

Good Morning and Happy Wednesday Memphis!

As I write the first Chair's Recap for March 2020, my thoughts and prayers are with the residents of the City of Nashville and Greater Middle Tennessee affected by the recent severe weather events. The Tennessee Emergency Management Agency has declared a state of emergency due to the damage and loss of life. It is during times like these that we must come together in support of our fellow Tennesseans, families, friends, and colleagues, alike. If you are able to help in the recovery effort, please consider the following options provided, [here](#).

Yesterday, the Memphis City Council convened to discuss ways to move Memphis forward. If you were not able to attend Tuesday's Council meeting, a full review can be found, [here](#).



Prohibiting Cell Phone Usage While Driving in the City of Memphis:

In my inaugural recap on January 7, I emphasized the need to enforce ordinances that are consistent with state and federal law. On Tuesday, the Council accomplished that end by amending Chapter 11, Article 16, of the City of Memphis' Code of Ordinances to **prohibit** the use of wireless telecommunication devices on roadways and highways. Yesterday, the measure passed on third and final reading. As a result, MPD will be authorized to cite drivers using cell phones while operating motor vehicles in the City of Memphis. The Council's ordinance conforms with similar law enacted on the

state and national level. At the end of the day, we value your safety. So, when we realized a [nationwide study](#) recently concluded that Tennessee had the highest rate of distracted driving deaths in the country (2019), we decided to take action. By amending Chapter 11, Article 16, on Tuesday, the Council is doing its part to avoid preventable loss of valued life.

Revitalizing Lamar Avenue via Comprehensive Rezoning:

Bottom line: We rise and fall together, as one city, as one community. The success of Lamar Avenue is no different. Two weeks ago, the Council extended a moratorium on the issuance of auto-related project authorizations on the 8-mile stretch of roadway between Bellevue Boulevard and Winchester Road. The decision was made because there is, and has been for some time, an over proliferation of tire repair shops, service stations, auto repair shops, used auto sales businesses, and car washes on the street, which establish challenges to future development aligned closer to the growing needs of residents living adjacent to the Lamar Avenue corridor.

In my last recap, I affirmed the Council's intention to partner with the Office of Planning and Development to move forward with the process of achieving a comprehensive rezoning of the thoroughfare. On Tuesday, we moved closer to accomplishing that end by **approving** a resolution authorizing the Memphis and Shelby County Division of Planning and Development to proceed with the submission of an application to rezone certain properties along Lamar Avenue. The Council's action represents the first, and most important step toward revitalizing Lamar Avenue via Comprehensive Rezoning. I look forward to the day when the fruit of our present labor will result in a thriving right-of-way capable of serving the relevant consumer demands of area residents, while also driving economic development for the benefit of all Memphians.

Improving Our Valued Park System:

The Council is dedicated to improving our city's park system because we view our public recreational spaces as resources in the fight for healthy living. On Tuesday, we followed through on our mission to improve our value park system by accepting grant funds in the amount of \$485,000.00 from the National Park Service. The grant funds will be used to improve Douglass Park in District 7, Super District 8.

Furthermore, in a highly anticipated measure, the Council also accepted an in-kind donation of \$300,000.00 from the United States Soccer Foundation and Target Corporation. The funds will be used to install soccer fields at Gaisman, Bert Ferguson, and Willow Parks, located in Districts 2 and 5, Super District 9.

Recognizing the Philanthropic Efforts of Memphis Professionals:

The late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. believed that "life's most persistent and urgent question is, '**What are you doing for others?**'" On the Tuesday, the Council recognized by resolution the philanthropic efforts of Memphis professionals, by specifically spotlighting the work of **Mid-South Mission of Mercy**, an organization that hosts an annual, free, two-day dental clinic serving the oral health needs of children and adults living in Memphis and the surrounding Mid-South who are either uninsured, or underinsured. Since 2016, the Mid-South Mission of Mercy clinic has provided nearly \$6 million dollars' worth of dentistry services to more than 10,000 Memphis-area patients, with the help of nearly 10,000 volunteers. Professionals with the Memphis Dental Society founded the organization, as well as its clinic, and were present to accept the honor. If you are interested in donating to, or volunteering with, Mid-South Mission of Mercy, visit <http://www.midsouthmissionofmercy.org/>.

Honoring our Tennessee State Champions:

In continuing the tradition of honoring excellence within our community, the Council recognized by resolution the Ridgeway Middle School Boys Basketball Team. The Roadrunners recently earned the top honor of 2019-2020 Tennessee Middle School Class AAA State Champions. On Tuesday, individual Certificates of Recognition were provided to each member of the talented team, as well as their Head Coach Jarvis Stephen and Assistant Coaches Julian Goodwin, Raybourne Johnson, and Eric Winfrey. Join me in celebrating these exemplary student athletes!

Answering the Call to Empower Memphis Youth:

We asked, and you answered!

Join me in thanking the congregation of Brown Missionary Baptist Church for their financial support of the City of Memphis' **MPLOY Youth Summer Experience**. On Tuesday, **Senior Pastor Bartholomew Orr** presented a check for \$10,000.00 to sponsor MPLOY internship participants. As a result, Memphis youth will be provided an opportunity to work this summer in a professional setting that will ensure their job skills development in June and July, when many students find themselves idle.

We know this to be true: Our youth are our future, period. To that point, we must commit to supplying them with the training necessary to reach their full potential. [The Administration's Office of Youth Services established MPLOY to provide Memphians, ages 14-22, with meaningful summer employment](#)

[opportunities](#). However, to date, the demand to participate in the 2020 MPLOY Youth Summer Experience has exceeded available program funds. Therefore, additional monetary support is needed from our community.

My call to action remains: Contribute what you can today to empower Memphis youth with job skills development and training. Donations of any amount can be submitted to "**City of Memphis/JOY – 125 N. Main Street, Ste. 700, Memphis TN 38103, Attn. Director Ike Griffith.**"

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Save the Date:

Finally, please be aware that the Council has officially amended its second, and final meeting date for March 2020. As a result, we will ***not*** meet on Tuesday, March 17. **Instead, we will meet on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 at 3:30 p.m.**

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Looking Forward:

As we move ahead, I am and will always be honored to serve you each day as part of a thirteen-councilmember team working to transform our great city into a place of opportunity for all. Stay tuned for future Council updates as we keep you informed regarding the activities taking place here at City Hall!

With earnest appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrice J. Robinson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Patrice Jordan Robinson
Chairwoman, Memphis City Council
District 3