

## ***Taking the reins, taking on the task***

Greetings, Memphis! It is with a mixture of pride and humility that I take up the gavel as Chairman of the Memphis City Council: Pride in this great City that I and my fellow Council Members have the honor to serve; and humility at the scope of the task and the confidence in me that Council Members have displayed by selecting me as Chair.

I would be remiss if I did not commend my predecessor in this seat, former Chairwoman Jamita Swearengen, for the work she did in forging the path that I now will take. I also wish her the best in her new path as Clerk of Shelby County Circuit Court.

Turning my eyes ahead, though, I look forward to working with our Vice Chairman, JB Smiley, Jr., and the other 11 Members of the Council to lead this City by serving it. As a body, we will strive to listen to the voice of the citizens as we make decisions that will shape our collective future.



## Your Council at Work

While it may not seem momentous, one decision that the Council made at its August 23 meeting nevertheless will have an impact on that future, in terms of eventual cost savings and benefit to the environment. The body approved a Resolution from the Memphis Light, Gas & Water Division awarding a contract for the citywide conversion of streetlights from high pressure sodium to LED bulbs.

The conversion will involve more than 77,000 streetlights throughout the city. The benefits of making the change are multifold. The City will save an estimated nearly 38 million kilowatt hours of electricity per year using the more energy-efficient fixtures. Based on these savings, the lights will pay for themselves over the 20-year term of the agreement. This means there is no projected cost increase to MLGW ratepayers for the project.

The energy savings will, in turn, lead to a yearly estimated reduction of 26,700 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions. The LED fixtures have a 23-year rated life and will require less maintenance, leading to a further reduction in costs. In addition – and most immediately to citizens – the new lights will provide increased illumination and enhanced safety.

In another step toward improving the city's sustainability, the Council passed the third and final reading of an ordinance adopting a Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy and Resiliency (C-PACER) program within the city. Created by the Tennessee General Assembly last year, this program allows local governments to offer certain economic development incentives to projects that promote sustainability and resiliency. The program will be administered through the Economic Development Growth Engine for Memphis and Shelby County (EDGE), and the Memphis-Shelby County Division of Planning and Development.

While the City looks to incentivize new businesses that may wish to locate here, we certainly don't want to overlook the contributions of those that are already here. And since August is National Black Business Month, at its August 23 meeting the Council recognized the month as such and approved a Resolution – co-sponsored by all Council Members – honoring more than 20 local Black-owned businesses for their exceptional service and commitment to the city. As the Resolution noted, "Black entrepreneurs form an integral part of the economy in the city of Memphis, contributing to its strength and dynamism."

Finally, another integral part of the city's economy is its Public Transit system. Not only does this system help get city residents to the shops and offices where they engage in commerce, it also helps them get to and from their jobs. This fact was reinforced to me on Wednesday, Aug. 24, when I attended a press conference at the headquarters of the Memphis Area Transit Authority (MATA).

There, Administrator Nuria Fernandez of the Federal Transit Administration announced that Memphis has been selected to receive more than \$76 million in grant funding from President Biden's Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The bulk of the money will be spent on construction of a new bus maintenance facility, which is desperately needed to help keep the

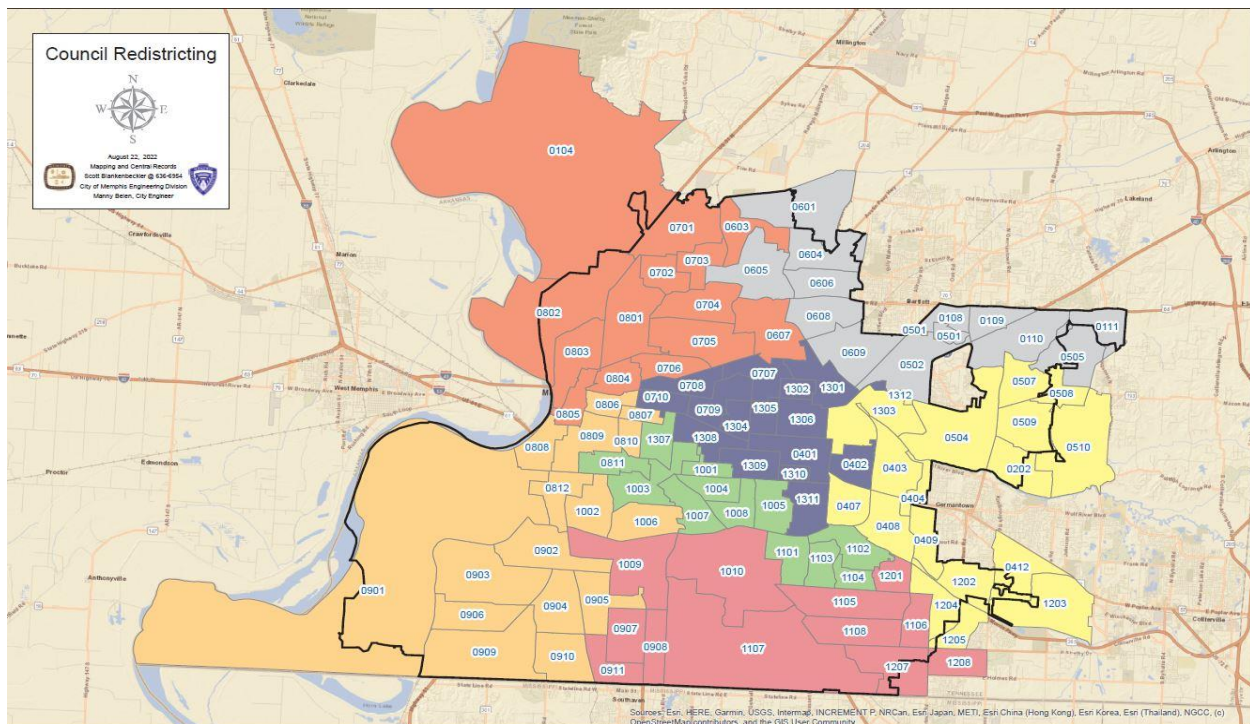
buses MATA has on the streets in working order. The rest will go toward the purchase of 16 new electric buses, to help MATA expand its services without adding more emissions to our air.

I am grateful to our U.S. Ninth District Representative Steve Cohen, who strongly advocated for Memphis to receive these Federal dollars. Along with the dedicated revenue stream recently proposed by our Mayor and approved by your Council, this money will go a long way toward helping our city have the vigorous Public Transit system it needs.

**A Special Note:**

Some of our citizens in certain areas of the city will experience a change in their Single-Member District number before the November 8 Special Election to fill former Councilwoman Swearingen’s District 4 seat. Because of population changes in the city as reflected in the 2020 Federal Census, the Council was required to redistrict so that all Districts remain as equal as possible in population. We also were advised by legal counsel to do this before the District 4 Special Election.

The ordinance approved by the Council established the District maps shown below. However, the Council will have further opportunity to discuss, review and change the maps ahead of the city-wide October 2023 election. As always, the Council will send out notice and information regarding Redistricting Committee meetings or proposals to further change the district maps, should there be any.



**Note: District 4 is in Green**

The Shelby County Election Commission currently is updating its District map. Updated District information for specific addresses should be available shortly before the Nov. 8 Election at <https://www.electionsshelbytn.gov/polling-location-and-complete-district-information>.

***The Bottom Line:***

As I noted at the beginning, I am proud to serve as Chairman of your Memphis City Council. I am excited to continue working with my fellow Council Members to enhance this city that we call home. Stay tuned for future Council updates as we keep you informed regarding the activities taking place here at City Hall. As always, for an archive of meeting recordings, you may visit <https://www.memphistn.gov/government/watch-public-meetings-online/>.



For Memphis,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Martavius R. Jones'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Martavius Jones,  
Chairman, Memphis City Council