Civic Tech Forum – KCMO City Council Candidate Questionnaire
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Digital Divide

Over the last few years, we have seen an increased focus on the digital divide--the lack of access to computers, Internet connectivity and other digital tools that are increasingly necessary for full participation in civic life and the modern economy.

What do you think the city's role is in bridging the digital divide? What goals do you believe Kansas City should set in bridging the digital divide, and what strategies should we adopt to achieve those goals?

I hope that the city will make it a priority to help fill the digital divide in many areas of Kansas City east of Troost. In addition I would like to see is increased funding to the public libraries and I would like to see the City invest in Tech centers attached to public libraries that are near middle schools and high schools. Students love to flock to the libraries after school when libraries are located close to schools. I would also like to see area businesses partner with schools to ensure that schools are equipped to engage the students with the best possible educational equipment.

Open Data

In the past couple years, Kansas City has established an open data policy and launched data.kcmo.org to make city data more accessible and usable. This is important because it enables citizens to do things like monitor 311 requests online, look up property records through GIS, and even create new applications to make the city work better, such as what the Code for America brigade does in its "civic hacking" meetups.

Have you ever used Kansas City's open data portal? Do you support an ongoing commitment to open access to city data? What are the biggest opportunities that a philosophy of open data offers, and what are some of the risks? What approaches do you support to manage those opportunities and risks?

I have used Kansas City's open data portal and I am still learning to navigate through the portal. Some of the biggest opportunities with such open data are of course the quick access to information and the elimination of the need to travel or call city officials in order to get information. The portals also allows for information to be comparatively processed for personal and business use and the data portal makes information available to the user who needs to find specifics. The risks have to do with inaccurate information being presented and the shrinking lack of privacy. Additionally, and perhaps the biggest risk associated with the data portal is that information dispensing jobs that would have been filled by people are being displaced and our culture does not adequately retrain the displaced worker.

Economic Development

Traditionally, economic development has been defined by real estate development and the ability to attract and retain large employers. Technology is changing the nature of work and jobs in some ways that we understand and others that we don't fully grasp yet. The ability to freelance and do "project

work" is increasing, large employees don't offer the long-term stability they once did, machines are able to do more jobs once done by people, and the technology skills needed to find jobs change more quickly than the educational system can adapt.

How do you think the city's economic development toolkit needs to change in order to compete in the current economic environment?

The City needs to focus on promoting economic incentives that will position the city and the region to be competitive in tomorrow's knowledge based global economy. Tax incentives for burgeoning low or high tech industries is where the city should allow incentives. The city should sharpen the focus on education, technical college skills and innovative training with a vision to cultivate the highest level work force for Kansas City. The city should look to partner with responsive and responsible businesses and corporations and make business who join social and community responsibility a priority of any incentive package offered in the city's economic toolkit.

Smart City

The city announced a groundbreaking "smart city" partnership with Cisco early last year, but details are still being worked out and specific information has been scarce. The idea behind "Smart Cities" is that data collected from digital devices--whether electronic sensors and cameras managed by the cities or the mobile phones and wearable devices that citizens purchase--can benefit the entire community in areas like public safety, traffic management, health care, and energy efficiency. Specific examples may range from red light cameras to street lights that dim when they can sense that no one is around.

How proactive do you think the city should be in developing these sorts of solutions? How would you balance the priority of the city to support the common good with the preferences of individuals who may not want to participate or worry about their privacy?

I think to the extent that smart city innovation aims at promoting health, protecting the lives and property of citizens the city should be moderately proactive in terms of the pace while implementing these sorts of solutions. Should the city find ways to integrate solutions that foster better health and safety with renewable resources the city should proceed in the fast lane while educating the public about the benefits and the privacy issues and while allowing an avenue for citizen input and the ability for citizens to opt out where privacy is a concern.

Sharing Economy

There is a phenomenon sometimes called the "sharing economy" or the "collaborative economy" that encompasses car services like Uber and Lyft (which recently caused some controversy in their entry into the KC market), lodging companies like Airbnb, coworking spaces, community gardens and other activities that blur the line between personal and commercial. Municipal regulations and tax codes often aren't set up to deal with these sorts of services.

How should the city treat deal with these emerging business models in a way that is friendly to innovation and also respects the need to protect the public and fund city services? Which collaborative economy activities, if any, do you participate in (e.g., do you use Airbnb when you travel?)?

The sharing/collaborative economy will be a reality for the foreseeable future. This is a growing phenomenon brought on by need and community and global shifting. The city will have to gradually implement fair and efficient municipal regulations and tax codes for this new and welcomed economy. I have not used Uber, Lyft or Airbnb when I have traveled but I am supportive of such businesses just as I am supportive of community gardens and urban farming. In the future I would even like to see communities that are self sustained with renewable energy resources.

The Playbook

KC Digital Drive's charter document is [the Playbook](#) that resulted from the Mayors' Bistate Innovations Team recommendations in 2012, which has been [updated and released in digital form](#).

Have you had a chance to review the Playbook? Where do you think we've seen the most progress and where do you see the greatest opportunities?

After reviewing the Playbook I would say that the greatest opportunities' for progress exist in the area of helping to ensure that students at every level enjoy the benefits of digital learning and the digital age.

Personal Tech Adoption

We all have to find balance in how much we choose to incorporate technology into our personal lives.

How do you decide when to absorb new technology tools into your life and work? What social media channels are you most active on? What are your favorite tech tools that you've recently started to use?

I usually use and absorb new technology on a need to use basis and I enjoy educational tools offered via the youtube, itunes U and google.