

Open Space, Environment, and Sustainability Committee Meeting Transcript – 12/03/2015

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[2:14 PM]

>> Garza: I'm going to go ahead and call the meeting to order of the open space environment and sustainability community. It is 2:14. We are in chambers at city hall. I'm Delia Garza, vice chair of this committee. I'm going to apologize, I'm going to be a little off today. I wasn't fully aware I was running this meeting until a couple of days ago. But we'll go ahead and the first item is approve of minutes of the meeting minutes of October 28th.

>> Zimmerman: Motion to approve minutes.

>> Garza: Motion made by councilmember Zimmerman, seconded by councilmember tovo.

All in favor? Opposed? Passes 3-0. Chair pool absent. And then I don't believe I have any general citizens communication. Maybe one? Okay. Is that person here? Can you raise your hand if you signed up for general communication? No? No speakers for general communication. So then our next item 3, which is the approval of open space, environment and sustainable committee meeting dates and I believe the way it's set up now we -- the March date is taken out, July, August and November. So I'll entertain a motion or if anybody wants to discuss --

>> Zimmerman: I move that we approve this schedule.

>> Garza: Great. Is there a second? Councilmember tovo?

>> Tovo: Second.

>> Garza: So moved by councilmember Zimmerman, seconded by councilmember tovo. All those in favor of the proposed committee meeting schedule say aye. Opposed? 3-0, chair pool absent. The next item -- just trucking through these -- number 4, recommendation regarding authorization of the negotiation and execution of all documents and instruments necessary or desirable to purchase in fee simple 25 properties at risk of flooding in the 25-year flood plain located within the Williamson county watershed as per city ordinance.

Is there a staff presentation?

>> Yes.

>> Garza: Thank you.

>> I am engineer for the watershed protection department here with other staff members from the watershed department and office of real estate to make this presentation. The reason why we are here today is give you an update of the Williamson county watershed project. Give you a high level policy update of how it is, how we are doing our buyout in watershed. This project has been in our radar for a lot of years. They have been flooded several times and we have had a lot of conversation with previous

councilmembers, with the budget office, but I'm just going to concentrate on the prior council items that happened in the last year and a half. Back in September 2014 when council was looking at the budget for fiscal year 2015, this project was approved for funding for the acquisition of 66 properties they are at risk of flooding within a 25-year flood event, which is the flood that has a 4% opportunity of occurrence every given year. In November 2014, we came back to council to ask authorization to make offers to three properties. Normally in a flood buyout project, it's similar to a contract where we are doing a structural solution. Let's say -- we come to council to ask for authorization to negotiate and execute a contract and award a contract. For the real estate acquisition, we'll succumb to council for them to give us permission to proceed with the negotiation. We came for three properties, we closed for three properties and we were planning to come back to council to get authorization for the other 63 and that's what happened in the recent council meeting that you had in June 4, 2015.

During that meeting we requested staff to make offers to 63 of those properties. And council passed a resolution and directed staff to look at it different scenarios and come back with the properties that they were not included and the direction that we got from council. That's what we are here to tell you what happened with the 63 properties and which are the ones we are obtaining for authorization. So this one --

>> Garza: I'm sorry, can I interrupt you real quick? I thought there was -- I thought there was a subsequent action that happened after June -- June that narrowed the buyouts to very specific to those that had been flooded. You are saying --

>> Yes. Out of the 63 properties and Pam from my staff will tell you out of 63 we ended having 38 that we proceeded with those. That left 25 properties, the ones we are here for now.

>> Garza: But wasn't that a council action subsequent to this the June 4th meeting?

>> On June 4th, council directed staff to proceed with the ones that they met some criteria. And those are the ones that start proceeding. Then you got council -- we got a memo that was sent to council explaining how many of the 63 we were proceeding with. So 38 out of the 63 we are already in negotiation with the property owners.

>> Garza: So the 63 was the original number from the funding from 2014. And then you are saying in June it got narrowed to the 38?

>> The 66 was only, then it -- was original, then narrowed to 33. Out of the 63 we got into 38 to proceed and now that left the 25 that we are here for.

>> Garza: Okay. Thanks.

>> Now I have Pam that is going to continue giving you the presentation.

>> Good afternoon.

Pam, supervising engineer, watershed protection. Before we talk in more detail about these 25 specific properties we wanted to make sure you had the context why this project even exists, why it's a buyout and why there's kind of a smattering of Orange properties on that map. So as she mentioned, we call this middle Williamson, it is the number 2 priority for the flood mitigation of the watershed protection department. In total there's about 500 properties in this project area at risk of flooding. Back in 1999, the city entered a partnership with the U.S. Army corps of engineers, same partnership that we had to study the onion creek watershed, we also partnered with them to study portions of Williamson creek. It included several areas you may be familiar with, the Bayton loop, broke broken and the radham area and heart wood which includes emerald forest in the middle. The partnership with the corps was a feasibility study. It was an evaluation of how bad is the flooding, what's causing it and how do we fix it. When we look at how to fix it from an engineering position, structural or nonstructural. There is a flood wall, channel modification that we can build to control the flooding and protect those properties. We also look at nonstructural, can we -- you know, is buying out a property and letting the flood plain return

to its natural state, is that the best solution. Some of the discussion in June was centered around what happened in these particular neighborhoods in October of 2013. I want to make sure everybody understands that this area has been at risk of repeated flooding for many years. We've had flooding in 1998, 2001, 2013 and then, of course, just a couple months ago on Halloween.

None of these were off the chart rain events. These were all year 10-year, 25-year rain events and in every one we had between half a dozen and two dozen, sometimes three dozen properties flooding. We sent the fire department out to these areas several times to do evacuations. We have several families self-evacuate when they see the water rise. One of those project areas was that Bayton loop neighborhood. This was a cluster of 25 homes near the confluence of Williamson creek and cherry creek at risk for flooding. We applied to FEMA and we were successful in buying out all 25 of the properties with a partnership with the corps. These pictures are from the 1998 flood and the evacuations that occurred in that neighborhood. So after the specific area that we're here to talk about, what's shown on this map are the properties at risk of flooding, heartwood and radam areas. At risk of flooding in a 25-year storm event. Which means according to the data we have about how high the water gets and how high the houses are they would have water in their homes during that 4% chance event. The result at the June council meeting was a set of criteria that we were supposed to go back and evaluate and it was centered around houses that actually flooded in the October 2013 storm event, houses that maybe didn't get water inside them but there was a flooding condition on the property that was dangerous for that particular property, and there was a stipulation that every property owner had to have had their deed date before that flood event in 2013. Meaning we haven't changed ownership, haven't changed occupancy since that flood.

So, of course, watershed protection, code compliance, several departments go out after every large flood event and evaluate what structures flood. So we have a pretty good sense of what structures took on water in that October 2013 event. We were immediately able to identify 20 properties that flooded, had water inside their house in that October 2013 event. With then, of course, looked at the deed dates. Unfortunately two of those did change ownership after that date so we had to exclude them following the ordinance. That left us with 18 properties that were immediately eligible and we started moving forward with buyouts for those. The next step was looking at maybe houses that didn't flood themselves but had enough water on their properties that it was dangerous. So using the high watermark data that we have for that storm event and using our high cathedrallic models, we were able to simulate what that water looked like, where the water is, is it in front of the front door, covering their driveway, up against their front sidewalk, would it prevent ingress and egress from the house. By going through that exercise we were able to identify an additional 20 properties that we don't know that the house flooded but we think the situation was dangerous. That got us to the 38 properties. On this map those 38 properties are shown with the red dots. The three properties that she mentioned that we previously acquired are shown with the black stars. And so you can see just because of changes in elevations of houses and because of the -- you know, the deed date exclusion, we have kind of a checker board effect on this map. We have properties right next to each other, one eligible for buyout, one currently not. Because they are all at risk, and this is a risk-based approach to projects, we know they are at risk of flooding.

We want to move forward with acquiring all 63 of them. We have these 25 left that we need the authority to make offers to. So again, we started with the 66, we closed on three already. Of the 63 remaining, the 38 that we have authorization for, we have them in our buyout process. We've begun interviewing the families. We've conducted appraisals on several. We've made offers to a handful and we have more offers going out as we speak. So now I want to kind of step away from the project a little

bit because there's been a lot of talk, a lot of conversation with council and with the flood mitigation task force about flood plain buyouts in general. When the watershed protection department buys property, we could buy property for several different reasons. When it's part of a project, it's a project that's identified based on the number of houses at risk, how high the water gets, how frequently it floods. Those become project areas that get rain, they are citywide. And they then look at how do you fix it. Just like the partnership with the army corps, how do we fix this problem, is there something we can build, engineer to control the flooding, or do we need to remove the houses from the hazard area completely. Sometimes it's a combination of the two. Sometimes we can build a flood wall to protect most of the properties, but we then have to buy out other properties. Sometimes we need to buy properties just to make room to build the detention pond that we need to protect the larger area. We only -- we've only pursued buyouts in areas we know buying those particular properties is the most cost effective solution. We look at the benefits, the costs. We know that that is the wisest use of our money. We've used several sources of funding. We've gated our gated utility fee, the rsmg, the regional storm water management program, bonds, cos, and taken advantage of partnerships with federal agencies when possible.

Since 2007 all of our buyouts have followed federal guidelines for acquisition and relocation which Alex will talk more about in a minute. Just to give you a sense of citywide where these buyouts have occurred, they are really kind of all over. North Austin, south Austin, east and west. Different project areas. Some really large projects like lower onion, some smaller projects, you know, 15 homes, one home, you know. So when we talk about, you know, a voluntary buyout policy moving forward and what the program looks like for the department, we kind of break it into two components. It's a watershed project, it's addressing a flood hazard. On the wastewater side we look at how we identify the projects, how we evaluate the solutions, and then once it's identified as a buyout how we implement it. What sequence we use to implement it. Then, you know, then we rely heavily on our partners in real estate to actually implement buyouts and that's where discussions of acquisition policy, relocation policy and the actual process that we use comes in, and Alex will talk to you more about that.

>> My name is Alex Gail, assistant director with the office of real estate services. Excuse me. Like Pam said, I just want to kind of briefly go over the acquisition and relocation policies, and that currently since 2007 we've used the federal guidelines. And what that is is what we call the uniform act. And basically it's short for the uniform relocation assistance of real estate acquisition policies act of 1970. Not to go too far into it, but basically the federal government came up with this act whenever there's a federal project with federal moneys anywhere in the United States that's acquiring land and displacing persons.

So even though some of these projects are using 100% city funds, we've applied those same rules across the board to make sure we stay consistent and fair with all the different acquisition, land acquisition with the flood plain buyouts so that, you know, some of these project areas are right next door from federal funds and city funds, and if we didn't apply the same policies across the board, people wouldn't be -- feel like they are being treated fairly and consistently. So what that is on the acquisition side is when we present an offer to somebody as we have a third party appraisal done, they -- they come up with fair market value as is condition of that property. And, of course, we then make an offer based on that third party appraisal. And flood insurance, if for some reason there was a flood, a previous flood that happened sometime down the road, there's no insurance deductions. To take that forward to where we're at kind of with today after the October 2015 flood, the federal guidelines do say they don't allow any duplication of benefits. So that's how we are where we are with onion creek and Williamson creek where council has called a special meeting in November early after the flood and, of course, what was implemented is we do a pre-flood value of the home since the home is -- sits with damage, what we do is a pre-flood value of that property and then we would deduct any insurance claim that would --

would -- that landowner would be eligible for or would claim against the house. So in addition to that, what council did approve is the up to \$15,000 credit on life safety items. And so there's -- there's instances where council can approve items when it's 100% funded by city money where council does have the -- those things in place to make any changes that they see is needed.

And so the recommended policy is to stay with what we've been doing, of course. The uniform act applies on the acquisition side. On the relocation side, what the relocation policy is saying as well is that we do follow the uniform act. And what that is, it includes housing of last resort and how we calculate relocation benefits or supplement for an owner occupant is we offer fair market value for your home on the acquisition side, but then we also find a comparable that's out there listed in the market. And if there's a difference between what we find as a comparable home and what your subject property offer is, there's a supplement to make up the difference between what we've offered for your home and what a comparable out there in the market is available as of that day that the offer is presented to you. And just to go into some of the little differences and intrakanal kanaly intrakanal Sitzman, onion creek, the -- on Williamson where we're at now the market, of course, is hot and the offer amounts on those Williamson homes we're finding the three that have already been completed, I think there was maybe one or two that had a relocation supplement, but it was quite small compared to what we're seeing on the onion creek. So although those homes are in the flood plain like the onion creek homes, the market is stating those homes still have high value even though they are in the flood plain. So the fair market values for those homes in Williamson creek have gone -- are considerably more than what they are in onion creek on the market. And so, you know, what the uniform act does allow eligibility for owner occupants, tenant occupants and businesses.

A tenant would be eligible similar based on what they are paying rent and what the market shows and if there is a difference and a business, such as a landlord in these cases that are residences are also eligible for separate benefits to reestablish per Se their landlord business at another property. So these are benefits on top of the acquisition offer that somebody would be eligible for. So the recommended policy that staff recommends is staying with the uniform act. We've been doing it since 2007 and we find it helps us be successful on these buyouts to make sure -- although they may be voluntary in some cases, that people are willing to sell to the city and move to a different part of the city or somewhere else so that we can move on with the project. The third -- third bullet there, just to go into some of our processes and milestones, just want to just quick rundown of how we do our processes within the acquisition and relocation of these displaced. We get title commitments on the home to make sure we're making the offers to the current people. We set up a meeting with these individuals to go over all the information that they are eligible for as a landowner in the state of Texas when a government entity is making an offer to them. So we go over all that father, but then as well we'll talk about the relocation benefits that they may be eligible for as well. We'll then set up an appraisal inspection with them where we ask that they are there at the time of the appraisal inspection so they can point out some of the intricacies of their home, any updates or things like that that they can point them out.

That's performed by a third-party appraiser. Then an appraisal review is done to by another appraiser to make sure all the standards licensed appraisers in the state have to follow, follow those standards as well as the uniform act. At the same time the buyout office and the agents are looking at comparables at that time so that they can start calculating what a relocation supplement would be for each individual because it's all case by case. There's not one -- one for everybody. It's each -- each family or each homeowner is made eligible based on the -- the market as of that day, as of we present that information to you. So we then present the acquisition offer to the landowner. At that same time we present them with relocation benefits. During that time that we've made them that offer, they have approximately

about 30 days we say get back to us if you want to accept, reject, counteroffer, something of that nature. But, of course, it's not a hard number. We just are trying to keep the process going. If somebody needs an extension, we can work with them on that. During that time frame we'll work on title curative issues, there's tax liens, mortgages, we get the information about the mortgage on the property and if there is any pending lawsuits, we can make sure we can start clearing those items or work with the landowner to clear those items. If there's a tenant on the property, we'll start working with that tenant to get them eligible for relocation benefits. And once the homeowner, the tenant has found their replacement property, they get with us, we make sure it's decent, safe and sanitary and we can claim their relocation benefits they may have been eligible for at the time of eligibility.

We then can move towards closing on the subject property. We have to have them out of the house, of course, to be able to close on their property, but then we'll make sure that they've found replacement housing as well, so once we close on the subject property, pretty soon thereafter if not the same day they will close on their replacement home. Those are key things. I think map wanted to talk about a few items as well.

>> So we want to give you an update on the funding status. You hear about the Austin market and Williamson is different. The square footage is higher than it was in tcad. The prices are higher than they were calculated about a year ago. So we estimated that the cost of the project, including the 63 properties, it will be between 23 and 25 million dollars. The original funding was authorized by council was \$80 million in September of 2014. We also have located almost a million dollar from the water management program from Williamson creek so that makes \$18.95 million. We have appropriated as today \$2.1 million, leaving a balance of 16.85 million. Just calculating what is it is the average of the nine or ten appraisals looking at for relocation benefits that they have been which today is probably about 20% of the houses getting relocation, we are anticipating that the 16.85 can go as far as 45 homes. Those 63. You have authorized 38, which we can finalize.

That leaves a balance of 2.9 which we anticipate we can acquire another seven properties. So that leaves out out 63, 18 properties that is not currently funding, which is anticipated to be between 6 to 8 million dollars. We are here today to give you this update and telling you just where we are on the buyout, where we are on the request authorization to acquire the remaining properties. Now, the question is where is the money right now. There is seven properties that could be acquired with the money that there is and our five-year forecast, Williamson -- number 2 priority in the city. So we were allocating \$2 million per year beginning in 2017 or 18. So every year for the next three years there were \$2 million associated with Williamson creek. So you can -- you can have -- and I have somebody from the budget office that can give us a better understanding how this could happen, or it could be phased and you only authorize the ones that the funding is currently available [indiscernible]. We are continuing our discussion with the flood mitigation task force. We have had meetings with the working groups of the buyout. We had one yesterday, so they have heard the issue that we have in Williamson and they have heard also what we are doing in onion.

>> Garza: Okay. I was operating when I prayed for this meeting, were the new slides with the extra funding needed that weren't in the -- or was that in the backup?

>> No, we added that after that meeting. We discussed that internally and we added that. That's what I give to you late.

>> Garza: Because I was operating under the assumption that-that the funding -- we weren't going to have to add any more funding.

So that throws a wrench in my suspension of what I was going to do. And I think you answered this, but I guess now I'm concerned about onion creek. If we had a very specific amount of money allocated for

those buyouts, are we going to possibly get a staff update that now we need millions for for those buyouts?

>> We -- onion is a little bit easier to predict than Williamson. Because in onion we have so much data about how much the appraisals coming before. We have seen how many the appraisals are coming now. And what we do every day that we have, you know -- we look at cost projections. We have also updated our costs in onion. I don't have that number available here, but I would say that if -- in the 25 -- in onion you have three areas, you have the core project, there is not an issue with funding, we have \$42.2 million coming from the federal government. And we have received almost 25 million from them. The core project is okay with the money. The 25-year there is the \$35.5 million approved in June 2014, we have closed practically -- I think we have closed 121 properties so there's only 19 pending. For what we have here there might be 10% people that don't want to participate. If that's the case, we have some extra funding if not everybody participates on the 25. If everybody participates, we are probably going on budget. You have approximately 100 in flood plain that was approved for the 3200 houses and that's about \$60 million. That one we also make projections based on what the market is today. If the acquisitions continue and in the same pace that they have been for the last couple of months, we anticipate on that one that also if it is a 90% -- just translate the same people they want to participate, if we have 90% participation, the project has enough funding.

>> Garza: Okay. So if we -- if this committee did forward the recommendation to go forward with the buyouts of the remaining 25, did you say there was somebody from budget that could speak to where that money would come from?

>> Kimberly Springer, deputy budget office for financial services department. With the onion creek and the Williamson creek buyouts both were funded with certificates of obligation. Mapa referenced approval by council as part of the budget adoption including \$7.8 million to fund those buyouts. With the split of approximately 60 million for onion creek and 18 for Williamson creek. If we needed to do -- required additional funding, the best is to continue the same funding mechanism of certificates of obligation.

>> Garza: I'm sorry that is correct last sentence.

>> If the council wanted to -- if it chose the different options that would require additional funding, the recommendation would be use the same funding mechanism of certificates of obligation.

>> Garza: Okay.

>> In other words, borrow more money, create more debt.

>> Garza: Do you have a question, mayor pro tem? Glad I want to be clear, I know we covered this but I just need to go over the Numbers again. We have authorized -- could we -- I don't know whether that's a question for you or miss vigil. Just to be clear on we've -- how many we've authorized, how many more remain, and it sounded like our funding -- if we increase our -- if we authorize you to purchase more houses we have funding for a certain number of those and then where is our gap? Could you hit those Numbers again? I apologize I couldn't grasp all he have them on that first time through.

>> Right now the balance 16.85 million. So that can buy 45 homes. We have -- you have authorized to proceed with 38. So those 38 they have the funding. There is \$2.9 million left, so that will allow to proceed with another receive out of 25. So the 18 you see in red, those are the ones that right now with the \$18.95 million that we have allocated for that project, there won't be enough. And like Kimberly was saying also, also the \$2 million that I was talking before that we have in five-year forecast, that's drainage

[indiscernible] From money and we allocated. Of course it needs to come through the budget process and needs to be approved, but those are the \$2 million we have for future projects in Williamson. Which also can be used to fund these 18 properties.

>> Tovo: So we could -- so at this point we can authorize an additional seven houses because you have funding enough to purchase those houses. And that would get us to 45. For the additional 18, no funding is available at this point other than certificates of obligation. So our options then would be to do certificates of obligation to do all of those houses at once, or to phase them in over the next -- I would have to do some division. To phase them in overtime at a rate of -- knowing we have 2 million a year allocated for that, though, of course, the housing costs are likely to go up as well and so we could find ourselves in a situation where if we think it's going to take four or five years it might take eight to get through just these initial buyouts. Okay. So it sounds like we -- that's very helpful. Thanks.

>> Garza: Go ahead, councilmember Zimmerman.

>> Zimmerman: Thank you. Two things I guess going on here.

I think some of this dates back to 2014 and I guess I wasn't there and I didn't vote on it. Maybe mayor pro tem can help instruct me on in, but there's two ways to approach it. You could either say council commits to buy 63 homes, and the -- the estimated cost, say, is 25 million. Or you could do another way. You could say, you know what, we've got budget of 25 million. That needs to buy 63 homes. But if it can't, the budget -- the budget is 25 million. The budget is 25 million. That's all you get. You are going to have to buy 63 homes with that. What bothers me about what's going on here, I'm seeing some inflation here kind of and I think I heard a comment that the value of the homes in the flood plain are increasing? I think I heard that comment and somebody made a remark to that effect. And I guess that wouldn't surprise me because we have a housing shortage here, right? The demand for housing is crazy here. So from that viewpoint I could kind of see if my choice to live in Austin is in a 25-year flood plain or else I live under a bridge or else I move to Buda, that flood plain looks pretty good and housing prices could be pushed up because demand is so crazy. But we can't operate this way where we say we're going to buy homes in a flood plain and the value of homes are increasing while we're waiting to buy them out. I don't see how that's a sustainable policy. So the question is are the homes appreciating in value while they sit in a flood plain waiting to be bought out?

>> What we're seeing is I guess what we budgeted for back in 2014. The prices of the homes have already gone up -- or from what we budgeted for back in 2014.

>> Zimmerman: So that's where you lost me. If we budget an amount of money to purchase homes, that's what we budget.

Whether the market says they are worth more or if the owners demand more, that has nothing to do with what we budgeted. We budgeted an amount of money. Here's what we're going to pay, we're done, right? We're done.

>> Garza: I guess I would to add context because I've been heavily involved in these buyouts. This is a very different situation from Onion Creek in that a lot of -- in welcome don't want to be bought out. You mention that we might come in under budget for the Onion Creek homes because not everybody is going to sell. I think that would be very similar to this situation and I really do -- I do not think, and this is just assumption, I don't think half of these people are going to want to be bought out. I went to -- before I was elected I went to a community meeting and in fact the majority were mad about this. So I don't -- it's a different situation. So what -- what I would suggest is we move forward with approving the 63 and see what -- like on a first come, first serve basis, see who wants to be bought out, and when the funding runs out we figure out if we need to make a budget amendment. People who want to get bought out will get bought out. I don't think -- again this is assumption, I don't think we're in a situation where every single one of these people wants to be bought out. Mayor pro tem.

>> Tovo: Thanks. So that was interesting because I wasn't -- that wasn't on my radar. But I want to get back to the question councilmember Zimmerman asked. So the value of the houses that we are looking to purchase has increased substantially since last year, even though they are in a flood plain.

>> Right, at least what we've budgeted for the prices, what a few of the appraisals have come in at are higher than what we anticipated.

>> Tovo: And I should remember this, but I don't.

Were appraisals done last September? September 2014, before this decision was made?

>> No, the appraisals that we are seeing, there were some that were done on -- when we came for application on those three in November, we have raises from that time. From that time to today the prices we're seeing in the appraisals done today they are significantly higher.

>> Tovo: Do you have a number how much higher or could you get that to us?

>> Yeah, we can get -- yeah --

>> Tovo: I'm interested when that question.

>> This is assuming this is the worst scenario. This is assuming 63, which is probability that 63, but just for budget purposes we wanted to tell you that part of the study that it will be. We have another flood in a week and more people wanting to sell, we wanted to make sure you know what the number is today. If everybody was to participate.

>> Garza: And I just want to add for purposes of discussion, I was gone when the direction was taken to just go with the 38. I think -- you know, these 63 were identified because our watershed department gave a clear opinion, their expert opinion that these homes were in danger. And just because those 38 flooded that one time doesn't mean that the other 25 aren't going to flood the next time. And so -- I mean I guess at this point I would prefer to relinquish the chair to mayor pro tem so I can make a motion -- or to councilmember Zimmerman so I can make a motion. So I want to make a motion that we forward this to the council. We do proceed with the buyout of all of them on a first come, first served basis because I understand it's a voluntary program. And then at the point where the funding runs out, staff can bring us back -- bring that back to us and we can decide what to do going forward.

>> Tovo: Chair Garza makes a motion to move forward with 63, with authorizing the staff move forward with the purchase of the 63. Is there a second? I'll second that. Any discussion? Councilmember Zimmerman.

>> Zimmerman: Thank you. So if the motion is what I heard is to move ahead with 63, at what budgetary figure? Or is that just not part of the motion?

>> Garza: What's currently budgeted. Stay within the current budget, move forward on a first come, first served basis.

>> Zimmerman: With the 25 million.

>> Garza: Once it gets to the point they would have to exceed that, they would have to come -- staff has to come back to us with direction of whether we will approve additional funding.

>> Tovo: Councilmember Zimmerman, do you want to --

>> Zimmerman: Yeah, I guess if we run out of money, we run out of money. Once the 25 million is spent. I guess the reason I wanted to bring that up now is if we make the commitment to buy the properties, it sounds like we're already making that commitment to borrow whatever is necessary and issue new certificates, right? If it's the policy of the council to buy the homes out, period, irrespective of what it's going to cost, then we're already making a commitment that we're going to force a new debt to be issued, right, if we need more money because the homes in the flood plain keep increasing in market value. Which doesn't make any sense. You are in a flood plain. How could your home continue to escalate when you are in a dangerous flood situation? And I thought the reason we were doing the buyouts is because you are in a dangerous situation. So how can homes that are in a dangerous flood environment be increasing in value? I can't -- so I guess I can't support this. I can't wrap my head around that.

>> Garza: I guess I would add that it's always a public safety issue.

Buyouts, that's the main reason is public safety. The difference here is it's not -- it's not the bowl that onion creek is in basically. Those families, that neighborhood is in a bowl and when it floods, that bowl -- this one I guess is a more shallow bowl. That is my nontechnical explanation of that. And so if -- I mean that's -- I understand your concerns and maybe the better wording would be move forward with -- it would be 63 properties on a first come, first served basis. I'm not saying we're going to buy out all 63. I'm saying we're going to offer those on a first come, first served basis. When the funding runs out, the funding runs out. If more people want their homes bought out, council will have to approve the funding.

>> Could I make a comment?

>> Garza: Sure.

>> One thing I think you brought up was the -- in 2017 you've now budgeted in 2 million per year. And that -- that might be one of the situations that would come up by the time you get to 2017, you may still have some that are -- need to be bought out and you've run out of money but you've got this other money coming in. They wouldn't be able to do it all as one, but they would be getting 2 million a year for a certain number of years. I don't know how that could change your motion, but it would be somebody already budgeted to come in and it wouldn't be taking on additional debt. That's just another idea.

>> That's of.

>> That's something, doing buyouts in onion, we didn't have the money we do today. The core project came in in 2006, they didn't give us money until 2014. However, the city authorized to proceed with the project but subject to funding. Now we're getting the funding and we're finalizing onion.

>> Tovo: Ms. Vigil, I mean, you're not -- if you exceed the funding, you can't go on purchasing houses even -- even if we move forward with this action because you're not -- you don't have any money were any additional funds authorized, you'd have to come back to council?

So it's not obligating the council to allow you to issue debt, I mean, it it's not obligating anyone to issue debt to purchase additional houses because the funding has not been allocated. So that would have to be a second step anyway.

>> Yes. That would be on the -- I imagine the budget office will put on the rca until funding is available, subject to future funding, they will draft that one.

>> Tovo: If you. I think -- I seconded the motion, intend to support it. I think when that came before the full council I believe I was on the losing end of that. I felt the staff had made a strong argument that these were all houses in harm's way and I think it makes sense to proceed as we are. Sorry. Any other discussion? All in favor? That's councilmember Garza and I vote for that as well. All opposed? Councilmember Zimmerman is opposed so that passes on a vote of 2-1 with councilmember Zimmerman voting in opposition and -- chair pool off the dais.

>> Garza: I guess for clarification, we know that is to move it to the council with that recommendation, right? Okay. The next agenda item is number 5, discussion and recommendation related to joint use agreements for five playgrounds located on aisd property had a has been identified by parks and recreation as being in a park deficient area. Do we have a staff presentation on that?

>> Councilmember, madam chairs, mayor pro tem, I'm ray Scott with parks and recreation department.

I believe this item is a resolution being formed or a motion being formed to direct parks and recreation department to enter into some agreements with aid. In 2012, the parks department selected and prioritized a total of 38 school sites aisd-owned sites for possible opportunities to develop a child friendly play area on that school site. Those -- we will -- we've talked to aisd and have a -- law has contacted us and a lawyer will help us draft the resolution.

>> Garza: Okay, sorry. I wasn't prepared.

>> Yes. I think --

>> Garza: I learned chair pool was going to be gone.

>> Yes, Ms. Pool is bringing this forward. So in 2009, council drafted a resolution that said that they wanted to be a child friendly area and have a park within a quarter mile and half mile of every city resident of city of Austin. In 2012, the parks department drafted an implementation plan on how to make that happen. One of the tools in that implementation plan were utilizing school aid properties as an a-- as an apportion of that site, quarter acre or some size off that school that the school was not utilizing and developing park amenities.

>> Garza: So identified, there's five parks that have been identified?

>> There's 38 total sites that would look at --

>> Garza: Mayor pro tem, you might have some more information?

>> Tovo: Well, I don't -- probably Mr. Scott can speak to more specific information about those. I just wanted to provide a little -- we talked about this briefly at our last meeting when we had the urban parks group members, former members of the urban parks group come and present and at the end of that meeting we kind of agreed that it would be good to kind of -- to move some of this forward and so I'd -- my staff worked with the staff to make sure that it happened here today so that we can get -- kind of get our staff moving forward in initiating this process with aid to negotiate some of those agreements.

And so as I understand you've just started that, and that's why the parks aren't identified but in the larger report there are 30 plus identified as potential options and we're hoping to ask the staff to pick what they regard as the five highest needs areas or biggest gaps.

>> I can read a list. I have them prioritized on the sheet of paper right here. I hesitate to name just five due to that aid has -- since we've written this implementation, aid has moved thousands of portables and stuff has changed and we'd like to vet it -- the actual sites with aid, but on the inner core --

>> Tovo: Could we just post it? Could we post it?

>> Post?

>> Tovo: Is it possible to just put it on the overhead?

>> Yeah. It's only. . . I will have to read from that though.

>> Tovo: Sorry, I was trying to make it easier.

>> That's all right. That's perfect. So the first underscored section there are actually park, school parks where we do have a partial ownership in the land. The actual sites we're looking at are the 28 inner core sites listed there had below, prioritized. Starts with ridgetop, Ann Richards, Alan, burnet middle school. You can read the rest. And then underscored below that are the ten outer score school parks that we've prioritized, cook being number 1, Williams, Barrington, Wooldridge, hill, Cunningham, Oden, St. Elmo.

>> Garza: Do you need direction from this committee or is this something just being done, you're working with aid and -- do I -- is something needs to be recommended to the full council?

>> I think we were -- I think the -- we were looking for some direction from the committee to direct staff to enter and execute an agree. With aid on this subject.

>> Garza: Okay. So I'll entertain any motions.

>> Tovo: Yeah, chair, I'd like to move approval that we recommend the full council authorize staff to move forward in negotiating agreements for five playgrounds locate on aid school district property and I would leave it to their discretion to make the best decisions based on various considerations from the highest -- you know, always keeping in mind that they be in a park-deficient area but it seems to me, as Mr. Scott was alluding to, some of the circumstances may change and a quick conversation with aid may say these are options, these aren't so I would suggest that we not be specific about what those sites are, just authorize staff to move forward with negotiating that in conjunks with aid so we can get that process going. I think it's a great opportunity to really expand our parks network and one that leverages

existing resources rather than investing additional taxpayer dollars at this point in the acquisition of parks and areas where we need them.

>> Garza: Okay. Is there a second to that.

>> Zimmerman: I'll second that.

>> Garza: All those in favor of the motion, say aye. That passes. Is that just staff direction or is that going to go to the full council for execution of --

>> Zimmerman: I was going to say, I was supporting that because it says negotiation so we should see something coming back and vote on the agree. As it comes back with the full council.

>> Bring back the agree.

>> Zimmerman: Sounds good, we can bring back the agree. To full council and debate and vote on it there.

>> Tovo: Well, I don't know, this is probably a question for somebody else, but I think the recommendation to move forward in negotiating has to go to full council as well.

>> I believe that has to come from the council.

>> Tovo: Hopefully that can go quickly so you can actually do the negotiation because no action is really going to start until we have that happen so I don't know how quickly we could get it on the agenda but I'd be supportive of having that happen real soon if that works from y'all's perspective, having the council authorize you to go forward and negotiate.

>> Okay. Would that item come from this committee?

>> Tovo: Yeah. And I think it could be no more than what we have here.

>> Garza: So you're come back -- this is going to council, then back to this committee and then to council again basically with the final -- when you have the final agree. Is that --

>> Let me make sure I'm clear. I believe what I understood was that the recommendation to direct staff would come from council. We would bring back a draft of the agree. To this board. And then the final agree. Would go to --

>> Zimmerman: I was going to say we might need public debate and comment on it. If it came here it would be a better place to have kind of a hearing on what's being proposed before it goes to council. This would be a good place to have the public conversation after the agree. Comes back.

>> Garza: I'm okay with that. So the vote was three in favor to send this to council with the recommendation to negotiate the agree. With aid and then it will come back to this committee with the actual agree. Before it gets sent back to council again. Thank you. Thank you.

>> Thank you.

>> Garza: The -- it's my understanding that the next item was for -- number 6 was going to be a time certain at 4:00 but I just saw, I think, the majority of the people we were waiting for, and is -- do we still need to wait until 4:00?

No? Okay, great.

>> Zimmerman: I don't see it posted at 4:00.

>> Garza: So then the next item is the briefing on park-deficient department's fiscal year 2016 block grant funding for parks, and I think there will be some citizens signed up to park on this. And I guess are there going to be -- I'd rather take citizen communication first, if there are any.

>> First? Okay.

>> Garza: we're going to wait for the translator to get situated. In the meantime I'm going to entertain a motion to postpone number 7.

>> Zimmerman: So moved.

>> Garza: And, councilmember tovo, you would second the motion to postpone number 7? Okay.

[Laughter] So we're going to -- all those in favor of postponing seven say aye? Three in favor of postponing item 7 until the next open space environmental sustainability committee meeting.

Our.

>> Mayor Adler: Our first speaker for item 6 is Evita Cruz. You have three minutes.

>> Hello. Well, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Evita Cruz, and I am from the [indiscernible] Austin coalition also with the dove springs district park. First of all I want to say thank you for allowing me to be here, and I also would like to thank the parks and recreation department for the positive collaboration that they have with us. Mr. Joe Diaz working closely with guava park and -- I'm sorry. So we adopted park and adopted creek teens urge you the open space environment and sustainability committee -- committee, I'm sorry, to disperse the 1.15 million park block grant equitably based on historic needs of 67578 -- 78744 and 78745 so the needs of the 12 teams are based on safety and health. So I'm going to introduce gave for those not familiar with it. Dava, it's a coalition of residents, community leaders and nonprofits that share a common interest in improving the health of 78744 and 78745 communities through increasing access to and participation in physical activities and improving the nutrition.

Gava supporters have agreed to align their resources and expertise for greater positive impact especially in our children, our children's health. So we have someone here. The adopt a park and the adopt creek teams from 44 and 45 and I would like to reduce them to you so you can put a face to this petition and as I mentioned your park or your team, can you please rise up. First with 44 it's do springs district park, franklin park, Houston school park, Kendra page park, onion creek greenbelt park, bonciena park. Now 45, it's armadillo neighborhood park, central Williamson creek greenbelt and then garrison project, garrison district park, owed emschool park, Cunningham school park, Joseph [indiscernible] Neighborhood park and St. Elmo park.

[Buzzer sounding] Thank you.

>> Garza: Thank you. Our next speaker is patches brashere. Are you donating your time? You're not. You were if you weren't here. You have three minutes.

>> Hello. My name is patches brashere. I'm a member of the Kendra page park adoption team, and the gave coalition. I'm here to urge you to invest the park block grant in the health and safety of the parks and creeks of 78744 and 78745.

We would like to thank pard pard for the wonderful playground equipment Kendra page received last week. The number of families enjoying the park has increased. However, we still have a long way to go toward improving health and safety in 44 and 45. These neighborhoods have some of the highest childhood obesity rates in Austin. Access to parks is important to me because it gives me space to model healthy activities for my boys. You may never see people from my neighborhood at city hall. Most work two and three jobs and are simply overburdened financially to access these public forums. I'm here on their behalf. 78744 and 45 have been put on the back burner long enough. I ask of you to use this park block grant to improve access to health and safety in my neighborhoods. Thank you.

>> Garza: Thank you for being here. Our next speaker is Lorena suariz.

>> [Speaking non-english language]

>> Garza:gracias. Edward Craig.

>> Good afternoon. Mayor pro tem tovo and the city council committee, thank you for your support of our community and for 78744 and 78745. I am pastor Craig with great commission Baptist church. I am a member of the gave team and franklin adopt a park team. Over the last three years we have worked with gave and other community organizations. We have polled our communities, spoken with

neighbors, taken surveys and assessments of assets, conducted block walks, developed park creek plans and monthly meetings, collaborated with city staff, local, nonprofits, and aid and business, organized and participated in regular volunteer workdays, at our parks and creeks, leveraged tens of thousands of dollars in private funds and in-kind donations, as well as advocated for inclusion of funds in the 2016 budget. Because of our collaborative efforts, Franklin Park, through a grant from the city of Austin, we were able to do much needed landscaping, including building a flower bed at the park entrance. Neighbors are still bragging about the beauty of that flower bed today. We've been able to maintain it on our own, including watering during the summer seasons. Also, the Austin Parks Foundation granted us \$15,000, and we were able to purchase barbecue pits with supporting slabs, making it possible for more families to increase family fun and activity.

The lighting has been improved under the pavilion. Families are able to sit and talk and do more activities longer. They're able to place basketball after dark in safety, able to use the playground after dark in safety, as well as walk together after dark in safety. These things have caused the crime rate to drop 32% according to A.P.D. Reports. Families are having more fun and having more birthday parties. The city has provided portable toilets which enables families to stay on the park longer. Better ground maintenance as well as trash pickup. 311 is being used more often to report crime-related issues such as graffiti. We have come a long way and still have a lot to do. We're not asking the city to do it all. Just meet us halfway. Thank you.

[Buzzer sounding]

>> Garza: Thank you. Mason Murphy.

>> Hi. My name is Kate Mason Murphy, I'm on the gave adoption team for Central Williamson Creek Greenbelt and Joslin Elementary and am the cofounder of the community gardens located on both. I'm on the flood mitigation task force and I'm part of AISD's environmental sustainability advisory committee. I'm an after individual community organizer and grant writer and I spent a lot of time in the creeks, stomping with my boys, running and bike riding. I wanted to talk about the difference between equality and equity. So equality is defined as the state of being equal, especially in status, rights and opportunities.

Equity, however, is the quality of being fair and impartial and to remedy defects in fairness and justice. We would like to get to a point where park amenities in these districts are equal to other parts of Austin before all of the funding is split equally among the districts. The basic amenities have been missing for a long time from these parks and these have been historically underserved areas. Equity means reversing the historical disparities. I also want to demystify the numbers that we pose. So we go back to the way the gave teams define need, and that is health and safety. We need monies that focus on safety. Safety makes usership possible and that makes health possible. Not all of the items could be priced so our number does not fully and accurately represent the total cost of the top two needs for each park team. The percentage of population in 78744 and 78745 since 2010 has been the most populous. It's still projected to be the most populous, yet we don't have the basic amenities in these parts of town and we have not had them for a very long time. 11.65% of the city of Austin's population resides in these two zip codes, 44 and 45. They're the two most populated zip codes in the city. But only 6.25% of the city's capital improvement projects have taken place in 78744 and 45 since 2006. Public funding is very necessary for these parts of town because these parts of town do not have a specialized foundation, as, for example, District 9 does with the trail foundation. And money should not be spread so thin. There's a historic need in these areas and we need to make up a lot of historic underservedness, especially with these being the most populous.

We need to invest in these areas deeply to reverse this trend. So we're creating a bigger problem. I was a P.E. Teacher and by the time I got my students in sixth grade I could tell if they had access to green spaces and parks and playgrounds or just by looking at their activity level and their obesity level.

[Buzzer sounding] Thank you.

>> Garza: Thank you. Tom Donovan.

>> I speak in support of the gave coalition and the packet of request that they've given you for zip code 78744 and 78745. I'm Tom convan, 10-year creek and park adopter, wildflower meadow supporter, community garden founder, head bottle washer. All at the central Williamson creek greenbelt. I'm also a parks board member. Our green belts and parks should be safe, inviting, accessibility ask with more trails and better lighting. Parks and geep space should be for all austinities. I'm not sure who first said it, but it's true, if we build it, they will come. Thank you very much.

>> Garza: Thank you. Next speaker is icic Sopata, it says with Henry Isaac Sopata.

I'll put them in the back to see if they're here when we're done. Cynthia Rodriguez.

>> I donate my name to

[indiscernible]

>> Garza: Okay. Let's see. Alba serrano, and I have Ms. Rodriguez is donating time to you and that's it so you have six minutes.

>> Thank you for having us here today, my name is alba serrano and I'm a community district, I live in district but my work takes me to districts 2, 3, 5 and sometimes district 8. I'm here today to explain a little bit about the work that teams have done for three years, 2012 and 44 and 2013, 45 arbitration residents have been having hundreds of thousands of conversations to build consensus about what is needed in their community. They have block walked, had one on one conversations, they have talked to people at their doors, they have taken up surveys, online polls, they have met on a monthly basis, and all of this has come to the the boiling point of having action plans established for these assets and their community that describe what is needed through the lens of the community to solve the problems that create health issues in their community. In the parks packet from the gave leaders you will find that there are hot spot maps that show in some of the area schools according to the aid fitness data more than 80% of youth are in a situation of obesity. This situation must be resolved. It's a situation that is created by a historic marginization and underservedness of resources coming to these districts, to these zip codes.

Neighbors have done the work to align with each other, to be active, and as you heard from some of the leaders today, that is a very difficult thing to do when you're working two and three jobs and have children as well, have barriers to transportation and all sorts of other barriers. So the leaders in 78744 and 45 have done the work to ground truth ideas that may be posed by city staff or others. In essence we hope that you will find that through the work of coming together, civilly coming together, being organized, talking to each other, coming to consensus, they add value to the process of master planning and other processes that are important criteria in how funds get dispersed. But you can be certain that this is up to date information because people are meeting on a regular basis and talking to each other about what would improve their community. So a solution that may be okay and appropriate for another community, as you know, may fail in another community. And it is important to take into consideration all the work and the ground truthing that people have done to come up with these priorities of safety to improve health. So we implore you to take this criteria into consideration. Our leaders have not only these two and three priorities that are stated at the top of the packet, but they also have full action plans that you can look to. That include many things, a long-term vision of being stewards of these parks and green spaces. They are in it for the long haul. We appreciate the collaboration of pard in this process. And we know that pard recognizes that in no other park of town

likely is there the density of stewards who have come together in this way, to be stewards of these parks for the long haul. Our teams are ready to look at feasibility questions. They are ready to look at pulling other funds, pulling in-kind dollars arbitration putting volunteer work, and they do so on a regular basis.

So we must not get stuck today in thinking to spread funding too thin. We must look to spread the -- offend put the depth of dollars that will make impact, that will start to resolve the situation of underservedness that is historic in these areas and the situation of health that the built environment creates. Gava leaders are not only working on the strategy of improving access to their parks and green spaces and physical activity. I want you to know that gave here's are also working on many other strategies re-- revolving around access to food, conditions of codes in their, neighborhood safety, their work is broad and wide. You can be assured that the investment of this money will be combined with many other efforts for the purpose of increasing the health in these neighborhoods. I thank you for your time today and implore you to take into consideration this criteria that has been ground truthed, that has been resident-led movement. Thank you.

>> Garza: Thank you. The next speaker is carbon yanaz [indiscernible] And is navana pilapovic Wagner here? You're donating your time? So you have six minutes.

>> Great, thank you. Mayor pro tem, councilmembers, on the open space sustainability and environment committee, thank you so much for taking the time to hear from just a handful of the resident-led coalition that is gave. I wanted to point out in one of the photos in the powerpoint slides you saw two or three long sets of cafeteria tables loaded with residents, and some of our cross-sector -- cross-zip code meeting where park teams from both zip codes have gotten together, it's getting difficult to find a space to hold them all because they really do represent a grassroots network and have been holding all of these meetings within their community and collaborating, and it's in that collaborative spirit that they developed the priorities that you see in the enact was given to you -- in the packet that was given to you.

As several have mentioned these action plans are living documents that each resident-led park adoption team or creek adoption team has developed over the course of months and months of meeting regularly and talking to hundreds of their neighbors. Those action plans are well-rounded plans that address various needs in the park and priorities and also goals, and they don't only include access items about making the park more accessible and safe but also activation and utilization goals. So how do they get their communities out? And these resident leaders have hosted countless events, workdays. They're activating the park and as they do that, we're seeing the difference. A.p.d. Is telling us that they are getting fewer calls in areas that have gotten recent amenities like lighting, like basic irrigation that makes a play area safe to run, walk, bike, and bring the family out. It's a significant difference. And one of the -- one of the great things that we can see, because of the support we have in the gave coalition, we have the UT school of public health actively evaluating these efforts to see, do they really work? And what they have seen where they have been -- as alba mentioned we've been going a little longer in dove springs. And what they're seeing that lines up directly with what these teams are doing, particularly in the areas around Houston elementary, where there's now a full-sized soccer field that was leveraged from public public and in-kind and public funding as well as as dove springs district park and the improvements and activation they're seeing an increase in utilization of these parks between 30 and 40%. This is just over one year. And what that tells us is that if you just get the park to the basic level, having the basic needs being lit during park hours and therefore safe, having a place to sit is a place to walk, a place to run, even those basic things in themselves make a tremendous difference in not only the use of the park but the overall quality of life in the environment.

And they serve as meeting places, as convening places, and they are making a visible difference, and that combined with the grassroots power of these teams, not only to leverage those funds, but also to activate the park is what we are seeing really have the potential to transform a community. Our goal is to see a difference in the childhood obesity trends, but we know that that touches so many other aspects of quality of life. And it is this resident-led coalition that is making that possible. We're also focusing on a variety of parks in both zip codes so district parks but also the neighborhood parks, the parks that are a quarter mile or less in walking distance of many families who may not have other modes of transportation to get to a further-away district park. So taking a pocket park that had no amenities whatsoever and actually just giving it the basics to where it can be a recreational space has a tremendous effect on the entire population, we can consist all of those individual, smaller parks in those walkable, densely populated areas as well as the larger district parks. So, again, there is a historic need here and these parks have come a long way. They're asking for the basic amenities that they can take and run with it. Then continue to meet the city halfway. They will continue to leverage in-kind and volunteer hours and to apply as they have been for public funding. All along the way. But they do -- they are asking for the city's help in getting to that basic point to where then we can really go from there and see a vast improvement across the entire -- both zip codes. Thank you for your time, and let us know if you have any additional questions.

>> Garza: Okay, thank you. That's all the speakers that I have, and if the high school students come, I'll be happy to let them come speak after the staff presentation. So is there a staff presentation?

>> Good afternoon, councilmembers, Marty stump, assistant director of the Austin parks and recreation department. I am here to present an outline of the parks department's proposal in regards to the block funding received during the current fiscal year through the generosity of the city council at the 11th hour during the budget council process and I'm very pleased to be able to speak to this subject. I want to provide a little bit of background in terms of how we started and how the department formulated our proposal. I do want to say first how much we, as a department, appreciate the work of the gave coalition. I had a chance offend meet with these fine folks earlier in the week and go through in greater detail in terms of their proposed park improvements and can't argue against most of the improvements that are proposed there, but one of the things I did talk to the gava folks about were the processes by which improvements are made and those types of improvements that are more readily implemented and others that become a little bit more complicated but I do not want in any way to be perceived as being, oh, popped to the proposals by the gave. Very fine work proposed. As we began immediately after the budget process to think about the spending process and priorities for the block funding, we see the block funding.

It really is a supplement on the capital side to the parks department ongoing capital program. As a point of reference the parks department has an annual capital spending plan of about \$30 million over the past few years so this is a substantial opportunity to increase the ongoing work. We set some criteria for ourselves as we began to think about what would be the appropriate projects to recommend under the block funding, and we are really here today in the spirit of a briefing and a work session to let you know what we're thinking but certainly to hear what your thoughts are in terms of the best way to move forward. A few criteria we set for ourselves, one, we want to seat funding spent this year during the current fiscal year, projects that would be -- have a more significant permitting and design phase and so forth, we would want to avoid and rather move forward with those things that have ground swell support already. Projects that are easily designed, permitted, projects that when built don't add substantially to the maintenance burden but it effective can reduce the ongoing maintenance expenses for pard. We concur with the thought that we did not want to get into a thought process at least from a staff perspective of trying to divide the money equally across ten council districts. I think we heard from

council to really address the current needs so in that respect we agree certainly with the folks from gave here. Likewise, with gave, we concur with the thought that the funds should be equally dispersed based upon need, where need is based primarily upon safety and health, that's certainly first and foremost in our mind. Moving through the presence presentation I want to talk a little about our proposal. It takes a little different form in terms of subject matter but again are flexible and here to hear what others have to say.

Our proposal does focus upon playgrounds, playscapes, nature-based playground as a fundamentally project -- fundamental project type that the department has been implementing recently based upon national trends and we think we have some opportunities and certainly there's overlap even in the projects we're proposing and those that the gave coalition has discussed here. So, again, as background, 1.5 million under the capital side and under the block grant. I'm here today with Kimberly Mcneely, assistant director here with the department. Kimberly will be speaking to the funding provided on the programming side and some positive outcome in that respect as well. We understand the open space committee is the fourth which will decide the path forward and I am submitting the proposal here before you for consideration. So in short, as a project statement, pard proposes block funding to design and construct innovative, nature-inspired play environments at multiple sites as a playscape replacement program. I'll speak to the value of this type of project as we go along. We have an ongoing playground replacement replacement, based fundamentally on a safety assessment we've done in years past that provide justification, rationale behind this type of project. And, again, we have a list of contained sites here -- candidate sites but not an absolutely definitive project list. In 2015, pard completed a playground assessment system-wide and it identified needs throughout the department and qualified, classified our existing playgrounds by their current condition. We have playscapes in 98 parks and hundreds of individual pieces, all of which have life cycle, typically 12 to 14 years, before that equipment needs to be replaced.

Moving forward as we're replacing equipment, we are trying to adhere to national best practices in terms of the types of play, both for public safety, as well as health, childhood obesity issues being addressed in community -- and community health overall. This document, playground assessment, you can see the cover is the dove springs district park playground so that is a playground we're all very proud of implementing in partnership with Austin parks foundation, community and St. David's foundation as that project was beneficial to community health. One of the things I do want to say as a standard a typical playground replacement can cost on the order of \$200,000 and up though with nature-based play we have an opportunity to be more cost-effective when we're using natural and less expensive materials. As we move forward with the capital spending we like to draw upon the good work that's been done in the past, adopted policy documents that support our decision-making process. I want offend point to both imagine Austin comprehensive plan and the work done a few years back under the urban park work group that spoke very specifically toward goals and objectives of play, as play for children and multiple generational experience in the park contribute to public health so the work we're talking about here is certainly a continuation of that ongoing philosophy. Just some visuals here in terminates of what we're talking about when we're talking about playground, we're making a shift bra brightly colored plastic and metal playground equipment that was traditional and moved toward more natural materials which really, as we're seeing in the science and the research supports it, that it engages kids with the out of doors and helps break down barriers that folks and children particularly may have as -- in terms of their relationship with nature and the out of door so some of these photos are the sorts of things we're talking about about not always natural materials but materials that look to be natural and plant material and living landscape is very much a part of that play environment.

Just some visuals here of recent work done with -- within the department here in the city of Austin. Some work that's received some national attention and some awards through asla in terms of the type of play we're talking about, the image there on the lower left is, again, dove springs district park where Boulders and logs and plant material were very much a part of that playground environment. At dove springs district park this project was made possible not only due to the funding available but Mrs. The playground that existed in that park was scheduled for replacement due to lack of compliance and safety consideration. So when we had that opportunity to replace that playground piece we wanted to vision and really be very creative in thought. Another project we received some attention and some award for but really successful project, it's Tom Laseter neighborhood park, shows the use of natural material, that's a manufactured piece of playground equipment there but has a naturalistic field and been a very popular facility. So parks and facilities that engage with kids get kids out moving actively and engaged in nature is what we're aiming for here. So as we look at the projects and the selection criteria naturally we have playgrounds throughout the entire city, primary concern is safety and accessibility. A lot of our playgrounds developed are designed to be universally accessible. We want projects like those that we've talked about here to have a strong community support, stakeholder input. Opportunity for programming. There's opportunity for nature learn in the dove springs playground, it has an opportunity to be part of programmed play. Site context, a lot of the types of play environments we're talking about are integrated into the landscape topographically and with the vegetation and certainly we look at funding, leveraging opportunities and so many of the projects that I'm talking about here we would prioritize according to is there a funding match, the Austin parks foundation or grant.

So the projects up on the board, these are playgrounds that rank high in our needs assessment for replacement. You can see that these mounds cross -- playgrounds cross all districts, the top two fall within the zip codes within gave so you can see there's overlap though perhaps these were not necessarily the projects identified by the community. So these obviously -- add these up, they amount to more than a million dollars to do, but what we would like to do, moving forward, is look as we get into design and prioritization and determine whether we have opportunities to make as many of these possible moving forward. But we're here today really to get some feedback in terms of the council and this work group's response to our rationale moving forward, if you feel that these are the appropriate project types. Another, you know, strategy moving forward is to again draw from lists of proposed projects that come straight from the community and attempt to work through the process of how we implement those. But we felt perhaps a more expeditious and effective path forward would be to draw and build upon the momentum under current projects. I can certainly answer questions on the capital side unless we want to hear from Kimberly on the programming side first.

>> Garza: Anybody have any questions? All right, we'll hear from -- question?

>> Zimmerman: Maybe one question. So how many zip codes do we have in the Austin area?

>> I don't have that answer.

>> Zimmerman: There's quite a few zip codes. We've been talking about a particular area, and I just would like to have the context of the other parks and the other neighborhoods and what they would say about equity. You know, my issue -- problem with equity is always that it's incredibly subjective.

What's equitable to one part of the city is not equitable to another part of the city. You know, equity to me is a -- it's kind of a hot bed of brewing political contention because it's so subjective and I bet you could find all neighborhoods and areas around the city who would argue they're underserved right, by their parks. So I just wish we could have had some context on thousand this particular park -- how this particular park in this particular area relates to the rest of the city. Maybe there was some reference to that but I just don't have much context here.

>> I guess in response to that, like I said, we have 98 parks city-wide that have playgrounds within them and it's fairly evenly distributed across the city in terms of the age of the playgrounds and condition. We are talking about playground replacement here as opposed to new park development, again trying to be mindful of the o&m burden and other opportunities in motion now to develop new parks, to help fill gaps, but we felt that taking this approach to playground replacement sort of consistent with national best practices, not necessarily targeted to any geographic area in the city, but to implement what has already been established quantitatively as our needs system-wide.

>> Garza: Yeah, I just -- I want to comment briefly before Kimberly speaks, and you can sit down -- oh, do you have a question?

>> Tovo: I had a couple questions. Just to back up to the playgrounds that you've selected I know there was an audit, and I can't remember if you mentioned this just a few minutes ago in your introductory remarks, but the audit department did a -- looked at playground safety and I wondered if there were -- is that how -- was there a relationship between the issues they noted and the projects that you've selected here?

>> Yes. So the playground assessment which is this document prepared by park staff, was a response to the audit to put a program in place in addition to the capital improvements there were staffing increases in our playground safety team that were an outgrowth of that audit by these projects and their evaluation, in terms of playground safety and compliance, are a direct outcome of the audit and the department's response to the audit.

>> Tovo: Thank you. So the playgrounds you've identified as candidate projects, are those in your estimation and review, are the highest candidates for replacement based on their age and safety issues?

>> Correct.

>> Tovo: And other concerns?

>> There are various categories failing, poor, average, good, and excellent or new. The projects that fall within these lists would fall within the category of poor. We have taken care of all of the failing.

>> Tovo: That's good.

>> Playgrounds throughout the city through prior projects. These generally fall in the category of poor.

>> Tovo: Which is the last category before failing. And so I remember during our budget process there was a particular line item that I believe one of the councilmembers had forwarded for playground safety. And I'm trying to remember. I believe what we did was merged it -- is that what happened we kind of merged that into the block grant.

>> It was a position provided in the budget for a supervisor under the playground safety team, so it was a new fte, new position added to the department's budget on the staffing side to lead the playground safety team.

>> Tovo: At some point I think we had a dollar figure just for playground safety and maintenance, and it was pretty substantial, and I was thinking what we did in the end was that we upped the block grant a bit to -- and had -- the assumption it would incorporate both.

>> Over a three year period from 2015 it's estimated I believe of a need to clear the poor backlog is on the order of \$4 million for equipment and a half million for safety surface but that just gets the most egregious sites brought up to current but certainly every playground we install the clock begins to tick for the next generation to ultimately replace. Through the nature-based play arbitration trying to do these projects consistent with not only national best practices in terms of public health, but also being mindful of maintenance obligation in the future, to the extent we can move away from plastic and moving parts toward more natural materials that will not degrade quite as rapidly, for example, the safety surface used historically, the rubber matting, only lasts five to seven years here within the city and within our environment and needs to be replaced quite frequently.

So we want to be smart about the new playgrounds we do.

>> Tovo: So when he say replacement -- and I know you mentioned this during your presentation but I think it's worth underscoring, were we to move forward with replacing some of the projects or all of the projects on here, it's not necessarily going to look exactly like what's there. It's going to be kind of the new movement of playgrounds which are more nature-based.

>> Correct.

>> Tovo: Can you address the -- you know, we've heard some very good -- most of us have probably met individually with gave representatives as well, and they've talked about some of the priorities they see in their parks and they seem to be in the category -- you know, one of the important needs was lighting, and I wondered if you could address -- address that and whether that would be among recommendations as well, to look at lighting or those kinds of improvements as a potential source for this money.

>> Yeah. It certainly could be -- one of the issues, again, I caution everyone, lighting is not always a one size fits all or a panacea for safety issues or perceived safety within the park and there are design permitting, utility impact related to that. Lighting can also become an attractive nuance not done well and not properly thought through when lighting for safety and security, it happens occasionally that we light an area that becomes like a candle to mobs and then we have folks assembling in the parks after hours. We have to be mindful of Ker few. It's something we have done even at dove springs, we lit the core area, understanding that having lighting at least up through curfew hours extends the day for play within the park, particularly within the summer if folks want to get out in the color of the evening. It's -- we do use lighting to enhance and increase safety but we have to be very careful about how we design it.

We have dark skies ordinances and all sorts of energy efficiency considerations and so forth so it's not as easy as standing a light up on a pole and wiring it up and going from there. It would take thought and may take some time and if the thought here is that if there are projects that do take additional time and if it's seen as appropriate and perhaps even going beyond the end of the fiscal year, we certainly would love to move forward and get things done within this fiscal year, but on a site that might require a new electric service for the lighting, it's somewhat unpredictable in terms of how quickly that work can get done.

>> Tovo: Okay.

>> Garza: Thank you. Before Kimberly comes up you wanted to add some -- I guess, context to the discussion because the way -- the concern that I've heard today and before this was many members of the 44, 45 community felt this money was specifically allocated for only the 44 and 45, and I could understand the confusion and the frustration because I was trying to remember the conversation during the budget discussion, and because, you know, that happened a while back and I didn't remember exactly what was said, one of my policy aides pulled the transcript because I wanted to be sure, you know, what was the intention because I do -- I did remember at some point we I understand condo of started saying we're going to do this block grant funding. So we went through the transcripts and -- and if I remember correctly, this was initially a concept item that chair pool put on the concept list that was very specific for the 44, 45, then it kind of started to get looped into stuff. I remember being concerned. In looking through the transcripts, I'm going to read a little bit of what I said then, I said, you know, at some point we're going to have to make hard decisions if we just -- if we just allot a certain amount to the department we at some point have to decide what the priorities are and we set that.

I guess I would caution us from just a block amount of money because the beauty of 10-1 was part of the ability to bring voices to this council that hadn't had that before and spending to parts of Austin that don't have it or there's unmet needs. I guess I'm just trying to say in a I hope we're not -- we put

ourselves in the exact situation that I was afraid that we were going to put ourselves in, that we're now at this committee level, trying to decide what to do with this money, and I think -- to do with this money and I think we unfortunately set false expectations for the community who thought that -- didn't understand how this transitions from the initial concept item. I guess going forward when having those budget discussions this is kind of a lesson learned for us, we need to be careful about the expectations we set and make -- because, you know, it's either we make those hard decisions at budget session or we make them now. And with regards to -- councilmember Zimmerman, you said we can define unmet needs different ways, but we can also look at a map of food deserts and childhood obesity and see a very concentrated part of where those conditions exist. So I just -- moving forward I just hope that we -- I guess this is a learning lesson for me, absolutely. But -- do you have a comment.

>> Zimmerman: I do. I appreciate those remarks. Let me kind of tag on to it. One of the things I brought up in the budget cycle, I could see this coming, and my point was there are different needs around the city, obviously, from the central business area out to the suburbs, northwest, south end you have different needs and unique requirements. Some people have a high priority on swimming pools. Others it would be parks that are around nature trails, et cetera. So to me the way to make 10-1 work in that would be to allocate, you know, segments of money and then you as a councilmember would help make those decisions with your constituents for how you would spend those park dollars in your area so that instead of having projects come before the councils or blocks, we would instead divide up the available park money and then your portion, if it's 10% or whatever it is, you would decide that with your constituents, you know, for your neighborhoods.

So that's kind of what I was asking for back -- during the budget cycle because I don't know what your particular needs are. You're not sure what mine are, and each of us as councilmembers kind of answers separately to our neighborhoods. So let us make those decisions based on an allocation of money.

>> Garza: Anybody have any questions? Okay. Did staff have another part of the presentation? No?

>> Yes.

>> Garza: Did you?

>> So Kimberly Mcneely, assistant director of parks and recreation. I think I'm going the wrong way. Sorry about that. So in addition to the block grant funding, as we were calling it, that you allocated for park improvements, you were also generous enough to provide \$200,000 in general fund for -- and I put in quotes, youth programming. While I don't have the exact transcript, the basic reminder -- or basic thing I remember about the conversation that happened was councilmember pool, who is not here to agree or not -- or disagree, had talked specifically about playground programs. Councilmember Tovo, you -- I believe that you were advocating or at least saying, hey, we should consider the roving leader program and in the end I think it was decided to allow the parks and recreation department to make a recommendation about youth programming. And so our youth programming recommendation is as follows. To use \$96,000 of the 200 that we're provided for a summer counselor and training program and a year-round leadership outreach program and that year-round leadership outreach program would be part of what happens with roving leaders, and a counselor in training program meets the needs of a recent or an ongoing assessment that tells us that in the city of Austin, there is a gap in programming for the teenage group or once a child becomes 12 years old and is either considered a teen or tween, 12 to 17, we have a lesser number of opportunities for those numbers and in working with teens and the tween group, we know that they are looking for opportunities to prepare them for future employment or for them to become better leaders for for them to become successful post-school in whatever endeavor they choose.

So a counselor many training program will allow them to build skills and then hopefully also be able to take those skills and build upon a future career if they're interested in a community service or

something like teaching or camp counseling or things of that nature. The second program is a park ranger cadet program and we would dedicate \$20,000 to that program. We already have an established cadet program, and we work with school -- we work with aid specifically out of Akins high school where there is a curriculum that individuals that participate in that school are able to dedicate some time and get credit to be a part of a park ranger cadet program. And if we were to provide the \$20,000 we could expand that to other high schools and that would be something we think would be desirable. We believe the cadet program, again, helps prepare those teens for a future -- future opportunities, gives them both social skills and real work-type skills and that cadet program is a year-round program with the culmination being an internship or an opportunity for those cadets to work with us in the summertime and actually earn some monies to be able to be a part of that program. The camayha recreation center has a program called growing natural leaders and right now it is part of a \$50,000 grant we've received from the Texas parks and wildlife approximate -- sorry, Texas parks and wildlife agency. That grant is scheduled to be nonexistent effective may of 2016. In order for us to sustain that program, we wanted to provide an opportunity to sustain the growing leaders program, growing natural leaders program because, again, it targets that the age group that where he know that we have a gap.

It's been highly successful, and if we don't find a way to sustain it, it simply goes away and that opportunity is no longer available. So \$50,000 would be dedicated specifically to that program. And the other \$34,000 allows the team members at Camacho to do outreach programming to all of our recreation centers and then also perhaps to add some opportunities to other facilities such as playgrounds, where they can go out and teach certain sorts of adventure activities or interpretive activities or nature-based activities like archery, like geocaching, like being able to read a compass and understanding how to navigate it in natural environments, interpretive programs, understanding the plant there, the environmental awareness appropriate for me as a Stewart in this community to be able to understand how I can help preserve and protect nature sore that's how we would use the other \$34,000. I'm prepared to answer questions.

>> Garza: Go ahead.

>> [Off mic]

>> Tovo: With regard to that last category --

>> I'm sorry. I think I took off.

>> Tovo: The Camacho adventure program, you said \$34,000 would be reserved for outreach so staff members would go during the summer or year-round or how would that fall out?

>> Both year-round. We already have what we call a lending library. And what that means is that we have a whole list of activities that -- we have a specialized or expertise in and any recreation center right now can sign up for a individual to come out to that site to be able to teach something that they're an expert in. So we don't just have the lending library for nature-based programs but also for cultural arts or other experiences.

With the given amount of funding or resources that we have, we only have so many opportunities that we can offer. Now we can expand that opportunity so it would be not necessarily to just recreation centers but it could also happen at programs -- at playground sites. But it would be a part of that program where we would schedule it and then be able to train our staff before they came in and then they would go out and deliver the program.

>> Tovo: Thank you. I think that this is -- I think you've done exactly what we really -- what I really had hoped you would do okay, which is to look at, you know, what the staff have seen as needs within the youth programming and present us, you know, update us as to what your recommendations would be going forward in -- with what is, I guess, in the scheme of things kind of a small amount of money, the \$200,000, but I'm glad we were able to find within the budget. As I recall that was -- you were just going

to come and sort of update us as to how you were planning on spending it. There's no action from us needed with this portion. So I would just say, you know, I think this is -- I think this is -- I would love to hear more about the first two options. I'm a little more familiar with the Camacho adventure program but I think it's a good plan.

>> Certainly. One we tried to get the we wanted to get the biggest bang for our buck. I wanted to get more detail, to mayor and council, more detail about each program so you can have the details of it and, you know, perhaps even a curriculum or an understanding. We certainly can do that for you. But there's basic consensus this is the direction you're okay with, we will proceed. I do need you to know we've already proceeded with trying to get a position posted. You did give us an fte.

-- Was an fte.

When we're talking about the programming we're going to be looking for a certain kind of person to come be a leader for youth programming. We didn't feel it was necessary for us to -- we've already started that, but if you give us a different direction today, we would make sure that video fulfilled a different role than to do the -- to do the leadership programming.

>> Tovo: Yeah. No, again, I think this sounds like a very smart plan, and I know that there's information out there about those other two programs so I can certainly do my own research as well. I wasn't intending to give you direction, that would require more work, but I'm just interested in learning a little more about those two. So, anyway, unless you'd like a motion --

>> I had a question. So the 200,000 was in addition to what was considered the block grant?

>> Yes, ma'am.

>> Okay. Then I had questions about the projects for the block grant. Was there an analysis done that provided maybe if there were other -- other funding resources or options available? So if it's -- if one of the parks is an area that maybe has access to a different kind of funding, was there any analysis like that done?

>> Yeah, not on a site by site basis, but that certainly would be a next step for us, and many of those projects that are listed there would very potentially have either some matching funds through the bond program, again through the Austin parks foundation, through neighborhood grants, neighborhood partnering program, through public works, but again, depending upon the schedule that we give ourselves to implement the work, that might affect which of those supplemental funding matches we might seek. But we have not done those on a site by site basis. We didn't want to get too down deep in the weeds so we had a general response in terms of whether this is a project type and the approach to the suspending that met the council's intents.

>> So if, at the end of -- if you go forward with what you're proposing, and let's say you are able to determine that there is an option for funding elsewhere, what would happen to that additional funding left in this --

>> I think the intent would be to get more project sites done.

>> Garza: Okay.

>> To, again, the list of projects that we provided there is a longer list than \$1.1 million will address. So to the extent that any of those projects could be supplemented with some additional funding, it would enable that money to be extended further toward more projects, or if it's the council's desire that we entertain other project types beyond the nature children's play areas, we would look at those as well. But the challenge for us would be, you know, do different districts want to approach their needs list or their wish list in a different fashion, and the folks from gave have spent a significant amount of time mapping and having a conversation with the community. They're ready for that conversation. Other neighborhoods, other districts haven't done that, so how do you approach the implementation of the spending, given different level of involvement that various neighborhoods and communities have had.

So, therefore, we thought that packaging this as a consistent project type on a playground program that's underway, that would be a way to move forward. But again, we wanted to stretch the spending as far as we can.

>> Garza: Okay. Go ahead.

>> Tovo: I'm not clear, unlike the \$200,000, I think we talked during the budget about what the process was going to be, and it was that we made that decision, and then left it to staff to update us about their recommendations. I don't believe -- I'm not really clear on -- I'm not really clear that we came up with what the process would be for these -- for this body of money. And so do we anticipate having a council action related to this at some point? Either in terms of providing direction or in approving specific grants? You know, there are at least five different ways that I can think of at the moment that we might allocate this. We might -- I mean, if this committee were to say today, your plan sounds fine, does it still require council approval?

>> Well, I think we would certainly be prepared to come back with a more detailed breakdown and sort of a project implementation approach. If we received some general feedback that it made some sense to follow this path. I think you're correct we were not given specific direction, you know, as far as how the decision process would be made.

>> Tovo: Right.

>> And we just -- we aimed for an approach that made some sense in that it's addressing known and documented need within the department. We'd love to be in the same position next year, with some additional funding.

>> Tovo: Sure.

>> And this, again, is a learning opportunity, and with the thought process there maybe that we might do the same thing next year, I think that would incentivize districts and neighborhoods to begin the process that some have already done, and that we might approach it differently next year. But for this year's spending, we just want to put this money to work as quickly as we can and in a way that's responding to a known need that we have.

>> Tovo: So we could do that, or we could do some combination of using some of those recommendations and then also listening to gava's specific recommendations for their area and seeing whether there's an opportunity to fund those kinds of needs, instead of some of these needs, or we could do something closer to the -- I mean there are just all kinds of different to proceed. I don't know whether there's time to do this, but treat it more like implant and say, we have this block of money, communities, if you're interested, apply for it. But, you know, again, that's a much longer time frame and I'm not sure that we have ever done that before in the parks department, and that would require a whole infrastructure we may not have so I'm not clear on how we're going to proceed today. Is this just kind of a briefing and a discussion, and we're going to contemplate it and come back next month?

>> It's my understanding staff was looking for feedback, and so -- and where I was -- I was thinking the same thing, what are the options before us?

And because I appreciate staff's, you know, recommendations and the criteria that was used, but I also - and, you know, gave folks can correct me if I'm wrong, but the whole reason gava was placed in those specific zip codes was because of the need there, and that's why they're not in the 48 or the 4 -- they don't have gave 4849. To my knowledge, there's no gava anywhere else. I don't know if I need to make a motion, but what I'm thinking aloud right now is, go with the list that you've proposed, and if there's -- if you can find, through your analysis, that you're able to leverage the dollars and get funding elsewhere, whatever extra funding is available, use that extra funding and talk to gave and the stakeholders and figure out what -- maybe they can have their priority list of, if you give us extra money, here's the two projects that we would like fulfilled, is what I'm thing. But I think you wanted to ask a question.

>> She had her hand up, then I'll go to --

>> I just appreciate you letting me sit in on this. I think it really is an important conversation, and I had a question and a comment. And the question was, you mentioned that these -- these projects, the candidate projects are all in the poor category. Do we have any other playground projects that are also in the poor, or does this list take care of the poor category?

>> I believe there would be additional projects in that poor category. I'd have to refer to the document and I could certainly provide that information. But this wasn't intended to be the comprehensive list of -

>> It's a start.

>> And it doesn't necessarily mean that the entire playground has a safety risk. It's oftentimes the assessment of the age, the general condition, the safety surface, those sorts of things. I don't want to alarm anyone that we've got dangerous play escapes out there, but it's a category our safety team uses.

>> So he this would be the priority list within that category of playgrounds that need work. You know, it just seems like, from what you were saying, the money has been spent to improve the failing playgrounds, and we've moved into the poor category, that that seems to be a reasonable process for the spending of this money. I think what's also important in the 10-1 way of government, and all of our minds also, is what's fair. And I was looking at this list, and it looks like that all of the different council districts either have one or two projects on this list. There's only one that has three, so it does seem like it's an equitable distribution of the funding to the playgrounds in the different districts of town. So I just wanted to say thank you for -- seems like this addresses both the reasonable and the fair components that all of us continue to talk about, and thank you.

>> Thanks. I just have one more quick comment. This is starting to remind me more and more of the conversation we had on the \$23 million of the capmetro quarter sent. In mobility we tubbed this initially, and we recognize it the same way that parks has a tremendous list of needs, mobility, transportation, right, road congestion, sidewalks, you know, there's tremendous needs there. So we kicked that around age we finally kind of came back to, you know, what is wrong with letting the separate councilmembers take a look at what staff has already identified, work with those constituents, and have the decision made by the elected councilmember on how to allocate those money -- how to allocate those monies, and, you know, consulting with staff on that tremendous list of stuff that can't all be funded, so there's got to be a way to prioritize it. Why isn't that -- I don't understand the objection to letting us do that.

>> Tovo: I really think it's got to be a balance. We're trying something with the quarter cent, and that will be interesting to see how that works out. But we are going to make the final funding decisions. He those decisions are -- lie within our purview as council and we make the policy decisions, but I don't -- I think it can get too far. I don't think -- I don't think our charter really supports a system where each council office has a certain amount of money to spend on road projects, or parks projects, or, you know, other things. And as with everything, the needs of our park system and the needs of our transportation system and, you know, tons of other needs are citywide, but sometimes we're going to have to make decisions not to have necessarily a project in every area because there are certain areas, as some of our speakers said, it has to be decisions based on equity, and sometimes the needs are going to be greater in one area than another, and sometimes the uses are going to be more prevalent in one area than another because that's an area where people congregate. So I don't -- I think that we need to handle -- I would suggest that we handle this one differently, but this seems like -- balanced differently than the quarter cent, and I think this seems to be a my balanced approach, though I hope we can do some thinking about whether there are opportunities, at least for a conversation, among the community members who represent gave about those particular projects and whether in the balance, you know,

they still believe that there are higher needs than the replacement of those two playgrounds within district 2.

>> We would certainly be able to look at their prioritized list and identify items that seem like they can be done fairly simply and easily and with a high benefit and return, and if the general feeling is that those projects are preferred over the replacement of a playground, you know, one of the reasons we identified playgrounds as an idea here is that we do have that assessment in place.

The department today is currently working on a system wide Ada self-assessment, so this time next year we will have a long list of accessibility improvements that might become a shopping list for things that need to be done. And, again, it's going through that process of evaluating the existing facilities, identifying quantifiably the need and profits of those needs, that enables us to make these decisions moving forward. It seems the playgrounds were timely for us, there's a lot going on in that realm, and we do have a needs list that's been very well vetted.

>> Tovo: I guess that would be the last point I meant to make before, but I think our professional staff has abilities and experience and knowledge and training that we just simply don't have, and that's why I think it needs to be a combination of -- of how we come up with those projects. Councilmember Garza, does that seem like a reasonable -- do you have a suggestion about how we could move forward? I'm just -- I would like to recognize both the recommendations of our staff, but also allow for an opportunity, since we have a very organized community who also brings a level of expertise to this, can we craft some kind of direction to our staff that would allow for both of these things to move forward, that we're providing staff with general support for their concept, if we have general support for their concept, but also allowing them to alter that list in collaboration with the community members who might identify alternative needs instead?

>> Garza: That's what I was trying to -- that's where I was trying to go. Real quick question. Of the candidate projects, of the -- I don't know, let's say there's 15 of them, are those -- those specifically are within the block funding amount. Is that correct?

>> No. The full amount -- and it really depends upon the final design, and we haven't determined what that replacement would be, but it's generally understood that that number of playgrounds would exceed the million dollars.

On the average, if you're replacing traditional equipment with traditional equipment, on the average, 200,000 here site, so that would suggest five or six sites if we approached this in a traditional fashion. If we do those in a nature-based play type of environment with relatively inexpensive materials, Boulders and things, we may be able to achieve more, but it wasn't intended that that full list that is there as candidate projects would be able to be funded simply with the block funding. But, again, if we can supplement that -- and again, moving forward, we're happy to refine our response and provide that back to council, to this committee, either through correspondence or at the next meeting, and drill down and determine which projects absolutely could and should be done, and if there is funding that is earmarked outside of playgrounds for our community needs, we can incorporate that into a final spreadsheet as well.

>> Garza: Okay. Because I absolutely -- like I said, I respect the work the staff did on this, but I also think it's important to -- to recognize the community and the people who of put a lot of work into the gave program. So I'm going to relinquish the chair again so I can make a motion to mayor pro tem tovo. You're the chair now.

>> Tovo: Yes. Oh. You need to make a motion, I was glad to take the chair.

>> Garza: All right. I guess the direction I would like to give for staff is to bring back options for prioritizing -- you know, what you've given us, but also options of -- you know, different options, if we

spent half of this on our priority list and half on gava's list, or, you know, that's one option, and then 70% on staff's recommendations and 30% on gava's -- could you bring that --

>> Sure.

>> Garza: Is that something you could do?

>> Absolutely.

>> Garza: Okay. That would be my motion.

>> Tovo: Councilmember Garza motions what she described. Is there a second? I'll second that. I think it makes sense to look at options. Any discussion on that motion? Councilmember Zimmerman.

>> Zimmerman: I don't really have an objection, but I -- I also guess I'm just not sure where it would go or what it would do. I'd still like a more full discussion on the idea of giving some -- some spending decision authority to councilmembers working with staff and the constituents and the various groups. So I think I'm going to abstain from the vote. I don't really have an objection to it, but it's just not the right thing I want to do, so I'm going to abstain.

>> Tovo: All right. Any other discussion? And I think this is a good process to kick off. I mean, I think maybe if we're going to try to include money like this in the budget for next year, it sounds like we already have another wish list category of really critical needs as well, but we might also just think about how we want to structure that process in a way that allows us to balance, you know, community -- what community members see as priorities along with the other assessed priorities. I wish we had money to do all of it. Anyway, all in favor? And that is two of us. All opposed?

>> One abstention.

>> Any abstentions? Councilmember Zimmerman abstains so that passes on a vote of two to zero with councilmember Zimmerman abstaining and chair pool off the dais.

>> Garza: Okay. Thank you. And we postponed item number 7, so if there is no objection, I adjourn this meeting at 4:34 p.m.

(END)