

City Council Special Called Meeting Transcript –2/17/2015

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>> Mayor Adler: Are we about ready to start? I think we have -- we have a quorum present. We're going to call to order the meeting, the city council meeting, Tuesday, February 17th, 2015. Time is 9:15, we're in the city council room. We have two councilmembers that are not with us this morning.

Councilmember pool is out of town today. And councilmember troxclair is not feeling well. Hopes to be with us this afternoon. We'll go ahead and have the first conversation that we have. This is the topic is watershed protection, environment and endangered species. At 12:30 today we'll do our second one for two hours. That one this afternoon is parks and open space. Panelists, I want to thank you very much for -- [lapse in audio]. A deep dive would require us to have a week in conversation. We don't have a week. We have two hours. So it's more just a real quick gloss of the area. We tried to identify some particular questions that we may be able to go deeper in by way of example. The hope is that we would begin to see issues that we need to come back to later. What that means is it's not going to be on -- on the one hand it's important for us to have exposure. On the other it's not going

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to be satisfying because no one will be able to say everything they want to say: Our structure follows a kind of 10-minute opening from staff. We'll then discuss with the panelists, the questions that you were given. Everybody speaking five to seven minutes. The council has the opportunity to stop and engage in conversations with either you or with each other. And we have first we have the presentations and then

the opportunity for the conversations. Sometimes that's morphed into one combined element. And then we have some other voices from the community that have offered to come speak that have been selected. So we'll follow that process. So again, thank you so much for coming and giving us the time. Ms. Lee, do you want to start us off? Thank you. >> Morning. [Off mic]. >> Good morning. Mayor and council, I'm Victoria Lee, the department director of watershed protection department. Before I talk about council's role in watershed protection, environment and endangered species, I would like to provide you with some background information. And then later I will highlight some key policy issues that will come before council in the next few months. So what is a watershed? You might have noticed when you drive in Austin that -- by the road sides there are some green signs that says entering the bull creek watershed or entering lake Austin watershed.

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So put simply, a watershed is this land area, when it rains all the rain runoff would drain into a particular water body. And the water body might be a lake, a creek, an aquifer. So a watershed is basically this land area. Austin -- Austin watershed aren't a typical city, we have 68 watersheds and 2500 miles of creeks. And those watersheds are large and small, as small as, for example, like Johnson creek watershed, it's totally located between 45th street and lady bird lake. And then the large ones like onion creek watershed, it's spread -- the onion creek itself is about 78 miles long, and the watershed area covers over 340 square miles. -- Square miles. And the Johnson -- so onion creek's watershed is almost as big or even a little bit bigger than the whole city of Austin's area. So what happened to our watershed and why do we need to protect our watersheds? You know, as we urbanize more and more natural lands are covered by concrete, which we call the impervious cover. And the more impervious cover you have the faster the rainstorm runoff is going into the creeks and Lakes. So when the creek cannot hold all the water that come

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down all in a very short time, that's when flooding happens. And because the faster runoff going into the creek hit the creek bank so it erodes our creek banks. That's the erosion. That's when erosion happens. And our runoff also carries the trash and pollutants into our creeks and our Lakes. So how do we address all these watershed protection issues. And just like with all the different challenges we evaluate, we mitigate and we prevent. And so for watershed protection issues, we have a master plan. Council adopted a master plan for us in 2001. And this master plan evaluated 26 watersheds and identified all the significant flooding, erosion and water quality type of issues and the total cost to fix them all would be over a billion dollars. So we prioritized all these issues based on the severity of the

issues. So for our flood challenge, right now we have over 3,000 structures and 430 roadway crossings that might be inundated by flood if we have a 100 year storm. And we monitor and inspect and maintain about a thousand miles of storm drain pipes. And unfortunately half of these storm drain pipes is undersized or

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very old, over 60 years old, which translates into another probably about 5,000 structures. That might get flooded when 100 year storm comes. So altogether our flooding challenge is about 10,000 structures that might get flooded if we have a 100 year storm that hit at the right or the wrong places. For our erosion challenge, so far we have fixed very serious problems, like the houses hanging over the cliff. Those type of houses might have fallen into the creeks if we did not fix it. We have fixed those serious problems, but still we have about a thousand active erosion sites and over 100,000 linear feet of streams with erosion problems. If you look at the graphics at the bottom of the slide here, you can see that in Austin a creek can actually double its size in the width and the depth in about 30 years. So the erosion happens and it's getting faster as we urbanize more. And water quality is very important factor in getting city of Austin to be ranked a top 10 to top 3 most liveable city in the country. And we, the department, routinely monitor various sections of our Lakes and creeks and aquifers. We are sampling the 49 wards and out of the 49

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watersheds, we particularly sample 121 reach segments of these creeks. And 13 of these reaches have a very high problem scores. We use various parameters to index the water quality of different creeks and Lakes, and so the 13 of them have very high problem scores, and out of the 13 I think waller creek tops as number one, the most seriously water quality problem. And for lady bird lake, every year we would pick up trash between 100 tons and 300 tons, depending on how big of a rainstorm that we have and how heavy a rainstorm we have. Last year we picked up 121 tons of trash. And the city is also has a legal obligation under the federal endangered species act. We have a list of endangered species and also threatened species. Under the list we have 10 that are endangered and 28 that are threatened. And watershed protection department, we're responsible to protect the aquatic species and Austin water utility is responsible for protecting the song birds and Karst invertebrates and I have Willie Conrad who is in charge of the program here with me, so if y'all have any questions, Willie will be able to answer those. And to address this protection of the endangered species,

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watershed has a Barton springs habitat conservation plan that we work very closely with the parks and recreation department in protecting our salamanders. And Austin water utility, Travis county has the balcones canyon lands conservation plan that protects the other endangered species and threatened species. And this also protect the jollyville plateau salamander. So how do we mitigate those challenges, those problems that we already have? We have two strategies. One is -- the very expensive one is using engineering structural type of solutions to solve watersheds, flooding, erosion and water-quality type of challenges. And here I have some pictures, examples for you. The top right is a low water crossing, David Moore low water crossing that we upgraded it. And under it is our waller creek tunnel. That takes out 27 acres of floodplain from the downtown area. And the up left is a bio filtration pond, and this pond improves the water qualit of lady bird lake. And under that is the four branch stream creek restoration that fixed the erosion problems over there. And another strategy using various programs to address all these issues, I have some

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examples of our programs. The top right is a spill response team effort. Whenever there's any spill on the highway, on our roadway, anywhere, then our spill response team quickly go to the site and try to clean all them up. So that a chemical spill -- [lapse in audio]. To the right our cleaning crew cleaning out the inlets around the downtown area. Especially we have filters that we install around the inlet and we have to routinely clean out the trash so that it will not go into our Lakes and creeks. And the top left is our lady bird lake cleaning crew. We routinely clean out trash from our lady bird lake. And I just mentioned last year it was 121 tons. In the bottom left is our field crew. Whenever it's about to storm, we watch the forecast and monitor our storm direction very carefully. And it's 24 hours watch. When we know the storm is coming, our field crew will get ready, get their barricades loaded and our shifts all assigned and going through the night, they would go over to low water crossings, block the roads and tell people turn around, don't drown. The most cost beneficial

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strategy to prevent problems from happening from all the lessons that we have already learned from the existing problems is definitely prevention. And for prevention we have our regulations and also our education program. They are the two main strategies that we use to prevent problems from happening. And last year -- not last year. About two years ago, 2013 we passed an update of our watershed

protection ordinance, which included all the stakeholders. And we had over 30 stakeholders' meetings and came up and updated all the environmental and drainage criteria. And a lot of the regulations and criteria manual, whenever we see something that might prevent further or future problems from happening, we routinely try to update it. So the council will see a lot of rules, regulation revisions come before you. And so the council can provide guidance and help us to reach and strike a balance between economic growth and environmental protection. But basically it's all to protect the people and the properties in this community. There will be several issues coming to council in the next few months,

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the onion creek buyout is one of them. I hope that we will be able to bring before council end of February or early March. Last year we were directed by council to create a voluntary bayou program. So we're going to bring -- buy out program. So we're going to bring to you a proposal, a recommendation on what kind of buy out program that we should have to solve flooding problems. And another big project that we are doing right now is the drainage charge revisions. We're revising the ways that we are charging residential units and commercial units, the way to charge them the drainage fee. And we already have had started the public meetings on this. There will be two more coming, so we hope to come before council in March or April for your approval of the new proposed method. And another big one is the codenext infrastructure and urban infill impact to drainage. Codenext is the revamp of the whole development code and in it we hope to be able to insert the green infrastructure type of requirement so that we can best use the storm water and supplement with our water supply and green infrastructure is being researched and viewed as very important not only just for water quality, water supply, but also for public health. So this will come before council in a few month.

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So that's my overview of our issues. >> Thank you, Ms. Lee. Austin is not alone in the state of Texas or even in the world, right, when it comes to issues of erosion, impervious cover, some of the various issues that you covered. So certainly not alone. I know the city of Houston where I lived for 13 years, I grew up in San Antonio, all these cities have issues. My question is do you have any idea how much these policies that you're underscoring and these problems in Austin is contributing to the unaffordability of this city? Or inability to build developments and to create new apartments and structures. Because the feedback I'm getting from developers and builders, the people that put up the houses and apartments we live in, is that the restrictions and regulations are so onerous in the city of Austin compared to other cities in Texas that, it has a dramatic contribution to unaffordability. And I haven't seen anything in this material that you provided -- there's absolutely nothing that addresses the

cost. So could you comment on that on how we compare to other cities in terms of cost of regulations? >> Yeah, definitely. We have to strive for the balance and we definitely want to review, and actually the department at this time is reviewing the whole criteria manual. Also with the viewpoint of how to make our criteria the most cost efficient so that there will be a balance between the protection -- between the protection and also the development. >> The cost benefit ratio is a exactly what I was looking for. I still haven't seen any

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cost fit ratio. We've had a number of policy drives. That's exactly what I never see. I never see cost benefit ratio. I see benefits of regulation, benefits of zoning, benefits, benefits, benefits. The cost is never mentioned. So thank you -- you are aware of that. I just want to see that in the materials, cost benefit analysis. >> Yes. >> Mayor Adler: Ms. Houston? >> Houston: It's too early in the morning now. I want to thank you so much for your presentation and I think that you're one of the first people to talk about a balance. And I think that that's what we all strive for in this city is not only people that come up with policy, but people who live here. It's where is that balance between the ability to preserve our water, wastewater, erosion, protect the species and the development. I've had some questions for a long time as to why we would continue as prior councils have done, go ahead and allow building to be developed in a 100 year floodplain. That was always curious to me as to why we would allow that to happen. It might not happen this year or next year, but we know it's going to happen. And it did happen in onion creek. And the bayous, the financial implications of what we're now doing is far more restricted or more onerous than if we had said no, you can't build in a 100 year. So do we have anything on the books that say you cannot build developments in floodplains? And how do developers get around that? >> Yeah. A lot of the structures that are in the floodplain were built before 1970, before the drainage rules and the technology is advanced enough to know about floodplain. So many of these structures were built before our regulation. And we do have the

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regulations that councilmember Zimmerman just mentioned, development will have to comply before they can develop. >> Houston: Okay. Thank you so much. >> Mayor Adler: Ms. Kitchen and then Mr. Renteria. >> Kitchen: I wanted to thank you also for your presentation. It was very clear and direct, which is great, just what we needed. I appreciate that. And I also wanted to thank your department for the recent work you all did on the south Lamar mitigation plan, because one of the issues that we're dealing with, and I think you pointed out in the impervious cover limits and perhaps in other areas, it's kind of a new issue, if I'm thinking about this correctly, with all of our developments so quick, all the

extent of our development, our infrastructure is not keeping up with it. So we're seeing flooding in areas that we wouldn't have expected otherwise. So I know that's -- I don't know if you want to speak to this or not, but I know this is an area that you all are starting to look at, which is the cumulative impact on all of our infrastructure when we build development. >> Yes. The west Bouldin creek watershed is a great example of how the local drainage system is not enough and the staff is definitely trying to find solution for that. >> Mayor Adler: Mr. Renteria. >> Renteria: My question is I served on the environmental board when the drainage fee was first established and it was like 3.25 or 3.50 per month, three dollars. And you know, when we were on there it was told -- it was led to us to believe that it was going to be used to pick the inner -- the infrastructure because the city never did pay attention to that. And it was going to be used just for the inner city. Now for some reason it's used all over the city. Now, where did y'all --

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when was it determined that y'all needed to finance infrastructure building capital improvement projects through the drainage fee? >> I didn't quite catch your question. >> Renteria: How come it increased so much from 3.25 or 3.50 to \$9.50? >> I see, the drainage fee. >> Renteria: Yes. >> Yes. We are looking at how we charge drainage fee. And because of the growth of the city and also, as I was just - - just briefing council, the challenges that we are facing and so the need is just there. So we have to -- we have to charge higher fees to address part, actually, a small part of our existing problems. >> Renteria: Well, I was led to believe that that amount of money was going to be able to take care of the problems that we had at that time in the '80's, and the rest of it was going to be paid by growth, the developers that were going to come in and they were going to pay for the drainage -- infrastructure to do -- to prevent this kind of drainage and the problems that we're facing today. >> Yeah. In 2001 we put together the master plan, we identified a lot more significant issues. It's a more comprehensive plan. Probably at your time some of the problems were not identified, but we'll be very happy to come before the council and do another summary of how master plan was formed and how our needs is estimated, the cost is estimated and present before council.

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>> Renteria: Thank you. >> Tovo: I want to invite Mr. Conrad, if he's willing to say a few words, about the water quality lands and their role in protecting and preserving our endangered species as well as the purpose stated in their names, our water quality. >> Thank you, councilmember. Mayor and council, I'm Willie Conrad, I manage the wild land conservation division for Austin water utility. Councilmember, if I understand your question correctly, you asked me to speak to the water quality protection lands and how they help with the watershed issues in the city. In 1998 voters passed Austin water utility revenue

bonds to begin buying land in the Barton springs watershed in Austin. Basically the premise behind that is that it was time for the city to start putting its money where its mouth was. We've had engineering solutions, we've had regulations. And at that time voters approved bonds to buy land in the watershed to keep it from being developed and contributing more to water quality issues. Since then there have been four bond elections, a total of four bond elections. And today we manage about 28,000 acres in fee title or conservation easements that protect source water watersheds in the Barton springs zone. Today the idea behind that is as development increases, the amount of pollutants in the watersheds increases and so by restricting development it's land that's not contributing

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to the pollution problems. And again, it's putting our money where our mouth is. >> I don't know where the right time to ask question about the S.O.S. Ordinance, would this be it? Okay. I know S.O.S. Has been -- there's been litigation with regards to if it applies after the fact or like if you can -- like the Garza tract, how it was applied to that. Has there ever been a challenge to S.O.S. Generally speaking on its, I guess, validity? >> As far as I remember, I think so, but I'll let one of my staff who are more familiar with S.O.S. To address this issue. >> Good morning, council. Mayor and council, chuck lezneik, S.O.S. Officer. As far as S.O.S., I don't believe there's been a direct challenge to that itself. There have been a number of challenges in terms of whether or not S.O.S. Applied to a particular piece of property and whether or not it was grandfathered or not. In fact, Garza -- >> [Off mic]. >> Okay. We've got a private attorney that informs me Lauren Ross, says it has been challenged and it was upheld. But the -- one of our most common challenges, legal challenges to S.O.S. Is very often whether or not the property is grandfathered or not based on prior permits. And Garza is an example of that, and there was a settlement to that lawsuit. >> Mayor Adler: Anything else before we go on? Ms. Houston? >> Houston: Just one

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quick question. On the map that you showed us here about the master plan that was developed, what do the little green dots represent and what does the red one represent? It says flood mitigation challenges. >> The little green dots? >> Houston: Uh-huh. >> [Off mic]. >> Houston: Oh, I'm sorry. >> I can answer that. Joe pantalion, executive director of the watershed protection department. That is actually a screen shot of our atx flood website. It is a realtime representation of the status of low water crossings throughout the city. It's a very popular website, especially during a storm event, where people can plan their driving route. The red dots show low water crossings that are actually flooded and are barricaded. The green ones are passable L low water crossings, and that's based on monitoring and field

observation. >> Houston: Thank you so much. I just didn't understand that. And I also want to say that we have -- erosion is a problem in district 1 and of course our creeks don't get -- and watersheds don't get nearly the interest as others, but our cemeteries are also sometimes on creeks and we have problems with -- in evergreen, for example, the creek is eroding and there is a possibility of people who have been buried for a long time being --

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next time there's a big flood washed into the creek. So erosion is a big issue. And that impervious cover as we continue to build more and more and we're building more and more and doing infill in districts 1 and 3 and 4 and 2, watershed issues are going to be even more important because there's going to be an impervious cover issue for us because there will be no drainage. So I appreciate the work that you do. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Ms. Gallo and then Mr. Zimmerman. >> Gallo: Thank you for being here. Thanks for all the answers to the questions. I live close to bull creek off of Lakewood drive and I've watched the progress of the discussion there with the water quality of the creek and the bull creek park used to be a leash-free area. And it was determined that the leash-free was adding to the problem, so it's now no longer a leash-free. But even since that point in time, evidently there are sewer lines that run down the creek bed. And since that time it appears that the issue is still there. So my question is once an evaluation starts on a water creek area like that, then how does it continue to progress past the point of determining that it should not be a leash-free area and is it continued to be monitored? It just seems like we still have the issue there and perhaps it really wasn't the dogs that were providing that, but something else is going on in that creek. >> Yeah. Actually, we do do weekly monitoring. We sample the water and I would get a report of the level of the germs. And it looks very good right now. And during the weekend sometimes when there are a lot more activities --

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[lapse in audio]. I don't think we are ready to review the leash requirement. >> Gallo: So if I have neighbors and I've been asked the question is how do we access that information, how do we access that information as far as the testing results? >> Yeah, you can just give me a call. And then I can send the results to you through emails. Very simple. >> Gallo: We get lots of questions on that. Thank you. >> Yeah. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Mr. Zimmerman. >> Zimmerman: Maybe this is not the right time to ask, but I'd like to know what's up with the sensors? I remember hearing some reports when we had the Halloween floods that there was a lot of misleading information coming from these sensors because they were incorrectly designed. If they're not designed fail-safe, you see all those little green dots, all those things could be underwater and the sensors say it's okay. If the sensors aren't correctly designed.

So who has responsibility, I guess, for designing this little system and making sure that it works? >> Yeah. We coordinate and partner with different agencies. And the geological -- I don't remember the abbreviation or the agency's name, but basically the federal agency that provides those sensors, the gauges, and all those have been hardened. And the what happens did not work, we all checked them out and now they are all working. >> So they were federal, federal devices and federally managed? >> Yes. >> Zimmerman: Wow. Thank you. >> And we do have our own too. It's just that for certain areas we just partner with the feds. And if they already have the gauges, then we don't have to repeat them.

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>> Mayor Adler: Okay. Mr. Casar and then Ms. Garza. >> Casar: Ms. Lee, do you have a comprehensive document of the scores, all 121 reaches? I imagine this council might be interested in. >> Yes, we do. >> Casar: And do you have similar scoring for erosion as you do for contamination or is it different? >> Yes, we do. >> Casar: Great. I'm sure my office might kick you an email and that would be something that would be very helpful for all of us to see that. >> Mayor Adler: That would be great. Ms. Garza? >> Garza: You mentioned the policy for the buyouts coming before the council soon. Can you give an early as possible date and late as possible date for a time frame? And can you explain -- I know it's a really complex issue. We've had a lot of conversations about this, but can you explain why it's taken as long as it has? >> Basically we are ready whenever council is ready. >> Garza: So y'all are ready to present the policy that you're recommending will be applied to the 100 year? >> Correct. >> Garza: Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: And to that end, when you present the policies, there's obviously a lot of interest in that. I know that councilmember Garza has had town hall meetings. We've been approached and had a lot of people in the community come and discuss with us here in the offices. Questions that go primarily to how the appraisals coming forward will -- compared to the appraisals that happened in the past. And the second one being whether or not there are any caps on the delta between replacement housing and the fair market value of housing being taken. My understanding is that there weren't limitations on that cap funding or relocation monies as the earlier buyouts. And I think there's some concern if there's changes that are made to

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that. >> Yes. We are very aware of the existing concerns and we are going to present a comprehensive pros and cons before council and for your guidance. >> Mayor Adler: That would be great. So if it's something that can be set at our pleasure, then maybe it's something that we're ready to get on as quickly as we can. So we'll work to get that scheduled on an agenda item as quickly as we can. Ms. Garza? >> Garza: That was my follow up, how do we get it before the council? Are we waiting for the city

manager to put it on? >> Mayor Adler: We'll get it on. We'll get it on. Anything else before we move on? Ms. Lee, thank you very much. So now let's go to our panel, to talk to us. What we're looking for are questions that relate to the opportunities to sustainably manage storm water and integrate nature and green infrastructure into the city. It might also be helpful to address the question that councilmember Zimmerman asked with respect to what is the cost benefit analysis of a sustainable program. What are the drainage infrastructure challenges for urban fill and redevelopment all over the city, probably in all of the districts. So Dr. Ross, do you want to kick us off? Thank you. And we're trying to get conversations about a five to seven minutes so that the council has an opportunity to be able to ask questions. And I know that's a hardship on a topic like this, but let's try. Dr. Ross. >> Good morning, mayor, councilmembers. It's really an honor to be here to address you for five minutes on what we need to be doing better around storm water infrastructure in the city of Austin. This is a project that I've been working on since 1991. And before I say anything else I really want to acknowledge the great presentation that I just got from Victoria Lee and the watershed protection department.

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I serve as a technical consultant to your community and your citizens, but everything that we do gets implemented really through the work of the watershed protection department. And I think you can see that they're largely on top of it and they need us to agitate. So I want to spend just a couple of minutes talking about what we're doing now and where -- not just me, but a whole community of people, some of them in the room. I think Eleanor McKinney for example is still here. A whole community of people in Austin who are forward thinking where we'd like to see you go. And then what we think are some of the impediments to the city of Austin getting there. So let's talk about where we are now. Oops. I'm pushing the wrong button. That was my microphone button and I need that slide button. And these are some of the kinds of projects that Victoria Lee just shared with you. This is a flood detention system. It's big. It's centralized. It's easily managed. And it's the kind of thing that we've been doing in Austin since the 1970s. It's actually the kind of thing that still is putting us ahead of the cities that councilmember Zimmerman mentioned like Houston and San Antonio. We are ahead of many of the cities in terms of offering this kind of flood protection to our communities. This is a storm water quality pond. It's concrete. It's also big. It's also ugly. And it's taking pollutants out of Barton creek. This is the kind of technology that's been in Austin since we passed our comprehensive these systems are dinosaurs. They're big, they're powerful. It's easy to know where they are and they're easy to manage, but they are not state of the art, and they are not providing us the kinds of protections that we need for Austin as we get bigger, as we infill, as we

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increase the impervious cover. So let's look at some of the things that we would like to see part of Austin's drainage policy. Many of these things are being talked about in the context and will be brought forward to you as part of this code next project. We'd like to see a lot more rain water harvesting. All of that water in the creek is a flood problem and an erosion problem and a water quality problem, we can be using to water our gardens. And as we watch the lake levels drop, this would be an incredible benefit to our community. We can build our sidewalks, our driveways, and our roadways out of pervious pavement. I did a design for a soccer parking lot, where we put the water volume underneath the parking lot. It made more space in that case for kids to play soccer but we could do the same thing and have more space for homes, shopping opportunities, or playgrounds for kids. We can, instead of having a pervious roof that sheds the water into the creek and adds to the problems, we can put a garden up there. We can put -- we can put, you know, a landscape on top of our buildings. And notes people don't know -- let me -- just raise your hand if you do know that the building that we're in right now has that kind of system, that the landscapes that we have out here in front of the building are actually built on top of the -- on top of a parking structure? That's a kind of technology that's actually pretty rare in Austin. Right? And we need this to be all over the city in both of our new development and our redevelopment projects, so that we can start to wind back those urbanization projects that lead to more flooding, more erosion,

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more of our -- our creeks and channels widening, and worse water quality. So what are the policy questions that keep us from moving toward a better infrastructure in our city around storm water management? And these are really important infrastructure questions, and we don't want to ignore them. One of the questions is, who's going to pay for it? This is a retrofit project on Shoal Creek to provide storm drain infrastructure. It's going to cost the city of Austin and taxpayers a drainage fee. Council member Renteria, this is part of what that drainage fee is going to. It's going to cost us four million dollars. It's a lot more expensive when we have to come back and shoehorn in a solution after the fact than it is to build the system during the development process when you have space, you have construction equipment on site, you can integrate it into the entire design. So the city of Austin right now, part of the reason why those costs are so high is because we have a lot of infrastructure that doesn't meet current standards, and all of us are paying for that. And ultimately, we all do pay for it. These are some photographs from Onion Creek. You know, in this case the developer did not set aside the land that was necessary to preserve the floodplain. The homes were less expensive, more affordable at the time, but ultimately there is a huge cost for affordability that neglects the considerations of flood erosion protection and water quality. There are questions of equitable outcome. On the left here you have a channel that is very typical, council member Houston, of the kinds of drainage structures that we have put in east Austin.

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It's exactly what my engineering professors taught me 40 years ago, make it triapsidal this very easy shape that's easy to put in your cad. Line it with concrete because that will make the water go fast, and it will never require any maintenance. And it requires the least amount of space. The developer can move their houses as close to the creek as possible. Those are the kinds of channels that we have gotten in east Austin. They're actually a very affordable channel. Right? It's the least cost in the moment, and it's the least cost in the long-term. On the lower right side of the image, you have the kinds of channels that we get in west Austin. It's beautiful, it has a natural character, it represents what we think of when we think of Austin. It's the kind of creek, council member Gallo, the kind of creek that we have preserved in bull creek, and I think that this is really an important question as you look at your drainage infrastructure. And then the last question, and I think really when we wrestle with watershed protection, and I don't know who of you are here, but we want to think about -- this is kind of -- there was an NPR radio show on recently that talked about Los Angeles as a sponge. Council member kitchen is nodding her head. Right? We want to think about, instead of building a city that's very efficient in terms of moving the water off the site, how do we think of the city as a sponge, where every yard, every rooftop, ever piece of pavement is designed not to shed the water, but to soak it up. We know the engineering solutions to that problem. We -- the green infrastructure, low impact development, those guidelines have been in place, they've been on my book shelf for pretty close to 20 years. Right? But the question really is, if

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we build that as a sponge, but Victoria Lee's department worries about -- she has a responsibility to make sure that it works, that it stays maintained, that nobody comes in and overfertilizes rose bushes. This is one of the concerns in not just watershed protection but in a lot of the city's infrastructure questions as we ask, how -- where's the balance between a centralized solution, and let me just say you always know where the dinosaur is. Right? You can keep track of that dinosaur. You can put on it a leash, and you know where it's going. And as we move to these decentralized structures, these decentralized solutions, whether it's lane gardens in my front yard, on my rooftop, or rain catch system to supplement my water supply, how do we recreate the reliability that we're used to having in city civil infrastructure. Thanks. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much. Next panelist, hank Smith, Texas engineering solutions. Mr. Smith. >> Thank you. Thank you. My name is hank Smith. I appreciate you guys having this forum for us. By way of background, I've been doing this in Austin, land development engineer for more years than I care to think about. I started in 1982. Before the city of Austin had a land development code. And Lauren is exactly right. There's a lot of great infrastructure that she's shown of how we need to be doing things. I will point out that what she's showing along shoal creek and the developments along onion creek, those were built with the latest technology, the way we were trained to do things, the way we

were taught to do things in that day. So they weren't put in in a manner that was capricious or whimsical, it was put in with codes there in the day. We know now it was a ridiculous standard, but it was the standard on that day.

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What we need to make sure, if we move forward and develop new standards, it's not looked at 40 years from now as being ridiculous and why are we doing things that way. It was curious to look at the first slide Victoria showed up, it had a picture of a sign: You're now entering a watershed. I spent years and brought an enforcement against the city of Austin in the late '80s or early '90s, as as a result of that ordinance, I required Austin to put a sign up saying your entering the recharge zone. That was something done as a result of a regulatory action with the city of Austin. I don't remember what the criteria was. It was a minor deal that went on, but it's just kind of a curious coincidence. There's too many opportunities right now and there are too many things that we can do to integrate green from infrastructure into the system to talk about today. This is not a deep dive. You're not walking by the creek with these presentations. You're looking at a big 10,000-foot level. What you have is a responsibility, most of you are elected to the city council, the responsibility to set policy and set glide answer. Most of you went door-to-door, knocking on doors, making phone calls and talking to people will what were the key issues. How many of you in knocking those doors, told you green infrastructure was the key issue they wanted to talk about in the city of Austin? I don't think that was a criteria for any of you. I think it was affordability, it was taxes, it was keeping Austin Austin, transportation issues. Those were the major issues you heard about. And so what I want you to do as you start setting the policy for green infrastructure, keep in mind what those key priorities are for the residents of the city of Austin. We need to keep Austin affordable. We can come up as an engineer with a set of standards and criteria that would be great, that's going to guarantee we protect the environment and has no issues, and we're going to continue to drive people into other cities. The fastest growing cities right now are San marcos, Kyle, Buda, Round Rock. It's not Austin. It's the outskirts because we're driving people to the outskirts.

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And part of that -- it's not all of it through our infrastructure, but a lot of it is the cost to develop in Austin. We can do these -- these great environmentally sensitive controls, and we're doing it outside of the city of Austin. We're doing it for a very limited basis in Austin. We did a subdivision in Austin, in Travis county, outside of Austin's etj, all the drainage goes into the median, it's filtration, bioswells, green systems, the city staff helped us design it. You have great people that know how to do this. There's no way to do it in the city of Austin. There's a school that fronts the roadway, their harvesting

comes from rain from the rooftop and sources to irrigate the land. All the water quality is done with biofiltration, with landscape, very low water intensity. We can't do that in the city of Austin. There are no standards. We're developing those standards. There's a group meeting, we had the first meeting last week, I didn't make that one, but we are developing those standards right now. What needs to be focused on in those standards is how do we do this affordably? It makes me a little nervous when I look at the outline for that group, and it has five working groups. And just real quick, going through those, there's a working group on green infrastructure, on working group on subdivision regulations, a working group on obstacles to small business, working group on infill compatibility, missing middle housing, and working group on affordability. There should not be a separate working group. Affordability should be on every issue and every one of those committees, not a separate committee looking at affordability, but roll affordability into everything we do. And don't look at it separate and apart. The city of Austin does an affordability study with all their rulings and regulations. They don't take the same approach in what I would look at as affordability stuff. A lot of times their assessment is, what is the impact to Austin? Is it going to be more to retain, review, not what is the impact to the average citizen in

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the city of Austin. The impact needs to look at what is the impact. That development, not what is the impact to the employees of the city of Austin. We've got great people here, great standards, we've got to look at the affordability issue. Some of the challenges we're going to have when we look at the infill issues is, there's going to be some contributions. Lauren is exactly right. The closer we can get to water quality to the source, the better you're going to be. If we can get water quality for a roadway incorporated into the design of the roadway system, we're much better off. If we can get water quality associated with a house, we're much better having the water quality on the lot. I'm also past president of a homeowners association. I understand the home building industry. I've worked in that industry over 30 years. Fha says get the water away from the house as quickly as possible. Counseling years tell you we want the water away from the house quickly, rapidly, we don't want infiltration. Water quality says we want you to especially could it as close to the house as you can. There's contradictions that need to be weighed and looked at on the engineering side. There's an issue with, when we develop a subdivision, we put the infrastructure in there and put the water quality controls in with the subdivision, I think the way the technology is going, instead of building the end of the pipe, a giant water pond, which is 23409 the best way to solve this, the ponds need to go in with home construction. They can't go in ahead of time. That requires letting the developer come in, put in is in infrastructure, then letting him off the hook so the home builder and homeowner is responsible for that. They don't want to say come in any backyard any time you want to and make sure my water quality pond is meeting the criteria, complying with code, and if it's not, bring your backhoes and truck and tractors in, tear up my yard and fix it. That's not going to go. Citizens of Austin and people are not going to allow that to happen. They're not going to want that kind of deal. So we have to have a certain amount of maintenance that's done by the homeowner, and it's

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not looked at. We're not big brother. We don't look over everything that happens out there. Most of the things, water quality ponds are very unobtrusive. It's not a concrete structure, it's a rain garden. 90% of the homeowners are never going to touch that. They're going to walk in, see it, and they're going to leave it alone. And if we overdesign these by 20%, I think we've accomplished the fact that maybe 10% of the people do something with it. That's okay because they're all overdesigned by 20% anyway. So there's ways to accomplish this without having to come in and be big brother and look over these things and make sure everything is monitored, monitor the water quality years down the road and if it doesn't work out, we can't go back and say we've got to retrofit. I think if we do this right on new construction, this same technology can be applied to existing homes. One of the biggest problems we have is in the areas where homes were built 50 years ago, 60 years ago, and there's no water quality, there's no detention, there's nothing. The technology we're looking at and talking about is something that can be retrofitted into those older neighborhoods. That's what the drainage fee can be looked at doing is coming in and retrofitting the older neighborhoods with technology we're using on the new homes. I could go on for a long time. I'm sure we're well past our five minutes or however long, but again, I'd be available to answer questions about how this affects the home building industry, how this affects the development industry, at any point in time. And I appreciate you all having us up here and going to through the effort to learn more about what we're doing. >> Mayor Adler: Ms. Houston. >> Houston: Mayor, do you want us to wait until the end of the panel before we ask our questions? >> Mayor Adler: We could do this. We haven't been doing that thus far so you don't need to feel bound by that. >> Houston: Just clarifying. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Ms. Gallo. >> Gallo: I appreciate you bringing up the point about the affordability and how it needs to be connected when we're talking about policy. How would you suggest that we make that happen? >> That's a tough question. The problem we have when we come up with regulations, that's like doing legislation down at the state legislature. We come up with great ideas, you write a bill, you submit it, and

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what comes out is totally different that understand what comes in. I think the rule-making process here is the same. We have a rule-making process for what we want to see in a typical water quality control. The design of those, unfortunately, when you get to implementing those from an engineering standpoint, you have your control structure, which is the basin you see. You've got to have an area set aside, during maintenance they have a place to park their trucks and store their equipment. You have to put a fence around the structure and set-by between the structure and adjacent development so kids don't come into it. The other criteria, you have to have a roadway completely around the structure

where trucks and equipment with drive around the structure. Suddenly your pond becomes this big but your work environment is this big to make that thing work. And we've got to get away from the philosophy of we've got to be able to get here to maintain every one of these ponds, the largest truck the city of Austin owns and the least efficient mechanism is how we deal with these. These are ponds that can be dealt with with a person and a shovel and cleaned out once every five years. We've built biofiltration ponds one side in the city of Austin and spent a lot full money putting in a certain type of plants and the city of Austin came in and mowed them all down. They didn't understand the way these operate is with the plant life. There's going to be an education with city maintenance or the maintenance needs to go to somebody else, have your hoa maintain these ponds. I live in a development in south Austin over the recharge zone, we comply with sos, have our water quality ponds, pay an extra fee to irrigation lands, maintain our own property, have a permit through this stuff. So we maintain it as a hoa, not the city of Austin. I think you're going to see more and more ponds where the city of Austin simply can't maintain the ponds they have right now. What we're talking about going to is going to a vastly, more ponds than what you see right now. Right now you have a neighborhood of a hundred homes, you may have two ponds that serve that hundred homes. The right idea would be to have a neighborhood of a hundred homes and you have a hundred ponds, or 50 ponds. City can't maintain what they have now, they certainly can't maintain if we start increasing

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drastically the ponds built, the number of quality facilities, not ponds, so we need to find a different maintenance system. >> Mr. Mayor? >> Mayor Adler: Yes. Ms. Kitchen. >> Kitchen: I also just wanted to comment or ask a question about affordability. I think that one of the -- one of the challenges of affordability is, you know, looking at the whole picture. >> Uh-huh. >> Kitchen: Because, you know, we have to think in terms of -- the cost that regulations place on housing, for example, but we also have to think about the cost of water over time. >> Yes. >> Kitchen: So, you know, the sponge concept and other concepts that we've been talking about, you know, when we look at affordability, it may be that something may cost a little more right now, but in the longer term, it saves people money. So that's -- I think that's one of the challenges from affordability. >> I agree completely. Lcra has looked at that. If you come in under lcra criteria, it's made with a sponge concrete. If you put that in for your driveway, you don't count the driveway as impervious cover that has to be treated from a water quality standpoint. If you come in and put in a green roof, take downspouts and route them to grassy areas, you don't count that rooftop as impervious cover because it's being treated somewhere else. You get credit for the good things you're doing, you can't come in and just say do all these great things, we're giving you no credit, no incentive to do these things because it's an economic decision. If a developer is coming in and home builder coming in and saying do I want a two-bedroom house or water quality pond in the backyard, you've got to build the house first. We can do these economically and make it work but it takes an innovative thinking and different way and different model than what we have right now. That model needs to be completely thrown out and start again from scratch. >> Mayor Adler: Ms. Houston.

>> Houston: Mr. Smith, thank you for coming today. >> Sure. >> Houston: When I block-walked and knocked on doors, the people

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in my district didn't know how to say green water infrastructure so I have to challenge you on that. But they did talk about runoff, they did talk about erosion in their backyards, that their backyards were falling into the creek. They did talk about the rate of flow from the concrete tunnels that are used in our area. They talked about how new development has increased the runoff through the neighborhood and down their streets and over the tops of their front yards, because the infrastructure was not -- it was not built to handle that. So they did talk about it. Not in the terms that you used, but I just wanted to clarify that they did talk about it. >> Sure. Good. >> Mayor Adler: Anything else? Ms. Tovo. >> Tovo: I'd like to backtrack just a minute and be really clear about the code next project as it was referred to. So there is a green -- a green infrastructure working group that has been meeting, I believe, it came out of some resolutions from council. Is that -- of course, we want that work to inform our code next process. Is there a separate group meeting as part of the code next process, or is the earlier reference to the working group? >> I'm not sure. I only know one working group that my staff is working. >> Tovo: Right. That's the one I'm familiar with as well. I see Mr. Pantalione. Would it be okay to ask him to clarify? >> For the working group that was associated with the initial watershed protection ordinance passage has now transitioned into that green infrastructure working group, so it is one and the same group. >> Tovo: I see. So can you explain -- of course the work that that group is doing will inform the code next process. Is there a direct link? >> Absolutely. I know that my staff have been working very closely with George Apple, George Adams, and pdr staff who are managing code next. And that working group for green infrastructure is considered kind of a -- now an extension of

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the code next process. >> Tovo: Okay. Thanks for making that clarification. But we can expect that the results of the green infrastructure work group to come forward in a relatively short timetable, whereas our full rewrite of the land development code will be several years off. >> That is the plan. >> Tovo: Okay. Super. Thanks very much. I know that my staff has been tending to that and is really optimistic about the work you're doing, so thanks. >> There are several members of the caag that are also participating in the green infrastructure work group so there's a direct link in what's going on there. >> Mayor Adler: Ms. Houston. >> Houston: So I'm sure that I should know this, but maybe other people don't. What is pdr, and now we have a caag, and I don't know what a caag is. >> Sure. Pdr is our planning and development review department, and the caag is citizens advisory group. So thank you. >> Mayor

Adler: Thank you. Thank you, sir. Mr. Snier. >> Council members, I'm the CEO and co-founder of big red dog engineering. I'm here today to speak to you about flooding and storm water detention. And the first distinction I want to make from what Hank and Dr. Ross discussed when they speak about water quality, that's largely an environmental issue. When we talk about flooding and detention, that goes largely a health and safety issues. It's the flood waters that are wiping out the houses that is causing the damage that's shutting down the roadways. It's not the dirt, the fact that the water is dirty. So as they advocate for a solution as close to the point source of the pollution as possible, on a drainage area you may hear me advocate for more of a regional solution. Unique to Austin, our flooding has caused almost entirely by rainfall events. We don't have snow melt

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upstream, we don't have tidal action. Tropical storm action is relatively benign by the time it gets to central Texas, which is to say the type of flooding we experience can be relatively known, but once in a while, it jumps out at us. Not too long ago, 2007, Marble Falls got 19 inches of rain in eight hours, and anecdotally speaking I would suggest to you that that's a rainfall event that should happen once every five hundred or a thousand years, certainly not every 10 or 25 or 50 years. And that could happen in our region at any time. Two years ago, during Austin city limits, the second weekend, south Austin, I think the number was nine inches of rain in a 14-hour period, and ended the second week of ACL. For the very same reason, our highland lakes can fill up in a matter of days or weeks if we get rainfall in the right location. So when we talk about flooding, let's talk about it first on historic level, and I'll give you two dates. The mid-1960s is when our current modern methodology was developed by the Army Corps of Engineers. And in the 1970s, the city of Austin really put in our modern drainage policy that has sense been ended, but the policy that didn't exist when developments like Onion Creek were first conceived. So when we talk about historic flooding, Waller Creek is a good example. Someone hit on whole Waller Creek, the Waller Creek Conservancy, it kind and the downtown turned its back to that area. We talked about Shoal Creek, we talked about Onion Creek. Council member Gallon oh, I think you hit on Lakewood drive and

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2222. We just addressed the 2222 part of that recently. When that historical flooding is present, that is a problem that is largely a city issue that the city and Tack Paris have to address. It's something -- there was a great quote on Ms. Lee's slight from Ben Franklin, it's a lot more to fix it after the fact than to get it right the first time. In those situations that are much publicized, that is what's happened. If you look at the present day, mid '70s and forward, by and large our city drainage policy has done an excellent job on

the new developments. There are, of course, exceptions to every statement and I could give you plenty, but the drainage policy, our code for engineering ethics is very clear to us. You know, we must address our flooding events. There cannot be any downstream effects. As civil and design engineers, Hank and I can make many mistakes that never get us to the courthouse steps but if we screw up our drainage and flood somebody downstream, we're going to end up at the courthouse. That's a fact of our business. And we also design to the one and 100 year event. So the worst storm in a hundred-year period, creature Kelly, our drainage policy and our designs accommodate that storm. For undeveloped property, green grass, if you will, there are two mechanisms that we have to stop flooding, pond development. The first is on-site detention, and the second is regional solution. RsmP is another acronym, regional storm water management program that the city implements. And then for developed sites that are being redeveloped, very to have any flooding has already been accommodated with subsequent projects that on-site detention is not a significant concern upon redevelopment, which also poses an opportunity policywise for us to look at. In contrast to redevelopment,

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suburb developments, we've done very little urban redevelopments that had a detention facility on the property. We've done very few suburb new developments that don't have a detention pond on the property. And they're not very pleasant to look at, unlike a water quality pond, they're four to five times larger, they're concrete boxes, they collect trash and add nothing to the value of the land. They're simply a safety mechanism. So what we're getting with the current drainage policy is by and large working. But as we talk about affordability, as we talk about the increasing value of the dirt, one of the methods we have at our disposal to combat that is the land that we're currently dedicating to flood control can be used more wisely, it can be relocated. As an example, the Mueller redevelopment project has two beautiful storm water ponds on the property. They are both water quality and detention ponds. They're permanent pool ponds. They're wet, if you go out there during the drought, they'll still be wet. They treat hundreds of upstream acres, they relieve the flooding in boggy creek downstream, and they add an incredible amount of value to the Mueller redevelopment. That is the hub of the community, it's an amenity in the community, and for 60% of the people out there, if there wasn't a sign that said it was a storm water facility, they would think that it was built as a landscape feature. Those are the -- that is the best example in the city of a great regional solution. It's hard, as Dr. Ross mentioned, to shoehorn such solutions in developed areas after the fact. But there are opportunities in every creek and every watershed within the city for us to achieve that. We have several conflicting conflicting

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authorities to putting detention ponds and creeks. Some are federal, some are city. If I wanted to put flood control in line today or immediately adjacent to a creek, I would have to get U.S. Army corps of engineers permits, I would be within city of Austin environmental creek setbacks, I potentially would have heritage tree issues, and within a quick ten-minute review of where I was proposing a pond next to a creek, I would go back to the client and say, you'll never build your project; put the pond on site. But it is just like the highland Lakes, which are dammed up, as a dammed up river, on a very -- much smaller scale, creeks can be brought back to life. Waller creek is a perfect example of that. They can serve as detention and water quality. They're dead today. I know of no creek -- Bull Creek is one of them, seasonally, but I know of no creek that's actually alive today. We have dead creeks that suffer boom and bust flood control cycles. There's no plant and animal life thriving in there. Hopefully with Waller creek, we start to change that, and through other engineering solutions, the other creeks can experience a similar revitalization. But you've seen Shoal Creek has been restored significantly from a concrete channel. You go look at Boggy Creek today, Boggy Creek, by fifth and sixth street, looks like the old L.A. River from the movie Grease. You could drive a car down it. Smooth, paved concrete. Those are all opportunities for us to turn flood control from a safety issues into an amenity. It's the same you here in terms of environmental perspective, you're going to hear endangered species perspective. What's important to us as a city and as a citizenry, that's not a question I'm here to answer. I play by the rules the elected body sits but there's plenty of opportunities for us to address our flooding and our drainage in

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more innovative ways. In-line or adjacent to the creeks on a regional basis as appropriate. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Questions? Thank you very much, Mr. Snier. Ms. Bristol. >> Thank you very much, mayor. My name's Valerie Bristol. I'm currently a retired person on the -- serving on the board of Travis autobahn. I think I was asked to come today because I was a county commissioner in the '90s and played a role in the formation of the Balconies Canyon land. I had to struggle with endangered species issues, infrastructure issues and come to you understanding how hard it is. But I wish to tell you, in my opinion there are three major things to pay attention to here besides affordability. I'm going to talk about the -- more the green infrastructure issue right at this moment. And that would be the Balconies Canyon plan exists and is out there. The water quality lands we've heard that Willie mentioned, then all this enormously complex creek and river system that we have here in our wonderful city. And so those are the key things that, as any decision that's made on development, depending on where it is, sort of -- these are the flags you should always check by. You say how is that affecting that creek or how is that affecting the water quality lands, or how is that affecting the Balcones area, to have that just as a reminder that these are infrastructures that are in place, and that need to be considered as decisions to be made. And I'm going to focus a little

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bit here on the balcones because we've had presentations that talked about the creeks and the river system and the water quality lands. But for those of you who weren't privileged to participate massively in the 1990s, we had a huge community discussion about what to do when we found out we were placed, our city and county, were placed right in the heart of an endangered species habitat that was declared endangered. That's the golden creek warbler, the black cat and caves, which were considered to be endangered. We had to deal with how did we address this issue? It's a federal law. As you know, the endangered species act. And some very inventive people came up with, actually read the law, amazing, and discovered that there was a mechanism that would allow a community to have its own answer to an endangered species act and that is a habitat conservation plan. And we in this community, when I use the word "We clear, I mean --we," I mean all of us, came together with the idea that it would be better to have a habitat plan managed by the city of Austin and Travis county than to have it be administered always -- only through a federal plan. So it also lift lifted the burden off the individual landowner who otherwise had to go and make applications to the federal system with the endangered species act, which was difficult, long, and expensive. So looking at all these different pieces, we came together with a solution that

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was that we would establish permanent preserve system in exchange for allowing a better and quicker mechanism for development. And that is the essence of the balcones. So by providing a mechanism that was fairly simple, fairly straightforward, or very straightforward, for landowners to present their property, present their plan, receive how much the fee would be for permitting their property through the regional permit, which is held by the city of Austin and Travis county, it has worked extremely approximately. We have had enormous development, in case you all might have noticed, out in the endangered species area. Now, some people would say we grow too well. We didn't save enough land, and that is a very realistic argument, but I think we saved what we could. It was a difficult financially, it has cost absolutely millions and millions and millions of dollars to establish these preserves. Both has been funded through bondholders through the city of Austin who fortunately chose a bond package in the early '90s which took advantage of the resolution trust's failure at the time of many developers that had gone bankrupt. So the land was purchased for about four thousand, five thousand dollars an acre, which today is 15 to 20,000 an acre. So it was a wonderful purchase and 12,000 acres into the preserve right away. The county bond package did not pass, and then Travis county designed a tax increment plan, which I call it a virtual tax

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increment plan, because it's one they designed themselves, not the ones that are in the legislation in the state, but it kicks the money from development that uses the permit, goes back into purchasing preserves, and that money has brought down \$90 million in federal funds. So the preserve system is almost complete. It's a little over 30,000 acres of the mostly golden cheek warbler habitat. The enormous increase in tax base when the development was allowed to take place out in the city and the county as well, but the water quality, nobody at the beginning was advocating this for water, but of course it has been a huge asset to protect the water quality coming in from the west, which comes to all of us. Everybody drinks the water that comes from the west. So the bull creek watershed has been greatly protected, not wholly, but greatly, by the balcones land -- preserve lands. Lake Austin, city -- there's also lands out near lake Travis. So those have been -- have done their job. Those mitigation properties are, as I said, almost complete, and much of the development that was using the permit is probably getting close to being built out in many places. It was a very successful local solution, very difficult national problem, and it had -- this was the first multispecies has been cat conservation plan in America, and it was very difficult to develop because when you're first, it's always harder. There were no precedents or

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things about what the local community could do, and we struggled with how to do it equitably and recognized that the people who were already living here had also taken habitat in the past. And this is, in a sense, another way to balance out the funding and not make it be just the landowner who was left at the end with endangered species on their property. I think it was a very equitable solution, but the key now is, it takes -- it will always -- the preserves have to be held in perpetuity, so they're not something that just got used and now you can change their use. Their use has done a job. And that job is all the development that took place because of the mitigation of those preserves, and they must be maintained forever. They will also be constantly threatened. People look out and they go -- they see a whole group of trees growing and thing, oh, wow, there's an open place. We could put our road right through there. Or we could take a piece of this and use it for ... Blank. So it's very easy to -- for everybody to say, oh, this won't hurt. This is just a little bitty bit of the overall. But of course this -- I didn't explain it too detailed, but this mitigation, it was the minimum that we could -- and it cost a fortune, as I've already described, but it was the minimum. So if you take away any piece of it, you are reducing it further. Also, it would have to be replaced, and we're running out of replacement properties that still have endangered species on them. So those are just things to consider when you hear, oh, this would be easy for us to just take this little piece.

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And that -- that's basically my presentation, except for one thing. Invasive species are a threat to all of the infrastructure that we do have. The balcones canyon lands, the water quality lands, and all of our creek and river system are greatly threatened by -- these are plants primarily from Asia, as you can tell from the flame. We have the wax leaf lagustrum, the Chinese -- I won't list them all off but we have lots and lots of plants that uses landscape plants many years ago but have escaped and are rapidly growing through our creek systems. If you ever hike as I do in the barn creek wilderness park, it's through of lagustrum. It totally changes the ability of the land to do its job, to filter the water, to be the sponge that was described earlier, to be habitat for all the different birds that we love to see in our neighborhoods. So please don't forget about invasive plants when you're making plans. Thank you very much. The city of Austin is located in a very unique place. We're right between the Edwards plateau and black land prairie coming in. It gives enormous ecological diversity, an exciting place to live, lots of different places to go for our citizens to enjoy, and thank you for your willingness to see that it's cared for carefully. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much. Mr. Zimmerman. >> Zimmerman: Yes. Thank you very much for that. I don't know how many people in here live adjacent to the bccp, but I'm one of those. I'm on a piece of greenbelt

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property that's immediately adjacent to the bccp. >> Does everybody know what that is? >> Zimmerman: Balcones canyon land preserve. Thank you. I appreciate that. You made a couple of, you know, qualifying statements, very successful benefits. I guess I've already been kind of critical of always talking about benefits without talking about the cost because there's a cost/benefit ratio. And there's one endangered species that you left out, and that's the Austin resident. The Austin resident is an endangered species. I mean, there are a lot of unintended consequences of what has happened here, is people who can't afford a lot of these mitigation plans have been, have been already, driven out of the city, especially in the northwest area where I've lived for 15 years. I just -- I moved here in 2000, and I started to hear about the Barton creek salamander, Barton creek salamander. And I still feel as a council member representing north Austin that there's more compassion for the Barton creek salamander than there is people that have been taxed out of our city. So my compassion lies with people that have been taxed out of our city by unaffordable and unsustainable action plans. I think now is as good a time as in I to mention a couple of things. Does anybody here understand that nobody in the world, the world's leading scientists do not know how many species can I. Species exist. They do not know. There are species disappearing from our planet before they are discovered. There are potentially millions of species that disappeared before human beings ever existed. And to be frank with you, I'm a little bit insulted at the I had

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it I don't tell CI to say the species if they disappeared are going to cause a cataclysmic disaster to our environment. We don't know how many are disappearing before we even discover them. It's my opinion, I tell you, I knocked on a lot of doors, they are angry about the cost of living here. And I think this misguided priority on species that are very likely going to disappear no matter what human beings do, the species will still disappear. So I think the policy has gone way overboard, we're taxing people out of their homes in this city, and I think it's a fool's errand. >> May I address that briefly? >> Mayor Adler: Yes. >> You'll have to remember that I mentioned in the very beginning, as a public office holder at the time, I struggled with this issue because this was a federal law. This is not something we just dreamed up. We didn't choose one day to live here and -- because we loved an endangered species. They were here long before we were, and then we found ourselves dealing with obeying the federal law, at the same time trying to turn it into an asset. You can rail against and argue against a law, or you can figure out how to make it work well for your local community. And I think this, the city leaders at the time and the county leaders did the very best they could with answering that question. Also, I'll point out that none of these things were done without votes, support of the community. This was a community solution, if you're referring only to the balcones canyon lands, they also -- that would also apply to the water quality lands. The creeks and rivers will be a constant issue, depending on where they are, but each one of

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those will have to have the citizens who are highly affected by that speak up, but they may or may not always find the cheapest solution, but we try to find -- I thought we found a long-term solution that made the most sense, and those are always hard questions. No question. >> I do have one final question. >> Thank you, mayor, and thank you for your input into this conversation. As you can see, it raises passions on all sides. >> Yes. >> Houston: But I want to thank you for mentioning the black land prairies. I hear the environmental talk all the time and nobody really realizes what a relationship that is to all the things that we're saving in the west side of Austin. So I just wanted you to know that I appreciate you knowing about it and mentioning it. Thank you. >> Well, one thing I would like to point out, I think a lot more attention will be paid to the east side, as the city moves in that direction, and that's going to be those very important big extensive creek systems and the river itself. As you're well aware, the river flows freely from longhorn dam on to the gulf of Mexico. It's a huge asset for the eastern part of the community and has not been addressed as a positive aspect. >> Houston: But I'm more concerned about paving over the area. >> Oh, no, I totally agree with you. And you can incorporate that in the water as well. Multiuse is the best way to go. >> Mayor Adler: Dr. Ross or Ms.

Lee, in Mr. Smith's testimony and Mr. Snier's testimony, there was some discussion about alternative ways to address these issues. There's some discussion about

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mechanical alternatives, there was discussion about non-maintained alternatives, there was discussion about alternatives that might cost less, that could be employed. Would you address those from your perspective? >> We have a whole range of options that have been presented to you to address. The three main missions of watershed protection are flood control, erosion and prevention, which preserves the bangs of creeks and heritage trees in people's backyards and fence lines, and then water quality protection. And we're not going to solve any of those problems, we're not going to -- we are not going to have the best Austin infrastructure with a single approach on any of those solutions. We have -- as a city, we have always been state of the art, really right at the cutting edge, way ahead of Houston, for example. If you drive to Houston, you'll see that their channels are large, concrete-lined ditches that flow through the city. And that drainage policy in the city of Houston was established in the 1970s. I was actually signing some of those facilities in the 1970. 1970s in Houston, and talking to them about the fact that we need more flood storage in the upland areas. At the same time that that conversation was happening in Houston, Austin was actually implementing that solution. So now we're here 40 years, literally almost 40 years down the line, and we have a lot of the benefits of a wide range of

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solutions, mayor Adler, to these three watershed missions. And I think part of -- I don't think the citizens of Austin are an endangered species. We are the fastest growing city in the state, one of the fastest growing cities in the country, and the reason why we are growing so fast is because we have maintained a quality of life that those of us who lived in Houston moved back for. So I don't think there's a single solution. I think we need to broaden our pallet, and I think we need to broaden our -- our understanding, both as a city, staff infrastructure manager, but also as a community so we understand how our rain garden and our rain catch are -- need to be managed to be part of the city. It will be something like driving the speed limit or stopping at the stoplights. We will learn how to live in our environment in a way that doesn't create a public safety issue or an environmental problem or an erosion problem for somebody downstream. And I think that really is one of the challenges that we face as a community. >> Mayor Adler, I've heard your speech several times about how you ended up in Barton springs shortly after arriving in Austin. And that being how you knew you had found your place. I would suggest to you and the entire council that because we have protected our endangered species and our natural features more than the other very developed cities in Texas it makes us a very unique

place and contributes to our success today. The problems we're facing are problems caused by success. And we should be grateful for that, but we shouldn't forget the values that got us here. We didn't get here because people didn't vote, and policy was made behind closed doors. Many of these votes were made in

[10:55:18 AM]

the open with people who are behind me leading that charge, people who are up here leading that charge, and we need to be cognizant of that, that -- I second Dr. Ross's statement. With the population growth we've had, they're coming here because we have something special and we're maintaining something special. So that's important to me as a citizen, as a land development practitioner, and I just wanted to second that also. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. >> If I can add, I agree, there is a concern in that Austin is losing its middle class. For the second or third year in a row, AISD has fewer students moving into AISD. They have fewer students going to school at AISD than they had last year. Fewer students last year than the year before. We are growing, but we're not growing across the board. We're growing with the very rich and we're growing with the younger -- the younger generation. We're not growing in that middle class. It's not a place where someone can get a starter home and move up within Austin. You have to have money to live here. And the directions we're going are going to continue in that direction unless we find some solutions. One thing the development community has done is we started doing more detached condominium projects. What that means is, you have a neighborhood that from your perspective, when you drive through you'll never know you're in a detached condominium project, but the city of Austin considers a commercial development and we're exempt from all the land development regulations. We can come in and design roadways with a 15 miles per hour design speed, as opposed to a 20 or 30 miles per hour design speed. We can weave in and out of trees and preserve setbacks. We can do a lot of things in a condominium regime that you can't do in traditional subdivision. What I've encouraged the CAG group to see if we can't incorporate those same standards into a subdivision standards. Right now a subdivision in Austin is 60 block feet with

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25 feet set back from edge of the pavement, the garage sits out front and everything looks the same because that's what the standards drive you to. Going to the condominium regime lets us basically place the same number of houses on the place, voiding the trees, avoiding all the environmental features you would want, then getting a driveway for each one of those homes. The homeowners don't own the property in front of them, it's all owned by condo association like you are downtown, but when you drive through, it looks the same as a residential neighborhood but has a totally different feel to it and

totally different mechanism. It's what the development community has had to go to to get around some regulations, make it still somewhat affordable and flexible enough to develop what citizens are asking for in terms of what they want to see in their homes. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. We have five other voices to speak. Erin foster. >> Can I ask a question while she's walking up? I'm glad we're having this conversation about affordability and sustainability and environmental concerns because it's a really important one. And cost often comes up when we talked developers. The question is -- the issue is often to require these extra regulations you're making it more expensive for us to create our product. And when we're -- I think it was in New York timesthis week, it had an article this week about a drought that's going to be coming home, we're going to experience a very large drought and we have to -- when we had the water conversation, it was -- they talked about we need to start looking at how these policies that we set and how we do all this stuff, because it's not getting better anytime soon, it's getting worse. So like the rain water we capture, is there any, I guess, studies you could direct us to or information that shows the cost of implementing those kinds of things and building is actually maybe getting cheaper,

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or how much more expensive is it than just regular on-site detention and that kind of stuff, is there any way you can direct is so we'll know -- solar is getting cheaper to, from my understanding, this is getting cheaper, so those are some policies we should be looking at. Do you have any information you can provide us with -- >> Council member Garza, I don't have those Numbers off the top of my head, but there are actually many websites out there right now that are -- cost models for green infrastructure and you can plug in the size of your house and you can plug in the amount of rain catch and some of the alternative storm water management systems, and it will, on a subdivision scale, tell you how much it cost to do development one way, versus development the other way. I have access to those models. I'm happy to share them. I'm sure watershed protection is looking at them as well. But that's exactly the kind of question and the kind of information that we need to be bringing forward. And I think, really, our watershed regulations have not changed since -- substantially since the early '90s. So developers have been developing to those regulations for a long time, whereas the cost has increased a lot. I think if you look at -- and I think we ought to, because we need to answer council member Zimmerman's question, but if you look at what's driving the lack of affordability in Austin, it is not the regulations that are protecting our creeks, our streams, our springs, and our aquifers. What's driving the lack of affordability in Austin is really simply >> In regard to the water quantity aspect, one thing the home builders association is working on, we worked with the city of Austin, Icra, several landscape architects, trying to come up with a new landscape package for single family homes that we build in this area. Historically the design has been an after-thought,

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developers have put in a home builders have put in saint Augustine from front to back, side to side, irrigation system that maintains that, you walk away and forget about it. [Laughter]. You get three trees, actually, seven bushes, it's not a landscape package that's fit for -- I don't want to use the term drought, but not fit for the environment of central Texas. [Audio lapse]. The grass shouldn't necessarily be saint Augustine, should be a natural type of vegetation. You don't have to have rock and xeriscape, but mulch you can do things that look nice, are esthetically pleasing that the homeowners want that uses less to maintain less water. We've been working on this package for about a year and a half. We're about to send it out this is what the development committee is regulating, this is how we self regulate. We've had a lot of input from lcra, local landscape architects putting that together. >> Mayor Adler: That sounds great. Let's go to the other -- let's go -- >> Tovo: Can I make one quick comment? I appreciate the discussion about cost, especially the comments from our speakers about how we might think about those more comprehensively because, you know, I think about some of the constituent emails that I have gotten over the years, councilmember kitchen talked about the issue on south Lamar which I know my office has heard a lot about in the last several years and has been involved in. I have some individual constituents in areas also in Bouldin creek where there is flooding and the city is now going in with an infrastructure project to try to help that. As we talk about costs and benefits, I hope we remember that - I think Dr. Ross you emphasized this as well. When up front solutions aren't adequate, there is a cost to other property owners if there's damage to the property and there's also a public cost as well if we have to go in and retrofit it. I appreciate the way that

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came out in different ways in the presentations we heard, so thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Let's go to the other voices. Yes, thank you. >> Hi, my name is Erin foster. For the past 15 months I've been working with the organization targ, Travis Austin recovery group, helping and assisting the neighbors in -- that were impacted by the 2003 floods. That's probably a minute right there, isn't it? Okay. I wanted to say we still need to be buying these last 240 homes. You will hear that from me every single time under the same policy. But looking forward when we're talking about flooding, one of the things that I think and would like to recommend as a policy is that we have someone in the -- in the watershed department that is tasked with being a grants writer/administrator. There are numerous grants out there from FEMA to mitigate before flooding and also after flooding. We -- according to FEMA, we are in the whole nation -- Texas is in the top five for repetitive loss. That means people that have been flooded over and over again. Yet, we don't get very much funding for that. So -- so knowing that we're in a flash flood alley, which is what the national weather service calls us, we should have funds constantly being applying for funds to mitigate flooding because we flood. And as you saw, there's 5,000 something properties that could flood in a 100 year flood. So I recommend that you do that. Because there isn't that type of a person in that department. And we're always scrambling for funds. And these are funds that are

available if you apply for them. Of course, dealing with the federal government takes sometimes years to get the

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money as we've discovered with the core money. But eventually it may come. The other thing I wanted to mention was -- was -- or speak to was the community -- cumulative development impacts. Again, this is -- we look at the floodplain maps and we look where people are in relation to the floodplain maps, but we don't look at the development that impacts, that goes into those creeks that impacts down the road. A good example of that is the south park meadows development. Over 523 impervious covers, it's right across the road from where all of these homes flooded. All of the water goes right into slaughter creek, which then goes right into onion and yet there's no way -- this isn't used as an impact. That cumulative impact is not addressed when we are looking at flood areas. So I would like to see something done about that when we are looking at areas that flood, we look at what could be impacting it for what's built around it, especially something as substantial as that. I had the opportunity to walk down that creek after the floods, it was five months after the floods. And everything downstream going towards those homes, there was debris over ten feet in the air. There was not a single piece of debris upstream. So that tells me that there was a lot of water that went into that creek, that then went into onion creek and had a substantial impact on those flood waters. I'm not saying that was the reason for the flood, but it needs to be looked at. The other thing that I wanted to say is that because of the repetitive loss, like I said, we have severe repetitive loss and repetitive loss. We need to really look at flooding before it happens. And I also wanted to address this for Mr. Zimmerman. The cost benefit of buying out these homes right now and getting them out of the way and mitigating, there's a federal study that shows that for every dollar we

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spend to get people out of harm's way, we will save \$2 in future costs. So there's a very benefit -- boy, I must not have had enough coffee. There's a very definite cost benefit. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you, very much Ms. Foster. Jacquelyn Perez? You have three minutes. >> Thank you very much. Good morning, mayor Adler, good morning councilmembers. My name is Jacquelyn Perez, I experienced the onion creek flood of 2013, thankfully Austin firefighters and first responders saved me from the ravaging waters. I have a background in public policy. I understand your concerns and I would like to express to you some of our concerns. I'm here today because your future policy decisions may leave 240 families homeless. Please allow me to explain. Currently, 140 of my neighbors are actively being bought out with relocation benefits. There was a buyout proposal brief that was presented to you in December with an

option for the remaining 240 homes, it stated that only homeowners that are low income will be able to qualify for relocation benefits and there is a \$31,000 cap on these benefits. If presented again, there are two problems with this proposal. One, homeowners must be low income to qualify for relocation benefits. So I ask you: Does this mean we must all remain poor citizens with little or no contribution to society in order to qualify for these relocation benefits? And, two, the relocation benefits are capped at 31,000. As a realtor, I know that the average three bed, two bath home in Austin has a list price of -- [audio lapse] -- Dollars.

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So this cap of \$31,000 would not be enough. Thus, it is crucial that every receive the relocation benefits. Without the full relocation benefits, there will be 240 homeowners left homeless. Like my neighbors, I lost my home, my car, my stability and also my livelihood. I have flood insurance. And yet it still took one year to fund. Meanwhile, I was homeless, living in a borrowed car, just so that way I could continue working my full-time job, showers, clean clothes, hot meals and safety became luxuries that I could not afford while I still had to pay for mortgage, insurance, and utility payments in a house that I could not live in. The devastation still continues for us all and we remain in harm's way. We ask you, since September 2014, we have the funds, why is it taking so long to buy us out of the number one high-risk area in Austin? Mayor Adler and councilmembers, please vote no to the policy change that removes relocation benefits. We deserve a fair package, just like our neighbors who have been bought out before us and this complete package would give us the ability to relocate to a safe place that we can begin to call home. Otherwise, we will once again be left homeless. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much. David van Hughes. You also have three minutes, Mr. Van Hughes. >> Thank you, mayor Adler. Council. Thank you for the opportunity to be here. My message is pretty simple and straightforward. If we expect to move toward sustainable water or sustainable watershed management instead of ever further away, we need to move as far and as fast as we can to a system that's based on low impact development, green infrastructure and volume

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based hydrology as some of the other speakers here have alluded to. My preference on this would be to set a rather simple and straightforward performance goal of -- of making the rainfall runoff response of the developed property as close to as it can be to the -- to the rainfall runoff response to the predevelopment property. Not to get all wonky on you, but Ms. Kitchen this speaks to your concern about the impacts after development of cumulative increases in impervious cover that aren't mitigated and so on. So I think this also speaks to your concern, Mr. Zimmerman, if we turn engineers loose to

engineer or actually maybe we should say start requiring them to engineer because right now the system is pretty much -- they are expected to push down a cookie cutter and regurgitate prescriptive designs that are blessed in the environmental criteria manual. If we let engineers engineer as creatively as they can, I think we will address some of the affordability problems. [Audio lapse]. Have here because I think this process would be delinquent in not pointing out to you that the bureaucracy needs to be fixed, performed. I design and implemented the first project in Austin that relied exclusively on full infiltration bioretention beds, or more C known as rain gardens, for detached single family townhouse Contreras project type that Mr. Smith spoke about. And it was a surprise to all of the staff and everyone that this could be implemented without any variances. The city had told the -- these developers that they had to go do a retention irrigation system. I was called in to do that because I'm a licensed

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irrigator as well as a be. I looked at this, I said this is nuts, we can do this. As I said everyone was surprised at that. Everyone expects you press down on a cookie cutter and selection the options. With he need to get more creative. Move to the new way of doing things, lid, infrastructure, volume based hydrology, highly distributed. We need to make sure each aspect does multiple functions. For example, rainwater harvesting are an ace in the hole because you have gone to a certain level of impervious cover, you are going to be hard pressed to observe more water on that land. So rainwater harvesting for active use is really the ace in the hole here. This is an example of how we can can do multiple functions with one thing. Rainwater harvesting provides water for irrigation, provides superior water quality management of that rooftop, it restores the hydrological integrity of that patch of ground now covered with a rooftop and as I said, then also down size the rest of the green infrastructure because that rooftop is out of play. This is an example of the sorts of things that we need to start moving to. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much. Tomat pantine. >> Mayor and councilmembers, I'm very happy that we are retooling the system and looking into the future. One point that I would like to talk about is balcones canyon land preserve. They have a lot of control over our parks and our over our citizens. On the other hand, city council and Travis county commissioners don't have any say into the balcones canyonland preserves management. The way that the preserve -- the bccp, which is the balcones canyonland preserves -- conservation

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plan works only has two board members. One from the city, one from the county. It's impossible to do business. If they find each other in any room other than chambers, it is a quorum, so they cannot even talk to each other. Also, to get things done it's very difficult because you have a tie, it will be very

difficult to solve it. Now, to change the board itself would be very difficult, would take time. At the same time, the bccp has -- has citizens advisory committee. Something similar to what we have with -- with the parks and recreation boards and different -- the planning commission, et cetera, et cetera. One solution we can have, it won't cost any money at all is to change how those members are selected. So my proposal is for every one of us, every one of the councilmembers, every one of the county commissioners get to as sign one representative of their choice to this group, assign one representative of their choice to this group. That way we would have at least some kind of connection between the city, the county and the balcones canyonlands preserve management. At the moment, we have none. There have been many issues in the past. Some in favor; some against the balcones canyonland preserves, but they were all bottlenecked because there is no way for the city council, Travis county commissioners to manage it. I would be happy to talk in more detail if anybody has any questions. Thank you very much. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much. >> Thanks. >> Mayor Adler: Mr. Bunch, bill bunch, thank you, sir. >> [Indiscernible]. [Off microphone]. >> Thank you mayor, councilmembers, I'm bill bunch with the save our springs, I was one of the four environmental community representatives on the initial stakeholder group that created the balcones

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canyonlands plan. Also instrumental in helping get some of those endangered species listed. I want to talk to you a little bit about our preserve system and how it fits with our parks and water quality lands. I first want to just back up and start back to the beginning and -- and Ms. Lee I think opened with a point that is so critical that we have to keep in mind. That is the ounce of prevention versus a pound of cure. We've got to prevent these problems up front and when we have succumbed to developer arguments, there's always going to be some who don't want to spend that ounce. And they want us to pay the pound. And we see that with flooding, we see that with pollution. And we're paying the cost of past mistakes. And so I hope we'll not succumb to that. We do have to prevent it up front. Secondly, on the issue of affordability, the city is unaffordable because we simply haven't made growth pay for itself. That's the bottom line. We've got to make growth pay for itself. We're told we got to grow our tax base, but our taxes keep going up, so there's a disconnect there. As Mr. Sayers said, though, it's also a matter of success. When you have a great place, people want to move here. When growth is happening so fast that we can't keep up, then simple supply and demand kicks in. Those who have the money pay for -- and can afford to buy the prime locations. We're seeing that. If we want affordability, in the central city, we're going to have to bring some public dollars to the table to provide it. That's all it is. But to suggest that Austin is unaffordable because we're protecting our environment, it's absurd, there's not a shred of support for that argument. We have spent many tens of

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millions of dollars to preserve land. The image that I have provided in the interest of sort of one picture is word a thousand words. On the left is our protected lands in 1998. On our right is protected lands in 2014. So these are park lands, bcp lands, watershed protection lands and some private lands that are protected with conservation easements. It's not just city money, there's federal money here, county money, some limited state money. But the city has done the bulk and I -- when I look at this and sort of think about the last 25 years, you know, two things come to mind. Is, you know -- jumping forward 40 years, looking back, what do we do? I think people are going to say, this is about the best thing that Austin did the last 25 years. It's going to be right there on the map. But they are also going to say, geez, it's all fragmented. If we had only done, you know, 25 or 30% more, we would have had a national park type system of preserves that were connected. We would have had more protected land on the east side. That were connected. Especially in the south like along onion creek. We still had the potential to do that, to bring connectivity, to build a world class system of parks and preserves. With a fraction of the money that we're spending elsewhere. If you look at the big protected areas in the southwest, that we've invested in to preserve our crown jewel, Barton springs, we spent less than \$200 million on that. That is less than half of the money it costs to build a single highway interchange. At Ben white and I-35. Isn't Barton springs worth more than that? We have kept the pace, but we haven't gotten there. We haven't done as much as we should.

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And with some intention, we can build the connectivity. We can keep preserving lands that are cheaper to buy and preserve than they are to extend infrastructure to and serve. So that then we can target our infrastructure money in the areas that we want to growth -- to grow, especially with the centers and clusters development concepts, we can achieve that even better and preserve what really makes Austin attractive and special. Most of these are public spaces that even low income folks share everywhere and -- [audio lapse] -- ago and today. We did a pretty good job, we didn't do enough. I hope you'll plant the rest of that oak tree for us today. And in the days [indiscernible] >> Hold on a second, Mr. Bunch. Ms. Garza? >> Garza: I have a comments and question. I often struggle with the extra [indiscernible] Create affordability because when I try to think of it in the simplest terms, if a house can be sold for \$250,000, the market says that's what it's going to be sold for regardless whatever costs on-- because you are involved with save our springs and what was the case that -- that challenged it? >> The developers filed a case called quick versus the city of Austin, they went all the way to the supreme court, developers argued about 10 different reasons why S.O.S. Was in conflict with -- with superior state law. They lost on all of those at the Texas supreme court. And the ordinance was upheld

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as a valid exercise of our -- of our local home rule powers. >> Just as a follow-up, we have seen how sometimes precedent -- is not precedent unfortunately sometimes. >> Right, yes. -- A case with a different set of facts, challenges again, do you have any thoughts on that. >> I think it's solid right now. If the legislature changes the law and -- and attacks local control in different ways, you know, we can be somewhere else. That's -- that's one of the reasons that it's a really good idea to keep buying critical watershed preserve lands and permanently protecting it so that we're not open to that kind of regulatory risk. >> Garza: Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: That, too, was a [indiscernible] Challenge as -- the holding was without regard to the facts of that case, that would be hard to overturn that. I was looking at the ordinance and saying on its face this ordinance is valid and the city is entitled to enforcement. Thank you very much. Mr. Zimmerman? >> Zimmerman: I want to go back to this metaphor, not metaphor but the saying of Ben franklin, an ounce of prevention worth a pound of cure. Of course there's a lot of wisdom in that. One of the ounces of -- of prevention that needs to happen that's never been mentioned here in terms of the bccp and other open spaces is the wildfire risk. So we had a little terrifying scare, of course, everybody knows what happens in bastrop county. But -- but also in steiner ranch it was -- [indiscernible] From where I live in the district 6 boundary. If somebody were to look at that and say, you know, we need to have an ounce of prevention in terms of fire breaks and some road access

[11:25:32 AM]

through these open spaces where we have a prayer to stop a wildfire that might develop in the southern part of the greenbelt. Because right now it would simply burn out of control, it would destroy all of the wildlife, it would destroy hundreds of millions of dollars of property and countless lives could be lost. People are literally trapped in some of these areas. They are land locked and steiner ranch there's one road, quinnland park. If there's a fire upwards of that, that cuts you off, people could die. I don't hear any concern about that. I hear more concern about the Barton creek salamander than I hear about people threatened by wildfires. >> I'll just comment. I think that's a -- an important issue that needs real attention. I'm not a wildfire expert. I know it's been getting some real attention. But I would submit to you and the council that we got in this mess for exactly the reason that I'm talking about. We didn't heed the ounce of prevention. We have -- almost every one of those developments, we had on the books for fire safety reasons code restrictions that said you have to have multiple access. You have to limit the block lanes. You had to have that connectivity. And those developers demanded that they get waivers from those public safety concerns. To build -- dangerous circumstances and now they want us to pay -- to fix their problem. That is the truth of that situation. You go back and look at every one of those situations when they were getting development approvals and they were demanding waivers from the limitation on block length and multiple access requirements. >> Thank you.

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>> One thing up on that? >> Steiner ranch is a great example. There were three ways planned out of steiner ranch at one point in time. A roadway platted and subdivided to the edge of the boundary when cortana was purchased it cut off the availability for that developer to build that roadway. There were plans, a master plan that shows where that roadway -- [audio lapse] -- but they were asking for waivers, it was planned to have a roadway through an area that was subsequently bought as preserved with no anticipation that a roadway would be allowed to go through that preserve to allow secondary access through that steiner ranch. It wasn't something that the developer did, it was something that was done by the acquisition of the bccp property exclusively. >> Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. We're going to go ahead and recess the meeting. We will reconvene at -- what time? At 12:30? There's -- there's a -- there's a second two hour session, it will be done at 2:30 so everybody has the rest of their day. A second item put on the agenda for both today and Thursday, a discussion, possible action regarding the council meeting procedures. This is where we'll have the conversation about splitting zoning as we work for it prospectively. We're not going to discuss it today, but if you would look at the -- at the bulletin board, there's going to be a proposed calendar that gets posted between now and Thursday so that people can comment on it so we have something to work off of. Hopefully it will show not only a master calendar but it will show calendars individually. So that you could see how it would relate to -- to you and then it becomes just an open thing for people to comment on to change or to work up, however we like. Yes? >> I'm sorry. Did I hear you correctly that it will also address the -- the council meeting agendas, the splitting of taking work sessions off and zoning off? Okay. >> Mayor Adler: Yes. It will be just something

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for -- to serve as a basis for a conversation. Okay? All right. 12:30.

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>> Mayor Adler: And we're really close. I'll go see if I can roust a quorum. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Thank you. And thank you for being on time. We're going to go ahead and reconvene our meeting on Tuesday, February 17th. This is our conversation about parks and open space. It is 12:44. As we've explained to the other group, I started off this process describing these as deep dives. Obviously, in order to even do this subject well, we would need several days to do a deep dive, so this is not that. But it does give us the opportunity to have our first conversation on the dais on this subject area. We've picked a couple

questions that you all have to kind of -- and they were -- could have been one of a hundred different questions, but it gives us a way to kind of focus the thought. We're going to ask Sarah Hensley to open about ten minutes or so, and then we have questions that we would hope that each of you could address, about five to seven minutes. We have, again, a block of time for conversation, but the way this is working right now,

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usually as it's happening, the conversation gets interspersed through the panel conversation, and that's fine to run it that way. Other voices from the community that we've asked to also speak at the end, three minutes each. So it would help us understand, I guess, at a really, really high level about parks and open space. Ms. Hensley. >> Thank you, mayor. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. >> Thank you, members of council. I just wanted to start off real quickly with the page, and I believe you all have it in front of you to give you just a good, high level picture of all the different amenities and items that are managed by our department. It's self-explanatory, and it's certainly not inclusive of every little thing we have, but it is a good overview as well. The other thing I wanted to do is share with you very quickly the definitions of open space. Our friends were before you earlier this morning from watershed and I paid to make sure that there was an understanding of all of us that open space can be defined as undeveloped land, it can be protected, it can be unprotected, it can be public and it can be private. And by private, as I had a discussion earlier with Eleanor, there's an ordinance here in the city already that talks about private open space, and so we look at that also as a place that, as we begin to become more and more compact and connected as a city and density becomes an issue, the need for open space, whether it's public or private, becomes more and more important. In Austin, our open space is also defined by usually the funding source, through bond programs. In par parks & recreation, that money for open space goes for acquisition of property, to buy parkland, to buy green space just to leave it natural, and sometimes we use it in sharing with our friends at Austin independent school district for playgrounds and school yards.

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It can be as simple as a public seating area or a plaza. It can also be as simple as a vacant lot, green way, or a blueway. When it comes to our friends in water services, you're looking at and you talked about it in some detail this morning, about balcones canyon land preserve, where there is the protection of endangered species and preserves that also serve as a mitigation bank. Then there's the water quality protection lands for conservation easements, and obviously publicly held fee title to protect sensitive landscapes in the Barton springs zone in order to benefit water quality. Both the balcones canyon land preserves and the water quality protection lands enhance our water quality and quantity, protect our

current and future water supplies, our groundwater protection, our endangered species, it does provide and support carbon sequestration around preserves Austin's natural heritage. As I looked at big trends, I looked at -- there was an article written by price Waterhouse cooper who looked at mega trends across the United States when it comes to the overall issues the United States would be facing. And parks & recreation, technology, for instance, is a big one for us that we're going to be dealing with across the country. And for us in parks & recreation, technology is huge. We do park scanning which looks at where maintenance can be served. Individual citizens can log in and send a work order that tells us where something needs to be fixed. The actual programming of geocaching, information signage where someone can literally take their cell phone and scan the parks sign that will tell them everything about that park. We look at online services, registration and payments, inventory management, security and safety, ball field lighting. And then wi-fi in parks is becoming a big deal, and digital

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devices for staff who can literally take a mobile device and go from one park to another to monitor and to do -- if they have to fix something in that park, they can click on what was fixed earlier and it's all right there at their fingertips, instead of having to call into the office to see what was taken care of before they go back out. Internet access of course for everyone is a big deal and people now want to be able to search the web in a park, be able to look online for something while they're sitting in a park. Another item that I see as a big trend for us in parks & recreation across the country is the environment. Extreme weather events, flooding, storm surges, drought are impacting what we do on a daily basis. Our natural resources are being stretched. Parks are at the forefront of protection when it comes to protection of those resources. We are out there in classrooms, whether they're at schools or out in the natural class environment. We're looking at the reduction of infrastructure and infrastructure costs by using storm water management through green infrastructure so that you don't have to build it so much as it's already there. Natural play areas, while we still engage and bring forth the new playground equipment, many times it's just as important to have natural play areas. And that's utilizing what's already there. And the outdoor education focus, one of the heights and highlights of our young people's interests this - - now, and it seems to be ongoing, is to be engaged in outdoor activities. Many children have never paddled a canoe, they've never paddle-boarded, they've never ridden a bicycle, and it's these programs that we're seeing a huge success. Another big trend for us, of course, in the United States is the minority/majority. By 2043, the minority will be the majority. A few years after that, the highest percentages of people will be over 70 years of age and

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under the age of five. That tells us in parks & recreation that we have to shift our thinking, and we have to serve more community members with a quality focus and more diverse programs. We have to be ready to and for rapid change as the population and the ages keep growing or more children are born, we have to be able to meet those needs. And what that means is create a continuum of services so that we're obviously keeping that trend going and grow with the users and not just stay stagnant. Something I feel very strong about that we need to look at as a city is multigenerational facilities, not just a facility that serves one population, but a facility that serves all the population. Because it's not just a parent that brings their children to a recreation center anymore, it's a grandparent. It's a guardian. It's an aunt. It's an uncle. It's a friend. And we have to be able to serve all of those individuals together, instead of having a mother or a father or guardian drive from one part of town to the next, we need to be able to serve them in one holistic fashion. The same thing by multiservices facility. We need to be able to have multiservices in one location. That's with one stop shop theory when someone wants to come to a recreation center, they may have other individuals with them, so perhaps a library being there, health and human services being part of that, so they may be able to get all the services they need in one location. This is something that you all discussed earlier when the planning department was here, but compact and connected city. The urbanization of cities across the country. In 2008, that of the population in the world lived in urban areas. By 2050, 80% of the United States population will live in urban areas. With the rapid urbanization of cities, parks & recreation will play a huge role in shaping

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successful cities, and I believe we already do. Most cities who want to be successful and who want to be seen as a top city look at parks, green ways, blue ways, bikeways as being their savior. We have to provide better connectivity so all the individuals, all the citizens, can get across from one location to another, and not be building facilities in every location, but have access to facilities. We have to look for ways to jointly develop those facilities, and some will be with other city departments, and some will need to be with outside entities. And we need to proactively purchase land or dedicate land in key areas so we keep up with this issue of densification and urbanization, so we don't have pockets that have no green space. 5, parks as an economic engine. This is one I could go on for days. I didn't put studies in here but I do have studies to back it up that parks are economic engines. Where parks are, people want to live. There's innovation districts where they're talking about places to live, work, learn, and play. And parks play a major part in that when you start to look at urban revitalization strategies, parks are key to revitalization of a city. Destination points, parks and trails are destination points not only for your residents but for tourism, and it's no -- you have to look no further than the Ann hike and bike trail to see the users in a year, and not all of those are from the city of Austin. The rebirth spurs employment so when a park is put up and businesses want to be around it, then there are jobs that come. And then the attraction of peripheral commercial usage is also a key to that because people want to live, work, learn, and play where the action is. Number 6: Parks & recreation

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reads to healthier populations. Our department works in areas of community gardens. We're looking at a food forest. We help build walking trails and the walkability of a city. We're working on paddling trails with other groups. We have natural playscape. We partner with health organizations, St. David's and other organizations for wellness in helping develop the holistic person. The idea of urban farms is going to be something in the future we're going to have to look at to help spur that, even in a location that may be more urban. Then the trend of outdoor fitness centers, where there are individuals who cannot pay the fee to go to a gold's gym or another, so they need that outdoor activity, outdoor fitness centers that are built for outdoor activities so people can go through circuit training while they're on a trail. And finally, collaboration and partnerships, stretching the dollars. And I don't want to go into this too much because some of the panelists are going to talk about this, but I go back again to joint developments, and the fact that partnerships and collaboration efforts, whether it's internally, public to public, public to private, public to non-profit, all help joint developments and help with better renovation and efficiency. The sharing of risks and costs help spread that out. The relationship to development. Bigger voice means bigger resources. And interdepartmental collaborations is something that I'm very proud of that we've been able to do, working here in Austin with some of our friends in other city departments. Those are what I believe to be the seven big trends for parks & recreation now and in the future. There will be some things that will change, but I do believe these are things that we've been trying to work on and will try to keep grooving on as the population grows and we become more of an urban and dense city. The question was asked, which I felt a little uncomfortable with, what's the role of council? I believe your role is the leadership role, setting policy in relation to these issues, and it is our job as staff to bring

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forth our best work and for you to set the policies in relationship to these issues. Our top issues for the next 60 days that you're going to likely see are going to be events in downtown parks. While I have a slide here that talks more about it, I'm not going into this because we have a panelist that will talk about that, but I wanted you to have current reality, and what you see, and the fact that staff does agree that we have some work to do there. Partnerships and conservancies, I wanted to list here for you, and this is not all encompassing, and as it was pointed out to me, we work very heavily with Austin parks foundation. I purposely didn't put them on there, but one of our biggest partners is the Austin parks foundation. But when you look at the slide there about we work with animal services, we've worked with Austin water utility on the use of reclaimed water, fire department on the wild lands and wildfire issues, health and human services in the giant facility at montopolis recreation center, neighborhood housing and community development, the turner Roberts colony park master plan, now even looking at

how we implement some of those phases of that master plan. The office of sustainability. The police department in the power program. Public works and neighborhood partnering program, watershed protection, in the protection of our resources into different ties of gardens and other with his to look at water resource management. And peace park is a perfect, for example, of string bank restoration. The transportation department, in looking at where we need to monitor parking better, and meter, particular at Walsh boat landing is one of not. Public, obviously the school districts, our neighborhood associations, we've worked to diligently with. Texas parks and wildlife. And we're working with the African American cultural heritage district on downs fields, map and field.

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One you're going to see most about, if you skip to public-private, there will be two items coming before you here fairly quickly, Seaholm intake facility where we initiated a request for qualification services, and the Decker Lake golf project which will be coming before you as well. Parkland dedication, another panelist will be talking about that as well, and talking about what we currently do and what's considered to be best practices, and then of course what we are recommending as a change that will also be coming to you rather quickly before council. Mayor and council, that wraps up my presentation, and thank you for the opportunity to share with you. >> I'm sorry, mayor? >> Mayor Adler: At the end you said there's a change that's coming to us? >> Just the change to the amendment we're asking to charge a higher fee. We've broken it down, instead of per door, which is what we usually charge, 650 per door for residential development, we're requesting that that would go up. We're looking at the acreage that would go up and we're looking at a development fee as well, so that we are able to recoup more money and we're able to do more things in parks and development of parks, versus we're having to take pots of money and put it together to be able to do stuff. >> Mayor Adler: I understand. Thank you. Questions? Before we go to the next speaker? Mr. Casar? >> Casar: Ms. Hensley, thanks so much for your presentation. I wanted to know whether -- you mentioned parks being available or accessible to everybody. Do we have -- I know that we have our goal for parkland for thousand for population but do we have a goal for how close a park needs to be per thousand of population or access to people, you know, geographically? >> Council member [inaudible] Assist director for parks & recreation. One goal, I wanted to remind you as a council that the previously seated council set a goal for

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the city, and that is that we would create accessibility for all residents in Austin at a rate of within a quarter mile in the inner city or the urban core, and within a half mile in the suburban area. With that information, the department does have a deficiency map of parkland that at some point in the future

we'd love to share with you, to give you some idea about where our deficient areas are. >> Casar: Great. Which boundary do we use to define urban core and which boundary do we use to define suburban area? >> Generally -- ricardo Solis with the parks department. Generally the urban core, U.S. 183 to the north and to the east and 71, Ben white on the south, and mopac for the most part to the west. >> Casar: And is that deficiency map completed or you all are still working on it? >> It is completed. It's on our website and it's constantly being -- being updated. >> Casar: Thanks. And do we take into consideration multifamily versus single family housing and that the deficiency is just considering -- and I think Ms. Hensley -- I know this is difficult, but Ms. Hensley referenced the fact that as we densify and urbanize, there are less people with front yards and backyards. Is that something we looked at or is that something the new council would have to show it's a priority -- >> Council member, it takes into account the accessibility of all residents, whether they live in multifamily or single family. I would like to share with you that Ms. Lynn Osgood is going to share with you more information with respect to access to parkland as part of the panelist discussion. >> Mayor Adler: If you would forward that link, that would be great. >> Yes, we will. >> Mayor Adler: Ms. Kitchen. >> Kitchen: At the appropriate time, whoever is speaking to this, I'd like to understand how the access is defined -- or

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actually applied. In other words, do you consider how people actually get to the park? In other words, are there sidewalks? Are there ways to get to the park when you're looking at -- and did I hear you correctly, it's a half mile south of Ben white? >> Half mile in the suburban area, yep, and quarter mile within the urban quarter. >> Kitchen: And suburban area is considered south of Ben white? >> Yes. >> Mayor Adler: Ms. Houston, then Mr. Renteria. >> Houston: Thank you all for being here today. I have a question about bonds. Did that -- did you address those? And how you rate what the bonds are, can you -- when we have a bond election, how do you decide what the issues are, and how are they rated? Because, as you said, the Walter E. Long metropolitan park has been on a list and has never gotten bumped to where it needs any kind of support from bond funds. So could you speak briefly about how that process goes on? >> Yes, ma'am. I'll try to do that. The staff begins their work immediately after a bond program, so what we -- what we'll do is put together a priority rating. We use what was recommended by the bond council that's appointed by the city council, the people that represent -- there's a bond task force. And we look at shovel-ready. We look at priorities for partnering opportunities. This was the last sort of theme of what was looking at partnerships, something that the city didn't have to put all the money in, but would partner with another entity so that we were able to receive more bang for the buck. Was there a master plan involved. So there was a lot of a of key components. We have a list -- when we turned in our list, I think we had a list of one billion dollars, and it was, of course, systematically cut back and cut back. We prioritize and keep putting things forward that we have

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asked for in the years prior to as a priority, but as they go through that process, some fall off and some fall off because when we get to a certain amount of money, there is -- it's that whole adage of we can't build it for that amount of money, and we end up having money sitting there. And so the idea is, we put what we need for that program, whether it's for Decker Lake and its 25 million for redevelopment of a park, and so we prioritize things based on that. And if we have a master plan, and if we have it ready to go. If we have a partner involved who is willing to help come to the table with dollars. All of those are factors that come in. And, obviously, that list also comes before the mayor and council as a part of that bond approval as to what gets funded and what doesn't. >> Houston: Thank you so much. So I guess my concern is, over the years, since Walter E. Long metropolitan park was built, it has suffered from benign neglect. I would like to know, at some point, how many times it's been placed on the bond list and what was its priority and what happened to that so it never got funded for anything. >> I will provide that. >> Houston: Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Mr. Renteria. >> Renteria: Yes. Council, [inaudible] Also included the park there in Lake Austin, Emma Lou Long park, is that what it's called? That park there is really falling apart. The city park -- what in the heck is the name of that park? City park? >> It's Emma Long park. >> Renteria: Okay. That park has really just gone to -- it's horrible. I mean, it's just -- things are just deteriorating, the streets,

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everything, it's gone. The swimming area is really just like -- there's weeds growing. It's not safe. That's what basically -- and also, I want to ask you a quick question, if you can explain to the people in Montopolis about the rec center that's going in there and the collaboration that you're having with the -- is it central health, or the clinic? >> With the health and human services department. Council member Renteria, when we looked at the bond dollars for the renovation and redevelopment of the Montopolis recreation center, there was an opportunity to the health and human services, as we had public dialogue, we found that there was a need not only to beef up the health and human services, but to actually build a recreation center there. The building that is known as the Montopolis Wreck Tracy -- recreation building that was given to the center and we turned it into a recreation center, which is what happens in a lot of places. We were able to partner with health and human services, combine the dollars which actual to approximately \$15 million, so that we can build a multiusage facility to serve not only the public when it comes the recreational activities, but then also to serve individuals who might want to be there for some health needs and that was our goal, and we worked through the past council to combine those funds. And actually, to be able to build a facility where we won't spend city dollars in the management of that facility by having two facilities, we'll have one. So, for instance, the custodial services would be one. The front desk services would be one. So there's an economy in scale there that will save money for the city by doing that. That's similar to something we did recently in 2012, which

Susan is going to talk about with the ymca, in saving the city \$12 million over the next 20 years in general fund dollars.

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>> Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. >> So can I interject as well? >> Mayor Adler: Please. >> All right. Thanks for having me. So part of the two, I think the issue is, it's not just bond dollars, but it's also maintenance dollars. And that the level of maintenance, I think that our parks department has one maintenance staff for every 175 acres, as opposed to maybe a national average of one to every 75 to a hundred acres. So does everything have to get to a point where, to get maintenance, it has to be a bond issue? I mean, that's just one topic, and I think that if you ask anyone that's moved here who lives here, one of the top ten, if not five top reasons they live here is our outdoor space. And we should support it, just because we have a natural jewel doesn't mean we just abuse it. Thank you. >> One more thing. Because of the council member Renteria's question, I guess it's a broader issue. Instead of just for, well, I need that for Walter E. Long and metropolitan park as well, but for all the metropolitan parks, and I'm not sure how many we have, but can you tell me how much we have spent on each of those metropolitan parks? And I think Emma long, what we used to know as city park, the Emma long park may be one as well. But could you just tell us at some point in the future -- >> I will. >> Houston: -- How much we've spent already on all of those parks so we can see kind of -- >> Absolutely. I'll be able to give you that by going back and looking at our program. >> Houston: Thank you. >> And council member, we have 12 metropolitan parks. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Ms. Roth? What kind of benefit and challenges are there for

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partnerships and conservancies? >> Yes. Thank you, mayor and council. I appreciate the opportunity to come and visit with you all today. And I quickly have prepared a few slides. I'll just kind of run through these real quickly just to stay on schedule. First of all, I'll be addressing public-private partnerships. In fact, actually in my key policy issue, what are the benefits and challenges of partnerships and be conservancies. To follow up from what Sarah was just mentioning, it's a private partner that shares significant risks, resources, and responsibilities with the parks rest department, with pard. Pard invites individuals both for-profit and non-profit organizations to form these pp agreements and carry out capital related programs. Some of these partnerships include building and donating a pard park or facility, some has a complete or partial pard purpose, then operating and maintaining an existing pard park or facility. At this time I'd like to just quickly highlight, I think, an excellent example of a recent P 3 agreement. And this is the onion creek metropolitan park district. I'm actually currently serving as

president on the board of directors for this metro park, and it was related in 2013 through the legislature. It obtained official city consent for operation in spring of 2014. And the district has power to tax but does not have eminent domain authority. It's an excellent model for future park projects, especially because it's one of the first districts in Texas that has been created as a parts district. And just quickly on the slides, I'd kind of list as far as how it was classified or created under the local government code, according to chapter 375. The main purpose, and what's wonderful about this district, is it serves as a tool to fund

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the cost of administration and operation inside the district's boundaries and the adjacent onion creek metro park and reimbursement of the Austin good night ranch, they're the developer, for the prefinancing of the district. And this is just kind of a -- it's a wonderful arrangement as far as trying to address with creating a park, as you know, you need to definitely have a master plan that needs to be in place, but then also, too, you need to demonstrate that if you were to hold a bond to make park improvements, you must have the operation and maintenance funding that's needed or available to maintain the park that's created. And so this -- this model, the developer is prefinancing all of the costs for the Austin parks foundation to create a master plan, and this should be completed by the early summer of this year. And they're going to also be providing \$160,000 per year for the base parkland improvements that are installed by the city. What this is, I'll show you a map here in a minute. It covers these improvements that are -- that are installed by the city, that's going to be 50 acres on the existing metro parks side. That's until the district tax collection is sufficient to cover these costs, until the homes are constructed in this development to support this tax revenue. This slide right here, it shows you the metro park district includes 700 acres of land, and it's going to be -- it's slated for development for a master plan mixed use community. There's going to be about 3500 residential units and about 220,000 square feet or so of commercial development. And so it's going to be -- it shows it's seven miles from downtown, but most of all it's in the desired development zone, and I definitely wanted to highlight that. And it's also located adjacent to the city's onion creek metropolitan park. And of course that park is

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887 acres. And if you see the map that's located to the right above the text, you can see in relation the onion creek metro park and the size in how it compares to the zilker metro park. The difference is, onion creek is about almost three times the size of acreage as zilker. And so right now, onion creek is a level IV, as far as the maintenance, the lowest level of maintenance, and it will be through this -- this partnership, this P 3 arrangement, the city will be able to develop 50 acres on that metro park site, in

addition to on the developers' site, they're going to be developing 120 acres for parkland, during parkland improvements. And then in addition, they're going to be having this revenue to cover the o&m costs, the management and operation and maintenance as well. I just quickly want to run through some of the benefits and challenges because that's kind of the main purpose of the topic that I'm going to be covering. I definitely wanted to just touch on, you know, again that it's going to be 120 acres of park improvements. That's going to be within the district. There's also going to be 50 acres that's going to be improved by the city that's on the actual metro park site. This site had been ---purchased years past. It had not been able to be developed just because of, for the most part, the city, they lack enough funds just to maintain the existing park system, much less to try to improve or maintain a new park. The developer is it would have gone the o&m costs. Base park improvements. The developer does not have specific titlement to the park but will be responsible for handling the daily operations and management. Then also, too, the developer is working with neighborhood housing for attractive financing just to address the affordability issue. Some of the challenges of this

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p3 example, I don't know if I want to really list it so much as a challenge. The first one is really just trying to find ideal and appropriate opportunities to be able to implement this excellent model. So begin again, it's just trying to work together, and you can make it a win-win opportunity for both parties involved. One item I did want to highlight as we're moving forward currently on this project, the developer, we are experiencing some -- some delays as far as going through the plan review process, even though this is a smart housing project, we do have concerns, as far as maintaining project schedule because, as we all know, that adds to the overall project costs, which, in turn, impacts the housing prices. Okay. Quickly moving on, the next item I'm going to touch on are foundations and conservancies. Foundations and conservancies, they're excellent tools and vehicles for collecting private funds, organizing workdays for the parks. Here's just a quick list of some of the park foundations and conservancies that we've got. Of course the Austin parks foundation and Collin will address a little bit more about his organization. The trail foundation. We do have the Umlauf, Barton springs conservancy, peace park conservancy, shoal creek, waller creek, and a recent one is the zilker botanical gardens conservancy. Let me touch on some of the benefits and challenges with these be conservancies and foundations. There's quite a few benefits that outweigh the challenges. They definitely provide a flexible giving options philanthropists.

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They assist in a special way. Some of these conservancies have been hiring professional fund-raisers to help with raising additional money to support these parks. They are able to charge different facility

rental fees than, say, like if the city was handling the charging of the rental of the fees. And then also, too, they provide flexibility through the procurement options for securing professional service contracts. A lot of these conservancies, they team with park, match financial contributions, and most of all, the money that they do collect goes straight back to the parks department instead of going into the general fund. And that, we feel, is the key item. Challenges, I will say, we've noticed that it's sometimes -- you know, can be a little bit difficult trying to make timely decisions as a group, maintaining transparency through the process. And then also, too, outlining roles and responsibilities on the leadership and management of parks. I want to just touch on two key examples that I think are relevant for the foundations and conservancies discussion. The first one is the Waller Creek Conservancy. That conservancy has just been amazing as far as just their goals of how they transform basically the Waller Creek area with -- you know, looking at a world class outdoor event space, the trail system that they've got integrated into the overall trail system, the interactive play spaces, and then of course looking at it from a nature or from an environmental standpoint with the creek ecology. The conservancy just recently hired the former executive and vice president from New York City, the Friends of the High Line. He's going to be handling a lot of the fund raising activities for this conservancy. And then also, too, just kind of highlighting the partnership. Back in 2011, they did a joint partnership for both the conservancy and the parks department, each contributed

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\$400,000 together, as far as to fund this new master plan that was needed for the area. And then in turn, the conservancy, they raised over a million dollars through private funding to complete the design, the design competition, and for the operations, and then both entities signed a joint development agreement in 2014. The last example I'd like to highlight is what Sarah had mentioned previously, the Ymca, City of Austin, the North Austin Community Recreation Center. This is just an excellent model partnership as far as between the two groups. You've got the Ymca and you've got the City of Austin. Both groups jointly pooled their financial resources together. As a result, the facility that was constructed was approximately twice the size that was originally budgeted through park. The Ymca, they managed, they operate and maintain the facility, and of course, too, they were able to -- the deficiency during the construction process, being able to, as far as being able to -- how do I say, bid for different contractors. It was very efficient and effective. They were able to stay within the budget constraints. And at the same time they were really able to address what the community was looking for in this facility, as far as they really wanted an indoor pool, they wanted an exercise room, they wanted meeting rooms. They had basically a full list through some of the outreach activities, the feedback that we had received from the community, this partnership was able to address that long, kind of laundry list of requests and needs. It's one of the most heavily used facilities and it has an expansive community garden, then also in collaboration with the art in public places. That's all I have to present forehead, if anyone has any questions. The.

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>> Houston: Mayor. >> Mayor Adler: Ms. Houston. >> Houston: Thank you so much for that information. I think this is probably a question for director Hensley. The foundation and conservists -- I'll get it out in a minute -- seem to be great tools for well resourced areas where there is a lot of opportunity and accessibility to money. What tools are in your toolbox for low resourced areas? >> Well, actually, I will say like the Y that was -- we partnered with, the facility is located off of Rundberg so it was in an area that was high need and certainly not in the highest of economic area. It was an area where there was no -- there was a library, there is a library there, but we had no real facility anywhere nearby. So this was not -- this was just a partnership with the YMCA, and I think -- I will say one of the biggest concerns from the neighborhood at first was the very thing about, well, wait a minute, it's the Y, and won't there be a lot of fees? But through our agreement, which is pretty thick, but it's very -- very detailed, that no one is turned away, that the program -- there's a board of citizen guidance -- citizens that guide it. We were able to get the citizen and neighborhood council on board, who were a little concerned about it being more of a cost factor. So there's a lot of tools like that where we partner with either the Y, the boys and girls club. We've worked with them and are still looking for an opportunity to partner with them in areas where they feel like they need to be and we feel like we need to be, so it really isn't about the money so much as it's about finding the right partner. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Mr. Zimmerman. >> Zimmerman: Just a quick question. When you're talking about benefits or challenges or drawbacks, do you consider it a benefit or a drawback that some of these foundations, like the

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Austin Trail Foundation, participate in political campaigns to convince voters to increase their property taxes through bond elections? Or are you aware of that? Some of the foundations you mentioned are involved in political contributions to raise taxes here in Travis did -- in Austin? >> Yeah. I can't really speak to that, but -- >> I can't, either. I know that those in the Trail Foundation and others are, you know, a 501c 3. I'm not aware -- I'm not aware, nor do I know of them doing that, but I really can't speak to that. >> Okay. Well, I'll get that information to you. You might be shocked at how much money is being funneled into bond campaigns by these organizations. And I have a big, big problem with it. But nobody else does, but I'll get that information to you. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Yes, Mr. Renteria. >> Mayor Adler: I just want to [inaudible] That Metropolitan Park at Onion Creek, where is that located at? >> That's a great question. It's down -- it's just seven miles from downtown. It's over [lapse in audio] It's on the east side, which is great. And that's another reason why I think it's been great to have this partnership because there's been so many amenities that are available on the west side, this is nice that it's over on the east side, east of 35. >> Excuse me -- oh, I'm sorry. Is it south of Slaughter or north of Slaughter? >>

Actually, it's just north of slaughter. >> Okay. But it's north of slaughter lane. >> That's correct. North of slaughter. >> Yeah. It's on -- yeah. That's correct.

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>> Mayor Adler: Okay. Go ahead. Ms. Houston. >> Houston: What level of affordability, what are the prize points for development? You said it would be affordable so I'm just trying to get a feel for what that means in that area. >> You know, and that's a great question. I know right now the developer that they are working on, they are definitely going more towards denser development, and they have a variety of development. There's going to be single family, multifamily developments, so there's going to be a whole range. I personally don't know the exact range and cost, but I know that that's one of their key -- I want to say one of their key factors that's very much on their radar. >> Houston: Well, I ask that only because affordability means so many different things to so many different people. And while we may be thinking of one kind of affordability, they may be talking about 250 to \$400,000. So ... >> If you'd like, I can check into that and -- or someone from the parks can get back with you if you'd like. >> Mayor Adler: That would be great. Thank you. Tell us about the issues involved with the use of parks or special events? >> You bet. Thanks, mayor Adler. I just briefly wanted to address council member Houston's question about doing projects in areas where the need is great and the resources may not be there. One of the -- one of the examples Sarah didn't discuss is a project we're working on in council member Garza's district at dove springs district park, where, as you know, there is a great need and not a ton of resources, and we entered into a partnership with both the city and the St. David's foundation. There's a really strong bit of community support there, and so we were able to leverage our organization's resources, as well as the resources of the city and another non-profit organization to build a really

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substantial playscape in an area of great need. So that's something we work on regularly and will continue to do as our opportunities permit. So thank you, mayor and council for the opportunity to speak today. I'm going to speak very informally. I spared you a powerpoint presentation. I hope you appreciate that. I don't like them. You know, we could talk all day about events in parks, but I'm the executive director of the Austin parks foundation. I've been there almost three years. We represent a staff of about five, board of 15 community leaders, 75-plus park adopter groups from all of your districts, as well as roughly 10,000 volunteers a year. Full disclosure, we are a partner in the Austin city limits music festival that happens every year in zilker park, and our part of that partnership is, we take funds that come from that event and spread them into all of your districts, into your parks, as your community asks. So we have a grants program. We give grants from 500 to \$50,000 for neighbors that

want to build a swing set, that want to plant trees, build an Ada accessible swing so that their neighbors can get in the pool. The list of programs or the list of improvements is long. We've been doing that for ten of our 25-year history. You know, I think of the sentiment you're going to hear time and time again, council member Houston and Renteria both spoke to it. Part is underfunded to the tune of probably a hundred million dollars a year. And as Ms. Hensley said before, if you look at it from a capital improvement perspective, it's probably a billion dollars. Just to think of our pool situation alone is pretty

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staggering. There's an organization called the trust for public land that speaks to the 60 biggest cities in the U.S. As they relate to parks and how they take care of our -- their parks, and what you find year in and year out is that Austin scores really highly on parks per capita and really low when it comes to how we take care of them. That issue is not going to go away. I don't think anyone believes that the city is all of a sudden going to magically find a hundred million dollars extra a year to pay for some of these needs. So as Susan spoke to partnerships and conserves of conservancies, we're now kind of terminations to events, I think those are some ways that we can help close that gap. The Austin parks foundation is about a two-million-dollar a year organization, and I also tell people we're trying to solve a hundred-million-dollar a year problem and do it with relatively scarce resources. You know, events come in all shapes and sizes, and I think, you know, the issue we're talking about is really events as they relate to Zilker park, Auditorium Shores, Festival Beach, and downtown parks. You know, I don't think there is a huge issue with overusing parks for events in any of our other parks. And, you know, a couple of things to consider. The Palmer Event Center sits smack-dab in the middle of Town Lake Metropolitan Park. The Long Center for Performing Arts sits smack-dab in the middle of parkland. There are all kinds of other events that happen in those spaces, from ticketed events to cultural events, tree events, community events. Everyone here knows Austin is an

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event town. We have been for a long time, and that's not going to change. And I think our stance from the parks foundation has been to thoughtfully look at those events. I don't think it's fair to try and place them all in one category. I think that's what you'll hear from me over and over again, is that they need to be taken on a case-by-case basis. You know, there are some things I think we should look -- take into account when we're talking about events in parkland. What are the economic benefits? And, obviously, that's something you all on the dais need to consider. What are the cultural benefits? You know, on the economic side, I see here that events that receive revenue for the parks department generate somewhere in the one and a half million dollars a year, and in an underfunded department, that's a big

number. You know, what are the benefits to the park itself? And what's the capacity of the parks we're speaking of? You know, Melissa here is going to speak from the neighborhood perspective. I'm a resident of Zilker -- I'm sorry -- I'm a resident of Travis Heights, so I am all too familiar with events that happen in Zilker, Auditorium Shores, Congress, and the like. And I think those issues need to be considered. We, at the request of your former colleagues, commissioned a study, which you'll see this spring, so look at that corridor as it relates to not just the number of events or the types of events, but really taking a hard look at how we can mitigate the impact from events because there are impacts, and you just have to drive down Riverside through Auditorium Shores on any given, you know, weekend where there's an event and you see it. And so how do we -- how does that impact traffic? How does it impact parking? How does it impact the neighborhood? And those are important factors.

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But I believe that we really need to -- we've got a system in place now with a parks director, a parks department, and a parks board that we need to give some more authority to not only make decisions, but enforce some of the -- some of the issues that happen. I've seen all too often in my relatively short tenure at the Parks Foundation, the Parks Board, which you all appoint, will make a recommendation that either gets completely ignored or completely reversed, which, you know, in my estimation as a volunteer, why are we using these folks if we're not going to listen to their council? I think Ms. Hensley is the head of a 70-million-dollar business, who's as tuned in to events in parks and their impacts and their capacity as anybody in this city. And we need to give her the ability to, you know, not only make some of those decisions, but when some of those folks -- some of those events don't do things the right way, be the one to say thanks but no thanks when they come back to do it again. And I'm also -- I think it makes a ton of sense -- and again, we're talking about a relatively small number of parks here. We all again know what they are. Previous city council set a limit to the number of events that can happen at Auditorium Shores, and I think that makes a ton of sense. I think we need to set some limits, and we need to stick to them. And when there's an opportunity to do less events, I think sometimes that makes a lot of sense for the city. The other issue is just -- and I spoke to it briefly, is grandfathering events. And, again, I will go back to -- I don't think we should automatically renew events every year. I think we should look at events on a case-by-case basis, and if that event is perceived to be a

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benefit in some way, then by all means let's do it again, but if they came in and wrecked the park and left it worse than they found it, let's not ask them to come back the next year. You know, again, I think there's a balanced approach here between public and private use of parkland, making sure events -- not

trying to shove big events into small venues. Some diverse use of parks for events, not all ticketed, not all free, not all culture 58, but a good, sort of diverse amount of -- and variety of events. And, again, back to the ability to sort of easily assess fines and penalties when things aren't done the right way. And, frankly, pull permits. And lastly, I would just say, you know, I think it makes a lot of sense there again, zilker, auditorium shores, we know what these bases are. When they are ticketed events, we need to be charging a market rate. It doesn't make sense to give space away that people would -- would and should pay a premium for. So, again, thank you for the opportunity to speak. I'm happy to take any questions. Thanks. >> Mayor Adler: Ms. Tovo. >> Tovo: Yeah, thank you very much. I think you've offered us some very good suggestions that we ought to consider. I wonder if you can talk a little bit more about the timeline on the study, when it's coming forward, and there has certainly been discussion about how Austin compares in terms of its fee structure to other cities. Is that information that will also be included within the report? >> Yeah. So it's done. I think we're just trying to, given that most of you -- not you -- are trying to absorb a lot of information, we're trying to be thoughtful about when that report comes to city council. So I know there's been some discussions. I'm not sure what -- spring was the last that I had heard.

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I don't know the specific timing as of right now. >> Tovo: Well, I'm very eager to see it. Can I ask you a follow-up question? I attended some of the meetings with partners that were held, and it included neighborhood associations and neighbors and community members. What was the outreach like to ordinary -- ordinary folks? Was it within the context of the auditorium shores planning process, or was there a separate battery of meetings with stakeholders to look at parks' impacts? It's never been clear whether those had been merged into one process, of which I'm pretty familiar, or whether it happened on parallel tracks and I just managed to miss the stakeholder meetings that we're dealing with the impacts of events? >> Sure. Yeah. We could probably talk all day about the public input process, but that's a conversation for another time. I think there were, all told, six public meetings, and there was an opportunity for online participation at multiple junctures there, as you well now know. It was very unfortunate that that process, not unlike a lot of public meetings I've been to in my tenure, got a bit off the rails because, you know, one specific loud vocal minority group was -- you know, the dog issue came up; right? And that really highjacked the better part of that process. And that's just a short coming of public meetings, unfortunately. And, you know, a lesson learned, and hopefully in the future, we can figure out a better way to have more thoughtful and considerate and constructive dialogue, instead of -- you know, one of those meetings was like a mob scene, and the way that some of the public spoke to our city employees is

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embarrassing. And the fact that we let them sit there and do that is just beyond me. So I'm hopeful that as we, you know, do more projects, we can find a more effective way to gather public input. >> Tovo: Great. Thank you. I look forward to talking with you further about that issue and also about the report. But, again, thank you for the suggestions you've offered. These are certainly not ones we haven't heard from other corners, raising the fees, making sure that there's a diversity of uses, that we're not closing off our parks for long periods of time. So thanks very much. >> Yes, thank you all for being here. This is very, very helpful. I just wanted to suggest that, you know, that the study that you're referencing, that now is a good time for us to have it. You know, we're about to embark on our committee work in the not-too-distant future, and this kind of information is a good -- a good thing to have right now. Also, because, of course, you all are familiar and you understand, of course, that this is a very, very critical issue, it's a hot button issue and it's one of the first things we need to talk about, from the standpoint of the use of our parks. So I would encourage you -- I really appreciate you thinking in terms of what all we're trying to do to get organized and get set up. I appreciate that, but, for one, I think I'm ready to see that. >> You will have it very shortly. >> Kitchen: Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: I think we can handle a lot up here. We'll find out. Mr. Zimmerman. >> Zimmerman: Yes. Thank you for being here. I mentioned a few minutes ago, there was just -- there's a lot of misunderstanding about how a lot of the groups like yours get involved in political issue. I'm now looking at the get Austin moving packet from 2010. I was involved in this campaign on the other side of the Austin

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trail foundation. I'm looking at September 24th of 2010. Here's the trail foundation, P. O. Box 59015, an and the of \$15,000 to political campaign that put out pieces showing cars stuck in traffic. When you see cars stuck in traffic, everybody can relate to that and think, wow, if I vote for this, I can get Austin moving. A lot of that money went to the concrete boardwalk out in the lake. And I think that's where the trail foundation came in. I'm kind of astonished at the lack of understanding at how money, in a sense, gets laundered through these 5013c corporations and winds up tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of dollars being applied to political campaigns to basically mislead voters. It's misleading to put a slick grossy with cars and congestion and say we're going to get Austin moving, just vote for us. Then their money winds up out in a lake in a concrete sidewalk. So I'll be the one to draw attention to that with my constituents in northwest Austin, who don't understand what's going on. But I want to make it abundantly clear, this is a very, very common practice for these private corporations to be contributing to political campaigns. And, frankly, I don't think the voters can trust a report that comes out when you have a political incentive to pass bonds in a campaign. >> Thank you. Let me just clarify that I am the executive director of the Austin parks foundation, which is a different organization. We are bound by irs rules that don't allow us to contribute to political campaigns or engage in lobbying of any --

of any capacity. We do, as an organization, have an advocacy initiative, but that is simply -- we worked with several colleagues who are here

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today two years ago to advocate for more funding for the parks department. And that has been the extent of our advocacy initiative. So I can't speak to what the trail foundation did or didn't do because I don't have that information in front of me, but we absolutely do not do that. >> Okay. I didn't want to single out the trail foundation because there's also an engineering corporation from Houston, Texas, for five thousand dollars. Here's a company from Kansas City, Missouri, one thousand dollars. A company, pb Americas from new York, \$2,500. And the list goes on and on. Downtown Austin alliance, \$5,000. I don't think people understand the kind of huge dollars in corporate money that's going into these bond issues, in the name of all kinds of spending. So I just -- I'm going to have to keep bringing that up, so thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Ms. Hawthorn, would you talk to us about the challenges of parks? Thank you. >> Mayor, I had a question or comment for Mr. Wallace. I want to thank you for pointing out the dove springs project and also wanted to point out there's a lot more projects that your organization has done in my district, and the practice of having people adopt parks has been great because there's -- they help -- for those who don't know about this practice, they guide these adopters through the process of getting grants at all different levels, and I'm sure it's widespread. And I just want to comment generally, I guess, to my colleagues about the purpose of these deep dives, I believe, was to -- for us to think of a Broadway that we approach policy, and so this, you know, gets that conversation going. And I like that you pointed out that the parks department is underfunded by such a huge amount, and when we start talking about our -- you know, when we start having our budget discussions, we need to really think -- remember this conversation. And when we're thinking of

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[lapse in audio] Possibly take money out of the general fund, we need to think about this conversation because this parks & recreation is a huge, huge benefit to our community. I mean, I've seen the dove springs pool full of children during the summer and how cutting those hours affects families, and these are families that can't afford to join the Y or anything like that. So you would never see -- and as -- public safety makes up about 70% of the general fund, and as a former firefighter, I am not advocating cutting that at all. But you would never see fire or police up here saying we're underfunded a hundred million dollars. So I just wanted to point that out to my colleagues who are thinking about setting policy. Remember these conversations. Remember how important that, you know, parks are to our community, and that's it. >> Mayor Adler: Ms. Harthorn. >> Hi. I'm Melissa harthorn. I'm probably one of your closest

hosts for almost every event in zilker park. And I'm the person for maybe the last -- maybe not this year but for several years that has done the community and liaison portion with whoever is the organizer of foreign event, the parks department, the fire department, any person that would talk to me. Okay? I have to say that the area of the world that I live in between Barton springs road and Ben white, we took 3,000 apartment units in this cycle. And zilker park is our regional park. There are some pocket parks that are adjacent to schools. South Lamar just got a park. In general, zilker is our regional park. If you go by zilker at any point during the summer, you will probably see at least 5,000 people in that park at any given time. At any given time. And the size of the events is

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almost mind boggling. At this point, I think I got involved and I got involved in the neighborhood association not long after the oak hill fire, steiner ranch, the bastrop fire, starting to have conversation about 70,000 people beyond the access route out of the neighborhood, should something happen along the greenbelt. We're incredibly lucky to live where we do, but we're also -- there are quite a few issues come with hosting an event of this size that we're talking about. I think that when blues on the green started, it was like a little 1,000 person thing up at the arboretum, and I think you'll find every two weeks on a Wednesday, mid commute, there is a cancer for 20, 25,000 people in zilker park. And that is quite a bit, and I don't think that's the way we started. I think that there are people in the neighborhood that enjoy the events. I think that they live farther away than I do. I'm a very tolerant and try to get along with everybody and try to have a sense of humor about it. And on occasion, you can't have a sense of humor about some of these things. You know. We find solutions, though, and we work with -- we're very lucky in that we have a parks liaison person who also has a good sense of humor, fire department, police, transportation, we all try to find solutions for -- you come out from trail rides and there are, you know, 12 baby diapers down the street. You would think that that would not happen in this day and age, but, you know, we found a solution and we worked it out with organizer. It's hard to tell people that you're really looking forward to Christmas because you can't have a party at your own house, but you can host a party for everybody else, every day, for two weeks.

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So people always look at you and like, it's only a weekend, or it's only a day. Go out of town. The fact of the matter is, the prison fence goes up around zilker park almost a hundred to 130 days a year, for every event that we host now. So out of 365 days a year, at some point there is a fence around it that the message is, it's not yours. I'm sure I made this beautiful list of things to talk about, and I'm sure that nothing I just said is on it. But I was very interested in talking about the funding and how it works, I think

that if you'll look, that zilker does get money spent on it, but it's literally because of how much we overuse it, and that the maintenance is required because we're literally choking it. There are things that go well, one of the things that I would ask that you consider in -- after seeing the first event of this year, would be some kind of penalty or consequences for people that don't uphold their contractual obligations. We've been very lucky in that we have had partners like c3 or the trail rides foundation that are willing to work on solutions for things that have happened. And our first event this year, we didn't quite see the organizational level or communication level that we have seen on other events, but there is really no consequence with the parks department for not upholding your word or keeping your communication level, or even simply having a call-in

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number to deal with issues on the ground. And I think that some of the issues that were -- that happened didn't have to end up at a national level. It's simply, the phone worked, and you could have called the organizer and you could have said, you know, this is unacceptable. You need to do something a little different. And, I don't know, I probably work better with questions than being a little nervous because I don't know all of you. >> Mayor Adler: You're doing a really good job. >> I am the neighbor that listens to pearl jam in her living room and five other stages at one time, and I like Christmas, and, yes, I eventually go out of town because I live in an area where everybody else wants to be, and I write that same property tax check every year, regardless. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. And I think everybody on the panel should feel free to comment to other things that other people say if they trigger a thought that you have or something you want to respond to. >> Can I just make a comment? >> Mayor Adler: Yes. >> Thank you for being here, Melissa. You know, I live in that neighborhood, too, so I know what you're talking about, but you take the brunt for most of the neighborhood. But I think the point -- I think the visual that speaks to me is the hundred-something days of the prison fence. Because the point really I think is that the park, which is our park for the whole city, is really not the whole city's for a lot of the time. So I thank you for bringing that to our attention. >> I mean it sounds like it's one weekend, but it's not. I mean, and when -- acl is typically three weeks, at one weekend, then there's a being week for park maintenance after that. Granted, when they added the second week on, this he didn't extend their time, but it's still a month, a

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month, and I think it's all a very tenuous balance. Everybody tries to be patient and tries to be a good host, but then like then there's one thing that will upset the apple cart. And you don't know what it's going to be. It could be a ferries wheel. It could be some heritage trees. It could be my driveway got

blocked, the sound is bad, the baby diaper -- you don't know what it is, but the level of unrest. And then right after the level of unrest happens, then our community starts talking about our property taxes, which are really high, and we are -- we do try to be good hosts, but at some point you -- you get to the -- where, what is enough? And there are people that do like them. >> Mayor Adler: Ms. Houston. >> Houston: Ms. Hawthorne, thank you so much for coming. Sometimes when you don't live there, don't you feel the impact, and you being here makes me know what it must be like to be to live there every day, every year, with these schedules that interrupt the routines of your life. Ms. Hensley, Walter E. Long would love to have the cyclists come, I'm not sure we have any heritage trees. I'm not sure why you all didn't think about that. We could do cross country year-round. And you may have. I don't want to get into that, but we've got a park out there that is looking for those kinds of things, and the cyclists would have been a wonderful opportunity. And when people -- when I say that and people say, well, how will we get them out there, well, we can get people to formula one, we can get them -- which is outside -- well, you all annexed -- well, it was annexed, so I was going to say outside of the city, but we can get them to Walter E. Long if question plan. So you have to think broader than just zilker and auditorium

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shores. >> I think that in some ways, just to respond, is that people want zilker because you see the city backdrop, it's cool. And, believe me, I would love to give you some of my events. I mean, I'm not sure that everybody in my neighborhood -- there are people that really love them, but they also live like on the other side of the neighborhood where they're not inconvenienced, or -- and they love having access, and the people that are the cheerleader for them. It's hard. It's hard to balance it, but 130 days out of the year wondering if you can get an ambulance to somebody's house, or a fire truck, because there's 70,000 people all trying to park; I mean, shuttling is big. The green message. I think probably the best improvement this year was the trail alliance presold parking, so that was it. It was gone. You knew it was gone, and you -- they just wouldn't let you in. Because it's a finite amount. Instead of having a hundred thousand people all trying to come park in this one little postage stamp. >> Council member [inaudible] Again, assistant director for the parks department. I wanted to share with you with respect to the bicycling event. Wardly long was one of the venues we recommended to the event organizer to consider, as well as some other parks outside of the central city core, and I wanted to just resound what Melissa was saying, that when it comes to events management, to a great extent, it's all about the environment and the backdrop. And when there was discussion about continuing to make sure that there's a diversity of events, both in the city, in the central city, but also in the

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outer areas, we really have to take that into account because the events that we are accustomed to that Melissa is speaking to have been in place for many, many, many years, and we heard as a staff that one of the things we should consider is not doing the grandfathering of the same events each year, and that we ought to take a look at that. So we have opportunities to decentralize events from the central city, but to a great extent, the event organizer foresees the event venue that is most compatible with the type of event and size that they want to do, and I just want to share that with you. >> And so I then agree with Mr. Franchell, that we say, I'm sorry, we can't host you this year. >> Yes. >> Mayor Adler: Ms. Tovo. >> Tovo: Yeah. I appreciate this conversation. I think it was Mr. Wallace made a good point, and thank you for that additional information about that particular event. But, you know, it's very similar -- I'll just say it's very similar to the discussion that happened on the street closure task force about encouraging street closure events to go to other areas of the city and what we heard from motorists, they like the capital backdrop and others but I think it's incumbent on us to make sure we're not impacting the same places of work, the same places of worship, the same neighborhood, it's the same parks over and over again. One of the -- one of the outstanding elements on the street closure task force that the group never came to consensus on was about limiting time to consensus on a great number of other issues, and that one is still outstanding and it's a similar -- really, with the exception of auditorium shores, we've not imposed a number limit on our parks. So I hope that that's something that we will take up as part of the open space parks committee, looking at that issue and recommending that our citizen boards or another stakeholder process looks carefully at that so that we're not impacting the

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same neighborhoods, the same spaces, the same, et cetera, et cetera, over understand a over again. >> Actually, I think the parks board did make a recommendation that's still in place that there will only be three large events in zilker every year, and that, technically, I think blues on the green when it started wasn't considered a large event. And so, therefore, it continues as it is morphed. The auditorium shores area did he un --did end up going on and becoming council limited by the number of events, and zilker is still -- I have like the link of all the words that I can send because I was always dismayed at how I got to as many events as I have. I have this piece of paper that says this should not be happening, but things happen. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: I would just also sort of just jump in briefly and say, I think to Melissa's point, about the fence, really, I think the sort of big -- big issue there is that acl and the trail of lights are on the heels of each other, so you've got a big event that closes the park for three weeks or a month, and then you've got another big event that only goes for a couple weeks, but it -- you know, they have to -- because of the nature of the electrical displays that they use in trail of lights, have to keep that fence up for a good bit. So we've actually reached out to the trail. I know James is here somewhere behind me. But we've reached out to them to sort of actively begin discussions about how we can bring some resources to bear to make that time shorter, since they are sandwiched together. >> And also look to running a double shift for setup and takedown. People -- there are some very good organizers that are willing

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to work with you and look for solutions for problems. We all are pretty curious of what the live nation c3 purchase will mean to us. C3, those guys are from here. They actually -- charlies, the charlies, and they're people that you know, and now that they're bought out, I'm just not sure what that will bring. Trail of lights foundation, he's here, and they're a pleasure to work with and they try to work it out. The question is, we do have other big regional parks, and shouldn't we share? >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Thank you. Ms. Osgood. >> Thank you mayor and council members for having us. Could you close -- so I'm here this afternoon to talk to you about parkland dedication. And to tell you the story about how this was raised within the public conversation, I sit on the parks board, and a couple years ago we began hearing from a number of different people concerns about parkland dedication, from the -- from the neighborhoods and from the development community. We heard a concern about a lack of transparency, about the program, overall. From parks advocates, we were hearing concerns that the fee had remained stagnant, had stayed the same since 2007, and as one parks advocate said, nothing in Austin has mistake I had the same cost since 2007. So we started looking at the issue of the ordinance and to see what could or should change about it. Just to -- just the basics, so parkland dedication is the policy that requires any new residential development to dedicate land for a park or pay a fee in lieu to the city in order to develop the facilities that will bring it into the same level of quality of life that

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is -- that exists throughout the rest of the city. So, in other words, it pays for the amenities that equate with quality of life. The only other way to pay for such -- the creation of equal services across the city is either to raise taxes or to lower the quality of life for residents. So ... To -- oop. I think I just turned it off. There we go. Okay. To to give an orientation where Austin is, currently Austin charges \$650 per unit. And you can see on this chart how that relates to other cities in Texas and across the nation. We're very low. The -- forgive me. Okay. Okay. So the fee that is charged is based on the current level of service. I think this is important to say. The fee that is being -- that I'm going to show in terms of it's computations is not being looked at to raise the level of service, but maintain what we have within the city, based on averages of land and population. And the -- what I appreciate about what the proposal that the department is putting forward is that they're really looking at creating a more nuanced understanding of how these fees are computed, so they're looking at a more nuanced fee of per-person rate rather than a per-unit demand. So, again, just to reiterate, the pld is either land, has a land requirement, you could pay a fee in lieu, and then also has a fee for the park development, so you have the land and then you have

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the park amenities that are -- that go on top. By being able to look at park -- the parkland dedication fees per person, it allows the structure of the formula to be broken down into low density, medium density, and high density. And this is something that's really forward thinking and don't -- you don't see in a lot of other cities to be able to nuance the formula. The way it's computed, looking at a per person ratio, there are an average of 2.8 people who live in a low density household. In a medium density household, it's 2.2, and in a high density household, it's 1.7. And I'll show you how these formulas work. The formula for fee for when you're looking at the land, what it's basically looking at is figuring out the number of acres that, on average, are available per resident, and then multiplying that times the number of units and people. So, again, it's keeping the, you know, the level of service that's available across the city. If you're looking at the fee in lieu, again, we're looking at averages. Looking at the cost of land based on recent acquisitions that the city has made, which is \$39,000 per acre, divided by the total city population per acre, which is a hundred -- it's an average of 160 per acre. And that gives you the fee in lieu of \$168 per person. \$168 per person. It's a lot of numbers. So what does that mean? So if a developer was to come forward and not be able to put a park within their development and wanted to pay the fee in lieu, they would pay for a low density development, they would pay a thousand dollars --

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\$1,030 per unit, and then that cost would cascade according to the density of the development. Then you also have the land development fee, and this is again computed based on the local standards of just what we have currently in our city today, the cost that it would be to develop a park, a neighborhood park, it costs about \$800,000. You if I go that there are -- and then that is divided by the number of residents that are, on average, served by -- by parks. And you get the park development fee. When you bring that all together -- so if you have fee in lieu and park development fees, you can see the current costs that are being proposed, in the new ordinance for the parkland dedication. So you can compare these then to the original \$650. It's important then to look at these again in relationship to other costs across the nation and with other cities, and you can see that we're -- it actually puts us sort of right in the middle. One of the things that I want to -- since I know that the council is interested in the -- you know, not just the formulas, but really the parameters of the discussions, I also wanted to bring up the conversations of what we're hearing from the different constituencies. And so for those folks from whom we hear resistance about raising the fees, there are a number of issues that get raised. One of them from the development community, we hear the concern that increasing parkland fees will hurt in terms of overall affordability, because it will, again, be another fee that will be part of the development cost,

and it then will raise the price of housing. I can say that -- I think the affordable -- the affordability issue is huge and key and having that we need to pay very close attention to. I don't think we can solve it by

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any one element of that larger equation. And so there is also concerns from the development community on the clarity of rules in regulating land development fee in lieu. So, in other words, when -- when should someone -- when should a developer put a park in, or when should they pay fee in lieu? Typically, that happens in a conversation, the developer will come to the park staff and they will talk about, you know, what would -- they negotiate what the choice should be. Now there is -- and this comes back to council member Casar's earlier question about -- about that gap map of, you know, where is it that we need parks within the city. And so I want to bring attention to -- this was a map that was generated in the urban parks work group report that shows existing city parks in brown, surrounded by either a quarter mile buffer for the inner core or half mile buffer for the outer core. The report also looked at and to see if you could develop all the city land possible, which included school sites, existing parks, undeveloped parks, and to see everything that the city could develop, we have this map. But then, getting back, if, as a city, we develop everything that we have the capacity to develop, there are still many areas of the city, particularly in district 7, 1, 2, and 3, that -- where there are major gaps that we need to acquire land in order to fulfill the need of having residents be able to walk to parks. And this is really critical. In Austin as a city, we are excellent in terms of the number of acres that we have.

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We have tremendous acreage resources. We don't have accessible park resources. Parks where people - residents can walk to them and achieve the benefits of community and health that we know that parks provide. So in answer to the question of concern from the development community of how do we know what will -- if -- you know, whether we should be looking at developing a park or doing fee in lieu, this is now part -- this map has now been integrated into the development system so that developers can look specifically at the parcel that they're working on and can see if they fall into a gap area. And that begins the conversation. The -- I'll leave it up there. There's also the issue that has been raised about the issue of developing new parks when existing parks can't be maintained. Again, like the affordability issue, it is a huge issue. The parks are severely underfunded, and again, I don't believe that we should be looking at just the pld question for something that is a very large conversation to have. From the advocate community, we hear requests for -- that the pld actually be extended to look at commercial properties because commercial developments also have an impact on our public spaces. If, for example, you look at a downtown development and the workers in that building go out at lunch time and sit and

use a park, that -- that is -- they are using our public facilities and, therefore, it is -- there's conversations about opening it up for public conversation of could the pld's be extended to commercial properties as well. Maybe not with the same pricing system, but again, within that conversation. Also, the issue of annual review. You know, as I mentioned at the beginning, the pld ordinance had

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not changed since 2007. Now, there is a formula that has been created, and again, I take my hat off to the department because it is a formula -- it's a formula based off of academic research, specifically the research of John Crompton from Texas A&M. We're very fortunate in the state of Texas to have one of the preeminent park scholars here at Texas A&M, and he has been in consultation with the department to develop that specific formula, so that it is rigorous. But with such precision and with the changes in population and land prices in Texas, or in Austin, it really behooves us to look at that rate Amy in order so that we can adjust it precisely. So so to return to the original issues, so, you know, as I said, as a parks person, we were hearing concerns that the issue had not been changed [lapse in audio] Had not been changed. In terms of transparency, we can look at that and really see that the department was working in a paper system in a digital age. They did not have the staffing necessary to be able to take all of thoughts records, and these computations can get quite complicated across numerous departments, and make them digital so that he will be readily available for community members or who would like to see. Fortunately, they were able to bring that system online so that is now available. There's also quarterly reports, which show the -- the most recent balances and according to planning areas and what is prioritized, and they're also looking at putting signage into individual parks that show that the monies for the development actually came from these specific -- the development of park actually came from these specific developments. And so I'd like to end my comments with just one issue, is

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that we talk about parkland dedication fees and we know this is important in keeping the equity of services across the city. It's important to recognize that with the economy that we exist in today, that these fees cannot really pay, in and of themselves, for parkland itself, that it is very -- that land prices are so high, that in order for the parkland pld funds to pay for new parkland, they have to be coupled with bond monies. So without those bond monies there, the pld funds are really there to help bring up the amenities so that they can hold and serve the growing number of people that are going to use the parks. But in terms of this map and the gaps that we have as a city, we have a large challenge ahead of us, and so I think that's important to -- as you debate and deliberate the conversation around this issue, I think that's important to recognize. So -- >> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much. Questions? Mr.

Zimmerman? >> Zimmerman: Yes. Just a quick question to kind of restate the obvious. You know, as the city purchases, as they buy up more and more and more land, let me show you something that one of the presenters already showed. It's a 1988 versus 2014 [lapse in audio] On the 2014, this is the land that the city is buying up, or that the city and county governments are buying up. They buy up more and more land. The remaining land becomes more and more and more expensive. >> Yeah. It's a complex equation. >> Ms. Osgood, so the parkland dedication fee can be in areas where somebody already has a park nearby. That money can be allocated by the parks department, so whichever part of town needs -- >> No. And that's important to say, that there are geographic bounds for where that money -- where those monies can be spent. And that's something that can also be looked at.

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>> Casar: So that's -- that policy is our own city policy, but -- >> Yes. >> Casar: It's not required by any larger preemptive policy? >> You know, the issue of parkland dedication has been who could at by the U.S. Supreme court, by the Texas supreme court and requires an issue of rough proportionality. The issue of location, it's a one-mile radius, so it's currently -- in our policy, it's a one-mile radius. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Mr. Francell. >> Mayor, council, thanks for letting me talk today. It's always difficult to follow a professor. I'm also going to, like Collin, not use a powerpoint presentation, and I think we're a little bit off schedule, so I'll try to make my comments to the point. My name's Jeff francell. I've been on the parks board since 1997. I was first appointed by mayor kicker Watson shortly after he won his first term. But also, since 1998, I've worked for the nature conservancy here in Texas and I've assisted the city of Austin inquiring thousands of acres of land, some of those on council member Zimmerman's map there. I've helped acquire land for endangered species, for water quality purposes, and for parks. I think it's important to note that almost every acre in Texas that is available to the public for recreation or acquired for environmental purposes has had to be acquired, and that's a result of our unique history. In many western states and even some states in the east, parks can be carved out of either state lands or federal lands, but Texas, especially the urban parts of the state, the developed parts of the state, didn't have a federal or state land base to start with, so that

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example goes all the way back to big bend national park, which was acquired under governor mom Carter through a campaign of private fund raising, some of which was supported by school children across the state in the '30s. So every acre of land that's available to the public almost has had to have been acquired. And that's one of the things that makes Austin different, that -- the fact that we are a city within a park. It took money, it took a lot of effort, it took a lot of public support. I will point out that all

of those acres that have been acquired with bond money have been passed by public support, and the public support for those acquisitions has been higher than many of the other things that they've been competed against with, for instance, roads or other projects. So all of the land on that map was acquired with quite a bit of public support. So one of the things in doing this land acquisition work that is sort of a truth is that you never really look back 50 years and say, wow, I wish we didn't buy zilker park. Unless, Melissa Hawthorne reminded me that the city had the opportunity to expand or acquire adjacent tracts a couple of times in its history in zilker and didn't do it, and having driven through zilker park on Valentine's day with the 5,000 people you mentioned enjoying the park, I kind of thought maybe we should have bought a couple extra parcels and had a little bit more room for people to play in. So that also made me think about, in the late 1990s, council member Beverly Griffith initiated the destination parks program. And the destination parks program in the late 1990s, and I was a little bit younger then,

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I kind of wondered to myself why is the city going out and spending a lot of money, I think it was about \$45 million, to buy land in eastern Travis county for parks, and there really weren't people there. And today I can look back at 2015 and say, I'm so glad that we did. Those hundreds and thousands of acres of land that have been acquired for the destination parks program, they make up the onion creek metropolitan park that we saw on the map today. If we tried to do that today, we'd never be able to afford it. So it's a -- it's a canvas that visionaries like council member Griffith saw that will be able to be painted on by future council members. Maybe we're not there yet, today, but as we fill in, as the city fills in around those areas, we're going to be so much more glad 50 years from now that we have those lands. I will say I have been involved in many of these bond programs, and the public support behind every single one of these programs has been, you know, well -- well above the average. You know, Austin -- I mentioned this before -- is nationally recognized for the fact that -- its aggressive land acquisition programs and the fact that it has open space that people can appreciate, for various purposes. So in the early 1990s, the city initiated, along with Travis county and other partners, the balcones canyon land conservation plan, and this is another example of thinking ahead, but the city acquired and met its goal of acquiring land for the balcones canyon lands preserve in the mid 90's, about 13,600 acres. Our friends over at Travis county, and I've worked with them and have friends over there, but they're still struggling to meet the goals of

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their acquisitions today, 2015, and they've spent quite a bit more money than the city of Austin has because it's taken them quite a bit longer to buy their land. Austin has to do this alone. The state of Texas has not had a program for parkland acquisition or open space acquisition since John Connolly was governor. So, thankfully, Austin and places like San Antonio -- San Marcos is another example -- have done their own efforts to preserve open space and parks. The -- the three general land acquisition programs, I mentioned them before, but parks, the balcones canyon lands preserves, and water quality protection lands, they're lands that are acquired for different purposes. Parks for public recreation and connectivity, balcones canyon lands preserved for endangered species, and the water quality protection lands for water quality, and to nick to preserve Barton springs, but they complement each other. The programs, there are lands within the water quality protection lands that have endangered species. The balcones canyon lands preserve, protect water quality. Many of the parks that are in southwest or northwest Austin, or along waterways in eastern Travis county, protect water quality, and mean that less mitigation has to be done to our creeks and streams. So I hope that the city will continue these programs, continue to buy land. We're certainly going to continue to grow. And I think as long as we're continuing to grow, we have to think about acquiring enough land for -- not only for people, but also for environmental purposes. If we stop and continue -- stop buying land and continue to grow, I think 50 years from now we're going to be in one of those places where people say, wow, wish they hadn't done that. We could have used that additional acreage.

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And one -- I'll say, finally, that was brought home to me while we were on the parks board this fall, and we were struggling with issues in [inaudible] Neighborhood association with a park that was Austin energy land that was repurposed for parkland, it's a six acre park in the highland neighborhood association. And the highland neighborhood area was developed in an era when the city didn't do a lot of land acquisition, and there are not a lot of parks there. And the people that live -- live there conserve a park, and they are struggling with the six-acre park and how to fit all the needs and purposes and uses they want to within that area. And I can't help but think to myself, I wish that the city council at that era had been a little bit more aggressive about buying land. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Any questions? Okay. >> Thank you. I appreciate that. And, again, I'm going to repeat what I mentioned before. Some of the ride margin -- I will concede that some of those bond issues passed by very wide margins to buy up public lands and what have you. Squirrel, the bonds passed by large margins here. Absolutely, I concede that. That's with a the Numbers show. The Numbers also show if you look at the campaign finance reports, hundreds of thousands of dollars of corporate money through special purpose packs have been forwarded into a lot of these campaigns. And I think I'd like for you to acknowledge that, if you could. Maybe you haven't studied it like I have. >> I haven't studied it. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Panel, thank you very much. I'm sorry. >> I have one quick question. I know that we've, you know, passed a proposal, the voters passed a proposal to work with aid on parks. Can somebody give us a short update on how we're working with our schools to partner on park spaces? >> Yes.

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Just quickly, we just recently finished a meeting with our friends at the a Austin independent school district. We're looking at economies of scale. We share a lot of land that schools have in joint areas, so we're going back and looking at the overall playgrounds, the number of playgrounds, and looking at how we can jointly do a bond program to do a better job of economies of scale in that extension. We're working with aid when it comes to programs. We have a very successful lifeguard program we just completed working. While we had 88 students go through a lifeguarding program so we can grow our own guards. It looks like 25 will be successful at completing that, so 25 new staff members will be eligible to be lifeguards for the summer. Then in regards to looking at land, I -- I have met with the cip facilities staff to look at the next program for acquisition of property that we look at that together for economies of scale for uses not only school amenities, ball fields, tracks, joint use, that we do this together so that the voters can see that we are doing our best to make sure that we're not duplicating those things. So we have an ongoing dialogue, working with them, not only from parks and park management and playgrounds, but also from a programming standpoint. >> Mayor Adler: Ms. Houston. >> Houston: Yes. Thank you so much for mentioning programming. As I walked about for seven months, one of us issues for givens, Dorothy turner Roberts, and rosewood, was a lack of program -- programming for our youngsters. Maybe some in the summer, but nothing hardly at all during the weekdays or on Saturdays at givens that the park closes at 12 o'clock and opens again on

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Sunday. I'm not sure of the times and dates, but again, I'd like to talk with someone offline about that to make sure that what I have a concern about is not what's the reality on the ground. >> And one last question, Ms. Osgood, the slide you showed with deficiencies or gaps, is that the same one that the parks department referenced earlier, or do you have a separate map? >> That is the same one. That was the one that was developed as part of the urban parks group. >> Casar: Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Ms. Gallo. >> Gallo: Ms. Hensley, I apologize, I had to miss a little bit of this from a previous commitment that I could not get out of. And you may have addressed this as part of your presentation already, but Ramsey park is in my district, and at least on the surface, it appears to me to be a very successful collaboration between the neighborhood residents, businesses, and also the foundation grant funding, the city, and is there -- I would like to see that replicated in other neighborhoods. Is there something that you could share with me as far as the pieces that have worked well, the pieces that we need to work a little bit on, and help make that process work better, because it seems to be a really good collaborative effort at this point. >> Well, and thank you for saying that because it does take -- I know that's saying it takes a village to raise a child. I think it takes a village to build a park and build programs

because we can't do it by ourselves. And this is a perfect example, Ramsey park, where the neighborhood partnering program, through the public works department, the parks & recreation department staff, our friends at the park foundation have helped fund the different amenities that the Ramsey park wanted to put into the park through a revitalization and master plan that we did. So we had to restructure a little bit. So things that didn't go so well, when we first started getting a lot of interest from neighborhoods, we weren't structured in a way to make things be successful.

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We were able to restructure, we now have someone who's a resource development officer -- not really an officer, coordinator, who takes the money, looking at grants, looking at neighborhood raising funds, looking at sweat equity, working through recommendations of the grant program through Austin parks foundation, and then we sometimes recommend -- apply for some of the funds through the neighborhood partnering program, and we have a person on staff that actually works with that neighborhood group to walk through the permitting processes and things so that they're not out there going, help, we don't know what to do. It's -- you know, because there are things that if you're going to pour concrete, you've got to go through a plan. And so there are some lessons learned, but now we're in a place where we work very closely, not just with our friends with the parks foundation, but keep Austin beautiful, all these different groups where we're bringing the right resources to the table to get the job done. Lessons learned again, although we sometimes we don't work as fast as the neighborhood wants us to, so we're trying to make sure that we are meeting the deadlines. And then sometimes we're ready to go and maybe they're still trying to figure out exactly what they want to do. But I would say we're replicating this all over the city. A column was mentioning our partnership with the dove springs area and the playscape that's going to be unveiled on March the seventh as the efforts over at Ramsey. So I'm going to be several places on it's my park day on March the seventh. But all of those kinds of projects come to refusing and we kind of get a full blow of that as March the seventh, it's my parks day. But I'm so glad you mentioned that because this is the way of the future. This is how we're going to be able to make park activities and pack projects successful and the only way with those neighborhood associations and groups. It's the residents of that neighborhood and they're vested in the process. Is there anything you can do with that process and that

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coordination that's not been done that we should talk about doing? >> Well, I mean I think supporting us and being there to challenge us at times, if there's another way, can we do it this way, with can we look at this, because sometimes, believe it or not, can he try to look at all the aspects but we may not be

listening or hearing it as much as we need to, so challenging us to see if there's any other opportunities, helping us by suggesting if there's other groups, we ought to be partnering with, we try to be holistic and I think we do a great job. I have such a wonderful group of people I work with. But we sometimes, we're so looking at one project that we might not be able to look at some things that we maybe need to grow in other areas. And then, of course, support. We're going to -- the more this happens, the more we get the requests from the neighborhoods and it's happening, I mean, we're working with the friends at -- I could name off I don't know how many for projects, the resources are going to be an issue for us. And, you know, we need to make sure we have the Numbers and we need to make sure we stretch ourselves to the max. But at the end of the day, when we can't take care of everybody and we're starting to see quality go uncovered and we're looking more the a quantity, that's when some things have to give. >> Thank you for what you're doing. >> Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: We have six speakers, other voices coming in at three minutes each. The first is Sharon Blye to talk with us about cemeteries as cultural park and open space. >> [Inaudible] >> Mayor Adler: Please. >> Only. Good afternoon. My name is Sharon blyethe. I'm a cemetery advocate, as you know. I have brief comments about Austin memorial park. 1992, the city council passed a resolution defining parks of the cemetery. However, there are some misunderstanding by city staff as to the actual boundaries of the cemetery. City staff incorrectly considers two parcels of cemetery land on the west side of shoal creek as

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surplus land. But these were actually purchased as cemetery in 1941. And they have never been severed from the cemetery. Recently, the city parks department authorized a survey of the interior of the cemetery and filed with the county clerk a new legal description for just the interior portion. That survey left out the two parcels making up the approximately three acres of cemetery land that is adjacent to the east cemetery fence line on the west side of shoal creek. The upper portions of these two parcels of land are suitable for burial, anyway. These tracts will be needed for use by the cemetery as Austin's population has now exceeded the available cemetery space in the city limits and no cemetery can be established in the city limits according to state law. The city of Austin has not recorded a deed transferring these two parcels away from the cemetery for another purpose. In addition, these two parcels are dedicated cemetery land, according to Texas health and safety codes 711036. The city has not done any of -- any severing of these two parcels from the cemetery. The city has repurposed over pieces of land by deed or actions of the city council but these two parcels have never been severed by deed or being after city council. The state law is very clear on this what a cemetery is. You have to have a human burial or you have to have a dedication or both. Both of these state law criteria have been met for the cemetery, including the two parcels which have never been separated. It is obvious that a public process needs to take place for these two parcels of cemetery land. Please, let's work together to see that this precious land is preserved for its original purpose, which is to be cemetery land. This could be done with city council resolution that will lend itself to a totally public process. I would appreciate it very

much if your offices would set meetings with me and others to explain this in more detail. Thank you for your time on this very sensitive and important

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topic. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Any comments? Thank you, Ms. Blythe. >> I do have copies of my presentation I'll pass out to the clerk here. >> Mayor Adler: Great. Thank you. Mat nitton, Texas -- >> Good afternoon, mayor Adler and council members, congratulations and thank you for your service to our committee. Any name is Matt nifton I'm president of a parks and bike trail. I've been asked to provide a couple of perspectives, if irs the role of concession anterior in providing services to park users, and second, the role of lady bird lake as a parks destination. First, the concessioner allows the parks department to partner with small businesses that can provide specific expertise and service to the public. For example, Texas rolling center provides rowing, kayaking, canoeing and paddle services. Our arrangement was the parks department is governed by a concession agreement. Typically, the concessioner he is to provide an exclusive license to operate from a specific location and the city receives a, exoof the gross researches. This year about \$25,000 will be paid to the city. Unfortunately I just want to echo an earlier comment that money goes to the general fund. I would like this group to consider the possibilities of directing concession fees to the parks department for spending directly in the parks department, and for their projects. In addition, Texas rowing center build its own facilities, including buildings and docks, at no cost to the city. These facilities are used and pro I had to the public and they become the property of the city once our contract expires. Texas rowing center provides no or low cost programs for people with physical, intellectual, and sensory disabilities. We also host a series of river

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cleanups through our partnership with keep Austin beautiful. And finally, we promote diversity through our rowing scholarship program for low income students and through our very popular Latino moonlight serenades. Our concession arrangement is a proverbial win-win. The city gets expertise, concession fees, and facilities. The concessioner gets authorization to operate their business on parks property, and the public gets access to lady bird lake through a variety of recreational options. Over my 15 years as a concession aire, I've seen lady bird lake become a destination for parks users. Over that time the usage Numbers have increased over 2,000 percent. Clearly people no longer want to just run around the river, they want to be on the river. Much of the growth results from the explosion of popularity of the standup pallet board or sups. Before 2010 there were no S of sups on lady bird lake. We're we're capital of the world. Last year there were over 60,000 sup rentals alone. Sups are bringing a new kind of park user to

the river. These are young people looking to socialize. All these young people are from all over the city, streaming to the park. This can only build awareness and broad support for the future of our park system. Texas rowing center is a public-private partnership success story. It's been a great experience working with director Hensley, her staff, and the parks board, all of whom have the same mission, and that is, in part, to leverage private enterprise to improve our park system and enhance the experience for all of the park users. I'm happy to answer any questions. >> Mayor Adler: Ms. Houston? >> Houston: Yes. Thank you so much. That was very interesting. The community benefits that you spoke about, are those in your contract, in your concession lease, or did you just decide to -- >> Well, I'm proud to say that

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we did it on our own volition. It wasn't spelled out in the contract. Our mission from early on, when I became a concessionaire, it was not a given we were going to get the contract and I listened to the parks board members including Jeff who was on the parks board back in 1999. What I heard was the biggest word that was used was "Access" for the community. And that meant the entire community. And so what we've done, our mission is to provide access to Lady Bird Lake for everybody. And we've got a whole host of programs which would take me far longer than three minutes to describe to you, but I will tell you that we have programs that are serving people in your community. >> Houston: And so it's not in the contract. That's what I -- >> It's not in the contract. >> Houston: Thank you. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much. >> Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Harry Sabio. >> Good afternoon, mayor and council. My name is Harry Sabio. I work for the Home Builders Association of Greater Austin. You are members build roughly 90, of the homes in the area we work with, 30 city-county jurisdictions. I was called last Friday and told I could be provided the opportunity for three minutes to talk about the parkland, new proposed parkland open space fees. And I can't. So -- but what I am going to do is to highlight three key areas, I'll go over them very briefly, and then if we can in subsequent meetings go into more detail, I'd appreciate the opportunity. I'm going to talk about affordability fairness in the fact that it's probably the most regressive tax you can possibly compliment, first, affordability. The last city council implemented close to \$10,000 in impact fees just last year. There was \$5,600 increase in

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water and wastewater fees, a utility line extension fee that is on the average going to cost two thousand dollars per house, and the staff has said that council approved by resolution, although not by ordinance yet, another 2-thousand-dollar fee to connect from the green box in the front yard to the house. The -- this proposed ordinance will increase impact fees before you ever turn a piece of dirt by -- by more than

double if you're anything -- anything except an apartment unit. Finally, parkland fees actually have disincentives for builders and developers doing their own work. If you decide that you're going to do your own work and pay for it yourself, there is -- it is discounted by the parks parks & recreation department. Second key issue I want to address is on fairness. Now, there are rules set up by -- for impact fees for water waste and water utility lines and we would offer up that parkland dedication fees should do the same. First of all, there should be a capital plan that the fees are going to be applied to. Second, they should benefit those who are paying for them. If you already live next-door to a park, should you have to pay for a new parkland dedication fee, and everyone else's park fees also? There should be no double payments. If I'm paying for -- if I'm having to pay for my parkland and the improvements on it, and then I have to pay for parkland bonds also, that means I am paying twice for parklands to service myself and factor into their calculations are the park fees. Let me wrap up by saying it's an aggressive tax. If I live in east Austin and I'm in a small -- small house, let's say \$150,000 home, I'm going to pay the same fee as if I'm in

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west Austin in a one and a half-million-dollar home. That's the definition of being regressive. That's the definition of what we should be trying to avoid. By the way, while I'm here I wanted to mention that if you'll look at the slide on the comparable cities, that the fees we are being compared to, they're not comparable cities. They're either out of -- out of state or, with the exception, I believe, of Fort Worth, not of proportional size. The -- just to wrap up, you know, we do appreciate the transparency and the need to get toward that. Again, if you will follow the rules that are set in place for water and wastewater and utility impact fees, you'll go a long way toward getting there. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Thank you very much. Any questions? Thank you. Ty Perkins. >> Good afternoon, mayor and welcome, welcome new council members. My name is Ty Perkins. I'm the executive director of tree folks and I'm here today just to shine a spotlight on the urban forest in particular, within parks. Tree folks is a non-profit in central Texas that has a 25-year history of leading volunteer tree plantings in public parks and greenbelts. This year we planted our one millionth tree. Most of our events are in Austin, which is our home base. Austin is covered by about 30% urban canopy, and in a recent 2008 stratum analysis report, that canopy is 62% in the fair report category. I'm sure you're familiar with all the benefits the urban canopy gives the city of Austin, but trees are a very essential part of Austin's infrastructure and they do a lot of jobs much more cheaply than

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infrastructure, air purification, they help us attain and maintain our ozone reduction status. Swamp cooling, water purification, carbon sequestration, energy use in buildings by appointing shade. In a very real way they contribute to the sense of place that Austinites have. Austinites are proud of their trees and care about them very much. We are in a significant drought, as you've heard. Last week and probably this morning we lost a half a billion trees in Texas over the last five years. I don't know what that number is. I don't think we know, in Austin proper, as a result of last five-year drought, but you can see it on the ground there. And, of course, our fast pace of development is a pretty great way to knock out the existing urban canopy. And what we have taken as our own mission is to lead volunteer plantings to try to mitigate the impacts of both drought and development. This is a great deal for the city. On one volunteer day, we can, with the use of perhaps one staff member, Saturday morning, Sunday morning, we can bring a hundred volunteers to a park and put in place, you know, possibly a hundred container trees, or in the case of plantings along the creek, a thousand or two thousand in one morning. We do this 25 or 30 times over the course of a season. So these kinds of partnerships that the city has with non-profits is a great way of leveraging resources in areas that are hard hit and may not have enough funds for maintenance. And it provides Austinites with a very intimate way of connecting with the city. It's a very positive touch point between the city and her people. So people who may plant a tree, when they're small children, can come back. The impact lasts as long as the

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tree does. So it's a very persistent way for the city to interact with their citizens. They have an awful lot of fun doing it. You know, I think that we can get a large volume of trees in the ground, but we can also create a lot of positive feelings and good intention on the part of the community. So I would encourage you to take pride in the partnerships that the city has with your non-profit partners, and increase opportunities for people to get in the parks themselves and put tree in the ground. So thank you very much. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much. Mr. Casar. >> Casar: I usually wouldn't do this because I know during these we want to focus on big policy issues, but I do want to thank Ms. Perkins and just let the rest of the council know that just this weekend tree folks partnered with Austin river watch to do an amazing planting in my district in butter milk park in the St. John neighborhood, and a lot of the funds I learned come from some of them tree mitigation fees that come from development, and so it was incredible to see in an area. Butter milk tree actually has the most impervious cover of anyone in the city. Youth from all of our high schools learning how to measure water quality and plant SAP lings. So thank you for partnering on that. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Steven sent NER. Three minutes, then David king for three minutes. >> Hi. I'm Steven zintner from sustainable neighborhoods of north central Austin. We often think about parks as a recreational benefit, and that's obviously their primary purpose, but I want to kind of reframe how we think about parks for this conversation in terms of how we can apply parks in certain locations to achieve the city's transportation goals. In the context in particular is early suburban areas of the city that are starting to see infill development. On the map up here, that's the white area, developed after

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World War II and through the 1970s. These are areas characterized by big commercial streets, large unwalkable walks, and few pedestrian amenities. About 80% of the trips that people take each day are not work commutes, they're trips to the grocery store, dropping your kids off at school. They're trips many of which still occur during peak driving hours. And we have an opportunity to look for ways to take some of those trips and convert them from car trips into walking and biking in the local community. The place to focus is places near transit. This is Burnet Road at North Loop. We have a new rapid bus station at the intersection there. Code next calls a place like this a node on the corridor. We've been calling it village centers or future village centers. The X that you see on the map is where I used to live. I lived at Kensington Green Apartments for several years. My wife and I would often walk five minutes south of there across the parking lot to Yarbrough Library. We stopped doing that after about a year because the owner of the parking lot fenced it off. It probably was getting annoyed with people like us trespassing across his property. So a five-minute walk to the library became a 12- to 15-minute walk to the library. We stopped walking. We started driving to the library. As we start planning places like this, we need to think about how to use open space to create connectivity to help people get to destinations in these places. Not just on the corridor, that's where a lot of the focus has been, but off the corridor as well. That's where you're going to shape places that really are pedestrian friendly, that are safe and attractive for kids, where people meet each other each other, where we shape a culture that likes to be

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outdoors and it greatly encourages the likelihood that people really will walk to where they want to go. There's a number of things we need to do. There's no silver bullet, as people have said. Open space -- and especially open space in these places is very expensive, so we need to kind of have a policy cocktail in mind. But what I want to leave you with is that if you're going to prioritize, these are the places to prioritize. You're going to get multiple benefits from your investment at places like this. It's getting the biggest bang for the buck. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Questions? Yes. Ms. Kitchen. >> Kitchen: I just wanted to comment. We've been -- I want to thank everybody for the great material that you all have been providing us with, and I'm hoping we can get copies of these presentations. >> Mayor Adler: If you would give them to the clerk, the powerpoint, a couple people have some that we don't have hard copies of. I think that would be helpful. Thank you. >> Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: And then our last voice is David King. >> Thank you, mayor, mayor pro tem, and council members. My name is David King. We need new long-term sustainable funding strategies that will help ensure that parkland and open spaces are available and free to all citizens and equitably distributed throughout the city. Current private funding strategies for parks are not transparent, while other funding strategies focus on Mary events

and commercial use of parkland that create barriers to low and moderate income families, and often keep parks closed to the general public. We have too many for-profit events on parkland and too much commercial use of parkland. Zilker park was closed partially or mostly for 141 days during a five-month period between September 2014 and January 2015. Terr partners has recommended a plan for two new parking garages, west Riverside drive and auditorium shores, at a cost

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over \$100 million. This plan will not enhance the park [lapse in audio] To help pay for the parking garages. The city and university of Texas are apparently discussing a new basketball arena on the south central waterfront just a few blocks from auditorium shores. A new sports arena at that location are encroach on the waterfront and create an events district that includes auditorium shores and butler park. Commercial for-profit golf courses are proposed for Walter E. Long park in the midst of one of the worst droughts on record. Funding for parks is uneven, inconsistent, and inequitable. Urban parks like zilker park, auditorium shores and park get more funding. Parks near wealthy neighborhoods get more funding from conservancies and foundations [lapse in audio] Is not subject to open records and conflict of interest laws, which creates a perception that park policies may be influenced by donors. We need a new way forward to provide consistent, transparent, and equitable funding for all parks. A 2014 study by resources for the future recommended three strategies: Endowments, trust funds, and new tax dedicated to public parts. We should start on the endowments and trust funds as soon as possible because they will take considerable time and effort to establish. In the meantime, stop waiving fees and expenses for parkland, ensure that all revenue generated on parkland is used for parks, significantly increase parkland dedication fees for new development. Increase fees for existing commercial use of apartment. Earmark five percent of the car rental taxes each year for public parks. Concrete business improvement districts to benefit public parks within each district. Compliment a transportation impact fee for new development. Urge the state legislature to introduce a new tax for public parks. Stop grant granting waivers and variance for developments a ever that encroaches on waterfronts, a vote by board, commissions and city council is required by

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variations or waivers, amend the development ordinance so it cannot override the ordinance. Please protect our heritage trees on parkland. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much. Any other comments? J. >> Just a quick comment. It's funny the Austin duck adventure just drove up while you were finishing your comments. I thought that was easternic so --was ironic so thank you for coming. >> Mayor Adler: Ms. Houston. >> Houston: Mayor, thank you all for everything that you said and for the

people who spoke. This is just a general comment about the panelists. I think as we try to have more diversity of information about policy, it would be helpful to have diversity of people who are appearing before us I know that chairman of the park advisory committee is a person in any district, a Latina, she was not invited to be here but we have three people from the parks board on the panel so I would like us to make sure that we have both diversity of thought and diversity. >> Mayor Adler: Absolutely. You mentioned points well taken. I would also point out that these are all listed on the bulletin and we would appreciate assistance and suggestions as we do these with as much notice as we can get. Your most recent communication are working toward that -- >> Right. There wasn't much notice of this one. But, you know -- >> Mayor Adler: We're pedaling as fast as we can go. Any other comments? Well, then we're done for today. We will adjourn today's meeting. We'll have our next scheduled meeting I think on Thursday. Thank you very much.