

— JOHN —
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MAYOR

POLICY PLATFORM

LET'S CREATE A CITY THAT WORKS
FOR EVERYONE.





A NOTE FROM JOHN

Nashville needs the truth, not just the trendy. During this campaign, I will be releasing policy statements on a number of major issues facing our city. Nashville needs a leader who understands complexity and has financial knowledge to provide clear direction. Restoring trust through transparency and accountability is crucial for Nashville's future. For too long, our city has allowed some of our neighbors to be left behind. As your mayor, I will have policies in place to ensure opportunities are provided so that all Nashvillians can thrive. I will support each and every resident, no matter their race, economic status, place of origin, faith tradition, gender, or sexual orientation. The positions below provide an overview of current issues facing our community and ways we can move forward to ensure Nashville becomes a city that truly works for everyone.

I see these as working documents that I am personally researching, number-crunching, and writing. If you have any thoughts or ideas to share, please sign up for a "Coffee with Cooper" so we can discuss.

John Cooper

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NEIGHBORHOODS

People may move here for the city, but they'll stay for the neighborhoods.

I am honored to be endorsed by the political committee affiliated with the Coalition of Nashville Neighborhoods: the Nashville Neighborhood Defense Fund.

My job as your mayor will be to ensure that everyone benefits from our city's growth. Nashville needs to remain a great place to live, not just a great city to visit. It's time to put our focus back on our neighborhoods. Let's create a city that works for everyone.

Neighborhoods are a cornerstone of each of my policy discussion pieces. Here are some highlights on each topic relating to focusing on neighborhoods.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Before we can talk about neighborhoods, we must deal with housing. We've created a lot of growth but the growth has increased rents and priced people out of their neighborhoods. Metro needs to make affordable housing central to every incentive that it gives. As your mayor, I will facilitate the creation of a real ten-year plan to preserve and create a meaningful number of affordable housing units at an appropriate price with measurable results.

EDUCATION

I am running for Mayor to ensure that all of Nashville's residents and neighborhoods are able to benefit from our city's growth. All students from all neighborhoods need to have access to high-quality educational experiences. I will be especially focused on reducing equity gaps in student outcomes. As mayor, I will prioritize investments in human capital through education and I plan to direct over half of new revenue into our school system. I

will expect that our schools get great results for all kids and will celebrate the achievements of those that do.

FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY:

Finance is the foundation of everything a city does. Sound fiscal management will allow us to get beyond this moment of financial stress. Better management of taxpayer money will free up resources for priorities like education and infrastructure. I've consistently favored the good management approach over a sizable property tax increase. Only a mayor can turn the page and usher in an era of good management. As mayor, I will put taxpayers first in negotiations. I will end the giveaway culture that is more focused on enriching a small elite than serving our entire city.

PARKS AND GREEN SPACES

Parks positively inform the character of our neighborhoods, and provide the opportunity for all to gather in shared public space. I have always prioritized green space in my real estate development work because I know how critical it is for community health and future generations. As a council member, I am proud of my record of supporting access to green space and preserving Nashville's unique assets when City Hall tried to sell or give them away. As mayor, I will set clear goals for expanding park access, identify new ways to support expansion and programming, and put parks at the center of the city's health and wellness efforts.

POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Trust between police and the people they protect and serve is key to the stability of our communities, the integrity of our justice system, and the effectiveness of our police department. We need to fully staff the police department — and our E-911 call center — and embrace a shift to community policing. As your mayor, I will set clear goals, provide the resources necessary to realize those goals, and hold people accountable for results.

TRANSPORTATION

Nashville can't wait another five years for solutions to our traffic and transportation problems. As mayor, I am committed to

developing a people-first transportation plan that is focused on helping you get to where you work and where you live in a timely, safe, and cost-effective manner. I want to lessen the time you spend in traffic through smart solutions, connect neighborhoods through bus system improvements, and invest in infrastructure like sidewalks to improve pedestrian safety. I will present a fiscally-responsible plan within my first year in office.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The last chapter of Nashville's economic development story was focused on downtown development and tourism. It is time to turn the page to a new chapter of economic and community development, where we emphasize growing human capital and focusing on the neglected neighborhoods of Davidson County. As your mayor, I will make sure that the Mayor's Office of Economic & Community Development emphasizes that community development mission, and not just growth at any cost.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Neighborhoods need high quality infrastructure in the form of sewer and stormwater systems, roads, sidewalks and intersections. That requires targeted investments in neighborhoods that haven't seen meaningful investment in generations. An area like Bordeaux is going to keep growing, but the quality and community impact of that growth will depend on the quality of the underlying infrastructure. A neighborhood like the Nations is already well into its boom, but lagging stormwater and sidewalk infrastructure are limiting the area. Our neighborhoods need infrastructure investment.

RESTORING TRUST

All of the above thoughts and policies will require a foundation of trust. We must rebuild and restore public trust to ensure we are able to carry out these plans that support our neighborhoods.

I encourage you to read my full policy statements for any topics that interest you so you can get a sense of my priorities and how I think. The first question I will ask as mayor on any issue will be "how does this affect residents?"

I want to hear from you. What improvements would you like to see in your neighborhood? How can we make Nashville a better place for you and your family? With your help and support, we can make Nashville a city that truly works for everyone.

FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Finance is the foundation of everything a city does. Sound fiscal management will allow us to get beyond this moment of financial stress. Better management of taxpayer money will free up resources for priorities like education and infrastructure.

Metro has picked up some bad financial habits in recent years. The current course of deficit spending and selling assets for short-term operating funds is unsustainable. Metro's revenue grew by over 19% between 2013 and 2018, yet education, transportation and affordable housing are still underfunded. Payments on our rising debt have limited the investments that can be made in education and affordable housing. But that has not stopped Metro from awarding incentives to developers instead of investing services that benefit residents. Metro needs a reset of priorities and leadership. Shared prosperity begins with fiscal sanity and people-centric growth.

I voted against a property tax hike last year and this year. It is a false choice that our only option is to approve Briley's parking privatization plan or increase property taxes. There are other options. The city has other revenue sources than just the property tax.

As for parking privatization, I will not as mayor be sending that to council. I have been strongly opposed to it, and it requires future council action for it to happen. You can change the bad things in this mayor's budget by changing the mayor.

The city needs to benefit more from tourism revenues. The number one thing I have heard on the campaign is the desire for the tourism space to cover its own costs and not impose them on the resident taxpayer. Tourism is an important part of our city's economy and identity, but it is time for the tourist economy to stand on its own two feet. We can obtain additional revenue from

tourism and development. Part of that revenue is from the surplus already being collected by other local government agencies such as the Convention Center Authority. It would be easy to raise property taxes, but there are other revenue sources that need to be utilized.

I've consistently favored the good management approach over a sizable property tax increase. Only a mayor can turn the page and usher in an era of good management, but the effort has already begun via Metro council action. One year ago, I led the formation of the Blue Ribbon Commission to identify targeted savings and revenue opportunities. The first year of the BRC was a partial success, but real support from the Mayor's Office is crucial to realizing the potential of the process.

Here are some examples that illustrate our city's misplaced priorities when it comes to managing Nashville's money:

OMNI HOTEL

When the convention center was built, Metro handed out massive incentives to bring in a luxury hotel. Taxpayers footed the bill for the Omni by providing \$61.56 million in tax increment financing (TIF), a 62.5% property tax abatement for 20 years, and \$245.5 million in cash payments over 20 years. All-in, we paid Omni more than the hotel cost to build! The TIF loan was enough to cover Omni's \$26.5 million land cost back in 2010. The 62.5% property tax abatement was worth \$2.28 million to Omni last year alone. Giving the abatement on top of TIF created an unusual circumstance in which the Omni development doesn't pay back its own TIF loan. Property tax revenue from other properties has to cover the difference. It is worth pointing out that the Metro General Fund only receives 1/6th of total hotel taxes collected countywide. So in 2018, the General Fund saw \$15.86 million in hotel tax. That same year, Omni received a \$2.28 million tax break plus a \$12 million cash payment.

MORE LUXURY HOTEL INCENTIVES

The Westin Hotel received \$14 million of tax increment financing in 2014.

The Thompson Hotel received \$4 million of TIF in 2015.

The Dream Hotel received \$6.5 million of TIF in 2016.

The Joseph Hotel received \$4.5 million of TIF in 2018.

5TH & BROADWAY

Fifth & Broadway, the site of our old convention center, was probably the most valuable piece of undeveloped property in the Southeastern United States. Yet in 2015, Metro sold the property to a developer for a mere \$5 million due at closing plus \$6.25 million over 25 years. The property's true value was many times that. That additional money could have gone to affordable housing. Nashville taxes then paid to build a \$34 million parking garage on the site for the developer. That's not all our taxpayers paid for. In the fall of 2018, the developer received a \$25 million tax increment financing loan via a tax-exempt bond from the Metro Development and Housing Authority. Private developers, not the public, were the winners.

NASHVILLE YARDS

In February 2019, a deal orchestrated by Mayor Briley passed through Metro council with only three votes in opposition. Metro agreed to give \$15.2 million to the developers of Nashville Yards, the future home of Amazon. This agreement was in addition to the Amazon incentives. In effect, Metro is paying to help build a development and secure the tenant of a lifetime for the developer. Here is what I said at the time: "Once again, we are using taxpayer money to subsidize the wealthiest, and once again we don't need to. We are handing subsidies out due to habit."

TOURISM TAXES

The taxes collected for the Convention Center Authority will reach \$136 million this year, for an annual surplus of \$60 million. The Convention Center Authority will have an estimated unrestricted cash balance of \$190 million. I began the process for recapturing some of this revenue to cover costs downtown, but more needs to be done. The Music City Center does not pay property taxes; perhaps it should before we raise residents' property taxes.

POLICE OVERTIME FOR PRIVATE EVENTS

Police officers logged 17,770 overtime hours during the NFL Draft weekend. As Channel 5 reported, MNPD spent more than \$4 million on special events overtime through the end of April. That compares to less than one million dollars in all of 2006. Police overtime is a drain on Metro's general fund and many officers don't like mandatory overtime. Private events need to begin paying for their own costs.

PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT AT FAIRGROUNDS

At the same time Mayor Briley was patching a budget hole with ill-advised one-time property sales, his administration steered ten acres at the Fairgrounds into private hands. Briley awarded ten additional acres to the developer for mixed-use private development. Building the stadium itself should have been enough of an incentive for a soccer team. We should not have included a bonus of ten acres at the Fairgrounds beyond the incentive of the stadium. City hall has sold land with its right hand and awarded it away with its left.

PARKING

The current mayor's parking privatization proposal is not the first time Metro has made mistakes regarding parking. When Metro sold the Clement Landport, it received net \$15,000 per space for hundreds of parking spaces in the Gulch. Meanwhile, Metro built parking spaces for private developments downtown for well over \$45,000 per space.

BEN WEST PUBLIC LIBRARY

In 2017, Metro sold the historic Ben West Library building and only got \$2 million. It is a historic 55,000 square foot building with parking. I was one of two votes against the sale. Here is what I said at the time: "I feel that we will regret selling this site for \$2 million. It's located across from what will be the amazing new federal courthouse and what will be a glamorous part of town. The city has had a string of valuable assets downtown — jewels in our crown — and each has been sold for too little. We have divested ourselves of these public jewels and we will wish that we had it back."

ROLLING MILL HILL LAND SALE

Also in 2017, the Metro Development and Housing Agency sold 2.76 acres south of Broadway at the Rolling Mill Hill development. The developer paid MDHA \$9.4 million, but the land was actually worth many millions more, perhaps double. MDHA also gave the developer a tax-increment financing payment of \$7.9 million. Here is what I said at the time: “My concern is that Nashville gets the fair value of the assets that it owns. This is clearly an extremely valuable piece of property, and we need to get the fair value of it for taxpayers. In effect, we are giving away a piece of land for \$1.5 million net.” Metro needs to begin doing business with the taxpayer in mind.

OPRYLAND WATERPARK

Metro gave Opryland Hotel an estimated \$14 million incentive package to build a private waterpark in 2017. The arrangement froze property taxes for the Ryman facility. Nashville residents are only able to use the waterpark if they book a stay as a resort guest. Here is what I said at the time: “I express my own reluctance to let groups pay their fair share of property taxes, and we will fail as a community if you let that happen. Everytime that we need in the future something for our districts: a reading instructor for our children, a policeman, a body camera, or a stormwater drain, we will know where to find it — and you’ll find it in the Opryland swimming pool. And literally that is where it will be.”

LIFEWAY

As the Nashville Scene reported in 2016, Metro awarded a “\$3.5 million package aimed at sweetening LifeWay’s plans to move their headquarters from one part of downtown to a different part of downtown.” I was the only vote in opposition. I said at the time that Nashville had become a swan and that Metro needed to raise our expectations for developers. “We have to expect a payback from it because we are depriving schools and children of the same money that could have gone to these other groups.”

DEBT

Metro has issued or obligated itself to issue \$2.6 billion in new

general obligation bonds to cover spending, since 2015. The State of Tennessee only has \$1.9 billion in total general obligation bonds outstanding. Our total issued and obligated general obligation debt is now about \$4.5 billion. This is with the assumption that there will be no new capital spending in the years ahead. General obligation debt will be \$6,500 per person in Davidson County – this is one of the highest per capita debt burdens in the country.

Our issued and obligated debt per capita has almost doubled since 2015, even accounting for our population growth. Metro deficits over the last three years are bigger proportionally than the Federal government’s during the same time frame. Metro’s deficit in 2018 was 15% larger than our entire sales tax collections. The increase in debt service payments since 2013 would essentially fund our entire police department.

MY COMMITMENTS

As mayor, I will put taxpayers first in negotiations. I will end the giveaway culture that is more focused on enriching a small elite than serving our entire city. I will re-evaluate the use of incentives so that they go to projects supporting community improvement rather than downtown development. I will provide robust support for the Blue Ribbon Commission to identify savings and revenue opportunities. We need to conduct performance audits of Metro departments and agencies to increase the transparency of how tax dollars are spent and identify areas for improvement. I also support creating an independent Metro Inspector General. This will be an independent office that will work with the independent Office of Internal Audit to identify and prevent fraud and waste across Metro government.

City leaders have been exceptionally creative with financing deals to help private developers, but that creativity and dedication is missing in action when it comes time to fund our schools, take care of our employees and create affordable housing.

Nashville’s taxpayers deserve a mayor who will stop this unsustainable cycle – a mayor who understands that tourism dollars should be going to improve the lives of residents, rather

RESTORING TRUST

than residents' dollars going to tourism. We need to reign in deficit spending because it hampers our ability to pay for essential services. I am running for mayor to provide sound financial management, recapture tourism revenues, end a culture of giveaways, and get our city's finances back on track. With your help and support, we can create a city that works for everyone.

Nashville is at a crossroads. For the past four years, I have served as an at-large Metro Council member. In the process, I've learned a lot about how this city is being run. What I've learned concerns me. Simply put, the Mayor's office has lost track of the public's priorities. It values promoting development, not protecting our quality of life. It has given millions of dollars in taxpayer funds to developers who don't need them and has ignored our schools, our traffic, and our affordable housing crisis.

Misplaced priorities and missed opportunities aren't the only problems. City hall is also mismanaging taxpayers' money. A culture of secrecy and entitlement has grown up where there should be transparency and accountability. In deal after deal, the taxpayer is getting the short end of the stick. One of the primary reasons I am running for mayor is to change that.

Let me provide a few examples:

- Fifth and Broadway, the site of our old convention center, was probably the most valuable piece of undeveloped property in the Southeastern United States. Yet in 2015, Metro sold the property to a developer for a mere \$5 million due at closing plus \$6.25 million over 25 years. The property's true value was many times that. That is all money that could have gone to affordable housing. Nashville taxes then paid to build a \$34 million parking garage on the site for the developer. That's not all our taxpayers paid for. In the fall of 2018, the developer received a \$25 million tax increment financing loan via a tax-exempt bond from the Metro Development and Housing Authority. Private developers, not the public, were the winners.
- The previous administration proposed handing over 21 acres of Fort Negley Park to private developers in exchange for \$1 million over 10 years, plus infrastructure improvements. Fort

Negley Park is one of Nashville's most historic sites. I quickly joined a broad coalition that formed to stop this giveaway. Vice-Mayor David Briley stayed silent. We succeeded in saving Fort Negley. Today, it is a UNESCO 'Site of Memory.' Yet instead of protecting other parks and public spaces, Mayor Briley has continued to attempt to sell them off. He steered ten acres of public land at the Fairgrounds to private development. He attempted to sell eleven wooded acres at Trinity Ridge. He proposed auctioning off Edgehill Community Memorial Park. Finally, he tried to swap Church Street Park downtown to a private developer offering a less valuable parcel. The pattern is clear. Bad deals and park giveaways will end when I become mayor.

- A responsible city needs to evaluate opportunities systematically and openly. That didn't happen when major league soccer came to Nashville. Instead of running a site selection that invited public input, city hall offered to build the stadium in Fairgrounds, with no consideration of its impact on such current uses as the State Fair. Then, to the surprise of the city council, City Hall awarded 10 additional acres to the developer. Building the stadium itself should have been enough of an incentive for a soccer team. We should not have included a bonus of ten acres at the Fairgrounds beyond the incentive of the stadium. At the same time, Mayor Briley was patching a budget hole with ill-advised one-time property sales, his administration steered ten acres at the Fairgrounds into private hands. City hall has sold land with its right hand and awarded it away with its left.

Economic incentives have their place. However, Nashville needs a mayor who will make sure the taxpayers come out ahead. As a former banker and a long-time businessman, I'll do the math to make sure developments benefit taxpayers. Development should serve the needs of this city, not the other way around.

Nashville deserves better deals. My business experience and my time on the council have given me the skills and the knowledge to

do better for our taxpayers. But I am also committed to helping the city do better. That means ending the culture of secrecy, evasiveness, and insider dealing that have taken root at city hall. Consider the following examples:

- Earlier this year, Mayor Briley proposed a "parking modernization" plan that would result in private management of our street parking, an increase in fees and fines, and a doubling (at the very least) of the number of parking meters. The real purpose of the plan was to raise \$30 million to plug a hole in this year's budget. This is short-term thinking at its worst. However, even this was botched. The first time the parking deal was awarded, Metro miscalculated the bids and released an intent to award to a company that bid \$74 million less than another company. The next iteration also had serious problems. One was the lack of details. The parking plan did not include a business plan, finalized rates, a map of where new meters would go, or a firm commitment to the number of additional metered spaces. I and many others objected to this proposal. In response, Mayor Briley announced that he was "hitting the pause button" on his parking plan. However, his budget continues to include the parking meter proposal and is expected to bring it up again after the election.
- Parking meters aren't the only issue over which his administration has thrown a veil of secrecy. The Mayor's Office has used broad claims of executive privilege and deliberative process to avoid open records requests by members of the press, in order to keep negotiations, plans, and communications secret. Furthermore, Mayor Briley's staff retaliated against a member of the press by removing him from their press communications list. This is an administration that seeks to avoid transparency. That is worrisome.
- In 2017, Metro Council passed a three-year pay plan that included modest cost of living adjustments for Metro employees. Then, in his first State of Metro speech, Mayor Briley urged "belt-tightening" to explain taking away employee

cost of living raises. Teachers actually saw their take-home pay decline due to rising insurance premiums. It was later revealed that Mayor Briley had given merit pay raises to his personal staff.

- Consider the current discussions around purchasing the Morris Memorial Building. The building sits adjacent to a parking lot that was central to city hall's proposed Church Street Park land swap. The proposed purchase was kept quiet from council members, and Mayor Briley has not yet said what the intended use of the building would be. The Mayor's Office has an option agreement to purchase the building at 10 percent above appraised value; meanwhile Metro has sold our own properties for less than the appraised value.
- Mayor Briley opposed the Community Oversight Board. His first budget removed promised cost of living raises for employees. Neither of the budgets he has proposed as mayor have increased funding for affordable housing by a single dollar. Yet his campaign is touting those three areas as accomplishments.
- The Mayor's Office has seemingly politicized the operations of the Metro Finance Department. In 2018, budget issues were kept quiet until the last minute, presumably to boost the chances of the transit referendum passing. At the June 4, 2018, Budget and Finance Committee meeting, Metro Finance stated that the fund balance was well below the 5% threshold — and that the pay plan had to be vacated due to this fiscal emergency. Subsequently, on August 30, 2018, Metro Finance formally declared that in seeking to reach and maintain a 5% fund balance, Metro could not afford a mere \$50,000 for a referendum on the soccer stadium deal. The 2018 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report showed that the fund balance was, in fact, at 5.5% at the end of June 2018, well above the 5 percent threshold.

It's time for a change.

As Mayor, I will put taxpayers first when it comes to negotiating development deals. I will do the math and negotiate good deals for this city. I will collaborate with Metro Council to craft real solutions to our challenges. I won't hide what I am doing. Accountability begins with transparency. Here are some of the changes I will pursue in my first year in office:

- I'll put taxpayers first when it comes to negotiating development deals. That means ensuring that new developments do not merely add to the costs of growth. Getting a dividend from our growth means including affordable housing as part of every development Metro incentivizes. It means ensuring that locals benefit from jobs being brought here, not just new arrivals.
- I will shift the focus of the Mayor's Office away from political posturing and public relations to serving the needs of our residents, local businesses, and neighborhoods.
- I will work with Metro Council to create an independent Metro Inspector General. This will be an independent office to work with the independent Office of Internal Audit. It will identify and prevent fraud and waste across the system.
- I will work with Metro Council to develop an enforceable ethics code that would apply to all Metro departments and employees. It will include clear rules to regulate the use and supervision of outside consultants.
- I will work with journalists, free press experts, and government agencies to review Metro's current open records practices, to make sure that the public's work is being done in a lawful, transparent, and public way.
- I will conduct performance audits of metro departments and agencies to increase transparency of how our tax dollars are being spent and identify areas for improvement.

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Public trust is easy to lose. But we can rebuild trust with a new start and a new attitude: Government serves the people, and the people deserve the truth.

I'd like to hear your thoughts and ideas. With your help and support, we can create a city that works for everyone.

Nashville has focused on one half of the growth equation: buildings and economic incentives. Measuring by the number of cranes you'll spot downtown on any given day, we are doing well by that measure. Economic growth and tourism has created a bustling downtown that attracts people and businesses from around the world.

We should celebrate that! But how are Nashville's residents doing? It is time to assess how all this growth has served us. It is clear that access to affordable housing is a concern across the city, as is transportation, public safety, and education. Growth has costs and people are feeling left behind. Without a course adjustment, we risk leaving our neighbors further behind.

Nashville does not have a great track record of treating those on the lowest end of the economic spectrum well. Our city ranks poorly on intergenerational mobility, which is a measure of the percentage of those born into the bottom 20 percent of incomes make it to the top 20 percent. And our urban core is surrounded by the federally designated Promise Zone to the north, east, and south. The Promise Zone is made up of areas where poverty is concentrated; unemployment is high, educational attainment is lower than other areas of the city, residents are geographically isolated from healthy food options and employment opportunities, and violent crimes are more likely to occur. While many residents are within only a few miles of our bustling downtown, they have not been able to benefit from the city's growth.

The last chapter of Nashville's economic development story was focused on downtown development and tourism. It is time to turn the page to a new chapter of economic and community development, where we emphasize growing human capital and focusing on the neglected neighborhoods of Davidson County.

As your mayor, I will make sure that the Mayor's Office of Economic & Community Development emphasizes that community development mission, and not just growth at any cost.

Here are some of my ideas on how to make Nashville a city that truly works for everyone:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH HUMAN CAPITAL

Recruiting highly skilled talent from elsewhere is good, but we need to prioritize developing the talent already here. Nashville looks inexpensive to those relocating from the coasts, but we are becoming increasingly unaffordable for those who have been here. As mayor, I will commit to further developing the human capital of Nashville's residents and will prioritize education and workforce training as mayor.

LEVERAGE EXISTING RESOURCES

There are lots of opportunities to leverage existing resources. For instance, Tennessee is the only state where adults can attend community college or a Tennessee College of Applied Technology tuition-free. The Lumina Foundation has designated Nashville as a Talent Hub, investing money in our city's workforce development efforts. Organizations like the Nashville Technology Council provide apprentice programs for those interested in a career in Nashville's growing technology field. Nonprofits are working to connect displaced workers with new careers. Many people and organizations are playing a role in connecting residents to opportunities. This work could go further and be more impactful with sustained leadership from the Mayor's Office and further investment where necessary.

INVEST IN SMALL BUSINESSES

It is critical that Nashville remains a place where small businesses open, grow, and flourish. I worry about how the escalating costs in this city inhibit the ability of locally-owned businesses to survive. As an example, this summer Flatrock Coffee on Nolensville Road was forced to close their doors due to rent increases. Sadly, their story is not unique. Metro Government has handed out many large incentive deals to big businesses wanting to relocate here, but

what about helping grow small businesses that are already here? Without programs that make it possible for small businesses to continue, we risk losing the foundation of what makes our city and neighborhoods unique. We should do more to target incentives to help entrepreneurs start and grow businesses here.

USE ECONOMIC INCENTIVES TO INCREASE QUALITY OF LIFE

Metro has overused tax increment financing (TIF) to incentivize luxury condos and hotels downtown. Metro has heavily used the tool downtown, but TIF can be used to bring benefits to neglected parts of our community. In a previous era, TIF was used to help bring Kroger to Monroe Street in North Nashville. We should explore using TIF to bring grocery stores to food deserts. Economic incentives have their place, and that is creating livable neighborhoods and spreading prosperity and opportunity across our large county.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Building out high quality infrastructure is one of the best ways to foster good growth. Our sewer and stormwater systems, roads, sidewalks and intersections are key components of economic and community development. Nashville is going to grow more in the next five years than in the past five years, so we have to get this next phase right. That requires targeted investments in neighborhoods that haven't seen meaningful investment in generations. An area like Bordeaux is going to keep growing, but the quality and community impact of that growth will depend on the quality of the underlying infrastructure. A neighborhood like the Nations is already well into its boom, but the stormwater and sidewalk infrastructure has lagged behind. Neighborhoods need investment.

It is my goal to make Nashville a city that works for everyone. As mayor, I will make sure that our city invests in human capital and infrastructure so every neighborhood has the opportunity to thrive.

TRANSPORTATION

Nashville will grow more in the next five years than in the last five years. As we grow, we need to make sure that Nashville remains a livable city. That requires investments in infrastructure — in roads, traffic lights, sidewalks and crosswalks and in public transportation that residents use. We need transportation improvements that allow residents to get around the county better and experience all that Nashville has to offer.

We all agree that Nashville has traffic and transportation problems. Time spent in traffic is increasing. Pedestrian deaths are on the rise; 62 pedestrians have been killed in the last 3 years. Significantly less than half of Nashville's streets have sidewalks. We have an inadequate and under-resourced bus system.

Nashville needs to address these problems. But instead of developing a plan to address them, the current administration is avoiding them. Instead of improving bus service, the mayor's budget cuts services. Voters rejected last year's transit plan supported by this mayor because it cost too much and delivered too little. Last year's vote was on a specific plan and therefore should not be interpreted as a lack of countywide interest in funding the right plan. Instead of listening to these criticisms and developing a new plan, Mayor Briley has announced that if he is reelected there will be no plan in the next four years.

It's time for a different approach. Nashville can't wait five more years for transportation solutions. As mayor, I am committed to developing a people-first transportation plan that is focused on helping you get to where you work and where you live in a timely, safe, and cost-effective manner. Here are my guiding principles:

- **Upgrade our bus system.** One in four urban residents does not have access to a vehicle. Only 12.9% of Davidson County households live within a ½ mile of high-frequency bus service

at rush hour. I'm committed to increasing that to 25% and also bringing the percentage of households living within a ½ mile of all-day frequent service up from 0% to 12.9%. I envision a robust bus network as the backbone of Nashville's public transportation systems. This mayor's budget underfunds WeGo by \$8.7 million. The subsequent cuts in bus service are yet another example of the current administration not prioritizing the essential. The current mayor's budget proposal would result in fares increasing by ten percent, the elimination of seven bus routes, and a reduction in service on another seven routes. Cutting routes and increasing fares harm those who rely on public transportation in this city. WeGo needs more funding, not less, to ensure that it is accessible, fast, frequent, and reliable. Let's stop placing bus stops in ditches and instead create covered, well-lit stops where people can wait safely and comfortably. Let's expand our sidewalk network so more people can walk to those bus stops. Let's actually listen to the requests of those who use public transportation by having buses run more frequently and extend the hours buses operate. Other cities have had success making incremental improvements to their existing systems.

Four years ago, Houston switched from a spoke-and-hub system similar to what Nashville has now to a grid model. It saw an immediate increase in bus ridership and decreases in trip times. Changing to a grid system and increasing the frequency of buses on key routes enabled Brampton, Ontario's bus system to double ridership within 12 years. It is clear that Nashville would benefit from a move to more of a grid model as well, with more cross-town and connector routes.

- **Tackle traffic, not just transit.** I recognize that not every resident or visitor to Nashville will use the bus as their primary mode of transportation moving forward. Most won't. Therefore, I will invest in common sense solutions to reduce the time spent in traffic, such as fixing problem intersections, utilizing smart traffic signals to better control traffic, widening turning lanes on key routes, and limiting construction lane

closures. That said, it remains critical that we reduce our reliance on single-occupancy vehicle trips in order to both reduce street congestion and carbon emissions. Around 80% of downtown employees drive to work alone. I am encouraged by efforts like the Nashville Connector Transportation Demand Management (TDM), which encourages downtown workers to find transportation alternatives to driving. Moving forward, this program should have sustained support and all corporations that receive any sort of incentive funding from the city should be required to have strong TDM plans in place. Our downtown grid is made up of narrow streets; this means we must reduce the number of cars downtown by encouraging more people to ride the bus, carpool, or bike to work.

- **Neighborhoods need infrastructure too.** Sidewalks make walking safer. They encourage people to get out, exercise, and know their neighborhoods. Yet Metro hasn't kept pace with the need for sidewalks. Metro has 1,900 miles of streets without sidewalks, and the WalkNBike plan identified 91 miles of high priority streets. Yet Metro has built only 6.2 miles of new sidewalks since 2016. Mayor Barry rightly made sidewalks a priority, but there is room for improvement in a system that still only has 16.2 miles of projects in progress. One hurdle is our expensive outsourced process including project management and right-of-way acquisition. We need to find ways to significantly lower our cost per linear foot of new sidewalk, which is over \$1,000 per foot. As a cost savings measure, we should bring some of the sidewalk project work in-house at Metro Public Works because we know sidewalks are going to be a stable long-term capital spending need. My transportation plan will include funding for sidewalks because we can't have an effective transportation system without them.
- **Improve safety.** Keeping people safe is the most fundamental job of government. Our notion of 'public safety' should include pedestrian and driver safety. The first year of my term will be focused on safety while we formulate a broader transportation plan. Improving safety means sidewalks, protected bikeways

and intersection improvements. Nashville is a dangerous city to walk in. Twenty-three pedestrians were killed in Nashville in each of the past two years. Back in 2014, Metro Public Works took the time to identify the fifty most dangerous crossings for pedestrians in our city. How many of these intersections have been upgraded since then? Just four of them. Funding has been secured for improving many of them, but the work is happening too slowly.

We can do better. As a candidate, I have held many conversations with residents who have mentioned that they would like not to rely on their car for each and every trip they make, but that they feel unsafe being a pedestrian. I want Nashvillians to feel safe as they move about the city. Given our level of pedestrian deaths and our lagging infrastructure, I am frankly unsurprised that many don't choose to walk or bike — or that many scooter riders stay on the sidewalk. Building safer crosswalks and making strategic sidewalk connections should be prioritized in our city budget. Calming traffic in pedestrian-heavy areas using actual physical measures such as reduced lane widths, speed tables, raised crosswalks, roundabouts, curb extensions, and better lighting are reasonable cost solutions and best practices that we must implement. Cars drive too fast in our neighborhoods. I support the recommendation of a 25 mph maximum speed limit for neighborhood streets to ensure that residents are kept safe. Protected bikeways should be expanded; a recent study showed that protected bike infrastructure nearly halves the number of fatalities and results in fewer deaths of drivers and pedestrians too. Existing bikeways and sidewalks must be kept clear of parked cars, debris, and scooters. Scooters need to be effectively regulated, and that starts with enforcing existing regulations. We know where the problems in our neighborhoods are; Nashville needs a mayor who will address them.

- **Create a Nashville Department of Transportation.** Creating a Metro DOT was one of the recommendations

within the Nashville Community Transportation Platform. If implemented well, a Metro Nashville Department of Transportation would help streamline and accelerate sidewalk construction, make safe street designs more likely to be implemented, and create a more effective home for an ambitious transportation demand management (TDM) program. Consolidating transportation functions that currently exist within Metro as well as bringing some contracted work back in-house would increase efficiency and cohesion of our transportation work.

- **Develop a new transportation plan within the first year.**

Last year, Mayor Briley supported a transit plan that cost too much and delivered too little. Instead of figuring out what we could afford to spend and developing a plan that spent those dollars in the most cost-effective way possible, mayoral aides figured out how much we could borrow and came up with a plan to go big. That was a mistake, but this mayor hasn't learned the right lessons from it. Instead of coming back with a more responsible plan, Mayor Briley has said that if he is reelected, he will not bring another plan before voters in the next four years.

Nashville can't wait five years for solutions to our traffic and transportation problems. As mayor, I will bring a fiscally-responsible plan to voters within my first year in office. I will start by listening to the residents of this city. I commit to creating and publishing a public engagement plan for transportation planning, something the current Mayor has not done. Creating an equitable transportation plan starts with changing the public planning process to make it more inclusive. We need a planning process that seeks community input as the foundation for our transportation plan, so that the final product is a plan that voters support. My administration will listen to your ideas and concerns, and propose a plan to directly address those ideas and concerns.

Many were wary of the 2018 transit plan because it used a regressive sales tax to fund a plan that concentrated benefits in a relatively small percentage of our neighborhoods. If, in the future, we move to use a regressive funding mechanism for a transportation plan, we need to be hyper-vigilant that improvements are distributed equitably across the county.

Voters overwhelmingly decided that last year's transit plan wasn't the right plan for Nashville right now. The Let's Move Nashville plan was built with too little consultation with residents and neighborhoods. It was driven by a desire to go as big as possible, not a realistic assessment of our needs. I was the only countywide elected official who campaigned against it, and I did so because it simply was not the right plan for Nashville.

But rejecting a bad plan is no reason not to present a good one. I believe that Nashvillians are ready to address this problem. Doubters will say that it isn't possible to come up with a transportation plan in a year. But we aren't starting from scratch. There were good elements in last year's plan and we largely know what needs to be done. The outline of a cost-effective transit plan is already visible in proposals such as the Nashville Community Transportation Platform. I was the first candidate for mayor to endorse it. I have too much optimism in Nashville to believe that we need another four or five years to come up with a comprehensive transportation plan.

These are my ideas. What would you like to see Metro do to improve your experience moving throughout the county? Send me your thoughts. With your help and support, we can create a city that works for everyone — and that moves everyone.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Though Mayor Briley disagrees, Nashville is in the midst of an affordable housing crisis. Between 2011 and 2017, rents in Nashville rose by 64 percent. During the same period, wages rose by only 14 percent. Not surprisingly, half of all renters and a quarter of all homeowners now spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing. Rising rents and gentrification have pushed many residents out of their homes. Before we can talk about neighborhoods, we must deal with housing.

As everyone in Nashville knows, the private market has responded to the demand for housing. As Nashville grows, developers are building more apartments and more houses. That's a good thing. Increasing the supply of housing is an important first step to addressing costs. But it's not enough. Most new units are priced for affluent renters and buyers. Middle class residents need options too. So do our workforce and lower income residents. By 2025, Nashville is projected to have a shortfall of 31,000 housing units for low-income residents. The market alone will not address this problem.

Affordable housing isn't simply about putting roofs over people's heads; it's about creating community. Having access to secure housing allows families and neighborhoods to thrive. Children do better in school; mental and physical well-being improves; seniors remain more socially connected and live longer; residents' mental and physical wellness improves, particularly when people live close to where they work.

I have spent my career in finance, real estate development, and project management. I know how to manage large, complex projects. No one in the mayor's race understands the real estate development and financing market better than I do. After four years on the city council, I've seen what Metro is doing to address

the housing problem. The answer is not much. In the past couple of months, this administration has talked a lot about its affordable housing plan. Look closely, though, and you will see a plan that is all sound bite and no substance. In short, this administration is faking it.

A press release pretending to be a plan.

Briley wants to give the impression that he is hard at work addressing the affordable housing crisis through his Under One Roof affordable housing proposal. However, his one-page proposal is completely inadequate. Here is how Mayor Briley's \$750 million headline number breaks out:

- **“Made-up” money.** \$250 million, one-third of the total, comes from imaginary “private-sector philanthropy.” This is imaginary budgeting. Local foundations and the private sector have made no such commitments. Wishful thinking won't build housing units.
- **Bailing out MDHA.** The Metro Development and Housing Agency (MDHA) is the city agency responsible for public housing. It is important to remember that we need both effective public housing as well as privately developed affordable housing for the community. MDHA is one of Metro's least transparent agencies, and not always in alignment with our needs today. The MDHA has long insisted that it has sufficient funding to carry out its Envision projects, without additional funding from the city. Mayor Briley's plan would allocate an additional \$350 million to the agency over ten years. In exchange, the public will receive — according to the mayor's one-page press release — “at least 1,000 deeply affordable units...plus another 1,600 affordable and workforce housing units.” This is a disturbingly low number of units for a \$350 million investment.
- **Claiming credit for future funding.** \$150 million in Mayor Briley's plan is an investment in the Barnes Fund, the city's

affordable housing fund. This is an exaggeration. Metro already allocates \$10 million per year to the Barnes Fund. The mayor's plan envisions increasing the city's contribution by \$5 million a year. Mayor Briley's current budget proposal amazingly does not include any new funds for the Barnes Fund, certainly not \$5 million a year. The Barnes Fund has done great work, but the funding is too unpredictable from year to year. The Barnes Fund needs a dependable source of funding and I will work with the community to create one.

In short, the mayor's supposedly three-quarter billion dollar housing investment is made up of unsecured promises for private contributions and a reframing of pre-existing funding and development plans.

The real solutions we need.

We can do better, and as mayor, I will do better. Here are some of my ideas.

- **Make affordable housing central to everything we do.** Metro needs to make affordable housing central to every incentive that it gives. We've created a lot of growth but the growth has increased rents and priced people out of their neighborhoods. As the city continues to grow, housing should be a part of every development incentive deal, but it hasn't been. I have already cosponsored legislation that would match affordable housing dollars with incentive dollars. I will also explore ways to use tax increment financing for affordable housing with the end goal of putting workers closer to jobs. Per state law, TIF loan proceeds may not pay for unit construction but can fund land acquisition and site preparation. Metro's TIF Study & Formulating Committee report from May 2019 stated, "there is no written strategy or policy in Nashville about when or how to use TIF on affordable housing projects." As mayor, I will define a strategy.
- **Improve the functioning of the MDHA.** MDHA has lost track of its mission. In recent years, it has financed a parking garage

for a luxury condo development downtown, and given tax increment financing to hotels and other luxury developments. I want the Metro Development and Housing Agency to focus on the housing part of its mission, rather than just the development aspect.

- **Establish a revolving loan fund for affordable housing.** As mayor, I will lead the way in establishing a \$25 million revolving loan fund for affordable housing that can be seeded with a \$10 million investment from Metro. We will then solicit \$15 million in investments from foundations, businesses, and individuals.

This is not a new city expenditure, nor is it an unrealistic request to the private and not-for-profit sector to simply give us money. Rather, this self-replenishing fund will be an investment that can generate returns and have a multiplier effect on housing creation. With access to a \$25 million revolving housing fund, community development corporations and other builders will be able to access approximately \$250 million in funding from banks and other lenders to build affordable housing. As this program succeeds, investment amounts can be increased. This is by far the most cost-effective way to build new affordable housing.

- **Preserve existing housing.** Building new housing is expensive. Preserving existing affordable housing is much more cost effective. Affordable housing financing is complicated. With my deep background in development, I know that an experienced team can leverage tax credits for preservation. That will allow us to preserve existing units. Under my leadership, I will ensure that we are maximizing the affordable housing subsidies we grant and that federal, state, and local sources work together.
- **Bring real expertise to housing policy.** Addressing the challenge of affordable housing requires more than one or two staff people in the mayor's office. We need to bring real expertise to housing policy and get it out from under the political purview of the Mayor's Office. As your mayor, I will

facilitate the creation of a real ten-year plan to preserve and create a meaningful number of affordable housing units at an appropriate price with measurable results. One key task is examining how Metro currently coordinates efforts across departments in this area. The need to make certain changes is already evident. The current One Roof public funds should be reallocated to support needs-based solutions. The PILOT ordinance could be expanded beyond Low Income Housing Tax Credit projects to include all affordable housing projects funded by the Barnes Fund, THDA grants. We should use nonprofit groups to leverage other federal and state housing funds for affordable housing in Nashville. Additionally, I will create an affordable housing board of public entities, for-profit developers, nonprofits, and elected officials, including Metro council members and state legislators, to identify obstacles and challenges to affordable housing projects, and propose evidence-based solutions that could work in our city.

- **Improve residents' access to services.** Under the current system, it's hard for people who need help to get it. We need to find better ways to communicate and work with homeowners and renters who are experiencing housing instability. We also need to work with nonprofits, churches, neighborhood associations, and others to figure out the needs of each community. As Mayor, I will ask Metro's Planning Commission to work with each Metro Council member to create a description of what affordable housing would best fit within their community and how affordable housing can support and enhance the quality of life for residents. Guiding principles for what high quality affordable housing looks like across the city will give developers something to respond to and will allow opportunities for community input.
- **Increase Transparency.** I am committed to increasing transparency on how funding is used to address the affordable housing crisis in our city. We will conduct and publish performance audits to confirm that that money we allocate is being used where it should be used. Auditing the Barnes

Fund and Nashville's HUD HOME/CDBG grants and process will ensure that we maximize the impact and the speed necessary for better results. We will also audit and track the use of General Obligation bonds by MDHA.

Nashville is going to grow more in the next five years than in the last five years. We need to welcome everyone who comes, and honor everyone who is already here. My task as mayor will be to manage that growth and address the costs of growth, one of which is affordability. As mayor, I will commit to doing the hard work of getting affordable housing right. That will require working through many layers of complexity to maximize our existing and future resources that can be devoted to creating and maintaining affordable housing units. We will do the hard work because we care about our neighbors, our neighborhoods, and in creating conditions that allow us all to call Nashville home.

I want to hear your thoughts and ideas. With your help and support, we can create a city that works for everyone.

EDUCATION

Nashville is booming and employers from around the country want to be here. In order to be a successful city, we must be a well-educated city. Education is key to sustainable growth that benefits the whole community. Metro Government has invested heavily in downtown development in recent years, yet has lost its focus on the city's essential responsibilities. Metro Nashville Public Schools has been under-resourced for too long while downtown has a surplus. For the past two years the money going towards public schools has represented just under 40% of Metro's general operating budget.

The lack of prioritization of schools has led to troubling outcomes for many students. The number of schools in the bottom five percent statewide has increased to 21. Only 27.4 percent of MNPS students were on track to meet grade level standards last year. Additionally, only 13.8% of economically disadvantaged students met literacy benchmarks in 2018. Due to generations of underinvestment in certain neighborhoods, low-income students and students of color are frequently left behind in our current system; in some neighborhoods, students move from a low-performing elementary school to a low-performing middle-school and into a low-performing high school. And we need to keep taking steps to address chronic absenteeism. Approximately 18% of MNPS students missed at least 10% of school days last year. And despite an estimated 60% of jobs in Nashville requiring a postsecondary degree or certificate, only 24% of recent MNPS graduates complete a degree within six years of graduation.

Despite the challenges, there is much to celebrate about our school system. Here are just a few examples. The Academies of Nashville have long been seen as a national model for career and technical education in high schools, and are often credited for improving high school graduation rates. One example I like to

highlight is the solar farm project at Whites Creek High School. Over 375 businesses are connected to high schools through the Academies program. Additionally, the wrap-around support of the Community Achieves program is helping improve student and community outcomes. Another recent success is that MNPS secured a \$13.4 million federal grant to provide targeted services to increase enrollment and retention in postsecondary programs for students from ten high-poverty schools.

I am running for Mayor to ensure that all of Nashville's residents and neighborhoods are able to benefit from our city's growth. This requires investment in human capital.

As mayor, I will:

SECURE RESOURCES FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Our biggest challenge as a city is making schools our top priority. My business background makes me uniquely situated to take on this challenge. As a council member, I created the Blue Ribbon Commission to identify \$20 million in savings for Metro Government. This is money that can be used to invest in schools. As mayor, I will continue to exact the same scrutiny on the budget to ensure that our schools have the resources they need to succeed. I will join the voices of those advocating at the state level for revisions to the BEP formula to better account for the needs of urban districts and secure more funding for our schools. Financial management and finding other revenues from tourism and development is the mechanism through which we will find additional funding for education. See more in my Fiscal Accountability policy statement.

INVEST IN HUMAN CAPITAL

Nashville has devoted just under 40% of our budget to schools in the last two years. As mayor, I will prioritize investments in human capital through education in order to ensure that everyone benefits from Nashville's growth by increasing the percentage share of our budget that goes to education. As mayor, I will commit to directing over half of new revenue into our school system.

USE MAYOR'S OFFICE TO SET TONE AND EXPECTATIONS

All students have the right to high quality education. As mayor, I will support current school leadership and help the school board recruit a great candidate for Director of Schools. I will prioritize having a strong working relationship with the council in order to bring the focus back to students. I will demand that district leadership and school board are aligned and focused on improving student outcomes, will set measurable and achievable goals for improvement, and will hold accountable to the goals that we set. Because all students from all neighborhoods need to have access to high-quality educational experiences, I will be especially focused on reducing equity gaps in student outcomes. It isn't enough to be the fastest improving urban district if there are students who are left behind. As mayor, I will expect that our schools get great results for all kids and will celebrate the achievements of those that do.

TEACHERS ARE THE DEVELOPERS WE NEED TO SUPPORT

I frequently say that teachers are the real developers that we need to support. Educators deserve to be treated as the professionals they are; these are the individuals who are preparing our kids for the future. They are not currently valued as they should be, and teacher recruitment and retention has suffered as a result. Over half of teachers who leave the district are within their first three years of teaching. The increased cost of living in Nashville has made it difficult for many educators to afford to live in the county. Most teachers ended up with lower take-home pay last year because of rising health insurance premiums. This is a problem. Wage stagnation makes it hard to sustain a career in teaching; it shouldn't take 18 years of teaching in MNPS with a Master's degree to reach \$60,000 per year. As mayor, I am committed to finding mechanisms to not simply provide one-time raises for teachers but also finding a longer-term, sustainable vision for teacher salaries that provide the opportunity for more growth over time.

CONNECT SCHOOLS WITH THEIR COMMUNITIES

Research shows that teachers are the most important factor that affects student learning inside of schools, but non-school factors

have a greater impact on student achievement outcomes. Over half of MNPS students are economically disadvantaged, and many students have been affected by challenges such as trauma, violence, and food or housing insecurity. Basic needs need to be met in order for students to meet their full potential. The district and non-profit partners such as STARS, the Oasis Center and the Martha O'Bryan Center have been working hard to support successful student outcomes. I am a supporter of collective impact programs like Community Achieves, which has brought community partners into 22 MNPS schools to focus on improving family engagement, college and career readiness, health, and social services. I see it as part of my role as mayor to convene and connect community resources to the schools so that students receive the support needed to succeed in an intentional and systematic way.

These are some of my ideas for how I can best serve students as mayor. I invite you to share what you'd like to see moving forward so we can continue this discussion. I realize that it is not enough to say that we believe in the power of education; we must make the investments in human capital to ensure that all students can make the lives they want and fully participate in our city. Nashville's future depends on the quality of education we provide to our students today. With your help and support, Nashville's schools will work for everyone.

POLICE & PUBLIC SAFETY

Keeping people safe is the first job of government. Unfortunately, the current administration is failing the residents who need us most. It is also failing the men and women who serve us. Our young people face an epidemic of gun violence. Last year, we had nearly twice the number of 13-year-olds charged with violent crimes than in the year before. Too many people don't feel safe in their own neighborhood. Between 2014 and 2018, auto thefts nearly tripled; they are up 180%. The number of murders doubled. Violent crime last year was at a level not seen in a decade. Yet our police department is understaffed by more than 130 positions.

We need to come together to address these challenges. You deserve a safe city where citizens and officers are treated fairly. Let me give you an example of why leadership from the Mayor's Office matters on these important safety issues.

For many years, Nashville has used "hot spot" policing. This can be effective when used fairly and in a targeted fashion, but the use of traffic stops to try to disrupt crime grew too much over time. These stops can put both residents and officers in tense situations and there is evidence that they are prone to racial imbalances.

It is important to note that the Mayor's Office had long had access to traffic stop data that revealed racial imbalances. It did not act on that data. It should not have taken sustained community activism to get leadership to pay attention. Metro has now significantly reduced traffic stops following the Policing Project's report in November 2018; however, we should have changed course much earlier — at least after the Gideon's Army report in 2016. It should not have taken the deaths of Jocques Clemmons and Daniel Hambrick in officer-involved shootings for this to happen. Our residents and our officers deserve better.

It is the job of the mayor to set clear goals, provide the resources

necessary to realize those goals, and hold people accountable for results. Here are some of the approaches I will use to safeguard the public and strengthen the relationship between police officers and the communities they serve:

- **Set clear goals.** After consulting with residents and with police leadership, I will ask the police chief to set specific goals for reducing crime, reducing unnecessary uses of force, and improving public levels of satisfaction with the police. It is time for clear and consistent leadership. Mayor Briley has failed to provide that on issue after issue, notably on the community oversight board which he both opposed and supported. I voted for the COB because I support accountability at all levels of government.
- **Measure results.** Elected officials need to understand public perception of safety and policing. In addition to closely monitoring crime statistics, my administration will reinstitute the practice of conducting an annual survey to measure public levels of trust in the police. I will also listen to you. I pledge to attend police-resident meetings in every precinct each year as Mayor.
- **Address our recruitment and retention problems.** As of April 24, 2019, 31 sworn officers have resigned from the force this year. This represents a 93 percent increase in resignations compared to the same period in 2018. It costs the city approximately \$75,000 to recruit and train each new officer. Mayor Briley's recent proposal of a 6 percent pay increase for new officers is unfair to the officers who are currently on the force and it doesn't solve our retention problem. The men and women who are already serving us deserve a pay raise too. Nashville needs all of the approximately 1,500 police positions funded.
- **Strengthen community policing.** Trust between police and the people they protect and serve is key to the stability of our communities, the integrity of our justice system, and the effectiveness of our police department. As mayor, I will

work with our police chief to more seriously implement the proposals presented in the “President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing.” These best practices include engaging the community in positive, non-enforcement actions and measuring satisfaction through surveys. In consultation with our police department, I will also direct our department to identify proven, evidence-based programs to target our most serious challenges, such as gun violence.

- **Community-wide cooperation.** Our public safety agencies must work better together and with nonprofit and faith-based groups. I plan to create a public safety subcabinet that brings together representatives for MNP, Sheriff, District Attorney, Public Defender, the Division of Youth Services, probation and parole, as well as representatives of nonprofit and faith-based groups, to identify problems and solutions. It is important that this effort include restorative justice advocates and other intervention advocates who are on the ground daily. The city needs private and nonprofit sector resources and expertise. I’ll work to amplify and increase the impact of the Metropolitan Nashville Police Support Fund to support the department and its leadership and to help it achieve deeper community engagement. We should give police executives greater exposure to best practices and provide officers with cutting edge training and assessment tools. We need implicit bias and de-escalation training that goes above-and-beyond the standards required by the State of Tennessee.
- **Build a department that reflects the community it serves.** Of the 1,435 MNP sworn officers, only 157 are black and 137 are women. We must prioritize the recruitment of officers who reflect the diversity of the community they serve. That means targeted marketing and reaching out to HBCUs and minority police officer associations. A diverse police department is an effective police department.
- **Support the officers who protect and serve us.** Policing is a difficult and noble profession. The rank and file should

be treated fairly by their superiors, just as the citizenry at large deserve to be treated fairly. Officers need technological support in the form of information systems that can talk to each other, and appropriate and necessary data and technology to respond quickly and safely. And for the difficulties of the job, police need need full access to mental health resources.

I consider this to be a working document. I want to hear your feedback and your ideas. Building a safer community requires setting goals. Setting goals begins with listening. As your mayor, my door will be open. Through neighborhood and precinct visits, surveys, and community forums, I will work to ensure that community residents are actively involved in reshaping our police department for the 21st century.

PARKS & GREEN SPACES

Cities across the country have recognized that parks are about more than green space. Parks play an important stewardship role by protecting and honoring the best aspects of a city's history and character. Their presence in a neighborhood promotes residents' health and well-being by cooling urban "heat islands," providing places for recreation and exercise, improving air quality, and helping to prevent flooding. Parks promote investment. They increase the natural beauty and resiliency of our city, and define our sense of place. Parks are public spaces where all are welcome.

Parks improve the quality of life of residents and provide an important foundation for strong communities. I was surprised to see a recent report by the Trust for Public Land that ranked our park system 54th in the country, far behind cities such as Raleigh, Austin, and Atlanta. My family and I love to spend time at Bells Bend and the Warner Parks, however, not all neighborhoods and families have easy access to our great parks and greenways. Only 37 percent of Nashvillians live within a 10-minute walk of a park — this is less than half the percentage of a typical major U.S. city.

Given the environmental, health, and economic benefits of parks, we should view parks as part of the solution to issues facing our city. Nashville should work with residents and businesses to invest in and expand our parks system. But under the Briley administration, instead of looking to turn surplus public land into green space, the mayor has attempted to sell off property to private developers to cover revenue shortfalls. Covering operational shortfalls with one-time budget gimmicks is a bad idea. Covering shortfalls by irreversibly selling public land is a terrible idea.

It's time for a different approach. I want our parks to play central and valued roles in helping Nashville continue to be and become

more of the city we want it to be. There are so many ways parks can be assets for needed solutions to many of the challenges facing Nashville. We must set goals, provide resources, and bring agencies together with residents, businesses, and donors to keep Nashville green.

As mayor, I will:

- **Safeguard our parks and our property.** As a council member, I opposed Mayor Briley's effort to give Church Street Park to a preferred developer for a new high-rise, luxury condo tower. I helped lead the successful effort to stop the city from selling a large portion of one of our most significant historic sites, Fort Negley, which was once the home of thousands of black refugees during the Civil War. I was against the attempted sale of Trinity Ridge, 11 acres of hilltop, creeks, springs and historic stone walls adjacent to existing banked land for Metro Parks that the administration tried to sell this year. And I also opposed Mayor Briley's proposal to auction off Edgehill Community Memorial Park, which includes the land where the folk art sculptor William Edmonson lived. That is twice in recent years Metro has tried to give away public land that is significant in Nashville's African American history. It's time to stop selling off our parks and disposing of properties in a piecemeal fashion and time to start looking for creative ways to expand green space in this city.
- **Connect our city.** Our linear parks, trails, and greenways can connect our green space and public spaces. The existing network needs to be maintained and expanded. I will focus on expanding Nashville's greenway system and the sidewalks and bikeways that connect our neighborhoods to the greenways in order to provide better and broader access to recreation and to encourage alternative transportation.
- **Enhance our neighborhoods through increased access to parks.** Parks positively inform the character of our neighborhoods, and provide the opportunity for all to gather in shared public space. I will commit to a goal of raising the

percentage of Nashvillians who live within a 10-minute walk of a park from 37 to 50 percent. Creating more pocket parks would be one way to accomplish this goal.

- **Expand parks programming and invest in our youth.** Our parks department provides much more than access to green space. It also provides over 1200 programs a week across the city, including sports, special events, arts, fitness, nature, and history activities. As a parent of three boys, I've seen how important after-school programming is in helping kids develop character and maintain good health. Neighborhood residents should have a say in determining what activities their local parks will need. I'll direct Parks to develop new ways to receive feedback, including working with neighborhood advisory groups to solicit input.
- **Improve our infrastructure.** Parks can play a critical role in increasing sustainable and resilient infrastructure. Metro Parks can work with Metro Water Services to expand green infrastructure such as retention ponds and bioswales to help Nashville manage our flooding challenges. Our new development in Nashville has led to less permeable surface area, which makes stormwater runoff a greater challenge to our neighborhoods. Focusing on green infrastructure will help us address one of the costs of our growth.
- **Diversify park funding.** As Metro Parks noted in their 2017 "Plan to Play" master plan, our parks system is unusually dependent on a single source of funding compared to park systems in our peer cities. We need to find new ways to finance programs so residents can have greater access to these resources. Other cities have found new funding sources by creating citywide park improvement districts and by creating business improvement districts around parks, identifying sponsorship opportunities, and developing more robust public-private partnerships to support our parks.
- **Expand green space.** There are numerous opportunities to expand access to green space amidst Nashville's development.

We should prioritize bringing additional green space to North Nashville, the banks of the Cumberland, and places like District 30 in Southeast Nashville, which currently doesn't have a single park. I would also like to work with the downtown residents and the business district to create an improved Riverfront Park along the southwestern bank of the Cumberland. We don't need to cut down cherry trees to stage events—cities across North America have demonstrated that parks and cultural events can coexist.

For me, parks are a passion. I have always prioritized green space in my real estate development work because I know how critical it is for a city's health and the health of future generations. As a council member, I am proud to stand by my record of supporting access to green space and preserving Nashville's unique assets. Parks should be a shared space for all, and the resources, beauty, and programs they provide strengthen our community. As mayor, I will set clear goals for expanding access, identify new ways to support expansion and programming, and put parks at the center of the city's health and wellness efforts. In my administration, Parks will play a central and valued role in helping Nashville continue to be and become more of the city we all want it to be.

