

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Seward Neighborhood, 2-27-08

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

Items:

- 1) March Roundtable: University District Partnership Alliance
- 2) NRP
- 3) Maximum Occupancy
- 4) Ranked Choice Voting
- 5) Foreclosure Resolution outcome
- 6) Central Corridor
- 7) Results Minneapolis
- 8) Bridge 9 Extension
- 9) E River Pkwy Trail Reconstruction
- 10) Park Dedication Fee
- 11) Bicyclist Protection Ordinance
- 12) Phthalates and BPA
- 13) Truck Weight Resolution
- 14) Compost Bins Available
- 15) Openings on City Boards and Commissions

- 1) The state legislature has appropriated \$750,000 to create the University District Partnership Alliance, a collaborative effort of the University of Minnesota, the City, and the neighborhood and business organizations that surround the Minneapolis University campus, and fund demonstration projects this year. If we can show that the Alliance is an effective tool for making positive change, we have a unique chance to leverage more resources and establish the Alliance as a lasting and effective organization for the future. The Alliance is currently collecting ideas for demonstration projects through February and will be deciding on what projects to fund in March. For more information see <http://www.community.umn.edu/alliance>. What should the demonstration project(s) be? How can the Alliance best address the challenges facing University-area neighborhoods? Please come learn more and share your thoughts at the next **Ward 2 Roundtable: The University District Partnership Alliance: What is it? What will it do? Monday, March 17, 7-9 pm at Van Cleve Park, 901 15th Ave SE.**
- 2) I am working with my colleagues, especially Council Member Benson, to meet Legislative committee deadlines coming up in March, to get the legislature to extend the Common Project pre-1979 Tax Increment Financing districts (those that currently fund NRP) to provide funding to support a Phase 3 NRP program. I hope that we can convince the rest of my colleagues to publicly support this action, which would give needed direction to our legislative delegation on NRP, and could be what is needed to extend the life of this highly successful program.
- 3) This Friday, I will be giving notice to my colleagues of an ordinance change I will be introducing to change the maximum occupancy regulations in Minneapolis. My goal is to make these regulations fairer, address discrepancies between the zoning and housing safety codes, tie the number of occupants in a dwelling unit to the size of the unit rather than the "relatedness" of the occupants, and require that landlords disclose to renters the maximum occupancy of each unit.
- 4) Working with Council Member Glidden, I will also be giving notice on Friday of my intent to introduce an ordinance establishing vote counting rules and procedures for Ranked Choice Voting elections. At a meeting of the Elections Committee tomorrow, I plan to call for a Request for Proposals for election equipment and/or services that will allow Minneapolis to implement Ranked Choice Voting in 2009.
- 5) I am thrilled that the six largest lenders in the nation have partnered with the Bush Administration in Project Lifeline to do most of what the Council asked in our Foreclosure Resolution last month. The Public Safety committee has also voted to raise the fee for having a vacant and boarded building from \$2,000 to \$6,000, to cover our costs related to foreclosures and provide yet more incentive to lenders **not** to foreclose except as a true last resort.

- 6) Today, the Central Corridor Management Committee and the Metropolitan Council made decisions about major aspects of this important project, including removing the Washington Ave tunnel. The likely outcome of this decision is that a portion of Washington will be a transit and pedestrian mall, similar to Nicollet Ave in Downtown. This will have traffic consequences on the surrounding communities, including Seward – traffic volumes are likely to increase on Franklin, especially towards the bridge. I'm pleased that the Central Corridor package that was chosen today includes more than \$20 million for mitigating adverse traffic effects that come from putting the train down Washington at grade.
- 7) I am very supportive and excited about the new management tool the City has developed to measure and increase the effectiveness of all our departments. It is called **Results Minneapolis** and helps us systematically track performance toward achieving the City's goals. As part of the program, a review panel of City leaders meets with a different department head each week to track progress and discuss strategies on key performance measures. By regularly tracking performance data we identify areas where we are excelling, as well as opportunities for improvement. I encourage you to look at specific measures for different departments and more information about this new and promising tool at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/results-oriented-minneapolis.
- 8) This month, I convinced my colleagues to make a significant investment of up to \$1.2 million in the City's bike infrastructure. As part of the new I-35W bridge, a tunnel will be constructed that will allow the City to construct an extension of the bicycle and pedestrian path over Bridge 9 into downtown. When it's finished, this trail will allow bikes and pedestrians to much better use Bridge 9 to get from Downtown to the West Bank, the U, Southeast and even Northeast. It also promises to help make the case to the Park Board that they should be investing in Bluff Street Park. Some City staff and policymakers wanted to let this trail extension die, but I argued that it would be a major benefit to the bike infrastructure of the City. The Council supported this on an 8-3 vote. After construction, the tunnel will be secured until we find the funds to make it a safe, welcoming facility, including lighting, emergency call boxes, etc. This is slated to happen sometime between 2013 and 2020.
- 9) The Park Board will hold a public hearing regarding the planned trail reconstruction along East River Parkway, on **Wednesday, March 5, at 6pm at the Park Board headquarters, 2117 West River Road in the Board Room**. Plans include replacement of the pedestrian pathway south of Franklin Avenue to the south city limits, and reconstruction of both pedestrian and bike trails north of Franklin Avenue to approximately 1200 feet north of the intersection of East River Parkway and Fulton St. SE. The bike trail south of Franklin was installed in 2003.
- 10) The City Council recently reviewed a Park Board proposal to create a new Park Dedication Fee in Minneapolis. This proposal, which must be approved by the state legislature, would impose fees on new developments that could be used for new parks, improvements or expansions, but not for basic maintenance and repair. I supported this decision and the Council's added stipulations that it include commercial and industrial development, as well as housing, and that it requires that a "nexus" be established showing that the specific land development causes a need for the new park, improvement or expansion.
- 11) Inspired by a new Chicago ordinance creating fines for drivers' actions that put bicyclists in danger – including turning in front of bikers, opening doors without checking, and passing with less than three feet clearance – I am planning to introduce subject matter of a similar ordinance later this month.
- 12) This week, the Intergovernmental Relations committee unanimously supported a resolution I've authored supporting bills in the State Legislature that would phase out Bisphenol-A and phthalates (known endocrine disruptors and suspected carcinogens used in certain plastics) in children's products. This resolution passed the Health Energy and Environment last week, and I expect it to pass the Council on Friday.
- 13) Along with Council Members Schiff and Colvin Roy, I am supporting a resolution calling for a moratorium on increases to freight trucks' size and weight until the impact of these larger vehicles on our bridges and infrastructure can be conclusively determined. I believe this is especially important in the aftermath of the 35W bridge collapse, given the number of fracture-critical bridges in Minneapolis.
- 14) Hennepin County is announcing a great opportunity for county residents to purchase affordable compost bins for only \$35 through the program described below. Hennepin County has partnered with Bachman's, Lakewinds Natural Foods and The Reuse Center to sell compost bins. Residents must pre-order by April 1 online at www.hennepin.us/compostbinsale.
- 15) There are openings on the Latino Advisory Committee (closes 2/29/2008), Public Health Advisory Committee (PHAC) (closes 2/29/2008), Rental Dwelling License Board of Appeals (closes 2/29/2008), Zoning Board of Adjustment (closes 2/29/2008). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.