to prevent the Park Board charter amendment from being placed on the ballot primarily because I wanted to respect the valid work done by the petitioners. Subsequently, a judge has concurred with the City Attorney and ruled the charter amendment unconstitutional and in violation of state law and so it will not be on the ballot unless the group appeals this decision and prevails in a higher court. I hope it is not appealed and believe it is time we return to the spirit of the agreement reached earlier this year to form a blue ribbon committee to study the relationship between the City and the Park Board, and come up with more thoughtful and constructive recommendations for improving it.
- 4) The Community Development committee has approved a small land sale to allow the Touchstone project on the Bystrom site to move forward. I supported this action, and expect it to pass the full Council next week.
- 5) We have secured federal American Recovery & Reinvestment Act funding for a number of Projects including: \$3.2 million in Recovery Act funding to pay for 13 police officers from January 2010 through December 2012; \$10 million in Recovery Act funding to rehabilitate the Camden Bridge (and create about 90 construction jobs and add 35 years to the life of the bridge); and \$2 million for improvement to the City's Water Works Dewatering Plant in Fridley.

- 6) One of our Youth Violence Prevention strategies (recommended by many of the youth we consulted) will be implemented this month. We are cooperating with the national *Speak Up* campaign, created in 2002 by PAX, a nonprofit organization working to prevent gun violence among children and families. Minneapolis will be the first city to utilize PAX's innovative text messaging technology. The texting service allows students to send anonymous text messages to the hotline and communicate with a crisis counselor via text. Professionally trained crisis counselors respond to texts and telephone calls 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Counselors will compile a report of circumstances from calls or texts and will send the report to MPD and MPS district emergency management staff, if necessary, for further investigation. A public awareness campaign including outdoor advertising, television and radio public service announcements will begin within the next month. Please visit www.speakup.com for more information.
- 7) The Police Department has made a presentation to the Public Safety and Regulatory Services (PS&RS) committee about how changes are made to the Police Policy Manual. This was prompted by a staff direction back in April that I helped pass, after several changes for the worse have been made in recent years. These include changes to the Taser policy and the squad car video policy that I believe endanger the public and make it harder to hold individual officers accountable. The committee ultimately passed a fairly weak "request" that the Police Department inform Council members who sit on PS&RS, along with the Mayor, when policy changes are finalized. I was pushing for a stronger action that would have allowed the Civilian Review Authority and policymakers to review proposed policy changes and give input before the changes are finalized. I will continue to work to include more input from the Council in the Police Department's work.
- 8) The City Charter is clear, and the City Attorney recently reminded the City Council during our discussions about who sets police policy, that the Mayor has full supervisory authority over the Minneapolis Police Department. While the Council does approve the appointment of the Chief and the department's budget every year, it appears likely that the residents of Minneapolis might benefit from a more direct role for the City Council in the supervision and policy-level management of the department. So this month I began more formally exploring possible changes to our charter that would give the City Council, as well as the Mayor, the powers "connected with and incident to the establishment, maintenance, appointment, removal, discipline, control and supervision of its police force."
- 9) This week Minneapolis is welcoming a delegation from our newest Sister City: Najaf, Iraq. I will be helping to lead our response, by attending events with the visiting Najaf elected officials and appearing on Almanac this coming weekend to talk about this new relationship. I helped lead the City's process for forming this new Sister City relationship, and I'm glad to have the opportunity to get it started positively.
- 10) The Health, Energy and Environment committee has heard a report on a fascinating and exciting new hydrothermal energy facility to be located at the East Bank Mills project that could, if successful, heat and cool up to four million square feet of residential and commercial buildings with little or no carbon emissions. The technology would use water from the Mississippi as a heat exchange, similar to how geothermal projects use the ambient temperature of the ground. It is also proposed to use the existing drop shafts to generate enough electricity to power the heat pumps. City staff has recommended that the Council devote a \$30,000 planning loan to this project, and I was proud to move their recommendation in committee yesterday.
- 11) The new green roof on the Target Center is finished. It is the largest green roof in Minnesota and the first green roof installed on an arena in North America. The 2.5 acre roof will capture nearly 1 million gallons of storm water annually by to prevent drainage into the Mississippi River and possible sewage overflow. In addition to storm water drainage prevention, the roof will help mitigate the heat island effect in downtown and provide plant and animal habitat. It is planted with a variety of Minnesota prairie plants, including Columbine, Prairie Coreopsis, Wild Strawberry, Dotted Blazing-Star, and Lupine. Lupines target the Karner Blue Butterfly, a federally listed endangered butterfly that needs them to survive.
- 12) I strongly supported a recent Council action to take a firm position on the ACES climate change bill (also known as "cap and trade"). I believe that climate change is one of the most important crises of our era, and that we must take significant, meaningful action. I supported the language in the City's position that opposes specific "carve-outs" for certain favored industries, such as agriculture.
- 13) The Home Grown Minneapolis implementation task force that the Council created in June is held its first meeting on September 15th. Over the last several months, my office and the Mayor's office have been meeting with participating City departments to set expectations for this important work. I'm very hopeful that this group will make good progress, with our first set of policy changes to be presented back to the Council by spring.
- 14) There are openings on the Public Health Advisory Committee (open until filled), Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners (closes 10/16), and Zoning Board of Adjustment (closes 9/25). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.