



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**KANSAS CITY MUST RETURN TO THE BASICS**

“The next Mayor and City Council must reinstate funding for maintenance of streets, sidewalks, sewers, parks and public facilities,” said Mayoral Candidate Mark Funkhouser, former City Auditor for Kansas City. Kansas City’s deferred maintenance backlog is about \$1 billion. “The amount of annual funding just to keep from increasing the backlog is probably \$80 to \$100 million, the current budget appropriates only around \$15 million,” said Funkhouser. “With better planning, we can turn this around.” Funkhouser added, “I have signed my *Commitment to Kansas City* that includes reinstatement of funding for maintenance of streets, sidewalks, sewers, parks and public facilities.” Funkhouser has asked the City Council to seek renewal of the one cent sales tax for capital improvements with the commitment of using half of that tax for deferred maintenance and a matching sum for the City’s general fund.

Funkhouser indicated that he fully supports the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce’s report: “*An Updated Analysis of Kansas City, Missouri’s Deferred Maintenance.*” Funkhouser has committed his administration to work with the City Council to adopt the Chamber’s recommendations.

As City Auditor, Funkhouser repeatedly stressed the need for a debt policy. In 2004 the City owed approximately \$1 billion in tax-supported debt principal. The City’s outstanding debt has now grown to \$2.3 billion. Funding normally budgeted for annual maintenance projects is now being used to make the annual debt service payments.

Earlier this morning (Wednesday, Jan. 10), Funkhouser called upon the City Council to exercise self-restraint and to impose a moratorium on new tax incentive grants until the City Council and next Mayor develop the financial policies called for in the new City Charter.

Funkhouser emphasizes that the City’s *re*-commitment to basic services must be made now or Kansas City may never catch up with its infrastructure backlog. “It is either keep up or catch up,” said Funkhouser.