



**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY**

GREG FISCHER
MAYOR

December 10, 2020

Dear Metro Council colleagues:

As we approach the end of this unprecedented year, I reach out with wishes for a safe and healthy holiday season for you and your loved ones, and with a deep and abiding hope that 2021 will bring peace, joy and success to our great City.

2020 has certainly been a year unlike any other, bringing a dramatic collection of overlapping challenges: COVID-19, the related economic downturn, righteous calls for action on racial justice and equity, as well as an unacceptable increase in gun violence. These challenges continue, but, in partnership with each other and with residents and community partners from throughout the city, we are making progress.

COVID-19, a global pandemic that has strained our health care system and taken far too many lives, has transformed our daily lives, upended schools and businesses, and tested the resolve of many. I am grateful for the commitment of our frontline health care workers, public health officials and first responders who continue to get up every day in the face of this dastardly disease and fight to keep all of us safe and healthy.

I am also grateful for your partnership in addressing many of the related challenges. Together, we are working hard to provide eviction prevention assistance, meals for our most vulnerable, support for critical non-profits, utility relief, financial guidance, job search assistance, grants and loans to keep our small businesses afloat, and help for students and families doing NTI. While we see a light at the end of the tunnel with vaccines on their way, we must remain diligent with urging the public to remain steadfast in staying home when possible, and being socially distant and wearing a mask when they cannot be. We have readied a vaccination distribution plan in alignment with the State and CDC. When distribution begins your assistance and voice will be critical, serving as trusted messengers on the need for folks to get vaccinated.

Together we have taken swift action on many needed reforms to advance racial justice and economic equity – from the passages of Breonna’s law, the Civilian Review Board and the creation of the new Office of Inspector General, to the Council’s assistance in the search for a new police chief and support for a new short-term contract with Fraternal Order of Police. In addition, in response to the public health crisis that racism has caused, the plan to Advance

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Racial Equity for Black Louisville has been released and includes steps and proposals on many of our shared priorities. This includes but is not limited to:

- A top-to-bottom review of Louisville Metro Police Department policies and procedures, which should be completed by early January.
- The community's Group Violence Intervention strategy to reduce violent crime and homicides.
- Recruitment and retention strategies to ensure all Metro government departments and overall Metro leadership are reflective of the community's 22% of Black Louisvillians.
- Policies to promote investment without displacement, such as increased funding for affordable housing, reviewing the Land Development Code, rehabbing vacant properties to sell to homebuyers, investing in current homeowners in distressed neighborhoods, increasing down payment assistance, investing millions to combat evictions and homelessness, and supporting efforts advocated by The Path Forward signatories and others to provide new support for small business creation and growth.

These are just a few of the dozens of strategies outlined in our plan – others address health, voting, education, wealth-building and job creation. Many of these will require your budgetary approval if we are to make significant and lasting progress. In addition, as you know, Metro's state legislative agenda also contains multiple proposals that would make us a more just and equitable city.

I look forward to these discussions as we move into the New Year and prepare the fiscal year 2022 budget. That budget preparation process will be the most important budget we've ever worked on together. Budgets are policy documents and represent our priorities in the most tangible way. This will be our time to make the biggest impact in the short run. Some of these immediate community priorities are already before you awaiting your action now, and I urge you to advance these initiatives quickly.

Our collective work to improve the city we love continues, and I look forward to what 2021 will bring for our joint efforts, both here at home and in our state capital. Please know that my door and that of my staff are always open to you for further conversation – even if that door is virtual during this dire pandemic! Also, as you know, I recently selected Wanda Mitchell-Smith to serve as my Metro Council liaison. Wanda brings decades of commitment and service to our community, both locally and in Frankfort. I am confident she will help ensure we have a strong, open partnership. Please continue to share your needs with her on individual Metro departmental actions. She will both handle the immediate tasks and summarize for my review and any necessary decision making on larger trends.

Happy holidays to you and your family. Please stay safe.

Sincerely,



Greg Fischer
Mayor

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