

# Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the Prospect Park East River Road Neighborhood, 4-28-08

Cam's next Prospect Park Office Hours:  
Pratt School, May 20, 9:30-11am

## Items:

- 1) University District Partnership Alliance
- 2) New Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator
- 3) U Garden Liquor License
- 4) Bike/Walk to Work Day
- 5) Minneapolis Advantage Program
- 6) Ranked Choice Voting Victory
- 7) Central Corridor
- 8) No Heat / Low Heat
- 9) Solar Cities Grant
- 10) Free Speech and RNC
- 11) Lurking and Loitering
- 12) 2008 Non-Motorized Transportation Grants
- 13) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) In April the University District Partnership Alliance Steering Committee approved a demonstration project that could bring up to \$730,000 to help preserve and encourage homeownership in the area. The approved proposal, entitled Preserving, Maintaining, and Increasing Homeownership, seeks to restore homeownership confidence and investment in the University District.  
Major components of the proposal include:
  - An 'option to buy' program for current home owners that will provide up to \$2,500 to people willing to give the Alliance a first option to buy their home when and if they decide to sell it. If it is sold to the Alliance it can then be held for, and sold to, a new owner-occupied home owner. This will be targeted to one area in each of the University neighborhoods, including one in the Prospect Park East River Road neighborhood, which can demonstrate the power to instill homeowner confidence. The target areas in Marcy Holmes and Southeast Como, however, will serve as the first demonstration project areas for the "option to buy" component in 2008.
  - A "Live Where You Work" campaign to promote the commitment of the University community and to market its homes to employees in and near the community who would like to live near their work places.
  - A homebuyer assistance program that provides financial incentives of up to \$15,000 in the form of forgivable loans to promote owner-occupied homeownership available to new homebuyers anywhere in the District.
  - Funding up to \$500,000 to provide rehabilitation gap financing to houses that will be bought as owner-occupied homes.
  - Staff to manage the project.
- 2) The City has hired Bass Zanjani to serve as the Youth Violence Prevention Coordinator for the City of Minneapolis. Mr. Zanjani's chief role will be to work with the City's Youth Violence Prevention Committee to implement the Blueprint for Action to Prevent Youth Violence, a multi-faceted action plan launched this year to reduce youth violence and crime. Zanjani brings to the city's Youth Violence Prevention team a broad and diverse public policy background. Previously, he served as Chief of Staff at NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center and has been a policy aide to two United States Senators (including Paul Wellstone). I believe that this is an important step forward on an initiative that has long been on the top of my list of priorities for the Ward and the City.
- 3) The Council has granted Prospect Park area restaurant U Garden a Class A liquor license. This license is subject to a number of conditions that my staff helped the neighborhood and the business negotiate. The restaurant will not:
  - build a bar area.
  - include hard liquor in any drink specials.
  - make more than 40% of their revenue on alcohol.
  - advertise hard liquor on the outside of their building.
  - advertise happy hour specials on its property viewable from the outside of the building
  - have any drink specials after midnight. (They will also offer non-alcoholic beverage and food specials to compliment drink specials.)
  - focus exclusively on alcohol in any advertising they put out.
  - serve alcohol to an individual or a party without serving food.

I believe that this list of conditions, agreed to by the community and the restaurant, will go a long way towards ensuring that U Garden remains a family-friendly restaurant, not a bar, while exploring the business opportunities

open to them with this new license. Thanks to all of the neighbors who took the time to meet with U Garden and negotiate these conditions.

- 4) Bike/Walk to Work Day is **Wednesday, May 14<sup>th</sup>**. If you're interested in leading a commuter convoy from Prospect Park, please contact Shaun Murphy, 333.2450, [shaun.murphy@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:shaun.murphy@ci.minneapolis.mn.us). For more info on Bike/Walk Week activities, go here: <http://www.bikewalkweek.org>. It's a bit out of the way, but you could also join my Aide Robin at the Birchwood Café, 3311 25<sup>th</sup> St E in the Seward neighborhood, for free pastries and a ride that leaves at **7:30am**.
- 5) I strongly supported the Minneapolis Advantage Program that passed the Council recently, which will give downpayment assistance to homebuyers in the neighborhoods hit hardest by the foreclosure crisis. It is my hope that this program can lay the groundwork for a similar program targeted to the University district, to help address the balance between rental and ownership in neighborhoods.
- 6) The City has sent out a Request for Proposals for Ranked Choice Voting equipment and/or services, and passed an ordinance containing our RCV election rules. I worked to make sure that this ordinance conformed to national best practices for ranked choice elections, and that the RFP includes enough flexibility to get good responses, but a specific enough timeline. I continue to push for Minneapolis to conduct its first ranked choice election in 2009.
- 7) Despite Governor Pawlenty's line-item veto, which will kill the Central Corridor project if he does not undo it, staff continue to work towards the September deadline for submissions to the Feds. The University continues to pursue a "Northern Alignment," which would route the LRT line down the existing rail trench through Dinkytown. I have some concerns about this alignment, especially with regards to its impacts on the West Bank. It will substantially increase the width of the Cedar bridge over the Washington trench, further separating Seven Corners from Cedar Riverside. It will impact Riverview tower and the scattered-site Section 8 housing nearby, as well as creating a new trench that will parallel 19<sup>th</sup> Ave S, cutting between the road and the law school through what is almost certainly contaminated soil. The most important question, however, is whether this alignment can fit within the Federal Government's funding formula. If it can, I am open to pursuing it. If it cannot, I believe that we should submit our application this year for the Washington Avenue alignment, which would include a pedestrian, transit, and bicycling mall. I steadfastly oppose any attempt on the University's part to reroute buses to take them off of Washington, especially any plan that would send them across the 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue bridge.
- 8) Minneapolis and St. Paul will share a \$200,000 Federal Department of Energy Solar Cities grant this year, to help us integrate solar into energy planning, zoning and facilities; streamline our regulations and practices that affect solar adoption by residents and businesses; create programs to help residents and businesses defray the capital costs of solar panels; and promote solar technology among residents and local businesses through outreach, curriculum development, and incentive programs. I'm very excited about this tremendous opportunity, and will be working to make sure we make the most of it.
- 9) The No-Heat / Low-Heat ordinance I've cosponsored with Ralph Remington has stalled in committee, and will come back again on May 7<sup>th</sup>. We are attempting to simplify regulations about when landlords must keep rental units adequately warm by basing them on date rather than external temperature. The rental industry is fighting us on this, so we need all the support we can get from renters who want their apartments to be adequately heated.
- 10) I continue to vigorously oppose mandatory permit processes for protest groups, being brought forward by Council Member Ostrow. I do not believe that most protest groups will participate in a mandatory process, and I fear that lack of permits will become a pretext for unnecessary and counterproductive law enforcement actions during this summer's Republican National Convention.
- 11) I am moving forward with an effort to repeal the unjust and antiquated Minneapolis "lurking" ordinance. This ordinance disproportionately impacts homeless persons, people of color, and the poor. I believe that we must redirect precious law enforcement resources to behaviors that actually harm someone, and laws that carry meaningful consequences. To accomplish this repeal effort, I will also be adding more behaviors to the loitering ordinance, making it cover crimes related to vandalism and theft. This whole package will come before the Public Service and Regulatory Services Committee on **May 21<sup>st</sup>** at 1pm.
- 12) The City's application for the 2008 round of Non-Motorized Transportation grants includes a proposal to make 29th Ave S a "Bike Walk Street" from E Franklin to Minnehaha. I am excited for this round of projects, which offer us the opportunity to explore concepts such as the "bike boulevard" that have been successfully implemented in other cities but never tried in Minneapolis.
- 13) There are openings on the Minneapolis Minneapolis Workforce Council (closes 5/9/2008). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).