

Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to Cedar Riverside, 2-20-08

**Cam's next Cedar Riverside Office Hours:
Tuesday March 4, 9:30-11:00am
Hard Times Café, 1821 Riverside Ave**

Items:

- 1) March Roundtable: University District Partnership Alliance
- 2) Bridge 9 Extension
- 3) Cedar Riverside Small Area Plan
- 4) Somali Leader Meeting
- 5) Stadium mitigation funds
- 6) ABC School Board Election Referendum
- 7) Foreclosure Resolution and Investigation
- 8) Central Corridor
- 9) Results Minneapolis
- 10) Fairview Expansion
- 11) Sergeant Prestons
- 12) Phthalate Resolution
- 13) Park Dedication Fee
- 14) Openings on 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) Last week, I convinced my colleagues to make a significant investment of up to \$1.2 million in Cedar Riverside. 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. I argued that it would be a major benefit to the bike infrastructure of the City and the Cedar Riverside neighborhood. 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.
- 3) The Cedar Riverside Small Area Plan will go before the Planning Commission Committee of the Whole next Thursday. Staff and my office are still working to make the plan reflect the feedback received during the comment period.
- 4) Along with Council Member Robert Lilligren (Ward 6), I have organized a meeting between Somali leaders and the Minneapolis Police Department to discuss how we can help the MPD and the Somali Community work more collaboratively together. Of special concern are the lack of crime reporting and the reluctance of crime victims and witnesses to come forward after crimes are committed. The meeting will take place **March 3, 7-8:30pm at the Brian Coyle Center** in the community room.
- 5) 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.

- 6) I am supporting a school board election reform proposal known as the **ABC** Referendum Campaign that will help make the Minneapolis School Board more **A**ccountable, **B**alanced and **C**onected. The proposal offers a way to improve representation, help hold elected officials accountable, make them more responsive, simplify Minneapolis' government structure, improve collaboration between jurisdictions and open up the system to political and geographic diversity. 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.
- 7) I cosponsored a resolution calling for the largest lenders and loan servicers to voluntarily freeze foreclosure activity in Minneapolis for three months, by allowing borrowers to refinance to lower interest rates, freeze adjustable rate mortgages, and other constructive actions. I am thrilled that the six largest lenders in the nation have partnered with the Bush Administration in Project Lifeline to do almost all of what the Council asked. At my urging and the request of Minnesota ACORN, the City's Civil Rights Department is also working with the Institute on Race and Poverty, looking into data on possible discriminatory loan and foreclosure practices by major lenders and loan servicers in Minneapolis. 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.
- 8) On February 27, the Central Corridor Management Committee and the Metropolitan Council are schedule 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. I am working hard to ensure that any plan takes into account serve the neighborhood and helped mitigate the potential negative effects the at grade might have on traffic in the area. The next Community Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, February 21, 5–7 pm at Goodwill/Easter Seals at 553 Fairview Ave in St. Paul.**
- 9) 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.
- 10) The Council has approved the full expansion plan for the new Children's Hospital in Cedar Riverside. Due to a conflict of interest (my wife works for the Fairview system), I was unable to vote on this, or directly participate. However, my Aide, working with 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, reducing pesticide and herbicide use, and keeping mature trees on Fairview property.
- 11) 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. If the business gets three noise violations, the number of nights per week that they will be able to have live music will drop from four to three.
- 12) The Health Energy and Environment committee passed a resolution I've authored supporting bills in the State Legislature that would create a task force to look into Bisphenol-A and phthalates.
- 13) 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.
- 14) There are openings on the Latino Advisory Committee (2/29/2008), Public Health Advisory Committee (2/29/2008), Rental Dwelling License Board of Appeals (2/29/2008), and Zoning Board of Adjustment (2/29/2008). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us.