

# Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the Prospect Park East River Road Neighborhood, 8-24-09

Cam's next Prospect Park Office Hours:  
Pratt School, September 15, 9:30-11am

## Items:

- 1) Franklin/27<sup>th</sup>/East River Pkwy Open House
- 2) Central Corridor Gets FTA Approval
- 3) Expansion of Premises Near Stadium
- 4) Alliance Ordinance Changes Pass Council
- 5) Granary Road Bonding Request
- 6) Garage Requirement for New Homes
- 7) University Business Center
- 8) Dinkydome / Sydney Hall
- 9) University Village
- 10) Proposed 2010 Budget
- 11) Central Corridor Station Art Meetings
- 12) TIF Districts
- 13) Neighborhood Policing Plan
- 14) 2008 Bike/Pedestrian Counts
- 15) Ranked Choice Voting
- 16) New Sister City: Najaf
- 17) Huron Flats Gets ERF Grant
- 18) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) There is an open house **tomorrow, August 25<sup>th</sup>**, from 6:30-8:30pm at St. Frances Cabrini Church to discuss the proposed minor changes to the intersection of Franklin, 27<sup>th</sup>, and East River Parkway. These proposed changes include new traffic lights with a more sophisticated timing system that will better manage all modes of transportation, bike lanes on the Franklin Bridge and 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue, an increase in the total time offered to pedestrians, and a decreased delay for auto commuters.
- 2) The Federal Transit Administration has released the Record of Decision on the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit project, which means that the project will go forward. Negotiations will continue with the University around vibration and electromagnetic interference, but this action by the FTA makes clear that this critical project will now move forward.
- 3) At the last Council meeting I gave notice of intent to introduce an ordinance that will increase the allowable opportunities for on sale liquor, wine and beer establishments near the University of Minnesota football stadium to temporarily expand their licenses and premises for special events. At least two bars owners (Sally's' and Stub and Herbs) near the new U of M Stadium have asked to increase the number of times (currently four) they can apply to expand their bars so that they can sell alcohol in their parking lots outside during gopher games. I have asked the owners to talk to neighborhood association leaders and the Stadium Area Advisory group. I am supportive of this idea provided there are strict conditions placed on the bars and the geographic area is limited to within a block or two of the stadium.
- 4) The University District and University District Partnership Alliance supported ordinance changes I authored regarding off street parking requirements and the administrative review for new homes unanimously passed the City Council on August 14.
- 5) Granary Road is ranked third of eight projects on the City's bonding requests to the Legislature for next session.
  - 6) Council Member Schiff has proposed a requirement that new single family homes and duplexes must have a detached garage. This passed committee, and I plan to support it at the full Council. There will be a variance process for this new requirement, which will allow houses to be built without garages where a genuine hardship can be proven. I will also be advocating with staff that we change the Administrative Review portion of the Zoning Code to reflect that detached garages are no longer optional. I hope this will allow us to require higher quality design throughout the city.

- 7) The University Business Center (2635 4th Street SE) owners have petitioned to rezone their property to add it to the Industrial Living Overlay District, to allow for a martial arts/kick boxing, school. I supported this at the Zoning and Planning Committee and expect it to pass the full Council.
- 8) The Zoning and Planning committee has rejected the appeal brought by the Chi Psi fraternity, which sought to block the approval of some modifications to the already-approved, and now smaller, Sydney Hall redevelopment, which had already passed the Planning Commission. I supported rejecting this appeal, and continue to support this project, which will preserve the historic Dinkydome and result in 125 new student residential units and first floor commercial space in a 6 story building right on the doorstep of the University.
- 9) The Planning Commission has approved the conditional use permit amendments requested by University Village, 2515 University Ave SE, allowing them to enclose a 608 square foot breezeway/walkway between the Fairview Clinic and U Salon in order to allow for a proposed expansion of Fairview Clinic, to enclose the current outdoor seating area at the Leaning Tower of Pizza to create an additional 267 square feet of indoor seating area, to add a single-level, 450 square foot open air deck adjacent to the Leaning Tower of Pizza along 25th Avenue SE, and to add an additional freestanding sign for Fairview Clinic along the eastern most entrance along University Ave SE.
- 10) Mayor Rybak has delivered his 2010 budget address. As expected, the budget is severely strained due to significant cuts in State aid (cut by \$40 million in 2009-10), mounting pension obligations (\$25 million in 2010) and growing health insurance costs (\$48 million in 2009). I am happy to see that the Mayor is keeping our commitment to jobs, an especially important issue in this time of high unemployment and financial turmoil. The mayor has proposed a total of \$19 million in cuts to the general fund since last December and this will lead to about 225 position eliminations. My largest point of disagreement with the Mayor relates to the funding of our neighborhood organizations. He is recommending that we reduce overall neighborhood funding by at least 25% from the levels we committed to last year (which were, for me, a significant compromise in themselves). I will be working throughout the budget process to bring whatever cuts we must make to neighborhoods more in line with the cuts we're willing to make to our city departments.
- 11) The Central Corridor LRT project is holding a public meeting to unveil the station art and design on **Thursday, August 20, 5-7pm** at Goodwill Easter Seals, 553 Fairview Ave N in St. Paul. The five artists who designed the fifteen Central Corridor stations used public input, research, and interviews to create unique station art that reflects the community and history surrounding each station.
- 12) The Council has voted by a narrow margin to delay a decision on whether or not to renew the Tax Increment Financing (or TIF) districts that were established in 1979, to continue to fund our neighborhood groups and debt relief for the Target Center. This was a compromise between those Council Members, like me, who want to keep the agreement we reached during the last budget negotiations and renew the TIF districts, and those who want to "preserve our flexibility" to not renew the districts. I strongly support renewing the districts. You can read more about the history behind this decision and further analysis at my blog.
- 13) Residents in every Minneapolis neighborhood have unique opportunities to work with police to help shape their Neighborhood Policing Plan. These plans are updated each year, so you'll have a chance later this year to attend a meeting in your neighborhood to create the 2010 policing plans.
- 14) The 2008 Bicycle Count Report is now available. Among other things, the study found that the number of bicyclists *increased 15%* between 2007 and 2008. More info is available at [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/bicycles](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/bicycles).
- 15) This fall, Minneapolis voters will be able to rank our choices for Mayor, City Council, Park Board and Board of Estimate and Taxation. To learn more about the system and see a sample ballot, please check out <http://voteminneapolis.org>.
- 16) The proposal I worked on with Council Member Betsy Hodges to form a new sister city relationship between Minneapolis and Najaf, Iraq, has passed the Council unanimously. I look forward to meeting with elected officials from Najaf and strengthening this relationship over the coming years.
- 17) Huron Flats (2428 Delaware St SE) has been awarded a State Environmental Remediation Grant of \$998,180 to prepare the site for construction of a proposed, but yet to be approved, 8-story, 100-unit building for student housing, with first floor commercial space. Remediation funds will be used for soil and groundwater cleanup and vapor mitigation.
- 18) There are openings on the Civil Rights Commission (closes 8/14) and Public Health Advisory Committee (open until filled). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).