

Mayor Greg Fischer's prepared remarks to the Louisville Metro Council for the recommended executive budget of 2017-18:

Thank you.

I'm honored to be here, and to serve alongside each of you.

A special word of thanks to our newest councilmembers:

Councilwoman Barbara Sexton-Smith

Councilman Brandon Coan

Councilman Scott Reed

Each of us made it here because we campaigned and were elected. Campaigns are where we make promises. Budgets are where we keep them.

When I campaigned for mayor, I promised to bring a business sensibility to Metro Government from my 30-year career as an entrepreneur.

I also promised to preserve, strengthen and increase access to our tremendous quality of life.

When I was sworn in, I pledged that three core values would guide my administration: to make Louisville a city of lifelong learning, a healthier city, and an even more compassionate city.

Our campaign promises and values, when successfully executed, all help build our economy and create opportunities for everyone.

Improve quality of life....it's easier to attract investment. Help our workforce become more educated, it's easier to grow jobs. Show more citizens the path to a satisfying career and a healthy life....it's easier to create safer and healthier neighborhoods.

To the Council: thank you for contributing to the tremendous momentum that is taking place in Louisville. In the last the six years:

- 63,000 new jobs have been created;
- 2,600 new businesses have opened;
- We've become a significant tourism destination, welcoming 24 million visits a year.
- We've cut unemployment from 10.4 percent to 4.7.
- Household incomes and median wages are up.
- In 2015 alone, more than 10,000 Louisvillians lifted themselves out of poverty. And, more than 7,000 Louisville families joined the middle class.

Today, more Louisvillians have a postsecondary degree than at any time in our city's history. In 2011, we were even with the national average; now we're 4 points ahead. 55,000 Degrees and the Cradle to Career system of lifelong learning are experiencing great results.

And our progress is visible. In the cranes over downtown and elsewhere. Today alone, more than \$10 billion in capital construction is taking place in our city.

And more is on the way.

We are thrilled that after a lot of hard work from all involved, Louisville will be the next Google Fiber city. We will continue to work with Google Fiber and others to bring super-fast internet services to our businesses and citizens, critical infrastructure for our future prosperity.

It will boost entrepreneurship, retain and attract talent to keep our economy growing. I want to say a special thank you to Council members Hollander and Kramer for helping with our broadband efforts.

To be successful, a city must have ambition, a global perspective, a caring heart, and embrace our interdependence on each other. We've become an international leader in compassion through programs like Give A Day, which this year tallied a record 180,000 volunteers and acts of compassion.

The Council has been a partner in this mission, unanimously passing a 2011 resolution making us the first large American city to sign the Charter for Compassion. Compassion has helped the city in many ways. It builds social muscles.

It's part of our global brand. As you've heard me say, ComputerShare chose Louisville in part because of our emphasis on compassion. ComputerShare initially planned a \$12 million investment and 250 new jobs. They've increased those numbers, and will now invest \$32 million in Louisville and add 1,100 jobs.

So compassion is good for business. And while it doesn't have a line item in this budget, compassion informs the decisions behind each of the investments we make for our citizens.

The 2017-2018 Louisville Metro Recommended Budget is fiscally balanced, as required by law, and includes no new taxes.

And as we get into the actual dollars, I want to remind everyone that by new ordinance, we are presenting this budget 30 days earlier than in previous years.

Please note that making this presentation four weeks earlier means that some of our estimates are less precise because the revenue from corporate taxes, for example, is still being collected.

I look forward to working with you and our citizens to pass a budget that keeps our promises, reflects our values, responds to the needs of today and prepares us for the future.

And this budget places its greatest emphasis on the first and most basic promise we all as public servants have made to the citizens of Louisville -- to always work to preserve and protect the safety of the public.

Our city has tremendous momentum, but it's no secret that we, like most American cities, are seeing an unacceptable rise in gun violence and homicides, and we must deal with this thoughtfully and directly.

That's why 58 percent, or \$343 million of the overall \$593 million general fund operating budget, is devoted to expenses related to public safety -- police, fire, EMS, corrections.

And when you consider new revenue -- we anticipate \$23 million in new revenue - \$19 million of that is earmarked for LMPD and the Office for Safe and Health Neighborhoods.

That's 83 percent of all new revenue devoted directly to public safety -- nearly \$18 million to LMPD and a little over \$1 million to Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods.

Public safety is our top priority. It's our obligation to every citizen and every neighborhood. We know that most of the violent crime in our city is connected to drug trafficking and is concentrated in a handful of neighborhoods.

So, in this budget, we are continuing commitments we made when we allocated mid-year surplus funds last December to fund 28 new police officers and three civilian crime analysts.

This budget adds 16 additional sworn officers for LMPD -- on top of those 28. It also provides funding to help coordinate our efforts to fight drug and violent crime - because reducing crime takes more than just adding more officers and making more arrests.

We'll fund an additional prosecutor in the Commonwealth Attorney's office who will focus on violent criminals -- putting and keeping them in jail.

We'll fund a new arraignment court prosecutor in the county attorney's office, who will work with low-level non-violent offenders to resolve cases efficiently and judiciously, helping reserve limited bed space at Corrections for the most violent offenders.

This budget also funds eight other new LMPD positions -- five crime scene technicians, a forensic firearms analyst and two additional staff for the Real Time Crime Center, so that we can solve crimes faster and get criminals off the street sooner.

That's a net gain of 55 LMPD positions compared to the budget that the Council passed last June.

This will bring LMPD's projected average strength to 1,293 in FY18, the largest number of sworn officers since merger.

We have a good track record of providing our police officers with additional tools and resources to fight crime.

In past budgets:

- We've invested in body cameras that every LMPD patrol officer now wears,
- and in shot-spotter and other technologies ;
- We hired more crime analysts,
- and created the Real-Time Crime Center.

And this budget addresses other critical challenges that our public safety professionals face.

In order to perform their critical work, they must have adequate facilities. This is a particularly urgent need at LMPD headquarters, where plumbing problems forced us to vacate the second floor. This budget will give LMPD the resources to move to a new headquarters building.

The Louisville Fire Department Headquarters also has a variety of structural and maintenance needs that we have to address. This budget does that, and includes funding for the critical relocation of our 911 backup center, and funding to make urgently needed repairs to our aging jail.

We're also hiring 15 new corrections officers, above the 45 officers who will fill expected openings. In addition, a recruit class of 30 firefighters will fill open positions.

I know there is talk about hiring even more police officers -- above the 55 I'm recommending in this budget.

I'm open to those proposals, so long as they include a recurring revenue source that also funds the hiring of additional training officers, and other investments in our training programs, equipment and facilities.

I welcome constructive, data-driven ideas about solutions that show results in reducing crime.

And, as you, the members of the Metro Council, go through this budget process, if you see priorities you think deserve extra resources, you have discretionary funds to make that happen. In this budget, I'm maintaining the Council's request to provide funding for Council-designated priorities, as well as Capital Infrastructure Funds and Neighborhood Development Funds.

Altogether, the Metro Council has \$6.5 million in undesignated funds to invest in public safety or other programs you think would be of greatest benefit to our citizens.

Looking at the big picture on crime, it's clear that the rise in certain types of crime that we're seeing in some neighborhoods and across our country doesn't have one cause or one solution.

To better understand the national context, we've been working with our federal law enforcement partners - the FBI, the DEA, the U.S. Attorney's office, U.S. Marshal's office, ATF, and other agencies.

We're also working with these agencies to get our worst and most dangerous offenders off the streets and get them tried whenever possible in federal court, where they're more likely to face longer sentences.

We have to work with the right partners, and we have to take a holistic approach to fighting crime – and to preventing crime. We can't arrest our way out of this issue -- we have to work our way out of it, person by person.

That's why this budget increases our investment in the Office for Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods.

History shows that we're not going to solve violent crime by just locking people up after they make a bad decision. We have to find ways to help them make better choices – choices that keep crime from happening at all.

Our programs are already doing that. Programs like:

- Pivot to Peace – where we work with victims of violence from our highest-crime neighborhoods and try to get them on the path to education and employment and a better life.
- Re-Image – where we identify young people who've had interaction with the justice system and connect them with mentors, education and employment.
- Zones of Hope – A partnership with the Louisville Urban League and the Interdenominational Ministerial Coalition to reduce violence in five target neighborhoods (Shawnee, Russell, California, Parkland, Newburg).

Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods also has provided funding to 19 organizations serving the Zones of Hope neighborhoods to develop violence reduction programs for individuals ages of 16 to 24.

One Love Louisville Ambassador Program. It provides community training in conflict resolution and other skills designed to help reduce violence.

One Love Louisville Youth Idea Challenge brings young people into the conversation about how to make our city a safer, healthier place.

And in this budget, we're also further investing in the Cure Violence program. This is an initiative that works to stop the spread of violence in communities by using strategies and methods associated with disease control: detecting and interrupting conflicts, identifying and treating the highest risk individuals, and changing social norms. Some Cure Violence communities have seen 40 to 70 percent reductions in violence.

To understand more about our comprehensive approach to violent crime reduction, there's a handout like this one with the rest of your budget materials.

As I said, drugs are a major contributing factor to violent crime in our city. And, like other cities, we're affected by the scourge of heroin and opioid addiction.

So we're investing \$200,000 in our Office of Addiction Services to hire additional staff who'll work with our partners at the Volunteers of America, which is expanding its addiction and

recovery services to serve more people. Through this partnership, we'll triple our efforts to help people fight and beat addiction, so they can live longer, better, healthier lives -- and our streets can be safer.

Keeping our community safe requires not only funding law enforcement and crime prevention initiatives, but investing in our children, our families and our workforce so they have tools and opportunities they need to succeed.

We can't expect children to show up at school excited and ready to learn if they are hungry. For years, Dare to Care has been feeding those in need.

They've seen a downturn in their contributions from a major donor, so I propose we invest \$100,000 to help ensure more of our citizens have enough to eat so they can focus on caring for themselves and their families. And I'm proud to say that as part of this year's Give a Day Week of Service, volunteers donated more than 30,000 pounds of food to Dare to Care.

Basic needs: Food. Shelter. We can't expect people to thrive on the job if they're wondering where they'll sleep that night, or if they have to choose between paying for medicine for themselves – or their kids – and having a safe place to stay.

That's why this budget invests heavily in affordable housing, with \$2.5 million going to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and \$12 million to Louisville CARES, a revolving loan program that provides financing to help develop affordable housing for low- to moderate-income families.

This represents the highest level of City funding for affordable housing in a single year at any time in the past 50 years.

If enacted, it will mean that over the course of three years, we have put an historic \$29 million toward affordable housing.

Investing in affordable housing is investing in our future. And it is critical to keeping communities safe.

For our families and children to thrive, not only do they need affordable housing, but they must be connected with resources, education and opportunities. And one of the most effective vehicles for those connections is the Louisville Free Public Library.

Showing our commitment to lifelong learning by upgrading our library system was one of my first priorities when my first term started. Since we opened the beautiful new Southwest Regional Library in 2014, we've seen a 33 percent increase in materials checked out, compared to the old Southwest Branch.

A 50 percent annual increase in patron visits, and the use of meeting rooms by citizens and organizations is up 350 percent.

Our Southwest Library was also recognized last month by USA Today as one of the 25 must-see buildings in Kentucky.

I anticipate that our new South Central Regional Library will also set new records after it opens in July.

We worked with the community to select features that would best serve South Central Jefferson County: Designated areas for kids and teens. Plenty of windows and natural light. Expanded materials in multiple languages to serve our growing and critically important immigrant community. And we're looking forward to launching the Collider Artist-In-Residence Program, thanks to Councilwoman Madonna Flood.

Today, I am happy to announce that we are officially moving forward with construction of the Northeast Regional Library. We need it because citizens in this Service Area check out more than a million materials a year, and their current branches fall well below state library standards on space per person.

This Library will be near the Northeast YMCA on land we already own, feature 40,000 square feet of space and have a sustainable, eco-friendly and cost-efficient design.

And the timing for this investment really matters. I'm pleased to announce we have been approved for a 20-year, \$4.1 million debt-service grant from the state to make this library a reality.

So we have to take advantage of this opportunity now to leverage the state money. Otherwise, we risk not only losing the grant, but compromising any chance of future awards.

When this library opens, we will have fulfilled our commitment under the Library Master Plan to provide a full-service library within five miles of 90 percent of Louisville residents.

Enhancing our library system helps citizens become lifelong learners and it contributes to one of our city's great assets: our quality of life.

We have to preserve and continue to invest in quality of life because it makes us attractive for visitors and outside investment.

It also sends a message to our citizens. Investments in our libraries, streets and parks are an investment in them and in their future.

Last year the community and the council spoke loud and clear on the need for more paving. So in this budget, you'll see a significant investment in paving our streets.

In conjunction with our Move Louisville plan and fix-it first strategy, we're devoting \$25 million to paving our roadways and making street improvements. This year, we're paving 162 miles of roadway.

Next year, we plan to pave another 187 miles along with fixing sidewalks and creating more bikes lanes.

Some examples of those projects are:

The West Market Streetscape, whose work will begin after Derby;
The long-awaited realignment at 18th and Broadway, which will be bid for contract this summer;
and
The sidewalk and ramp realignment at Dixie Highway at I-264. That work will begin this summer.

We are investing about \$500,000 in new bike lanes. For those of you keeping track of our bike lane investment, this year it will constitute six one hundredths of one percent of the city's budget.

We invest in bike lanes because many of the knowledge workers we need to attract and retain tell us they want to ride their bikes to work and around the city – and our global competitors provide this amenity as well.

These same workers and their employers also need us to invest in internet infrastructure. They want speeds and capacity beyond what we can offer now. Google Fiber – and the great news yesterday - will help with that.

So will the Kentucky Wired Project. This is a state-run public-private partnership that is laying fiber optic cable throughout the state. We need to be involved with this partnership because our city's data demands are only going to increase.

We have the opportunity to work with Kentucky Wired to lay extra fiber optic cable at a third of the normal cost. This has numerous benefits.

We can add more cameras to the MetroWatch network. We can link more Metro-owned buildings to the fiber optic network.

It will help us provide more smart transportation options on the New Dixie Highway.

And Metro Government will have excess capacity on our fiber optic network to lease to private internet service providers which, in turn, will provide faster internet speeds to our citizens.

We estimate this KY Wired investment will pay for itself and then actually start generating revenue for Metro Government.

We're also making investments to provide high-speed internet access to low-income areas to advance our digital inclusion strategy.

And we're also funding critical technology upgrades for Metro Government. Like new software to improve our ability to collect revenue as well as enhanced cyber security protection.

While we're investing in enhanced digital resources, we also have to invest in the great natural resource of our world-class parks system.

That's why this budget devotes \$1.7 million to Metro Parks upgrades and maintenance needs, including pools, spray grounds, playgrounds and repairs.

There's \$1 million for capital and maintenance needs at the Louisville Zoo.

And funds to acquire more land for the Louisville Loop, build a new walking path at Joe Creason Park, and a new boat ramp at Shawnee Park.

Louisvillians are blessed to have great parks like those along with Jefferson Memorial Forest. Iroquois. Cherokee – and the Parklands at Floyd's Fork, which isn't part of Metro Parks, but is a great example of the tremendous number of community partnerships that offer great benefits to our citizens.

Like the gathering of organizations from across our city that came together to produce the community's arts master plan.

It's called Imagine Greater Louisville 2020, and it lays out equitable and innovative ways to use the arts to further enhance our quality of life, grow our economy and address our city's greatest challenges and opportunities. We believe in the power of the arts to inspire.

To open our minds and our hearts. To bring people together. That's why we're also investing \$100,000 in this budget to implement Imagine Greater Louisville 2020.

Collaborations like these give us the chance to do more work for citizens by smartly leveraging our budget dollars. We also aggressively pursue state, federal and private grants to extend our capacity even further.

In the last six years, we've received millions in competitive grants from organizations like the Rockefeller Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Harvard, along with the Humana Foundation, the Gheens Foundation, the Norton Foundation and many others.

In many cases, we're competing for these grants with cities around the country – and the world – and we're winning.

Because these organizations along with various state and federal agencies see our city's momentum and want to help us build on that and keep moving forward.

We've been awarded tens of millions of dollars in state and federal grants to help us hire new police officers, build the Northeast Library, create the New Dixie Highway, and revitalize the historic Russell neighborhood through the \$29.5 million Choice Neighborhood Grant.

The historical infusion of capital coming into west Louisville today is truly exciting.

And this budget includes funding to begin the revitalization of Beecher Terrace and Russell. We'll use the Choice Neighborhood Grant to leverage more than \$200 million in public and private funds to transform Russell into a sustainable, mixed-income community offering citizens of west Louisville quality services and schools, as well as better transportation and job opportunities.

And these successes feed and build on each other. Like people across our entire city, I am happy to say that years of work have borne fruit for west Louisville, including today's announcement that Interapt, a local technology company, will move its corporate headquarters to Rowan Street and create up to 250 jobs.

The West Louisville YMCA is happening. Passport Health Plan is moving its corporate headquarters to 18th and Broadway. We're moving forward with Waterfront Phase IV. And we're seeing more businesses and opportunities expanding in West Louisville, including:

- Kentucky Peerless Distillery
- Over the Nine
- Great Northern
- Heine Brothers headquarters
- Sweet Peaches and Irma Dee's restaurant
- Chef Space
- The Gigabit Experience Center at LCCC
- LCCC is also working with us to establish the Russell Arts, Commercial and Culture District

And the first families are moving in as part of the 2nd phase of the Cedar Street housing development.

Overall, there's more investment in west Louisville today than we've seen in a generation or longer, with more to come.

When you look at this budget as a whole, you'll see that it's balanced in more ways than one. This budget balances the need to honor our past commitments with the need to invest in our future.

In this budget, we're investing most heavily in public safety, as we should -- with most of our new revenue dedicated to police.

As officials who must serve the entire city, we must look beyond short-term fixes and easy answers to comprehensive, long-term solutions.

That's why our investments in public safety not only include an unprecedented number of new police officers, but also critical targeted investments to build our economy, provide affordable housing, promote lifelong learning, improve our quality of life and create opportunities for our citizens in every neighborhood in our city.

And we're going to continue our emphasis on compassion. I'm tremendously proud of the work we've done to cultivate compassion in our city. And I look forward to the work ahead.

Because when I look around our community and beyond, I see the need for more compassion, not less.

Every person in every ZIP code needs to see how they fit in a positive way to a positive future.

So we will continue reaching out to our citizens and investing in them and their future, so that every child in every neighborhood understands that their city cares about them.... believes in them.

We want them to know that they have a clear path to reaching their full potential right here in their hometown.

Doing all these things at once – it's a challenge, yes. And a delicate balance, but that's what we do every day in public service.

We come together, here, to find ways to meet the diverse needs of 760,000 people in 26 districts in our growing city, in a changing world.

It's an honor and a privilege to serve our citizens with you.

Thank you for your service and commitment to the people of Louisville.

And I look forward to working with you to pass a budget that honors both the promises of the past and the promise of our city's future.

Thank you.