

# Council Member Cam Gordon's Report to the Prospect Park East River Road Neighborhood, 9-22-08

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

## Items:

- 1) University District Zoning Study and Moratorium
- 2) Prospect Park Historic Designation
- 3) Campus Crossroads
- 4) 2009 Budget
- 5) Online Utility Bills
- 6) U of M Bike Trail Constructing Spring 2009
- 7) Centerpoint Energy Informational Meeting
- 8) NRP
- 9) RNC
- 10) Pre-Employment Drug Testing
- 11) Washington Ave Bridge Construction
- 12) Remanufactured Toner Cartridges
- 13) Central Corridor
- 14) Parking Rules Input Opportunities
- 15) Openings on Boards and Commissions

- 1) The Council has given preliminary approval to a development moratorium in the University District neighborhoods (Marcy Holmes, Prospect Park, Southeast Como and Cedar Riverside). The proposed moratorium requires that a temporary ordinance be drafted and approved by the Council. The new ordinance will lay out more specifics about the moratorium and possible waivers that could be granted by the Zoning and Planning Committee. The new ordinance will come before the Zoning and Planning Committee on **Thursday, October 2, 9:30am**. The moratorium prohibits demolition of single family homes, duplexes and triplexes, and also bars new construction of 1-4 unit residential developments. The purpose of the moratorium is to give City Planning staff the space to work with the University District Partnership Alliance and the neighborhoods on a study to address land use and development concerns in the University district, including parking, occupancy, design standards, zoning, inspections and the development review process. The moratorium will ensure that property owners do not make major changes while the study is being completed.
- 2) I have nominated the Prospect Park neighborhood for local historic designation. This nomination was formalized by the City's Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) on September 16, granting interim historic protection for the neighborhood. Interim protections will cover all external alterations to buildings and accessory structures (like garages). This includes demolitions, additions, renovations and other improvements to properties are considered to be contributing properties to the district.
- 3) My office is closely following the Campus Crossroads development, which goes before Planning Commission today, to ensure that the City helps put the Memorandum of Agreement between Opus and PPERRIA into effect.
- 4) Mayor Rybak has presented his proposed 2009 budget to the Council. It includes welcome new investments in infrastructure, continued attention to preventing youth violence and a smaller than expected property tax increase of 6.9% (less than the 8% increases of past years). The 2009 budget will be adopted in December. I look forward to learning and sharing more in the weeks ahead and I encourage you to share your budget priorities and concerns with me.
  - 5) Save paper and money on postage by signing up to receive your utility bills online! Visit [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/forms/utility-billing](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/forms/utility-billing), fill out the form on the back of your next billing stub and mail it in with your payment. If all Minneapolis utility customers signed up for electronic billing, each year the City would save 44 tons of wood (equal to 302 trees) and enough energy to power seven homes. It's also a great way for us to make your tax dollars go further.
  - 6) The City plans to move forward on constructing the University of MN bike trail, connecting the east end of Bridge 9 through the Dinkytown trench to Oak Street and the U of M Transitway, next spring.

- 7) CenterPoint Energy is holding an informational meeting, to help low-income residents of the Second Ward learn more about the programs and options available to help them afford to heat their homes on **Wednesday, October 1, 6-8pm** at Matthews Park, 2318 29th Ave S, in the gym.
- 8) The Council has moved forward a motion to establish a new department of community engagement and neighborhood advisory board without recommendation. I presented a substitute motion on the board, which I developed by looking at the Framework report, the "Neighbors 4NRP" alternative and the 2007 Community Engagement Task Force report. I modeled my proposed Community Engagement Commission on our already existing Planning Commission. It is my sense for this level of importance the Planning Commission is the most comparable civic board available. My proposed Commission would include a greater number of neighborhood-appointed members, and will have expanded powers, including: review of the new CE department's budget, business plan and director; the authority to set neighborhood boundaries and empower official neighborhood groups; hear neighborhood grievances; and implement portions of the Task Force report. I am hoping that my substitute will generate some discussion both within City Hall and without. When the issue returns to us as a full City Council this **Friday, September 26**, I suspect that my strategy will be to introduce some, many or all of the proposed changes in the substitute in separate motions.
- 9) I have many concerns about the performance of MPD personnel and other law enforcement before and during the Republican National Convention, including the detention of the Glass Bead journalists and the confiscation of their equipment; preemptive raids against Minneapolis residences, and related condemnations; the seizure of an educational sustainability bus (Permibus); uses of force resulting in 'collateral damage' to nonviolent protestors; arrests of journalists, including Democracy Now! host Amy Goodman; provocative actions by MPD after the Rage Against the Machine concert; and concealment of badge numbers under riot gear.

With Council Member Schiff, I have called for a public hearing and full investigation into law enforcement actions both before and during the convention.

Last week, the Public Safety & Regulatory Services committee rejected my attempt to get more information included in the MPD's "After Action Review" of events related to RNC. I was especially interested to know about how well our officers followed the July 25th Police Policies Resolution, even when in St. Paul. I also wanted information on the preemptive raids that occurred the Saturday before the convention, and as much information as possible about the actions of other levels of law enforcement, for instance the FBI and Secret Service. I am disappointed that my colleagues have declined to ask for this information, but I will continue to do so nonetheless. This item will come back to the PS&RS committee in October.

- 10) I continued to have concerns about the drug testing regime brought forward by Human Resources staff, which was so broad that it covered people who empty our parking meters. I was joined in voting against this policy by Council Members Benson, Goodman and Remington.
- 11) Due to concerns about the strength of the upper pedestrian and bicycle deck of the Washington Avenue bridge, Hennepin County has closed all but the 'breezeway,' the sheltered semi-indoor space at the center of the bridge. With the high ped/bike volumes on the bridge, it will be fairly congested until construction is completed. I have been assured by Commissioner McLaughlin's office that they are striving to get this work done as soon as possible next spring or early summer. While the U is looking into possibilities for keeping a bike facility on the bridge, it may be helpful for as many cyclists as possible to use Bridge 9 to get from the East Bank to the West Bank.
- 12) My office will be conducting a pilot project for the use of remanufactured printer toner cartridges, with the hope that we can use them citywide, saving the City money and preventing waste.
- 13) The City has submitted our comments to the Central Corridor's Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement. We expect the Met Council to submit the application for federal funding in early September, as planned. The City is very engaged in conversations about the layout of the Washington Ave transit/pedestrian mall. Our goal is to maximize pedestrian space, ensure that buses and trains can operate effectively on the mall, and provide a predictable space in which bicyclists can operate.
- 14) City Planning staff have scheduled a neighborhood-focused open house on the proposed changes to the zoning code regarding off-street parking requirements for **Thursday, October 16, 6:30-8:30pm**, Martin Luther King Recreation Center multi-purpose room, 4055 Nicollet Ave. (The University District study will also likely deal with off-street zoning requirements, creating a unique set of requirements for the U District neighborhoods.)
- 15) There are openings on the Minneapolis Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities (closes 10/17) and Public Health Advisory Committee (closes 10/17). To apply, call (612) 673-3358 or email [cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:cityclerk@ci.minneapolis.mn.us).