

GREATER KANSAS CITY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

CANDIDATES FOR MAYOR QUESTIONNAIRE

MARK FUNKHOUSER

- Candidate's full name as you would like it to appear:

MARK FUNKHOUSER

www.markfunkhouser.com

- Candidate's profession:

Retired Auditor City of Kansas City (*Certified Internal Auditor, member Audit Standards Advisory Council and Inter-governmental Audit Forum*), **Author** (*Role of Audits in Public Sector Governance, Columnist and articles on audit and public finance*), **Teacher** (*Adjunct Professor Public Management and Public Finance at UMKC and University of Kansas*), **Parent.**

- Current and previous elected offices held by candidate, including years held:

None

- Please attach a headshot photograph of yourself in jpg or tif format to be published in *Greater Kansas City Business*.

Please respond to:

1. *What are the priority issues for you as mayor of Kansas City and how do you plan to address these?*

Making Kansas City a place where people want to live and work by creating an environment ripe with job and economic growth; working to increase Citizen satisfaction; properly budgeting for new and continuing costs such as infrastructure, Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) and anticipatable expenditures; gaining financial health and flexibility – by being smart about the money. Complete and careful analysis – the kind practiced in my Auditor's office – is required. There is an undeniable connection, which old-school politicians don't always recognize, between (a) budgets squeezed by high debt and interest rates, crisis funding decisions, and deferred maintenance and infrastructure costs and (b) degeneration of basic city services performance leading to citizen dissatisfaction.

2. *The City of Kansas City, Missouri isn't adequately funding its annual capital maintenance program. How do you envision the City making progress on fully funding this program?*

Deferred maintenance conservatively totals approximately one Billion dollars. Current annual need is about \$80 M. The Council committed by resolution to increase general

fund allocations to \$60 M by 2008 but their current budget provides only about \$15 M. The continuing shortfall can be addressed by renewing the one cent capital improvement sales tax. The Council should commit in the ballot wording to dedicate 50% of the renewed tax for deferred maintenance to provide about \$35 M annually. The Council should also direct the City Manager to budget no less than \$35 M annually for deferred maintenance from the General Fund.

3. In light of the recent passage of a light rail plan by Kansas City voters, please give your expectations for the 3/8 cent sales tax as a funding source, as well as expectations for any federal matching funds. How would you implement the light rail plan passed by voters?

A regionally funded multi-modal transit system is vital for the City. The light rail system should be integrated into a regional system that includes buses and heavy rail. We would support a regional ballot measure including a dedicated tax for public transit. We need a system that allows our folks to get to jobs in Johnson County and elsewhere; allows our neighbors from Johnson County as well as Lee's Summit, Blue Springs and the larger region to travel throughout the City; and that permits everybody to easily access our stadiums, the airport, our business districts and neighborhoods.

4. How do you envision economic development tools, such as tax increment financing, being balanced with competing budget concerns to bring about future economic development for Kansas City?

I wrote a great deal about TIF as City Auditor: the City doesn't direct the TIF process, there is no policy framework for evaluating individual projects, there is no analysis of tax base impact, there is no credible analysis of developer's financial projections. If the "but for test" is real, our City is backing 59 projects, to date, the market would not support. The City must set clear policy directions and adopt careful analysis in using incentives. The City best supports economic development by doing a solid job of providing the right kind and level of services – especially those considered basic services. When our City becomes a place where people want to live and work, economic development follows.

5. A significant portion of Kansas City's health levy dollars supports the city's core health care safety net providers. This funding provides comprehensive health care for the city's uninsured, the number of which has increased in recent years. Is such indigent health care funding a priority of yours and how would you work to support it?

Most municipalities (no one else in the metro area) do not provide indigent health care. Thus, Kansas City is put at a considerable competitive disadvantage when it comes to funding broad-based basic services. People receiving indigent health care are a vulnerable population who also rely upon a wide variety of other services provided by the City including adequate public safety, transit, illegal dumping enforcement, basic infrastructure, etc. The City should focus on providing outcomes addressing these primary functions affecting everyone and spend money wisely to provide the most overall good for these vulnerable citizens while recognizing the potential trade-offs.