

Budget Statement

Thank you Mr. President. I have some things to say about this budget and I feel compelled to say them before we take this vote.

For the 12 years I have sat on this Council, I have voted in favor of the budget, both Operating and Capital, as a way to help move this city forward. Like many of you, I have made tough decisions in tight budget times and in better economic times; I like to think I have helped many areas of our city with key projects that have spawned economic growth such as but not limited to helping broker a deal to settle a judgment against the Kentucky African American Heritage Center and NewBridge Crossing development which paved the way for Walmart to announce its major project for West Louisville at 18th and Broadway. That alone was \$100,000 of District 3 funds to help the city and improve the quality of life for those neighborhoods.

Like many of you, I have a district to be mindful of, and like many of you I work hard to provide the things that will help the people of my district. Better roads, better parks and so forth. The things my constituents deserve just like the people of all districts. They are taxpayers just like everyone else.

However, I have noticed a disturbing trend over the years which sees District 3 being left out when it comes to needed funding for many projects. It has happened too many times.

I have seen budget after budget presented by this Mayor that has nothing in it for District 3. I have watched this Budget Committee, year after year, take care of many areas of the city but District 3 doesn't seem to qualify or get the attention that some districts do. Many of these projects are ongoing and continue to get funding every year for improvements or expansion. But not District 3!

I suppose there are those on this Council who believe I am speaking out of turn or they think I should just sit back and say nothing about it. Well, it is time to say something.

We renovated the Shively Branch Library with about \$300,000.00 last year of which \$150,000 came from District 3 infrastructure funds. According to Liza Sizemore, Library Director when she spoke before the budget committee we continue to have the same problems of wait time for computers. The way the Library Master Plan was laid out there should have been a Shively Branch Library built before the Fairdale Branch Library or the new Southwest Regional Library.

District 3 also is in need of renovation of William Harrison Park.

This year, I was approached by Metro Parks and was asked to secure \$400,000 for William Harrison Park in my district. I was told by Parks this is money needed to make major improvements to this park. It is a park that's as just as important as Cherokee Park, or the Parklands or the Jefferson Memorial Forest. Yet here we are at budget time and only \$35,000 has been allocated to this project. My math may be wrong but I

think we are missing about \$365,000. But more importantly the importance that Metro Parks stressed for this park has now just vanished.

And finally, District 3 is also in desperate needs a community center in order to have a venue for youth as well as seniors to a place to go for activities.

You know last year, some of you went before the local press to talk about how the projects you wanted and were advocating were not being funded in your district. You talked about how unfair the budget process was in and that your areas did not receive the same consideration as other areas of the city.

Well imagine how you would feel if year after year, you made requests and nothing happened or you got passed over or were told, you need to plan better, you need to have all the details you need to wait there are more important areas in our city that need funding.

This budget process is not fair.

I have been a member of the Budget Committee for many years. But it seems like a select few make all the decisions and many of us are just told to “live with it.”

District 3 is a very well established area of our city and I think the time has come to make a statement about the way this area has been treated over the years.

So Mr. President, in light of what I have found during this budget process, I will be casting a “no” vote on these budgets. I am sorry that I have to make this decision but I can think of no other way to bring attention to the fact that for too long my District is passed over for something “new” or some other priority.

The time has come to take a stand and let this Council know that some of us are tired of having to continuously fight for those things which seem to come with ease to other areas of the city.

And with that, I will be voting “no”...

Thank you Mr. President.