



Our vision is to improve the social and economic well-being of the communities we serve.

March 2009

Vol. 1 No. 1

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Fourth Friday Movies at Golden Thyme.

Raisin in the Sun comes to Guthrie courtesy of Penumbra.

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Frogtown-Rondo collaboration helping community prepare for Central Corridor light rail transit



Photo by Ashanti Austin/Nonprofit Newsletter Partnership

Nieta Presley, executive director of Aurora/St. Anthony NDC, attends a two-day anti-gentrification summit of residents and organizations along the Central Corridor.

By Ashanti Austin

A new initiative led by nine community organizations is focusing on high-impact projects along University Avenue designed to bring prosperity to the people of the neighborhood as state and local governments prepare to build the Central Corridor light rail line.

The Frogtown/Rondo Action Network, funded in part by the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, or LISC, and serving an area from

Rice Street west to Lexington, and from Thomas south to St. Anthony, is made up of:

- Aurora/St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation
- Community Stabilization Project
- Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation
- Hmong Business Association/Asian Economic Development Association
- Jewish Community Action
- Just Equity

- Selby Area Community Development Corporation
- University Avenue Business Association
- University United

Although planning for the Central Corridor LRT in Saint Paul includes strategies to mitigate negative effects of the project on community members and small business owners, the Aurora/St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation is

FRAN has a plan

concerned that the project

might not be focusing enough on the real needs and issues of the community as expressed by the community members and business owners.

“If the underlying premise is to ‘spur’ economic development, then the building of the LRT must be done right from start to the finish,” said Nieta Presley, executive director of ASANDC.

FRAN’s goals are to direct resources toward community-based projects already under way that would otherwise be constrained by limited

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Dear Readers:

Welcome to our new newsletter. My goal this year is to continue the great work we have been doing at ASANDC. We have several new projects coming up in 2009. We hope that these new ventures will be as successful as our previous projects have been.



Leetta Douglas

We look forward to community participation in our events and activities in the coming year. Keep reading the newsletter and watch for upcoming events.

Leetta Douglas
ASANDC Board Chair



**Aurora/St. Anthony
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**THE AURORA/ST. ANTHONY
NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION NEWSLETTER** is published six times per year by the ASANDC and the Nonprofit Newsletter Partnership, with generous support from the Local Initiatives Support Corp. It is distributed to 3,500 homes, businesses and government offices in the Summit-University neighborhood of St. Paul, Minnesota.

**TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE OR
TO ADVERTISE** in this newsletter, email art@redbirdmedia.net, call (612) 655-8102 or mail to ASANDC Newsletter, 12536 Everton Ave., Apple Valley, MN 55124.

Meet Our Community Reporters

Ashanti Austin

By Jake Kulju

Minnesota doesn't get a lot of visitors from Los Angeles. Although California and Minnesota are both border states, the comparisons stop there. Our subzero temperatures, long winters and flannel shirts put a crimp in the Hollywood Style. But Ashanti Austin doesn't care. She likes it here — and get this: She's from L.A.!

After teaching in Oakland for three years, Ashanti decided to hop on a plane and check out the Twin Cities. She hasn't looked back since, immersing herself in all manner of things Minnesotan, and loving it. "I ended up staying, even after I was frostbitten," she says.

Not long after her first brush with a Minnesota winter, Ashanti got involved with the Sibley Bike Depot Cooperative in St. Paul. She learned how to work on

bikes and was asked to join the board of directors, a position she still holds.

She loves music and its role in her life. "I grew up in the '70s and '80s where my relationship to music became a way of life. I learned to think critically, ask questions, dance and write through music culture," Ashanti explains. Hip hop is her genre of choice, "but I don't mean mainstream radio station play," she emphasizes.

There no doubt of her sincerity — if you ever get the chance to see her dancing in her red stiletto boots, you'll know what I mean.

It's a long road from L.A. to St. Paul, but Ashanti walks it with grace. Her new role as a community reporter and journalist is well suited to her inquisitive, thoughtful and optimistic mind.

Look for her articles in upcoming issues!



Ashanti Austin

Jake Kulju

By Ashanti Austin

When Jake first walked in the door, his sincerity struck me first. He had long brown hair managed loosely into a ponytail and a smile that kept everyone smiling. He was sporting a Timbuk2 messenger bag and dressed like he knew winter. It was not clear if he showed up on a bicycle, but I later discovered he rode a 1980 Italian Chordia.

Contrary to his claims, Jake Kulju is not that nerdy. Jake hails from a small town in Minnesota west of Duluth called McGregor. This 27-year-old English major and teacher is both charming and extremely intelligent.

As a seasoned freelance writer writing for outdoor magazines, adoring all things green and the Twin Cities, he has his own way of conveying his obsessions with a kind of skill that would make the hippest hipster pause. His writing style is clever and funny. He openly admits that the very first story he ever wrote — in fourth grade — was a sequel to Shel Silverstein's, "The Giving Tree." Jake laughs as remembers that his story, "The Talking Tree," "was about an evil tree

that stole things from people."

However, his personality on paper and quirky jokes are just part of the picture. After I met his wife there was something obvious about Jake that I missed earlier. So I asked... and he said:

"It was a spring day in April. I was wearing a pair of old jeans with holes in the knees and a white tank top. We were sitting on our fire escape in Providence, Rhode Island, drinking beer (which he brews himself), watching the neighborhood after the sun went down. I asked her if she wanted to spend our lives together and be married. I gave her a necklace with silver wings on it. She said, 'Yes.'"

Jake Kulju is the addition to the Non-profit Newsletter Partnership that brings to bear seriousness about our community and the kind of temperament that balances wit with skill. He is concerned about historical perspectives, and his sincerity draws the reader in with ease. He has many more stories to tell. Read more from Jake in upcoming newsletters and visit him at www.jakekulju.com.



Jake Kulju

Central Corridor Update

The University Avenue Business Association is determined to be heard as LRT plans move forward

By Jake Kulju

Jim Segal knows how important University Avenue is. Owner and CEO of the Ax-Man surplus store, his livelihood comes from the avenue.

"I'd like to keep growing the business ... and to make it as sustainable as possible," Segal says.

Thousands of Twin Cities residents no doubt feel the same way. The Ax-Man has been in business for more than 40 years, offering quirky, rare and just plain weird surplus items to shoppers all over the state. The locally famous shop gives University Avenue much of its unique flavor.

But Segal and other University Avenue business owners are worried about challenges that the proposed Central Corridor Light Rail Transit project might pose to small businesses. A member of the



Photo courtesy of Metropolitan Council

The Met Council's Joey Browner and Ax-Man owner Jim Segal discuss business issues along the Central Corridor.

University Avenue Business Association steering committee, Segal and others have been organizing to get their voices

heard.

Linda Winsor, a UABA staff member,

➔ PLEASE SEE UABA, PAGE 8

Bethel University Frogtown/Summit-U Community Partnership



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Bethel University is a proud partner with the community through its Frogtown/Summit-U Community Partnership.

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Community Calendar

MARCH

19 THE UNIVERSITY AVENUE BUSINESS

ASSOCIATION – wants to help you market your business and increase customer/tenant loyalty before, during and after light rail construction. It will host a Marketing & Branding session from 7:45 to 9 a.m. at Model Cities, 849 University Ave., St. Paul (NE corner of University and Victoria). Representatives from U7 will share their plans for helping small businesses with marketing. U7 is a collaboration of seven community development corporations that has organized to support the retention of existing small businesses on University Avenue in the face of the construction of the Central Corridor light rail line: Aurora/St. Anthony CDC, Greater Frogtown CDC, Hmong Central Coalition, Selby Area CDC, Sparc, Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers, and the Neighborhood Development Center.

27 FOURTH FRIDAY MOVIES AT GOLDEN

THYME – Stop by Golden Thyme Coffee & Café at 7 p.m. for a film and some fun (social time starts at 6:30). For information on Fourth Fridays at the Movies, call Golden Thyme at (651) 645-1340.

Through

26 VISIONING SESSIONS will be held to advise the artists who will design art to be incorporated into the 15 Central Corridor LRT stations. The community is invited to share ideas on local history and culture around each station with the assigned artists. Here are the remaining meetings scheduled by station in St. Paul:

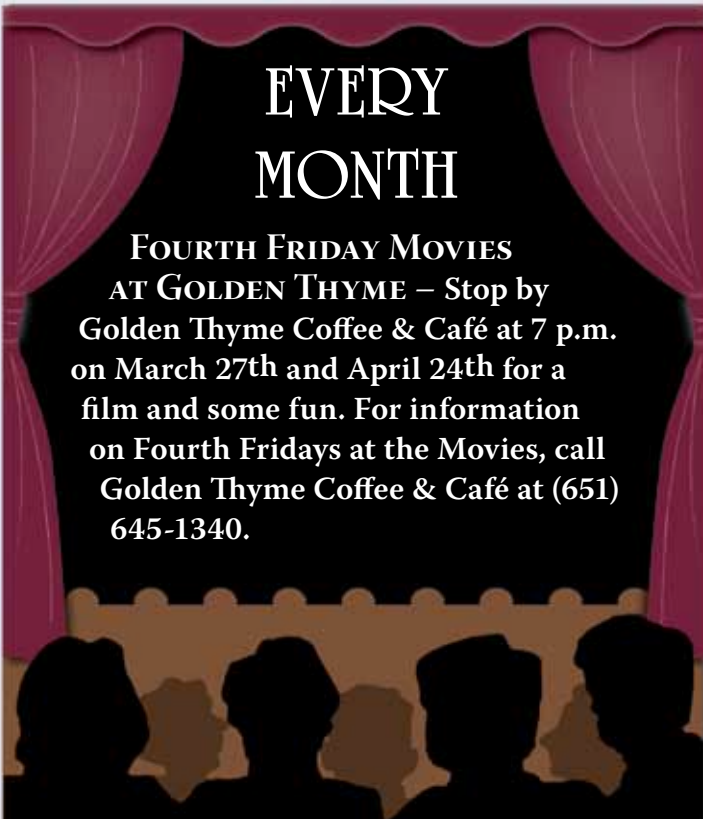
- » Rice Street Station: **March 17**, 4 p.m., Christ Lutheran Church, 105 University Ave., St. Paul. Artist Seitu Jones of St. Paul.
- » 10th Street/Capitol East stations: **March 18**, 4 p.m., St. Joseph's Hospital, 45 W. 10th St. (new entrance), St. Paul. Artist Janet Lofquist of Minneapolis.
- » Snelling Avenue Station: **March 18**, 6 p.m., Hamline Midway Library, 1558 West Minnehaha Ave., St. Paul. Artist Roberto Delgado of Los Angeles.
- » Fairview Avenue Station: **March 24**, 6 p.m., Goodwill Easter Seals, 553 Fairview Ave. N, St. Paul. Artist Nancy Blum of New York.
- » Union Depot Station: **March 24**, 6 p.m., Black Dog Restaurant, 308 Prince St., St. Paul. Artist Myklebust + Sears Studio of Stockholm, Wis.
- » Dale Street Station: **March 25**, 6 p.m., Model Cities Brownstone, 849 University Ave., St. Paul. Artist Seitu Jones of St. Paul.
- » Westgate Station: **March 26**, 6 p.m., Court International Building, North Atrium, 2550 University Ave., St. Paul. Artist Myklebust + Sears Studio of Stockholm, Wis.

Through

29 STEPPINGSTONE THEATRE PRESENTS "Streetcar! Twin Cities Bound," by Graham Gremore with music by Sasha Smith. From the writer of Step-

EVERY MONTH

FOURTH FRIDAY MOVIES
AT GOLDEN THYME – Stop by Golden Thyme Coffee & Café at 7 p.m. on March 27th and April 24th for a film and some fun. For information on Fourth Fridays at the Movies, call Golden Thyme Coffee & Café at (651) 645-1340.



ndar

Our vision is to improve the social and economic well-being of the communities we serve.



pingStone Theatre's popular "Mill City Gang" comes a new musical play set in St. Paul in the 1890s. Can a boy and a girl from opposite sides of the streetcar tracks be happy together? An important period in Minnesota history comes to life in this off-kilter romance. Students of all ages will enjoy this "through the looking glass" version of the past. Tickets: \$9 children and seniors; \$11 adults. For groups of 20 or more, tickets are just \$7. Tickets are available online at www.steppingstonetheatre.org/streetcar.html or by phone at (651) 225-9265.

APRIL

2 NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER STAFF will be available in the Rondo Community Outreach Library's Business Resource Center Office, 461 N. Dale St., St. Paul, to provide business resource assessments and referrals from 1 to 3 p.m. Want to talk to someone about starting a business? Stop in. Registration not required. For more information, call (651) 266-7400.

3 STORYTIME & SING-A-LONG at Rondo Community Outreach Library, 461 N. Dale St., St. Paul, from 11 to 11:30 a.m.

7 FREE ADULT BASIC ENGLISH CLASSES with the Minnesota Literacy Council at Rondo Community Outreach Library, 461 N. Dale St., St. Paul, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Call (651) 266-7421 for more information.

16 STAY IN PLACE AND THRIVE Community Forum on Resisting Gentrification, 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Lao Family Community, 320 W. University Ave., St. Paul. Sponsored by the Preserve and Benefit Historic Rondo Committee, the Asian Economic Development Association/Hmong Business Assn., and the Alliance

for Metropolitan Stability. The forum will feature national presenters who will discuss strategies for resisting displacement in low-income communities of color when redevelopment occurs. Dinner will be provided. For more information, call (651) 222-0399.

18 HOME OWNERSHIP PROGRAM: MCASA, a partnership between Model Cities Community Development Corp. and Aurora St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corp., seeks to create affordable home ownership opportunities for low-income families and works with home ownership counselors to provide guidance and assistance to participants in moving toward homeownership. HomeStretch classes, which cost \$25, will be held from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Brownstone Building, 849 University Ave., on the following dates: April 18 and 25; May 2 and 9; May 16 and 23; June 20 and 27. For more information, call Brenda Bailey at (651) 632-8350 or email her at bbailey@modelcities.org.

ALL MONTH

PROBID TRAINING — Make your business make you more money! The ProBid Training Program offered by the Selby Area CDC has made a significant difference in the bottom lines of small businesses. The program helps calculate their bottom line, overhead, and markup so that bids are more profitable. Your small construction, janitorial, landscaping, painting, or other business will grow and prosper by taking this class.



Classes are held from 9 a.m. until noon on Saturday mornings at the Selby Area CDC office beginning in March. Cost for the class is based on income; most students pay \$100. Contact the Selby Area CDC at (651) 291-7704 or by e-mail at sreller@selbyareacdc.org for more information.

Reviving Western Avenue

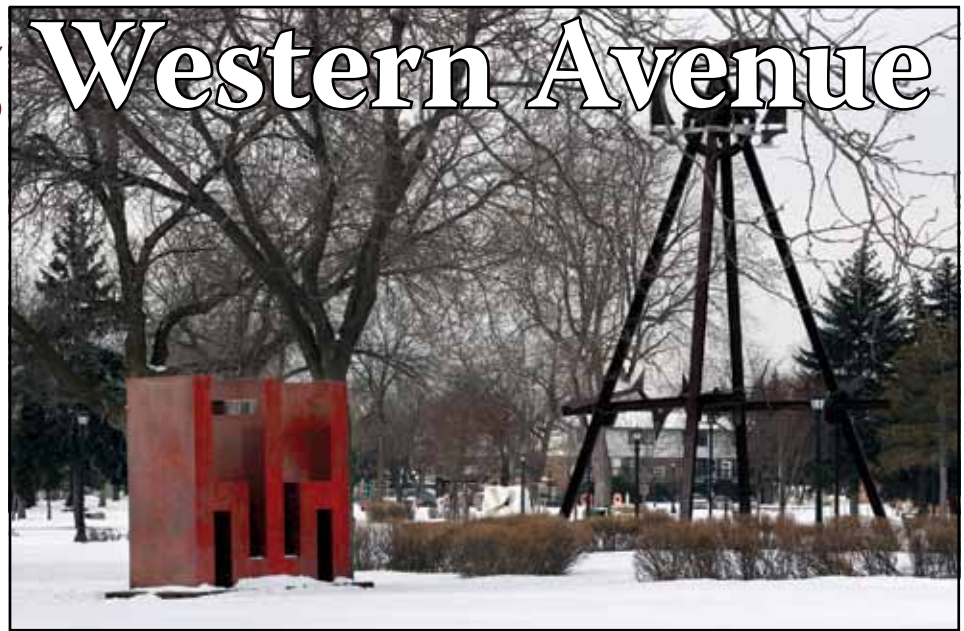
This past fall, community representatives, professionals, Aurora/St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation and other organizations convened a planning session to initiate revitalization efforts for Western Avenue and create a connection to Western Sculpture Park.

In December, community representatives met to hammer out physical components to revitalize Western Avenue. They considered:

- Green development/Sustainability.
- Safety.
- Culturally significant sites.
- Infrastructure of the Corridor and surrounding area, especially the connection with Western Sculpture Park.

The session was facilitated by the Assembly of Architects, a nonprofit, community-based professional organization. The result of the design charette was the development of an application for funding under the city of St. Paul's Capital Improvement Budget, which was submitted on January 12.

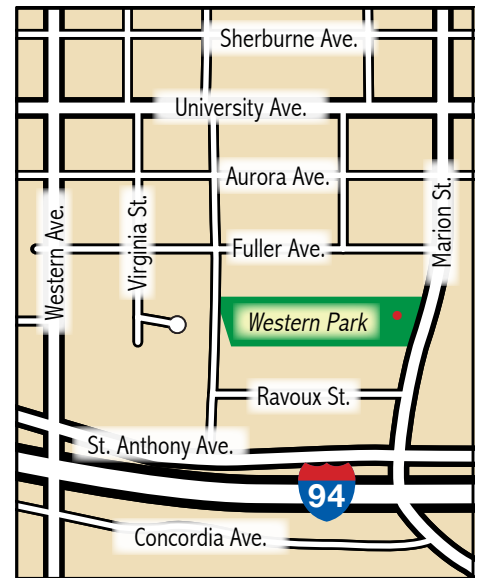
Participants included representatives from: The Aurora/St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corp.; The Convention and Visitors Association; District Council 8; Public Arts St. Paul;



Ramsey County Board; The Riverfront Corp.; St. Paul City Council; and the Selby Area CDC.

The rationale for the proposal speaks to many concerns about the aesthetics of the Corridor. The portion of Summit-University north of Interstate 94 is isolated. For decades, the densely populated, diverse, low-income, northern sector has been disconnected from economic and civic resources south of I-94.

Western Avenue is the most critical link over this great divide. A municipal state route with four lanes of traffic, Western is an informal route to the freeway with associated high speeds and un-



safe conditions for pedestrians and cyclists and many children en route to the Rondo Education Center and the Martin Luther King Center.

North of I-94, no improvements have been made since the early 1980s. The streetscape is barren, unsafe and ugly with cracked sidewalks, minimal green edging, and streetlights/ poles canted in a jumble. It conveys a negative message to the many low-income neighborhood residents about their worth as citizens. It thwarts community building and economic development.

The coalition of citizens, civic and community organizations, in partnership with Public Art Saint Paul, support this application and its purpose. We look for continued community support for this effort as well.

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Frogtown-Rondo collaboration helps all members of community prepare for light rail

→ FRAN, FROM PAGE 1

means and abilities. The idea is to have ASANDC, which has been serving the community since the 1980s, to center the coordination efforts in order to aptly prepare, strengthen, and help residents and businesses not only survive the Light Rail changes but any changes that present themselves to our community.

Presley states, "The goal of partnership is to enable folks to plan to survive and thrive or to relocate as an option, not by force."

FRAN's plan of action was developed after answering several questions: How does the community respond to change? What kind of predictions can we make about where residents need to be? Where are they at now? What are needs going to be in 10 years? Will the community still provide that?

In working with constituents, FRAN will curb the potential negative impacts on residents. There have been 11 projects identified by the partnership. The following are four examples:

- **Creating Homeownership** – to encourage creative homeownership for those in rental situations; lease to purchase with preparation to become good homeowners.
- **Renters** – Housing provisions for renters and preparation to become potential homeowners.
- **Foreclosures** – How to stabilize current homeowners and preparation to thrive.

- **Creating "Green" Jobs** – Based on the LRT premise that more jobs will be created and improve economic situation of residents.

LISC has committed three years of support to FRAN and hopes to raise and leverage additional resources both for support and implementation of FRAN projects, which have a total budget of about \$7.5 million.

"Success and stability is one of the main goals of ASANDC," Presley said. The intention is to remain a consolidated community coalition so that residents may continue to receive access to information that affects them and their families, whose needs do not end with the completion of the Central Corridor Light Rail Project.

More Information

- www.aurorastanthy.org
- www.tclisc.org
- www.frogtownrondo.org
- www.tcstreetsforpeople.org
- www.modelcities.org

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FREEPORT WEST

Provides services for youth and young families most likely to experience poverty, oppression, institutionalization and violence.

Mission: To support the efforts of families and communities to create environments where all children thrive.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Community Connections provides mental health referrals and services to homeless families in shelters with children who have severe emotional disorders.

Freeport FamilyWorks works with families whose children are at risk of neglect or abuse. Services offered include advocacy services, supervised visits, resource development, parenting training, household management training, coaching and mentoring, and housing resources.

Health and Wellness program provides families and youth the opportunity to get fit by providing fitness training and nutritional workshops. Our objective is to help individuals stay fit and healthy in order to combat obesity and Type II Diabetes.

Project SOLO provides life skills training, case management, counseling, educational and employment services, basic health care and referrals for medical, dental and substance abuse services to homeless youth. Transitional housing services and family reunification services are also available.

StreetWorks is a collaborative of 12 diverse youth serving agencies committed to meeting the needs of runaway, homeless and at-risk youth.

Freeport Saint Paul Youth Center

Summer of 2008, Freeport expanded their offices to Saint Paul with a Youth Center in the Selby-Victoria Neighborhood. Freeport Saint Paul is a safe and welcoming place for young people to improve themselves, their future and their immediate life situations.

Tax deductible donations may be sent to Freeport at 2219 Oakland Avenue S, Minneapolis.

MINNEAPOLIS 2219 Oakland Avenue Minneapolis, MN 55404 612.824.3040	SAINT PAUL YOUTH CENTER 861 Selby Avenue Saint Paul, MN 55104 651.222.3504
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www.freeportwest.org

University Ave. businesses prepare for LRT construction

→ UABA, FROM PAGE 3 is part of the effort.

“We’ve been holding ongoing, monthly events for a year now,” Winsor says. “As the issues came up, we started holding meetings.”

UABA’s target audience has been small businesses and community organizers, but Winsor points out that many residents join the meetings, too, to keep informed about UABA’s plans.

“With the bad economy on top of the fact that we have to deal with the construction, I just want to make [the construction period] the best bad situation possible,” Segal says. “Someone needs to start real solutions.” In an effort to do just that, UABA recently hired a consultant to conduct a peer city study of other rail projects around the nation. The study found alarming statistics about the effects of lengthy construction projects along business-heavy avenues.

“The study told us that small business directly affected by the construction can plan to lose 20-50 percent of revenue during construction,” Winsor says. “If you can get through it, you might benefit from it, but the businesses that don’t survive



Image courtesy of the Metropolitan Council

LRT station concept

construction will go out of business.”

UABA is seeking support through community channels, meetings with the Metropolitan Council and with local, regional and statewide elected officials.

“I think that the elected officials are really listening to us,” Segal says with optimism. “[UABA] creates a good forum where a group of people with the same relative interests can share ideas and voice their opinions in one place instead of the elected people dealing with 100 different people. We can amass the main issues of the group

and put them forward, which gives credibility to the issues.”

One thing UABA isn’t doing is considering legal action.

“We have worked to identify the issues that are most important to small businesses and are using the UABA forum to push our agenda,” says Winsor.

Segal agrees. “We don’t intend to put the financial resources into legal action —and let me be clear. We don’t intend to stop light rail. We are concerned about the construction and development issues. We know our business is going to be severely impacted.”

Aurora/St. Anthony Neighborhood Corporation

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