

**News from Cam Gordon
Council Member, Second Ward
February 2008**

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/council/ward2/>

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.

The University District Partnership Alliance is a collaborative effort of the University of Minnesota, the City of Minneapolis, and the neighborhood and business organizations that surround the Minneapolis University campus. The state legislature has appropriated \$750,000 to create the Alliance 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 newly formed 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 on March 17, 7-9 pm at Van Cleve Park.

Central Corridor Light Rail Line. On February 27th, the Central Corridor Management Committee and the Metropolitan Council are scheduled to make decisions about major aspects of this important project, including the Washington Ave tunnel. It is looking less and less likely that the tunnel will be included in the project, due to strong political consensus in Saint Paul and Ramsey County, the projected cost of the tunnel, and the complicated Federal funding formula. Other options being discussed include turning a portion of Washington into a transit and pedestrian mall, similar to Nicollet Ave in Downtown. There is another scheduled Metro Council LRT meeting to answer residents' questions in Prospect Park on **Tuesday, February 12, 7-9pm, St Frances Cabrini Church, 1500 Franklin Ave SE.**

Results Minneapolis. 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 and vision. 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 this new and promising tool at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/results-oriented-minneapolis.

Stadium mitigation grants. Neighborhoods that directly border the U of M campus can now apply for funds to address the new University stadium's impact on the community. Approximately \$69,000 in total funding will be available in 2008. Eligible applicants are member organizations of the Stadium Area Advisory Committee and their partners, and applications are due by April 1, 2008. For a complete list of eligible participants, fundable activities, criteria, and an application form, visit www.community.umn.edu/gnf. Funding announcements are expected to be made in July.

New Street Resurfacing Program. The Public Works department has proposed a new street resurfacing program to help improve and extend the life of our streets. The cost and time for street resurfacing is significantly less than the present renovation and reconstruction programs. Under the new program we can resurface 15-20 miles of city streets per construction season as opposed to 4.5 miles through the older programs. Resurfacing will extend the life of a street at least 10 years. Because Minneapolis has a policy to assess property owners for some portion of street repair work along their property line, it is important to note that assessment rates for resurfacing will be ½ those of rates for a street renovation project. **Franklin Avenue from Emerald to the River and 18th Ave SE from Como to Hennepin** are on the list of 8 priority

proposed resurfacing projects that could start this summer. **Twentieth Ave from Cedar to Riverside** is a potential 1/2 mile stretch that may also be included depending on finances. Work should be done in 2008, or 2009 at the latest.

School Election Reform. There will be a school board election reform proposal on the ballot in November. It is known as the **ABC** Referendum Campaign and is intended to help make the Minneapolis School Board more **A**ccountable, **B**alanced and **C**onected. I believe that the proposal offers a way to improve representation, help hold elected officials accountable, make them more responsive, simplify Minneapolis' government structure and improve collaboration between jurisdictions. If enacted, it would change the School Board from the current 7 at large seats to 9 seats voted in with 3 at large seats and 6 district seats. The six districts would mirror the Park Board districts. Please vote **YES on ABC** on the 2008 election ballot.

Foreclosures. I cosponsored a resolution calling for the largest lenders to voluntarily freeze foreclosure activity in Minneapolis for three months, to allow borrowers to refinance to lower interest rates, freeze adjustable rate mortgages, and other constructive actions. At my urging the City's Civil Rights Department is working with Minnesota ACORN and the Institute on Race and Poverty, to look into data on possible discriminatory loan and foreclosure practices by major lenders in Minneapolis. The Public Safety committee is considering a proposal 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.

Historic preservation study. The Seward, Cooper and Longfellow neighborhoods will be surveyed this year by the City to identify potential historic buildings and sites. The survey will identify properties that may be eligible for historic designation and will help influence future planning and development efforts. This is part of the ongoing plan to survey all Minneapolis neighborhoods within the next five years. The survey is being funded by the State of Minnesota.

Ranked Choice Voting. The Secretary of State's Ranked Choice Voting work group has completed draft legislation that will provide rules for conducting ranked choice (also known as Instant Runoff) elections. They have also completed a review of the options for electronic voting equipment to implement ranked choice elections. My office has led the Council's participation in this process – my Aide, Robin, wrote the first draft of the proposed legislation. I expect a report from the City's Election Director sometime this month, and will be pushing for the City to put out a Request for Proposals to find election equipment vendors for 2009 implementation.

Truck Weights. 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.

Bicyclist Protection Ordinance. 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.

Second Chance Day. I will be attending the Council on Crime and Justice's first-ever Second Chance Day on the Hill next Wednesday, February 13 at 11am. Over 1,000 ex-offenders, community members, and supporters of justice reform will come together in the Capitol Rotunda to highlight the importance of second chances for ex-offenders. This ties into my ongoing work on preventing and addressing youth violence. For more information, please go here: <http://www.employexoffenders.com/secondchance.html>.

Park Dedication Fee. 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.

Digital Inclusion Fund. Grants totaling \$200,000 are going out to organizations across the city for programs to promote technology access and technology literacy. This fund was created last year as part of the contract between the City of Minneapolis and US Internet Wireless, the company currently building a citywide wireless network. For information on the grant recipients, go to www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/wirelessminneapolis and click on "what's new."

Dangerous Animals Ordinance. Last month, I helped make the new "dangerous animals" ordinance more reasonable. The original proposal included new provisions empowering staff to declare pets potentially dangerous for behaviors that "constitute a physical threat" or require someone to take "defensive action." I successfully moved to create exemptions for these vague behaviors on an animal's owner's property and to narrow the blanket prohibition on ex-felons owning large dogs to **violent** felons. I believe that these changes will allow the proposal to address truly dangerous dogs, while not leading to an increase in innocent dogs being declared dangerous and destroyed.

Please join me at the **State of the Second Precinct** on **February 23rd** from **10am-noon** at the **Aveda Institute, 400 Central Ave NE**. Inspector Skomra and members of the 2nd Precinct will update you on police initiatives in the 2nd Precinct, plans for burglary suppression, and the Neighborhood Policing Plans. If you have questions, contact Carol Oosterhuis at 673-2874.

Block Club Training is being offered on **February 21st, 6pm** at the 2nd Precinct, **1911 Central Ave NE**. If you are planning to attend, please RSVP to Carol at 673-2874.

Focus the Nation. I was delighted to participate in a teach-in on climate change at Augsburg College last month, as part of the Focus the Nation day of action. Learn more here: <http://www.focusthenation.org/>.

Compost Bins. 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.

Cedar, Franklin and Minnehaha. The City is entering the final design stage for a major project that will put in place transportation infrastructure to support a mixed-use, transit supportive activity center around the Franklin Avenue LRT station. The Community Development committee has requested \$375,000 in Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development grant funding to support this effort. The project includes improvements to the intersection of Cedar, Franklin and Minnehaha Avenues, implementation of a streetscape to improve pedestrian access to the station, and the construction of a new street.

Midtown Eco Energy. Kandiyohi Partners has voluntarily completed an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW), which is currently under review by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. The proposed Midtown Eco Energy project may not receive any permits or other approvals, nor can construction begin, while environmental review is under way. I credit this positive development to the good community organizing and raising of questions by local activists.

Bridge 9 Bike Trail. I am fighting hard to preserve the City's option to extend the Bridge 9 bike trail into downtown, by pushing for a tunnel under the 35W bridge that is under construction.

Fairview Expansion. The Council has approved the expansion plan for the new Children's Hospital on Riverside Avenue that includes closing 7th Street in front of the current hospital. Due to a potential conflict of interest (my wife works at Fairview), I was unable to vote on this, or directly participate. However, my Aide, CPED Director Mike Christenson, local residents and Fairview representatives, drafted a "Good Neighbor Agreement" that will substantially improve the Riverside Park neighborhood. The specifics of this agreement include raising funds – starting with a \$10,000 donation – and developing plans to work on improvements to the park and lighting, establishing a SnOasis program where hospital ramps can be used by residents during snow emergencies, reducing pesticide and herbicide use, and keeping mature trees on Fairview property.

Sergeant Preston's. Sergeant Preston's has received approval from the Public Service and Regulatory Services committee for a Class B liquor license. I have been directly engaged in drafting a tough, comprehensive list of conditions on this license, to protect Seven Corners from unreasonable noise.

Applebee's on Washington. The Applebee's restaurant at 615 Washington Ave SE has applied for a New Proprietor liquor license (for a new owner to continue the existing alcohol sales), which has not yet been approved by the Council.

Fast and Furless, a "vegan boutique" plans to open in the old Smiley's Clinic space on Franklin, in Seward. Read more about this unique destination business here:
<http://www.fastandfurless.com/>.

Openings on City Boards and Commissions. There are openings on the Civilian Police Review Authority (closes 2/15/2008) and Zoning Board of Adjustment (closes 2/29/2008). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.

Yours, in peace and cooperation,

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