

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the Prospect Park East River Road Neighborhood, 6-22-09

Cam's next Prospect Park Office Hours:
Pratt School, July 21, 9:30-11am

Items:

- 1) Historic District
- 2) Impact of Unallotment
- 3) Homegrown Minneapolis Passes Committee
- 4) Ranked Choice Voting Moves Forward this Fall
- 5) New Second Precinct Commander
- 6) Central Corridor
- 7) ZPRR Meeting and Ordinance Changes
- 8) Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission
- 9) Pedestrian Master Plan
- 10) Tax Increment Financing Districts
- 11) Civil Rights Investigations
- 12) Business Signage
- 13) Rental Licensing Ordinance Amendment
- 14) Bike Education
- 15) National Night Out
- 16) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) My office is working with PPERIA to set up a neighborhood work group, supported by my Aide and staff from the City's Department of Preservation and Design, to work through issues related to local designation of a Prospect Park historic district. The group's goal will be to come up with some ideas for specific guidelines for the district and organize a community meeting in August.
- 2) As you've likely heard, outgoing Governor Tim Pawlenty has "unallotted" \$2.7 billion in State spending. Government Aid to Minneapolis will be cut by **\$8.5 million** in 2009 and **\$21.3 million** in 2010, for a total cut of **\$30 million** through 2010. With the Governor's action today, on top of his previous draconian cuts to LGA, the City of Minneapolis receives **43 percent** less from the State than we did six years ago. The State collects about \$74 million from our property taxes, and \$390 million in sales taxes generated in Minneapolis. Given Pawlenty's action, the State now only returns **15%** of those dollars back to Minneapolis.
- 3) Last week, the Health, Energy and Environment committee unanimously passed a resolution I authored putting the City on record as supporting locally grown food, and creating a Homegrown Minneapolis Implementation Task Force. I will co-chair this group, which will focus on putting into action the recommendations of the Homegrown Minneapolis report: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/homegrown-home.asp.
- 4) The Council, with my strong support, has voted to use ranked choice voting for this November's municipal election. This was made possible by the unanimous decision by the Supreme Court on June 11th that ranked choice voting is constitutional. My office has worked hard since 2006 to make this happen, and I'm excited to move forward.
- 5) Second Precinct Commander Robert Skomra has retired, and has been replaced by Bryan Schafer. I've had the opportunity to work with Mr. Schafer on youth violence prevention, in his role as head of the Juvenile unit, and I'm optimistic about the direction he'll take the Precinct.
- 6) The University has submitted a 26-page letter outlining their concerns about the vibration, electromagnetic, construction and traffic impacts of the proposed Central Corridor Light Rail line, and what they consider to be inadequate funding for mitigating these concerns. The Metropolitan Council has made clear that this sort of move by the University could delay the start of construction on Central Corridor from the planned start date of next year to 2011. This means that the project cost will increase, due to inflation, potentially endangering the mitigation funding Minneapolis, St. Paul and the University have already been promised by the Project Office. I am concerned that by taking this action they have put at risk not just the mitigation funds but the light rail project as a whole.

- 7) I have introduced a text amendment to the Zoning code that came out of the City/neighborhood Zoning, Planning and Regulatory Review (or ZPRR) committee, that includes a proposed ordinance establishing a University Area zoning overlay district, and requiring .5 parking spaces per bedroom for all new residential buildings constructed in the district. There is a public meeting to discuss this proposal and other outcomes of the ZPRR committee **Monday, June 29th**, from 7-9pm at Van Cleve Park.
- 8) The membership of the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission has been decided. Cooper resident and Longfellow Community Council Marcea Mariani is the neighborhood representative for District 8. The Commission's first meeting will be held **tomorrow, June 23, 4:30-6:30pm at Logan Park** (690 13th Ave. NE). You can also find information on the NCEC at: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/ncr/NCEC_Home.asp. It's my hope that this commission will help lead to better communication and community involvement in all City decisions, improved and consistent funding to build the capacity of our neighborhood organizations, and effective oversight of the City's new Neighborhood and Community Relations department.
- 9) Public Works has presented a draft of the City's first Pedestrian Master Plan to the Transportation and Public Works committee. You can read the plan here: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/pedestrian. This marks the first time that the City has taken a comprehensive look at how our infrastructure and planning affect the walkability of our neighborhoods. I'm hoping that it will help us improve on the existing strengths in our pedestrian system, and close some of the gaps that I know are out there. Staff has scheduled a public meeting on **Thursday, July 16**, at the Minneapolis Central Library, with the following planned events: 5:30pm Walking Workshops, 6:00pm Meeting, 6:30pm Presentation.
- 10) The proposal to establish a new tax increment financing (TIF) district to help pay off Target Center debt and fund neighborhood revitalization activities will be coming up for review, possible amendments and final approval this summer. You can read the plan here: http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/Consolidated_Redevelopment_TIF_Plan.asp. This is made possible by the legislation many of us worked to get passed in 2008. I'm a strong supporter of the TIF district and believe that it is essential to future funding of neighborhood controlled planning and revitalization efforts in Minneapolis. I support funding Target Center debt relief (which will help our general fund and lighten the load on property tax payers) and neighborhood revitalization equally and will fight hard to ensure the neighborhoods get their share. The official public hearing for this will likely be at the Community Development Committee at **1:30 pm on Tuesday, July 21**, in Room 317 City Hall. Comments are due by noon July 20 to be part of the official record.
- 11) I oppose eliminating the investigations unit of the Civil Rights Department. I am not convinced that the State can adequately enforce our local civil rights ordinance, and wonder if this move will negate the purpose of the local ordinance. I am also concerned that we will no longer be the leaders on civil rights that we have been at least since Hubert Humphrey in the 1940s. If we give up our position of leadership - as the most diverse and one of the most progressive communities in the state - and instead follow the State's lead, what effect will that have on the future of Civil Rights for all Minnesotans? If there are concerns about the quality and timeliness of our investigations, we should both raise our expectations and increase the support for the department.
- 12) Council Member Lisa Goodman has introduced language that would ban all sandwich board signs from the public right of way. I know that a number of businesses in the Second Ward use sandwich board signs without negatively impacting the pedestrian environment, and I'm reluctant to go along with this motion. I hope to be able to craft a compromise that could deal with some of Council Member Goodman's concerns (mostly regarding sidewalk congestion downtown) while also preserving the right of small businesses to let the public know where they are.
- 13) The Council has passed an ordinance requiring an inspection, along with a fee of \$450, for all changes of ownership of rental dwellings. I successfully introduced an amendment exempting properties that have been inspected in the past 6 months from both the inspection and fee.
- 14) The City's Bike Walk Ambassador Program is starting their Bike Education series. In the wake of the recent bicycle fatality downtown, many people are concerned about their safety while biking. The Ambassadors are excited to offer these classes to help bicyclists improve their skills and confidence, and learn from certified and trained Bicycle Instructors. Go here to find dates for courses, and to register online: <http://www.bikewalktwincities.org/ambassadors/registration.html>. Attendees must possess a driver's license. Please register ASAP- Class size is limited to 8 people.
- 15) National Night Out is coming up fast, and now is the time to start making preparations on your block for the night that brings neighbors together. This year, National Night Out is **Tuesday, August 4**. Online registration for National Night Out is now available at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/nno/>. You can also register by calling 311. If you register by July 14th you will be entered into a drawing for prizes donated by area businesses that you can distribute at your party!
- 16) There are current openings on the Civil Rights Commission, (closes 7/10), Family Housing Fund Board of Directors (closes 6/26) and Public Health Advisory Committee (open until filled). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.