





MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Ray Baray, Chief of Staff 
Doug Matthews, Chief Communications Director 

DATE: January 28, 2015

SUBJECT: Input Summary for Council Restructuring Proposal

To inform tomorrow's discussion of your proposals regarding Council committees and public engagement, we wanted to provide you with a full accounting of feedback received through Monday evening. The attachments included with this memo include:

- Comments provided during your meeting on January 22
 - Transcript of the meeting, with public comments highlighted
 - Reports from Telephone Town Hall, including comments and voice mail from individuals who did not speak on-air during the meeting (in English and Spanish)
 - Results of polling conducted during the meeting
 - Comments received during the meeting via Twitter (using #myatxgov)
- Comments received via our online engagement portal, SpeakUpAustin.
- Comments received via 3-1-1
- Comments received via other social media channels

In addition to the community members attending the meeting in-person, there were 3,943 residents (3,814 in English, 129 in Spanish) who accepted the invitation to participate by phone. Of that initial group, 350 stayed on the line through the first 30 minutes. Fifty-four (54) remained on the line through the conclusion of the meeting.

Please let Chief Communications Director Doug Matthews know if you have any questions or additional needs in regard to the feedback collected. He may be contacted at Douglas.Matthews@austintexas.gov or 512-974-2231.

CC: Marc A. Ott, City Manager
Assistant City Managers

CITY OF AUSTIN

Enhancing Public Participation at City Council – Transcript

Highlighted Citizen Comments

1/22/2015

[5:39:59 PM]

>> Mayor Adler: Good evening. We'll gear up this first meeting. So good evening. I am Austin mayor Steve Adler. If you would take a seat, there is a quorum present so I'm going to call this meeting of the Austin city council to order on Thursday, January 22, 2015, city council chambers, Austin city hall, 301 west second street, Austin, Texas, and the time is 5:40 P.M. We have one item on the agenda -- the first item on the agenda tonight is to approve a resolution which would direct the city manager to establish an administrative process allowing councilmembers to reduce their annual salaries, to reallocate the funds to other areas within their office budgets. In a second I'll ask if there's a second to that motion. I'll make that motion. Is there a second to that motion? It's been seconded by don, Mr. Zimmerman. Before we move to debate on this motion, I just want to talk real quickly about the schedule. This meeting on this item has been noticed for 5:30. The public discussion on the second item will begin at 6:00. So council, we're going to move through this item here and then we need to break and then reconvene at 6:00 because there are folks joining us from lots of different places. With respect to this item, I think we should discuss it ever so briefly because what we're going to do, I think, Ms. Houston, if it's okay with you, as we discussed, we're going to bring this up and then we're going to postpone it until next Friday on the 29th for action. And that will give the council some opportunity to be able to see if there's additional flexibility that they would like to build into this. There's been some

[5:42:00 PM]

conversation about other councilmembers and they want to talk to hr and I think will give people time. And then we have a work session next Tuesday we can talk about it and then act on it on the 29th. This is an item -- so we'll move in to debate and I want to talk about it for just a second or two before we'll entertain a motion to postpone until next week. I want to begin by saying that -- of the time that your council, the 10 people on this dais, are already spending doing their jobs. Lest there be any question in the community, everybody, the councilmembers from all 10 districts, are earning well beyond what they're paid for in salary in order to do this job. This is a job that people are doing by -- motivated by a desire to improve the community and to provide public service. I made this motion because Diane and I happen to be in a unique position. I grew up inner city DC, went to college and law school on scholarships. When I came to Austin in 1978 I had dreams, and Diane and I have been blessed or lucky or fortunate enough to achieve things that I didn't even know to dream about when I got to Texas in 1978. So we're in a unique position to be able to take our salary and to rededicate it to increase the capacity of the mayor's office by bringing in additional staff so that we can better handle the constituent concerns that

are coming in and to deal with the policy ideas of trying to help us move forward in a new way on things like affordability and transportation and

[5:44:01 PM]

supporting our schools and water and so many other things. But I think that puts us in a rather unique position, but it's something that Diane and I want -- but I want to again make real clear that this is in no way should be taken by anybody to suggest that the compensation that councilmembers are being made in any way truly compensates for the time that I see these folks spending. So that's what I wanted to say about it. Ms. Houston, do you want to say anything about it because you and I both co-sponsored this resolution. >> Houston: Thank you, mayor, I am representing Dunn and I am retired from the state and also being eligible for social security. And because of the promise of my people to the district is that I would be out in the community and have town hall meetings and have one Saturday early month where they could meet me in the place in the district, but in my community you can't ask people to come to something without offering them something. They have to have some food and something to drink. So I need to be able to redeploy that money to be able to do those kinds of things in the district. I also want to do some capacity buildings with interns at houston-tillotson university and being able to pay them is one of the reasons that I helped to co-sponsor this resolution. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Is there any further debate on that? Ms. Garza? >> Garza: I did want to add some to the discussion here. And because I understand the overall goal is to give councilmembers the latitude to adjust things in their

[5:46:02 PM]

office budget, the framing of it, and reallocating funds, I understand that, but the framing of it and the reducing individual salaries, I'm concerned because for me 10-1 was not only about the public having more accessibility to their council, it was about the public having accessibility to sit on this dais. And I'm concerned about the slippery slope of possibly prohibiting -- and the political pressures some may feel in prohibiting some working class families, working class people who don't have supplemental incomes and are not in other people's positions. And it might prohibit them from seeking a place on the dais. So I'm glad that this is being tabled because I was going to ask for that and I hope that we can maybe reframe this on so we don't set up a situation where we're in a position like legislators who earn next to nothing and then have to end up working for lobbying firms. And I think we can all agree there's a big conflict of interest when our legislators are also working for lobbying firms. So I hope we can maybe reframe this so we don't prevent any future people who specifically someone from my district wanting to run for council and not having that supplemental income and feeling some kind of political pressure and they have a family to support. Thank you, mayor. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. And I certainly agree with that. Is there any other debate on the dais before we ask for the public input? And I think there's one, Jennifer Mcphail here? All right. >> [Inaudible]. >> Mayor Adler: Hold on one second, Ms. Mcphail. >> My name is Jennifer Mcphail. I'm with adapt of Texas.

[5:48:02 PM]

We wanted to come here tonight because we were very enthusiastically in favor of making city process more accessible and more usable by every citizen, but in particular the group that we represent, people with disabilities. The governmental process a lot of the time, the political process in general is not very physically or communitywise accessible to us because so many of us have barriers in terms of physical needs or time and space it takes to get here or different things like that. So when you're forced into situations where people have to come here at 10:00 A.M. On Thursday and stay until 4:00 A.M. On Friday, that can be very taxing no matter what your situation. And in particular about this item, the one thing that occurs to me is that there's this attitude that developed over the years at city hall that if you spent the most time here or you sacrificed more, then you've earned a badge of honor. And I hate to see people on the dais forced to give up money because they feel a pressure or asked to keep money or whatever, things going back and forth, because it becomes a macho contest about who sacrifices the most. I don't mind people taking more than what they need, but I also don't want anyone demanding more of the citizens either. Just make it fair for everybody. >> Mayor Adler: So let's work on it and thank you very much for the testimony. And I think that that's the intent. And let's work on it over the course of the week. We have a work session that's going to be coming up on Tuesday where we can address it further. >> Yes, sir. And if you could do something -- there used to be like a table that worked as an accessible dais for people that were mobility

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impaired. If you could bring that back, it would be good. >> Mayor Adler: We'll do that. >> And we'll talk more on the next item too. >> Mayor Adler: Great. Thank you. Thank you. I would entertain a motion to postpone this until next Thursday. Ms. Houston and Mr. Zimmerman seconded it. All those in favor say aye? Opposed nay? So it passes with a vote 11-0. With that then we have handled the first item. The next item we have has been set for a time certain at 6:00. We can't start that meeting any earlier, so we'll stand in recess here for the next 10 minutes or so. And then we'll reconvene at 6:00. Okay? Thank you.

[6:08:58 PM]

>> Mayor Adler: All right. Is everybody ready to reconvene? I want to welcome everybody to the Austin city council meeting being conducted in city council chambers downtown. We're now to the second item on the agenda, which is the opportunity for the council to receive suggestions and comments from the community with respect to a proposal that's been made. A lot of us ran in this election suggesting that we should change government, make it a little bit more thoughtful and deliberate if we could, to increase the meaningfulness of public engagement. And to that end right out of the box this council is trying to do that and to consider and set new rules for how we would deliberate and operate. It's the intent of this to increase the quality and the effectiveness of

public engagement. I think people who watched what happened earlier today in the debate have already seen that this council is determined to move in that direction. For today's hearing or today's session we have had the benefit of the public information office that has taken this charge and this responsibility very seriously. We have not only postings on speak up austin.org that have been available and many members of the community have already contributed, but people have been emailing --. We also have people in the community that were called over this last week alerting

[6:10:58 PM]

them to this hearing taking place today, and just a few minutes ago a call went out to 50,000 people in the community suggesting to them if they wanted to stay on the line that they could participate in this meeting either by talking or through their touch tone. If you do not get called and have the opportunity to join in either by telephone, you can always tweet or send a message or go online. If you don't get selected in this room to be able to have a chance to talk, know that this is just the beginning of the conversation. That everybody can go online. When this meeting ends at 9:00 tonight, I'll stay in this room taking suggestions from people until the last person leaves. And my understanding is that other members of the council are also going to stay in this room as well to receive comments from people that are here. We also have a Spanish interpreter. If anybody is present here and wants to give suggestions or -- accommodation. So that is also available. So we're going to go ahead and begin this process. And like many of the things we're going to try, we haven't done this before, we're going to see if it works. And if it works, then that's great and we'll incorporate it. And if we run into problems or situations that we could have done better or done differently, then we're going to learn by it and then the next time we'll change doing this. So let's begin. Larry, you have -- are here to help facilitate this evening. Would you tell everybody who you are and introduce yourself to everybody. >> Thank you, mayor. Good evening, everyone. Good evening, everyone. So welcome to those of you who have joined us in the chamber and those of you who are watching on television or listening on the

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telephone. I'm Larry schooler and I oversee public engagement for stint in a role created by the public information office about five and a half years ago. It's great to be with you tonight and you will have opportunities to participate, mayor, in a number of different ways as you indicated. Folks will be able to participate the old-fashioned way by raising their hand and asking to be recognized and being able to come up and speak. But if you're watching this at home and you would like to participate, we have other ways for you to do so. You can call in to a toll-free number that's both in English and in Spanish. In English it's 888-440-1932. In espanol, [speaking in Spanish]. I hope I did that right. Si. You will also be able to text in your comments. There will be some poll questions that will be going up on our television screen here in a moment that you will see at home and you will see in the chamber and whether you're sitting here physically in the chamber or watching at home you will be able to text in your response in both to multiple choice

questions and to open response questions. So whether it's via regular old-fashioned coming up to the mic and speaking, calling us up on the telephone and pressing zero to speak to a call screener to get on that way, texting or tweeting will hopefully accommodate every form of participation we can tonight, mayor Adler. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. And what about after this the meeting? We have probably at this point over a thousand people that are on telephone, more joining in. We have lots of speakers in the hall that want to speak. If people don't get a chance to participate actively tonight, how can they participate after this meeting is over? >> Well, mayor, some folks may be accustomed to thinking of our 311 hotline for strictly a customer service function, but in the last year or so we've really repurposed 311 to through a community engagement function if. For those who don't have the opportunity to participate tonight and would like to use their regular telephone to leave a message to make a comment on the phone you can call 311. We also have a new mobile

[6:14:59 PM]

app for 311 where you can leave your comments. As the mayor indicated before, we will keep speak up austin.org open through Monday, January 26th. So if you have comments you would like to make online, can you do that at speakupaustin.org. That's speakupaustin.org through Monday, January 26th. >> Mayor Adler: That sounds good. As we go through -- before we begin, is there a way for you to poll the participants that we can see who is on and who they are? >> There absolutely is, sir. We'll do that right now. I'm going to ask for first poll question to go up on the screen and for those who are listening on the telephone, the operator is about to give you our first poll question. So we want to find out what council district you live in. So if you're here with us in the chamber you can use a paper survey if you would like or you can use this electronic survey with your cell phone. So if you're using your cell phone what you're going to do is you're going to send a text message to the telephone number 22333. Again, that's 22333. That's the phone number you're texting to. And initially you will text the phrase Austin Texas gov all spelled out, no spaces. Again, that's austintexasgov. Once you text that message that's essentially going to plug you into our system and then you can just choose the letter choice that corresponds to your district. So if you live in Dunn you would choose a. If you difficult in drew, B and so on. Make sure you text the message Austin Texas gov to the number 22333. And pick the district by number and letter corresponding. District 1 is a, district 2 B, district 3 C, district 4 D, district 8 H, district 9 I and district 10 -- as I indicated on the telephone for our callers who can listen via phone and

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contribute via touch tone phone. So our results are populating in realtime. It looks as if mayor pro tem tovo's district has a decisive lead in the representation. And here comes district 3 on the March. [Laughter] >> Mayor Adler: I think did you this at a carnival once. >> And down the stretch they come! So as I indicated, we are conducting this poll also on the telephone. At the moment actually district 1 has the most number of callers participating for councilmember

Houston's district, but the other districts are also fairly well represented. So again, what district are you living in at the moment? You can do a paper survey, you can text in. Anyone who is watching on TV or the internet tonight can watch on this poll. It's not distance sensitive. It doesn't matter where you are in relation to the computer. It's all based in the cloud on the internet. So we'll give it just about five more seconds or so to finish this poll and then we'll move on to our next poll. But this is a nice way to give us a snapshot of who is participating. Boy, that district 9, I tell Ya. All right. We'll go ahead and close this first poll and move on to the second one. I think mayor and council, this will help to give you all kind of a sense of some of the challenges that your constituents are facing or their habits I should say initially in terms of how they have typically tried to communicate with the city council. The question is when you've communicated with city council or other city officials what has been your favorite way to do so or your preferred way to do so? Is it a, calling a city council office, B, calling 311, C calling a member of our staff or the city manager's office, D, sending an email to council or city staff, E, using social media, F, posting to speak up austin.org or G, attending one of the many, many, many in-person

[6:19:01 PM]

meetings that the city of Austin conducts. So you can vote as you just have with just picking a letter. Once you've texted austintexas.gov you can also tweet it with your answer and there's also a web address if you would like to use a web browser to cast your vote. So if you're listening on the phone your operator should be advancing you to that next question. Interesting to see the number of folks who attend in person meetings as their preferred way to interact, but certainly email is very popular. I want to point out that speak-up austin.org in addition to having the 200 or so comments on this alone has about 3,800 registered users who have joined the site over the course of its three and a half or four year history to participate in a number of different forums on a number of different topics, but we've also used aggressively social media to solicit feedback from the community. To that end if you're listening tonight and want to make a comment via Twitter you can use the #myatxgov. So what's your favorite way to communicate with the city? Cast your vote for the next five seconds or so and then we will move on. >> Mayor Adler: Larry, the results that you're seeing from people who are on the -- do you have results that are coming in from other sources on this? >> At the moment -- all of the results that are coming in via Twitter and text and web are right there on the screen for you. The ones that are coming in by phone are available to me as well and they're trickling in as the operator -- >> Mayor Adler: Do you see a different pattern from the telephone different from the kind of pattern we're seeing on the screen? >> To a degree. I'm noticing that there are a healthy number of citizens who do prefer to make a telephone call ironically enough. They picked up the phone tonight. They prefer to make phone calls than anything else. So that's so far what I'm seeing on the telephone vote. But I'm going to have the operator continue to poll that question as the night goes on to see what we're hearing. But typically we do have a

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significant difference between what callers tell us and what our audience participating in this way tells us. All right. I think we're ready to move on to our third and final question here in the introductory section. And here what we're asking is what would you say is the biggest challenge or impediment around providing input to the city council? What is the biggest reason that it's difficult for you to provide input to the city council? Would you say a, it's not convenient to do so, B, there's not enough information about what they're considering, C, not enough time to give input before that decision is to be made, or D, you're not aware of opportunities to provide input. Again, a, it's not convenient, B, not enough information to know what's being considered to give input, C, not enough time to give -- give input before a decision is to be made. It seems like your council proposal tries to address all these challenges on one way or another. That's one reason we wanted to know what folks thought were the most pressing of the challenges. We did not provide an all of the above choice. I'm sure they're posing this question on the phone as well. It looks right now as if not enough information is the majority pick, but number of folks also expressed not enough time to give input is the most pressing reason. So quite a number of folks feel that they are unaware of opportunities to provide input. It is certainly difficult sometimes for us to effectively reach the broad Austin population giving the number of people who are trying to get the public's attention these days. So the that can be a real challenge. Mayor, before I hand things back over to you, I want to make sure that our callers are aware that we will be taking comments from them that are germane per your preference, for the council's preference. If they press zero they will speak to a call screener and that will enable me to get the right caller on at the right point in time.

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But that is the conclusion of the polls that we're going to ask here in the open and we can turn things back over to you. >> Mayor Adler: Larry, thanks a lot. Very interesting. And welcome everybody here again and welcome everybody who is listening on the telephone or otherwise. Obviously this is going out on channel 6 and on the website. Councilmembers, there are a lot of people here who want to participate. We have a group of folks, almost 40 here that have signed up. There will be people on the telephone that want to be able to come in. Under the standard rules of the old council, the prior council, there would be three minutes allowed for people to talk. We could limit that if we wanted to, we could start at three minutes and just see how that goes. I guess I would ask people to recognize that there are a lot of people that want to talk that this is not the case where people give their testimony and then a vote is about to happen. We're going to be taking input throughout the evening and over the week. So if anybody who gets selected to speak is willing to donate their time back to the group, the group as a whole to keep that time in the pool before 9:00, that would certainly be appreciated. Maybe we start this way and see how people do in terms of sharing time with their neighbors and not cut that immediately at this point and see how that works for people to help accommodate. We're going to go ahead then and start and give people the opportunity to give us input. We have a councilmember from Round Rock, **John Moman**. Is he here? Thanks for traveling here to Austin. Why don't you start

us off. >> Thank you, mayor,

[6:25:04 PM]

councilmembers and city manager Marc Ott. This is amazing. This is exciting. I think what I'm seeing here tonight is really awesome. I think where you guys are headed and where you're going with us is going to make a big difference in Austin moving forward in a very positive way. Like I said, I'm a round Rock city councilmember. I was elected in may of '09, reelected in may of '12. And I chose not to run for reelection this year, so my term ends may 28th. So I've got some mixed emotions about that. It's been a real great experience for me. I've made some good strides. I think Round Rock has done really well. We've got a great council, we've got a great staff and a wonderful community. I love living there. Just to give you an example of something that we did in Round Rock that is an opportunity for the forum that you're establishing here I think to kind of give you an idea of where things could go in a positive way. We had a group of engineers, architects, contractors, real estate brokers, developers that came to a council meeting in December of '09 and were -- made a presentation, they had a spokesman, a guy by the name of Ron hey good, owner of wrath construction was with a group of about 30 people and just talking about the way we did business with regard to permitting, development, construction, inspections and on so on that wasn't going so well back at that point in time. And so we as a council took that seriously and there was a -- the mayor appointed me and Chris Whitfield as a small group to go study this. And we came back with a

[6:27:05 PM]

resolution that was passed in January of 2010. I got a copy of it. Can that be put on the screen? >> Mayor Adler: Is there a way to -- and you have 38 seconds left. >> How much? >> Mayor Adler: 38 seconds. >> It's a one-page resolution that is basically about customer service, not compromising code, life, safety or the environment, but just making things happen. And we've had a lot of success, a lot of compliments on the way things have been done since that point in time. And I think I'm out of time. So I appreciate you and what you're doing and I'm real proud of Austin and this city council and this community. >> Councilmember, thank you very much. Thanks for participating. >> Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: As kind of a brief overview of what we're doing here, mayor pro tem tovo, would you just generally explain what we're doing? >> Tovo: Sure thing. I'll be very brief. I know a lot of you have -- would like the opportunity to speak. We are, as you probably have heard, trying to improve the process through public input, early in the process, and a very significant element of that is looking at the way we structure and schedule our council meetings. So some of the issues with regard to scheduling council meetings that are on the table, some of the proposals we're considering would be to hold more frequent council meetings with the aim of helping make sure that those cou council meetings end at a reasonable hour. As I look around I see lots of you who have been here at 1:00, 2:00 in the morning, and we are very committed to trying to make sure that our council meetings end at an earlier time. We might also consider rotating council meeting agendas on a regular schedule both

to save the public time, but also to save staff time. And that might look like having particular council meetings that are devoted to zoning issues.

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So zoning issues might only be taken up, say, on the second or third week of the month. And then the third that falls into this category would be to move executive sessions to a day other than our council meetings, so they wouldn't fall in the middle of a council meeting, but they might be held instead during a council work session on a Tuesday before the Thursday meeting. So those are some of the ways in which we are looking more globally at the council meeting schedule to see if we can make some changes that would address some of the issues. >> Mayor Adler: Great. Let's have some public comment. Frances McIntyre? And then we'll call Paul Robbins. >> Good evening. I'm Frances McIntyre with the Austin league of women voters and I want to thank you for opportunity to talk to you tonight. You all look very comfortable in your chairs. [Laughter]. I have read the proposed -- that was the backup material for this meeting. The league of women voters believes that democratic government depends on informed and active participation at all levels of government. The league further believes that governmental boys must protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding public meetings and making public records accessible. The league is greatly concerned about transparency as well as the ability of the public to participate in decisions made by the city council. Transparency of public bodies means that everything you do should be available to the public. The best example of transparency of a public body, which comes to mind, was the independent citizens redistricting commission. From the application process to the drawing of the district maps, everything was either televised or on

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the website. All meetings and deliberations were televised, even the hiring of staff. And meeting minutes, as well as comments from the public and the commissioners, were available to the public through the website. Council can do that too. The following comments relate directly to the proposed city council deliberation process. Under your goal, we certainly approve of your attempt to make the system more friendly to citizen participation. On bullet number 2 we suggest that you not refer to the public as customers, but rather constituents. Under the proposed process changes, number 2, I've heard that some of the 13 committees will have to meet places where they cannot be televised. This definitely does not fall under being transparent. We are concerned that moving almost all public comment to committees rather than the full council would not only be confusing to the public, but might create a perception that they do not have access to the whole council. And number B also under the proposed changes it states that limits will be placed on public comment for council meetings. It says, quote, maintain the ability to receive public input at council meetings if, and it outlines two scenarios that would deny citizens from speaking to the full council. One, if they had already spoken to a committee. And two, that they would have to request to speak by four councilmembers. There really should be no rules that limit who

can speak at the full council. On number 3 we really appreciate -- [applause]. [Buzzer sounds] Is that my three minutes? May I finish my last paragraph? >> Mayor Adler: Yes. >> Thank you. We appreciate your effort, your continuing efforts to enhance access to the

[6:33:05 PM]

minutes and the backup materials, etcetera. The league understands that you're trying to improve the efficiency of the council structure and meetings, and we applaud you for that. We just want to make sure that you have the word transparency foremost in your deliberations. It is your job to protect the citizens' right to know and to facilitate participation in government decision making. Thank you so much. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much, Ms. Mcentire. [Applause]. >> Council, I am Paul Robbins. I am an environmental activist and consumer advocate. First, would you show the slide? I want to show you something that you might find interesting. This is a graph of the number of cou council meetings between 1978 and 2014. You probably knew the general trend, but these are the actual Numbers. As you can see, the number of meetings has decreased markedly over time from a high of 62 in 1981 to only 27 last year. The low point was 24 in 2013. I applaud your efforts to have more meetings and leave before 3:00 in the morning. I am, however, worried about some of the proposed changes that will deter public participation, not enhance it. I will speak to two of these. And they're very similar to what Ms. Mcentire spoke on. The first concern is a proposed limit for -- to limit time for public hearings at council meetings. This has been done on occasion in past councils. Typically by limiting hearings to an hour with each side getting 30 minutes each.

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This kind of approach short changes everyone. The council does not receive a lot of valuable information. People who have waited patiently for hours do not get a chance to speak, and in some cases it's impossible to pick a side. I mean, this is Austin, after all. How can you pick one of two sides when there might be five or 10 sides? The second concern is the committee structure. Expansion of committees does not bother me. What does is that public hearings that take place in committees with as few as three councilmembers, if one of the four leave, that that means that these same public hearings may eliminate or take over what a regular council meeting would hear. Instead of three or four councilmembers hearing it, the entire council should hear important issues. Those are my comments. I hope you will take them in regard. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. [Applause]. Larry, do we have anybody on the telephone? >> Mayor, we do. Lori is calling from district 3 tonight and she had some comments about some of what she's read related to committee structure. So Lori should be with us now. Lori, if you can hear me, please go ahead. >> Yes. I just want to make sure that these committee hearings are going to be held at a time that working people can attend, after hours or on weekends. That's all I have to say. >> Thank you very much, Lori, for that comment. >> Mayor Adler: And I think we've heard from lots of people that have also expressed the desire and need to make sure that committee hearings are held

[6:37:07 PM]

at a time when people can participate, people who work. It's a good point and been made by many. >> Mayor, if you like, we can take another call if you would like to go to another speaker. James is joining us. We don't know which council district James lives in, but if possible I want to try to bring James on. He specifically mentions having difficulty getting to public meetings that are being held here at city hall. So James, if you can hear me, please go ahead. >> Yes. I'm just wondering why -- I live in district 1 with Ms. Houston. I don't know. I hear promises, I hear the whole city council from way baeucoup years, my father was there with Tom Miller and I came up in politics in this city. I know what it's like. I would like to have more of a district area -- if they're going to represent us in our local area, district 1, 2 and 3 lump together, have a big meeting once every month or so there. Go somewhere else and have the same meeting in another group during that time. If they're going to be paid to represent us at that city council, then do it in a true fashion and manner. Long time ago when Austin was small, yes, we could go down there, not get killed in traffic when you've got so many people here who do not have a driver's license. In my area, which is area 1, I'd like to see something done more forceful in bringing meetings to the group, not scattered here and there. I know it's hard getting downtown. I can't drive in that madhouse. So my question is I'd like to see it come to the area, even if Ms. Houston wants to, once a month. Go to these meetings with city council, bring it back.

[6:39:07 PM]

Then next month you can vote on what we've discussed. If she says no, our area says no, two or three other areas says no, then you know that the majority of the people of the Austin says no. And they're against what you're trying to do. But I don't think we the citizens get enough time to participate in this. There's not enough room in this city to go down there and participate in these meetings. There's nowhere to park. >> James, thank you very much for your comments, and I think that he said, councilmember Houston, he was living in district 1 and had jibed very nicely with what you were saying at the beginning of the night withholding regular meetings in the district. >> Mayor Adler: And we've also heard that comment from a lot of people who have not and aren't able to come and attend council meetings here because they maybe live too distant. And they were looking for an opportunity to be able to engage actively in the formation of resolutions and ordinances even if they're doing it by email or by phone, but in a way that's actually material where it actually gets incorporated and has the ability to incorporate into Evan actual ideas. So James, thank you for that. Next speaker that we have would be suntanal [indiscernible]. And then Joe bassy. Did I pronounce your name correctly or close? >> Close enough. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. >> Good evening, mayor and councilmembers. My name is (saying name) And I'm president of the srcc, south river city citizens neighborhood association. On behalf of ssrcc I would like to first congratulate you all for being the first 10-1 Austin city council and a special congratulations to our district 9 council woman Kathie tovo.

[6:41:07 PM]

Today I bring to you four questions from ssr for you to consider as you work to refine the public process. The first one, and this may be more of a question of clarification, is if a council committee declines to take action or rejects a request, do citizens have the ability to garner support from at least four councilmembers to have their case heard before the full city council?

>> Mayor Adler: That's the proposal on the table, yes. >> Okay. And the second question is we're concerned about representation from our district council person on committees that are important to our neighborhood association, like the planning and neighborhoods committee. And so we ask how will councilmembers be assigned to these committees? And our third question is if our district's council person is not on a committee in which we have a case to be heard, would there be a way to request that our district council person be allowed to sit in on a specific case? And our last and fourth question is, it seems that one of the reasons why city council hearings often take so long is because interested parties often feel it's necessary to get as many people to speak as possible for certain issues. And people feel the need to speak. And even if they're repeating things that others have already said to drive the point home. We have felt this is necessary in order to overcome the disproportionate sway that agents, especially lawyers in contested land use cases, seem to have over some councilmembers. There seems to be a lack of trust on both sides. On the one hand we're not sure if our emails are being read and that we're truly being heard. And so we impress our point upon the council by packing the house as much as possible. And on the other hand, council doesn't seem to quite trust the neighborhood representatives who claim to speak for the entire neighborhood, like me. So how will this new city council address this issue?

[6:43:08 PM]

So with that, the new city council is to create a more efficient public process and to increase engagement with our citizens and we look forward to a new and better process. Thank you.

[Applause]. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. She asked some questions about appointing and about council. I don't know if we want to go straight to -- whether we want to respond to things now or whether we want to use the time to get the answers. I think Ann is going to be -- in pieces we have -- >> Mayor, I would recommend that you or someone answer them so that others who may come and ask the same questions, so we can clarify them now. >> Mayor Adler: All right. I'll answer the first one of those and then we'll pass them around the table. The first one was who appoints? Under the proposal the council collectively have offered to give me the ability to do that so that I can talk to each member of the council and find out where they need to be. And to be able to make sure that we have representation among the council. That is a responsibility and honor that this council has -- has extended. I take it as a real good sign that a council that a lot of people were concerned about whether they could move together as a group at all could move forward on something like that. And I promise to do my best to respect and reward the trust that this council is offering to give to me. The next question was about what about if your council person is not on the council. Someone want to respond to that? >> With regard to the committees

and the way that we anticipate them operating, any councilmember can go to and participate in any committee, whether they're on it or not. And you know, we've talked amongst ourselves and in talking with folks in our district, we fully expect to

[6:45:10 PM]

participate in any committee where there are items that we've brought forward or where there are items of particular interest to our districts, and so yes, councilmembers can participate in committees whether they're on that committee or not. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. The next question went to dealing with the number of speakers or the perceived credentials of speakers. Someone want to respond to that? Okay. Ms. Troxclair. >> Troxclair: I'm hoping what we will find in this new council structure, the 10-1 system, is that you will hear back from your representative. I've had the same frustration when I'm on that side of the dais of feeling like I've sent emails and I don't know if anybody is getting them or if anybody is responding. So my responsibility as the district 8 representative has been to be accountable to the people in my district. I have, you know, not only just set up an auto response to let people know that I received their email, but have also personally responded. I've tried to personally respond to every single /the city/constituent who has contacted me thus far and addressed their issue. So my hope is the further we go into the system not only will you have the opportunity to of course participate in the public input process through the committee structure, but your councilmember will also make sure that you are feeling adequately represented and that they're responding to your issues and concerns. >> Casar: Mayor, if I may speak to that also briefly. As someone who has spent many hours myself making hundreds of phone calls or sometimes thousands or also helping volunteers do so so that this house can be packed when it has to be packed, I think that the current committee structure

[6:47:10 PM]

still creates the opportunity for that to happen because I think that it's an Austin tradition to some extent, and then also there is something to be said that it's not just about the input that is coming to council and what we are learning, but that the time that our citizens come and spend here when they come and speak to us, that that is important. So we are trying our best to preserve that in front of the full council when we can, but also have public engagement at the committee level so we can do more public engagement. And then second, I know that councilmember pool will speak to us later in the program, but as far as the call that was made around having more meetings geographically being disbursed, I know some folks will have questions about accessibility to the council or language barriers. We know that this structure isn't going to solve everything on public engagement. So just so you know, Ms. Pool will be talking about a taskforce we'll be creating to keep working on this and to come up with more answers. So we know that this is -- I don't think any of us are pitching this as the answer and so this is a continuing conversation. So thanks for y'all's time. >> Mayor Adler: Sounds good. Larry, do we have somebody else. I'm sorry, Ms. Gallo? >> Gallo: There was a question about the relationship

of the neighborhood associations and the concern that councilmembers and council offices would listen to what they presented. So in fear of that, packing the house with voices instead of listening to the summary from the neighborhood association. And I want to say that I know most of the offices, most of the councilmembers are looking at this process, this 10-1 process and being very responsive and really tasking the neighborhood associations to help us be the voices, to help be the voice that comes to us with the issues and concerns. One of the things that I know my office is going to work on is to help neighborhood associations be able to produce a survey that can go out to their partnership. So it will not just be the voice of the neighborhood people that show up at the meetings, but also the people that have young kids

[6:49:11 PM]

at home that can't come to the neighborhood association meetings. Or for whatever reason don't want to do that. But we'll be able to hear the entire voice of the community as we talk about different issues. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Do we have a phone call? >> We do, mayor. I wanted to make sure also to highlight a couple of tweets that have come in in regard to the discussion tonight. One person defeated new council committee proposal lacks explicit stage for review of public discourse. News and blogs, Twitter debates, etcetera. Another tweet that came in had to do with a specific committee. For the committees listed didn't see technology or technology innovations. How will this be covered? There also was a tweet that actually came in before the meeting even began that says we're going to the public hearing to speak in favor of open data for improved agendas and minutes. So those were a couple of tweets -- again, the #myatxgov. Mayor, I do have a call if you're ready to take one or if you would like to respond. >> Mayor Adler: Let's respond real fast. Ms. Pool, do you want to respond? >> Pool: Yes, I'll love to respond to the Twitter about technology and innovation. We do indeed intend a committee. I think on the list it's toward the bottom and it's called innovation and creativity -- of industries and I am going to recommend that we --. And I want to make that really clear. That is an area that is very important to me personally. I sat on the telecommunications commission years ago and learned a lot and it's also an element of workforce development and skill set that we all need to be productive in the 21st century. So yes, technology will absolutely be -- have a resting place with the council committee. Thanks. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Phone call? >> We do have a call from

[6:51:13 PM]

district 4 tonight. Dorothy is joining us and I think actually has a comment about some of the technology we're using this evening. Dorothy, if you're there, please go ahead. >> Yes, sir. I just want to thank the mayor and everyone for this wonderful opportunity to participate because I don't have a computer and this is just the best thing that ever happened to Austin, Texas. And I thank you and I will be listening all the time. Thank you very much. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much for participating. Thank you. We're trying to give as many people as many different ways to participate and to lower the barriers for participation. Joe bassy? Is he available? Is he in

the room? How about Monica? Monica -- nuevo lord? Ma'am, did I pronounce your last name -- >> Please, I'm begging because [indiscernible] In the city of Austin sending their boss to kill me in my apartment. They shoot something in my mouth through the light on the table. They shoot something in my ear and the doctor pulled it out at Brackenridge. Please, can the city hall come and see how messed up with the electricity.

[6:53:16 PM]

My telephone is now walking. I have TV, I have computer but they're not walking because I don't allow them to walk. My phone too. They raise my bill to \$100 and I'm on assistance. They broke my neck for the injury I had in the post office. And I went for surgery for one year. It is the bad guys and I know those people. If the city don't handle it, I will stay for them to kill me. I'll go back to Washington. I tell them that, the city don't want to protect me. >> Mayor Adler: Ms. Lord, is there someone -- >> That's all I came to say. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Manager, is there someone that can visit and see if there's an issue that we might be able to help with? The next speaker -- thank you, ma'am. Scott Johnson. >> Good evening, mayor and council, Mr. Ott, city staff. Thank you for the opportunity and welcome. One of the greatest challenges from my perspective in terms of the agenda is when a citizen or business representative or city staff is down here in the morning expecting an item to be heard before the lunch break, there's a couple of barriers. One is the briefings. If those are going to be changed or modified that could help. But the next is citizens communication. I want to keep citizens communication, but would like to see that moved to later in the day and still provide some time certainty. What happens when you're down there as a citizen or business interest or some of the department directors or other important staff that are waiting and then have to come back after lunch is that we lose effectiveness

[6:55:16 PM]

as an organization. I would propose that with the slimmed down agenda citizens communication could be slotted at 5:00 or 5:30, possibly before the proclamations and the live music. We signed for citizens communication last year say in January or February, if those same folks continue to sign up monthly and sign up in November and December and it's the same subject line that they're trying to get you to understand or help on, there may be an opportunity to offer an office meeting to them and possibly reconcile this issue. Help them with it. I'm not saying that that's a certainty, but that's something you should look into because obviously there's folks that sign up every third or fourth meeting when they're eligible. They can't sign up every meeting anymore and that code change I think was up time for people that have trouble calling between 9:00 and 9:15 the Thursday before one of the meetings. Another opportunity is to try to get as many items through before the lunch break. And hopefully all these things can help there. Regarding some of the committees, mobility should be a committee, but when you plan for the mobility of our region and you neglect to integrate the land use planning, then that's one of the reasons why we have the challenges that we have, that we don't give people options and we do not plan our city

better. Another opportunity is that I believe that we should add to one of the policy deep dives, we should add air quality, climate or integrate the two. We tend to look at climate as being something that is very important, which it is, but we tend to forget that while they're interrelated, there's two issues there. There's ground level

[6:57:16 PM]

pollution and there's pollution that rises to the stratosphere. And that could be added to one of the committees in open space and environment and sustainability. I would encourage the council and the staff to add -- [buzzer sounds] -- Sustainable economic development as well. That's been an opportunity for sometime. Thank you for your time. >> Mayor Adler: All right, Scott. Thank you. Do we have a phone call? Let's do that. Charlene is on the line, I don't know from what district, with a comment about improving efficiency for participating in city meeting. Charlene, please go ahead. >> Yes, precinct one, if that's what you're speaking of, to the members on the council. I like this phone communication. I hope it's a success for more citizens to put their input. We would like to know when we give our input that it made a great difference. It would be nice to know that because of the citizens, when there's a police brutality or a young man or woman has got killed, or the city of Austin is liable for something that, you know, damages needs to be awarded, that our -- the panel do not always have to go behind the scenes to make a decision whether we're going to pay for these damages or the citizens also will not be accountable. And we would like to be behind that scene when you make that decision, because you represent the citizens of Austin. So, I would like to see that more are open to the citizens. For so many people who don't have computers and who are not have a busy lifestyle, maybe with major important events

[6:59:17 PM]

going on in the city, pushing people out of their districts where they stay in, or in the domain, give the people, the citizens more time to participate, maybe something broadcast underneath the TV screen, because most people watch TV, or a regular broadcast station just for major events when you need more citizen participation. My last comment would be, citizen communication. When you're making decisions with the budgets, for the city of Austin, the citizen communication, I think is so important. It should be separated from maybe a couple days in that week, whenever you have it, separated from making decisions, but you already have input you can go from there for the citizens of Austin. We'd really like to know you use their comments some way, somehow, to say, our elected officials are really listening. >> Mayor Adler: Hearing. >> I want to make sure we'll have a recording of the entire call audio that you can obtain via email separately, so you can listen to with a much higher volume at your computers and so on. >> Mayor Adler: That would be helpful. I don't know who it is that's typing the transcript that comes, I don't know how that happens, but, if that person can hear what's happening on one or two other calls, I was able to read the call, even though I couldn't hear it. But, I can't do that when the screen shows the word clouds. >> It's a balancing act. >> Mayor Adler: So, when we're

having a call, if we could go back to that screen, that might be helpful. >> Sure. >> Mr. Mayor. There seems to be some fans overhead. When those things come on, I can hardly hear anything. It's off right now, but, when it's on, I can't hear the phone

[7:01:18 PM]

calls. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. The next speaker is **chip Rosenthal**. Is chip in the room? Okay. Now, you've been donated time from lots of people. That would entitle you to 15 minutes. If you give any of that back to the group, I think people would be appreciative. >> **Yes, mayor, I plan to give a significant portion of that back.** >> Mayor Adler: Thank you, sir. >> **It sounds like the council is going to already take action on some of the technology issues we wish to raise. Thank you mayor, councilmembers, my name is chip Rosenthal, I'm speaking tonight on behalf of an all-volunteer community group advocating for open data. We are the code for America brigade in Austin. Thanks for the opportunity to speak on this proposal. I came here tonight with four points of feedback. The first is that we support being allowed to give our public input at the committee level as you've proposed. That's worked very well for us in the past when we've been able to bring our issues to a committee and have them worked there, the action that moves forward has often been with our support and the council's consent. I think one reason that has worked so well is because the past councils have had a committee that has been dedicated to the technology issues that we've often wanted to address, the emerging tech and telecommunications committee. You know, sometimes we dive into particular subject areas, and it's very good to have councilmembers who are briefed and prepared to understand input, and understand where we're coming from when we present these issues. I came here tonight to advocate**

[7:03:19 PM]

for the addition of a technology commission, and I'm fully prepared to take yes for an answer, thank you, councilmember pool. >> Good. >> Rather than go through the long list of issues that justify why I think it's important that we continue a more than decade tradition of having a committee dedicated to these issues, I'd like to point out that a couple of areas I think are very important to this city are the community technology initiatives like grant for technology opportunities program and the Google for fiber communities programs. There is an article that came out just today in the Austin chronicle that talks about a lot of these very strong community technology programs that have come through the city, and those programs have primarily run through our past emerging tech committees. It's very important we maintain that presence. I would dare say in 2010, if we didn't have an emerging tech committee that was prepared to act and recognize the opportunity of Google fiber, I'm not sure we would be getting gigabit broadband in Austin today. And it's -- stepped up to the plate as a result of council, past council acting on that opportunity. Another area that really concerns open Austin a lot is the civic technology area. We do a lot of work with the city, past city council and city staff on the Austin government online initiative. And we advocate for more use of the open data portal, and so we think it's very important to have an emerging tech committee or a committee standing to handle

these issues. >>> Two final points I wish to make. Let me skip ahead in my notes. On proposal three on the speak up Austin site, there is a question relating to minutes, backup, and tracking, and two points of feedback on that. First, in addition to minutes,

[7:05:21 PM]

backup, and tracking, we would like to see improvements in the agenda system and support for agenda notifications. The current agenda system is difficult to navigate and has no facilities to stay noticed on a topic. The situation is more dire for council committees and commissions which don't use the system, just post a PDF document. That's a difficult situation on staying advised of council actions, it may get worse if public input is pushed into the council committee process. We would like to propose you include amendments to the system and notification support. Another part -- and this is something, be prepared to hear a lot from open Austin over your term. Every time council comes forward with a proposal for some sort of technical facility, be it a website, an app, whatever, we are going to advocate that your action also include a call to open the underlying public data beneath that. Not just keep it locked up on a website, or behind an app. Let me give you an example of that. When the previous council looked to create an app to do council district lookups so people could find out what district they were in, one of our points of feedback was that's great, but please be sure you release the underlying map data for that. As a result, the community has developed several applications utilizing this data. Our vote atx voting place finder application uses the data. Also, at the atx hack for change hack-athon last year, a hacker did a mashup between the top 311 service calls in a district and showed it on a map. Again, the underlying data is very important to us. So, thank you for the opportunity to present these issues, and we look forward to working with you. Thank you. [Applause] >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Councilmember kitchen.

[7:07:23 PM]

Would you generally go over what we're talking about with respect to the committees? >> Kitchen: Yes, we appreciate the input that we've gotten so far. I want to say a few things about that item number two on the backup. So, just to fill in some of the things we've already talked about, and talk for the committees for a minute. Our purpose is to provide an opportunity for people to tell us what they think before decisions are made. And that's the purpose behind opening up and allowing for more public hearings at the council committee level, because we want to hear that input, and we want to provide for that complete opportunity for input earlier in the process before the final decisions are made. So, we recognize, of course, and we've talked about the fact it is also important to speak to the full council. We've also been talking about the fact that just because a committee has four people on it doesn't mean the public hearing will only be in front of public hearings. We expect public hearings held at a council committee level will have participation from other councilmembers as well. As we have talked about before, we expect to have hearings in front of the full council, and we have given some suggestions about when those might occur. One of those is at the request of four councilmembers. And I want to

clarify that the request of four councilmembers does not go to any individuals that speak, it goes to the actually having a public hearing in front of full council. And those four councilmembers can speak to how that is held. It may be, you know, two hours, it may be three hours, it may be an hour -- want there to be a

[7:09:24 PM]

misunderstanding that those four people were talking about who the individuals were that could speak. That's not the case. It's the four councilmembers will speak to the fact that we would have a hearing at the full council level. >>> Let me just say a few other things, because I want to get back to the opportunity for people to participate. In terms of the list of the council committees, thank you for all the input we're receiving on those. What we've done, essentially, is created some additional committees because in reviewing the existing committees we felt like there were some very important issues that the city council addresses that there was no place -- no committee in which we could address them. So that's one of the reasons that you see the additional committees. Also, we appreciate all the feedback, and we certainly recognize that a number of these committees will need to work together. And so, there will be opportunities for items to be held in front of joint committee meetings, and we've given an example on some of the backup material. For example, the mobility committee will need to work closely with the planning and neighborhoods committee, the housing and community development committee. So we fully expect that to occur. Finally, I would just say that we recognize and appreciate what we're hearing about access to these council committees and we're committed to making sure they're held at a time that people can participate, and that we have opportunities for people to see a televised committee meeting, as well as other opportunities to participate. So. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much. >> Mayor. >> Mayor Adler: Yes. >> I would like to ask you a clarifying question about something you said earlier. Under this proposal, we are entrusting the mayor with appointing folks to committees, but I believe that under this

[7:11:24 PM]

proposal, we are talking about making sure the council ratifies by a majority vote those decisions to create a balance of power between the council and this mayor, or any future mayors. Is that still the current proposal? >> Mayor Adler: I understand I'm on that relatively short leash. [Laughing] >> Mayor Adler: To try to do what's right. Absolutely, that's correct. Yes. >> I think there was an auditor's report that came out. It had several similar-size cities around the country, and they said all of those cities had the mayor appointing the councilmembers, so we're not trying anything new here. That's the way the other cities were working. I can get that report to you. It's quite interesting. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Larry, do we have another phone call? >> I wanted to mention a couple of tweets that were related to the conversation. One person is asking, how will people get selected to be on a standing committee? I think I was hearing that answered here a moment ago. One person commented, "Want to see the emerging tech committee remain. The backbone of enhanced edge gaugement is emerging tech." A tweet to that

effect. We also have a caller calling from councilmember Houston's district once again. Andrew has joined us. And Andrew says he has experience on city commissions in the past, so it would be very interesting to hear Andrew's perspective, if he is available. I'm going to wait and see whether we can bring him up, mayor, to speak to us. I believe he's there. Andrew, if you're there, please go ahead. >> I'm here. And honorable mayor, councilmembers, I'm really excited to have this unique opportunity to call in to city council. This is great. And I think it's a great start to the way of doing business. So, I just wanted to share some thoughts and experiences I had. I've been the chair of two city commissions, and served on the

[7:13:26 PM]

committee. And being involved with various citizen input in the process. But, what I've noticed is that sometimes the communications that happens from the citizens to the citizen committees commissions doesn't always make it to the council subcommittees. So, I think as we move forward with this process, it's going to be really important that we look at how that information gets conveyed, and to make sure that there's understanding of what the roles of the citizen commissions and committees are, and that the decisions and the citizen input that happens there gets conveyed to the council subcommittees. So, really to look at that in an organizational way on how we can improve that communication, I think will really open up a lot more citizen participation that's already occurring flowing to the council. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. I think that was one of the things that we were trying to deal with. There were a lot of people that served on boards and commissions, and sometimes we'd spend hours talking about language on something and then when they would watch the city council deal with the same thing, they would watch the city council kind of blow right through that language and they'd be looking at each other and saying, wait a second, there was a lot more involved with that. Now the way it works, when something comes from a planning -- a board or commission as a recommendation it will be referred to a committee that will deal with it. Beyond that, that committee, when it's meeting, can invite a member of that board or commission, the chair or designee to sit with the council on the dais while the public testimony's being taken in order to increase that measure. So, we see this as a real tool and an opportunity to increase that measure of involvement. And remember, there are lots of different ways, under this process, that things can get initiated. It could come from a board or commission and get referred to a committee. It could be something that one of the councilmembers introduced

[7:15:27 PM]

that then is considered by the committee. It could be something the committee working in that area decides to initiate within that area on their own, in their committee. Or the committee process can be bypassed altogether by four council people that say this should go straight to the council. We were trying to increase the opportunities as opposed to limiting them. So, thank you for that call. The next speaker that we have here is Carlos Leone. Mr. Leone. >> Thank you, mayor Adler. I am Carlos Leon, thank you for placing in in Austin Texas tonight to show why

providing greater opportunity for meaningful public engagement earlier in the legislative process and providing greater opportunity to tackle problems are critical to making the council work fairly. You all used five black and five white marshels to unfairly determine your term lengths. Document one on screen and in front of you. The first choosing councilmember had a 50% chance, five of ten, to choose black for a four-year term. If first member chose black, the second choosing member had a 44.4% chance, four of nine, to choose black. But if first member chose white, the second member had a 55.5% chance, five of nine, to choose black. Either way, second choosers chances are different from and dependent upon what the first chooser did. That's unfair. Therefore, the chance for the drawing a four-year term are

[7:17:28 PM]

uneven across individual councilmembers, an unfair gain. Therefore, city council should invalidate the unfair marble results and do a fair number process instead. Document two on screen and in front of you. At 11:50 A.M. At the January 2nd council meeting, each councilmember can write down a number between one and 35 inclusive on an index card, sign and date, hand to the clerk, who immediately can read out each member's choice and show the number on camera. The five councilmember's Numbers closest to the powerball megaball from the January 31st draw get the four-year terms. Absolutely means 34 is one unit from 33, and one unit from 35. And a wraparound would be in effect, meaning 34 is two units from one. The sample in front of you and on-screen shows the process in action. Transparent gain. That's a new way forward, mayor. In Jesus name I pray, amen, thank you, mayor Adler. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. [Applause] >> Mayor Adler: That might be an interesting thing to consider the next time that we go through that process. The next speaker that we have is Stuart Hersh. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you, Mr. Hersh. >> Thank you, mayor and members of the council. My name is Stuart Harry Hersh, like most in Austin, I rent. I support your considering an

[7:19:29 PM]

enhanced committee structure. The most successful city council committee I ever saw was the joint council school district committee under mayor Cook. They worked through contentious issues involving code and the time it took for the school district to get remodeling and new construction permits. I know that's not an issue for y'all. They worked with staff on a schedule to allow citizen planning commission codes and ordinances and full planning commission recommendations before the council had its public hearings, and decided to take action. It was a time when council priorities and council schedules aligned with the staff performance measures. Like so many things in Austin, we used to do things better than we've been doing them recently. Sometimes the solution can come from our past rather than an academic best practices research project from some graduate students at one of our local universities. We used to be a best practice on a lot of things, and we have lost our way. And instead of looking to Portland or Seattle, or other places that people tend to show up here and talk about, I suggest we look backward to some of the things we used to do in the 20th century that people thought were

better, and begin talking about whether they may be a better path forward than what we've been doing in recent years. Thank you very much for your time. >> Mayor Adler: Mr. Hersh, thank you very much. [Applause] >> Mayor Adler: Do we have another phone call? >> Mayor, we do. An interesting caller named Jim, who I'm not sure is from which district. He had a comment about our committee structure. Jim, if you're there, please go ahead. >> Yes, thank you for accepting my call, and thank you, mayor, and new city councilmembers. I would like to say, again, thank you.

[7:21:30 PM]

But, first of all, one thing that has not been brought up about forming committees that I would like to suggest is a veterans affairs committee, as we have 250 veterans exiting fort hood every month now, exiting the military into the workforce and into, you know, communities around Colleen, fort hood, and, of course, Austin is one of the closest places. We are going to see an influx of veterans coming home from Afghanistan and the war. I would suggest we form a veterans affairs commission or committee I should say to assist the veterans and provide them assistance in the city of Austin if they come to our city. They are the ones that, if you think about it, that is why every committee is in there, why the mayor is there, and why everybody in the room is there, because they fought for our freedom and risked their lives for what you're doing for our city. That's just my suggestion, and thank you for accepting my call. >> Mayor Adler: Jim, thank you. [Applause] >> Mayor Adler: Ann? >> Kitchen: Thank you very much. We will flesh out the descriptions of the committees more. We have anticipated working with the veteran commission, and you just don't see it in the description. Yes, we're thinking that would be under the health and human services committee. >> Mayor Adler: I think the point is well-taken to make that explicit in what we do. >> Kitchen: Yes. >> Mayor Adler: The next signed-up speaker is Sharon Blythe. And then Lou Mccrary. >> My name is Sharon Blythe, and

[7:23:32 PM]

I am a long-time advocate for the city cemeteries. And I want to congratulate you. I feel honored to be standing in front of 11 winners tonight. I think there is a glaring omission of the health and human services committee in -- much if you would add that to health and human services. Thank you very much. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you, that's a point well-taken, as well. The goal is to make sure that all the subject matters that are covered by the council would have a home in a committee that would be charged with that responsibility and be held accountable for making sure that their items are addressed. Mr. Mccrary. >> Good evening, Mr. Mayor, councilmembers, I'm in district eight on the board a while ago. District nine was leading district eight. I promise to have a better contingent next time. [Laughing] >> Seriously, I want to thank you for being here tonight. We are proud of this council. We're proud of the election. I watched it all. You survived it. You ran the gauntlet. We know that you have good endurance. We know about your intelligence. And I think this is going to be a great city council for the city of Austin, and I mean it. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. >> As you know, town hall meetings were the first form of

direct democracy in colonial times, a time and place for citizens to come together and decide how they, not the king, would run their business. By calling this meeting, the town hall meeting, the first town hall meeting for the city of Austin, you're continuing that tradition. I hope that it will continue. I know that the city of Austin is now a big city, but in my mind, and in the minds of many

[7:25:33 PM]

of our citizens, we think of Austin as our town. A place of schools, and neighborhoods. A place with beautiful parks, and open space. A place to raise our children. A place of great ideas and good people. All that we ask is that every now and then, when you are grappling with all the wheels of government, take a moment and think of Austin as our town. I believe that that thought will lead you in the right direction. My most sincere thanks and appreciation to all of you as a citizen for your service. [Applause] >> Mayor Adler: Thank you, Mr. Mccrary. Almost 12 months to the day, we first ran into each other, talking about this election. And you requested a town hall meeting 12 months ago. The next speaker that we have is Ernesto Calderon. >> Mr. Mayor, city council. >> Mayor Adler: Yes, sir. >> First of all, let me congratulate each one of you. As a former -- not the former, but the lead plaintiff against the city for single-member districts in the 1980s, you can't imagine how good I feel about coming before you tonight. So, with that having been said, let me address the proposal of the council on citizen input. The -- one of the things I have a concern about is, any kind of reduction in public input before the full city council. Part of making a presentation,

[7:27:35 PM]

for example, if I'm making a presentation, part of what I want to do is not only influence, perhaps, the member of my district, which is two, but I would also like to feel like I am influencing the total council in attempting to come to some sort of conclusion. So, anything that might dilute full participation at the full council meetings, I would hate to see come about. But, at the same time, I want to congratulate you for taking a step in the right direction in. And with that having been said, thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Mr. Calderon, thank you. And by way of response to Mr. Calderon, there was a question which concerned all of us. There's no perfect solution here. In a perfect world, we have full public hearings at every stage of the process. But, with 11 people here, and so many issues, it didn't seem like that was workable, so we're trying to find the best balance. But if we have open hearings at the committee level, then it's real important that not only the other councilmembers who weren't there to hear everybody that spoke, or as good as if they were. And not only that, but that the public is as good as if they were sitting at that meeting, and it's easy to follow. Mr. Casar, would you talk to people about transparency, and how we were talking about the record being developed? >> Casar: Certainly. The hope would be that we are coming to decisions as a full body after having watched committee hearings on our own time, that the meetings and minutes would be accessible to us as a council, and if we didn't understand an issue after having reviewed the videos or the transcripts,

that we would postpone those items, or choose to host a public hearing or

[7:29:38 PM]

postpone them. My sincere hope is that we'll actually have more public input, not less. That we'll have more meetings, many of which will still go pretty late. And so there are more of us that can take more public input. There was a blog post written by someone who I respect quite a bit, writing that there's an inherent tension between quality and quantity, but, that is you under the assumption that there's a limited quantity we can take. If we have more meetings and make those time certain available for public input, we can expand the quantity while enhancing quality as long as the information that is being delivered to a small council committee is actually publicly available and transparent to those of us on the dais, and I commit to, and I believe my colleagues will commit to, making sure we watch those committee hearings so any public testimony in the committee will, indeed, influence our decisions. Mayor. >> Mayor Adler: Yes. >> What we're trying to do also is, you know, I have served on boards and committees, and I was there for 14 years. So, I know the process that we serve on the board. We make our recommendation. The staff makes their recommendation, and then it goes to the full city council, and then by the time it gets -- we get to the city council, most of the decisions has already been decided. You're going to -- they're going to hear your input and the decisions have basically already been decided. What we're going to do is form a committee where -- so that's the process, that was my frustration when I was serving on the board.

[7:31:39 PM]

Is that worked on the commission, and by the time it got to the full council, it was totally different than our recommendation was. So, that's what I feel like this is going to accomplish. >> But we also want to address, and this is critically important, the other side of the issue is the ability of the public to have access to the meeting information. The council meetings, the commission meetings, the board meetings, so that you can track what is going on in whatever way possible. This is a great opportunity for us to be able to work on the city council website, and many of you probably feel like I do that it's not very user-friendly, and it doesn't have information in current time. So, the transparency is not just available to you, but, also available to the public. >> Mayor Adler: We have a phone call? >> A number of posts to #mytaxgov, some of which relate directly to this conversation. City staff will need to engage citizens for input, not after the decision is made. Another comment, we'd like to see council take leadership rather than following staff lead. Make arrows go both ways. [Applause] >> Council to staff and staff to council. More deliberation, more time to gather information and hear views, all good things for new. That's a tweet. Physically packing city hall equals activist tradition, what about written discourse accessible to average moderates? Needs to use tech not only to hear from citizens, but also to make sense of what they're hearing. An interesting tweet, "Not

[7:33:41 PM]

nearly enough young people at the Austin Texas special called city council meeting tonight, why is that? "Tweeted. That's all for now. >> Mayor Adler: I spoke to the reporter with the daily texan this weekend as well as yesterday to talk about this meeting, to talk about ways to lower barriers for further engagement, and I think we're going to talk about that subject a little bit more in just a little bit. Next speaker we have is frank Fuentes. >> Mayor Adler, for the record, honorable members of this council, Mr. City manager, for the record, my name is frank, chairman of the U.S. Hispanic contractors. I am a citizen of your district Ms. Gallo, congratulations to every one of you on your victories. At any rate, I'm here to represent not only the -- association. If I could get Ms. Carol to stand up to be recognized, please. The Austin American statesman has, over the years, in a very detailed way, has shown the city how there is a divide. Those that have and those that have not. And lately, I think we've all read how there is an exodus of minorities. So, I'm kind of surprised that at today's meeting, the very first meeting that we are speaking before you is that we're asking for your undivided attention. We see in your new structure, mayor, that the mwbe council subcommittee is being thrown in with a council subcommittee. We're asking for your undivided

[7:35:43 PM]

attention. Our issues are very specific, very unique, and I'm not sure that us being thrown into another council subcommittee will truly help us. Our goals over the years have not been met, we've struggled with the bureaucracy and institutional racism that gave us the mwb ordinance. We're asking today, to this council, to help us maintain this bridge to ultimately represent us. You are the bridge to the staff. So, we're asking you to maintain that bridge. We're asking you very humbly to help us. Thank you very much. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. [Applause] >> Mayor Adler: I believe that was important. That we moved it to the economic development committee because we saw the mission and goal as being more important to the city and broader than -- we saw it being very broad, and part of the mission. So, if -- there's the perception that in any way we've discounted that, then work with us. That that committee is not to remove that scope. >> Again, no disrespect to any of the councilmembers that decided that this was the best thing. I'm sure it was all well-intended. >> Mayor Adler: This is an opportunity, we're asking for your input, so, please. >> No one ever asked us. No one ever had a conversation with the minority businesses of the city if that would work. It seems like a little bit of the old.

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No disrespect to city staff. We could lose it. It's that delicate, and it's that unique, and it is that difficult, at times. So we're asking that our issues really deserve a committee in its honor. And, again, no disrespect to any of the councilmembers. >> Mayor Adler: None taken. >> All we're saying is, no one ever asked us, or else we would have said, small minority businesses deserve a unique opportunity to speak with the councilmembers at their own committee level. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. >> I hope that makes sense. >> No, no. I understand. >> Hello, how're you? >> I'm

doing wonderful, congratulations. >> Thank you, thank you. And I certainly understand the issues that you bring to us tonight. First of all, you weren't asked, except, this is your ask, and you're giving us your feedback. But the other part of it to me is that for years, economic development has kind of been separate and apart from. And I think my feeling was that if we engaged, you know, small businesses, minority business, with economic development, we can make economic development more accountable rather than have them do whatever they do, and then have you guys do whatever you do. And so, in my thinking, it was a way to say to economic development, "These are not stepchildren. These are a part of your family, and you've got to work with them and for them in order to make this work." And that hasn't happened before, so thank you for coming. But I just wanted you to hear what my thinking was. >> Mayor, if I may respond? >> Mayor Adler: Please. >> The ordinance is specifically for minority businesses to do business with the city, specifically city contracts. Economic development is a little

[7:39:46 PM]

bit different, from our perspective. There we'll need help with the building permit department. It's very difficult for small businesses to go and let's just say we want to invest in a piece of property. You know, getting it developed is just incredible, and it requires an incredible cash flow -- or financial resource for us to do business with the city. The city already has the projects. It's, how do we do business with them? How do we remove barriers that impede small businesses from doing business with the city? There's quite a difference. We're in there with economic development, we're in there with labor. Ours are not labor issues. Ours are strictly business issues. How do we deal with the city and the city bureaucracy, and all the barriers that are in front of -- not necessarily just minority businesses, but small businesses as a whole. So, it's very different. And so, again, that's why we are asking. Give us your undivided attention, give us your own committee. >> Houston: Thank you so much. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. >> God bless you all. >> Garza: Not a question for you, Mr. Fuentes, thank you, but, I guess this is a legal question. You referred to the ordinance that created the wbmbe, and if we're essentially creating a new ordinance with the new council structure, is there something in the new ordinance that needs to explicitly say that we're eliminate -- how does that ordinance that created it go away? >> [Off mic]. >> The changes will require an ordinance to make a lot of changes in the current code. So, we will handle all of that. >> So that happens in the drafting of a new ordinance? >> As we draft the new

[7:41:47 PM]

ordinance, we'll make all the changes. We're listening to everything going on tonight to try to figure out how to do that. >> Garza: Okay. >> Mayor Adler: Mayor pro tem. >> Thank you, mayor. I wonder if there may be some -- the actually mbewbe ordinance wouldn't go away. The committee would be replaced. I just wanted to clarify that point, but, I wanted to offer to Mr. Fuentes and anyone else who's interested, I wonder if we could do some talking in the next week. I understand, having served on the council committee, I understand the nature of that

committee's work, and I wonder if we might just talk about -- specifically devoted to the kind of work that that council committee did, because it is very specific and it has typically involved hearing from the -- from a liaison on the citizen board who is kind of the, you know, person on the ground working with a lot of the contractor groups. It also involves the councilmembers reviewing the goals and specific projects and how well we're doing at meeting those goals, and so we might find, you know, we might find some other solutions that present themselves. But, I appreciate you being here and the communications you've sent, and you raise a very good point, so thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Do we have a phone call? >> Anne has been waiting very patiently tonight. I don't know what council district she's calling from, but her comment relates to the discussion to some degree. If you can hear us, please go ahead. >> Good evening council and mayor. I first would like to say, I'm in Ann kitchen's district. And I am excited for the new mayor and councilmembers have

[7:43:47 PM]

kind of lost their way to their constituency. Sometimes when you stay in a place for a good amount of time, you become complacent and you don't hear from the people you serve as much as you should. So I'm excited about the new blood that's sitting on the dais, and very proud of the new mayor, who seems very diverse already. My comment is -- I'm hopeful that -- that work with those populations that are disfranchised, and not just the homeless. Also, not to assume that funding one or two minority initiative businesses or nonprofits is sufficient to answer the consistent pattern of inequity in investment in the black and hispanic community needs. The boards and committees are fruitless if they recommend funding or any other thing and there's no real consideration, much less dollars given to it. So I'm just hopeful that you all look more closely at the funding and those things that have been allocated in the past, and look at more issues and things that are faced -- the minority community needs and that we're faced with, and to help everybody who is representative of your district, black, white, hispanic or whatever, you need assistance because of social ills that they have faced. And I just really wanted to make that comment, because I think that that's important. It's our dollars, and they should be invested equitably in every community. And finally, I think that we have a fine city manager. I think he has done a great job for the city of Austin. And he has diversified the administration at the city of Austin. And I just think that he has done a good job, and I just want

[7:45:50 PM]

to put that out there, that you all support him so that he can continue on helping and serving the city of Austin as well. Thank you very much, and congratulations to all of you. >> Mayor Adler: Great. Thank you, thank you for your participation. The next speaker in the hall is -- >> Can I make a quick comment? >> Mayor Adler: Yes. >> Just in response to one of the tweets we heard earlier. The person T who tweeted about the lack of young people involved in this meeting. I wanted to point out, you ever the youngest councilman and councilwoman ever to serve on the council. [Applause] >> And we want to engage the youth of our city. So, please contact me.

Please reach out to me, and tell me how we can work together to engage the youth of our city. >> If I may, we have some student government leaders from our college campus tonight, and the public information office has been meeting with college student governments to discuss ways to better engage college student populations, and I'm being assisted by a couple of current college students. We are trying to make some inroads there. >> Mayor Adler: Great, thank you. In the hall we have Luke, he's left? I thought maybe I had just so mispronounced the name that he didn't recognize it. Jennifer mcfayle. >> Hi, one of the things that I wanted to bring up, also, that had occurred to me once we started talking about having meetings in district areas is that there's a trend in politics to have more official campaigning in people's

[7:48:02 PM]

individual homes, and more official -- inaccessible to us. And I've served on boards and commissions many times -- accessible. There were a lot of physical barriers trying to get to those different locations. So, as you go to your districts, please make sure not only that the physical areas of the buildings that you're in already are accessible, but that there's alternative transportation like buses, and trains, and things like that. That's very important. There have been many a late night that I had to go out in oncoming traffic because of lack of sidewalk network or something like that, and I'd really rather not die to give that input. [Laughing] >> Just a preference. [Laughing] [Applause] >> So, making the meeting shorter is great, but also, especially on budget items that have an impact, not in an annual year, but many years through the future, you want more detail, not less. There's been a trend toward -- I'm sorry. Toward sharing less information from the budget online. There's not as much detail. And that's really unfair to all citizens, including you. You'd be amazed at how many times we've saved the city a lot of money from being able to look at something simple. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much. [Applause] >> Houston: I'd like to speak to your issue. The town halls that I'm talking about will be in the daytime, will be always in either city facilities that are accessible on bus lines, or in other structures that have full accommodations. And so, having been a person that had been very involved with people who have differing abilities, I'm very much aware of the need to have those kinds

[7:50:02 PM]

of accommodations, and we'll make sure that people are accommodated. >> Also, not allowing the meetings to determine what comes on the agenda is important. Having an open and inclusive process for many ideas without keeping people here until 4:00 A.M. is important, too. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Larry, do you have another phone call? >> I do, mayor. From council district five, Madeline has a comment about communication with council. [Beeping] >> Excuse me, that was the speaker's timer that nearly made me jump out of my skin. Madeline is on the line with a comment. If you're there, please go ahead, Madeline. >> I'm here. Can you hear me? >> Yes, we can. Please. >> Hello, hello? >> Mayor Adler: Yes, hello. >> We can hear you. >> Okay. The schematic that was sent out by the city was kind of terrifying. And I know my way

around pretty well -- there, but -- and before they'd ever get to you guys is a little worrisome. I don't think that's a good term to be using, because, you know, who knows that that commission will be right, you know? The other thing is, this is very important to me, I've been working on this a long time. The 311 operators, we have contract laborers out there. They're our first responders of the first sort. And no matter what, we tell our tourists, old folks, people like

[7:52:04 PM]

me, we tell everyone to call 311. And yet, we have contract labor out there. And I have made -- I'm a retired city of Austin employee under to by Futrell, and I cannot believe what I see sometimes out on the street workers. And they don't even have labels on their vests, city of Austin, because they're not. And we're not saving money if they get hurt. So, those are my two issues. And I was so excited to be down there for the swearing in, and I really believe we can just really at least save some of what was Austin, you know. I'm very -- >> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much for participating. Next person, hiwei solovitz, and then tell me how I should have said that. >> Actually, it's hiawa. It took several years. >> Mayor Adler: I promise to do better. [Beeping] >> I'm with adaptive Texas.

[7:54:06 PM]

I have some of our issues that I will -- Texas the full council, and don't get our comments or issues watered-down by subcommittees. And I know that other members will speak to those issues. I'll just mention the topics we have right now, and not in major detail. Transportation to make it even better in the city of Austin, sidewalks to make sure curb cuts are there -- are followed and encouraged, and also with housing to make sure any new developments have at least a percentage of affordable housing in them, because we see many new developments around the city. Parks to make sure they are -- the trails are accessible and maintained throughout the city, because parks are a great thing, and we all want to use them. And with that, I will stop for now. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you, thank you. Our next speaker will be Karen Hayden. Is Karen still in the room? Ms. Hayden? The next speaker is Carol rizicki. >> Good evening, mayor Adler, councilmembers. It's nice to be here to speak to you today.

[7:56:07 PM]

My name is Carol, I am executive director of Texas rose. My organization works for affordable electricity and a healthy environment. We advocate for low-income customers here in Austin, and actually in other parts of Texas. I am a resident of district seven. But I am here today to make a few comments about this proposal that you have before you to change the city council processes. Now, number one, on the sign-up sheet, it might be nice to have a choice besides for, against, and neutral, because sometimes when I'm here, like tonight, I kind of like your proposal, but I don't like it altogether. But sometimes when I come to talk about things, I kind of don't like the proposal. So maybe we could get some different choices for people to have besides for,

against, and neutral, because sometimes when you kind of like it or you kind of don't like it, it's hard to decide which box to check. Okay. On this proposal, some things that I like. I love the idea of having more meetings, because there are some things that everybody doesn't necessarily have to be here for, and they're not here for all those things. The third thing I like is moving executive session -- complete your deliberation. So, those three things, great ideas. I also like the idea of having committees and more committees, but I have to say -- and I came here, I'm standing here before you to say it out loud in front of you, I don't like the idea of limiting the public hearings to

[7:58:08 PM]

the committee process. [Applause] >> And, when you come right down to it, I don't know. A lot of you I haven't seen around city hall a lot, mayor pro tem has been here a lot, Ms. Houston, you've been here for a lot of different occasions. Those of us who are here to speak to city council, we don't talk unless if we think we really have to. We don't make meetings long because we want to make councilmembers miserable. We stay here because we feel as though we, up to that point in time, that we have not been adequately heard. So if your committee process works the way you want it to, you won't have long council meetings because of public comment, because if the issues are worked out properly within the committees, those of us who are concerned about the issues will not have all that much to say. So, I really encourage you to rethink that part of the proposal. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. >> That's my time. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: You have another call? >> Whenever you're ready for it. >> Mayor Adler: We're ready for it. >> Barbara is calling, don't know from which district, but had comments specifically to boards and commissions she wanted to share. Barbara, if you're there, please go ahead. >> Yes, I am and I am in district 1. I have a question about boards and commissions and how people are chosen to be on those boards and commissions because what I have run into is that some of the boards -- the people that are on there already have their own ideas and they don't give an unbiased opinion. And they really don't take into account what the neighbors or neighborhoods are looking for or what they need because they've never been out into the neighborhood. The other question is this

[8:00:10 PM]

is a new format for everyone and I've been down there when we've had comments from citizens and a lot of times what I'm doing is I'm seeing people that don't even have a horse in the race, but they're commenting on something that should be decided by the neighborhood and the council. Also if your district person does not agree with what the neighborhood needs or wants, how will that be resolved? >> Mayor Adler: Question? >> Houston: I want to thank Ms. Scott for calling in and how much we appreciate that. I'm sure there will be many instances where -- not many, but some instances where any one of the district representatives for whatever reasons might have a disconnect with what the community envisions. And so in those situations once you've gone through the committee process and talked to the four councilmembers and others that might want

to sit there up to five, right? Right? Is that right, up to five? The committee meetings? It's not a problem with a quorum. >> Mayor Adler: No. In fact, every one of the committee meetings will be noticed -- every committee meeting will be noticed as a committee meeting and a full down meeting so that the entire council could show up. >> Houston: So if that should happen, I would suggest then you talk with some of the other people on that particular committee and they will be just as attentive and listen to your concerns and hopefully we will be able to resolve the

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issues. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Pinaci Gosch. >> Thank you, all the councilmembers. I have a handout which I have given to everybody, and I do not want to make it too technical, but [inaudible]. I first got involved in some of the city processes when Mr. Ken Murray started the 10-1 process. And it was extremely detailed process which in technical language we call it at the physical level. There is conceptual level, logical level and physical level. And it is at the physical level that we find all the problems. The best gift, you are starting a new 10-1 process, which was not there before. And the best gift that you can give to the city is create a set of processes which will survive, which the city can follow over long periods of time, but these processes cannot be at the conceptual level, they have to be at the physical level because they will keep city's activity limited. We cannot make city better bicycles, we have to keep city activities limited. And that happens with good -- extremely well-defined. So I will request the city council to give us a set of processes, governance processes through which we can understand the city processes easily and we can engage the younger generation. That was my first point. I have given everybody a handout. And the second point I have,

[8:04:12 PM]

if four councilmembers can bring a topic to the agenda, if the same four councilmembers can take it to the public hearing, then at this point of time everybody has good relationships, it's great. It's all great. But when people do not have good relationship it turns into a quarterly formation and then you have to think into if four people can bring a topic to the agenda, then you -- another set of four people or five people to bring it to public hearing so that it doesn't turn into a quarterly effort. Those are the only twoments I have. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Thank you. Smitty. Is Smitty here? Tom Smith. Jean Crawford? Bill okee? Yes, I'm sorry. >> [Inaudible]. >> I want to thank the previous speaker for putting this together for us. It's very helpful in thinking through the process. >> Mayor Adler: Mr. Okee. >> Thank you, members and councilmembers. I am bill okee with the Austin affordability.com blog. And I consider tonight to be kind of a personal celebration because if any of you have read my blog in the last year, one of the things I mentioned was that back in the 1980's, over 28 years ago, I stood before the city council with a proposal to reform the meeting process. And it was because of the long meetings that I did that. And the next morning in the american-statesman there was an article titled agenda reform proponent kept waiting. I was kept waiting for

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several hours. And so I'm very happy that 28 years later it's finally going to happen. So thank you very much. [Laughter]. I recently went to the Austin history center and actually found that article, and one of the things, one of the quotes they had from me is that if you'll reform this meeting process -- and thoroughbreds. So in reviewing the structure of the committees that you've come up with, and by the way, I think the committee process is generally very good, and I think it's an excellent suggestion. I'm concerned about affordability proposals and which committee the affordability proposals would be submitted to. And the closest one that I see on there is finance, but in looking at the description of the finance committee, the last item says, budget alignment with priorities, policy impact on affordability. It looks to me like that might not be quite broad enough because some of the proposals that I have that others have talked about are things like truth in taxation and doing something about the better transparency on budget surpluses and things of that nature. And of course the giant thing of the 20% homestead exemption. So I wondered if you wanted to expand the scope of that committee and maybe even renaming it budget and finance committee because even outside of the annual budget process, which starts in the summer, there might be issues related to the budget that come within that scope. So I think if you were to revisit that language and consider that it might be helpful. The other comments I had were somewhat similar to some of the other speakers.

[8:08:14 PM]

I think that the committee should probably meet after working hours. And one of the things that might be helpful in terms of getting the public input to the whole city council would be if transcripts could be taken of the public testimony at each committee and then those transcripts could be forwarded to the entire council. Maybe that would help. Any way, thank you again and I'm looking forward to meeting with you and I'm looking forward to all of you helping to make Austin more affordable. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. >> Mr. Okee, before you go amp, thank you very much for being here. I know we had some conversations earlier about some way to get -- some method to have time certain, how we could structure to get time certain testimony for people to come in. >> Well, at the committee level, you know, I'm not so sure. Those are going to be smaller so I think they'll be much easier to manage, but the specific ideas I had were related to the general counsel meetings. And one of my thoughts was moving the zoning. I also think that, you know, if you try to anticipate which topics are going to draw very large crowds -- because you can tell if there's a lot of action in the newspaper and a lot of comment coming in to your email about a particular issue, you may want to schedule that issue for an earlier time because all of those people that are coming are going to want to be heard. I can't tell you the number of times throughout the last nearly 30 years that I've seen the biggest group of people being held to the very end of the meeting before they get a chance to speak. I think that should be reversed. Anyway, thank you very much. [Applause]. >> Mayor Adler: Mr. Okee, thank you.

[8:10:14 PM]

Larry, do you have somebody? >> Mayor, as a matter of fact, I do, but I'm a little bit behind on the number of tweets we've gotten in the last little while and we've gotten a number of them. If you don't mind I was going to read through a couple. One of the ones that's gotten a little bit of traction on line says this, anyone else feel the irony that while the city of Austin debates expanding public input, 10 blocks away the Texas legislature works to limit it? I'm directly quoting. Another comment, a couple of comments on committees. Open space is a cross-cutting topic germane to sustainability and resiliency, yes, but also to land use, social and environmental. Committees, some are exceptionally important such as Austin energy, a billion dollar business, more than four should sit. No limiting input to just committees. In my opinion goals of mobility and land use are mutually reliant. Hope to see these two committees forged together. A couple of comments from the same poster regarding committees and the expansion of committees. The prioritization of the committee process could have effect of city insiders who track committees, the ability to track 13, question mark, committees agendas is difficult and not something a majority of citizens are able to do. Swift passage through the committee process does not imply full public vetting or support. The ability to mobilize citizens post the committee process should be preserved and easy. The like the idea of committee hearings. I don't think it should circumvent testimony in front of the entire city council. And I believe also a comment, agree executive session on a different day is great. Thinking back to my first times coming to meetings as a J student, I assume that's journalism, but I don't know for sure. Mayor, we do have a call, but I'm happy to keep it on hold unless you would prefer to go. >> Let's take one or two more in here real fast if we could. I've now learned operating

[8:12:15 PM]

control central here that I need to refresh my screen more. I thought we were pacing this out pretty well, but there are actually 18 more people who have signed up to speak. So let's continue to move through the group the best way we can. So I have **ruby Ra** and then I have Mary Engel. >> **Thank you, mayor, mayor pro tem, councilmembers. I am so excited about all of y'all being on that dais. I look forward to working with each and every one of you. I signed up neutral because I wasn't quite sure. I was going to sit here and just listen, but on this draft that you have I believe that Austin energy needs to be included with public utilities. My experience since I retired from Austin energy, we are -- we are a public utility and we should have the respect to serve the public citizens and what we need at Austin energy, mayor and councilmembers, is a new way forward. We've got to respect these citizens of Austin no matter how poor or how rich you are. And that's what lacks at Austin energy. You can call up there and they'll transfer you to four or five different people, and that happened to me this week when I was trying to help a young woman that her life got cut off in district 1 -- light got cut off in district 1, but it happens all over the city. So please reconsider that and work on the customer service issues at Austin energy. Maybe we need a consumer**

[8:14:17 PM]

protection commission, a customer service commission, some training on basic manners, not only Austin energy, but the whole entire -- some of the city departments. So thank you very, very much. I look forward to working with each and every one of you. >> Mayor Adler: Yes, ma'am. Thank you very much. Thank you. >> Good evening, mayor Adler and mayor pro tem Kathie Toivo and councilmembers. I'm Mary Engle and I'm here as an ordinary citizen. I signed up tonight not for or against. I'm optimistically -- I'm cautiously optimistic about this new committee system. So I'm here as a skeptic and I'm hoping that there will be a place for a skeptic and some other skeptics so that we can keep you on track. And I'm trying to do this for the public record to make sure that skeptics have a place. And if something needs to be changed, we can be more flexible with our system because with all new processes, there are glitches. So having said that, I also wanted to comment on another speaker's comment about being concerned with limiting the public input to committees because there is a potential here for a transparency issue in the deliberation of the full council. How do we know that the whole council has reviewed all of the input? After all, we're only human. There are so many hours in a day, but some input, it might be my case, it might be somebody else's case, but that might be vital to our lives and our quality of life. So having said that, I'm leaving as a skeptic. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. And there will always be a

[8:16:17 PM]

place for skeptics here. Larry, do we have another call? >> Mayor, we do. I don't know where Annie lives, but Annie has been holding for a long time and has been a long-time Austin resident for just over 50 years. Annie, I hope you're still on and if you are, please go ahead. >> I'm still here. I'm in Mr. Gregorio's district. I came here in 1962 for my husband to go to school and we've been here for short periods since then. I was brought up from the cradle on civic responsibility and was teased not too long ago about being a serial voter, but it's been harder and harder and harder to have any enthusiasm because the city council -- it seems like the names would change and the faces would change, but it would be the same old city council. I think maybe that was because of a lack of openness. This year I just want to give you three cheers. I am just so thrilled to see what's going on. It's so American! God bless you. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much. >> Casar: Mayor, if you may entertain me for one moment, I think that it's phenomenal that we're getting these calls and I just want to recognize -- I know that a lot of us have been talking about this sort of engagement, but I want to recognize one city councilmember that has really been pushing for us to have calls come in like this, so if we could break the quorum for one second and have a hoot and a holler and applause for councilmember Houston who has been insisting we take these phone calls. [Applause]. And also real recognition

[8:18:18 PM]

for the amount of staff and technical support it must take to run a meeting like this while we're

getting Twitter feeds and surveys and phone calls over the speakers. It's a real feat. I really appreciate our staff that have been able to make this possible. It's really incredible. Thank you Larry and everybody else airtight at I.T. That's made this happen. Thank you all. [Applause]. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Our next speaker is bob Kafka. And [indiscernible], you're next and Jeremy Hendrix after that. >> Thank you, council. My name is bob Kafka, I'm the organizer for adapt of Texas and I'm a veteran. And I'm a member of district 9, Ms. Tovo's district. I want to build on what Jennifer said. This July 26th we'll be celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Americans with disabilities. Typically that's only included in health and human services. Accessibility needs to be across all the committees that are created. And not just physical accessibility, but interpreters, alternate format for people and those with cognitive and mental health disabilities also need to be attentioned. I just want to -- I've been told so many times when I don't know about Twitter or Facebook to ask a 12-year-old mesmerizing by technology and don't forget that we don't want a digital divide in terms of people who -- it's not an income issue. Many older people just don't communicate that way. So alternate ways of communication really needs to have input because I know

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that technology is very, very appealing, but it also can really be very narrow to a population that is more educated and knows how to use that type of information. Really concerned about the committee of four council people. And the reason why is because of the 10-1 structure. Actually having four councilmembers in the old citywide election would have made more sense than district because councilmembers, for good or for bad, were elected for their district. And there will not be, we think, adequate input if we can't have public comment to the full councilmembers. So I really want you to look and weigh the pros and cons of doing that. The other thing that might help in terms of input, Jennifer mentioned to me there used to be a comments section when you registered. That was taken out. That might be some way that people don't have written comment, they can actually put that on and if they have to leave early, it runs late, -- I think that should be raised to have more people be able to talk. And the other thing about transparency that I've been very frustrated with is that giving input is fine, but the accountability of -- you know, everything we give input -- [buzzer sounds] -- It will not be agreed upon, but sometimes it's very helpful to find out why you decided not to do it. And that at least builds that your input wasn't just taken and, oh, thank you, pat you on the head. That you get some feedback that we didn't take your comment, your recommendation because. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. >> That would be very important.

[8:22:19 PM]

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much, thank you. Areth panju? >> Hi. I'm a civil rights attorney on the board of the freedom of information foundation of Texas. We safeguard opens records laws and open meetings laws. I have a young family. And in November -- I live in [indiscernible] District and in November I became a whistle blower. For today's meeting it's

important to recognize the transparency is the cornerstone of public participation and the absence of transparency yields the very opposite. In fact, the absence of transparency often gets taken advantage of. If you can put up that notice. I'm just going to give you one quick example where I live. This is a notice for the bluebonnet hills historic district. As you can see it tells us absolutely nothing. We got this in November. Nine days later was the first of three meetings coordinated to reach the outgoing city council and not the incoming city council. Now, I could see the red flags and I showed up and e-mailed an objection that said we need proper notice. I showed up in person to members of the landmark commission and since they're here the south river city homeowners group all said that this is an absurd objection and we should keep going. So that's what they did. I got the city attorney involved. They pulled it from the agenda, told me I was right and now you guys get to vote on this. The reason it's important is because I've seen this before. And it's easy to count to 11. 11 days is the proper notice. And if these things don't become clear, then you're not going to have public engagement and it will get taken advantage of. Earlier today I sent each of you an email and also a member of your staff that summarizes the results of an open meetings act request that -- an open records request that details the lack of transparency, everything about lobbying of

[8:24:20 PM]

preservation office to get this passed, emails from outgoing and still here council members staff to get it passed based on this notice. And tipping off the applicant that there's opposition and coaching them on how they could respond to it. Now, I'm one person. And I decided to step up because I've taken on the government. I litigate constitutional cases, but it shouldn't require someone with my qualifications to recognize how this is going to affect people's property rights. So what you could do when you set up these new -- this new system, this is the very core of public participation. No one knows how they're being affected if they on get something like this in the email and not everyone has someone like me that can see the red flags. If it wasn't for someone like me, right now to change my front door, I would need to get a permit if it doesn't look the right way. That should never happen in our neighborhoods and we should all care about having a meaningful way for us to engage even though some might be politically connected, the rest of us have an equal voice. Thanks for your time. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Jeremy Hendrix. And then Roy Whaley. Is Jeremy here? Mr. Whaley. >> Howdy y'all. My name is Roy Whaley and I have the privilege of serving as the conservation chair for the Austin regional group of the Sierra club. As I'm sure you all know, the Sierra club was established in 1892 by John murr, making it the oldest environmental organization in the world. It is a national organization and we have impacted a multitude of environmental improvements and protections. We have the lone star Sierra club is our state group and

[8:26:21 PM]

then we have different subgroups. We are the Austin regional group. Now then, the environment is not represented by a district on the dais. The environment encompasses everything. It does not

notice or recognize artificial lines drawn on a map. Therefore we are involved in each district. Every district up here. But we need your help. We need you to help us identify adds volunteers the environmental issues in your district and what we need to be addressing. So please reach out to us. Please let us know how we can work with you because we are ready to do that. Now then, as I look at this I want to point out that yes, we are volunteers. And so when I look at the committee structure, what I see are, as a volunteer, not billable hours, but hours, more hours to be involved in an issue. And so that is a concern, but we don't mind, most of us don't mind, putting in the extra hours if we believe we are getting a result from that. And so it is a struggle for most people. It is for me and I'll be honest, when a change like this comes along, to embrace it. On the other hand, it's not a struggle for me to see that I'm standing on the track of a speeding train and it's not going to slow down. So I'm not going to try to stop this train, I'm going to try to learn how to work with this train. One of the issues I see when I look at this flow chart is that on open space environment and sustainability that we have

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rivers and Lakes, but not aquifers. And of course aquifers are a concern. And water quality. I was happy to hear the quorum issue addressed. Now, Smitty Smith and Karen weren't able to stay, but we did talk before they left. And we agree that Austin energy should not be a separate four member committee. [Buzzer sounds] You are the board members of a committee as a whole and it should stay that way. And we ask that it do. But replates that with a four-member committee on something that I think is glaringly missing from this. And that is social justice. We don't have a social justice committee on here. Let's keep the committee adds a whole, but let's address our social justice issues. I always say environmental justice is always social justice. But not all issues are environmental issues. So let's please address that and thank you for your time, thank you for your service and thank you for being here. I look forward to having a relationship with each and every one of you. >> Mayor Adler: Mr. Whaley, thank you very much. Yes, Ms. Kitchen? >> Kitchen: Thanks so much -- >> Mayor Adler: Can you put on your microphone? >> Kitchen: Thank you so much for being here and sharing your thoughts. Just to clarify, the thinking is that social justice will be handled under the health and human services committee, so we'll clarify that in the description. Also I think in terms of the energy committee, I think that although we certainly need to have more discussions amongst us, but I think there is a feeling that it should be a committee of the whole. >> Thank you. And also that we should not limit public input at a time when we be moan the lack of voter turnout that we should not limit those that are willing to come down here.

[8:30:25 PM]

God knows I don't want anymore three A.M. Meetings, but I would rather see an issue thoroughly hashed out than to limit it by the time. And there are issues -- there are ordinances we have that we would not have today if we had not come down here and spent the night, watched the sun go down and watch it come back up the next morning. And it's made Austin better in

every way, including the thriving economic engine that we have now. And that comes from our environment here in Austin, Texas. Thank you again for your time. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you, Mr. Whaley. Next speaker is Stephanie guranki. I'm sorry. >> Actually, I might reserve my comment until she's done with hers since she's already walking down. >> Mayor Adler: Mr. Casar, I apologize for not seeing you sooner. >> Good evening, my name is Stephanie and I am the program director of the better builder program at workers defense project. As many of you know, workers defense project is a member-based organization. We have over 2,000 members here in Austin. And we work with low wage workers to help them achieve fair employment. We provide a host of services and also engage in various forms of advocacy. And for the past eight years, workers defense project along with various community allies have been very successful at collaborating with city council to win incredible gains for working families here in the city of Austin. And these victories have been possible because of public input system was in place that allowed our members who are working people, people who have families, people who are working often times upwards of 16 hours a week to make ends meet, these members were able to participate in the public process, share their own experiences and educate councilmembers about their own reality. And that's how we won the gains that we won to make Austin a better place for working families. So as we think about

[8:32:25 PM]

improving public input in the years ahead, yes, let's make sure that we maintain opportunities for public input to happen in the evenings so working folks can participate. I would echo many other speakers in urging council to use caution in limiting the opportunities that various community members have to address the full council. I also want to touch on the issue of language access because I haven't heard many comments about that thus far. I hope that that's an issue that the taskforce that's being assembled will address in more depth, but I hope that we think about language access not only in terms of the ability of community members to communicate to council during citizens communication, but also the ability of community members in the audience to understand what's happening during council meetings. Typically workers defense project has had to come with their own interpreters, their own translation equipment. I think maybe council could work to make sure that they provide those services so we don't have to. I'd also language to talk about resolutions transparency because that's not something that's been addressed thus far. There are many instances in which city council has passed resolutions that are directing the city manager's office to come back at a certain date with a proposed policy that the city council can address. And we have found that sometimes those resolutions end up kind of reaching a black hole of sorts and we struggle to meet with city manager to figure out what's going on with those resolutions to figure out what sorts of progress are being made on these resolutions. So as we think about increased input, increased transparency I hope we will think about mechanisms in which the public can have more access to information about the city manager's office -- the municipal id

[8:34:29 PM]

resolution that were passed this past summer. And just advocate around workplace issues, economic justice issues. I'm not clear which committee these issues would fall under. I don't know if it would be economic development, community development, but we look forward to more clarification from the council about where our pet issues would reside in the new system. And being an organization that does advocate extensively on the state level and with other municipalities in the state, we also are intimately aware of how a committee structure can be used to stall issues or kill issues. So we do want to make sure that there are mechanisms that remain in place -- for councilmembers to bring issues to the full council and create a bypass system. >> Casar: I wanted to address Mr. Wh Whaley's point about a social justice committee

because when I received the list of committees I was hoping to add one of that type, but I realized -- realized that for myself addressed in every single one of these committees because there's a proposal that comes out of mobility or public utilities or anything else that is not socially just, I might self will be voting no and will be working on my fellow councilmembers and with the community to vote no. And if things are socially just in each of these committees then to move them forward. That's the way I have thought about that issue. But in response to what was brought up by Ms. Garancan as far as economic justice and also Mr. Fuente around M.B.E., west W.B.E., I think we should consider the focus of the economic development committee or even considering a new name for that committee to show it's really about economic opportunity and not just

[8:36:30 PM]

traditional thoughts about economic development where our development is truly about giving opportunities to small businesses, giving an opportunity to veterans for the call we got about veterans or other disadvantaged workers to make sure that economic justice and shared prosperity is also a focus of that committee. And so perhaps I will post on the message board some ideas for -- for writing the mission of that. >> Mayor Adler: There's another issue that's coming up with respect to community engagement that goes beyond the proposal that we're considering today. Councilmember pool, can you address what we have been doing longer term with respect to community engagement? >> Pool: I sure can, mayor. Thanks for the opportunity. Building on -- on this sort of -- council feels that it is a key component to the community with austinites. If we understand the various avenues of public engagement both into the council and from the council out into the community. I think Mr. Schooler has shown us tonight that there are a number of avenues of communication -- to call in and tell people how you file about things. We even will still receive letters. So to that end we will engage a council taskforce on community engagement that will delve into these very issues. We will inventory all the wide array of tools that the city currently has and uses because it's pretty broad. And I was impressed to see

[8:38:31 PM]

how many avenues were available. We will look at ways to enhance that, taking into account the various languages that people speak in Austin. I know that there are some shortages in translators so some of the communities might be able to help us in finding certified translators -- interpreters for a particular array of languages. And then after six months we'll receive a report from the taskforce to find what they have discovered and recommendations they may have to enhance -- enhance and improve recommendations with the budget cycle. [Audio stopped] So that any changes -- I have three co-sponsors, councilmembers Gallo -- Houston and kitchen. January 29, thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. And we've also proposed that whatever it is that comes out of this attempt at greater public engagement is also specifically reviewed as we go through it and at a specific top time to make sure that we're doing this in a way that's achieving what the intended goals are. Let's keep going with comments. And again I would urge people if you give a few seconds back to the group we might actually be able to get everybody in here close to 9:00. But Megan misenback? >> Congratulations to all of you. And it's a delight to see you standing there.

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I think we've all heard terrific insights and ways of looking at problems that are -- that I hadn't even imagined. Many of you can talk a lot faster than I can. I really admire that. Just one thing I'd like to say is I think transparency is very, very important to me. I think agendas need to be posted as early as possible, at least five business days, I would say for minimum for some of the committees. And then it's very important for me. I love the schematic of the people with their little speech patterns above them. But I'd like to see a direct line from them to the council. Thank you very much. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Melvin wren. >> Thank you, mayor and members of the council. Congratulations. I'm a product of district 1, maybe ora might not want to admit that from time to time, but here I am. One of the things that -- one, I'll say this. I normally would not agree with Mr. Whaley, but you have a moving train and you can get out in front of it and get run over or you can try to get on -- try to catch up with it. One I would say there's too many committees. I broke it down to seven committees and I'll send that to you. Two is the public needs to be able to bypass the committee. For example, when we're dealing with issues -- and I live in colony park in east Austin. When we're dealing with issues where the council and the city have not been present or done anything for 87 years on a form of equality as far as I'm concerned, then you don't need to be sitting in a committee trying to talk to

[8:42:31 PM]

them about how you can get equal standards and equal participation. For example, when they did the grant that they got for the colony park neighborhood, what happens is they did the same thing they have always done, take federal money and never put their own money into it. So therefore we have people that are not going to be working in the community because the grant has run out. This is the pattern that's been there for many years. I've been here since the early '80's and it continues. No money of the city put where the federal money is and as a result you have a lot of

plans that have sat on the shelf. You have a lot of things that have never happened. So the thing I'm saying to you is we need to have a way to bypass committees and come directly to council because the issues of equity, of fairness, of equal opportunity go well beyond what the history of the city has done for years. And so the idea of pigeonholing something in the committee and thinking they're going to come up with a solution when the city itself hasn't come up with a solution in 80 something years is in my mind ludicrous and we need to begin to look at it from the standpoint of taking the issues. Where are the pockets of poverty? How do we address all the issues in the pockets of poverty and how do we make them whole? We can't go back and undo history, but what we can do is find ways to have building blocks to get them to a point where we can find equity and we can find parity and we can find an equal opportunity. So the thing I'm saying to you tonight is it's very important that you understand that in my community, my community has been in meetings after meetings and meetings working more so than I've seen any other committee where they met every week for over two years or almost three years with the neighborhood housing group as well as with other departments. And that dedication goes by the way side when we made recommendations to the previous council and they kind of pushed them aside.

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So I would say to you equity, fairness and equal opportunity should come first over and above your committee structure. And I thank you again for being willing to serve and I hope and pray that the group will do as much as it can to bring those issues to the first -- to the forefront. Thank you again. [Applause]. >> Mayor Adler: Margarita [indiscernible]. >> Mayor, while he's walking, Melvin, I'm always happy when you show up. [Laughter] >> Mayor Adler: Ms. Deseario? >> Good evening. As a community representative from also the colony park neighborhood association as well as the colony park lake side community development corporation, I do want to take this opportunity to welcome you as our newly elected mayor as well as our new city council. I want to congratulate all of you. It is our hope to continue the relationship we established with the previous council by keeping you informed as we move forward towards addressing the challenges and issues facing our community. I am not going to repeat a lot of what has already been said, but let me just go ahead and come from the positive side of how our engagement process worked for us. These are just a few highlights. As mentioned by Mr. Wren, we did have weekly meetings we held with the city departments, we held weekly meetings with nonprofit organizations, public school administrators as well as community groups. At any given week representatives from the various organizations like Andy rod dick foundation, cap metro, community care collaborative, Austin resource recovery, planning budget office of Travis county, Austin independent

[8:46:32 PM]

school district, parks and recs and the forestry department have shared their resources with us while providing ways in which planning and collaboration for the 288 acres have benefit the

community. Through our partnerships then we want to say that we were able to bring the community's perspective on several issues facing in colony park such as limited access to health care, lack of employment, social services, the absence of a viable transportation system as well as a concentration of underperforming schools. Through our weekly meetings our public engagement and colony park neighborhood association core team's unrelenting commitment to find solutions to the issues facing our community shaped the very nature of the way public engagement took place. Let us be clear, however, -- and again, I want to be on the positive side that the colony park public engagement plan was not something that any consultant brought to the table, but rather an outgrowth of community coming together, mixed with grassroots experiences, research and an awareness that something had to be done that was different from any type of development in the city of Austin. I wanted to also point out some of the observations of your proposed plan. Number one, because I am a representative of district 1, I see that we have a large immigrant population. There is no mention of how we are going to address -- [buzzer sounds] -- Those individuals. They have no access to technology, no emails, and we wanted to know how then are you going to fill this void? I have other recommendations, but I will then email those to you. Thank you very much and congratulations. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much. Do you have a phone call, Mr. Schooler?

[8:48:33 PM]

>> Mayor, I do. Just before I get to art, who is waiting patiently, there were a couple of tweets related to email input. Email input is more efficient than three minute speeches and gives council time to digest, but often no response, so we assume not read. It would be great to be able to opt in to get an email notice when certain meeting agendas are posted since there will be so many. And art is standing by from I believe district 3 with a comment for the mayor and council about an interesting idea that he has for neighborhood engagement. Art, if you're ready, please go ahead. >> Thank you very much. Congratulations, mayor. I look forward to visiting with you sometime in the future and with some of the council people. I'm a resident of Austin, Texas all my life. I've been here for 67 years, taxpayer and voter. I was speaking before the city council even before I was eligible to vote back in the early 60's. And I was very interested then in trying to set it up by district. And there's very much interest at the same time of trying to form committees that you and the council possibly could appoint individuals throughout the community that would be interested and would be willing to share their time into going to the community and really look at the hard-core issues that are brought before y'all before any action would be taken. So whenever the committees would meet, they would have a good recommendation whether they would be recommended in favor or against it before y'all, and

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then y'all would be the time ones to make that decision. I served in several committees with the school board whenever they had bond issues. I served with the late Mr. Willie Kocurek who was our chairman and I was one of their members. And we were able to go into the neighborhood and

really get the voters behind the bonds and we told them why and it did get passed where before they would just not have involvement of the community and it was very hard to sell the bonds. So I look forward to, if possible, if y'all would be interested, that I would be glad to share my free time like I have before with the school board and be glued to help in any way I can. Thank you very much. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Kenneth comb? And then Girard Kinney. Yes, sir. >> Good evening. Thank you for taking this load on to yourselves. Thank you. I'm Kenneth comb. I'm a psycho therapist, a certified mediator. I do train attorneys, judges and I have had in my classes every profession. But I bring one little book, a book about New York City 60 years -- 60 years this lady went before council /after/of a council and worked with the development department. It is about engagement. Wrestling with Moses, how Jane Jacobs took on new

[8:52:35 PM]

York's master builder and transformed the American city. But what about right here in Travis county? And I'm out in imperial valley. Imperial valley for you is one little bitty small spec on the map. For us it's every part of the county. The cleavage that exists between the city and the county needs to be addressed just like the ladies talked about Austin energy in the relationship. The working with the same population, being cross and not talking to each other, two ships passing on the ocean and not coming together. That cleavage, as I sat here and my body shook for the last whatever it is, three hours, I am breaking down and I cannot do 13 hubs of imperial valley, 21.5 miles by six miles, 102 square miles. I cannot -- I've had a fist in this jaw, a fist in this jaw, a fist in the face, and I can't take that anymore. I will resign and I will walk away from being the source for free written grant proposals. And I thank you for writing grant proposals, margarita.

[8:54:35 PM]

We have been loggerheads since the PGA tour. There's a question that I want to leave off this. My few minutes is just about that cleavage. The negativity. The negativity that you feel. [Buzzer sounds] With regard to getting prepared to come work with the city. And thank you for the committee program. That's really a helpful approach. The phone-in system which Larry has been able to bring about and the -- this needs to be worked. We need to have social media functioning in this city and people's relationship. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you, sir. Thank you very much. Girard Kinney. And then Julie Montgomery. >> Thank you, mayor and new councilmembers. As many of you may know I'm a lifelong austinite and I've worked 20 some-odd years on boards and commissions, chaired several of them. And mostly having to do with land use and transportation. In one way or the other, Mueller taskforce, airport design commission, on and on, and my own neighborhood association I was the founding chair of that neighborhood association. I am -- unlike Mary Engel who was skeptical of the committee system, I was skeptical of single-member district single member districts, but I think the committee system is a way to overcome the inherent problems with a single member district system because all of the council is going to be focusing on issues which, by the way, there are very few issues that you're dealing with that

only have to do with one district. They're not geographical in

[8:56:37 PM]

their nature. As the Sierra club person said, not only the environment, but also all of these issues really pervade all of the districts. So I congratulate you on this new concept. I think it's brilliant. I do have one specific problem that was alluded to by one of the tweeters and it has to do with the fact -- and I know that councilmember kitchen spoke about the fact that mobility and planning and neighborhood and planning will need to work together. Yes, of course they will. But they should be together. There was a time when we -- when they were separated. We brought them together and there was -- there has been a land use and transportation committee at the city level. It wasn't -- I don't think it was really functioning that well, but let's not throw the baby out with the bath. Mobility and land use should -- those two words should never be said separate from each other. They are so instruction dably tied to each other that I would suggest rather than having a mobility committee and then a neighborhood an planning committee that you have two committees, but that one of them deal with land use and transportation at a very high level, looking long-term broad issues, and that the other committee also deal with land use and transportation, but at project level and more specific implementation of those. It's a different way of looking at the two committees. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Julie Montgomery and then Andre novamodroff. >> Good evening, mayor, mayor pro tem and councilmembers. My name is Julie Montgomery,

[8:58:38 PM]

resident of district 1. I'm here in support of the proposal, I think it has a lot of potential and I come before you to maybe offer a couple of suggestions to make it stronger. So I have a few ideas of ways to maximize the effectiveness of the committee system. I do think if properly implemented it could help cut down massively on the amount of time that citizens feel obligated to be here. We all have busy lives. It's really important. I think if we do have public hearings in committee, then you should allow some public testimony at the full council hearing but it should be only limited to one minute and my reasoning for that is there might be committee subconstitutes so coming to council is actually different than what you heard in committee, in which case folks might want to say hey I supported this before but now I don't, vice versa. Also at the Texas length slaughter committee system, any councilmember should be allowed to sit in and ask questions but perhaps not vote. And then if you group the committee hearings by topic, that allows folks to -- you know, if they're concerned with just particular -- one aspect of what that committee deals with, they can know [indiscernible] That night. And then finally rewards to the issue of how will the full council know what happened in the committee, I think it would make a lot of sense to have a report coming out of each committee hearing that sort of summarizes the pros and cons of each issue discussed, you know, the supporters and opponents arguments that were heard, if there's something like that also at the Texas length slaughter house research, they do those reports. The second thing I wanted to suggest was an alert system like

Heidi suggested on Twitter which would be an notification system for issues coming up in

[9:00:39 PM]

committee, agendas getting posted, anything like that, people could get an e-mail alert or maybe we could come up other sorts of alerts as well. Maybe we could do text alerts. That might help reach out to our younger populations and increase participation there. Texas legislature online is a great example of how they do that well. That can be a venue of how they're doing realtime amendments while being discussed. I know sometimes it's very hard to follow along with what amendments are being discussed when they're sort of verbally tossed around. Then the third thing I'd like to suggest is that B we have such a great opportunity here, there's so much momentum around increased transparency and community engagement and I think it's crucial that this continues so I would suggest that we form a citizen commission on public engagement and transparency, not just a task force but ongoing commission, as well as a council committee. >>

Mayor Adler: Okay. >> Thanks. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much, Ms. Montgomery. >>

Houston: Ms. Montgomery, I'd like to thank you for representing the young people in district 1.

Thank you. >> May I ask Ms. Montgomery a quick question. I know you were trying to get

through a lot of stuff. >> Sorry. >> I want to give you a moment longer to explain an idea I

hadn't heard before, which is one minute of testimony at the public hearing as opposed to to

three. You mentioned -- sorry that it was connected to addressing substitute motions or

something. Can you elaborate a little more for us your thoughts around that. >> Sure. Happy to.

So the idea would be the primary opportunity for testimony would be in the committees, people

would know when they were happening. That would be why the notification system is so

important, to make sure that folks know that there's an opportunity to come up to talk about

something they care about. So the main them, three minutes, you get it at the committee.

[9:02:41 PM]

Then sometimes proposals shift. By the time it comes to council it may be a different proposal

than what public testimony was given on in committee. And the public may want an opportunity,

individuals may want an opportunity to come back and say, hey, you changed this and now I

don't support it or, hey, you addressed the things I was concerned about and now I do support it.

And I think that those sorts of comments probably don't need to be a full three minutes, if you've

had the opportunity to provide that opportunity, the full three minutes at the committee level. >>

Thanks, that's helpful. Have we talked much about changes that would occur to policies between

the committee level and the council reviewing them, mayor? Have we thought much about that.

>> Mayor Adler: I don't remember being involved in conversations that were about that aspect.

>> I could just weigh in, mayor, to councilmember Garza's question. I think there was a

discussion that no votes would take place in a committee, that the votes -- the decisions on policy

would only be made by the full council at a decision-making meeting of the council on a

Thursday and that the intention would be to build the body of information in advance of the

meeting, that every one of us would be responsible for understanding and having our questions

answered in advance of the meeting so that we could arrive at a decision point more quickly. And that if any new information or new angle were offered at a council meeting that had not been vetted by the committee, that we would have the opportunity to send it to committee for that vet vetting. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Did you want to talk, Ms. Kitchen? >> Kitchen: I was going to say in answer to your question we have talked about the fact that

[9:04:45 PM]

public hearings at the full council level might be limited in some way -- in terms of one minute as opposed to three minutes. >> Mayor Adler: We had all recognized that we fully anticipated there would be public hearings in certain instances, depending on the -- what was being considered, and that we all recognized that and want to make sure whatever public input there was was appropriate to that measure and that occasion and that time. >> That's right. >> Mayor Adler: Beyond that we hadn't gotten to a one size fits all rule. >> Mayor, I think my question was more to Ms. Montgomery's concern that a committee could recommend a specific resolution or ordinance language to the full council and there could be changes by the time it was put on our agenda, which seems to me to be different than what I think we're contemplating but I -- >> Mayor Adler: I don't think that we have talked about any changes post committee before council. Our -- none of us were envisioning that happening. >> Cesar: In such a case something like that happened that would make a good case why councilmembers would choose to reopen a public hearing -- >> Mayor Adler: If that ever happened you might have ten people ready to send it back down to the committee. >> Cesar: Great, thank you. >> Mayor Adler: So let's continue on. We have at this point I think five or six more speakers and then we have a poll. I think, which you're going to conduct. So Andre, labomodrof, how close did I get? >> Close enough. Good evening, mayor. Good evening, council. Thank you all for being here this evening. I want to applaud you for really taking on a very significant change to the governance of this city. Systems exist for a reason, and that makes them difficult to change. It's really heartening to me

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that you have taken a queue from the voters and really put forward a very bold proposal here tonight. I think one of the most important aspects of this is the public engagement task force, and I think that part of the reason that's so important is to me the -- this proposal shows you're willing to be bold, but the task force to me shows that, more important, you're willing to revisit the idea at a later date and ensure that it's an evolving concept and that you're open to continual change. While I think that in most cases Austin -- or Texas has more to learn from Austin than the opposite, do I think that it's a really -- really good to take the cue from the legislature about focusing on the committee process. I would add to that that I would also advocate a clean and crisp fiscal note that would clearly discuss what the potential impacts would be to taxpayer funds of proposals that would have an impact or could have an impact on taxpayer funds. And I would add that that and also another very important document, which is the affordability impact statement, which is issued by the neighborhood housing and community development

department, that those should be made available at the committee level so that there can be a complete discussion about the subject that's at hand that's influenced by those documents and that information. Last I just wanted to add that at your disposal and to help in any way we can, and appreciate your time tonight. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you very

[9:08:46 PM]

much. Mr. Zimmerman. >> Zimmerman: Andre, thank you very much for that testimony. I think the fiscal note idea that is attached in Texas legislature, let me give one specific example. There was a recent source of income ordinance that was passed. I saw some of the paperwork on that, and it said that there was no fiscal impact. So that was the estimate, I guess, from the city. Of course now it's in litigation. So now the city legal staff has to defend that in court and I don't know how much that's going to cost, tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands. So I love the idea. It's just not easy to do. >> No. I understand. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Larry spears, and then Juan arvitas. >> Greetings. I applaud you for your willingness to tackle the communications. I make the point that I'd like to make, I want to tell a little story that happened at mayor Adler's campaign office. We set an appointment to talk with one of his campaign people. Something happened and they couldn't. This man here stood and came out and had set aside his chores he was doing and came back and spent the time with us and kept us there even over our appointment to communicate. It showed me that he was willing to take and communicate with the people of the city, that he should be applauded for. Which brings up the points that I'm wanting to make. The point is I'm hoping that y'all keep that attitude of communication, no matter what it takes, with the people of the

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city of Austin. So many times there's voices out there that are not being heard, and I was impressed by his attitude. Also, don Zimmerman spent time to talk with me at his campaign office and others have, about all the different issues I'm not bringing up now because this is not the time for it, but the issues that -- is sometimes -- I would like for you to not just concentrate on your communication with the public, but to encourage the rest of the city to communicate with the public so things are properly run and not frustrating and getting nothing done. [Applause] >> And I would like to say this. I appreciate the attitude I'm getting from this council and the mayor's office of want to go communicate. And I believe that y'all deserve a standing ovation for this focus that y'all are doing on communicating with the voters and people of the city, those that are underprivileged, those that are overprivileged and in between. I appreciate it. I appreciate you have someone with my name as a moderator. So thank you very much. You are appreciated. And I think everybody here agrees that communication is important. So I thank you for it, and y'all deserve an applauds. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. [Applause] >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Juan arvitas. Brian roger.

[9:12:48 PM]

>> Hello, mayor and council. There's a lot of things I love about this, moving the executive session, the zoning, more meetings. I think that will free up a lot of time to really keep the public testimony that we hold so dear in front of the entire council. I mean, I'll do a -- I spend a lot of time digging really dip into issues. I mean, I'll give six, ten, 12 minutes before council and they'll say, Brian, that was a bang up job. I'll say they don't know I spent 80 hours, three weeks, more than that, a long time. This isn't something you can just -- stops the public hearing process. You know, sure you need four to get to the very end, but some of these issues I deal with are more arcane. Let's say I give testimony to a subcommittee and it's on a service extension request and 100% reimbursement of water utility lines. Maybe I'll find a sympathetic audience, maybe not. I know the issue well enough that if I've spent 80 hours on an agenda item, I know it probably better than you guys are going to know it. So I think it's imperative that I'm able to counter what staff says, people like Paul Robbins and others who get wonky on this stuff, it's important that we're able to come up and talk to y'all about it. Even little things like the impact the advisory commission. Yeah, that's required to have a public hearing, but leading up to that, it took a lot of change, changing of minds to realize that the city was underselling its water and waste water taps by a lot of money. In order to get a 7-0 vote it took that constant -- and we saved the rate pairs

[9:14:49 PM]

\$165 million. It really does add up. The economic development ordinance rewrite in 2009 requires public hearings that I hope that stays the way that it is. I know that you councilmembers have enthusiasm now to go back and watch the other subcommittee public testimony, but you guys aren't going to have the time. And, frankly, am I going to be that motivated to do all the work I do just to stick to a subcommittee and then it be done? I don't think it follows the natural trajectory of how issues come before the public because, you know, it's just art. People don't really catch on until the statesman puts an article in the paper, okay? Boom, everybody shows up. You say well we'll have a public hearing then. Yeah, there's still things -- the people don't just catch on that -- it's not -- we all understand it because we're in this building, we may be council watchers. It's got to seep in the public. If you put a lot of stuff -- if you front load it and then not allow the end testimony, I think it's going to be a problem. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Mr. Rogers, thank you very much. >> Yes. [Applause] Jacqueline shicker. >> I want to thank -- oh -- all of you for the fact that it's now past 9:00 and my experience with lives is that they are also salespeople I appreciate that every single one of you is demonstrating exactly what I think this proposal demonstrates, which is a commitment to hearing the voices of Austin. I think -- I don't think it would have come -- I'm going to read off my paper or I will talk too much. I'd rather give people time to speak. I want to stress I believe the fact we have new voices -- new leaders means we should be like accepting of the fact that changes aren't coming from bureaucracy that is trying to silence us.

[9:16:49 PM]

Changes are coming from people who have felt silence. I don't think all of you would have run for office or we would have had the people we were having run for office if you didn't care. So I thrust that you have sat on your committee and on the dais and researched this and researched this and researched this. My understanding is that sitting in committee work is where the research gets done. Like, you can actually represent a population if you have all the information and if a committee -- if you take -- Mr. Cesar, am I saying it right? Cool. Is sitting in committee to research the topics for economic development and make a recommendation, it will better educate the entire ability for the council to vote on issues. I don't expect any single person, the whole world, to be able to cover every single issue sufficiently. Representatives can't do that. They're people. I think the committee process suggests that. The council as it stands now, is taking the initiative to say we would rather be better researched than overloaded on every single topic and I highly, highly -- I really wish y'all were advocating for yourselves forever how brilliant that is. I wanted to stand up and say that I think it's powerful and I don't think you would be sitting here if you weren't -- if this goes terribly, to not change it back. If this is somehow going to terribly affect it, I think it's already in the move of change, and in terms of if there's -- suggestions -- what you actually called this public meeting for, there's completely the public since public testimony has been the issue addressed so thoroughly at this meeting of an amazing show of democracy and public testimony for the record and patience for that, that you could put in -- I don't understand how the ordinances laws worked. I haven't researched that. I'm in university, not even law, but I think there's the possibility of putting memo the proposition a caveat of a test period if that is the major

[9:18:50 PM]

issue that your constituency is speaking about. This is a year of seeing if the public testimony as has been recommended by the committee -- pardon me, by the council as it stands works and if it doesn't, then going back to the old system or reevaluating because I don't think we shouldn't be moving just because we're scared it's not going to look the same. Everything shouldn't always look the same. Thank you for your time. I really appreciate it. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much. Mr. Zimmerman, did you have a comment. >> I want to say thank you so much for being here tonight. I really appreciate your input. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. >> I want to point out that previous speaker is part of the student government initiative I referenced earlier. >> [Indiscernible] [Laughter] >> Mayor Adler: Well, members, that is the list of folks that have signed up for our meeting. Larry, is there a poll you want to take, then we can have comments? >> We didn't speak to the affordability committee yet. >> Mayor Adler: Let's go ahead and do that. I apologize for that. >> That's okay. Ms. Garza. >> Garza: I actually wanted to comment on the previous speaker and I'll talk about affordability really quick because I know it's late. I don't think it's something we touched on but the plan was to do a 6-month trial. >> Yes. >> Garza: Of this new system and reevaluate. If the feedback at that time is -- and if we recognize at that time the old system was better, I think we all agree that we'll go back to the old system. So thank you for reminding us that -- I don't think any of us have spoke to that. The intention was that this was a trial run, just to try to see if we could change things. Also on the -- on our proposal is an

affordability committee, and I think we have this opportunity with -- we have new

[9:20:50 PM]

leadership at all levels of government right now, on the county level, and we have an opportunity to improve ways that we communicate and improve the ways that we serve our community. And it is with that in mind that there will be an item on the 29th and I wish Mr. Oakee is here and if I know him he's watching so it's item 22. The goal is being -- among the goals are collaborating around future bond measures, giving entities a better feeling for bond viability, a lot of times different taxing entities have different bonds coming up. I think it's great if we can talk to each other, Travis county, cap metro, central health. My proposal would have appointees from I'll repeat them, aisd, Travis county, commissioners court, Austin college board of directors, central health board, Dell valley independent school district. I realize not all the school districts are represented there but we did take a look at the different school districts to see how many children in Austin go to these school districts and we tried to pick the ones that have the greatest representation of young adults austinites. Identify existing duplication and services between the agencies, look at -- and that's -- among that is evaluating interlocal agreements and related performance measures and also just address any other items that impact the cost of living. I don't know if I said the title, but it's original affordability committee and I would love -- again it will be on the 29th, item 22 right now and please contact my office or any of the other councilmembers and they can forward that feedback to me of how we can make that affordability committee better. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Great, thank you. There were also four people that registered but did not ask for time to speak. **Robert Nash registered neutral,**

[9:22:55 PM]

Joyce registered against, registered for and Heidi registered for for. Larry, you want to do a poll and then we'll conclude. >> I do, mayor. We wanted to actually solicit feedback about our process for this evening. There's been quite nice unsolicited feedback and we appreciate it but we'd like to know what folks thought about our process for tonight. You can use the text message apology and folks on the phone can vote with their touchstone phone major imprisonment a to 23333, B, not great, neutral, so so, good would be D and very good E. We've going to keep this poll for a short time because we've an open-ended one for people of that comments for how we can improve the process. We'll allow for some quick feedback and leave an open-ended question up as we go off air here in just a moment. Definitely want to take this opportunity to thank the mayor and council for embracing this slightly new fangled way of doing things tonight. We appreciate y'all's support and working with this format. >> Mayor Adler: Allocation you and the public information office and staff did a great job so thank you. [Applause] If anybody on council wants to give a concluding remark, this would be the time to do that. Ellen? >> Troxclair: I just wanted to speak a little to the issue of the title of the committees. We all have issues that are important to us. We all have issues that are important to our districts. Long list right now that are only going to grow longer. And, you know, there's not a specific committee on

property taxes, but it doesn't mean that I'm not going to be pursuing solutions for property tax relief or so -- it's -- I know it's something we discussed a lot tonight and I wanted to say

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just because a specific phrase or a specific word isn't in the title of a committee doesn't mean that it's not important to us, doesn't mean that it's not going to be in the pool of issues that we work on. And, you know, it's going to be an interesting discussion that we have from here because the number of committees, we've heard, you know, that we -- that people want a lot of committees, but then we've also heard that people want committees to meet in the evenings so that we get feedback. Also have council committees -- yeah, council meetings that will be in the evening, as well as requests -- so it's a balance between how in a transparent way while still being human, like you mentioned, and being available to spend time in our district. So that's just a discussion that we'll have I think over the coming weeks. >> Mayor Adler: I think we will. Let me just say personally how proud I am to be part of this body. You know, I went through a campaign for 12 months. Seemed like it was 12 years. There was a recurrent theme as I went around and in so many forums people almost laughing, would talk about a new 10-1 council, with the expectation almost that we wouldn't be able to do anything together. And I think that had anybody suggested during that process that in the first month this council would unanimously propose to the community something that was as significant as what it is that we're trying to do now, I'm not sure that anybody in any forum that I was at would have believed that, and I'm just very proud to be part of this group

[9:26:56 PM]

that has put this forward. So thank you. [Applause] >> Mayor Adler: Larry, you want to -- >> Mayor, can I say something? >> Mayor Adler: Yes. >> Renteria: I want to just let my people in district 3 know that, you know, sometimes, you know, we make meetings, neighborhood meetings to attend a meeting at lunch or an afternoon, and, you know, like today I had a scheduled meeting, and I couldn't go and attend that meeting because we had a lot of important issues that we were discussing today. So I did have my -- I'm just really proud of my AIDS that they were able to go down there and attend their meeting. So I hope that, you know, you understand that there's going to be days that my staff is not going to be in the office to answer the phone and just give us a -- we will return your calls and we will respond, you know, to your concerns, your problems or your concerns. So just -- I just want to let y'all know that, you know, I -- you know, in my mind, I'm, you know, really thinking about y'all guys and I'm really going to be working hard for you. But there's going to be subcommittee some times that, -- there's going to be some times we're stuck in committee meetings, giving inputs and there might be times I have to cancel some of the meetings that we scheduled. We're going to try our best to contact you before, you know, before that meeting is scheduled so you don't have to waste your time coming over here to city hall. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Mr. Serial, dschooler, do you have one last poll question. >> It's on the screen now, suggestions the public might have for

improving the format going forward. We'll certainly continue to tinker with it. >> Mayor Adler:
We would

[9:28:57 PM]

encourage everybody to continue posting. You can call into 311, speak up up.org, send e-mail to phones, work session on this on Tuesday, draft resolution people can react to I understand will be posted tomorrow that incorporates some of the thoughts but there will be more work on Tuesday as we work it through so hopefully we have something we can consider next Thursday. Any other discussion before we adjourn the meeting? >> I'm sorry. >> Mayor Adler: Go ahead. >> I want to reiterate what the mayor said about I'm really proud to be part of this body and how we all came together on this but I do want to recognize councilmember kitchen for -- she really did a lot of work on this and I really appreciate everything she did to cull all this information and get us going in this direction. [Applause] >> Mayor Adler: With that note, we stand adjourned.
[Meeting adjourned] [🎵 Music 🎵]

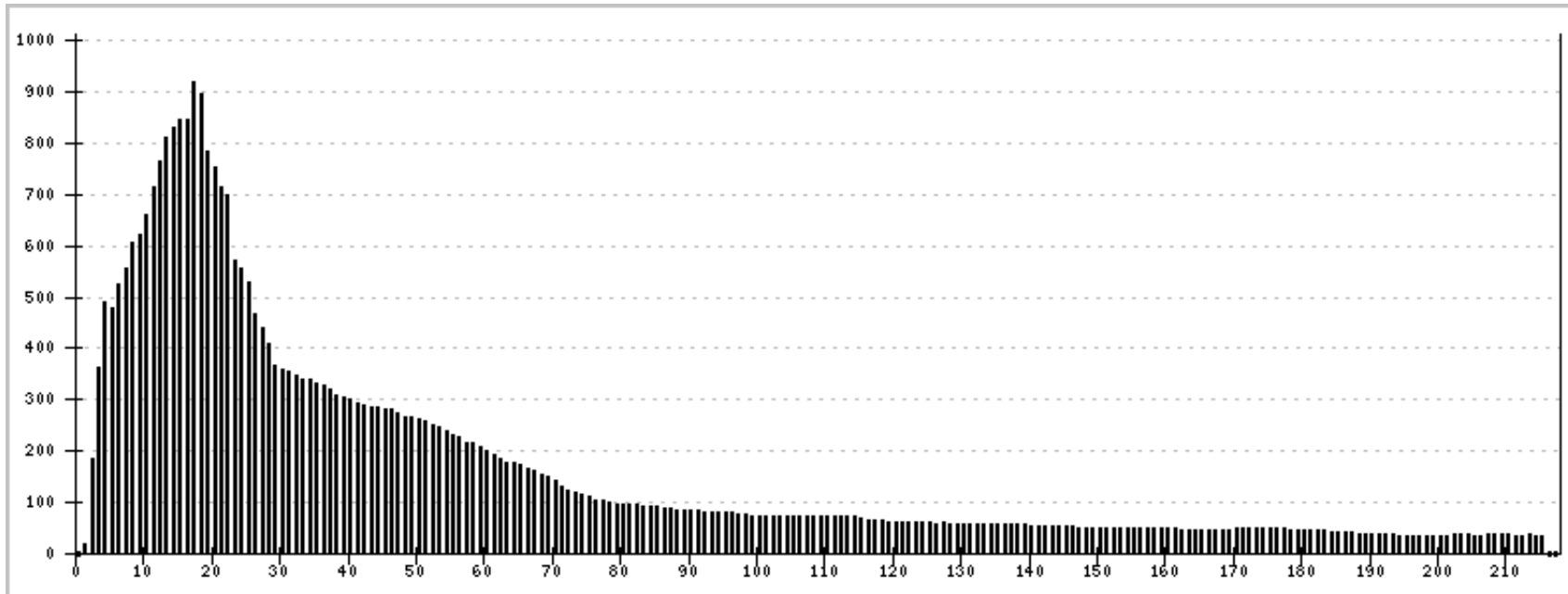
CITY OF AUSTIN

Enhancing Public Participation at City Council

Telephone Participation Report

1/22/2015

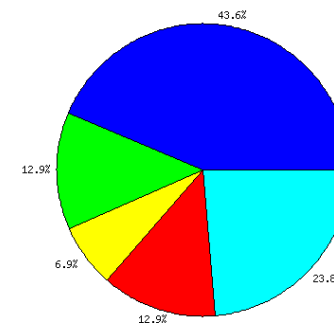
In Conference NOW / Conference Minutes



Polling Questions

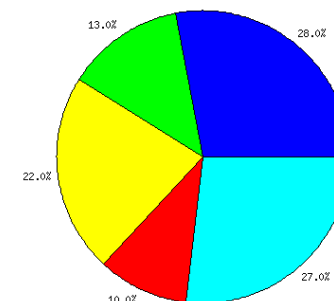
1. What Council district are you in? (1-5)

ID	Answer	Responded	% of total
1	One	24	44
2	Two	7	13
3	Three	4	7
4	Four	7	13
5	Five	13	24



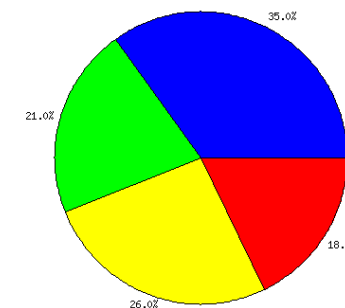
2. What Council District are you in? (6-10)

ID	Answer	Responded	% of total
1	Six	25	28
2	Seven	11	13
3	Eight	19	22
4	Nine	9	10
5	Ten	24	27



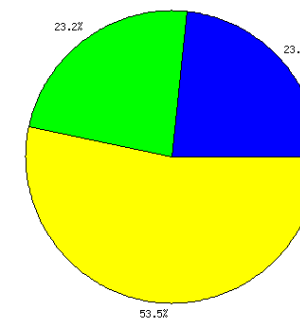
3. When you have communicated with the city, what has been your favorite way to do so? (Part 1)

ID	Answer	Responded	% of total
1	Calling a City Council office	22	35
2	Calling 3-1-1	13	21
3	Calling a City department	16	26
4	Emailing City Council or City staff	11	18



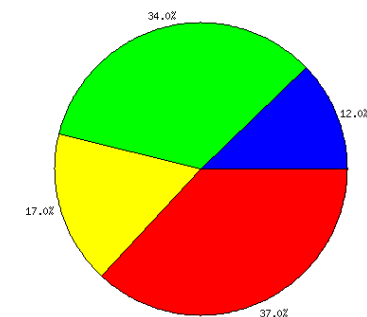
4. When you have communicated with the city, what has been your favorite way to do so? (Part 2)

ID	Answer	Responded	% of total
1	Using Twitter, Facebook or other social media	7	23
2	Visiting SpeakUpAustin.org	7	23
3	Attending an in-person meeting	16	53



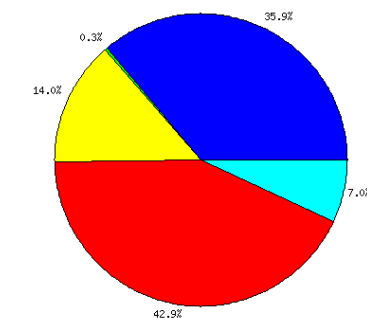
5. What would you say has been the biggest challenge around providing input to the City Council?

ID	Answer	Responded	% of total
1	Not convenient	14	12
2	Not enough information	39	34
3	Not enough time to give input	19	17
4	Not aware of opportunities to provide input	43	37



6. How would you evaluate our process for this evening?

ID	Answer	Responded	% of total
1	Needs major improvement	5	36
2	Not Great	0	0
3	Neutral/Unsure	2	14
4	Good	6	43
5	Very Good	1	7



Talked Participants

ID) Name, Address, Phone/Comment

1) , [REDACTED]

(Dorothy)(4)() I think that what we`ve experienced today with this telephone town hall is the best thing since sliced bread. I love it!

2) [REDACTED]

(Ann)(?)() Does city have any plans to ensure minority driven business and non-profits are funded?

Speaker Queue

ID) Name, Address, Phone/Comment

1) , [REDACTED]

(Richard)(NW Austin)() When will we get something done about Anderson Mill Road? Traffic has gone up by a large magnitude in the last several years, there`s a blind curve and it`s very dangerous?

2) , [REDACTED]

(Nancy)(8)() Why do some of the city council memebers have not picked up their campaign fines?

3) , [REDACTED]

(Eunice)(NW Hills)() How will we reach our represtatives to get maintainence done on our streets?

4) , [REDACTED]

(Mike Sweeney)(4)() Why did you permit condos to be built on town lake?

5) , [REDACTED]

(Diane)(Cedar Park)() Why no public transportation here?

6) , [REDACTED]

(Helga)(5124336690,>() I`m still new to the town, and would like to know how to get around.

7) , [REDACTED]

(Bertha)(Travis co)() I would like all the new people getting jobs to be asked to go to defensive driving. There are so many wrecks every day. Hispanic people learning English. Elems should teach our kids Spanish.

8) , [REDACTED]

(Rayna)(Williamson Co)() Does the mayor going to lower property taxes?

9) , [REDACTED]

(Nita)(Northwest Boston)() Regarding utilities - people employed by/ retired from govt/state jobs get paid after the bill due date, then we get a late fee?

10) , [REDACTED]

(John)(NW Austin, Rockwood Lane)() I have a question concerning bicycle safety. I see a lot of cyclists riding without helmets, and I think they should be mandatory for all cyclists & skateboarders.

11) ANTOINETTE RICCIO, [REDACTED]

(Ann)(Williamson County)() I'm 90 years old and my taxes are too high. I feel at my age I shouldn't have to pay taxes. Who can I talk to about this?

Inbound TF Participants

ID) Name, Address, Phone/Comment

1) [REDACTED]

(Charline)(?)() how improve Effeciency for participating in city meetings?

2) [REDACTED]

(Annie)(UNKNOWN, TX)() Wants to give three cheers to you. Lived in Austin since 1963. Used to be a "serial voter" but stopped for a while because she felt the council had disconnected. This is fantastic.

3) [REDACTED]

(Art)(3 Central South)() I would like to see the mayor and the council select 1-2 persons throughout the city and let them be the ones out in the committee to go to the neighborhood and bring out the issues and present to cou

4) [REDACTED]

(Madelyn)(5)() We need more direct communication w our council, not more boards and commissions

5) [REDACTED]

(Jim)(UNKNOWN, UNKNOWN)() Would like to suggest there be a veterans affairs committee

6) [REDACTED]

(Andrew)(1)() Noticed in the past I've chaired a couple city commissions, there is always a real challenge of communication btwn citizens and boards etc. I think it's important to get input from citizen board.

7) [REDACTED]

(Lori)(3)() Will the subcommittees of the council meet after hours or on the weekends so the public can participate in hearings held by the subcommittee?

8) [REDACTED]

(Barbara)(UNKNOWN, TX)() Question about how boards and commissions are chosen. Seems they bring their own perspective in and ignore the perspective of others. How can we handle that better?

9) [REDACTED]

(James)(UNKNOWN, TX)() I'm 85 yr old native of Austin. Hard to get downtown at my age. Political people need to get out into the community to talk to us. I'm in 1, I want someone out in my district.
(longwinded)

10) [REDACTED]

(Joy)(9)() Can we have events like ACL that cause large crowds not be in Vilca(?) Park? 75,000 people is too many for this densely populated area, and my life was threatened by a bicyclist. (read question)

11) [REDACTED]

(Judith)(51st and Ave H)() Does the city council have anything to request a sales tax increase? Take it upto 9 cents on the dollar and set it for a few yrs. This instead of high property taxes

12) [REDACTED]

(Daria)(6)() Education. I was listening to KUT on Friday, talking about how council gave money to AISD last year. Want to remind you that's not the only school district in Austing. We're all feeling pinch.

13) [REDACTED]

(Rob)(Tovo)() I want to encourage council to revisit Imagine Austin. Not just put a stamp on it.

14) [REDACTED]

(LeaAnn)(East Oltorf)() Who is my councilmemeber?

15) [REDACTED]

(Bertha)(North side 78758)() Ex-special aid for dept of treasury. Costly to rent apartments. Need to have assistance to cap apartments so they're cheaper than houses.

16) [REDACTED]

(Stephanie)(10)() What is the city council going to do about affordable housing? My rent has been raised 9% every year I've lived here, and my 9-yr old grandson now lives with me, and we can't afford to live here now.

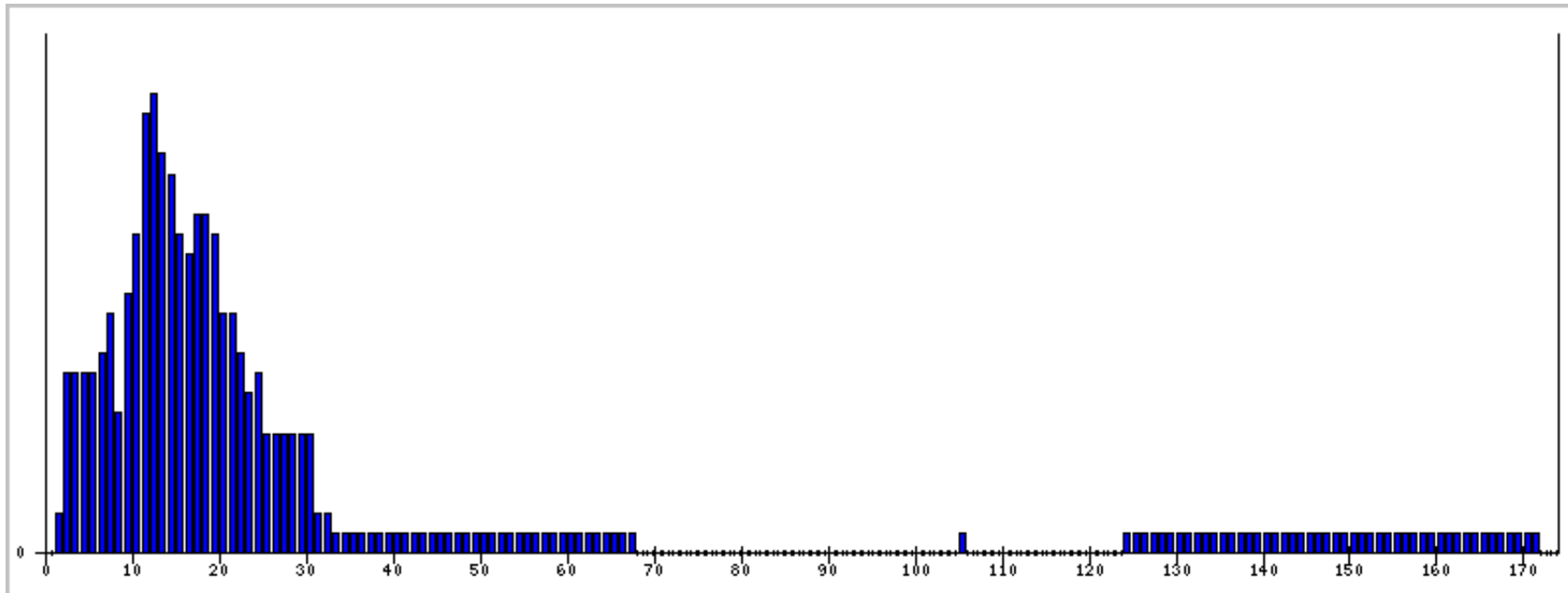
17) [REDACTED]

(Greg)(10)() What is city planning to do to get a better culture/attitude at the city itself- it seems to be us against them now?

18) [REDACTED]

(Evelt)(2)() Public input questions?

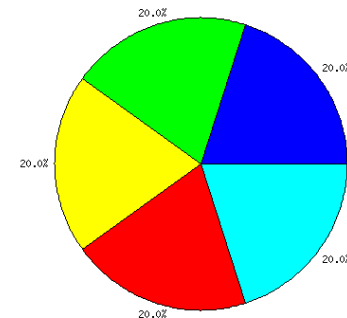
In Conference NOW / Conference Minutes



Polling Questions

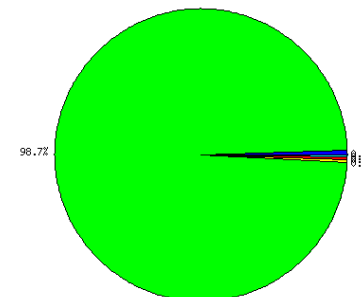
1. What Council district are you in? (1-5)

ID	Answer	Responded	% of total
1	One	0	0
2	Two	0	0
3	Three	0	0
4	Four	0	0
5	Five	0	0



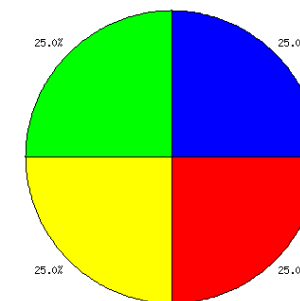
2. What Council district are you in? (6-10)

ID	Answer	Responded	% of total
1	Six	0	0
2	Seven	1	100
3	Eight	0	0
4	Nine	0	0
5	Ten	0	0



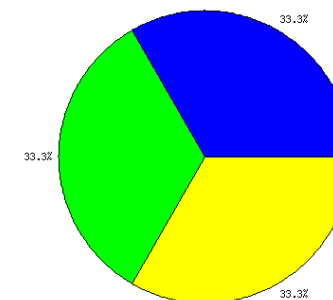
3. When you have communicated with the city, what has been your favorite way to do so? (Part 1)

ID	Answer	Responded	% of total
1	Calling a City Council office	0	0
2	Calling 3-1-1	0	0
3	Calling a City department	0	0
4	Emailing City Council or City staff	0	0



4. When you have communicated with the city, what has been your favorite way to do so? (Part 2)

ID	Answer	Responded	% of total
1	Using Twitter, Facebook or other social media	0	0
2	Visiting SpeakUpAustin.org	0	0
3	Attending an in-person meeting	0	0



CITY OF AUSTIN

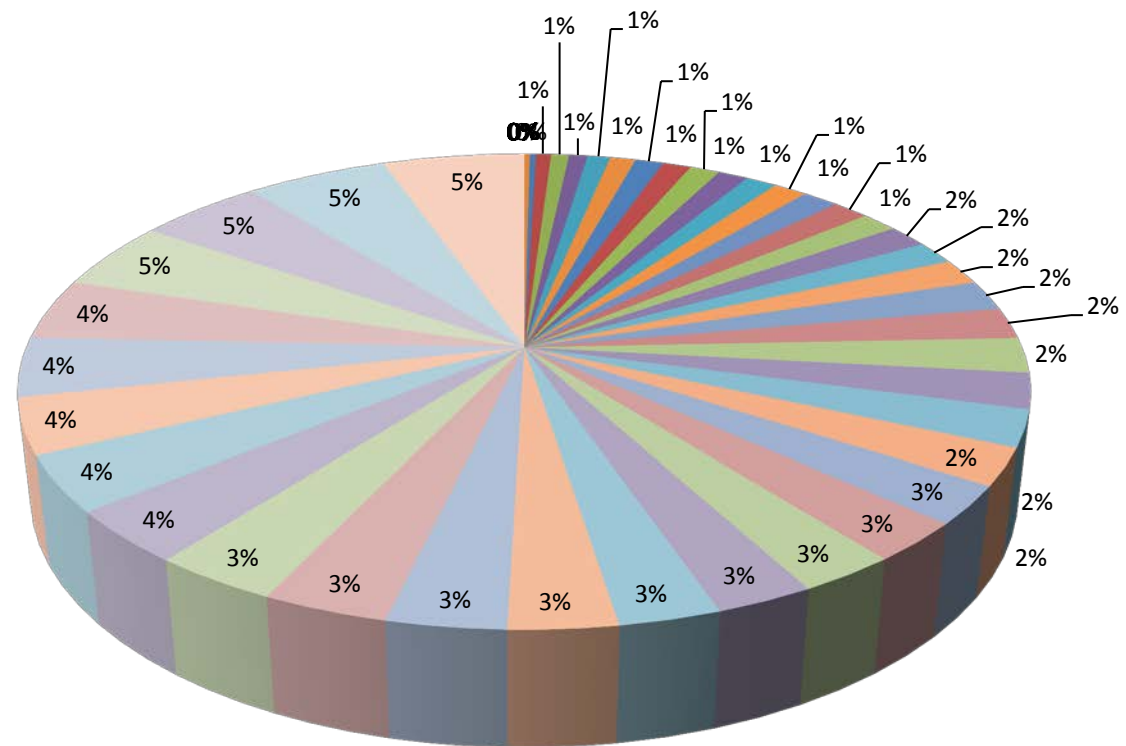
Enhancing Public Participation at City Council

Live Polling Report

1/22/2015

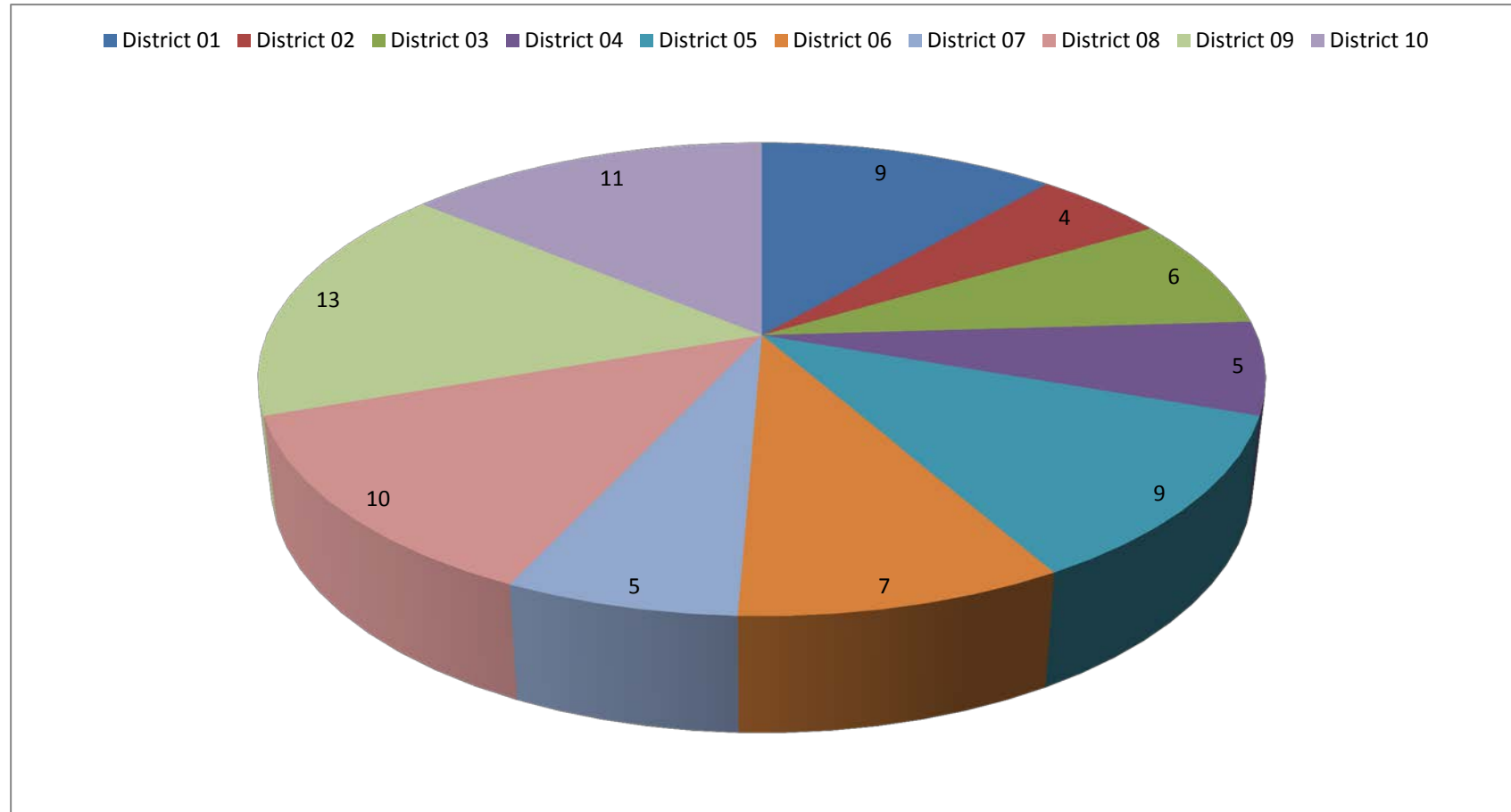
Number of Accepted Calls by Zip Code

zip 78708	0
zip 78709	0
zip 78710	0
zip 78711	0
zip 78712	0
zip 78713	0
zip 78714	0
zip 78715	0
zip 78716	0
zip 78718	0
zip 78720	0
zip 78755	0
zip 78760	0
zip 78761	0
zip 78762	0
zip 78763	0
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zip 78773	0
zip 78774	0
zip 78778	0
zip 78779	0
zip 78783	0
zip 78799	0
zip 78742	8
zip 78719	9
zip 78701	22
zip 78725	26
zip 78733	27
zip 78722	33
zip 78754	37
zip 78705	41
zip 78730	41
zip 78726	43



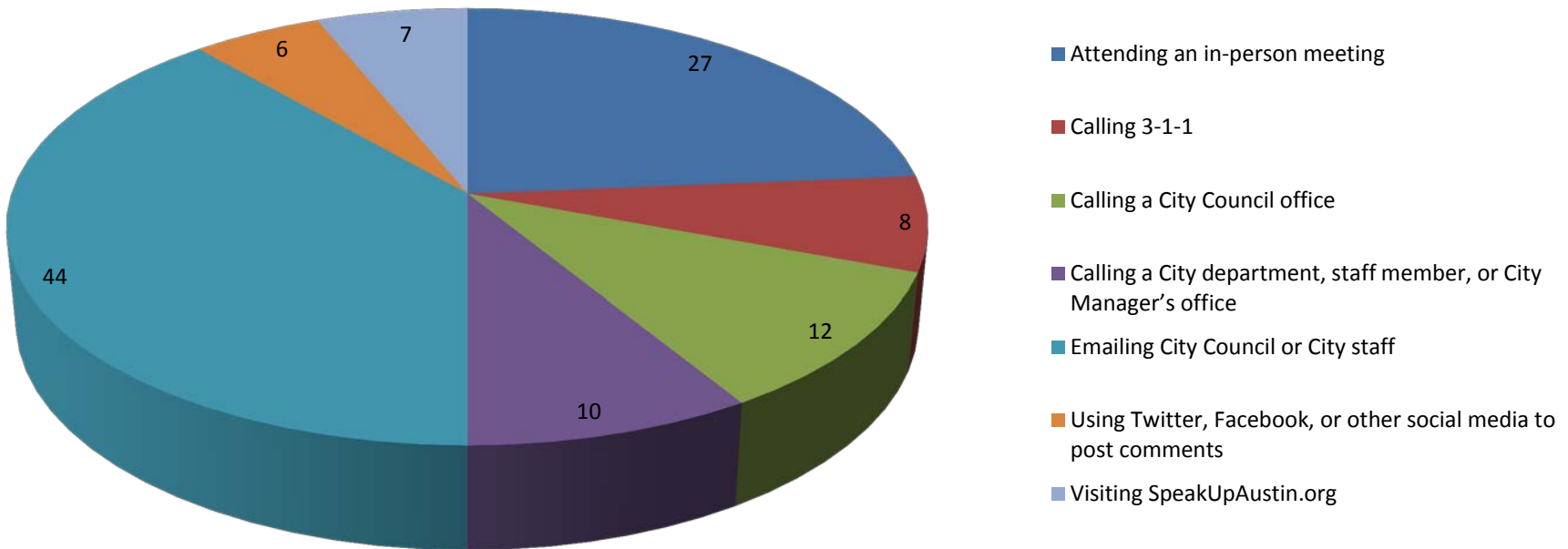
"What council district do you live in?"

District 01	9
District 02	4
District 03	6
District 04	5
District 05	9
District 06	7
District 07	5
District 08	10
District 09	13
District 10	11



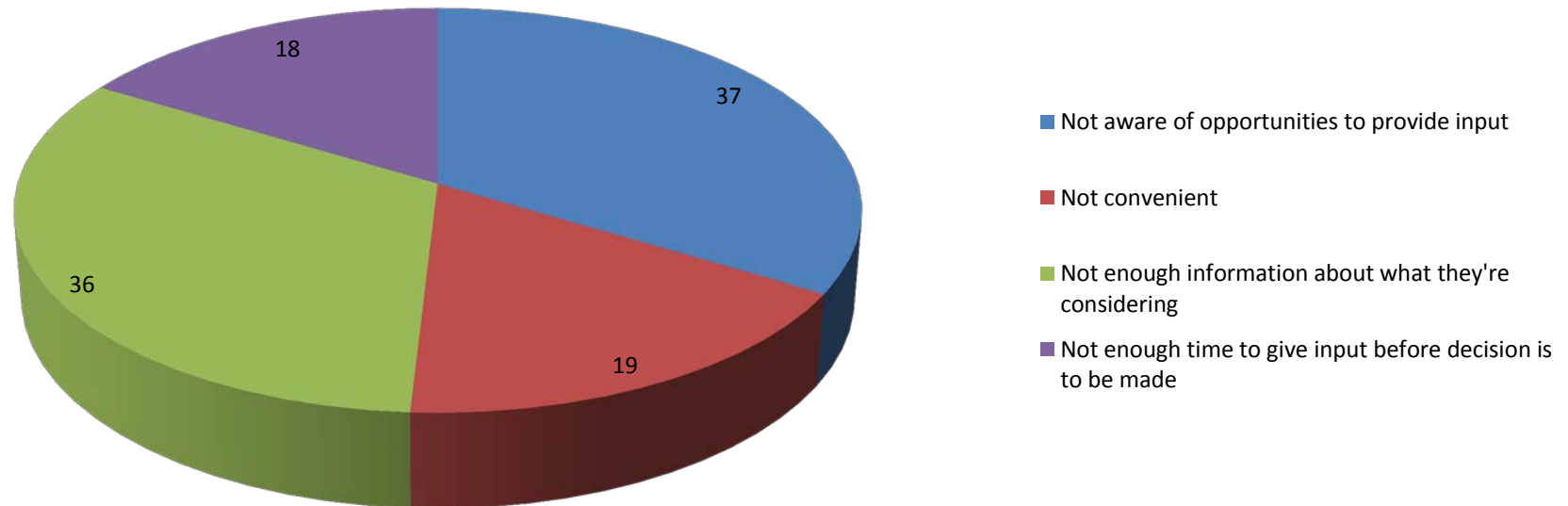
"When you have communicated with City Council or other city officials what has been your favorite way to do so?"

Attending an in-person meeting	27
Calling 3-1-1	8
Calling a City Council office	12
Calling a City department, staff member, or City Manager's office	10
Emailing City Council or City staff	44
Using Twitter, Facebook, or other social media to post comments	6
Visiting SpeakUpAustin.org	7



"What would you say has been the biggest challenge or impediment around providing input to the City Council?"

Not aware of opportunities to provide input	37
Not convenient	19
Not enough information about what they're considering	36
Not enough time to give input before decision is to be made	18



"What are your thoughts about the Council proposals? "

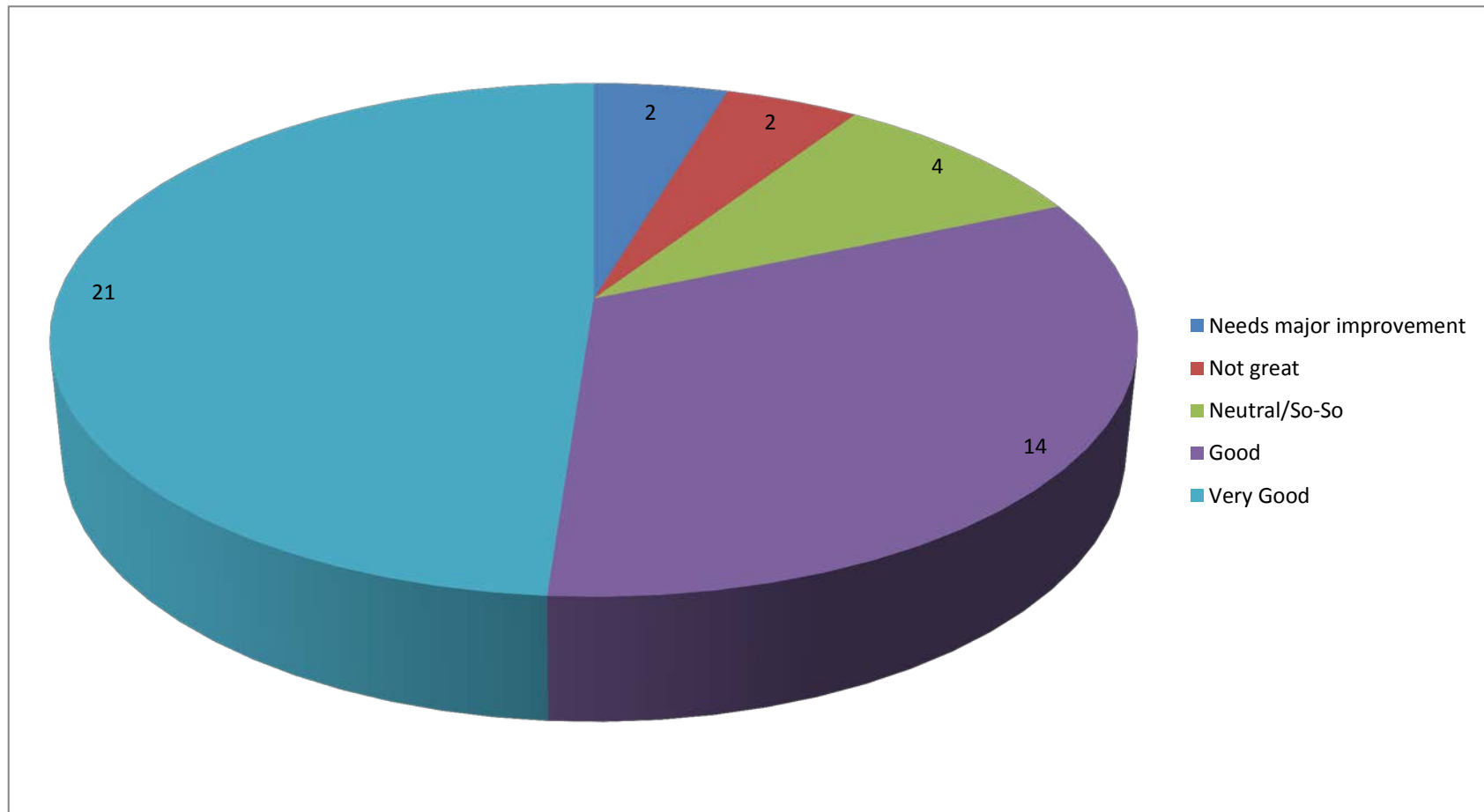


"What are your thoughts about the proposal for these additional longer-term measures?"

No Response

"How would you evaluate our process for this evening?"

Needs major improvement	2
Not great	2
Neutral/So-So	4
Good	14
Very Good	21



"What would you do to improve upon this format for the future?"



CITY OF AUSTIN

Enhancing Public Participation at City Council

Twitter Comments

1/22/2015

Expanding Public input

Proposed Strategies Include

- *Expand the usage of technology through interface , expansion of data, the continued use of social media, email use and phone use*
- *Expand interaction between committees council members and community members.*
- *Continue to push for wide community participation in public input meetings*
- *Separate public input from committee decisions*
- *Stand alone zoning meetings*
- *A line item budget*
- *Organize more frequent/shorter meetings*

Summary

- *The twitter feed revealed overall positive reaction to the proposed and utilized means of public input and are advocating for the continuation of that.*

CremaGrande	#myatxgov Technology needs to interface amongst all City departments, often the left hand has no idea what the right is doing
Ivy Le	Pretty much agree with everything @chipr said at #myatxgov council meeting. Opening up data never did hurt a democracy.
Heidi Gerbracht	It wld be mistake to cut city staff out of or limit staffs input to council. They have prof expertise separated from politics. #myatxgov
JD Gins	I support (love) the tele-townhall call in process for testimony. #myatxgov4
Jimmy Flannigan	Anyone else feel the irony that while #myatxgov debates expanding public input, 10 blocks away #txlege works to limit it
Joe Deshotel	Kudos to the new #atxcouncil for holding a town hall and taking questions via social media and by phone. #myatxgov
Julie Montgomery	The moment #myatxgov's public input is NOT dominated by the 50+ crowd will be the moment I'll consider downplaying social media for input.
Heidi Gerbracht	It wld be great to be able to opt in to getting email notice when certain mtg agendas are posted since there will be so many.

	#myatxgov
Andrei Lubomudrov	I am really so impressed with this new #ATXCouncil tonight. It really feels like change is in the air. #myatxgov
Austin Texas	Town Hall on proposed Council committees has concluded but you can give feedback at http://www.speakupaustin.org , call 3-1-1, or use #myatxgov.
Shellee O'Brien	#myatxgov could win support by showing flow of info between members, committees & communities; not just which direction a petition flows
Andrei Lubomudrov	Truth! MT @JaceDeloney: I'm all for better public input tools, but end of day what matters most is what is done with that input. #myatxgov
Saundra Ragona	@austintexasgov Consider having district meetings in the district w/ council member to carry back to council #myatxgov
Marie Acuna	#myatxgov For the committees listed, didn't see technology/technology innovations. How will this be covered?
Austin Texas	What do you think about the proposed Council committee plan? Watch at http://www.atxn.tv , listen on KAZI FM 88.7 FM or use #myatxgov
Rossana Barrios	Participating in #myatxgov interactive online opportunity!
Stonewall Austin	use #myatxgov to comment on line NEW COUNCIL at WORK #ATXCouncil
Ivy Le	A brand new @austintexasgov city council coming out of the gate strong tonight! Check out http://SpeakUpAustin.org to give input. #myatxgov
CAN	Austin considering new committee structure for receiving public input and making decisions #myatxgov
Sheppard John C	3 minutes goes quickly.... #myatxgov
Amos Stoltzfus	Happy to see many ways to give input to #ATXCouncil! #MyATXGov

Tim Bonnemann	Impressed w/ opportunities for remote participation offered at #myatxgov city council meeting: http://bit.ly/1GDTUNI /cc @LarrySchooler
Jackie Wang	People are already using the call-in comment option at the #ATXCouncil meeting. I want to see the tweets. #myatxgov
Amos Stoltzfus	Sprawl/congestion are obstacles to in person engagement. Maybe #ATXCouncil needs to approve a new land use code? #myatxgov
Regina Lawrence	Really impressive and inspiring to hear Austin citizens engaging--in person and remotely! #myatxgov
Amos Stoltzfus	#ATXCouncil needs to use tech not only to hear from citizens but also to make sense of what they're hearing #MyATXGov
Ivy Le	.@austintexasgov Physically packing city hall=activist tradition. What about written discourse, accessible to average moderates?
Ivy Le	@austintexasgov New committee proposal lacks explicit stage to review public discourse (news AND blogs, Twitter debates, etc.) #myatxgov
Bruce Lee III	How can we achieve this kind of participation at every meeting? It's great to see so many here! #myatxgov
Ivy Le	10-1 council efforts already working! Several #myatxgov tweets read aloud, then caller sans computer promised to listen to every meeting.
Madeline Krebs	...I'm the youngest in the room right now at the first #atxcouncil meeting of the new council, where my @UTAustin students at? #myatxgov
JD Gins	I like the idea of more committee hearings, I don't think that should circumvent public testimony in front of the entire council. #myatxgov
Kraft	I like the ideas to avoid regular marathon-length meetings. Okay to try, realize problems, and iterate. Better than current way. #myatxgov
JD Gins	If someone spoke to a committee they should not be denied the right to speak to the entire council. #myatxgov

JD Gins	I support the threshold being low (4) for council members being able to bring agenda items to the entire council. #myatxgov
JD Gins	This is important b/c key decisions that come before the council already go through the committees process. #myatxgov (However rarely is there media (or general public) attention until issues are going before the entire council. #myatxgov Most citizen tune into votes the council makes long after the committee process. #myatxgov (3/4)The ability to mobilize citizens post the committee process should be preserved and easy. #myatxgov
JD Gins	Swift passage through the committee process does not imply full public vetting or support. #myatxgov
JD Gins	I 100% support hold more meetings as a method to reducing the length of meetings. #myatxgov
JD Gins	I support stand alone zoning meetings. #myatxgov
GUMBULLY	In my opinion, goals of Mobility and Land Use are mutually reliant; hope to see these two committees forged together #myatxgov #ATXcouncil
JD Gins	support (love) the tele-townhall call in process for testimony. #myatxgov
JD Gins	I support more public input through many of the methods laid out here. Let's aim for quality and quantity. #myatxgov
Heidi Gerbracht	It wld be great to be able to opt in to getting email notice when certain mtg agendas are posted since there will be so many. #myatxgov
TakeBack AustinParks	Email input is more efficient than 3 minute speeches and gives council time to digest but often no response so we assume not read #myatxgov
Allison G. Heinrich	Suggestion made to have 1 min testimony at full #atxcouncil mtn. Cites changes/substitutes etc made in committee. #myatxgov
Andra Lim	each committee could have a page on http://speakupaustin.org to publicly accumulate citizen comments on upcoming agenda items #myatxgov

Jay Wiley	Caller at #atxcouncil mewing says public input should be separated from final decision by Council. Good idea. #myatxgov
CremaGrande	#myatxgov Budgets need to be line item budgets, so we can see where our tax dollars are going
JD Gins	Going to take a stab at offering my suggestion / thoughts on our civic engagement process! #myatxgov
JD Gins	Not sure I agree no good decisions are ever made in the middle of the night. Look to the legendary SOS ordinance. #myatxgov
JD Gins	After robust public input that went late into the night, the council caved 2 the will of public & passed this critical ordinance. #myatxgov
Allison G. Heinrich	Yall phone ins, recapping twitter, and a poll. What is this madness? Glad to see it! #myatxgov #atxcouncil
Pysops	Onwards Technocracy! <u>#myatxgov</u>
Jace Deloney	I'm all for better public input tools. They're great. At end of day, though, what matters most is what is done with that input. <u>#myatxgov</u>
Jace Deloney	Lest we forget that all of the tools on display at tonight's <u>#myatxgov</u> mtg were used during the Project Connect Central Corridor Process
Andrei Lubomudrov	Truth! MT <u>@JaceDeloney</u> : I'm all for better public input tools, but end of day what matters most is what is done with that input. <u>#myatxgov</u>
Jimmy Flannigan	Love neighborhood assoc. too, but most rent. Don't let NAs be the core of engagement. It's why @nwatx is a leadership group. #myatxgov
Ivy Le	2 comments re: investment in minority business tonight: perfect example of complex issue suited to written research and discourse. #myatxgov
Allison G. Heinrich	I'd really rather not die just to give that preference. - on lack of sidewalk network, buses, etc #myatxgov #atxcouncil

Debmocracy	lol. love Jennifer McPhail. "rather not die to give that input...just a preference." more accessibility! #myatxgov
Allison G. Heinrich	Must use print, radio, tv. Use neighborhood newsletters, bulletins, etc. Also use new & social media and listservs. #myatxgov #atxcouncil
Joe Deshotel	Handicapable citizen asks #atxcouncil members to hold events at accessible venues, near public transportation options. #myatxgov
Allison G. Heinrich	Asking for for, against, and neutral, etc., as options. Ive seen this work fine in other venues & deliberative bodies. #atxcouncil #myatxgov
Debmocracy	good call on "for/against/neutral" being too black and white/develop a 4th choice: "just input". NO LIMITING INPUT to just CMTES! #myatxgov
Susan Lippman	good call on "for/against/neutral" being too black and white/develop a 4th choice: "just input". NO LIMITING INPUT to just CMTES! #myatxgov
GUMBULLY	Open Space is also a cross-cutting topic, germane to sustainability/resiliency, yes, but also to land use. Social & environmental #myatxgov
Allison G. Heinrich	Agree exec session on a different day is great. Thinking back to my first time(s) coming to meetings as a J student. #myatxgov #atxcouncil
Debmocracy	Go Ruby Roa! We need a new way forward with AustinEnergy...put it under public utilities! #myatxgov
Allison G. Heinrich	Current plea is for better customer service. City departments treating folks better when they need help. #atxcouncil #myatxgov
Allison G. Heinrich	There will always be a place to skeptics at #atxcouncil. - @AdlerForAustin #myatxgov
Allison G. Heinrich	@Debmocracy Im in @PedernalesCoop now. Only had @austinenenergy for a year, never had to deal with customer service. #myatxgov #atxcouncil

Chip Rosenthal	@jdatx Agreed. @openaustin is advocating improved agendas and notification features. #myatxgov
Allison G. Heinrich	More ways we do outreach the more folks we reach and more backgrounds/ media, etc., consumption types we will cover. #myatxgov #atxcouncil
Brendan	@UrbanHaiku @austintexasgov I guess we'll just have to start a revolution #myatxgov
Allison G. Heinrich	Must partner with Round Rock, Leander, and AISD, etc., schools if we go that route. #myatxgov #atxcouncil
NewWayForward	Why does Austin Energy need two Chief Information Officers? Is this what is meant by Best Managed City? #myatxgov
JD Gins	It's not a myth #myatxgov

Youth Participation

Proposed strategies include

- *Incentivizing the younger generation to participate in the City Council and attend public input meetings.*
- *Holding public input meetings at local universities to allow accessibility to youth who desire to attend.*
- *Discuss engagement in schools to culminate public engagement from a young age*

Summary

- *Many noticed that there was an absence of youth at the community meeting as well as an overall lack of youth participation in the community.*

Brendan	I think the younger generation needs an incentive to participate in City Council. Civic duty and general interest isn't enough. #myatxgov
Ivy Le	@bemarsh Young Austinites <3 this city, but maybe don't know how to participate or don't realize how @austintexasgov affects QOL. #myatxgov

Debmocracy	Casar fist-bumps Troxclair for her shout out to them being youngest councilmembers ever/desire to engage youth of ATX #myatxgov
Ivy Le	.@impactnews_cta I'm "that tweeter." @EllenforAustin/@GregorioCasar hopefully just a start to significant young participation in #myatxgov.
Ivy Le	.@bemarsh We gotta recruit @juliamontgomery who @Oraatx1 just thanked for "representing the young people" at tonight's #myatxgov mtg. :)
Chip Rosenthal	@madelinekrebs several UT LBJ students came to support the @openaustin input #myatxgov
Allison G. Heinrich	I feel like there is a way via speaking engagement etc to do more in schools to engage kids early. #myatxgov #atxcouncil

Committees

Proposed strategies include

- *Maintain the technology committee*
- *Support the Community Engagement Task Force*
- *Support stand alone Social Justice committee or integrate social justice into standing committees.*

Summary

- *Community members are concerned about losing the Technology Committee and with being able to interact with all committee agendas. Furthermore wide discussion over the social justice committee occurred on the twitter feed.*

Daniel Reyes	#myatxgov How will people get selected to be on a standing committee?
Drew Arnold	@austintexasgov Will there be any Council related committee meeting that won't be open to the public? #myatxgov
JD Gins	The prioritization of the committee process could have the ill effect of empowering city hall insiders who track committees. #myatxgov
Drew Arnold	@austintexasgov Want to see the Emerging Tech committee remain. The backbone of enhanced #civicengagement is

	emerging tech. #myatxgov
Jackie Wang	#myatxgov Community Engagement Task Force! What's the plan with that and how will you encourage students to participate?
TakeBack AustinParks	each committee could have a page on http://speakupaustin.org to publicly accumulate citizen comments on upcoming agenda items #myatxgov
Julie Montgomery	@jdatx Social justice is really an issue that shd be woven throughout HHS, housing, planning, mobility, econ dev, pub safety, etc #myatxgov
Allison G. Heinrich	Speaker from @workersdefense on need for language access. Ppl can communicate w/ #atxcouncil but also be able to understand mtn. #myatxgov
Democracy	The tweets don't lie. Social justice stand-alone committee is what the ppl want Council! :-) #myatxgov
Allison G. Heinrich	Also concern brought up that committees can kill bills. I thought there was a bypass via x no of councilmembers. #myatxgov #atxcouncil
Allison G. Heinrich	CM Casar says social justice should be seen in every committee. #myatxgov #atxcouncil
Gumbully	Yes! "I would like to see social justice represented in every one of these committees" @GregorioCasar #myatxgov
Debmocracy	Roy Waley bringing it home:AE not a sep. 4 member cmte/replace it with SOCIAL JUSTICE cmte!!! Have I told u lately I love u Roy? #myatxgov
JD Gins	Not sure I think social justice should be linked to health and human service committee. It should stand alone. #myatxgov
Daniel Reyes	#myatxgov I agree, social justice should not fall under human services. Social justice/human rights should have their own committee.
NewWayForward	Ruby, Carol and Roy make great point about utilities in one committee. AE manages billing system for all the city utilities.#myatxgov
Andrei Lubomudrov	It's no easy task to give an important issue the focus its due without compartmentalizing it. #myatxgov
Daniel Reyes	#myatxgov Human Rights committee to work to defending the rights of people and upholding their dignity
JD Gins	The ability to track 13(?) committees agendas is difficult and not something a majority of citizens are able to do. #myatxgov

General Meeting Comments

Summary

- The following tweets reflect positive comments made about the meeting overall as well as tweets informing community members about the public input meeting.

Austin HSEM	#ATXCouncil wants to see more of YOU at City Hall...Find out more and voice your opinion now: http://ow.ly/HsTqL #MyATXGov
ATX Mobility Depts.	Hey, #Austin! Be heard! Tell #ATXCouncil what you think of its new proposal for Council Mtgs./Committees: http://ow.ly/HsUR9 #MyATXGov
Austin Texas	Your time matters... so tell us how #ATXCouncil 's new meeting structure fits into your schedule: http://ow.ly/HsL1a #MyATXGov
Change Austin	Your time matters... so tell us how #ATXCouncil 's new meeting structure fits into your schedule: #MyATXGov: Your... http://dlvr.it/87s0kw
Austin Texas	Your voice matters...so tell #ATXCouncil what you think of its new plan for Council Mtgs http://ow.ly/HsL6D Share/RT using #MyATXGov
Mike Dominguez	Your voice matters...so tell #ATXCouncil what you think of its new plan for Council Mtgs http://ow.ly/HsL6D via @austintexasgov #MyATXGov
Change Austin	Your voice matters...so tell #ATXCouncil what you think of its new plan for Council Mtgs Share/RT using #MyATXGov:... http://dlvr.it/88GBGX
ATX Mobility Depts.	#ATXGov belongs to YOU. Join in and tell #ATXCouncil what you think of its new plan for meeting structure: http://ow.ly/HsTmE #MyATXGov
Austin Texas	Do shorter, more frequent #ATXCouncil meetings better fit your schedule? Tell us!: http://ow.ly/HsLr3 #MyATXGov

Change Austin	Do shorter, more frequent #ATXCouncil meetings better fit your schedule? Tell us!: #MyATXGov: Do shorter, more... http://dlvr.it/88t3NV
Laurie Felker Jones	Looking forward to learning more about the #publicengagement task force proposed by #myatxgov
SRCC Austin	Share your ideas in person @ City Hall or tweet in using #myatxgov. Also join the #speakupaustin discussion here: http://tinyurl.com/o7amset
Austin Texas	No plans this Thursday night? Come tell #ATXCouncil your thoughts on its new proposal for mtgs. structure http://ow.ly/HI9GK #MyATXGov
Austin Texas	New #ATXCouncil may change how it makes decisions that affect you... Join the conversation: http://ow.ly/HITox #MyATXGov
ATX Mobility Depts.	Do shorter, more frequent #ATXCouncil meetings better fit your schedule? Tell us!: http://ow.ly/HsTgt #MyATXGov
TakeBack AustinParks	City staff would need to engage citizens for input as more than formality & not AFTER the decisions made #myatxgov
TakeBack AustinParks	Can we trust City staff to filter citizen input to Council after documented attempt to keep public in dark for @TownLakePark vote? #myatxgov
TakeBack AustinParks	Would like to see Council take leadership rather than just following staff lead. Make arrows go both ways eg Council <--> Staff #myatxgov
Austin Public Library	Hey, #Austin! Be heard! Tell #ATXCouncil what you think of its new proposal for Council Mtgs./Committees: http://ow.ly/HJnYQ #MyATXGov
Open Austin	We're concerned that the #atxcouncil public engagement proposal eliminates tech committee. http://www.austintexas.gov/myatxgov #myatxgov
KUT Austin	Those who've felt left out of city council's decision-making can now voice their views online or by phone: http://kutne.ws/1ySw6BW #myatxgov
Open Austin	We're going to #myatxgov public hearing to speak in favor of creating a Technology & Civic Data committee. http://www.austintexas.gov/myatxgov
A. Strauss Institute	Share your thoughts with new #ATXcouncil tonight at a Town Hall led by @AStraussInst fellow @LarrySchooler #myatxgov
Monica Loera Sanchez	if u can't make tonight's town hall, then provide ur feedback here! City council is listening! #myatxgov

Watershed Protection	Hey, #Austin! Be heard! Tell #ATXCouncil what you think of its new proposal for Council Mtgs./Committees: http://ow.ly/HEkY8 #MyATXGov
Joseph Caterine	More people filing in, slowly but surely #myatxgov
KUT Austin	Starting tonight there are new ways to communicate with the city council & mayor. Find out more here: http://kutne.ws/1BN5YZQ #myatxgov
Eric Hegwer	@austintexasgov @AustinWatershed #MyATXGov #meetingsaboutmeetings
Austin Texas	To participate in tonight's Council discussion, call 888-400-1932, en Espanol 888-400-9342, or use #myatxgov, http://speakupaustin.org , 3-1-1
Joseph Caterine	Discussion of Public Engagement plan about to start #myatxgov
Ann Eaton	#ATXCouncil #myatxgov
Shellee O'Brien	Current count of how many times the live feed has died on me: 3. Important to know shortcomings of these channels too #myatxgov
Jospeph Caterine	People at home interested in participating in the discussion can call 8884401932 or can leave a message with 3-1-1 #myatxgov
Jeff Stensland TWCN	#atxcouncil discussion is underway. Follow along on Channel 6. Tweet #myatxgov
Ann Eaton	Live poll at the Council Town Hall! #MyATXGov My City rocks!
JD Gins	Good lucky yall. Yall look great on channel 6. And thank you for this transparent and engaging process process. #myatxgov
Jackie Wang	Tweet #myatxgov to participate in tonight's #ATXCouncil discussion!
Ivy Le	Not nearly enough young people at the @austintexasgov special called city council meeting tonight. Why is that? #myatxgov
JD Gins	Watching the ATX council planning meeting at home on channel 6. #myatxgov
CAN	Mayor Adler will appoint Council Members to new Council Subcommittees #myatxgov
Leticia Molina	#myatxgov
Tina Cannon	I just love my city tonight even more than I did yesterday! #atxcouncil #myatxgov
Regina Lawrence	nice shout out from a caller to @LarrySchooler and #myatxgov: "This is the best thing that ever happened to

	Austin..."
Stonewall Austin	Democracy at work #myatxgov
Denny for District 5	Citizen Engagement #myATXgov #ATXCouncil #NewWayForward http://fb.me/7o5s64lpK
Debmocracy	@chipr speaking truth at City Hall if the TX lege can have a working notification system, #myatxgov can!
Nik Hadjigeorge	@chipr speaking on behalf of @openaustin to the #ATXCouncil #myatxgov
Rossana Barrios	@HGerbracht : I'm watching #myatxgov #ATXCouncil live. Very interesting options for #citizen_engagement processes.
Sheppard John C	this format is informative & also entertaining...it's like old TWCch.6 meets the ch.10 publicaccess channel w/ a twist of @twitter #myatxgov
Sheppard John C	permuatations and combinations, math is fun #myatxgov #atxcouncil
Julie Montgomery	Is this the first time this #ATXCouncil has heard from Stuart Harry Hersh, who, like most in Austin, rents? #historic #myatxgov
Sheppard John C	flip a coin 99 times in a row & it comes up heads all 99 times, what are the odds it will be heads on flip 100? 50% #myatxgov #atxcouncil
Debmocracy	Mayor Adler gives atty Lou McCreary props for planting the seed 1 year ago for this public input on public input hearing #myatxgov
Change Austin	Mayor/Council taking public comments on council committee proposal. Join discussion:888-400-1932,#myatxgov, , 3-1-1 http://dlvr.it/8Bz2NZ
TakeBack AustinParks	Watching #myatxgov town hall on channel 6
JD Gins	Good luck y'all. You look great on channel 6. And thank you for this transparent and engaging process process. #myatxgov
Debmocracy	uber-left-brainer presents what looks to be a well-thought out plan. post that on speakup please Larry! #myatxgov
Larry Schooler	@Debmocracy thanks--please do that or have the author of the plan do so. We are moderators of the site not direct contributors #myatxgov
Ivy Le	Austin #Affordability Blogger not on Twitter, so here's @ATXyimby: Austin Area Year End 2014 Housing Stats. #myatxgov

Debmocracy	Bill Oakey...TRUTH!!! how many times the largest group of ppl waiting to speak is made to wait until last #myatxgov
Joe Deshotel	Kudos to the new #atxcouncil for holding a town hall and taking questions via social media and by phone. #myatxgov
Heidi Gerbracht	9 mins left of time posted for this public hearing. Wonder how swiftly they can wrap it up. #myatxgov
Ivy Le	Props to @LarrySchooler & @austintexasgov tech fr @GregorioCasar for coordinating tweets/phone/speakers tonight! Not easy. #myatxgov
Allison G. Heinrich	Poll shows overwhelming satisfaction w tonight #atxcouncil mtn. 21 very good, 13 good, 4 neutral, 2 not great & 2 needs maj impr. #myatxgov
Sheppard John C.	D/E daring & excellent @austintxgov #myatxgov a little is good, more is better first step 10-1, next step 20-1=more "opportunity" districts
Austin Texas	Town Hall on proposed Council committees has concluded but you can give feedback at http://www.speakupaustin.org , call 3-1-1, or use #myatxgov.
Daniel Reyes	Great job #ATXCouncil and thanks to fellow tweeters...it's been fun and looking forward to positive changes for #ATX! #Peace #myatxgov
Change Austin	Town Hall on proposed Council committees has concluded but you can give feedback at , call 3-1-1, or use #myatxgov. http://dlvr.it/8C2KnK
Shellee O'Brien	#myatxgov could win support by showing flow of info between members, committees & communities; not just which direction a petition flows
Eye over Austin	Pretty exciting stuff #myatxgov if you want to talk to city council #austin #txlege #citycouncil #atx #progressivegovernance #texas #tx #512
Pysops	@johncsheppard @austintxgov #myatxgov eventually each presinct and later on every voter until Democracy is truly achieved. But baby steps)
Chip Rosenthal	The @AustinTexasGov PIO team did a good job pulling together the #myatxgov meeting in less than a week.
Pysops	Blue eye in the red storm @JimmyFlannigan: #myatxgov vs #txlege

CITY OF AUSTIN

Enhancing Public Participation at City Council

SpeakUpAustin Discussion Comments

1/27/2015

Contents

Participant Summary	2
Location of Participants	2
General Feedback Summary	2
First Proposal: <i>Manage Council agenda to avoid late night meetings and foster greater public participation</i>	3
Second Proposal: <i>Enhance opportunity for meaningful public engagement earlier, before decisions are final</i>	20
Third Proposal: <i>Dramatically enhance access to and completeness of minutes, back-up, tracking follow-up action on resolutions, and other records of Council Committee and Commission proceedings to support transparency.</i>	34
Fourth Proposal: <i>Take immediate steps to Initiate longer term improvements for public engagement.....</i>	40

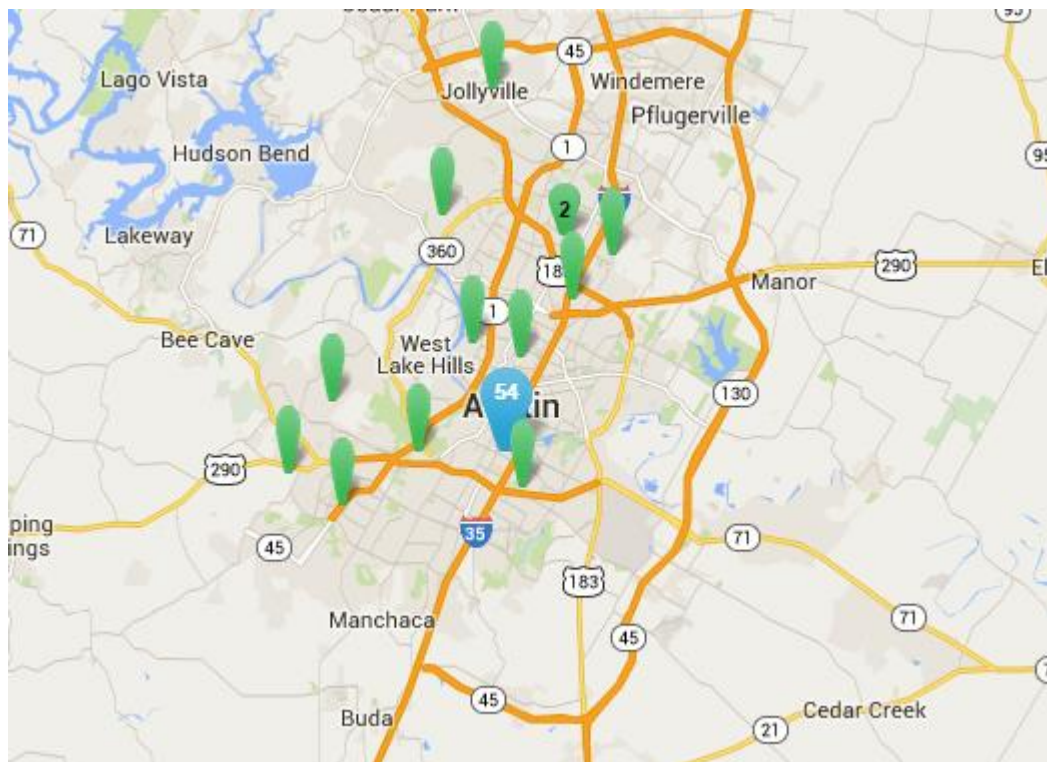
Enhancing Public Participation at City Council Report

Discussion Hosted on SpeakUp Austin
January 9-22, 2015

Participant Summary



Location of Participants



General Feedback Summary and Recommendations

Citizens of Austin seemed to share many common and consistent beliefs about city council changes and increasing public engagement. These common trends include:

- More council member communication
 - More meetings in the specified districts

- More **direct feedback and responses from council** members when citizens send in commentary and requests.
- More accessibility and transparency
 - With rising technology and capabilities- city documentation and notices should be more **user-friendly**.
 - Citizens consistently expressed desire for an **alert system** to be notified on information about the topics most important to them.
 - Addressing new engagers to municipal government – orientating people to how to get involved with step by step instructions.
 - All topics wanted feedback on how any new structure changes faired at the end of the year.

Topic: First Proposal: Manage Council agenda to avoid late night meetings and foster greater public participation

Proposed strategies include:

- Rotate Council meeting agenda items on a regular schedule by subject to save staff, public and Council time. Example: week 1 and 3 zoning, week 2 and 4 other items
- Hold Council meetings more frequently to reduce the number of agenda items per meeting and to end meetings at a reasonable time.
- Move Executive sessions to a day other than Council meetings as appropriate.

What are your thoughts on these proposals?

Feedback Summary

- More Meetings
 - Generally favored more frequent meetings
 - More **weekend** meetings
 - More varied meeting times and locations
 - Supported separating executive session meetings
 - Criticism regarding more meetings
 - “more meetings does not equal more engagement”
 - More meetings may delay decision process
 - More meetings is only efficient if more people can attend
 - General recommendations and requests
 - Feedback was more focused on an **increase in ways for citizens to be involved** in meeting than just a flat increase in meetings.
 - Requested a list-serv or **notification system** so people can find out which meetings contain items of interest to them, specifically.
 - Meeting agendas should be more **time sensitive** with regards to what issues will be taken up at what times.
- Commentary / Speaking on Issues

- Negative feedback about the “for” or “against” structure of speaking
 - Many “independent” speakers get cut short
 - **Not all opinions from speakers are specifically sided**
- Timing Feedback
 - Favored a time limit for speaking but not strictly ‘30 minutes for each side.’
 - Presentations (by entities other than a citizen with comments) should be time limited and posted to the city website
- General Feedback / Speaking Recommendations
 - Favored public input at committee level meetings
 - *Caveat- Items that never went to a committee should not have a limit for the time of public testimony before the Council.*
 - Different forums or outlets for feedback and community engagement
 - **Meetings’ live stream should have an area to give live feedback and commentary**
 - Speaking to specified council members directly – **with consistent responses from council members**
 - Council members to provide open office hours for speaking with constituents (Especially favored to occur within the geographical district location.)
 - Examples:
 - 2 days of Citizen Communication (including afternoon and evening times)

108 Responses

Larry Sunderland at January 09, 2015 at 5:09pm CST

The practical downside of increased participation is the amount of time needed to hear all who wish to speak. Increasing those opportunities to speak will help in that regard. What cannot happen is what became the default action for large controversies in the past council. This was the announcement at council that each "side" had 30 minutes and figure out on your own how to divide that up. Assumption being that there were two sides only and that everyone is aligned in one of those two camps. Individual non aligned citizens are disenfranchised by this practice. Is the public hearing just there to meet the citizen comment requirement or is it there to gather facts and opinions ahead of a decision?

Will Will at January 10, 2015 at 5:11am CST

"individual non aligned citizens are disenfranchised by this practice" That happened to me. Shame on Shelly Lee for having only liberal environmental groups speak on item #10 on 12/11/2014.

Fritz Knopg at January 15, 2015 at 11:11pm CST

Larry, I especially agree with your last bit: "Is the public hearing just there to meet the citizen comment requirement or is it there to gather facts and opinions ahead of a decision?" We should give people TIME to be heard. (Still retaining the right to occasionally – very rarely – stop someone from droning on.)

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 13, 2015 at 3:17pm CST

Thanks for your comments, Larry and Will. Do you have a suggestion as to how to improve this practice?

Brad Parsons at January 17, 2015 at 9:18am CST

There is a problem, just 1, I see in all of this. For an item that has not gone to any Committee, Council can still limit public testimony to say 30 minutes each side, and that means people who sign and show up will be cut out of giving testimony on items that they were never given an opportunity at Committees to give feedback on. Prior Council did this often, these proposed changes still leave that bad option available to the new Council, seems like by design, unless it is amended out. **So the Amendment would be that for items that never went to a Committee, there will be no limit on total time of public testimony before the whole Council.** All the more reason why everything possible should first go before a Committee.

Mark Rome Mark Rome at January 09, 2015 at 5:17pm CST

I like all the ideas, and understand what you are proposing. The description reads like something out of a legal and business class, or quality program. Maybe break it down into everyday language? Simplify and be direct

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 13, 2015 at 3:18pm CST

Thanks for your comment, Mark; any specific section where you would like clarification?
-Moderator

Tim Thomas at January 09, 2015 at 5:27pm CST

I fail to see how this would help. By moving to more nights you make it harder to navigate the system and engage. This will be a boon to the professional complaining class who will be able to complain every night of the week, but make it more confusing to find out what need they need to attend.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 13, 2015 at 3:17pm CST

Thanks for your comments, Tim. What would you propose as an alternative to what's been presented here that would help the public engage? -Moderator

Debbie Russell at January 20, 2015 at 5:58pm CST

...and there's the little matter of the TX Open Meetings Act.

Fritz Knopg at January 15, 2015 at 11:15pm CST

I think face-to-face communication is best.

Tim Thomas at January 15, 2015 at 10:11am CST

Fewer meetings. Make each case open on the Internet and collect comments at each step along the way. Then council can read all the comments before voting on it. Allow online voting tied to address on each resolution before city council so they can gauge public opinion the day of. It's very simple.

Neither solution is going to ensure that everyone gets everything they want. But my solution involves a lot less wasted time.

Katherine Ray at January 20, 2015 at 5:10pm CST

As to Tim Thomas' suggestion, this sounds great, and it works for me since I have a computer, an iPad, and an iPhone. But what about the people who are less fortunate and don't have easy internet access? I think this solution limits input to the more fortunate in our community, and I don't think that's right or fair.

LaTisha Anderson at January 09, 2015 at 6:06pm CST

My question is what would this times look like is it is to engage more citizens? Will it prevent more or less of the working class not to be be able to attend?

Coapublic Information admin at January 13, 2015 at 3:18pm CST

Thanks, Latisha--can you clarify your point? Not sure it's clear. -Moderator

LaTisha Anderson at January 14, 2015 at 8:00am CST

Will the flexiability allow for more or less of the working class to attend is basically what I am trying to say.

LaTisha Anderson at January 14, 2015 at 7:58am CST

Here's an example if a meeting starts at 5:00 and will run to about 7 pm. Most working class will still be at work, so will this increase them being able to participate or will times be crafted in such a way that it allows for more people to be apart of the process?

Javier Bonafont at January 09, 2015 at 10:05pm CST

I agree that these are all good starting points. I also think that the idea of having public comment at the committee level is a more useful point in time to engage the public.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 13, 2015 at 3:19pm CST

Thanks for your comments, Javier. -Moderator

Will Will at January 10, 2015 at 5:06am CST

Instead of 3 minutes give 5 minutes, and make sure EVERYONE WHO IS SIGNED UP TO SPEAK, SPEAKS, REGARDLESS OF POLITICAL VIEWPOINTS! I was discriminated against by Shelly Lee Leffingwell on 12/11/2014 item #10 THE ONLY CONSERVATIVE SPEAKER IN FAVOR OF COAL!!!

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 13, 2015 at 3:19pm CST

Thanks for your suggestion, Will.

Will Will at January 10, 2015 at 5:08am CST

Oh and the citizens communication thing, do what San Antonio does have it both on Wednesday and Thursday. They have A Session and B Session, A session at 6:00 pm and let B session be the noontime hour for folks that have errands to run in the AM or who travel back and forth.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 13, 2015 at 3:19pm CST

Thanks for that suggestion, Will. -Moderator

Debbie Russell at January 20, 2015 at 6:00pm CST

Such a suggestion might help the concern raised by LaTisha Anderson above.

Katherine Ray at January 20, 2015 at 5:16pm CST

comment...What you have suggested, and what is done in San Antonio, is fine for people like me who have flexible schedules. However, with Austin's traffic, if someone works until 5:00 p.m. in either north or south Austin, there is no way they can get downtown, get parked, and get into the City Council Chambers by 6:00 p.m., and noon is totally out of the question. I would love to see us make city government open to more people--not just the wealthy and the chronic complainers. To do that, perhaps if some of these committee meetings (or most or all of the committee meetings) are held somewhere other than downtown, that might really help to bring more people into the process and make the "outsiders" really feel a part of the city.

Roger Chan at January 10, 2015 at 9:00am CST

In a City Manager form of government the CMO is full time but the Mayor and council is part-time, we should move some if not all of Council meetings to the weekend to enable more business owners and folks who work during the work week to attend. Public comment should

have to be submitted in advance and screened for repetition and then posted on the city's website for public review and comment. Only the subject/issue and tally of postings need to be reported at council sessions with the exception of burning issues which would be aired in public.

Coapublic Information admin at January 13, 2015 at 3:21pm CST

Thanks for your suggestions, Roger. -Moderator

Debbie Russell at January 20, 2015 at 6:03pm CST

Roger, you had me right up til "have to be submitted in advanced" and "screened." (and I don't think anyone's under the assumption anymore Cmbr is a part-time job...they get full time pay!)

Brad Parsons at January 10, 2015 at 11:20am CST

I commend the new Council members and Mayor for wanting to meet more often. With this proposal, you will be meeting at least twice as often as the last Council just with full Council meetings. Throw in the Committee meetings, and you all will be meeting maybe four times as often and possibly more. This will become a FULL TIME job for all of you whereas previous Council's have treated it like a PART TIME job. One point, the Committees will only work if you put a lot of thought and effort into them, preparation, during, and followup, and listen to and incorporate the better points of the public's testimony. Also, Committees should not just pass out of Committee items not ready to go to the full Council. A Committee may have to deal with a proposed item a couple or more times before it is ready to go to the full Council. Good stead with all of this; as an original 10-1 petitioner and watchdog, it is good to see a new Council so eager to double and quadruple the effort of prior Council's toward good and sound policy.

Coapublic Information admin at January 13, 2015 at 3:20pm CST

Thanks for your thoughts, Brad; are you suggesting that this would make for too much work for the new Council, or do you think it is an appropriate amount? -Moderator

Brad Parsons at January 13, 2015 at 4:31pm CST

This is a lot more meetings for the new Council, but if it is what a majority of them want to do, then more power to them. I am figuring at least 1 Council meeting every week or two, 1 or 2 Working Sessions every couple of weeks, and for the 13 Committees every Council member would need to be on at least 4 or 5 Committees. Each Committee would need to meet at least twice a month with some of them needing to meet maybe 3 or 4 times a month. For this to all work, the Committees would need to do their homework, come prepared, and do a lot of work in Committee before passing on to the Council. So that is as many as $2 + 4 + 8 = 14$ meetings a month for a Council member,

compared to the prior of about 4 or 5 meetings a month. Much more work, but if the members are up to it, it could be good.

Ma Ma at January 14, 2015 at 2:46pm CST

Topic of Mayor/Council Member workload: Their salaries (\$82K+/\$70K+) are above the median income of Austinites working full time. I have no issue with these individuals responsibilities becoming a full-time job. Salaried (not hourly) employees all over the city are expected to work full time hours for their pay.

Pat Houston at January 10, 2015 at 1:19pm CST

I agree with Roger Chan's post ... some meetings on weekends, and public comment submitted in advance and posted online.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 13, 2015 at 3:22pm CST

Thanks, Pat. -Moderator

Megan Meisenbach at January 22, 2015 at 3:20pm CST

I commend the Mayor and Council on trying new approaches. I would encourage additional Council Meetings with Executive sessions as the last item. Citizens should talk to the full Council.

Here are some streamlining suggestions: City staff's initial input at Council Meetings should have restricted time limits (but be posted in the agenda backup materials) ,long presentations (by entities other than a citizen with comments) be strictly limited, instead posted on the city web site, Council Members comments on why they will vote a certain way should be time limited, Planning Commission agendas be posted 5 business days in advance of meetings.

john hafernik at January 10, 2015 at 3:11pm CST

leave as is, only way to talk to a full council and get your point over to your district rep

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 13, 2015 at 3:21pm CST

Thanks, John; to clarify, are you saying no changes should be made to City Council meetings and procedures? -Moderator

Fritz Knopg at January 15, 2015 at 11:19pm CST

I agree, the option of presenting one's views to the full council should be preserved.

john hafernik at January 13, 2015 at 3:37pm CST

that is correct. no changes. every time i have written or e-mailed a mayor or council no response. to be able to appear before a full council and state your case is vauable time for your cause. the new council is just wanting to forgo the face to face time with the citizens.

Anonymous Anonymous at January 10, 2015 at 4:33pm CST

I think they should leave it the way it is, or change it minimally to where public comment is accepted during the committees.

I don't like the idea of public comments having to be screened in advance. So that means some comments wouldn't pass muster? It seems counter to the idea of taking public comments int he first place.

Coapublic Information admin at January 13, 2015 at 3:23pm CST

Thanks for your thoughts. -Moderator

Susan Pantell at January 12, 2015 at 3:00pm CST

I agree with the three bullet point recommendations above. Do not agree with screening comments and only providing some. Maybe times could be varied to allow more people to participate; holding all meetings on the weekends is not a good idea. Maybe it would be possible to hold meetings in different parts of town, since it is difficult for some people to get to City Hall. I did not realize Council members work only part-time; seems like they should be working full-time since there is a lot of work to do and they are paid enough for full-time.

Coapublic Information admin at January 13, 2015 at 3:23pm CST

Thanks for your comments, Susan. -Moderator

Shari Farrell at January 12, 2015 at 4:07pm CST

Many topics are going to require long sessions. Although it would be great to follow a schedule that allows the majority of the population to physically attend (basically after working hours but before sleeping hours) - it does not sound feasible and will cause a backup of items waiting to get on the agenda.

Coapublic Information admin at January 13, 2015 at 3:39pm CST

Thanks, Shari; what would you suggest be done to address that issue? -Moderator

M Castro at January 13, 2015 at 8:38am CST

I like the idea of having zoning on a separate day from other issues. Also like more meetings so they don't end so late.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 13, 2015 at 3:39pm CST

Thanks for your comments. -Moderator

will houston at January 13, 2015 at 10:39am CST

It is nearly impossible to understand why an agenda (time and topic) cannot be made and used in order for those who are there can predict when their topic will come up. I have sat through an entire meeting....2pm or so until late that night only to be told the item would be taken up at the next meeting. Then I waited a couple of hours before it was brought up the following week. This is only an exercise in common courtesy.....or arrogance....you chose.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 13, 2015 at 3:44pm CST

Thanks for your comments, Will. -Moderator

Debbie Russell at January 20, 2015 at 6:07pm CST

Will, that was more about the mayor changing things around on the agenda to dissuade input on items he was hoping to not have to hear so much input on. "Oh, we really need to go with this item first so staffer so-and-so can go home...so we'll move this up" meanwhile a bunch of tired folks who DON'T get paid to be there are falling asleep waiting for their item.

Delwin Goss at January 13, 2015 at 3:36pm CST

How can you set a time when you don't know how many people are going to speak on an item? If you set a time you have to limit input then those who's jobs or lack thereof will be the only ones able to sign up first to speak?

Jennifer Houlihan at January 13, 2015 at 11:00am CST

I appreciate the effort, but so far am not tracking how more meetings = more engagement. There's already a well-established group of citizens who have flexible schedules and an opinion on everything under the sun. They'll show up no matter what the final schedule is. My concern is the people who may not have even been to City Hall before that we are trying to engage. How will ordinary mortals know where find out the issues on a particular agenda, or the 3 minute rule, or the difference between first and second reading? Perhaps a short, playful "orientation video" for citizens would be in order: park here, here's the elevator, get your parking validated, here's a map of the group floor, sign up to speak here, and so on.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 13, 2015 at 3:44pm CST

Interesting suggestion, Jennifer. Have you seen such a video anywhere else that you could share? -Moderator

Jennifer Houlihan at January 13, 2015 at 4:50pm CST

I wish! But no. My advocacy group and another with shared interests got as far as an outline last year for a joint project, but resources were too tight to complete it.

Jennifer Houlihan at January 13, 2015 at 11:02am CST

*ground floor

Sharon Yarbrough at January 13, 2015 at 12:53pm CST

As Austin grows, I think that more council meetings are necessary. I also feel a reasonable person who is passionate about an issue can and should learn how to be succinct in their points. If they are able to raise issues where the council needs additional information then council can delay a vote until the additional information is received.

Coapublic Information admin at January 13, 2015 at 3:44pm CST

Thanks for your comments, Sharon. -Moderator

Annette Naish at January 13, 2015 at 1:23pm CST

I think each of these ideas appear to be well thought out and appropriate for what both the council and the public need. The premise of committee meetings in which people with ideas and opinions may speak up is important. But, only if the meetings are at times when the public actually has a chance to be there. I understand that staff members have knowledge and opinions but I believe ignoring the fact that members of the public may also have knowledge and opinions is inappropriate. If we are going to move to a city government that is fully inclusive then there must be respect shown to everyone, even people with whom we disagree. In the real world there is not necessarily only one perfect answer.

Coapublic Information admin at January 13, 2015 at 3:46pm CST

Thanks for your comments, Annette--at what times should the committee meetings be held? -Moderator

Annette Naish at January 13, 2015 at 4:01pm CST

I have seen some suggestions that some things happen on weekends. Not sure that is best, but I know you are excluding people with jobs if you have everything happen between 8 and 5 on weekdays. If the committees would be on different topics, it seems that maybe different evenings for different topics? Austin is a city and surely someone can come up with times that work for everyone.

Delwin Goss at January 13, 2015 at 3:49pm CST

I'm not sure I have an answer? I do know setting in Council Chambers for 12 hours just to speak for three minutes only favors certain groups. Those members of the public who have lives/jobs/kids aren't always able to do that. Under the old system Council gets input from paid lobbyists , those who can afford to miss work, those who have jobs with very flexible schedules and from the unemployed. That method excludes a lot of folks. I hate having to quote Spiro Agnew but then the City ends up with something Mr Agnew referred to as the "silent majority". Any elected official who listens only to the 200 people in council chambers and fails to take into account the opinions of the other 800,000 citizens isn't going to fair well

Coapublic Information admin at January 13, 2015 at 4:49pm CST

Thanks for the comments, Delwin; what do you suggest as an alternative approach? - Moderator

D Sitko at January 13, 2015 at 6:13pm CST

I agree with rotating agenda topics and with scheduling executive sessions to not coincide with council meetings. Increasing the number of council meetings should be a last resort. The US Federal Government deals with public comment on regulatory matters and a host of other initiatives. I was particularly impressed by how the objective setting was conducted for Healthy People 2020. Here is a link to an archived web page that demonstrates how comments were accepted (written, electronic in advance or during web meetings or hard copy) as well as oral (at live meetings and in web meetings). Speakers could sign up ahead of time and on the day-of, space permitting. Time constraints on oral comments were set, which should be true with Austin's council. Accepting written comments in advance and using technology to culminate, sort and tally should be performed. <http://198.102.218.64/2010/hp2020/Objectives/Process.aspx>

Coapublic Information admin at January 14, 2015 at 8:52am CST

Thanks for that input, D. -Moderator

Ma Ma at January 14, 2015 at 3:04pm CST

Council Meetings: The meeting process itself needs to be improved. Having attended/watched many, I would suggest the use of a meeting facilitator. This person, unlike a meeting leader, is focused on the meeting process (agenda, time, participation, etc) versus the content. They generally don't participate in the discussion, but improve the meeting effectiveness. There's lots of info on the web about this process. There may even be CoA employees trained as facilitators.

Coapublic Information admin at January 21, 2015 at 2:42pm CST

Thanks for your feedback. -Moderator

Ma Ma at January 14, 2015 at 3:06pm CST

Think the idea of having weekly meetings with assigned topics has possibilities as long as provisions are made for items that will cross multiple topics.

Coapublic Information admin at January 21, 2015 at 2:44pm CST

Thanks for your feedback--what would you consider to be an "overloaded agenda?"

Ma Ma at January 14, 2015 at 3:17pm CST

Executive sessions should be separated from regular agenda in some manner. Either beginning, end, or separate meeting altogether.

Coapublic Information admin at January 21, 2015 at 2:44pm CST

Thanks for your feedback. -Moderator

Ken Rigsbee at January 14, 2015 at 4:08pm CST

I agree with Roger Chan and others. However, with our new organization, seems to me that a lot of enhanced communication can be made with an individual's council member directly. I think there ought to be a steadfast limit on time for public comments during a meeting. There are all kinds of other methods and procedures where one might give their opinions. Council Members should have and post office hours for communication with constituents.

Coapublic Information admin at January 21, 2015 at 2:44pm CST

Thanks, Ken--what time limit for public comments would you recommend? -Moderator

Charlie Dismore at January 14, 2015 at 4:36pm CST

I concur with the proposed strategies, recognizing that there will be an increase in meetings required by council members in order to get their jobs done properly. We hope they will be willing to do the time to achieve our expectations. That said, many of us favored the 10-1 format for council so that our voices will be heard loud and clear through our "voice" in the council chamber, namely, our geographical representative. We will be communicating in the main through her for issues we deem important and want to be heard.

Coapublic Information admin at January 21, 2015 at 2:44pm CST

Thanks for your feedback. -Moderator

Jim Wilson at January 14, 2015 at 8:55pm CST

Appreciate ability to be more involved. I intend to communicate directly with my district representative to express my thoughts and positions. To that end I would need to be electronically informed of ongoing topics the council is considering so that I can voice my opinion.

Coapublic Information admin at January 21, 2015 at 2:45pm CST

Thanks for your feedback--how would you prefer to be electronically informed? -
Moderator

Rick Rick at January 15, 2015 at 1:26pm CST

I agree with Delwin Goss. This is going to sound strange, but I think that the past City Council has received TOO MUCH comment from the public. You are elected people to represent the citizens and it would be much better if you would make decisions based on your own understanding of the issues. Sure you need SOME input, but honestly, you are ever going to get ALL of the input that would be needed to be entirely informed. The Special Interest Groups and the lawyers have always controlled the message and the outcome. Of course, I'm hoping that you all can rise above it, but more meetings is not going to help.

I suggest taking it ALL to the internet and allowing people to post, similar to hear on Speak Up, about certain items. Most of us in Austin live too far away from City Hall for us to drive all the way downtown, through horrendous traffic, to finally arrive, and sit and wait hours, to be listened to for 3 minutes. Why not have a 250 word limit and take everything over the internet? Really, why not? Saves on gas, frustration, anyone can comment, etc. The Special Interest Groups are going to hate it because they are accustom to stacking the deck but when the entire City can actually comment from their home, you guys are going to see how warped the input has been over the past 30 years. Viva 10-1!

Coapublic Information admin at January 21, 2015 at 2:44pm CST

Thanks for your feedback. -Moderator

Craig Bennett at January 15, 2015 at 4:27pm CST

Assuming you mean executive session the way I think you do, there is no way to hold executive sessions apart from a city council meeting, as the Texas Open Meetings Act requires that all closed meetings start out in a posted open meeting. Texas Gov't Code 551.101. But, if you mean it differently, then disregard my comment!

Coapublic Information admin at January 21, 2015 at 2:46pm CST

Thanks for your feedback. -Moderator

Doug Matthews at January 16, 2015 at 7:08pm CST

Yes, the council wants to "improve" citizen input and simultaneously to shorten the absurd meeting times: two mutually exclusive goals. To provide "input" does not require a personal performance before the council. Those who clamor to speak from the podium do so largely as a part of political theater. Require "input" to be in the form of e-mail or standard letter to all

members. That satisfies the "input" issue. Everyone get input. Everyone is treated equally and equitably. Not everyone can get up and preach; there is no time for that, and it's inherently unequal and inequitable. Input, letter or e-mail can be posted on the council issue website page. Yes, this will take all the drama out of the sessions, but that's exactly what some folks want.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 21, 2015 at 2:50pm CST

Thanks for your feedback. -Moderator

Jim Grosso at January 16, 2015 at 8:25pm CST

I think this is an excellent suggestion. The function of the council is to make policy, not micro manage. Austin is now a big city with more complicated problems than in 1967. Being a council member is now a full time job. Council members are part of a mini-legislature, not spokespeople for Hyde Park, Tarrytown, SOS, the Serria Club, you get the idea.

Doug Matthews at January 16, 2015 at 10:18pm CST

Thank you, Jim Grosso.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 21, 2015 at 2:50pm CST

Thanks for your feedback. -Moderator

Horacio Gasquet at January 16, 2015 at 11:05pm CST

The proposal looks good. I like the idea of having committees so that people can meet on a topic specific agenda. How much it will improve participation is debatable in a busy society. But making it easier to participate should be the first focus. I participated a lot in the past, but got jaded when it seemed that it was too hard to influence the outcome of decisions that were being influenced elsewhere.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 21, 2015 at 2:52pm CST

Thanks for your feedback. -Moderator

Nada Lulic at January 17, 2015 at 9:52am CST

This is a pragmatic proposal that should start simplifying meeting processes so all participants can be more efficient in deliberation (Council) and participation (citizens). Like many who have commented above, I have long been concerned that a small, vocal, group of people with very flexible schedules have driven many important conversations at Council. I see this proposal as a good start to addressing this concern.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 21, 2015 at 2:52pm CST

Thanks for your feedback. -Moderator

pinaki Ghosh at January 17, 2015 at 10:58pm CST

A big challenge of this proposal (or as it has been in the past with the agenda) is that all points are getting equal weightage - like we have defined terror levels or security levels similarly the topics can have color levels (example: red means 30 min allocated for public + 30 for council members etc or green may mean something which can take multiple meetings with 30 minute in each meeting). When putting a topic in the agenda the council members or committee should put in the color coded weightage the topics can be much better managed.

The second challenge is the time allocation for each committee - there are 13 proposed committees - one of them can easily take away most of the time - so council members should allocate a certain amount of mandatory time for each committee each month - which if not used will end the meetings early - this will actually make the committees more efficient.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 21, 2015 at 2:51pm CST

Thanks for your feedback, Pinaki; what would you propose for that allocation of time for each committee each month? -Moderator

Vivian Martin at January 18, 2015 at 7:21pm CST

I'm in favor of this proposal. It allows three avenues for citizens to provide input. It also enables city council to make decision while still fresh and alert. And having committees enable research of issues and ideas so that city council are able to make informed decisions.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 21, 2015 at 2:53pm CST

Thanks for your feedback. -Moderator

Therese Baer at January 20, 2015 at 9:02am CST

I vote "Yes" on this proposal. Let's try it, as is. if it doesn't work well, then let's modify it.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 21, 2015 at 2:54pm CST

Thanks for your feedback. -Moderator

christy bryant at January 20, 2015 at 1:41pm CST

I am in favor of this proposal. It is absurd that our City officials vote on things so late at night. It is common sense NOT to make decisions when you are sleep deprived. Anything to shorten the meetings is a good and healthy thing for the City of Austin. However, I would caution that rules be adopted so Committee meetings don't run past a reasonable time (9:00 pm).

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 21, 2015 at 2:53pm CST

Thanks for your feedback. -Moderator

Derrius Sims at January 20, 2015 at 5:41pm CST

Allowing citizens to live stream these meetings would do wonders for those who can't fit them into their schedule. It would also encourage younger citizens, whom often feel alienated because they lack the political capital of those more experienced with the process found at the meetings, to participate in the political process. If the live streaming included comments or chat they could even "participate" by having a small section at the end dedicated to answering the highest voted questions or comments. This is the format that large corporations such as Sony and Microsoft use to engage their audiences that would otherwise be unable to participate by physically traveling to their trade shows and doesn't add much work to the process. Chat logs means keeping records is no problem. Twitch tv would be an excellent platform to achieve this functionality at low cost and minimal overhead.

Coapublic Information admin at January 21, 2015 at 3:01pm CST

Hi, Derrius--we do have live streaming of City Council meetings currently (www.atxn.tv), but am I correct that you would want to add a chat function?

Betsy Greenberg at January 21, 2015 at 9:20pm CST

I think it's great that the Mayor and Council members want to improve opportunities for public engagement. We have always been able to e-mail or phone Council members prior to a public hearing. However, without any responses, there was always the question of whether Council members even read those e-mails. While every decision can't please everyone, it would be nice to at least know that e-mails were received and considered.

One important thing is to avoid the input processes run by staff -- those with posters, maps, online surveys, and projects in a box such as those used for Project Connect and CodeNext. These take a great deal of time and then we have no idea of how (or whether) the public input is used.

Committees seem like a good idea, especially now that the Council is larger. The only concern I have is that for cases that affect a particular district -- such as zoning cases -- the specific district representative should be involved.

Thanks!

More frequent meetings with shorter agendas will be much better.

Susana Almanza at January 22, 2015 at 11:12am CST

We, PODER, agrees with rotating council meetings so that zoning cases/landuse issues are set for specific dates. Zoning cases were at once started at 4 pm which made it easier for some working class people to participate in the zoning cases. Zoning cases should start at a later

time, we suggest 5:30 pm. We agree that Executive Sessions should be moved to Council Work Session days. The Mayor should not limit the amount of speakers. We have participated in numerous topics, only to be left out because the two camps already had their designated speakers and those within an independent camp were excluded for speaking (civic engagement).

Sumit DasGupta, Retired Senior Vice President of Engineering, Silicon Integration Initiative, Inc. at January 22, 2015 at 11:26am CST

Excellent idea in principle,... however, I fear that the proposed structure would delay decision-making unless, there are rules on prioritization and time limits (with sufficient time allotted for deliberations, of course) to ensure ideas don't die in committees. Also, would like to repeat an idea already suggested that some council meetings, depending on public / business interest on an agenda item, be moved to weekends.

Heidi Gerbracht at January 22, 2015 at 11:57am CST

On behalf of RECA, we are supportive of all three of the proposed solutions in this topic. Rotating meetings by subject, meeting more often, and moving exec session to another day all sound like good ways to avoid the late nights that have been so problematic. We'd also suggest that this be an iterative process, so that Council, staff and the public can try it, see what works, and then tweak as needed. Thank you to the new Council for their efforts on this difficult subject.

Mike Dahmus at January 22, 2015 at 1:05pm CST

1. Provide ways for citizens to provide input, viewable by the public, to city council members outside of meetings. The important thing is not that it be provided in a city council meeting itself, but that city council (and staff) see it; that others (media) see it; and that it is persistent.
2. Provide time-sure opportunities to speak. (My one venture before City Council was a disaster - took all day off work and family obligations; got 15 minutes donated to me; spent half the day down there and was ready to go, and then got collapsed into 30 seconds due to the "30 minutes for each side" rule).

Carol Lee at January 22, 2015 at 4:26pm CST

I think all three of these suggestions--rotating meeting focus by like subjects, more frequent meetings, and moving Executive Session to another day---are excellent proposals. Just moving Exec Session to another day would free up a significant chunk of time for the regular meeting without reducing public involvement.

Brett Merfish at January 22, 2015 at 6:40pm CST

On behalf of Workers Defense Project, we support measures to engage the public more effectively. Should the three proposed solutions (rotating meetings by subject, meeting more often, and moving executive session to another day) do avoid long meetings that prohibit meaningful public engagement, then we support them; however, it is imperative that meetings fall during hours when working Austinites can provide input. In addition, we would like these measures to be evaluated as they are implemented to ensure they do indeed allow increased public input and engagement.

Topic: Second Proposal: Enhance opportunity for meaningful public engagement earlier, before decisions are final

Proposed strategies include:

- Move public hearings earlier in the process to Council Committees. At request of 4 Council members, schedule additional public hearing before Council for a limited time period with the goal of establishing a time certain for testimony that is accessible to the public.
- Assign all proposed ordinances/resolutions to Council Committees before being considered by the Council. (Does not apply to time sensitive items or items already further along in the process. This does not change the City Manager's ability to bring items directly to Council.)

What are your thoughts on these proposals?

Feedback Summary

- Committee Meetings
 - In favor of having public input during early processes
 - Must have accessible times for public testimony
 - **Main criticism- committees only having 4 council members**
 - Questions of concern-
 - Only 4 council members present may mean only 4 districts' opinions will be represented
 - Only 4 council members look at the issue in-depth even though all vote
 - Committee breakdown leaves out issues that affect each other
 - Ex- Land use and transportation
 - **Bigger and broader issues should have more council members**
 - Ex- Austin Energy
 - Transparency issues- will all committee meetings be filmed and accessible?
- Methods of Engagement
 - **Online posting outlets and forums were highly preferred over in-person engagement**
 - Preference to the format of Speak Up Austin

- Want more ways to vote on comments
- **Want council to see comments and provide feedback / analysis**
 - *Caveat- All methods of input in the various processes should be equally weighed*
- Localization of meetings
 - Live 2 way streaming at public library branches for more inclusion
 - More **small scale town hall meetings in each district** with the mayor and council member of the district
- Direct Mayor and Council member communication
 - Email communication **lacks response and input**
 - Recommend a 24hour or 2 business day turnaround time on response

55 Responses

Tim Thomas at January 09, 2015 at 5:29pm CST

I don't feel the problem is a lack of in person public input. In a representative democracy some people are not going to get their way, and that does not mean their opinions were not considered.

I would prefer to have input sessions that were easy to register and vote remotely as well as in person. Webcasts of meetings, etc. I would prefer a system where opinions could be tallied with comments online, to prevent the need to go and shout in person to have your voice heard.

Allowing by right development and simplifying the permitting process would of course also provide less need for these long drawn out public engagement processes.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 13, 2015 at 3:47pm CST

Thanks for your comments, Tim; have you seen any examples elsewhere that would be helpful to review? -Moderator

Rollie Cole at January 16, 2015 at 9:51pm CST

Actually, this very process is a great model. Break an issue down into topics, allow for comments that others can see (which also lets the commenter know the comment was received), respond to those comments. SpeakUpAustin is a great model for that. -- What is lacking here (sometimes shows up on other Austin-related projects) is some organized way to "vote" on comments and some final analysis, shown to the commenters, that will be the summary to pass on to the council. The analysis should have numeric totals, pie and bar charts, etc. that describes the comments, the number of people commenting and supporting various comments, etc. So SpeakUpAustin is a great start -- adding "polling" and "re-presented analysis" would be great next steps.

Brad Parsons at January 17, 2015 at 9:18am CST

There is a problem, just 1, I see in all of this. For an item that has not gone to any Committee, Council can still limit public testimony to say 30 minutes each side, and that means people who sign and show up will be cut out of giving testimony on items that they were never given an opportunity at Committees to give feedback on. Prior Council did this often, these proposed changes still leave that bad option available to the new Council, seems like by design, unless it is amended out. **So the Amendment would be that for items that never went to a Committee, there will be no limit on total time of public testimony before the whole Council.** All the more reason why everything possible should first go before a Committee.

Javier Bonafont at January 09, 2015 at 10:17pm CST

I think input at the committee level is a terrific idea. By the time something is at the full council a lot of work has gone into it, and a lot of discussion and staff input and its a big freight train, so having the public weigh in early, in smaller committee hearings, is far more likely to produce results. I ALSO believe that some online format (such as this) to gauge opinion, or some Live 2-way streaming to branch libraries would make things more inclusive. Finally, I get DOZENS of "notices" from the city about zoning and planning and items up for votes, but none of these notices contain any USEFUL information. Its all vague abstracts like "the council will consider a proposal to alter the sign ordinance." WHAT does that mean? Alter to what? To make signs larger? smaller? voluntary? taller? Certainly there is a specific proposal to be discussed, why not actually include it? Its like that with almost everything. "Will consider a site plan waiver at 1000 B Street" What? what KIND of waiver? what is being built? It seems like whoever creates the notices deliberately conceals any useful details, so my choice is to ignore most of them or spend hours digging for details and calling and going online. I don't know why the staff bothers with notices at all (okay, i do know, its in the charter, they are forced to, and it clearly shows that they don't want to.) Improve that.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 13, 2015 at 3:47pm CST

Thanks, Javier--how would you improve the notices you mentioned? -Moderator

Roger Chan at January 10, 2015 at 9:06am CST

We need to institute and conduct town hall meetings in each district. Minimally the mayor and that district council member must be present to discuss and explore issues

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 13, 2015 at 3:48pm CST

Thanks for your suggestion, Roger. -Moderator

Scott Trimble at January 20, 2015 at 2:25pm CST

I was going to suggest this as well. Each council member should conduct regular town halls in their districts. I recommend 2-4 meetings per month, on different days (and at different times?) so it's not always the same people participating.

Karen T at January 20, 2015 at 5:44pm CST

I agree. We have a traffic problem. We also now have 10 districts. Let's bring our individual representatives to us rather than all of us having to go to City Hall. And set up real time access so we can stay in our homes and comment.

Brad Parsons at January 10, 2015 at 11:37am CST

Am a little concerned about the wording above with regard to limiting total time for testimony before the whole Council. For Items that have come straight to Council and not gone through the proposed Committees, it is not appropriate to limit hearing time other than the 3 minutes per individual, also individuals should still be able to sign up and donate their time to another speaker when any testimony is taken before the whole Council or Committee. One of the worse examples of this in the past year was when CM Martinez motioned and the Council accepted limiting public testimony to only 30 minutes on each side on the Rail issue the first and only time the final proposal was heard before Council. THAT WAS TOTALLY INAPPROPRIATE, and a part of why the voters rejected Rail on the ballot, a perfect example of not enough genuine public input on an issue, in that case the Rail ballot item.

I am a little concerned that the new Mayor and Council might be missing the point of the problem of the past includes bad information and regularly false assumptions from The Staff gaming the system. Staff still has the advantage to game this system. Even with these proposed reforms, the problem is not the public giving testimony. The best solutions still will require a skeptical and discerning Council that does not accept false assumptions, limited solutions, bad and biased legal advice, and pigeonholed policy choices that were predetermined by Staff and professional Lobbyists before they even came to the Council. The new Council will still have to overcome those with good listening and basic good judgement, something I think all of you appear to have the potential to do.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 13, 2015 at 3:47pm CST

Thanks for your comments, Brad; could you clarify what you mean when you say "staff still has the advantage to game this system?"

Ma Ma at January 14, 2015 at 3:37pm CST

Would not want to assume what Brad was thinking, here are some thoughts.

City Council has the authority to make and pass ordinances. The City Manager/his staff/CoA departments have the responsibility to carry implementation of these ordinances. Sometimes the needs and desires of the various departments are different than the desired outcome of a particular department.

Dan McAtee at January 10, 2015 at 5:04pm CST

A process for written comment via the COA website. The current "email the mayor & council" function is next to useless due to lack of response to input. COA needs to set expectations for response; "within 24 hours"; "2 business days": "we don't have the answer now but _____ will contact you no later than _____". Basic communications

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 13, 2015 at 3:47pm CST

Thanks for your suggestion, Dan. -Moderator

Susan Pantell at January 12, 2015 at 2:49pm CST

I think it would be good to try this, but one concern is that if only four districts are represented on the committee, people who are not from those districts may have less impact on the proceedings because the Council members will be less concerned with opinions not from their district.

Some issues might need to be reviewed by the entire Council from the beginning because of their importance for the city. Some examples of that type of issue from the past are the consideration of changing the management structure for Austin Energy, Water Treatment Plant 4, and the Urban Rail proposal.

It's not clear to me where issues regarding libraries, pools, recreation centers, etc. would fit in the proposed committee structure.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 13, 2015 at 3:49pm CST

Thanks, Susan; where would you recommend issues regarding libraries, polls, recreation centers, and other topics fit? And what alternative would you suggest to address the issue you mentioned with district representation on committees?

Susan Pantell at January 14, 2015 at 12:41pm CST

Maybe they intended it to go under Housing and Community Dev. One idea is to move trash and recycling from Environment to Utilities, Resource Recovery; move parks from Environment and include that with libraries, pools, etc under a new committee, "Community Services", and keep the "Environment" for longer-range planning and policy issues like sustainability, open space purchase, climate change, and water resources.

I don't have an answer for the district representation issue on committees; I think it is a potential problem. As suggested above, I think for big, important issues, all of the Council may need to be involved from the start, partly because of this concern.

Shari Farrell at January 12, 2015 at 4:20pm CST

A designated area on the AustinTexas.gov website allowing for public opinions on what issues should be considered for agenda items, responses on what decisions were made; which would allow for some tracking of the impact of the conclusion, and a place that tracks all meeting notes, items, conclusions as well. A website dedicated to allowing the public to help decide what constitutes an agenda item (by majority - without a few people leading the conversations...) - follow the minutes and notes as if they participated in the sessions, and allow for responses of conclusions the impact conclusion has made on citizens/city. This is a way to allow the public to participate in sessions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week - even when the issue is regarding Parks and Libraries which are very importation to many citizens. Short videos can be used as well.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 13, 2015 at 3:50pm CST

Thanks for your feedback, Shari. -Moderator

Ma Ma at January 14, 2015 at 11:23pm CST

I was referring to this site:

<http://austincouncilforum.org/viewforum.php?f=2>

Could be modified to link the all agendas, data, etc in other sites.

Ma Ma at January 14, 2015 at 3:55pm CST

There is an area on the CoA website for public input. Start there, and modify as needed. Save time/money.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 14, 2015 at 4:12pm CST

Thanks, Ma Ma--this, in fact, is that site.

Jennifer Houlihan at January 13, 2015 at 11:11am CST

I know of several efforts to bring forward resolutions after as many as 8 years of work, through the commission structure, subject to repeated delays by legal and by staff, believing all the challenges had been addressed - only to see them derailed on the same business day that they were to go before council by a lone voice. It's maddening. If the new committee structure means that by the time a resolution gets to council, all sides have had a chance to weigh in, build consensus, and craft a resolution will work for the majority of stakeholders, and cannot be

derailed by one of two individuals with a bully pulpit after everyone else has worked together for months or years on a workable solution, then let's try it.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 13, 2015 at 3:50pm CST

Thanks, Jennifer; can you be more specific about the cases you mentioned? -Moderator

Jennifer Houlihan at January 13, 2015 at 4:59pm CST

Most recently, the busking ordinance. It was expected it would pass on consent at the final meeting of the year, but was pulled due to a late objection. The issue is not whether the last-minute complaint had merit and deserved consideration; but rather that months and months of work had gone into the most recent version with ample time for public comment, and all processes and procedures had carefully been followed, yet the outcome was still knocked off schedule. That's a problem with the system, that there can still be stakeholders that late in a conversation who feel they've had no chance to weigh in. If it takes another layer of meetings for people to believe there are enough opportunities to raise their voices on issues that matter to them, then let's get 'em on the books!

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 14, 2015 at 8:54am CST

Understood; thanks, Jennifer. -Moderator

chris grigassy at January 13, 2015 at 12:31pm CST

Order all Council staff, and all City staff to stop using "The Delphi Technique" at City facilitated public meetings and surveys!! That deceptive method isn't really asking for citizen input, but citizen Agreement--for ideas some "expert/s have put forward. And please educate yourselves about this deceptive method that has caused many of us active citizens to quit trusting the City!

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 13, 2015 at 3:51pm CST

Hi, Chris--could you provide some examples where you have seen that technique used during public meetings and surveys? -Moderator

Ma Ma at January 14, 2015 at 4:03pm CST

Had not heard the label of this technique though I've seen this used. A meeting facilitator is not supposed to have any vested interest in the meeting outcome. Any consolidations of topics or inputs of the meeting is to be done in full view and with consent of the meeting attendees.

Ma Ma at January 14, 2015 at 11:40pm CST

Thanks, am not aware that council sessions use a meeting facilitator. I have seen meeting leaders (who participate in the meeting) and time keepers. A meeting facilitator is process focused.

I have seen the "delphi technique" applied when participation is consolidated in a manner to present desired result and when surveys are designed to achieve desired results.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 14, 2015 at 4:14pm CST

Hi, Ma Ma--can you clarify...are you saying you have seen facilitators act as if they do have a vested interest in the outcome? And on the second point, can you explain more about what you may have witnessed to the contrary? -Moderator

chris grigassy at January 13, 2015 at 12:42pm CST

www.vlrc.org/articles/110.html is the link to explain the Delphi Technique manipulation of citizens.

Heyden x at January 14, 2015 at 11:39am CST

When setting up committees land use and transportation need to be on the same committee. We got into this mess by considering land use and transportation separately - they need to be considered together so that we all recognize how one directly affects the other.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 14, 2015 at 4:15pm CST

Thanks for the suggestion, Heyden. -Moderator

Joep Meijer at January 14, 2015 at 12:24pm CST

I understand that the intent is to have 4 council member serve on each council committee. I would urge that some committees would see a broader representation, in particular the oversight committee on Austin Energy. Austin Energy is the most important asset of the city, it is responsible for a large contribution to the city budget, it impacts affordability for all residents and low income families in particular, and is the biggest opportunity to cut our emissions and use more renewable energy. This committee will also discuss additions to the traditional business model. All in all, a very important committee that deserve the attention of more council members, perhaps not all, but at least seven would be a good starting point.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 14, 2015 at 4:14pm CST

Thanks for the suggestion, Joep. -Moderator

Ma Ma at January 14, 2015 at 4:15pm CST

Believe the intent of the committee process is to have a specific number of council members sit on these committees. But nothing in the proposal would preclude any member from attending. (Providing meetings are not double booked, but that is just schedule management.)

Each council member has a responsibility to their district AND a responsibility to the entire city. A balance will be needed to prevent entrenchment.

Mary Voltaggio at January 15, 2015 at 11:52am CST

In general, the ideas presented are a good start. Committees can be a double edge sword: On the one hand, they can serve to evaluate, prioritize and go forward, or they can turn in to a swamp bog where nothing moves. There would have to be transparency or Committees could be seen as trying to manipulate the outcome. Each Council member must come up with a way to gather input from their district (via website, town hall, survey/polling, etc.) early in the process, so that time, money, and resources are not wasted. Larger issues like energy, water, or transportation may require a mayor-led town hall or public forum. Taxpayers are probably more irritated by the relentless "studies" conducted by the city that cost of lot of money and end up going nowhere.

Rick Rick at January 15, 2015 at 1:50pm CST

I think Ma Ma and Chris are referencing some of the City meetings that we "all" have participated in over and over again. I'm thinking of the stickers voting through the Imagine Austin process that eventually wore me down after about 18 meetings, and the Project Connect process where "everybody knew" what the Project Connect Team wanted and that is what "won" the contest, which then failed at the polls (so there! why didn't you guys listen to us?). These meetings of citizens are staged it seems to pull the public to an endpoint that someone else has dictated from all high at the City. This is a reality; not a conspiracy theory.

I would put all discussions and comments on the internet and let people comment in that forum. It could even be summarized to a list up to 20 questions per topic, and allow the people to vote. A subscription process will be needed to try to stop the stuffing of the comments.

Horacio Gasquet at January 16, 2015 at 11:08pm CST

I like the idea of having committee meetings focused on a topic specific agenda. But, it is not sufficient to just listen to people talk. How does that input get converted into policy? It is not clear what the follow up is, when a citizen has a great idea.

pinaki Ghosh at January 17, 2015 at 11:06pm CST

A fundamental issue here from compliance perspective - if 4 council members can bring an issue to the agenda then it should be more than 4 members who can bring it to public hearing - else we can see formation of cotarie - this means we will need 5 council members to bring it to public hearing - which also means these 4 have to win over one more council member to bring it to public hearing - from Governance Risk Compliance perspective this is a very standard operating procedure. This is change I will request the city to make

Joshua Canter at January 19, 2015 at 10:25pm CST

I like this idea, this it's great and could really help things!

Therese Baer at January 20, 2015 at 9:03am CST

I vote "Yes" on this proposal. Let's try it, as is. if it doesn't work well, then let's modify it.

Mary Reed at January 20, 2015 at 1:13pm CST

While I appreciate the fact that the city is trying make the public hearing process easier, less time-consuming, etc. as President of the Clarksville Community Development Corporation (CCDC), the neighborhood organization for historic Clarksville (www.historicclarksville.org), I feel very uncomfortable having important matters related to my neighborhood -- demo applications, proposed zoning changes, etc.-- heard only by a portion of the Council, even though the the full Council would vote on them.

How would those Council members who do not serve on a particular committee gain an understanding of all of the facts and nuances related to a matter before they vote on it? I fear that important information may get "lost in translation" and as a result some Councilmembers will end up voting on an issue without complete knowledge.

Also, what if certain Council members who heard a matter discussed in committee try to color the information that was presented during a hearing when they discuss it with the rest of the council, maybe because of ideological or political reasons?

I much prefer an opportunity to make my case to all of the council even it it means that I have to spend hours at a Council meeting. I think the Council will make better decisions when all members have the opportunity to be equally informed.

Michael Michael at January 20, 2015 at 3:33pm CST

There should be a separate Council committee on affordability and a Mayor's cabinet on affordability. It was the pervasive theme throughout the Mayoral campaign and Council campaigns, and it is at or near the top of every Austinite's priority list. It deserves to its own committee as opposed to being merely included as a subset of other committees.

Joseph Reynolds at January 20, 2015 at 4:52pm CST

The committees must be consistent with State Law. Under the City Charter the Council is one instance of the Land Use Committee [Planning and ZAP being two others]. Hearing land use items in a sub-committee isn't constrained by law, but the Council has to remain as the responsible body. Any land-use subcommittee will need to be structured such that every one of the 10 Council members get's to hear items in their district. Four member subcommittees won't work unless there are three of them with parallel duties. And, items are going to arise that cross district boundaries - the development of the State Land at 45th & Bull Creek Rd is one such, members Gallo [d-10] and Pool are directly involved and Tovo represents on of the Neighborhood Associations in the Coalition. Working a subcommittee structure will be difficult.

Perhaps not planning to close an item in one Council Meeting would help, actually have 1st, 2nd, and 3rd hearings.

Perhaps pushing hearings into Boards and Commissions, with a higher standard for appeal to council is needed.

Liz Haltom at January 21, 2015 at 11:31am CST

It's the behind closed door lobbying that's the problem. When I was advocating for an issue at City Hall, by the time the public hearing rolled around, everyone's mind was already made up. It was visibly obvious. Showing up to testify changed nothing. The public needs to know what information and arguments decision-makers have already been presented with and by whom and when, so we know what other information City Council needs to hear and can get there knocking on doors at the same time as the lobbyists. I'm very disappointed to see that none of these proposals address bringing more transparency to the before-hearing lobbying that goes on.

Andrew Bucknall at January 21, 2015 at 3:45pm CST

Having Chaired a task force committee, the Urban Renewal Board and Urban Transportation Commission as well as serving on the affordable housing commission (now CDC) I have noticed that council committees can often have the same purpose as established citizen boards, commissions and committees. As Jennifer Houlihan talks about this means an issue can go through a very long vetting process and result in a council committee or council not even knowing about the previous process as they move forward or react to an agenda item with little to no information. I think it is very important to look at how existing boards and commissions interact with council committees to increase understanding and communication so the vetting that occurs at the existing citizen level is communicated forward. I assume through this process there will be a continual review of citizen committees to determine duplication of efforts,

necessity by law and reorganize based upon information. Establishing a metric to evaluate boards, commissions and council committees may be helpful in this re-org process.

Bob Batlan at January 21, 2015 at 8:00pm CST

Comments for your consideration relative to the New Council Committee Proposal.

1. Public testimony to committees should be scheduled in evenings so that working people have a chance to be heard.
2. The mechanism to allow an item to be added to the full council if requested by four council members may be helpful, but is not sufficient. The committee structure would tend to have council members concentrate on the issues related to their committee assignments. Their concentration on other issues would most certainly be more limited. Therefore, it will be difficult for non-committee members to evaluate requests from outside their areas. A public petition process should be developed and added as a way to bring an item to full council in a timely manner. A fair, but rigorous petition process would prevent frivolous requests. However, it would allow a path to bring important items that did not receive committee support to the full council. I assert it would be more effective for all than having individuals and groups shop for council sponsors.
- 3.
4. All Council Members should be on a Committee on Austin Energy.
5. A formal review of the effectiveness of the new structure should be conducted and recommendations adopted before the end of FY15.
- 6.

Thanks for considering this input.

I would be pleased to discuss these items at your convenience.

Bob Batlan Austin Interfaith Strategy Team

Sumit DasGupta, Retired Senior Vice President of Engineering, Silicon Integration Initiative, Inc. at January 22, 2015 at 11:31am CST

Excellent idea. Also, this may be a repetition but I would recommend that minutes of all meetings be posted on a city web-site for public awareness / comments before a proposal is put on council agenda.

Susana Almanza at January 22, 2015 at 11:35am CST

At the present time, numerous recommendations & resolutions are heard by specific Boards & Commissions, they are then forward to City Council. Does that mean that the 13 committees, will be an addition to the already established Boards & Commissions? Or will the council

committees replace the current Boards & Commissions? How will the 4 council members be selected for the council committees, what is the process? If the council committee makes a decision opposite of the impacted community, will the community be given the opportunity to speak to the full Council? WE, PODER, are also concerned about the discussion of online emails being tallied. We still live in a digital divide and those with access & knowledge of using electronic means could easily out number impacted low-income and/or people of color.

Susan Lippman at January 22, 2015 at 3:26pm CST

These are all excellent questions. I hardly know how to express an opinion on the proposed structure without knowing the answers to these. Especially important is: how are the 4 selected? Perhaps it should be all voluntary, with a minimum of 4. I agree with some of earlier commentators that Austin Energy certainly is important enough for a larger committee.

Heidi Gerbracht at January 22, 2015 at 12:19pm CST

On behalf of RECA, we are supportive of public testimony happening earlier in the process, and to having items go through committees first. Having opportunities to engage remotely, whether it's by computer or by telephone, is immensely valuable in giving access to folks who have not traditionally been able to show up at City Hall- those with children or jobs with long hours or a lack of transportation, etc. It will be important to weigh that feedback equally to feedback from those who show up at meetings, if we're truly going to make local government more accessible to everyone. If remote input is possible and weighed equally to in-person testimony, then an hours-long public hearing becomes less necessary, and it's less likely that one loud voice drowns out the voices of the many. It may also be useful to consider a time certain ending to public hearings as well, even if that means more public hearings have to be scheduled. The one area in which we'd urge caution is with land use. Much of the process for land use decisions is guided by state law, and it's an in-depth process already. We're hopeful the changes can make the development process more predictable and help stakeholders work better together, and we'd like a process that is not lengthier and more expensive. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Carol Lee at January 22, 2015 at 4:46pm CST

The committees may add value for "deep dives" into issues but I am concerned about relying on the committees to craft positions and finalize Council decisions, and for the Committees to be the primary input for public hearings. With 13 Committees I am assuming that some would meet during the normal work hours and others in the evening, and I've read that not all would have Channel 6 coverage. It would be public-viscous to expect citizens to monitor the agendas of 13 Committees and have public testimony prepared within 3 days of the Committee meeting. What

would be extremely welcomed is an improved Public Notice system, whereby any citizen could "subscribe" to be notified of items based on selected filters. The current paper-based Public Notice system is very costly and ineffective. I also think it is extremely important for the full Council to serve as the Board for both of our public utility entities as Austin Energy and Austin Water Utility are our largest public assets.

Tom Fitzpatrick

The goal to make Council meetings less onerous and more accessible to citizen participation is a good one. Going forward, consideration should continuously be given not only to facilitating public participation, but to honoring that participation by adhering to plans and agreements that result from it. Seeing plans ignored and agreements overturned after the citizens have gone home trusting they have made some difference – is a recipe for diminishing both trust and engagement long term.

I have three comments about the use of committees to facilitate public hearings.

1) While the idea of breaking out council work into committees is entirely reasonable, a structure of too many committees has potential dangers also. The way forward should monitor closely the total amount of time and the number of meetings that results from the committee structure. If, indeed, a resolute Council Member intends to track transcripts and recordings of committees that he or she does not attend, the system quickly becomes more onerous rather than less so. And if a citizen wants to track what's going on and when it may be effective to participate, a smaller number of venues is much easier to monitor.

2) On the subject of public hearings being primarily at committees rather than full council (absent a special request), it should be noted that citizen engagement and citizen activism are not necessarily the same thing. Some Austin citizens, for whom we are grateful, spend enormous time and attention tracking and trying to help shape the city's policies, programs and development. Many other citizens are either not able or not inclined to track meetings and the work of elected representatives they would like to trust. These citizens only get engaged (and show up at hearings) when something is far enough along and far enough off the rails that someone they know sounds an alarm. These folks may be less likely to engage at a committee hearing when the scope of a problem or an inconceivable departure from expectations has developed and been revealed. The purpose of the system design should be to enhance trust and engagement, not to require constancy of vigilance.

3) The number of committees should not silo the work of Council or further encourage siloing the work of city departments. In particular, I believe that logical integration of rules and concerns could be facilitated by combining several of the combined committees, and dividing their agendas into the subareas originally proposed. I suggest combining:

- Mobility
- Public Safety
- Planning & Neighborhoods
- Open Space, Environment, and Sustainability
- Housing & Community Development

Economic Development and Innovative Industry Development should also be combined (again maintaining the separate agenda rubrics).

Topic: Third Proposal: Dramatically enhance access to and completeness of minutes, back-up, tracking follow-up action on resolutions, and other records of Council Committee and Commission proceedings to support transparency.

The proposed strategies would include the creation of accessible documents that clearly explain Council processes to public.

What are your thoughts on this proposal?

Feedback Summary

- Documentation access
 - Little ease and accessibility to information (**not user friendly**)
 - Hard to navigate and process current online postings
 - Different departments and commissions **lack consistency** on posting protocol and timing
 - Background information used in the decision process is not always available
 - Ex- data, amended agenda times, etc.
 - City Manager studies / evaluation for resolutions are not easy to locate.
 - Request **notifications for updates on actions taken** by council on draft agendas, meeting minutes, presentations, etc.
- Council Member access
 - Negative responses on the amount of 'literal locked doors' that council members sit behind
 - Contacting council members does not always result in direct response

25 Responses

Tim Thomas at January 09, 2015 at 5:32pm CST

I'm not sure how this is different from now. We have access to a huge amount of data. I'd love to get to 100%, but I don't think the majority of citizens are suffering from a lack of data. They're suffering from too much data and not enough time to process it. The way our city has created patchwork ordinances over patchwork ordinances means that you have to commit yourself to understanding the issue at hand to understand most of what goes before council.

Coapublic Information admin at January 13, 2015 at 3:52pm CST

Thanks for the feedback, Tim. -Moderator

Brad Parsons at January 10, 2015 at 11:55am CST

Yes. Generally speaking, unless a person is very adept at navigating the many different City information applications and varied webpages, most of which are not user friendly, it is hard for most people to follow what the City and Council are doing. Particularly I agree, the Minutes of both Council and Commission meetings in the past have been inadequate. In the case of the Council, the Minutes are often badly transcribed. In the case of Commissions, there often are not Minutes posted even after the fact of any useful detail.

As for followup actions on resolutions, yes, there has not been a systematic display to the public connecting followup actions particularly on Council resolutions requesting actions by the City Manager. One has just have to be aware of them and recognize them when they appear again on the Agendas.

Point to mention, the last Council passed A LOT of resolutions in the past 6 months asking the City Manager to study or evaluate one thing or another, those need to be tracked and noticed to you all and the public when the City Manager starts bringing those slew of items before you.

I might add, you the new Council are not obligated by any resolution that the prior Council asked the City Manager to look into. Further, the new Council should seriously consider taking a look at a number of ordinances to potentially be rescinded that the last Council rushed through in their final year when they saw the handwriting on the wall after the 10-1 Commission was able to complete their task.

Coapublic Information admin at January 13, 2015 at 3:54pm CST

Thanks for the suggestions, Brad. Any specific ordinances you would like the Council to review? And what would you like to see included in minutes that isn't there currently? - Moderator

Josh Rabinowitz at January 10, 2015 at 1:53pm CST

Not entirely related to transparency, but I'm not sure where else to put the request: I'd like to get email or RSS updates on actions taken by the council in addition to draft agendas, and maybe email or Facebook reminders of city council meetings being streamed over ATXN. As has been mentioned earlier, availability of info is not a problem. I think Austin does a better job than most with transparency, though better minutes and follow-ups to resolutions are certainly necessary improvements. This is something that just winds up not being at top of mind because announcements of council activity are relatively quiet in a noisy world. Not actively reaching out to let people know about meetings could be viewed as a move to reduce transparency, though I don't believe that's what's happening here.

Coapublic Information admin at January 13, 2015 at 3:56pm CST

Thanks for your suggestion, Josh. -Moderator

Susan Pantell at January 12, 2015 at 2:30pm CST

I agree with the proposal and not with the people who say the information is adequate. Often, the back-up information for resolutions, including the actual resolution language, is not available until very soon before the meeting. I'm on the email list to receive Council meeting agendas, but major changes are made to the agendas between when I receive it and the actual meeting, and I receive no update. When measures are amended during the meetings, as they often are, it is very difficult to find the exact language that was approved.

Coapublic Information admin at January 13, 2015 at 3:56pm CST

Thanks, Susan. -Moderator

Debbie Russell at January 20, 2015 at 5:50pm CST

...and sometimes the language isn't available until the item is being presented :-(

Jennifer Houlihan at January 13, 2015 at 11:23am CST

Last year, I participated in a hackathon with the goal of creating a tool to increase city civic engagement. The idea was that citizens could sign up for meeting alerts, by keyword (water, dog park, bus fare, Austin Energy) based on posted agendas and backup and project updates. They could then pass the alert via social media to friends/colleagues with a shared interest in that issue. So what happened? Our programmers quit before the end of the first day. The City has multiple "project management" platforms, and a single project could be in multiple platforms, in different phases, yet not share a common ID number. The consistency and amount of background materials posted doesn't have a particular standard, and every department/commission has its own way of doing things, so while you may find the powerpoint presented at one commission, that same presentation presented to another commission is not posted. The timing of how quickly materials are posted after they are received/discussed varies widely. In sum, the basic data hygiene was so uneven as to make any kind of modeling or mining practically impossible for software - much less a regular person with a job and two kids to get to soccer practice, trying to stay informed in real time. For a city that talks so much about tech, we have a lot of ground-level work to do.

Coapublic Information admin at January 13, 2015 at 3:57pm CST

Thanks, Jennifer; how would you suggest the City approach this challenge? -Moderator

Jennifer Houlihan at January 13, 2015 at 5:04pm CST

I'd start by talking to Lewis Leff in the Office of Sustainability. His team (I think he was with CM Riley's office at the time) at the hackathon had a very similar idea, and was already a bit farther down the track with theirs, including mocked-up screenshots and suggested functionality. And I've give this to the Office of Innovation, not an IT team, to reengineer. My two cents.

D Sitko at January 13, 2015 at 6:22pm CST

I think that a single site/source with all information would be helpful. As others have mentioned, items are often disparately placed or require a burden for an individual to locate. Timely information shared via social media and email listservs is also appreciated.

Andria Castillo at January 14, 2015 at 10:14am CST

The one area of concern is the number of potential committees. Many of the committees can be interdependent such as affordable housing and possibly providing social services in those affordable housing areas. Even the community block grants are used to support health and human services programs. By having so many separate committees, there could be a redundancy of conversations and silo decision making instead of encouraging collaboration and leveraging financial resources. My feedback is to consider broadening the committees scope with more of a vision for what they could accomplish then assigning the appropriate departments, etc to them. Granted some committees need to be separate for legal reasons but not all 13 possible committees.

Charlie Dismore at January 14, 2015 at 4:39pm CST

Totally concur. Documentation must be comprehensive, detailed, and available to the public at our request.

Ma Ma at January 14, 2015 at 5:28pm CST

I see this in two parts: 1. Access by the average citizen to information already available 2. Additional information needed/desired by citizens not currently available

1. There is a lot of information out there, but it can be so time consuming to locate. In the private sector there are websites that are simply organized and menu driven, yet contain huge amounts of data. Something that starts from CoA main page so anyone can find it.
2. It is often the case that back-up information used to make decisions is unavailable or so hard to find it is virtually unavailable. Also there times that discussion occurs on the dias about data I have not been able to locate. Lastly, there have times when agenda items are amended during an active council session. The amended item is not available to the public. Pieces of paper are flying around. Sometimes even the

council members are confused. Again in the private sector there are meeting applications that can be edited on the fly and seen by all both physically in the meeting via large screens and computers, and those viewing remotely.

Austin has tremendous business and technical expertise in its' citizens. Don't spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on studying the tools and applications out there without leveraging this expertise first.

Rick Rick at January 15, 2015 at 1:54pm CST

I like this guy Ma Ma. He seems to have some good ideas.

Therese Baer at January 20, 2015 at 9:04am CST

I vote "Yes" on this proposal. Let's try it, as is. if it doesn't work well, then let's modify it.

Debbie Russell at January 20, 2015 at 5:43pm CST

Slightly off topic...but I think this should be folded in somewhere in this discussion: we should enhance access to COUNCILMEMBERS.

Once upon a time...up to around 2007/8, anyway...there were no locked doors or "gatekeeper" ahead of those locked doors to council offices. Many see that step as symbolic of our council-of-old's unresponsiveness (that 10-1 was hoping to address).

Back at the old city hall...I could just walk into Goodman or Slusher's offices - speak to THEIR gatekeeper/receptionist - sometimes there wasn't even that--they had less staff than cmbrs do now (so it's not like they can't handle a walk in here and there), but were more than happy, if they weren't already in a meeting or about to have one, to talk to you if even for a few minutes. The door to the council offices at the new hall wasn't locked until somewhere around the end of Mayor Wynn's/beginning of Mayor Leffingwell's term.

These were the days of "round robin" meetings/skirting the open meetings act...of too many back door deals that resulted in bad public policy (a water treatment plant to treat water we don't have; subsidies for the richest corps in the world, etc.). Locking the doors and having to tell outer-chamber receptionist who you were/why you wanted to drop in and maybe hand an aide something or whatever, smacked of this not being "THE PEOPLE'S HOUSE" as Cmbr. Houston noted inauguration night.

Let's truly make this OUR seat of gov't again, please.

Debbie Russell at January 20, 2015 at 5:49pm CST

PS: you can't call it "security"...we already pass through metal detectors...which we didn't used to have to 'back in the day' either.

Karen T at January 20, 2015 at 6:16pm CST

Now that we have our own Councilmember in our own district, the City might actually get more citizen input. And those citizens are not going to necessarily know where and how the information is available that some folks who have been involved in government have been accustomed to over the years. So that should be considered.

There are issues that have occurred over the years that I had no clue was going on until the rules were actually in place. The one I remember clearest is when the hours for watering our lawns were changed. I remember the "stake holders" had their meetings and came up with "the hours" for watering yet none of the stake holders apparently still watered with a hose - making the middle of the night hours unrealistic for some of us with hoses. Stuff that affects homeowners, like watering and this crazy ban on plastic bags, should get some real input from citizens. But I will tell you - when these things were happening at City Hall, I had no clue. There needs to be a way to communicate to the public before these things happen so that real input can be gained and I'm pretty sure, most citizens are going to need a primer on how they could participate. This is the right time to change the mindset when it comes to participation. Folks just need to figure out how to make it user friendly. Look in the employee pool and find who is good at doing this kind of work.

Sumit DasGupta, Retired Senior Vice President of Engineering, Silicon Integration Initiative, Inc. at January 22, 2015 at 11:34am CST

Thanks,... this topic relates to my comments on the previous item.

Susana Almanza at January 22, 2015 at 11:52am CST

Currently, transparency and efficiency of posting of Minutes and Backup, is a great concern. The new website is not easy to navigate. Residents need time to review items that will be voted on and/or discussed. There is need for improvement in Topic 3. Council meetings need to be rotated and held in the specific council districts. City Hall is not accessible to all, especially when there are too many items on the agenda, you can't find parking. District representatives need to be meeting in the community, not just City Hall, let's bring some real change and real public engagement. District representatives need to inform their District residents about upcoming items that will impact the District and/or City wide changes.

Heidi Gerbracht at January 22, 2015 at 12:26pm CST

Not completely on topic, but on the availability of useful information: How about a way to opt in to getting emailed notice of meetings as soon as they're posted, with a link to the agenda? Many of us will be interested in multiple committees, and assuming the clerk will post notice of them per usual, it would be nice to be able to opt in to automatic email notice of posted meetings so you don't miss meetings because you forgot to look at the website one day. This

will be especially useful now that we'll have more Council and subcommittee meetings to pay attention to! Thank you.

Carol Lee at January 22, 2015 at 4:55pm CST

I agree that the City's record-keeping, and public access to records, needs to be improved. Take advantage of current technology and bring the City's information management into the 21st Century!

Topic: Fourth Proposal: Take immediate steps to Initiate longer term improvements for public engagement

Proposed strategies include discussing the following issues during a “deep dive” session with the entire Council for the purpose of soliciting ideas to enhance staff’s current engagement efforts:

- Evaluate creating a mediator position (on staff or contract) to reduce conflict for planning, zoning, contracting, and purchasing issues.
- Initiate a public process to research, obtain public input, and make recommendations to Council on best practices for public engagement in city government. Create Public Engagement Task Force supported by experts in public engagement best practices.
- Align City Commissions with Council Committee structure over time to enhance public engagement and better address Commission recommendations.

What are your thoughts on this proposal?

Feedback Summary

- Mediator position
 - Positive- more efficiently for meetings
 - Negative- seems **redundant** with council member positions
- Engagement Outlets
 - Positive feedback for current outlets like Speak Up Austin, surveys, polls and other commentary forums.
 - Request **more web based platforms for meeting attendance and engagement in real time** (similar structure as the twitter / phone call in / text in poll meeting held on 1/22)
 - More remote ways to engage and provide input (ex- IN districts)

34 Responses

Tim Thomas at January 09, 2015 at 5:35pm CST

- How would a mediator help? The Council Members are the mediators. Delegating to a whipping boy may make it easier to go back to the voters, but it's abdicating responsibility.
- A best practices system would be worthwhile.
- Aligning Commissions and Committees sounds good.

I'd add that the biggest process is not that we are lacking in public input. Someone will always lose. On most issues we need far less public input. We don't need 20 people showing up in person to reiterate the same 20 bullet points that they've already sent to council by email. We need a council that can stand up to voters and make decision quickly.

Coapublic Information admin at January 13, 2015 at 4:21pm CST

Thanks for your input, Tim.

Fritz Knopp at January 15, 2015 at 10:56pm CST

I don't agree that "we need a council that can stand up to voters and make a decision quickly." Not at all. The Council's job is to listen and absorb. And then after gathering all the facts and organizing them, the Council should carefully and even slowly if necessary come to a decision & plan to implement the citizens' ideas and wishes. The Council members should not be considered experts, any more than (or even as much as, in some cases) the citizens. Austin has lots of brilliant citizens.

Also, the citizens need to be given a decent amount of time to present their case! This is not happening now. Enforcing rigid cut-offs does not have good results: Important information is often missed this way, plus the practice of guillotine-style timekeeping is exhausting and insulting to the populace!

LaTisha Anderson at January 09, 2015 at 5:51pm CST

Depending on the situation a Mediator could be efficitive. Could also cut down on the challenges that could or would have been resolved by a mediator but instead are being addressed by Council Members.

Coapublic Information admin at January 13, 2015 at 4:21pm CST

Thanks, LaTisha. -Moderator

Sarah Hicks at January 10, 2015 at 4:12am CST

A smartphone app. The app could be designed for free by allowing any resident to submit a prototype. Citizens could come to this site to choose the winning design. Winner gets major

publicity and their name goes on the app. Anyone who has been a resident for two years or longer is eligible to buy the app for their phone for \$5.00. All proceeds go to the homeless for food and shelter. The app could have several topics for locals to view and vote on what they feel should be reviewed by the council. The proposals with the highest votes would then have a chance to speak to council. Less people at meetings, less time wasted, and better accuracy on public opinion. If anyone has a problem with the \$5.00 one time fee, two hours of community service could waive the donation. One vote per citizen each meeting on each topic. Citizens with no smartphone could purchase a voting ID that could be used to cast vote via phone, internet, or dropbox. Conflicts could be settled without a mediator or the council.

Will Will at January 10, 2015 at 5:24am CST

That would be against the Texas Constitution Sarah as a municipality cannot require payment in exchange for a vote. It also runs afoul of the Texas Open Meetings Act. Two hours of community service in exchange well that violates the US Constitution. It is a governmental body, not a correctional institution. Besides you can email council from a smartphone, which many working class people cannot afford in the City of Austin because they are nickel ed and dimed by Austin Energy, thanks Larry Arnold Weis, not. But they need to cut his pay in half at least, ditto with Ott.

Sarah Hicks at January 10, 2015 at 4:32pm CST

It isn't a "payment" it is a donation, for software, not a vote. The "municipality" wouldn't receive the money, the less fortunate would. I apologize for the use of the word "vote" in my idea, as I was using the Webster/Oxford as reference not freedictionary.com. Let's use choice instead. The app would only serve as a voice for the public to deliver their choice on issues, not a final decision. Everyone in the community has a way to speak up, even more so than now. I would think with a way to organize public opinion the efficiency of the council and decision making time would benefit. I also provided a free way for those who want to be involved in the poll. Community service should be every citizens contribution back to the community.....not punishment. Sustainability in anything requires contribution from the strongest to the weakest. I would never suggest something unconstitutional. My idea considers everyone in the community and offers solution. How ignorant to view the term "community service" and associate it to prison. Community service is the most important and honorable contribution a citizen holds. You should try it. There is no need for the constant defensive opinion in society.....it only creates more problems.

Coapublic Information admin at January 13, 2015 at 4:24pm CST

Thanks for the suggestion, Sarah. Have you seen such an app anywhere else? - Moderator

Rich Heyman at January 10, 2015 at 10:34am CST

Institute participatory budgeting in the districts: <http://www.ward49.com/participatory-budgeting/#Intro>

Coapublic Information admin at January 13, 2015 at 4:23pm CST

Thanks for your suggestion, Rich. -Moderator

Brad Parsons at January 10, 2015 at 12:12pm CST

Sounds good, but in the end it still depends upon the true listening willingness of the Council members to the public and your good judgement to understand when you the Council are being served bad or biased information, false assumptions, predetermined conclusions and the like. I was pleased to see at your first orientation meeting that it was clear all of you are sufficiently skeptical and probably understand that.

I will mention an example. Staff told you at the first orientation meeting that they are constantly on the lookout for assumptive potential problems on the horizon that could create problems, but they tried to give the impression that everything is under control and the City is in a great position. I can tell you something that is happening right now and quite possibly could give you a big problem with revenue and budgeting within a year or two, OIL. For those of you who were here in the late 80's, you know what I am talking about.

Two other points, your biggest CRISIS issues that Staff has not gotten under control are WATER and TRAFFIC. In fact, paying tax dollars to promote the city actually makes those two CRISIS problems worse. There are a lot of false assumptions underlying the WATER and TRAFFIC issues; you will have to weed through those. But, you can be certain, WATER and TRAFFIC are CRISIS issues that Staff and the last Council have not solved.

Coapublic Information admin at January 13, 2015 at 4:22pm CST

Thanks, Brad. -Moderator

Kevin Tuerff at January 11, 2015 at 6:49pm CST

To truly get public opinion from the 860,000 residents of Austin, budget for independent market research on solutions for major issues facing the Council. Each district should also have a budget Council members to communicate with their constituents.

Coapublic Information admin at January 13, 2015 at 4:23pm CST

Thanks for the suggestions, Kevin. -Moderator

Rollie Cole at January 11, 2015 at 8:37pm CST

Engagement AT City Council is a tiny piece of the puzzle. Engagement WITH City Council should be the long-term goal. That includes before, during, and after City Council meetings. Technology, such as a software app, can help -- but only if the council members remain committed to engagement with the citizens they represent. Activities like this request for comments, with opportunity to vote on the comments of others, is a good example of the type of thing the council could do for all sorts of major issues facing the city. Ask citizens for ideas, ask cities for data, ask citizens for opinions/reactions to the data and ideas of others, and re-present the results on web sites like this one to allow for further engagement. Polls and surveys are good, especially the kind where you can see the intermediate results as soon as you submit your response. Work with places like the Annette Straus Center at UT for more ideas on engagement WITH city council, not just AT city council meetings.

Coapublic Information admin at January 13, 2015 at 4:32pm CST

Thanks for your suggestion, Rollie. -Moderator

Mike Mike at January 13, 2015 at 10:04am CST

What people really want is the ability to submit their opinion and to have someone actually listen to it and to consider it when making decision that affect their lives and taxes. Actually attending a council meeting is inconvenient, has traffic and parking issues, ect. Perhaps improved electronic public engagement would help. Attend live by web and improved email or web community feedback during and before meetings would help engage with the public. The key is to let people know their opinion is being heard and considered.

Coapublic Information admin at January 13, 2015 at 4:40pm CST

Thanks for your input, Mike. -Moderator

Jennifer Houlihan at January 13, 2015 at 11:33am CST

First, it's council's job to mediate the disputes that make it to that level. In my experience, by the time they get to that point - zoning or otherwise - there have already been mediation efforts, conversations with CMs, and a significant investment of time by staff. Be Solomon: you were

elected to make hard decisions. And second, if you want to use tech to help build the relationships between council and the public, I'd start with replying to every message that's sent, even if it's just an auto-reply that says "your message has been delivered." And it's not enough for the councilmember to be available to communicate and be service oriented - it applies to their staff (and other city staff) as well. I recently had an issue come up on a weekend and needed an answer from the city, but wasn't sure who to call. One CM's staff got back to me that day with the contact info for the person I needed, and had let them know I'd be calling. A second CM's staff got back to me the next day, with some (but not all) of the same info. And the third CM's staff sent me a form email on Monday, letting me know they had filed some sort of form on my behalf...and it was two weeks before I was called by that office, saying "Hey, we just got this - isn't this the thing we fixed weeks ago?" I'd respectfully suggest working on some of the basics before worrying about revisioning a new mediation structure.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 13, 2015 at 4:41pm CST

Thanks for the input, Jennifer. -Moderator

D Sitko at January 13, 2015 at 6:30pm CST

I support the investigation into best practices and aligning committees and commissions. I do not believe a mediator is necessary in general although a nonpartisan, independent facilitator may be merited for certain special meetings/executive sessions. I wholeheartedly support the idea of a web based platform during the council meetings so that residents can listen, view, and submit comments and questions in real time without having to actually attend the meeting. These could also be used for committees or special meetings on given topics (e.g. work groups). The Federal Government uses this website for public comment on Federal regulations. Perhaps Austin can model something similar. <http://www.regulations.gov/#!/home> They also post matters in the Federal Register, again, Austin could design something similar <https://www.federalregister.gov/>. Lastly, one potential useful source for insight on how to improve our process is the Center for Effective Government http://www.foreffectivegov.org/open_accountable_government.

Coapublic Information **admin** at January 14, 2015 at 9:15am CST

Thanks, D. -Moderator

Charlie Dismore at January 14, 2015 at 4:49pm CST

We don't need a Mediator to facilitate between citizens and Council. We don't need another Task Force to engage the public in city management activities. The best way to engage the public will be to ensure that our voices are heard and paid attention to in the decisions made on our behalf. As most folks know, participation in City votes has been woefully low - in the neighborhood of around 8 to 10 percent of registered voters. My opinion of why is that most

people do not care enough to get involved. And for those who do, they have not been successful in changing the direction of ill-advised spending of public money. We have high hopes the 10-1 format will begin to make a difference, with Council votes being watched and our representative held accountable by his or her constituents. We do not see a need to align commissions with council committees. Their input is available through the City Manager and Staff.

Ma Ma at January 14, 2015 at 7:15pm CST

How various citizens feel about their input to council

-Some citizens might feel they are being listened to, only if the council responds and acts upon their input. Since some of these individuals are very active in the local political process, the squeaky wheel theory applies. Interaction with our representatives is part of our governmental process. But each citizens input should be given equal weight. - Sometimes individuals give input as representatives of an organization or advocacy group. That also is part of our governmental process. But the Council should use caution to ensure that the majority of people in these organizations truly feel the way they are being represented.

Rick Rick at January 15, 2015 at 2:07pm CST

If this topic is to "go back to the drawing board" and start fresh ... why not allow each District to focus on its input to its District Rep, at the District Level. BUT ... we need to have the discussions / meetings with our District Rep IN OUR DISTRICT and NOT downtown. That has always been the problem. The "silent majority" is back in the district while the "vocal minority" is flapping its chops at a City Council meeting.

If a Mediator function is created, those people should roam from District to District, holding meetings and absorbing the feel of the City, heading off big problems, with the help of each District Rep at that local meeting ... Just an idea.

Fritz Knopg at January 15, 2015 at 11:07pm CST

I think:

- 1) No moderator: the Council is the moderator.
- 2) Hear from the Citizens their ideas on "best practices." You could hire a 'Conductor' (rather than an "expert") to oversee a few meetings where the Citizens expressed those ideas to the Council.
- 3) Don't start separating everything into Districts. This is ONE city, with many parts, but we all live together and we all care about all the parts (or should).

pinaki Ghosh at January 19, 2015 at 10:42pm CST

All these new hiring scares many people - more cost. There are 2 questions

1. How do the council committee complement the city commissions?
2. How they will co-ordinate the job of public outreach?

The question implies that City Commissions are not doing a proper job of involving the public where necessary for long term discussion - this is true but hiring a new set of people will not solve this. We have to make the communication procedure better.

One great example is how Ken Mori communicated about the 10-1 - a lot of people got involved and one bad example is how accessory building plan got passed without much public involvement. But ultimately we are talking about more effective city commissions with better public input and better communication so lets focus on that process.

Therese Baer at January 20, 2015 at 9:11am CST

I'm not sure I understand this proposal. A real-life example would be nice.

Karen T at January 20, 2015 at 5:54pm CST

Drives me nuts when I hear the City wants to hire someone on contract. Do we not have competent City workers? Are we not growing more competent people every day? This is Austin. We should have the best already! If you are going to conduct business differently, you may have to do a little reorganization to get the right people in the right roles. But please, no more tax dollars to have an outside party recommend something. Our own City workers ought to know best.

Sumit DasGupta, Retired Senior Vice President of Engineering, Silicon Integration Initiative, Inc. at January 22, 2015 at 11:41am CST

There is one topic that I am not seeing any mention of,... which relates to organizational effectiveness in city administration. During the last elections, I heard off-the-cuff remarks about this and that there was no oversight of this anywhere. The city should be run like a business, and like all businesses, there should some oversight, with benchmarking with other cities, to determine how effectiveness can be enhanced, as part of a continuous process. This should be a topic for either the proposed "Finance" or "Audit" committees. Citizens with extensive business experience should be sought out for advice and counsel.

Susana Almanza at January 22, 2015 at 12:12pm CST

The City doesn't need to hire a mediator. To many times, staff has been making the decisions for communities without consulting with the impacted communities (looking at developers view only). Staff needs to be incorporated into the council committees. Let people engage, make sure that meeting times are accessible to the working class people, those who are not paid to be at the council meetings. District representatives should host meetings in Districts about upcoming agenda items for that District and items on City-wide impact. This would at least inform residents about upcoming votes and/or discussions on particular items. At least the residents would be informed about what would be taking place in their neighborhoods and whether they wished to be more engaged. Imagine City Council District representatives engaging with their constituents on a regular bases.

Heidi Gerbracht at January 22, 2015 at 12:36pm CST

Just a note that any mediator would need to be aware and incorporate the fact that there are almost never just two sides in a discussion on city policy or even on a zoning case. Also, there are rarely individuals who engage in the process who represent the interests of the city at large- specifically with regard to zoning- the neighborhood and the developer are not the only parties with interest in the decision, even though they're usually the only voices represented in the conversation. As for RECA, we would support and participate in any efforts to make longer term improvements in public engagement.

Carol Lee at January 22, 2015 at 5:10pm CST

Is a Public Engagement Task Force with experts necessary? We have lots of Staff who have fancy titles and formal training to be a public servant. I think the problem has been more an issue of sincerely wanting to engage the public. If there are any efforts to establish a District Office for any council members, please inventory the City-owned facilities to find and develop an appropriate space that would allow for the same citizen participation at the District Office as at City Hall. The District Offices could provide space for CMs to meet with constituents as well as the public to provide testimony (via televideo). Consider allowing citizens to remotely provide opinion on an issue (i.e., whether support/oppose/neutral, comments, which district reside in, any affiliations with organizations affected by the action, etc) rather than having to go to the kiosk at City Hall.

CITY OF AUSTIN

Enhancing Public Participation at City Council

Austin 3-1-1 Input Report

1/22/2015

Service Request Summary Report 15-00014402

Printed Date : Jan 27, 2015 2:02:56 PM

Type: Community Project Feedback	SR #: 15-00014402
Area: -	Priority: Standard
Group: Community Engagement	Status: New
Jurisdiction: City of Austin	Status Date: Jan 23, 2015 12:31:27 AM
Input By: HENDERSON, CATHERINE	Created Date: Jan 23, 2015 12:31:27 AM
Method Received: Phone	Overdue on:
Location: 1520 RUTHERFORD LN, AUSTIN, TX	
Location Details:	
SR Comments: this information was recieved via the Austin 311 Mobile Application:	

Flex Notes	
Flex Note Question	Flex Note Answer
Give the name or description of the Community Engagement Project you are calling about	City Council Reorganization proposal
Did you miss the last meeting?	
Do you have any comments that you would like the stakeholder or City to consider in the process?	The current proposal to reorganize City Council and push public input to committee level will reduce the length of Council meetings but if staff will be speaking at Council meetings to explain agenda items then public citizens should also be allowed to speak. (General Comment)
Do you have any suggestion to increase participation in the process?	The current proposal to reorganize City Council and push public input to committee level will reduce the length of Council meetings but if staff will be speaking at Council meetings to explain agenda items then public citizens should also be allowed to speak. (General Comment)
Would you like a callback?	No
What is the preferred language for callback?	
The Community Engagement team will contact you within 5 business days.	not required
For more information about this project and other opportunities to provide feedback to the City please visit austintexas.gov/community	citizen was also referred to http://austintexas.gov/myatxgov for additional ways to provide input
Department Use Only	
What Community Engagement Project are you calling about?	
Place notes on feedback in comments field.	
Type of feedback (main category).	Client Services (External to 311)
Feedback type - Client Services.	Feedback for other city departments
Department of person submitting feedback.	Citizen
Dept original call was concerning	Mayor & City Council
Root cause of feedback.	Invalid - Submitter did not understand process
Feedback result.	Correct SR Submitted

Service Request Summary Report

15-00014402

Printed Date : Jan 27, 2015 2:02:56 PM

Participants				
Participant Type	Participant Name	Address	Email	Phones/Extension
Participant	, Refused			
Citizen				
COA Employee				

Activities				
Activities	Assigned Staff	Due Date	Completed Date	Outcome
Action Taken by Staff				

Details				
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Activities				
Activities	Assigned Staff	Due Date	Completed Date	Outcome
Review Request	Community Engagement Staff			

Details				
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Activities				
Activities	Assigned Staff	Due Date	Completed Date	Outcome
Triage Request	HENDERSON, CATHERINE	Jan 23, 2015 2:49:00 AM	Jan 23, 2015 12:15:00 AM	Workgroup Completes Feedback

Details				
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forwarding this general comment to CIS to forward to the SPOC in Council. If this was misdirected, please notify Catherine.Henderson@austintexas.gov to advise. Thank You!!!

Activities				
Activities	Assigned Staff	Due Date	Completed Date	Outcome
Review Request	Client and Information Services		Jan 23, 2015 12:35:00 AM	Feedback Not Actionable - CLOSE SR

Details				
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PLEASE CANCEL RESPONSE TO THIS ISSUE- AFTER REVIEWING INTRANET, DID SEE INFORMATION ON HOW TO PROCESS GENERAL COMMENTS REGARDING THE CITY COUNCIL PROPOSED REORGANIZATION. HAVE SUBMITTED A COMMUNITY PROJECT FEEDBACK SR TO ENSURE INFO ROUTED TO PROPER DEPARTMENT.

Service Request Summary Report

15-00013845

Printed Date : Jan 27, 2015 2:02:56 PM

Type: Community Project Feedback

SR #: 15-00013845

Area: -

Priority: Standard

Group: Community Engagement

Status: New

Jurisdiction: City of Austin

Status Date: Jan 22, 2015 9:20:24 AM

Input By: Spot311 Interface

Created Date: Jan 22, 2015 9:20:24 AM

Method: Spot311 Interface

Overdue on:

Received:

Location: 1101 W ANNIE ST, AUSTIN, TX

Location Details: N30.25 E97.76; XY: 3108169.1381995366, 10063828.290036485; LatLng: 30.249422297679352,

Details: -97.76276516009113

SR Comments: I am in District 9
Will there be an email sign up so that our District rep (council member K Tovo) can contact us about COA news?

Flex Notes

Flex Note Question

Give the name or description of the Community Engagement Project you are calling about

Flex Note Answer

Speak up Austin

Did you miss the last meeting?

Yes

Do you have any comments that you would like the stakeholder or City to consider in the process?

Do you have any suggestion to increase participation in the process?

Would you like a callback?

No

What is the preferred language for callback?

English

The Community Engagement team will contact you within 5 business days.

For more information about this project and other opportunities to provide feedback to the City please visit austintexas.gov/community

Department Use Only

What Community Engagement Project are you calling about?

Participants

Participant Type	Participant Name	Address	Email	Phones/Extension
Participant				

Activities

Activities	Assigned Staff	Due Date	Completed Date	Outcome
Action Taken by Staff				

Details

Service Request Summary Report

15-00013161

Printed Date : Jan 27, 2015 2:02:56 PM

Type: Community Project Feedback

SR #: 15-00013161

Area: -

Priority: Standard

Group: Community Engagement

Status: New

Jurisdiction: City of Austin

Status Date: Jan 21, 2015 9:36:01 AM

Input By: Vasquez, Andrea

Created Date: Jan 21, 2015 9:36:01 AM

Method: Phone

Overdue on:

Received:

Location: 1520 RUTHERFORD LN, AUSTIN, TX

Location

Details:

SR Comments: citizen states that the meeting should be in spanish as well and that the topics of the meeting should be listed a week before the meetings are held

Flex Notes

Flex Note Question	Flex Note Answer
Give the name or description of the Community Engagement Project you are calling about	#myatxgov
Did you miss the last meeting?	Yes
Do you have any comments that you would like the stakeholder or City to consider in the process?	
Do you have any suggestion to increase participation in the process?	citizen states that the meeting should be in spanish as well and that the topics of the meeting should be listed a week before the meetings are held
Would you like a callback?	Yes
What is the preferred language for callback?	Spanish
The Community Engagement team will contact you within 5 business days.	
For more information about this project and other opportunities to provide feedback to the City please visit austintexas.gov/community	
Department Use Only	
What Community Engagement Project are you calling about?	

Participants

Participant Type	Participant Name	Address	Email	Phones/Extension
Participant	Munos, Oltaviano	931 UNION CHAPEL, CEDARCREEK, TX		HOME 512-584-1297

Activities

Activities	Assigned Staff	Due Date	Completed Date	Outcome
Action Taken by Staff				

Details

CITY OF AUSTIN

Enhancing Public Participation at City Council

Nextdoor Comment

1/22/2015

Next Door Comment:

Could the City Council consider holding one meeting every few months in Northwest Austin? The traffic is so bad getting downtown, it holds people back from going to their meetings.

Laura Root