

The Honorable Councilman Terry Riley, Fifth District



I've always wanted to serve on the council, because it's where you can have the greatest impact on the day-to-day lives of people. Working with neighborhoods and community associations, making sure citizens receive City services in the manner they should, that's what makes a difference in people's lives." -- Councilman Terry Riley, 5th District

Councilman Terry M. Riley was elected to serve the people of Kansas City's Fifth District in October 2000, and following re-election in 2003, he continues to promote a stronger community. He currently serves as Chairman of the Operations committee, member of the Finance Committee and member of the Budget and Audit committee.

Councilman Riley is a humble native of both Kansas City and the district he serves. As a graduate of Southeast High School, he was elated to be first called into an elected office at the Kansas City Missouri School District. At the time, he was the youngest board members on record.

During his tenure on the school board, a State House Representative Vacancy became available in the 43rd Legislative District. With the concerns and issues of the community at hand, in 1998, Riley pursued the vacant seat and won in a landslide victory. As a State House Representative, he passed an amendment to stop racial profiling and continued to address the needs of the community in the areas of education, health care, and economic development.

As a representative of the Fifth District, Riley continues to serve the community he so modestly was brought up in. As an advocate for youth and education, Councilman Riley started Riley's Readers, a literacy program, in which over 6,000 children, in kindergarten through third grade all over the area, participates each year. Mentors and community volunteers encourage youth to become more aware, and well-informed through the use of reading. Councilman Riley's goal is to have every child become a better reader by the end of their third grade year. As a continued personal mission to ensure the success of young people, Councilman Riley hosts an annual Back to School Rally. This rally provides thousands of area students with school supplies paramount to academic

success. In addition to serving the young, Councilman Riley promotes safety in the form of an annual Smoke Detector give-away.

In keeping with his commitment to community economic development, Councilman Riley partnered with Congressman Lacy Clay, 1st District - MO, Congresswoman Karen McCarthy, 5th District - MO, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation and the National Congress for Community Economic Development to bring the With Ownership Wealth (WOW) initiative to Kansas City, MO. WOW is a national awareness campaign designed to address the disparity of African-American home ownership through education and information. The purpose of the program is to increase the home ownership count by 1 million over the next five years. The Kansas City initiative, held on July 28, 2001 along with St. Louis, assisted more than 59 African-American Missourians in securing pre-approved mortgages in excess of \$6 million.

As Councilman Riley's commitment to the people of Kansas City continues, he has taken his mission on to a national level. He is a former board member of the National League of Cities (NLC) and is currently serving on the Advisory Board for NLC. Councilman Riley is also member of the International and Immigration Task Force Committees for NLC. Since becoming a member in 2003, he has ascended the ranks from Second Vice-President and is currently serving as President-Elect of the National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials (NBC-LEO), an NLC constituency group. NBC-LEO is an active membership group consisting of leading African American elected officials from cities across the nation. He continues to be active in passing key legislation for both NLC and NBC-LEO.

Councilman Riley is also an organizer of campaigns having worked as Director on the **Get Out the Vote** efforts. By working with grassroots organizations in the Kansas City area, the GOTV plan helped to inform and assist in mobilizing voters to the polls. It is his commitment to the political world as a whole that led him to work on the GOTV campaigns in 2000 and 2004.

Councilman Riley is involved in a number of civic organizations including: **NAACP**, former Vice President of the *National Association of Black School Board Members*, board of directors of the *Boys and Girls Club*, *Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.*, *Operation PUSH*, and the co-chair of the *Minority Health Commission*. He is an advisory board member of the *Greater Kansas City Job Corp*, *Swope Ridge Geriatric Center*, *Good Samaritan Project*, *Genesis School* and *YMCA of Greater Kansas City*. In 2005, Councilman Riley was chosen out of a field of 900 applicants to become a member of *The American Council of Young Political Leaders*. He was one of eight ACYPL members who traveled as part of a political exchange to Vietnam.

Councilman Riley has received numerous awards pertaining to his community involvement. His most notable awards and recognition include: *National Brick Award*; *Top 30 under 30 Young and Up and Coming Community Leaders in America*; *100 Most Influential African Americans*; *the Friends of Yates, Inc. 2001 Black Man Distinction*; *Southeast Missouri State Distinguished Citizen Award 2005*, *Martin Luther King Jr. Service Award 2006*, , and the *United Minority Media Association's Time Well Spent Award*.

Proving the theory that behind every great man there are even stronger women, Councilman Riley is the proud husband of Kea, and the proud father of Syesha and Noah.

City Budget

1. Budget Process

Please outline your understanding the City's budgetary process and suggest any changes you would like to make.

I favor the current process of the Manager submitting the budget to the Mayor prior to sending it to the City Council. However, I would like to see more public input somewhere along the line, before the budget is finally adopted by the Council. It is good to hear testimony from department heads, but we need to have greater public involvement, such as town hall meetings

2. Budget Priorities

Where do you feel more funds in the City's budget should be allocated? Include the three highest priority projects/items in the City budget. Where do you feel less funds in the City's budget should be allocated? Include the three lowest priority projects/items in the City budget.

The top priorities may shift from time to time, but right now I believe these are the top three:

1. Public safety (police, fire and ambulance)
2. Capital maintenance, improvements and deferred maintenance
3. Public transportation (bus/light rail initiative)

3. Fiscal Strategy

The revised City Charter now calls for the City to develop formal policies for debt management and economic development incentives. In crafting and adhering to these policies, how would you identify goals and address risks, opportunities and tradeoffs. When would you advocate an exception to these policies? Please comment on Mark Funkhouser's audit of the city's debt. Give examples of where you agree, or disagree, with his conclusions.

We need to identify goals and address risks and opportunities based upon appropriate risk/reward relationships utilized in sound business practices. It doesn't make sense to specify exceptions until the development of the policies are developed.

I agree with Funkhauser's audit and concern for the out-years between 2010 and 2016. But I also believe we have time to plan for undesirable outcomes during that period. The issue right now is not to incur more debt, especially risky tax incentive debt. There are some innovative tools the City can utilize to ease debt payments and these should be explored.

4. Taxation Level.

Please provide your opinion of the current level of City taxes and whether you would recommend that any taxes be reduced or increased.

The level of taxation in Kansas City right now seems appropriate. I would not advocate increasing taxes over the next four years unless there is a compelling reason that is unforeseen at this time.

5. Employee wages

Provide your opinion of the current pay levels of city workers. Be specific with respect to police, fire and other employees: are the allocations to Police and Fire sufficient? If not, what elements of the budget would you reduce to make those allocations larger?

I believe the current level of pay for city workers on the lower income brackets are not high enough and I would like to see the City develop creative ways to bring them up to competitive standards with the private sector. I also believe the police and fire employees are adequately paid at this time.

6. Reserves

The City has a “goal” of a reserve balance of 8%. What is your opinion of the 8% goal and how would you suggest the balance be restored to 8%? How long do you suggest it will take to restore the 8% balance?

I think the goal is appropriate. To achieve this, the City needs to be more aggressive in collecting earnings taxes, as well as back taxes owed the City. Collected funds could be earmarked for the reserve to help build it back up to 8%. A portion of any increased tax revenue, beyond what was budgeted, could also be applied to the reserve fund until it reaches the 8% level.

7. Basic Services.

What should be included in the term “basic services”? How well the City is providing them? What changes are needed to improve the level and delivery of those basic services? Please comment on the Citizens’ Satisfaction Survey. Give examples of improvements you would make, and how you would accomplish them.

Beyond emergency services, such as police and fire, I believe there is much the City can do to improve the delivery of basic services. In my district, one of the biggest issues is illegal dumping. The City should allocate resources to the areas that are most in need, i.e., code enforcement, increasing bulky item pick-up, strengthening the current ordinances that deal with absentee landlords, etc. Unfortunately, many of our neighborhoods in the 5th District are blighted and we need to increase efforts to clean-up and restore these neighborhoods to livable conditions.

8. Indigent Care

What is the City's role in providing health care services to indigent people in Kansas City? Should the City change its current selection or support of agencies providing these services? Do you support the Margaret Kemp Center project?

The City earmarks a portion of its property tax for the safety net providers at TMC, Swope and the neighborhood health clinics. These services are needed for the uninsured and underinsured and is the only means for some Kansas Citians to receive health care. This should continue and I would not advocate cutting the budget for this unless the city finds replacement revenues.

I support the Margaret Kemp Center at 9th & Harrison.

9. Responsiveness

Provide your thoughts as to the responsiveness of City Hall to valid requests for services? If, in your opinion, this could be improved, what steps would you take to do so?

As a City Councilman, this is a priority issue for me. I believe the City is doing better (i.e., with the new 311 Action Line, etc.), but there is a long way to go. At this time, however, let's see how the Action Line and new tracking system works.

10. Planning

What priority do you give to rewriting the zoning/subdivision ordinances?

I believe this is a high priority. We have brought the Charter up to date, and now we need to modernize additional aspects of our municipal government procedures and policies, including new zoning and subdivision ordinances.

11. Parks and Recreation.

How important is Kansas City's system of parks and boulevards? Should the Parks Commission remain independent? What services should be reduced or eliminated? How would you provide better funding and quality of services for these activities?

Our parks and boulevards are very important. They add to our overall quality of life in ways that other cities envy. It appears the parks department is routinely under-funded and I applaud their efforts to find creative ways to finance operations, fountains, etc. Their successful pursuit of public/private partnerships should be accelerated.

12. Consolidation with Counties.

What opportunities exist to consolidate services provided by the City with those of Jackson, Clay and/or Platte Counties?

Two areas that should be explored for consolidation of services with the counties should be public works and parks and recreation. The development of a regional jail may also be a prospect for consolidation.

13. Public Transit

What is your opinion of public mass transit? What changes would you make? Do you favor a light rail system? Would you support a ballot measure (including dedicated tax) for public transit? Do you support MARC; regional Smart Moves regional initiative?

Public transit is a major issue in my district. People need a way to get to and from work in our community and the bus system is critical. While I favor light rail, I am concerned that its funding source (the existing 3/8 cent sales tax that funds approx. 40% of the cost to operate the ATA) could cause massive reductions in bus service in my community. Light rail at the expense of people getting to and from work, the doctor and the grocery store is not a good trade-off. This is a big challenge and needs to be thoroughly reviewed with a wide range of input from current ATA riders before any light rail program is initiated.

14. Flood and Wastewater Control.

Outline your general thoughts on the City's plans to improve flood and wastewater control. What would you do to address the combined sewer problem: what funding mechanisms would you use and how would you be fair to the rest of the city in funding/fixing this problem?

Much of the combined sewer system in Kansas City is in my district and the federal mandate to convert this system is huge and unfunded. Now that there is Democratic control of Congress, I will advocate strongly for the City to lobby for federal funding for this massive endeavor. The taxpayers of Kansas City alone cannot afford to fund this project. We must have help from the federal government.

15. Deferred Maintenance.

How do you plan to address the City's backlog of deferred maintenance? How should this be funded? How much should be allocated to capital maintenance and how would you suggest the capital maintenance funding be increased to achieve this? Place this in a timetable.

This is a top priority and we probably need to increase funding for deferred maintenance, however we also need an update on what the needs are at this time. Much has been and is being accomplished in replacing capital infrastructure which has impacted on the reduction of deferred maintenance items over the past couple of years and that needs to be evaluated before we increase that budget by a large amount. We have to keep in mind that when we increase that budget, we are taking it from some other service provided by the City.

16. PIAC

What are your thoughts on the current Public Improvements Advisory Council process? Specifically: do you support an independent citizen review/recommendation process? What changes would you suggest?

I believe the Public Improvements Advisory Committee is a very efficient program and I support continuing it with the understanding that the City Council has final authority in adopting and funding the Committee's recommendations.

17. Police

What is your opinion of the current level of services provided by the police? Do you favor placing control of the Police Department within the City, and if so, how would this be governed?

I believe the KCMO police department provides a good service to the citizens of Kansas City. In some areas, such as the Northland and the Eastern part of the 5th District, response times need to be improved.

I support local control of the police department because St. Louis and Kansas City are the only two cities in America that do not have municipal control. The police board should be appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. We fund it, we should control it.

18. Priorities

Give examples of three geographic areas in Kansas which in your opinion offer the best opportunity for focused development and growth and likewise three areas which most require focused remediation.

Targeted areas for growth would include the Northland, the Eastern part of the 5th

District and Richards-Gebaur. For focused remediation, I would include the area around Bannister Mall, the urban core East of downtown and the West Bottoms.

19. Privatization.

Provide your opinion of “privatization?” What agencies or departments do you feel are candidates for privatization? What is your opinion of CIMO, especially related to cost effectiveness and productivity? When should outside consultants be used? How important is it to rebuild the Public Works Department, and would you make this a priority? Are there other City Departments which should be contracted out?

Generally, I am not in favor of “privatization,” however, certain instances of outsourcing services is needed occasionally. For example, I believe CIMO has served a purpose, to relieve the backlog of City projects. Outside consultants should be used for efficiency purposes only, although I question the high cost of consultants that have been used to manage the CIMO program recently. We need to manage this effort internally

20. Downtown.

What, if any, priority should be given to Downtown by the City? What is your opinion of the major City sponsored initiatives? What are the key requirements from the City to make these successful?

The downtown entertainment district is a high priority: it needs to be completed on time and under budget. The City has invested a lot of money in this project and it must do everything it can to make sure it is successful.

Our priorities are to obtain a tenant for the Sprint Arena, increase the number of conventions coming to Kansas City, and continue to increase residential units downtown. For downtown to succeed, it needs a daily influx of people to support the entertainment district and the hotels, and permanent residents to sustain the area.

21. TIF.

Provide your own opinion on Tax Increment Financing and the current City process? What changes, if any, would you suggest making?

I believe TIF should be used in more economically deprived areas of the city, to stimulate economic development, create quality jobs in the community and to remove blight.

22. Other Economic Development.

Provide your opinion of the other economic development tools (such as 353, LCRA, etc.) What changes, if any, would you suggest making?

Other than my response (above) , I would not suggest making any changes at this time.

23. Metropolitan competition/cooperation.

What is your evaluation of the City's relative attractiveness in retaining and growing population, employment and investment? How can Kansas City be a responsible leader in metropolitan cooperation/competition?

Several areas need attention. First is education. If we don't have good school districts, businesses will not move here and growth will stagnate. Second is that we do not live in a very clean city. More attention to our "appearance" is needed. In terms of our leadership, we need to get ahead of the curve on many fronts. It seems that in recent years, other than the redevelopment of downtown, we lag behind other communities in the area. Anti-smoking in public places is an issue where Kansas City needs to re-consider and take stronger leadership.

24. Ethics

Would you participate with other City Council members in an annual ethics seminar?

Yes.

25. City Manager

Is the Council-Manager form of government the best for Kansas City? What is your opinion of the listed responsibilities/goals contained in the current City Manager's contract and if you feel they should be changed or different, what items would you change? For how long should the Manager's contract be? What changes, if any, do you suggest making in the current distribution of responsibilities between the City Manager, Mayor and Council?

I would not recommend any changes in our basic form of government, nor in the responsibilities/goals contained in the current City Manager's contract. The term of the Manager's contract is appropriate.

26. Your goals

As a City Councilman, my goals include:

1. Continue neighborhood capital improvements in the 5th District
2. Focus on clean-up, removing blight and unsightliness, stopping illegal dumping, etc.

3. Lead the Council to focus more on our forgotten neighborhoods throughout the city, increased funding neighborhood code enforcement.
4. Develop affordable quality housing for all citizens

I believe my experience in state government, as a former member of the school board, and as a current member of the city council, provides me the qualifications needed to continue serving in this office.

27. Campaign tactics.

What key endorsements will you be seeking? What specific commitments have you made, or will need to make to receive these? Will your campaign include negative tactics?

I plan to run a very positive campaign based upon my experience in government and my accomplishments over the past four years. I will ask for support and endorsements, based only upon my record. No political deals.

28. Diversity.

What ability do you have to reconcile differences and be sensitive to racial divisions in this community? Please give examples of situations in which you have successfully displayed this ability.

My ethnicity and record in public life provides a clear picture of my sensitivity to diversity. I am more acutely aware of racial divisions in our community than most people and will continue to work to bring down the racial barriers that divide us.

I sponsored legislation for the Second Generation Disparity Study, a resolution denouncing racial profiling in the City of Kansas City, which passed unanimously.

29. Personal time commitment.

How much time do you have (and propose to spend) on City (Mayoral/Council) matters?

As much time as needed to fulfill my obligations as a Councilperson.

30. Personal financial support.

I rely only upon my salary as a City Councilperson.

I have paid my city, state, and county taxes.