

1. Tell us about yourself.

I am Kansas City's Native Son. I was born and raised in KC, graduated from Bishop Hogan High School, received my undergraduate degrees in Public Administration and Political Science from Park University. I received an Executive MBA from Benedictine College, and currently completing a graduate degree in Education. I am from the village. I have spent most of my life being involved and engaged in programs and activities that are tasked with helping making Kansas City a better place for everyone. My professional experience includes being an educator, community relations specialist, nonprofit leadership, retail management, and executive consulting. I serve as a mentor, community advocate, and a caring member of my community.

2. What are some of your previous accomplishments?

Some of my previous accomplishments are centered on community activities. I've worked with nonprofit agencies and social justice and peace organizations to help register new voters, served as an educator to assist K-12 and adult learners further their educational opportunities, working with sub-contractors to secure work and increase their profitability (even growing some companies from 5 figures to 6 figures in work capacity). I work and serve with other community advocates to provide employment and professional training services to create work opportunities for community residents. I currently serve as 5th District PIAC Representative for Kansas City and led the collective charge to improve and expand the capacity of Kansas City Community Gardens, worked to get Starlight Theater to a city wide funding source to free up more in district money for neighborhood projects while allowing the historic theater to lobby for more and increased funding. As a result, I am pleased to be a member of a Public Improvement Advisory Committee that has enacted a paradigm shift to work collaboratively instead of competitively. In addition, I humbly serve as Superintendent of Christian Education for St. James United Methodist Church.

3. What are some of the things you would like to see in your district improve?

Some key improvements to the district would be increased and genuine accessibility to residents' elected officials. There needs to be a sincere and continuous dialogue that engages and empowers both the residents and the elected official with good and relevant information and actionable items for people to go do, work, and contribute. There also needs to be a leveraging of development projects and initiatives for capacity building opportunities. We need to grow the number of skilled workers and professional services that accompany building something above ground. We need to strengthen our unions and union membership/participation and create opportunities for increased connectivity to skilled trades and labor entry points for graduates and community members. I would also like to see neighborhood groups and organizations working together more and better. Strong neighborhoods build and sustain strong communities—livable, business, educational, recreational, all sorts of communities. Our public officials need to be ambassadors to opportunities to meet, collaborate, and connect people and communities to opportunities that can help improve the quality of life for people.

4. Tell us about your campaign and what it is all about.

- A. Workforce development:** Leverage opportunities to partner workforce, employers, and public departments to provide hands on paid training opportunities that provide transferable workforce skills for future projects and employment.
- B. Economic development:** Utilizing abandoned and unused prior commercial sites within the district as locations for small manufacturing and green manufacturing to create jobs and transition industry and their supplements to the region. Leveraging workforce development programs/initiatives in partnership creates a readily available skilled labor supply source. Leveraging employment and community benefits agreements for resources as a deterrent to crime
- C. Enhance livability of neighborhoods:** Working with city departments (codes, waste/bulky item pick-up, sidewalks & streets) to improve efficiency and capacity (availability and accessibility of city employment and jobs) of city and neighborhood services. Bridging gaps and building relationships with

residents and developers in residential areas to encourage collaborative projects that are mutually beneficial. Leveraging workforce development projects to address neighborhood blight and beautification needs

- D. Enhance neighborhood organizational capacity:** Working with neighborhood organizations to build leadership from within neighborhoods. Advocate and build alliances within neighborhoods for coalition building. Providing access to and advocating for the inclusion of neighborhood organization involvement in community projects as deterrent to crime in neighborhoods

5. Education is very important, what are some of your plans to strengthen the education in your district?

As an experienced educator having served as a teacher and administrator for K-12 education and Adult education, I believe education is important because it provides an academic learning but also a social learning –in which both should include the component of critical thinking. As a councilman my impact can be on the social learner side by connecting outside resources, funding, and experience opportunities to students and their families. This will provide vision, hope, and access to opportunities that otherwise may have gone unknown or unnoticed. We have opportunities to allow students to take what they learn in the classroom and implement it in the real world for expanded learning opportunities. We can create future leaders that will care about their community and would want to care for and contribute to their community.

6. Growth of small businesses is a main ingredient in our communities' success, what are some initiatives to maintain and uplift that growth?

As a councilman there is an obligation to be an ambassador and to connect people, businesses, and both groups to resources that can promote growth and sustainability. By leveraging multi modal transportation there are also opportunities to bring together groups that may have a proximity challenge or are far away in distance or accessibility. There are new opportunities presented by newly created Opportunity Zones. By facilitating small business conferences and trainings, creating skills and trades development opportunities, market exchanges and ambassadorships with other countries, and educational exchanges with students can create a narrative that is positive, moving Kansas City forward, and assist in making Kansas City a leading city.

7. Moving forward, any advice to those who are voting June 18th?

The best voter is the informed voter. I would encourage every concerned and caring person in our community to check out and research each candidate they are considering. It is important to remember that when we cast our vote for a candidate, it is not (and should not) be just a political statement –but a statement of trust and teamwork. People shouldn't vote for candidates they cannot and will not work with because it takes both the candidate and the community to make our government work and work right. If you are someone that is dissatisfied with how things are, get engaged by voting and working with others to create the change we want and need to see. Our future needs a new chapter that allows people to hope and believe again, but also creates a sense of freedom to make their collective contributions as citizens and as people. No person should be made to feel unsafe or threatened for wanting to contribute, and no child should grow up in a community where there is a lack of quality teachers and community leaders. Every person should have the right to an opportunity to earn a living at a wage and have housing that is affordable, that respects their humanity and dignity. Having a healthy life in which the foods you eat, the parks in which you play, and the sidewalks and streets in which you walk are safe and of high quality, and if you experience an accident that you are provided healthcare that helps and not hinders your ability to get back to that quality life. If these are values you can support and work for then, I am your candidate Edward Bell and I am asking for your vote!