



**Minneapolis**  
City of Lakes

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## **Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the Prospect Park East River Road Neighborhood, 1/26/09**

**Cam's next Prospect Park Office Hours:  
Pratt School, February, 17 9:30-11am**

- 1) February Roundtable – Goals and Concerns for '09
- 2) Crime Down Citywide
- 3) 2009 Budget Woes
- 4) New Parking Meters
- 5) U of M Master Plan
- 6) 2009 Great Streets RFP
- 7) Off-Street Parking Requirements
- 8) Commercial Property Registration
- 9) Street Lighting Policy
- 10) Youth Violence Prevention Executive Committee
- 11) Internal Affairs Audit
- 12) University Alliance Report to Legislature
- 13) Homebuyer Incentive Program
- 14) Land Purchase for 25<sup>th</sup> Ave. Extension
- 15) Bike Sharing Open Houses
- 16) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) Please join me for a **Roundtable Discussion** on priorities and challenges for 2009 on **February 11, 6-8pm** at Matthews Recreation Center. In this time of economic uncertainty, how can we work better together to keep making progress towards our shared goals? Come discuss your hopes and concerns for our city.
- 2) Crime statistics for 2008 were released late last month, and crime is down by double digits for the second straight year. It is especially good to see reductions in violent crime and juvenile crime. Citywide, violent crime is down 13 percent when compared to 2007 and down 24 percent compared to 2006. Homicides are down 22 percent from last year and down 39 percent from 2006. Robberies decreased 18 percent, aggravated assaults are down 8 percent, and juvenile crime dropped 17 percent. The Second Precinct, which covers the Southeast Como, led the city in violent crime reduction, falling 21 percent. As we look at crime statistics it is important to note that this data is only as good as our system of reporting and entering crimes into our system. I am sure we have all heard concerns in the past about under-reporting of crimes. I know for a fact that some crimes in Ward 2 have been reported to me but that have not resulted in police reports. Just as we need to encourage our officers to follow up on calls and complete reports so that we have good data and so that we can hold criminals accountable, we also need encourage one another to call to 911 when crimes are in progress and 311 to report crimes after the fact.
- 3) Shortly after we approved our 2009 City budget we learned that the Governor was "unalloting" \$13.1 million of the \$41 million Local Government Aid (or LGA) payment we were anticipating in December. In addition to the loss of LGA we are also being challenged by Minneapolis' closed pension obligations. For some old pension funds, losses due to stock market drops in the 2008 calendar year are expected to exceed \$38 million over the next 5 years. Unless the state is willing to reform its pension laws and merge these few older pensions into the larger state pension plan, the City must cover this loss. Together, these unexpected pension obligations and state aid cuts mean that we will likely need to make significant changes to our budget in 2009. The Mayor has

already asked City departments to submit plans for cutting from 10 to 20% of their approved 2009 budgets. City Intergovernmental Relations staff will also fight hard at the Legislature for the smallest possible LGA cuts and reform of the pension system. I urge you to contact your legislators and advocate for balancing the State budget without harming local government's ability to provide essential services.

- 4) In December, the City started a six-month-long test of several new types of parking meters. Our current parking meters will need to be replaced in the next few years, and this will help us determine what kinds of meters we want. I am very interested making sure new meters accept credit cards. Six different types of meters are being tested on six separate blocks around the city. Four test areas include multi-space meters. There are test areas in Stadium Village, Dinkytown, Old St. Anthony, Eliot Park and downtown. Staff will evaluate the performance of the meters and you can help by sharing their feedback with Please direct all questions or concerns to [tim.drew@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:tim.drew@ci.minneapolis.mn.us) and fill out a short survey at [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/parking](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/parking) by clicking on "parking meter testing" then select "filling out a short survey online."
- 5) The University will be holding four open houses on their master plan: Monday, Feb. 2, 1:00 to 2:30 p.m., Cowles Auditorium, HHH Center; Tuesday, Feb. 3, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m., Mississippi Room, Coffman Union; Wednesday, Feb. 4, 1:00 to 2:30 p.m., Room 33 McNeal Hall, on the St. Paul campus and Thursday, Feb. 5, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m., Van Cleve Park, 901 - 15th Avenue SE. Draft Campus Master Plan and the invitation to comment will be published and available on the Campus Master Plan website at [http://www.cppm.umn.edu/master\\_planning.html](http://www.cppm.umn.edu/master_planning.html) I hope people will be able to attend and/or comment on the plan. I would be very interested in reading and hearing people's thoughts and reactions.
- 6) The **2009 Great Streets Business District Support Grant** Request for Proposals (RFP) has been issued. There is \$500,000 available to fund activities that revitalize and strengthen business districts. Eligible activities may include technical assistance for businesses, marketing, planning, market studies, promotional events, and more. The target grant amount is \$5,000 - \$50,000. There will be an informational meeting on January 26<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. at CPED's office. This meeting is not mandatory but will be an opportunity to ask questions as well as hear from some organizations that received funding in the last round. Proposals are due by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, February 27, 2009. The Request for Proposals and more information are available at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/rfp.asp>. **Proposals are due February 27, 2009 by 4:00 p.m.** Questions can be directed to [Kelly Hoffman](mailto:kelly.hoffman@ci.minneapolis.mn.us) at [kelly.hoffman@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:kelly.hoffman@ci.minneapolis.mn.us) or 612-673-5079.
- 7) A majority of Council Members joined me in voting to send the proposed commercial property registration and inspection program back to staff for more work. I argued against moving this forward because I am not convinced that this is the right time to initiate this new program and think other approaches need to be studied. I was especially concerned that the funding plan placed an unfair and unwarranted burden on small and good businesses. Thanks to all the business owners and organizations who've communicated with me on this matter. A related Vacant Commercial Property Registration proposal has also been sent back to staff for further work. It is scheduled to return to the Public Safety Committee on February 25.
- 8) The Council has amended the City's standards for the number of off-street parking and loading spaces that must be provided when establishing or expanding land uses in Minneapolis. Parking requirements for residential uses outside of downtown will not change. The changes will reduce the financial burden on new small businesses, give the City the tools we need to prevent overly-large seas of parking, and help to discourage auto-oriented development in favor of more walkable, community-oriented commercial areas. Some of the highlights include: reductions for most commercial uses to one space per 500 sq. ft. of floor area, while retaining a four-space minimum; elimination of minimum parking requirements in the downtown zoning districts; lower off-street parking requirements for non-entertainment food and beverage uses, the first ever establishment of bicycle parking for most uses; requirement that uses over 1,000 sq. ft. (an increase from 100 sq. ft) must provide off-street parking; and limits on the amount of parking that can be provided for new development.
- 9) After years of effort, the Council voted to finalize our new street lighting policy. With the adoption of clear policies, the moratorium on new pedestrian scale lighting will end. The new rules clarify how residents, with City staff assistance, may petition for pedestrian lights. Working with Council Member Glidden and others, we were also able to amend the new policy to state that all new streetlights will be full-cutoff, unless the Council approves a variance. This will reduce glare, light pollution and energy usage. The policy also calls for use of Light Emitting Diodes when possible, a much more energy efficient lighting technology, which will both reduce the carbon emissions of city operations and save the City a significant amount of money. Street lighting represents roughly 40% of the City's electric bill.

- 10)** The Council has created a new Youth Violence Prevention Executive Committee to continue implementing our plan to reduce youth violence. I am honored to be serving on this committee, and excited to keep our momentum going.
- 11)** In 2006 the Civilian Review Authority work group I helped establish issued several recommendations that were approved by City Council. One called for an external audit of the MPD Internal Affairs Unit. In 2008 the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) was awarded the contract to conduct the audit. It is now complete and offers several recommendations that might improve our complaint investigation process and better inform and educate the community. I succeeded in convincing my colleagues to require that the MPD come back to the Public Safety and Regulatory Services committee on a quarterly basis to report on their progress on implementing these recommendations.
- 12)** The University District Partnership Alliance is working on our report back to the Legislature in February. This report will go before the Council's Intergovernmental Relations committee on February 3. Also, throughout January and February neighbors in the University District area will be reviewing a draft report of the Alliance's Zoning Planning and Regulatory Review Committee. This will form the basis for any changes we make in conjunction with the demolition and development moratorium put in place last August. All comments are welcome. For more see [http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/University\\_District\\_ZPRR\\_public.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/University_District_ZPRR_public.asp)
- 13)** We launched the University District – Home Buyer Incentive Program this month. The program provides down payment or closing cost assistance through \$10,000 two-percent interest loans that requires no monthly payment and are forgivable over five years. All area realtors are invited to a meeting about this on January 16, 1-3 pm at Van Cleve Park. The program offers loans to new buyers in the Cedar Riverside, Southeast Como and Prospect neighborhoods. For more information contact the Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation Housing Resource Center, at 612-378-7985 or visit [http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/prod/groups/ohr/@pub/@ohr/@relocation/documents/asset/ohr\\_asset\\_069659.pdf](http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/prod/groups/ohr/@pub/@ohr/@relocation/documents/asset/ohr_asset_069659.pdf)
- 14)** At the Community Development Committee meeting Jan. 27 the committee will consider authorizing staff to pursue acquisition through negotiation with property owners or through condemnation, portions of the following properties to be used for the 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue portion of SEMI/University Research Park infrastructure: The property in question is owned by Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Railroad Companies. I am supportive of this effort because it will allow us to move forward with plans to extend Malcolm Avenue SE and 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and build Granary Road in the Southeast Minneapolis Industrial (SEMI) redevelopment project area. Granary Road has also been identified in a memorandum of understanding between the City, County, University of Minnesota and Metropolitan Council, as a betterment related to the Central Corridor LRT project. The planned road network will open up the 400-acre former rail yard site for redevelopment as a light industrial bioscience area. The area is a state-designated bioscience zone. Funding for the acquisition will come from tax increment revenue (\$320,000) and a State Grant (\$320,000). The tax increment is the 50% local match necessary for the Grant.
- 15)** I'm exciting a new bike sharing system I hope will be installed over the next year or so, using Non-motorized Transportation Project funding. You can learn more at one of three public meetings cosponsored by the City and the Nordic Ski Foundation (our consultants on the system): Wednesday February 4, 7pm at Calhoun Square Atrium, Lake & Hennepin; Uptown, Tuesday February 10, 7pm Coffman Memorial Union, The Whole Music Club (basement level), UofM East Bank ; Thursday February 12, 5:30pm Central Library, Pohlrad Hall, 300 Nicollet Mall
- 16)** There are openings on the Latino Advisory Committee (2/27) and Minneapolis Public Housing Authority Board of Commissioners Vacancy (Closes 02/13). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).