

# **Louisville Metro Council**

## **Minority Caucus FY12 Priorities**

Understanding the challenging financial situation facing this community and the budget constraints facing Louisville Metro Council, the members of the Minority Caucus present this document, as a road map, to address some of the issues we perceive to be most critical and also suggestions of potential areas in which we believe real savings can be achieved. Additionally, we have included several regional projects and encourage their funding.

Each member of the Minority Caucus individually ranked 37 items from the most mission critical to the least mission critical. Public Safety was not included in that list since we all agreed it is our number one priority. Public Safety includes Police, Fire, Corrections, Emergency Medical Services and Emergency Management Administration (MetroSafe).

**We agreed the following budget areas are mission critical:**

Public Safety	Business Development
Business Attraction	Public Works Road Operations and Capital
Ministries	External Non-Profit Organization Funding
Housing	Louisville Free Public Library Operations
Public Health & Wellness	

**The following budget areas were ranked as our top priorities:**

Business Development & Attraction	Bridges
Public Works Road Capital and Operations	Ministries
Quality Community Charity Trust (QCCT)	Family Health Centers
External Non-profit Organization Funding	

**The caucus agreed the following budget areas are not mission critical:**

Community Centers  
Brightside  
External Related Corporations (Examples: DDC, Waterfront, etc.)  
External Contracts (GLI, Extension Office, etc.)

While the Minority Caucus recognizes the importance of these budget areas, we support cutting costs in areas that are considered non-mission critical, rather than taking a percentage cut across the entire Metro. Percentage cuts everywhere do not encourage careful analysis of needed funding of mission critical programs and projects. Determining what Metro Government should provide to this community is critical to reform. Partnering with successful entities like Waterfront Development and Brightside will move us forward faster than we can alone.

The Minority Caucus has gathered our priorities/suggestions into three categories:

1. Community Wide Funding Priorities
2. Opportunities for Budgetary Savings
3. Regional Projects for Consideration

# Community Wide Funding Priorities

## Public Safety

Members of the Metro Council's Public Safety Committee recently released a letter calling for a comprehensive audit of MetroSafe. While we understand there are many departments in need of review, we believe the size and scope of MetroSafe's mission, along with recent revelations, have led to additional questions regarding Metro's ability to deliver our most basic and required service, public safety.

The population of Louisville Metro is shifting to areas outside of the Gene Snyder Freeway (I-265). Areas that were once sparsely populated are now hubs for growth. Members of the Minority Caucus seek a greater emphasis by Metro to reduce response times for EMS runs in all parts of Louisville Metro, with particular emphasis on suburban areas. We also encourage local government to achieve the national emergency response standard.

We would also like to see an increase in the installation of warning sirens in these new centers of population along with the replacement of older sirens with newer battery backup systems. We understand that progress is being made, but the pace of this progress (approximately 2 sirens per year) is unacceptable. The Minority Caucus also requests Metro Government explore a power dialing notification system implemented by areas or county-wide.

Metro Police has the largest budget in Metro. There is no argument having a solid, well funded Police Department is essential to public safety. The Minority Caucus encourages the Mayor to completely fund their core function, front line police protection of our citizens. Since merger an increased amount of Neighborhood Development Funds has been allocated to overtime expense in various districts to monitor speeding, increased patrols during peak crime seasons and increased crime in targeted areas. These appear to be the very things that should be a core function of Metro Police and the divisions should not have to petition council members for core service funding. We encourage the Mayor to fund the core services and achieve savings in other areas of the Department. For instance, replacing "desk" employees covered by hazardous duty pension cost with civilians would reduce cost, put more sworn officers on the streets and free up funding to cover core services.

## Public Roads

The condition and maintenance of many Metro streets are deteriorating as the result of cuts made by the previous administration. While foregoing street improvements for one year may not result in extreme deterioration, the continued neglect of many of our roads over multiple years has raised safety concerns and has prevented Metro from keeping up with the population shift within the community.

Members of the Minority Caucus recommend Metro increase its funding for road improvements including reevaluating the decision to not use CDBG funds for road improvements. Public Works rates the road conditions. We encourage a published road maintenance plan that keeps our roads maintained at no less than a 60 rating. Along with that plan, we also support a commitment by Metro to fund the plan to insure safe roads for our residents.

We also request the Mayor focus on constructing the corridors and connector roads that encourage business investment. Job centers like South Pointe Commons and Bluegrass Industrial

Park are in need of additional/improved access routes. Growing centers of population such as the Fern Creek, Highview, Taylorsville Road and Eastwood areas are in need of new or improved roads to help handle the dramatic increase in residential housing that has been developed in the Eastern and Southeastern parts of Jefferson County.

Lastly, we encourage a reevaluation of the snow removal plan. There are areas of our community that contain hazardous hills and curves and are not included in the snow removal plan. Using Neighborhood Development Funds to remove snow in critical areas to ensure road safety for their constituents should not be necessary.

### **Property Maintenance**

Metro Government must find better ways to care for properties we own and maintain. In recent years, items such as mowing of medians and street sweeping have been reduced in an effort to save funds. While we understand budget cuts were a reality of our economic climate, there is a growing concern that the safety of the people we serve could be harmed because overgrown medians reduce visibility. We encourage a plan to increase mowing along such major thoroughfares like South Hurstbourne Parkway and Fern Valley Road. The same problem exists in many Metro Parks. The cutting schedule makes areas of our parks unusable for sports teams or other groups seeking to enjoy our world class facilities.

Some members of the Metro Council have attempted to restore or increase the mowing schedule along some of the most needed areas using Neighborhood Development Funds. We believe a long term solution regarding the maintenance of right-of-ways is critical. Such improvements may require the review of agreements between the State and Metro, but should ultimately lead to improved conditions and safety.

The Minority Caucus also requests the administration investigate all options to find an improved way to maintain and enhance Metro owned buildings. Government buildings are generally old and in need of repair. We believe the use of routine maintenance would, over the long run, reduce occupancy costs. We encourage the complete funding of that maintenance.

### **Traffic Light Synchronization**

We support the continued funding and staffing support for the installation and implementation of a traffic light synchronization system to reduce drive times, reduce pollution and help coordinate traffic patterns throughout the major roads in Metro. This project was first funded by the Minority Caucus in FY06 and was not a priority. Since that time, additional funding has been added in multiple capital budgets but the project has not been completed. It is our hope that the administration makes the completion of this project a top priority.

### **Economic Development**

The Minority Caucus completely supports the Mayor's commitment to job creation and economic development. The Minority Caucus is encouraged by the Mayor's fresh approach to business development, business attraction and ultimately job creation. An analysis of the effectiveness of the Great Louisville, Inc. contract and partnership is encouraged. In addition, we encourage the Mayor to work closely with the Commonwealth of Kentucky to reduce some of the roadblocks our cities have for attracting business to our communities – i.e. changing the State Tax Code to local government to recognize Net Operating Loss carry forwards. We want the world to know Louisville is open for business.

The Minority Caucus encourages an emphasis in Public/Private Partnerships to move projects along that cannot be done alone. Let us not forget our own State motto, "United We Stand, Divided We Fall." State Government, Local Government, businesses and residents are all a piece of our economic development and long-term success.

### **Vacant Lot and Enforcement of Property Maintenance within Neighborhoods**

The recent passage of legislation in Frankfort supports Metro's efforts to enforce our current laws regarding upkeep and maintenance of all properties within Metro. One boarded up house in a neighborhood hurts the property value and neighborhood pride of all the neighbors. Metro must do all it can to keep vacant and foreclosed properties in a condition that minimizes damage to neighboring home values and the safety. The Minority Caucus encourages strategy development to address the vacant lot and abandoned property issues.

### **Parks and Libraries**

Since the establishment of Metro Government, Metro Parks has been one of the largest recipients of additional budget funds. With growth in suburban areas and the need to maintain current parks – we encourage an increased focus on funding existing Park Master Plans in a way that addresses needs while also being geographically balanced.

The demand for libraries to serve growing parts of the community is clear. Members of the Minority Caucus have supported past efforts to construct a larger Newburg Library and a library to serve the Southwest portions of Jefferson County. We encourage the implementation of the Library Master Plan. We specifically encourage additional funds in FY12 and future years to construct a new Fern Creek Library and the Northeast Regional Library. These two libraries would serve two of the fastest growing parts of the community which are currently underserved.

We would also encourage the Mayor to investigate a better location for the East Government Center. This location houses the Middletown Branch of the Louisville Free Public Library which is overcrowded and unable to meet the needs of the growing population it serves. The existing lease requires a one year notice to terminate, but the current annual lease payment could be used to construct or purchase a new building.

In addition we also recommend restoring some or all of the current libraries' Sunday hours of operation. It is believed this could be accomplished by rotating which libraries are open or for all libraries with few additional funds, but the cost seem prohibitive due to overtime requirements in the employee's contract. The Minority Caucus is committed to education to insure Metro's successful future.

### **LouisvilleCheckbook.gov Improvements**

LouisvilleCheckbook.gov is the result of Republicans encouraging full transparency of government operations. A checkbook was developed and funded by Republican Neighborhood Development Funds and was available until Metro Information Technology was able to design and implement their version. Phase I has been very well received, but we cannot stop there. We encourage the LouisvilleCheckbook.gov enhancement to include contracts linked to checks, non-check transactions and revenue received. We also request Metro work with associated government entities and quasi-governmental entities to either host or assist in the development of a similar product for each (example: Metropolitan Sewer District).

# Opportunities for Budgetary Savings

## Benefit Reform

Understanding that the vast majority of Metro's annual budget is in fixed personnel costs, members of the Minority Caucus suggest a complete review of current wages and benefits.

Pension costs are dictated by Frankfort for the plans covering Metro employees. Metro Government doesn't have the ability to reduce current expenditures other than changing the number of sworn versus non-sworn, and full-time versus part-time employees in CERS. However, we encourage pushing Frankfort for dramatic pension reform. The number of defined benefit plans offered throughout the United States has drastically decreased over the last 20 years and we encourage all Kentucky governments to follow the private sector with real pension reform in an effort to save future cost. We recommend implementing a plan for pension reform. This plan could be implemented for new employees. Special consideration is encouraged for the employees that give supreme sacrifice in serving in our public safety positions.

Metro currently offers three health care plans to its non-FOP employees. We believe the number of plans offered should be reduced to two. One would be a consumer based plan Managed Choice Plan and the other a Balanced Choice (80/20) Plan. Both plans should receive the same amount of subsidy per employee from Metro Government. The Minority Caucus would support such an effort if the changes are done in a fair manner that recognizes current labor agreements and eventually leads to equality among our employees.

## Economic Development

Members of the Minority Caucus agree that the creation, growth and recruitment of jobs should be a top priority for this government. With that in mind we would like to suggest the following ideas to help make Louisville more competitive.

There are many incentive programs and agreements which have waived revenues in the short term to lead to more revenue in the long term. The Minority Caucus encourages the Mayor to compare the competitiveness of Louisville Metro incentives for major projects such as Center City, Museum Plaza and other projects to the type of incentives offered by other competitive cities. Members of the Minority Caucus would like a clear understanding of the practices used in other communities in hopes that Louisville Metro can develop a better strategy for bringing increased investment to this community without giving away more than is necessary.

We would also recommend a review of existing incentives used by Louisville Metro with such groups as Greater Louisville, Inc., KEDFA, and their effectiveness in comparison to competitor cities. It would also be beneficial to look at incentives utilized at Riverport and at the Greater Louisville Technology Park (old Naval Ordinance) to judge the appropriateness of each in today's marketplace.

## Public/Private Partnerships

Find new public/private partnerships to create efficiencies in Metro Government. This idea has worked for other cities such as Indianapolis.

## **Role of Non-profit Entities**

Non-profit organizations are critical to the success of a community. They fill specific roles underserved by government. When governments and non-profits partner together, synergies are created and more residents are served. The Minority Caucus would like to increase support for established human-service non-profits that can further the mission of Metro in a more efficient and effective manner. Additionally, we encourage the Mayor to partner with non-profit organizations and local businesses to further their mission.

## **Recycling Program**

Other cities in the United States, and even within Jefferson County, have implemented innovative recycling programs using larger 85 gallon carts to hold recycled materials. Metro Government is already using a single source method for the collection of recycled goods. Moving from the small containers to the larger, more secure carts would allow persons to recycle more, reduce the number of trips to empty cans and could rely on waste removal vehicles the city already owns.

The benefits from such a program are quickly noted. There would be less wear and tear on Metro trucks since the number of trips is reduced from weekly to bi-weekly. The community would be cleaner since less trash would be blown out of overflowing containers. These obvious benefits plus the environmental savings of reduced trash going to our local landfills would more than offset the minimal investment needed to implement this program.

## **Utilization of Metro Buildings**

Metro Government owns many buildings that are underutilized. We also lease many buildings that are close in proximity to government owned buildings that currently have vacant space. We encourage an evaluation of all leased space, with a focus on better utilizing available space within Metro owned buildings.

# **Regional Projects for Consideration**

## **Middletown Eastwood Trail (Completion)**

The MET Phase II is the final phase of the MET Project to construct a 10' wide multi-use path along the south side of Shelbyville Road as part of the 100-mile Louisville Loop. MET Phase II begins at N. Beckley Station Road and travels 1.9 miles eastward to Gilliland Road in Eastwood. Phase I was funded by Metro Government and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet through a CMAQ Grant. The MET Project offers bicyclists and walkers greater connectivity and access and encourages these more active modes as viable forms of transportation. (District 19)

## **South Pointe Commons Connector Road**

Funding is needed to help purchase the right of way and construct a three lane road from the south side of Bates Elementary. This project is expected to cost approximately \$800,000 and was recommended as part of the 2001 Fern Creek Area Study to improve the public safety of the students, parents and faculty of this school. (District 22)

## **Charlie Vettiner Master Plan Implementation**

The Charlie Vettiner Master Plan was funded in the Fiscal Year 10 Budget. This large park located in Southeast Jefferson County is in the heart of our community's growth and is in need of enhanced playing fields, playground equipment and passive recreation options to serve the many new families that are moving into the adjacent neighborhoods. (Districts 20 & 22).

## **Recycling Pilot Program**

Members of the Minority Caucus would like to see the establishment of a pilot program to begin to collect recycled materials from persons within the Urban Service District using an 85 gallon cart on a bi-weekly basis instead of a much smaller container on a weekly basis. This program could be implemented on just one of the current collection routes and would preferably run through multiple districts that are represented by persons from both political parties.

## **A B Sawyer Park Improvements**

Direct additional \$200,000 for construction and improvements of restroom facilities at park. This funding would be in addition to approximately \$340,000 that was added for improvements to the park in Fiscal Year 2011.

## **E P Tom Sawyer Park Observation Pavilion**

Leaders within the Louisville Sports Commission and the State Parks Department have requested funds for the construction of a pavilion for hosting regional school and collegiate cross country events. Funds are sought from Metro Government to help assist in the construction of an approximately \$200,000 pavilion that would help bring more events to our community.

## **McNeely Park Through-Road**

Partner with the State Fish and Wildlife Department to construct a road that will run through McNeely Park between Pennsylvania Run and Mt. Washington Roads. This could be accomplished in conjunction with the eventual renovations/reconstruction that is expected at the dam that is used at McNeely Lake. Estimated Cost \$2.5 million. (District 23)

### **Quail Chase Golf Course**

Encourage Metro Parks to consider purchasing Quail Chase Golf Course to incorporate this course into the Metro Parks Golf System for an estimated cost of \$3.5 million. (District 23)

### **Westport Road Small Area Plan Implementation**

Approved in 2010, the Westport Road Small Area Plan calls for infrastructure and aesthetic improvements to the areas of Westport Road between the Watterson Expressway Interchange and Hurstbourne Parkway. This plan also addresses pedestrian access and efforts to revitalize vacant shopping areas along Westport Road. (Districts 7, 16 & 17)

### **Bardstown Road Miracle Mile Streetscape Plan**

Last year the Metro Council allocated \$640,000 in funding for implementation of the Bardstown Road Miracle Mile Streetscape Project. This project, which is planned in phases, will help to revitalize a business district just south of the intersection of Bardstown Road and Hikes Lane. The total amount needed to complete this project is approximately \$750,000 (Districts 2, 10, 11, 22 and 26).

### **Brownsboro Road Improvement Project**

No additional funds are required for this project. Members of the Minority Caucus would like to see increased attention given to this project to help bring about its completion in a timely manner. (Districts 16 & 17)

## **Members of the Metro Council's Minority Caucus**

Councilman Ken Fleming, District 7  
Minority Caucus Chair

Councilman Kevin Kramer, District 11  
Minority Caucus Vice-Chair

Councilman Kelly Downard  
District 16

Councilman Glen Stuckel  
District 17

Councilman Jon Ackerson  
District 18

Councilman Jerry Miller  
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Councilman Stuart Benson  
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Councilman Robin Engel  
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