

# City Council Special Called Meeting Transcript – 9/6/2018

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>> Mayor Adler: All right. I think we have a quorum so I think we can get started. Colleagues, it is Thursday, September 6th, 2018. It is 9:16. We are in the boards and commissions room here at city hall, 301 west second street. We have a special called session that will last until 11:00. So we have like an hour and 45 minutes. And this is a work session in anticipation of our first budget deliberative session, potentially happening next Tuesday. So let's dive right in. Manager, do you want to kick us off. >> Sure. Mayor, councilmembers, Spencer cronk, city manager. Thank you for having a space around the city's proposed budget for fiscal year 2019. Since we last met last week in the budget work session we have had a number of conversations with each of our offices. They've been very helpful in identifying both what are the shared goals we have as a community that aren't reflected in the proposed budget and potentially individual council objectives that they might want to put toward. Today's purpose is really to focus on the shared goals where we did see a majority of the council offices looking at items that we might want to include in the proposed budget, and we wanted to spend some time better understanding what the parameters around those potential amendments might look like. So I'm going to ask Ed van eenoo to walk us through those key topic areas and then we'll spend time at the end talking about next steps. >> Good morning, mayor, mayor pro tem, members of the council, Ed van eenoo,

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deputy chief financial officer. Just have a few slides where I'll tee up a number of items . , And I think our thought is as we go through this presentation we would actually pause at different points and get feedback and have discussion with council as opposed to just going through it all and then coming back to the discussion. So I'll kind of highlight where those points are. We wanted to start with just a look at our budget adoption timeline and the journey we've been on since the city manager presented the budget to you all on August 6th. On August 15th we had our first budget work session and at that work session we talked about our budget adoption process this year and how it was going to be different from prior years and started to form some consensus about how to proceed with our budget adoption. Based upon input from councilmembers we had a number of staff presentation. We talked to you about

funding in the budget for homelessness services, our parks and recreation department made a presentation on their budget. We talked about artist space and we also had some slides about our senior exemption. I will mention at the back of this presentation we did reprint, just as an appendix, for some context, the homelessness presentation and the senior exemption presentation, since those are both things that we're anticipating will be discussed today, we just wanted to provide that context to you again in this packet. And then we ended that meeting on the 15th with our -- the beginning of our conversation with you all about some of the potential budget amendments that you were considering that you might want to make to the proposed budget as part of your budget adoption process. August 22nd we had our first public hearing and then on August 29th we had our second work session in this room. Again, there were more presentations based upon the input we received from you at our one on one meetings. We talked about our budget highlights. Rodney was here to talk about the development services department and the changes in that budget

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becoming an enterprise, et cetera. We had a presentation on deferred maintenance, funding for our cultural centers and we also talked about potentially creating a new park development review fee so the parks department could recover the costs that they incur in the development process. We also floated to you for the first time three budget scenarios that kind of seemed to be shaping based upon our conversations with the council. I'm going to touch on those again, just reiterate those on my next slide. Then we continued our conversations with you about some of your prospective budget amendments. The second budget hearing was on August 30th and that leads us to today, September 6th. In that blue box on your right I highlight kind of what our intent is today. I do want to revisit those three budget adoption scenarios we talked about on the 29th. We did want to then discuss with you and -- these are some of the pauses in the presentation that I was talking about. We would like to discuss with you some of the items that have been floating around where it really feels like there's growing consensus on those items. So emcote and homelessness funding and the senior exemption are some of those topics. And of course to fund some of those things we've been talking about increasing the tax rate slightly from what it was proposed at. And then we would like to round out the day with just one more round of the conversations about the amendments that you would like to see made between now and Tuesday, September 11th, when we would be before you seeking your approval of the budget. So in regards to those three broad scenarios, these aren't intended to be real specific, but scenario one is just we've heard from some councilmembers support for potentially just adopting budget the way it was presented, which would be the smallest property tax increase of the various scenarios we're looking at. And just as a reminder, it does include significant

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investments across the outcome indicators that you as council prioritized back on September 4th, homelessness, housing, et cetera. In scenario 2 we view this as a broad scenario where we could

increase the tax rate by some amount, but allocate that to one-time needs or reserves. The thought process there being that there is the risk that the state legislature will lower the revenue cap in the next session. It's currently at eight percent, and we'll see what action they may take, but it's been proposed at two and a half percent, which would be a significant impact to the city and all cities. So increasing the tax rate to save six percent, which is what you set as the maximum, and putting those dollars to reserves would kind of start creating a rainy day fund for the city should we be capped. Not only does it create that rainy day fund, but it also increases your levy. It would be used to address pending council resolutions. So there are a whole bunch of council resolutions we've addressed in this budget, but there are other resolutions where you've asked for us to do some work and report back to you and those report backs haven't occurred yet. So one thought here is that this would be a source of funding to address some of your future priorities as that work is completed be. And then also one time funding that we put this at one time funding for the reserves. That's to dial back what was capped by the state than recurring expenditures. When we put new dollars towards additional staff we look at that as recurring expense and we need to look at that expense as even under a revenue cap, like deferred maintenance, if you put money towards that, it's much easier for us to pull

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back on should we need to if we were capped at something lower than the eight percent level. And scenario 3, which is built on scenario 2, but essentially opening the door to address some of your highest priority issues, like emcot, like homelessness, so you would be putting some of the money to recurring expenditures. One of your priorities was to increase the senior is exemption, which is something that we lumped into scenario 3. So you can see we see some of the advantages to scenario 3 as it would soften the property tax impact on seniors and disability homeowners were you able to increase the senior exemption. And of course, that scenario allows some funding for some of your highest priority initiatives like the ones I previously mentioned. So one of the key questions for you to consider today as we go through this, and I wouldn't necessarily say you should consider this one right now because it might be putting the cart before the horse a little bit, but some of the things we're talking about staff views the most viable way of funding them, some degree of an increase in the tax rate from the 4.9% at which it was proposed. We just put some scenarios up here. You can see if you went to five percent it would generate another \$590,000. At the top end, if you went to six percent it would generate an additional \$5.2 million. You could pick any number in between, but that's just to give you an options. But of course keep in mind that as you allocate that increased tax revenue to expenditures, do you have a reserve policy that calls to maintain the reserves at 12% of total general fund expenditures. So as those expenditures go up, we have to keep an accounting of how much goes to reserves in order to comply with our 12% policy. In regards to -- I wanted to provide you this update because we've had a couple of things since the proposed budget was delivered to you. One of those changes you heard about already was the -- really this is the only change, the reduction in the Austin energy impact

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to a typical ratepayer. At the time of the proposed budget we were projecting it would be just over two dollars. The tariff has been finalized. It's been presented to council and so the final tariff will actually see a \$3.36 reduction in the bill for a typical ratepayer. The other change I made to this is just perspective. It hasn't occurred yet, but down at the bottom we've rerun the property tax bill as if you had -- if you were to increase the tax rate 6% instead of the 4.9%. So if that's how budget landed, the total impact to our typical ratepayer from the current year to next year would be \$82.39 annually, a 2.1% increase. >>

Kitchen: I just have a quick question about the Austin energy. >> Yes, ma'am. >> Kitchen: So my understanding, and I want to make sure I'm understanding this correct. So the ability to reduce combs from the bucket of funds that has to do with pass-through funds, if I'm understanding correctly. So could you just speak to that for a minute? Because I know it's been -- the question has been raised to us about the ability to use that fund -- use -- instead of reducing by 3.36, the ability to reduce rates. And I understand that these are separate buckets of money and you can't do that. Could you speak to that for a minute or maybe we could address that later? >> I could speak to it a little bit, but if we get into the weeds, we might want wait for others to come speak to it. One is the base rate, just what you as the customer pay to get electrons delivered to your house. There's no change in that. In addition to the base rate there's a number of pass-through expenses that are outside of Austin energy's control. One of them is the

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regulatory charge that's paid to ERCOT, the electric reliability council of Texas for the Texas-wide grid that we participate in. We're just given a share of that cost to participate in the grid and we pay it. That's actually coming down a little bit from what they had initially projected in the proposed budget. Another one is the power supply adjustment. So as fuel costs go up that power supply adjustment is going to go up. It just gets passed on to the customers. If the fuel costs come down, it gets passed on to the ratepayers. So those two aspects are coming down a little bit that results in the \$3.36 reduction. So we can't artificially keep those rates higher than what they need to be for those two charges in order to give a base rate reduction. >> Kitchen: All right, thank you. >> Mayor Adler: So with respect to page 4, the income tax, the increased tax rate from the Ford 4.9 is student .95 as shown on the next page? >> No, on the next page we updated that slide as if council -- if we were to go to the six percent maximum that you've set. So at the very bottom there I talked about this now being the six percent. >> Mayor Adler: Got it. Okay, thank you. And then just to touch base on this because it's being reported differently in some of the media. When we talk about the six percent, we're not talking about a budget increase of six percent. Is that right? >> No. The six percent is the increase above the effective operations and maintenance rate, which is defined in state law. >> Mayor Adler: Do you know what the budget -- the general fund budget increase is that's being proposed? >> So the general fund increase -- it's a little bit convoluted because of the DSD moving out, but the

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general fund increase would be 5.5% of an increase from fiscal year '18 to '19 after dsd is removed from '19. We're -- trying to true it up, it would be a five percent increase if dsd not being in the budget for both years. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much. Why don't you continue. I'm other, hang on a minute. Councilmember troxclair. >> What about all funds? >> All funds was a four percent increase. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. >> So this is one of the places where we're going to want to pause. This is a conversation we've heard from a lot of you, publicly and in our one on one meetings is a conversation about some degree of increase in the senior exemption. We have mostly heard from folks saying they would like to see something on the smaller side of the scale. You could set this at any amount you want, but currently your exemption is 85,500. It's the same level that both the Travis county and central health offer to seniors. And so on this one we just put together some options. There could obviously be tons of other options, but if you wanted to increase the exemption by \$4,500 to a total of 90,000, that would lower our revenues by 770 thundershowers. That depends on the tax rate you ultimately approve. So the revenue reduction we're calculating is if ultimately we were to go to a six percent then you would end up with 770,000 leaf revenue. So it wouldn't be 5.2 revenue more, it would be 5.2 less this 770 and you can see we did the same thing for a 2,500-dollar increase. Again, there's no limit or restrictions on how you set this. We're just giving a couple of examples based upon what we heard from council was for a modest increase in the senior exemption. So I think there we would be seeking some input and direction on council from council on this.

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>> Flannigan: Ed, can you remind me what the additional two percent in the regular homestead exemption is reducing revenues by? Just for context. >> Let me flip ahead in our slides because I'm trying to remember if some of the background we put on the exemption included that. That information. >> Flannigan: I know we already made that decision, but my preference was always to increase the senior exemption more and not do -- because it's the flat rate, as we all know is the more equitable type of exemption. But we did the two percent over my protest. But I still think it would be good to do a little bit to the senior exemption, acknowledging to the seniors that are getting this exemption that they are also getting the two percent homestead. So I don't want any seniors who are paying attention to think that this is the only exemption they get. They're also getting the full homestead exemption. But I would support going to 90,000. >> I don't have it memorized, but I'm trying to get you that information while our conversation is happening here. >> Kitchen: If you're wanting to hear from people, I'm supporting taking it to the 90,000. >> Mayor Adler: Further discussion on the dais? I support increasing the senior exemption as well. Councilmember troxclair. >> Troxclair: I'm sorry I don't have it in front of me. Is this a level that holds seniors harmless? >> No. We calculated that again. It's dependent on the tax rate you ultimately endorse. At a six percent tax rate increase you would need to increase the senior exemption by \$17,500 to hold seniors in aggregate at the same levels of taxes that they're currently paying,

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inclusive of the exemption. >> Troxclair: So that number would have to be 17,000 to hold them harmless. The 45 number would need to be 17500. >> It would need to increase \$17,000 to 103,000. The property value exempt from taxation would need to go up by \$17,500. >> Houston: As one of those seniors, I support the 90,000. >> Mayor Adler: Pio. >> Renteria: I'm also supporting the 90,000 senior exemption. But Ed, I find it interesting one of the comments you made earlier, you're saying if we invest in personnel, then if the state reduces it down to four percent, then that's considered part of the base. So it won't be -- >> It's a lot harder to adjust to a revenue cap when you're dealing with people and their jobs and their families than it is to scale back on some deferred maintenance needs to we might be able to address through other mechanisms. You're talking about potentially layoffs. So that's the concern with adding staff with that hanging over our heads. >> Renteria: So if it did go to four percent, we would be looking at layoffs or deferred maintenance? >> I wouldn't want to say that definitively. I can tell you that at four percent, and I've been telling you this for awhile at the same time four percent cap I don't see our budget structurally working. It will have to fundamentally change. And it won't just be Austin, it would be other cities. When you look at utility transfers and fees for services that are generally growing two or three percent a year, a four percent cap is not really four percent revenue growth, it's maybe three to three and a half percent revenue growth when you put all your general fund revenues together with

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that property tax cap. Just the cost of doing business as normal as a result of rising labor market costs and health insurance costs and worker's comp cost is typically around four percent. So clearly four percent base expenditures growth doesn't work with three percent, three and a half percent revenue growth. So something would have to change. I surely wouldn't have to say that we will have to do layoffs, but it will definitely be a fundamental change to our budget structure. And again, it's been proposed by the governor at two and a half percent so we'll see where that goes. >> Mayor Adler: Alison. >> Alter: I support increasing the senior exemption. The exact amount would be your -- I would propose a five and a half percent tax rate and that would mean a slightly lower exemption, but I think would be more tax relief in the end. So I think it's how you deliver the tax relief. So I would be open to that conversation if there were others that also supported the lower tax rate. >> I do have information. The best we can do right now is that the two percent increase on the exemption at our proposed tax rate of a 4.9 percent increase saved the typical owner \$29.02 per year. >> Flannigan: I was looking at the 770 and 440. >> We can do that too. >> Mayor Adler: Ellen? >> Troxclair: So I don't know who the right person is to answer that question, but why were these two levels chosen, the 90 or 88,000. >> What we heard from talking to people is what you've been hearing today, is most councilmembers saying they would support a small increase in the exemptions so we gave a couple of small increase scenarios.

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>> Troxclair: Are you able to provide us with a more filled out chart with this information? I know I would prefer -- I would probably prefer to adopt budget as is at the 4.9% that would help seniors and everybody. But if we're going to go up, I mean, I understand what councilmember alter was saying and would be curious to know what those levels would be at lower than six percent increase. And what would be the cost to get them like to holding them harmless. I know there may not be the will on the council to do that much. >> But more scenarios for that for senior exemption. We have them in 500-dollar increments ready to pose as a budget question response. >> Mayor Adler: Is that on page 23. >> Flannigan: It was provided in the last budget work session. >> Mayor Adler: Page 23 of the handout we all have in front of us. >> Casar: I think it's clear from folks going around the table that there's the will for them to be some increase in the senior exemption. I've regularly supported there being an increase in the senior exemption, but I do think it's important to mark and say that there is -- I think that there is some tension around how much it should increase relative to other issues. I think there's enormous value to seniors being able to stay in place and not be uprooted, especially if they've been in their home for a significant period of time. And that there are lots of seniors on fixed incomes that it's really hard for them to I just to the changes happening in government, be they at the local, state or federal level. I think we also have to recognize and just say at the same time what the seniors experiencing poverty or being near the poverty line is less than younger people and that cost burden -- there's way more

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percentage cost burdened on young people than seniors in their housing. But at the same time there's value in a flat senior exemption. At the same time this benefits seniors who are homeowners rather than seniors who are renters. And when we think of the cost burden and the uprooting -- the difficulty of being uprooting with senior renters this isn't addressing those specific needs. So one tool can address the needs of everyone, but I think it's important that as we continue to increase the senior exemption every year and someone ran the numbers and I think we've increased it between 60 and 70% over the last four years, but somebody can double-check that, I think it shows a commitment to working on it, but I do think that as we discuss other fishes this work session that we do recognize in this community that while we have a lot of seniors in need that homeowners disproportionately are less burdened by housing costs than renters and seniors are disproportionately less close to the poverty line than younger generations of people. Again, that doesn't mean that there isn't an important need for the senior homestead exemption which I've supported regularly budget after budget. But I think as we try to make those final decisions on how much to fund in homelessness services or how much to fund in health clinics and some other things that are a real need that we need to think about how the homestead exemption increases in context of those other needs. Again, I know that me saying that will probably have folks saying that seniors don't need the senior homestead exemption. I'm not saying that and it's clear that the majority of council wants some level of that senior homestead exemption. But I think that there is a myth out there that the burden of housing cost is more heavily felt by

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homeowners or that it's more heavily felt by seniors and the data indicates that while it is an issue for everyone that it is more heavily felt, that we have lower income folks in the lower strata and lower income folks that rent. >> Kitchen: Mr. Mayor? Could I? Thank you, councilmember Casar. I understand and will reiterate that you're not saying that we don't need the senior exemption. I want to just add a few other aspects to what you mentioned, that is the data that you cite actually really doesn't cover the whole picture of what's going on with seniors. And so while I appreciate that data and I certainly appreciate the needs that you're outlining and that's why I'm supporting a relatively small increase, but the other data point that I think is important for people to understand is that many seniors are at risk of losing their homes and while on paper it may look like they have a great deal of assets, that could easily be their entire -- their entire nest egg for when they retire and end up in a nursing home or end up -- or end up needing very serious expensive medical care. So we're actually talking about seniors who are at risk of not being able to live and not being able to handle what could be for them very serious medical issues at the end of their life. So that kind of risk is not captured in the data we have because on paper it looks like they have plenty of money. When you factor in the impact, it's not the case. So I absolutely agree that everybody has these needs and I cannot weigh who has a greater need. I just think that there's

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very significant needs for younger renters, for older renters, for younger homeowners to get into the market and for older homeowners. That's why it's a balancing mechanism for us. And I just am reluctant to -- I'm reluctant to use data that makes it -- that kind of draws a comparison like that. So that's why -- but I am supporting the smaller amount because I recognize and support some of the needs -- all of the needs that you have given examples of. >> Troxclair: I wanted to clarify the information that I was asking for. So it looks like on page 23 that this is for six percent. These are the different levels for six percent. So if you could demonstrate what the savings would be at different levels at like five and a half%, including the amount of money that seniors and everybody else would save going from six percent to five percent. So if we adopted a budget at five and a half percent increase, but a smaller amount specifically for seniors, I want to also take into account what that differential was between five and a half percent or six percent because it actually might benefit them more to adopt a lower tax rate even if it means adopting a lower senior exemption. Does that make sense? >> It does. I'll sit down just to make sure I have exactly what you're looking for, right? And if we can get that done as a budget question. But I think I understand what you're asking for. >> Troxclair: Okay. And one other thing I wanted to add for council's conversation is this tool is kind of unique because other taxing entities have been following our lead on it. So when we increase the senior exemption then others are kind of -- are following along. So it's almost like a way for us to leverage -- leverage our ability to provide tax relief to

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seniors. So I think that's one kind of unique thing about increasing the senior exemption. >> Mayor Adler: Yes, Alison? >> Alter: I wanted to piggyback on councilmember troxclair's comment because I would like to know which way we actually deliver more relief, and it's not readily clear to me which is the better tool, and in the long run if you do the tax rate it has less implications if we are capped than if you do the senior exemption. So -- >> Essentially if we could look at seniors, say, for the proposed budget of 4.9% at the 85,500 exemption, maybe a scenario for what seniors would pay at a five and a half percent tax increase and the 85,500 exemption and then a six percent tax increase with a 4,500-dollar exemption or some -- that would be the only final variable I would need and we can turn the crank on that. >> Alter: Because if do you the tax rate versus the senior exemption, then if you need the flexibility, next year you have that back, as I understand how it works. Whereas if you put in the senior exemption you would not have that flexibility in the future. And you may be able to deliver better relief through the tax rate to more people as well as to seniors seniors. >> Mayor Adler: So another way to look at it that would yield the same kind of information is is if we went down to five and a half percent we're receiving taxpayers 2.9 million and that would include seniors and non-seniors. If we took that same \$2.9 million or roughly three million dollars, we would be doing a tax exemption of the 17.5 that would all be seniors. So I guess the question

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would be of the 2.9 that's associated with going for the five and a half percent -- I guess that's additional generated money. So it would be the spread then. So dropping from the six percent to the 2.9 would be \$2.3 million. So the question would be of that \$2.3 million, how much of that goes to seniors. Okay. Do you want to take us on to the next thing. So Kathie is not here. We need to report on the homeless deal. So let's skip to the discussion of emcot. Did you have something, Ann, before we did that? >> Kitchen: No. I was going suggest we wait for her to come back. She wanted to talk about emcot too. I don't know if there's something else that you want to go to first or should we -- >> Let's go ahead and start the emcot. >> Kitchen: Okay. >> Just real quick, as a tee up, this was a request from austin-travis county integral care for both the city and the county to replace the funding that they lost as a result of changes to the 1115 medicaid waiver program. Currently that program is funded at a total of \$1.4 million. They have informed us that that's not adequate to fully address the program needs, so their request was for \$1.9 million. The county has approved funding 40% of that, which was the request to the county. So \$760,000 and a little bit is what the county proposed to pay. We've just laid out two scenarios based upon some conversations we've had with various councilmembers and some things we've heard. One would be per the resolution that you called, for you asked us to identify

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60% of the funds. I wasn't clear if 60% of the funds was 60% of the current 1.4 million or the 1.9 request, but 60% of the 1.9 million requested would be 1,140,000. There was another thought that the city could match what the county has put forth at \$760,000. That would provide atcic with a total of 1,520,000, which would actually be more than the 1.4 million the program currently has. So again, we just put two scenarios out there just to stimulate the conversation to some degree. There's obviously a lot of other options you could talk about. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Ann and then mayor pro tem. >> Kitchen: I don't know how you want to handle this. I had some comments on a related topic that we have been talking about together before. >> Mayor Adler: I think you can throw that out on the table. >> Kitchen: Okay. So I put this together to reflect some conversations. It's very much a draft, but we had been talking some about some examples in other communities where some changes were made to how first response of done for mental health incidents. And so what I'm passing out is what I think captures the conversations we've had and the need to take a look at what other communities have done. For example, Dallas and other communities. And also to look at that in light of some information that's been -- that's come to us recently from the her in terms of the auditor's look at mental health incidents. So what I passed out to you is an additional funding amount of 75,000 to be used for a study to inform and guide the first response service to help ensure that in an incident involving someone experiencing a mental health crisis that

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the individual receives clinical care as quickly as possible. So these are programs that are designed to get the first person that the person in crisis talks to is a mental health professional. To the extent possible. So 75,000 is what we're thinking is -- would be sufficient. This has some direction in it about the scope of a study. The thinking would be for -- the thinking at this point would be for the city manager to determine who's best situated to do that study. And then once the study was done -- and I'm talking about a quick turnaround study. I'm not talking about a year-long study. But a quick turnaround study that would then the results from that would come back to council and also would need into any refinements or improvements or changes that were appropriate to emcot, and that's why I'm talking about it right now. And that also might be appropriate from a sort of process flow for our police department. So I had originally talked about this in terms of a higher dollar amount, but in talking with folks at emcot and others it appears that we could -- that this kind of study could be done for a relatively nominal amount, about \$75,000. Because there is a lot of information already out there. So that's what I just passed out. And again, it's a draft. The enhancement direction is designed to be -- describe a scope for the study, so that's a draft too. And I just wanted to get it out there to you all today for purposes of discussion. >> Mayor Adler: Greg? >> Casar: Mayor, I'm generally supportive of us trying to figure out how we keep on getting to best practice in mental health response and I think a lot of cities and communities are working on this. I don't know when the appropriate time might be for the auditors to give us just a two-minute or three-minute update on what

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they just sent us yesterday because it seems like what we put in our audit plan from last year really lines up with what the auditors are working on. So if now is the right time. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Let's go ahead and do that. >> I can pull up a powerpoint but can get started while we wait on that. If you need copies, we have copies to pass out of the document that we sent out yesterday. That was really just a summary. So I'm Corrie Stokes, city auditor. I just saw my picture come up and realized I hadn't said that. With me today is Patrick Johnson, the audit manager over this project. We're in the middle of an audit. We're actually towards the end of an audit on mental health related incidents and APD's response to those incidents. I think last week it came up at the work session that there was some interest in a budget briefing on the preliminary results of that audit. So we have some information specifically related to the APD partnership with Integral Care as well as some strategies we saw in other cities for mental health related calls. All right. So just real quick background, as in any audit we look for a best practice model of how things can be done. In this case we identified something called the crisis intervention team core elements. Try to say that word. Developed by a group called CIT International, which is a non-profit focused on police-based crisis intervention. So the goals of that are really the goals of that group and the core elements that they've developed are to improve the safety of both the person in crisis and the officer, and to redirect the person as Councilmember Kitchen mentioned earlier, to redirect the person with mental illness from the judicial system into the health care system.

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In Austin APD uses a crisis intervention team structure where they have a crisis intervention team unit as well as mental health officers and patrol officers in the field and then that partnership that we've been talking about, the partnership with Integral Care. And Councilmember Houston, for you I put what EMCOT stands for in the slide, expanded mobile crisis outreach team. One of our preliminary findings is APD is meeting the state requirements for training and so Texas has certain requirements for all officers. We meet those through a training that's provided to cadets going through the academy. They also provide their mental health officers with some additional training. However, one of our observations is that the additional training didn't fully align with best practice. Specifically the best practices shown here in the box, CIT certified training should include topics related to crisis intervention, but also include direct interaction with the community being served, whether that's people experiencing mental illness or their family members, but people within that community. The other thing we saw is that the best practice was that CIT certified officers should respond to the crisis event and lead the intervention. In Austin the MHOs are not typically the first on the scene and they don't lead that response. We dispatch the -- usually the first available officer and the first officer on scene is responsible for assessing the situation and determining whether or not an MHO or EMCOT should be called. It is possible if you call dispatch you can ask for an MHO or EMCOT and/or EMCOT to come on scene, but it's atypical. So looking at the partnerships specifically with Integral Care, APD partners with Integral Care for certain types of calls and this is something we wanted to talk a little bit more about. EMCOT is only involved in a portion of health-related calls and does not respond, and that's because they do

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not respond to any situation that might be classified as high risk. For example, there's a weapon involved or -- and also because emcot is not staffed 24 hours a day. So you can see in this chart you don't have to read the millions of numbers in there, but those are calls. Those are mental health related calls lined up with the emcot staffing. And this is for the last four years. So what you see there is that the emcot staffing covers a portion of the red and yellow, which are the higher volume call areas, but not all of those. And the last piece, councilmember kitchen talked about this, we noted some peer cities where both an officer and a mental health professional go out into the field to go on mental health-related calls. We looked in a little more depth at Texas peer city related to how they divert or programs they have to divert chronic mental health-related issues from police response to health care resources. In looking at this we saw examples in three Texas cities that were designed to identify chronic users, connect them to services and obviously the goal there is to reduce the calls coming into 911 for police response, and instead address that through mental health services. So these three examples, there's more details on the slide. I won't read the tiny print, but this is the kind of information that you'll be seeing and we'll have more detail about other pieces of APD's response in our full audit report, but this is specific to the relationship with emcot. I'm happy to answer any questions. >> Mayor Adler: Jimmy. >> Flannigan: When you were reviewing peer cities did you look at the cloud that's happening in --

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councilmember kitchen and I got to judge invasion in cities competition and the -- there were two winners and one of them has -- it's a tablet that live streams a mental health professional on the scene. So it gets them the interaction is faster, it's immediate, you don't have to wait for someone to show up. You can staff it more easily. A lot of very interesting things about it and I don't see it in the analysis. >> I don't know the extent to which we looked at that. We did look at Harris county's partnership. >> Patrick Johnson, assistant city auditor. With the Houston analysis, they actually have some units where [inaudible] Mental health professional does respond to the scene physically and so that's the information we have. We didn't hear about the cloud cover 911. >> Kitchen: I can speak to that. That's a very innovative approach. They used it with ems, though. I don't think they used it with APD. And they used -- so they may not have used it with their emcot-like projects. I think it should be -- I'm glad you brought it up, councilmember Flannigan. I think I will -- I would suggest that we include that kind of thing in the scope of work for an analysis of how to take all these findings and move forward with, you know, with some proposed changes to how we work. It -- it's -- it would be interesting to see the extent -- the level of crisis that they use that in. It's a great project because what it is is basically, as councilmember Flannigan described, when ems ends up on the scene and someone is having a mental health crisis, and for example they need drugs, they can Skype into -- Skype or otherwise call a psychiatrist who can

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prescribe, can talk to the person right there and prescribe. So that's just one example of how they use it. But anyway, thanks for bringing that up. >> Flannigan: My recollection is they had two products and one was about law enforcement and one was about ems. >> Kitchen: I may be remembering incorrectly. >> Flannigan: It got confuse, but at a higher level, city manager, I don't know what department this would fall under, it would be my preference not to -- not to be so specific as we adopt the budget. If there's \$75,000 is a pretty small amount in context of the size of our departments and budget as a whole. Is there something we're doing now that is less important than this? Is there room in the budget as it exists to provide this study? And then separately I think it would be better for us to do this as a council outside of the budget process to get into the bullet points of the direction and not to do it through the budget process. >> Kitchen: Well, councilmember Flannigan, I appreciate that. I just don't want to lose the opportunity if the funds are not available within the budget because I wouldn't want to wait until next year to find the 75,000. I agree with you that it seems to me to be a small amount. >> Flannigan: And I would agree. I don't want to see things get delayed if we are in rough agreement they should be done. >> Kitchen: Right. >> Flannigan: But I don't have the time to go into the bullet points and I would want to have more conversations and there may be stakeholders that want to show up at a council meeting and talk about it. I don't know the budget process is the right time. If the manager -- if we were to say there's a \$75,000 study budget that we're going to set aside and in October or November you and I bring an item to the council to debate the details and the more detailed direction as we would on a number of things, that would be more my preference. But really this to me is more about the budget

[10:04:57 AM]

process and I appreciate the list, councilmember kitchen you have and I'm sure we'll get to a couple of the other things, but my preference as we get to September 11th is that we are not being this specific, that we -- and that at the same time we're having a conversation of is there something that's \$75,000 we're spending in this bucket that staff could look at and say, you know what, this is more important. That's really my hope that we can have that kind of conversation in the budgetary context. >> Kitchen: Well, I -- >> Mayor Adler: Let's give some other people a chance to join in the conversation. At a really high level on this I support the emcot and I think we should participate in having that program move forward. It seems to me that one of the -- if it's now coming to us and we can fund it we can talk about the scope of the emcot over the role of the program and it seems to me I would want emcot to have as part of its scope participating in and figuring out how this program can intersect with how we do first responder public safety stuff so that the study isn't happening entirely outside of emcot, but that people understand the expectation that as a city we would have that emcot figure that out. I'm not saying they have to do it right away. I'm just saying that if we're going to fund a emcot program, I would want a program that would intersect with our public safety first responders. If, Alison and then -- >> Alter: Thank you. So I agree with the direction to be innovating and moving forward with addressing mental health crises that we experience in our community. I am concerned that how we do this matters moving forward for our ability to innovate moving forward.

[10:06:58 AM]

I am uncomfortable with how this came to council at the last minute. We knew this was happening with the legislative session and this should have been on the radar long before we already had our budget out. And I feel very strongly that this should be one-time funding. As we innovate through this process, we may find there are much better models. I don't know, but we haven't gone through that process. The models that are out there do have different partner structures than what we have now, and we may need to be more [inaudible]. I don't know that we will do that and we get very good service from integral care, but if we are going to be paying for emcot, we need to set up evaluation measures, we need to have outcomes, we need to understand what we're getting for the investments that we're making. I don't know that the budget is the place to do all that, but as we move into a contract with them where we would be spending this money, we need to be thinking very carefully about how we set it up. We've been doing things one way and while we've been delivering some results, we still have lots of problems in our community, and this is only recently come to my attention, the innovative model, so I don't know the answers for that, but I don't want to make choices of ongoing funding that then set us up to have trouble innovating and pivoting as we decide there are new ways to do that. And integral care is a great organization and they deliver high-level care. There are other organizations, though, in our community that may also be able to contribute. The other thing if you do go forward with true I go to put criteria in the budget, I think it's really important that we recognize what we're seeing in some of these other places are

[10:08:59 AM]

in-kind contributions from clinicians as part of these processes which are very critical to the funding model that is in question. And if we set it up that we can only have one provider, we are going to be handicapping ourselves in that process. And again, I don't know the details, but we need to, if we're going to have criteria, allow for the in-kind contributions and we need to create space and how we do this in the budget so that we can innovate and accomplish what we're trying to accomplish. >> Mayor Adler: Greg and then mayor pro tem. >> Casar: I'm supportive of us making sure there is a recollection in this service -- isn't a reduction, but I'm supportive of figuring how to keep on improving because the council has actually put improving mental health response in public safety incidents on the city manager's list of things to improve since Elaine hart was in the city manager position, and it continues to be there and so I think it's really important we've had this audit. I think it's important we make sure not to reduce existing is advises in the community but recognize we need to do better. I think whether we do it in the budget or shortly thereafter, but if we can get it done in the budget, put some scope around what the study area would be. I'm interested in making sure whatever we put together makes sense to the auditors who have been working on this for a while, makes sense to the folks at integral care, makes sense to folks in city management and APD because I think it's going to take all of those folks working together to do this right. And I think the council has set this as something that we really want to see improve, but we haven't quite figured it out yet. Since we're talking about it now, it seems like the

opportune moment to get it moving. >> Mayor Adler: Mayor pro tem. >> Tovo: This has been an interesting conversation. I just wanted to chime in

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that I'm supportive of moving forward with the study. I think it's important for all the reasons my colleagues have laid out. With regard to what -- and as I mentioned multiple times and I brought forward that resolution, I'm very supportive of continuing with emcoter is advises. It would seem to me that in fact one of the here in councilmember kitchen's description talks about adjusting, recap the strategy, adjust our contracts with social service providers. And so to me that would extend also to our emcot contract at the point where we might want to talk with integral care about making adjustments if those seem warranted. But I think that's far down the line and to me it's a critical priority we fund emcot in this year's budget so I'm going to support both of those measures. >> Mayor Adler: Ms. Houston. >> Houston: Thank you, mayor. First of all, Ms. Stokes, I appreciate all the work you do, but the reason I don't like 5:00 Knicks is not because I don't like them it's because people in the outside don't like them and they don't know what they are talking about. With that said, the reason the expanded mobile crisis outreach team is before us today is because they lost the 1115 waiver. So is this ask a one-time only to get them through the next year or is this going to be an ongoing ask for the rest of the years? >> I'll defer that to you. Not something that we looked at in our audit because it came up more recently, but -- >> I've not spoken directly with the folks at integral care, but I believe from what I've read from them that their ask is a for recurring funding for this. >> Houston: So I, of course, believe in crisis intervention and where people are and not making people come to where we

[10:13:02 AM]

serve them, but to go out to them, but I'm concerned about some of the things that have been said about, you know, what will the future look like in the mobile crisis outreach area. How will we be nimble enough to respond to those things once we get this in place. You've given us two opportunities. One is 60% of the total requested funds, and then the match, the Travis county funding which is more than 60%. I don't know that we've even -- I think it is, I'm not a mathematician, but it appears that if we match the \$760,000, that's a million what, 800 -- >> If we match the Travis county it would be \$1,520,000 total. >> Houston: So I think the first question for me is which one of these options do we do to help them out. Do we do this as a one-time funding or an ongoing funding, and then out of that match or whatever that decision is, then do we have them do the \$75,000 for the -- for the study that councilmember kitchen is requesting. I don't think we can do everything for everybody, but if we can do some things to help get this off the ground for one-time only and then do the study out of the money we give them, we don't know what the federal government is going to look like over the next couple of years and whether there's another grant that they will be able to apply for and receive. But if we do this ongoing, if that's their assumption this will be part of our budget from now on and not have the opportunity to do other grants, then they would come back and say we've got another grant that will fill

this gap, thank you for helping us through that process, but now we're going to ask you to put that money back in the general fund. I think we need to leave room for them to do that

[10:15:03 AM]

outreach and look for other kinds of resources to fill that gap for the 1115 waiver. I'm fine with that first year, but let's look at some other things. >> Mayor Adler: Further discussion on the dais? Ann. >> Kitchen: Just a couple of thoughts. With regard to the -- the funding for the study, I just would be careful, I would not want to take the 75,000 out of whatever dollars the council feels is appropriate for emcot because those dollars for emcot are for services. So we have to recognize if we also ask them to do the study, we're reducing the services that were decided upon. Because while 75,000 is not a lot, it is -- it's significant for the services. So I would say that and I would real really -- I mentioned before I think it's important and timely that we move forward with the \$75,000 now. I'm open to where the city manager can tell us that that might be available from, but I don't want to wait to make certain that it's available. I think it's an appropriate budget question. With regard to emcot, I would just -- I just want to -- the way that I look at emcot and our partnership there is that integral care is a public entity that we appoint board members to. We actually have a relationship with them that is more in line with a partnership. They are the entity that is designated by the state to handle mental health services in the community. And I do not consider them on the same level or -- I do not -- level is not the right word, but I do not consider them in the same way I might think about our entities or nonprofits in the community because their role is different and it's one that is a governmental role that we are part of.

[10:17:05 AM]

So -- so, you know, I do think that, you know, the model can evolve and probably will evolve and I'm sure they think so too. The other thing I would say about 1115 waivers, the federal government funded 1115 waivers as pilots. That program was never intended to go on as long as it has. We've just been fortunate in our communities that the federal government has continued to fund it, but it was set up as an innovation for communities to test things. So the fact that it's now coming back to our community, while I'm unhappy that the federal government has not continued it, it's not a total surprise because the intention all along at the very beginning when they started that was to test models that communities would eventually pick up. So I think we just need to -- so I think about the question of what happens with emcot and who funds it as a question for our community to figure out. And I also think that the city has a role with our partner integral care to think about these services. So -- so I think that councilmember Houston is raising the right question for us now. You know, how much and one time. My preference would be the 60% of total requested funds and my preference would also be to make it clear that we want this to be ongoing, although I recognize that others may want it to be one time. But from my perspective, the services they provide are not going away. They are important services. And although we may morph the model, I don't think it's going to be an expenditure for our community



that's going to go away. >> Renteria: Mayor? >> Mayor Adler: Pio and then Jimmy. >> Renteria: It's sad when the state had just, you know, turned their back on these people.

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When they emptied the Austin state hospital years back and they promised they were going to support the cities and the communities where these people -- you know, they seem to have forgot all about them, you know, and now it's our responsibility, the city, to take care of them. And there's a big need out there. You know, even just small amount of money we're going to be spending here is not enough. We're not going to be able to service all these people with mental crisis that's out there. And the state has just turned their back on these people. You know, they promised us years back when they did -- they closed down the state hospitals that they were going to step in and help us out and it didn't. So now it's up to us, the city. And we're doing the best we can with the small amount of funding that we do have, but we need to remind the state that it is your responsibility also to help us to help these people. >> Mayor Adler: Jimmy. >> Flannigan: Is there anybody here from integral care? Or emcot? >> Yes. >> Mayor Adler: Would you come up and maybe -- thank you. Why don't you go ahead and introduce yourself to the viewing audience. >> Houston: Turn the mic on. >> Ellen Richards, chief strategy officer for integral care. Be happy to answer any questions. >> Flannigan: My question is something Ed brought up that this represents an increase in funding from the previous year through the waiver. >> The waiver funding, we originally funded this -- I'm just going to tell you the whole thing so it's clear to everyone. We originally funded this team at about \$1.8 million with the waiver. Due to the changes in the waiver, we reduced the funding last year because we're having to shift our focus to a population based

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outcome measure system, which is a significant change. So we reduced it to 1.3. We're trying to get the team back to its original strength at the 1.8 funding. Last year we -- this last six months we increased our staff compensation to try to move from the state 2012 compensation level to the current level to increase -- reduce turnover and that took us up to the \$1.9 million that we're trying to secure for this program. >> Flannigan: Thank you. I just wanted to understand why the numbers were changing. >> Right, yeah. >> Flannigan: Normally when I'm dealing with city departments I have more opportunity to call folks into my office and understand where things are going so I appreciate that answer. I really like councilmember Houston's suggestion. I would support maintaining the funding that they operated under in the previous year and then using that difference to fund the study if we're going to be compromising. My original preference is still to find that 75,000 in the buckets that we've already created that were created in the manager's budget, that staff could point to things less important than this and present that choice for us. The choices that we are given in these meetings which is fund it or don't fund it are not the only choices. That it is really the conversation I think we need to be getting to. But as a middle point, I think councilmember Houston hit it on the -- hit the nail on the head for me which is fund it, I would prefer funding it with what they operated on in the previous year, given I'm not

going to promise in if I nature funding into the future and use the opportunity to study the other models in response to the auditor's report. >> Mayor Adler: Kathy. >> Tovo: So it happened a few minutes ago, but I wanted to agree with councilmember kitchen on funding both of them separately and with the amounts proposed. That would be my preference.

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And to do it as ongoing funding understanding, as I mentioned before, that the contract with integral care could shift, and understanding as is the case with everything we fund in our budget ongoing or not, it's not a permanent commitment. Any of those items could change. While I'm talking about that, in thinking about the different proposals staff have laid out, one of which is to go up to the 6% rate but use the -- use the extra money to put into a reserve in case we get capped, you know, if we have needs that we need to fund through the budget this year and there's a cap, we will simply have to go back and reduce things in previous -- in subsequent years. So I think that putting that money to work if there are needs that we believe are significant enough to fund is -- makes the best sense with, again, with the understanding that we make budgetary allocations on a year to year basis, and if in three years we need to make cuts, we will have to do that, unfortunately. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Yes. Ms. Houston. >> Houston: One last thing and I want to thank councilmember Renteria for reminding all of us, I was part of integral care when it was mhm in the '60s so have grown up in the field. And you are absolutely right, when we're deinstitutionalizing the facilities the money was supposed to follow the person into the community to provide those wraparound services. Each year little by little that has stopped and now the city is being required to help fund the program. Worthy programs, but there's so many other 1115 waiver programs that will be going away, just like councilmember kitchen said, for the same reasons. These were innovative programs and we'll be getting requests from other entities to help fund them as well.

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And councilmember kitchen, I was trying to think who did we appoint to the -- the board of integral care, but the mayor appointed them. >> Kitchen: Right. It didn't come through the committee. >> Houston: Yeah, so that's what I was getting confused. But again, I support the expanded mobile outreach team. I support trying to get the money to finish this, but I still think that we cannot -- I've been on the council for four years and I've never seen any entity that we've given money to come back and say, you know what, we've got some other grants, you can have your money back. Never has happened in the four years and I don't think once people get adjusted to having that backup they will continue the request the same amount of money and that's their right, but we have to be careful because we're in a precarious time. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. I don't remember who the council appointed to that, but we could probably find that agenda when it was on nominating -- >> Houston: La out. Ann southern and Robert chap paramedic. >> Mayor Adler: Thanks. Anything else on this? I would also support the emcot funding. I think I would be leaning toward funding it fully, but I would like to -- since

it hasn't gone through our vetting process, our scoping process, for us to be able to take the program through that so that we could identify if there was specific city considerations that existed. We know of one that we wanted to intersect better with the police so I would like to see that happen as part of the contracting on this. Anything else before we move on? Ann. >> Kitchen: You may not -- I wasn't quite understanding you were saying you may need to think about it, but will you support the 75,000 for the funding? >> Mayor Adler: I think we have to do that.

[10:27:14 AM]

Have the conversation about how that happens, but even in addition to the 75 is separate funding I would make it part of the scoping with emcot so emcot understands that whatever program like this exists, that's a really important city consideration. And it might be a consideration that Travis county might not share the same way since APD is under the city function as opposed to a county function. I think different governmental entities might have different things they want to make sure that the program focuses on or does. I recognize we don't know what that best practice is so we have to figure out what that is before we can ask somebody to implement it and I think they should be part of that and maybe a driving force behind that since this is what they do. Anything else on this before we move on in mayor pro tem. >> Tovo: A quick question for you, mayor. When you talked about vetting emcot through our process, I think I heard you say as -- that you would support moving forward with the funding and doing that as part of their contract. Not sort of before we would enter into a funding relationship. >> Mayor Adler: Correct. >> Tovo: Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Well, I'm not making the contract conditional, but if we're going to be entering into a contract, I would want some of those things put into that contract for that to happen. >> Tovo: I just wanted to verify you were not advocating for a delay in continuing those services. >> Mayor Adler: No. >> Tovo: Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Alison. >> Alter: In my comments I wasn't advocating for a delay. I wanted to make sure those were part of the contract. I still think that doing it on a one-time basis for this next year given that we may want to change things up considerably is relevant and important moving forward. >> Tovo: I appreciate that clarification. I understood you completely. It was the vetting, usually we vet and move forward so I

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just wanted to make sure that that was not what the mayor was suggesting. >> Mayor Adler: Yes. >> Garza: Just a comment about how we move to this new budgeting process and we learn from this one, you know, there have been times when we've sponsored resolutions in the -- way before the budget time and there were concerns from councilmembers about having budget discussions before budget. But many times those policy items were vetted by boards and commissions, there were, you know, lots of discussion about it and then it was finally a councilmember bringing that issue forward in a very vetted with a certain amount of money attached to it. And then on the other hand, you know, I understand your concern about bringing stuff last minute, quote unquote last minute. I met with integral care over a year ago sue this has been on the radar for a very long time. I just feel like we need to, I

don't know, agree as a council and maybe it's like a filing deadline, like the legislature does, that we're going to file -- we're going to -- you know, there's going to be a deadline as we move into budget where we're not having these, you know, because then it comes to this where I don't know if I can support this because it's not vetted. On the one hand, I can't support this because it's happening during budget discussion. I'm wondering if there is a way to come up with a better system. I know stuff will come you mean last minute that needs to be discussed, but I think if there was a general rule of filing deadline maybe too because a lot of those things that come up during regular time, not budget time, are very vetted. I know the issue there but then you have a bucket of a billion dollars and so much money to spend, but anyway, just as we're moving into a

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different budget process maybe think about that. >> Mayor Adler: Jimmy. >> Flannigan: So I really appreciate, this is exactly the kind of conversation I want us to be having and agreeing to the extent we can hold ourselves accountable to agreements what this process needs to look like, and it does bring up another topic and I don't want to derail a very short meeting. >> Mayor Adler: Just book mark it then. >> Flannigan: With what the staff's approach is to a 12 months of resolutions, many of which say study and recommend or study and bring back for consideration. And we approve basically all of those. The ones that I recall pushing back on is when the language said and fund, and we were doing budget, that's where I was pushing back. But to better -- because there's a lot of those resolutions that got funded in the manager's budget, and it's not -- to be fair, I haven't asked the question about why those and not others because I know there were some that weren't selected. And as a -- my process as councilmember, I don't do a lot of those. I -- it's just not the process that I follow so it makes me wonder if it is a process I need to follow and start loading up agendas with ideas I think my constituents want -- but I don't think anybody wants that. It's a process question for the manager as we think about future budgets, but councilmember Garza, to your point, I think we're roughly on the same page here, and I don't have a problem with last minute, I'll do stuff fast, but as a process matter, I think we're close, if there were better clarity from staff on how to interpret it in this time. >> Mayor Adler: For me on this, I really like the question and the direction that raised. There are two issues for me, one is the vetting issue and the other is prioritization issue. The difficulty, I like the additional vetting that we can do in the middle of the

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year. What I miss then is the prioritization element because you are considering something in a vacuum not in a contextment but to get to an urge about it process where things are vetted and there's time to prioritize without a moving target would be really helpful for me as we go into a budget process, so having a cutoff date and people could file last minute up to the cutoff date would be something I would support because it would give me time to think in terms of prioritization. When things change at the last minute I have to reprioritize. That would be something that I would support. And this particular one, I

don't think that we really had the opportunity for you guys to vet this and to -- but we've had, you know, each one of our budgets we've had something come up at the end that's really significant that if we don't act we're losing ability to leverage funding. So if there was a way for us to call those things earlier, I sure would like that too. We have 25 minutes. >> Mayor and councilmembers, I really appreciate this conversation and looking forward to continuing it over the next few weeks and months ahead because I think back in April when we started the budget process, that was fundamentally different than what we have done in the past. We knew there would be lessons we would be learning and things we would know that might feel different than they had in previous years, but I appreciate the comment and looking forward to making sure next year it's even more improved upon. >> Mayor Adler: 25 minutes. Do you want to take us through the last thing on this section. >> Just really quick, I did want to report back to councilmember Flannigan number, we would have \$5 million additional revenue. The next item if we go back one in your handouts to the homelessness topic. At our August 29 meeting

[10:35:17 AM]

council formed a sub quorum, that group has met and I believe councilmember tovo is prepared to report back on what that group discussed. >> Tovo: Thanks. We probably don't have time to engage in all the issues we would need to. I think members of our group probably do want to talk with staff about certain elements of it. The bottom line is that our group has consensus on advocating to increase the funding for services for those who are experiencing homelessness at -- in an amount of \$1.9 million. I've distributed some sheets from councilmember pool talking about -- let me back up. I think where we're still working is we've identified the priorities within that and I think our group is still working to make some recommendations to determine whether we're going to leave it all as one recommendation and then ask staff to come back to us with a plan or make some general allocations within that \$1.9 million in terms of how much would be navigation services versus housing services versus other kinds of services. And so we'll update you as we have it. But this does correspond to the two sheets I just passed out from councilmember pool. She is not here, she's on city business, and I believe we have consensus to make a component of that \$1.9 million. In terms of priorities. Councilmember kitchen, did I miss -- >> Renteria: No, I was just going to point out -- >> Mayor Adler: Go ahead. >> Kitchen: This just puts in writing what the mayor pro tem just mentioned, and that's this budget direction document on homelessness where it just identifies the 1.9, that the mayor pro tem mentioned. Under enhancement direction it has four bullets related to sort of a scope of services, but as the mayor pro tem mentioned, there's further conversations

[10:37:20 AM]

happening about this -- this scope and perhaps more direction on the 1.9 amongst the scope. Did I say that right, mayor pro tem? >> Tovo: Yeah. >> Mayor Adler: So there's understanding -- >> Houston: I've got rapid rehousing, youth and what else? >> Mayor Adler: There was something from kitchen. >> Kitchen: Services for those experiencing homelessness. It's a budget direction document. Did you get

that, councilmember Houston? >> Mayor Adler: Mayor pro tem, on this -- there was something we were looking at over the last couple weeks that talked about a second host team and a number. This is inclusive of that but doesn't necessarily direct it that way, but this is that same chunk of money augmented. Is that correct? >> Tovo: It's the same chunk of money. And it would be divided among -- divided among different services. I think that may be something we want to talk about if we have time with staff the extent to which they could supplement the host team so that it could go to areas outside its current geographic area which is west campus down through downtown and what those costs would be. Maybe councilmember kitchen has submitted a budget question asking them to scope a smaller expanded host team that would allow us some additional funding to do housing and other services. >> Mayor Adler: So my understanding, and I wasn't present at the meeting, but Leslie was in my office, at this point I think what I'm supporting, I would support this because I think this is an important priority. In fact, it was the highest priority that we set as a council in our strategic planning group. But I would urge us to create that as a bucket so that the staff could in fact do the kind of thing you just talked about and we would have more time in the next three or four days to be able to figure out how that money actually gets allocated.

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Yes. >> Kitchen: I think that one thing we talked about as a group that is that we didn't want the bucket to just say homelessness because that's so huge. And so what we're talking about is -- what I passed out had four bullets about areas that we wanted to focus on, and then some of us wanted to have some additional conversation about whether we need to do drill down even more on those bullets. So those bullets include rapid rehousing, navigation outreach services outside the city central core. That is the language that speaks to the potential to expand the host team such that it has the resources to go beyond its current geographic area. The third is housing security protection, eviction prevention and the fourth is revitalization and safety of arch and the surrounding area. >> Mayor Adler: Sounds good. >> Kitchen: Okay. >> Mayor Adler: Let's keep booking because we have other stuff we have to get through too. Jimmy and then mayor pro tem. >> Flannigan: Compared to fiscal '18 what was the increase in moneys allocated to homelessness? >> I think that's one number that needs clarification. We've been talking about \$3.1 million, but that gets confused with the way the watershed homeless camp cleanups was presented so I think you have to reduce that by \$750,000. So say \$2,350,000 increase. >> Flannigan: Just looking at -- is this 26.35, I'm sorry because I know councilmember kitchen put this out and I hate to ask you to vet numbers you were just handed. We added a lot of money in the budget for homelessness. And if we're going to put more money into homelessness, I'm uncomfortable with a list of

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bullet points that don't set priorities. I would much rather put money in the bucket if we're going to put money into a bucket, I wouldn't support it in this budget. We already increased the bucket. Deferred maintenance like I said before. It's not entirely clear how council is providing general direction to the

staff on homelessness initiatives. Is it just a collection of random resolutions over the years, do we have a homelessness strategic plan that we're developing like I don't know if assistant city manager Hensley has input on this because it's something you've been working on a lot. >> Mayor Adler: Mayor pro tem, did the group talk about that? >> Tovo: Sure, I would be glad to. Councilmember Flannigan, you may remember last spring we passed the action plan to end homelessness in Austin and that does actually lay out -- and is designed to be our guidelines for how we invest both our dollars but also partner with other individuals and organizations to work to end homelessness in the community. I think we have a strategic plan that's guiding this. I do agree in this response to the mayor, I think it is important within the bucket of \$1.9 million to set priorities. And so that's something -- that's work that if we cannot get accomplished between now and next week, I would suggest we come back with an ifc to do. I think we need to provide council or council staff with some guidelines about how we want that money allocated. You know, among other things, and I'll be very quick on this, the arch is a very pressing, very imminent concern. We have an rfp out there. There are concerns I'm hearing that the money that we currently have reserved for that contract is really not sufficient. So I think that we -- I think that if we are committed as a council to increasing the budget and to looking at ways to enhance safety at the arch that being up front right now about that commitment would be helpful in terms of that

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larger conversation going on. The same is true for others. I want to be sure that we are well positioned to get this money working in the community. If we are in agreement to raise the found by -- in an addition, as councilmember Flannigan pointed out, in addition to additional funds in the city manager's budget, I want to make sure these funds are out there in the community working and we're not taking six months to ask staff to figure out a plan and come back with a plan. Let's just get it moving and get people into housing. >> Mayor Adler: So I think what you propose works for me because I agree with what you both said. I think we need to give more direction than we would if we just create a budget bucket, but I'm not prepared, I don't think this is the process for us to define that bucket. So if we had something that came up and that came back to council here pretty quickly working with Sara and our staff to come back with something that then would say this is how we should spend that bucket. I agree with Jimmy this is not the process to do that. If we could create that money, that bucket, and then come back, I think that would be really helpful and that would work for timing for me. Not to delay it, so as quickly as we could get that back. Ann. >> Kitchen: Just to understand the parameters, so would you agree that -- that when we -- if we do move forward with creating a bucket that we do so in such a way it at least sets the higher level parameters understanding that we will then come back and provide the additional direction that the mayor pro tem is talking about and that councilmember Flannigan and I think you mentioned also. I would be very reluctant to create a 1.9 million bucket for additional homeless services without at least these four bullet points that kind of talk in terms of what we're talking about. Because it's such a big

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topic. >> Mayor Adler: Right. For me I would like all four of these things. I just don't know if there's a fifth one and sixth one because I just don't know. I would be fine with us giving that high level direction, if we had a fifth bullet point that said and also from our professionals if you think there is something else you think should be spent on, now is the time to air that so that could be part of that conversation. I wouldn't want us to preclude item number 5 or 6 because I don't know what they would be. >> Kitchen: You know, I appreciate that and maybe there's -- I would always want the staff to come back and give us their recommendation. But I wouldn't want this to be an open-ended bucket. So we can think about what that means in terms of how you guys would understand that, but ... >> Mayor Adler: Ms. Houston, then Jimmy. >> Houston: Thank you mayor and this will be quick because as I looked at the buckets or the bullet points, one of the things that some of us really believe in is that people want jobs she -- and that's not part of this \$1.9 million bucket is how do we get people experiencing homelessness jobs. We don't even talk about employment opportunities in this bucket. So there's some other things that many of us have talked about over the years that's not included in this. >> Mayor Adler: Jimmy. >> Flannigan: Just for clarity, I don't see 1.9 as a bucket, it's more money in an existing bucket. I think that's important. And I don't think it's open-ended because as mayor pro tem reminded me we did pass a planning to address homelessness. If that plan is insufficient, we should revisit it, or if the plan is too narrowly focused we should revisit it. If it's missing something in the plan we should revisit it. But if there is a plan, then we could say as council make the bucket bigger and I know I should or could make the bucket bigger because staff said we could spend ten times the amount of money on this and here's the impact putting more money in a that bucket would have.

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And then I could reply to staff, not all of us are going to do it this way, is there 1.9 million we're spending somewhere else that's less effective than adding 1.9 into this bucket. It's a great pattern and practice we should get into and if the answer is no, everybody we do now is absolutely essential, then we can say put more money in. But I think that's just part of the process I would like to see us get to. And as far as staff is concerned, you can expect me to keep asking that question. >> Mayor Adler: For what it's worth, back to the conversation about the plan we had, and I think the plan that was presented that we approved was a really good plan and encouraged all those stakeholders to get together to do that when we adopted it, it was not adopted at that point as the overall strategic plan for homelessness in the city. That's not what it was. And we had conversations at the time, as a matter of fact, staff took us through there were other areas not part of that which is why we didn't adopt it as a strategic homeless plan as part of imagine Austin. It was really good and it was really important, but the staff was suggesting that there were also some other things that we needed so just to put that study in context, we had that conversation back then. Alison. >> Alter: So I would favor a homelessness bucket where we would allocate it once we get back the study that Ms. Hensley is working on with her staff and that the city is working on, that we would get back in two to three months that is spoked to help us to prioritize our funding among the city contributions to addressing this challenge. And that's where I would be on that. I am comfortable certainly making this be whole for the community who had an expectation of \$3.1 million, so that would be the 750,000. I'm not sure I'm at the --



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not at the 1.9 million level at this point for that bucket, but certainly we have communicated to the community that we would have that other 750,000 and so I do feel comfortable to that and I would probably go higher, but I'm not at the 1.9. I did want to give Ms. Hensley, if she would like to speak to what the city manager's office thinks might be a process where we could have this bucket, but it's still be able to be allocated according to a process that you have been working on. >> Sarah Hensley, interim assistant city manager. Everyone points are so valid, we could throw all sorts of money at an issue experiencing in Austin's unlike any other city. We are two to three months away from having a recommendation back to mayor and council on some specific recommendations in regards to how we align dollars more holistically to dealing with homelessness. In addition to that the challenge to work with a recommendation in regards to the downtown area and the tif money that may be available over the years. But having the money that councilmember kitchen is recommending as some form of a bucket is certainly important and any guidance we would like to work with you on to make those priorities. I will say we are very close to having some priorities, and one of those will be to talk with council about is it to actually house people, is it to house people with ongoing services, all of it really hone in on specific priorities over the next year we'll be looking at social service contracts all focused on issues related to homelessness, and then looking at a strategy how we

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realign those dollars to get the bigger bang for the buck when it comes to addressing issues for homelessness. Could stay the same but also could end up not being little buckets but more of a larger impact to address issues. That's where we are when current reality, but we are two to three months away from that and every time we uncover one thing, we're finding other things we need to look at. But I do think to move us along if we were able to sit down with the staff, I mean with the councilmembers and look at how we address maybe those specific priority areas and staff would be able to recommend sort of where they see those dollars going, then we would be happy to do that as well. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Mayor pro tem. >> Tovo: Just by way of context, last year we did increase the budget and we left it fairly general, and I'm glad that that money has now been allocated, but it took almost nine months to get that money for those services. And so I just at this point, I'm -- I appreciate all the conversation and the different feedback, but I probably wouldn't support holding on to some of the funding until the study is completed. I mean, I think that will inform us going forward and can inform our budget investments next year, but we have such a dire need for this money to be working right now that if we're in agreement about an additional allocation for individuals experiencing homelessness, it would be my strong recommendation that we try to come to some agreements here about which categories we see as important for this year. And my preference would be to try to do it and, you know, I'll reconvene with our subquorum to see if we can come to some of those recommendations by Tuesday, I have less time than I thought. High priority to get it on next council agenda. So that again we can start

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getting that money to people in need. >> Mayor Adler: Let's move on. Pio, did you want to say something? >> Renteria: Just a comment, you know, I support what my colleague Jimmy has been saying and, you know, we did meet and we did say, hey, we are going to put this money in a bucket and address the homeless issue. We met and I think we should allow the staff the time to come back to us with their recommendation and then see, you know, we did increase the bucket for the homeless, so I think we need to give it a chance to let it work. >> Mayor Adler: Ann, do you want to close? >> Kitchen: In five seconds, I just wanted to say I support what mayor pro tem said. And I appreciate what everybody is saying and we can certainly take the time for moving forward, but I don't want to hold up this bucket. And I really think we shouldn't. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Thank you. Page 9. >> If we could move ahead, bring the presentation back up. Move ahead two slides. A number of things we've heard from councilmembers would not or potentially would not have an impact on the general fund. That's usually where our bottleneck is and most of our conversation has revolved around. Highlight five items on for things we already know could be funded through other mechanisms in the general fund or we think they can and we're still working on those solutions. Two of them pertain to pard so I wanted to take a quick moment to offer a clarification to statements I've made in the past about the pard budget. On two occasions I've mentioned pard having a 9.8 percentage point increase in budget. That was a calculation I did kind of on the fly before my public comments. It's technically correct, but a part of that increase comes from the merging of a special revenue fund with pard's general fund budget. If you were -- which isn't new funding, of course. If you were to adjust for that, the real percentage would be a 7.5% increase in

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the budget, but if you are to look at the general fund budget you will see that 9.8% increase. That does overstate the true increase in the parks budget. I won't go through all of these, we're short on time, but if there's any comment, maybe a quick round of council support for some of these nongeneral fund items that you might want to see in a final budget. >> Mayor Adler: Jimmy and then Alison. Alison. >> Alter: I'd like to address the park thing. I appreciate you clarifying that. I wanted to further clarify that so we have been saying we have an \$8.2 million inies in the parks budget. If you take the 1.8 million, it's really a \$6.4 million increase. And I think 4.9 million of that were cost drivers. So I just want people to understand that when the advocates have been coming and talking to us about parks and been thrilled with our budget, they have been operating off this notion of a 10% increase and 8.2 million and we're really at a number of 6.4 with a large portion of that being cost drivers because pard is one of those departments that is particularly impacted by our decision, which I wholly support, of moving forward with a living wage to \$15 and all of the things that then happen and also having a lot of employees that end up getting the two and a half percent. And so the amount that we are increasing parks and making those investments is much smaller than what we thought. I wanted to underscore that because one of

the things I wanted was deferred maintenance into our parks. It doesn't have to be this or that although I would like some to go to playground renovations. We have an enormous backlog of deferred maintenance. We have limited time so I'm not going to belabor that point but I probably will want us to hear from pard on

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the backlog. Some of that money can come from that pot that already exists that is in the general fund nor the 6.5. But we've never had that fund before and it's kind of wide open. But taking, you know, something like 20% of that and saying that goes to pard, it would still follow all of their procedures for prioritizing it. I think would be very important and in light of this changed reality with the budget, I think we need to be very seriously thinking about how we can tackle some of those things with those dollars or also with additional dollars for the budget. >> Mayor Adler: Jimmy. >> Flannigan: I would have a lot of questions about the ombuds persons for dsd to make sure -- that are already increasing by pretty dramatic amounts. I want to encourage staff when you talk about this pard development review fee that we're clear to the public that this is not a fee that goes into the general fund, this is a fee that is paying for things currently paid for by the general fund. We don't want to make it sound like we're increasing a fee we'll reallocate across the general fund. It seems like a -- without a distinction but I think the legislature sees it as a distinction but I want to make sure we're clear it's about more appropriately funding some pard work that should be funded by dsd. And then on the master plan, I would really encourage and support funding the master plan outside of the bond monies regardless of the ballot because we didn't ask the Asian resource center to pay for their master plan out of the C.I.P. Funds and I'm not comfortable asking the carver to do it that way. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Ann. >> Kitchen: I just passed

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out the enhancement for the arts space assistance program, which I think will fit on this list. The latest information we have is that there may be the potential to just reallocate some of those funds that were put into economic incentives program because those programs that we just passed are not going to ramp up immediately. I've asked that question several times of the economic incentives department, and if I'm understanding them correctly, that would be the case. So it's -- so I'm thinking that this -- that my items that suggesting putting additional dollars into the art space assistance program is not new money but a reallocation just on a one-time basis for this year. >> Casar: Mayor. >> Mayor Adler: Yes. >> Casar: I guess my question and maybe it's because of the kind of [indiscernible] Coming into economic investment but these are not a general fund impact but my question is would that art space thing actually have a general fund impact in that those \$600,000 or whatever or 400,000, I forget what you're -- >> Kitchen: Yeah. >> Casar: Was it 600? >> Kitchen: Yeah, mm-mm. >> Casar: Would those be able to be used for anything else? >> Kitchen: Okay. That's a legitimate question. That's out of money in the city manager's right now for that department. So it's reallocating money within a department. >>

Casar: Understood. Okay. Just when we get to that I just think that that would be -- there's no general fund impact if we are cutting something while spending on something else, and I've handed out some things for us to do, the same -- >> Kitchen: You may have some of that too then. >> Casar: Maybe we just have that conversation. Because if indeed the new economic incentive program isn't going to ramp up quickly in your view to use all that money there could be a conversation about should it be spent on asap or X or Y or Z in order to no longer have general fund

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impact. >> Kitchen: Sure. We can have that conversation. We can have that conversation about any one of these. >> Casar: Right. >> Kitchen: The reason I'm suggesting it is that it's still an immediate need. It's just that the program -- the logistics of getting a program up is difficult but we can certainly have that conversation. >> Casar: Understood. Thanks. >> Mayor Adler: So how are we -- what is the sense for how we proceed and do this without this turning into a concept menu exercise? I mean, are there any paths that you all have discussed or envisioned that you could recommend or that you guys are thinking about? Because it looks like what we're about to have here is 25 things, 30 things that we're going to talk about whether we fund or not. Is that where we're going? >> Alter: Can I give you 30 seconds to think about that I wanted to say I passed out councilmember pool's information about the pool, the parks' recycling, and I believe her office is still working with staff on some funding options and there's a new one that's not on here with parkland dedication. But that is -- I just wanted to let people know that that was handed out and also wanted to let Mr. Flannigan know that we will likely be doing a budget rider for the park development review because we -- I agree with you that we should be doing it based on how much time they're really spending on it, and so they're going to be working on that and coming back to us so it would be more as a budget rider and then it would be coming back to us on that. >> Mayor Adler: Manager, you want to speak to -- >> Sure. Mayor, council, I think the good news is that there's broad or a majority consensus on a number of the types we're exploring today so I think itself very helpful for staff to be hearing some of the parameters in which those

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conversations need to be guided. And so I have certainly appreciated those topics that we took a little deeper dive into. They were a result of the conversations that we had with each of your offices. But to the mayor's point, we have a number of other priorities that each of your offices brought forward, and so, again, the good news is nothing that was discussed today or handed out today is a surprise to us. And so we are aware of what those other identified needs or priorities are and what we're going to do is do another round of discussions with each your offices. Because I do believe that some of them may not require a budget amendment. I think that some of them are conversations with staff to see how we can be looking within existing resources, reprioritizing, making sure that there's clear direction to staff that that is a priority of yours. But not all of them. And I think that -- I think the question will be for us as a body is to determine, you know, for those others that do require additional resources, you know, what

might be the compromises that we're willing to take on? So I think that we're all hopeful that we do not move forward with a concept menu type discussion on Tuesday, and I am -- I believe, and my first year in this budget I'm cautiously optimistic that we will not get to that point. So I'm looking forward to literally starting this afternoon going back to each of your offices, taking a look at your priorities again and making sure that we can identify and address them to the best that we can with the recognition that we won't be able to do all of it in this budget cycle. But we know that there is a list out there that each of you have brought forward, but that list is manageable enough that we're looking forward to continuing our discussion with your office. >> Mayor Adler: Good luck. [ Laughter ]

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And I didn't mean that sarcastically at all. [ Laughter ] I meant good luck. To all of us as we go through that. To the degree that there's anything that still remains after your visit with folks, and so as to have us on the council not prioritizing 50,000, 75, 100,000, \$150,000 items, maybe there's a way for anyone or more of us to create an addition category. That would be things that somebody has felt is an important thing for the city to do and might be a better way for us to achieve some of the strategic objectives that we've identified. And then you and staff could go away, take that list, and in the next month or so take that list and say to the department that's looking at it, to what Jimmy was saying earlier, is that something that would be better -- is that something that could be funded within the budget, number 1, or, number 2, is that something that is a better thing than something that's in the budget so the department would say we see this now, we want to do this and we're not going to do something else, or you come back and say we see this, we hear this, we see the strategic objective that you're trying to do for this but we think what's in the budget right now will better enable the city to achieve those things. I'm just trying to figure out if there's a place ultimately we can put those things without us having to treat them like the concept menu where we're choosing between those things again. So I just throw that out for y'all to think about as a concept too. Okay. Everyone wants to speak on this one. Mayor pro tem will be next and then Greg. >> Tovo: Yeah, I have a couple additional things that we have -- unfortunately, we have run out of time at so many of

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our budget meetings that there are some things I hope won't be new because they've surfaced before in various ways but we haven't necessarily spent time here talking about it. I'll mention those in a minute. Just with regard to how we might move forward, I mean, at the end of the day I think it's a very different model to have amendments, you know, to bring forward amendments than it is to have the concept menu. I think those are two wholly different things and having amendments is what I would support. I think it's great if the staff can figure out ways to do the it and can come forward with some recommendations between now and next week on some of these bigger issues if that seems appropriate, but at the end of the day I think making amendments still makes sense. You know, with a couple of these items, we did raise it through a resolution in some cases. The council passed it. The staff

went away and made recommendations. It's still not funded. At the end of the day we just need to vote to fund it or not fund it. And so that's -- those are the amendments I'm prepared to make. One is as I've mentioned multiple times, tenant -- the eviction counseling, which I think we're going to fold into a slightly broader tenant education campaign to pick up another item that was the response to one of my resolutions with regard to a student tenant education campaign that was not funded in the city manager's budget. And we will provide more information about that. The ai -- >> Mayor Adler: Do you know about what that costs? >> Tovo: We are proposing \$200,000. That would pick up the eviction counseling, which was the subject of a resolution. It would pick up student-tenant education campaign, which, again, was the subject of a resolution. And it would also respond to the requests that we've had from Basta to provide more resources for a clinic dedicated to tenants' rights. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. >> Tovo: It would couple those in. It's not meeting the full need that was identified but

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it's, I think, would be a good start. Aisd parent support specialist, we've had opportunities to talk about that. Let me say there are multiple resolutions like the mortgage assistance program that I brought forward that is also not funded, but I'm going to think about other ways that we might achieve that. The red river cultural district, some were safety improvements, but my hope is that we can fund some of that through hotel occupancy taxes. There are a couple items on this list that I think are good, eligible projects for the hotel occupancy and if we are not making outreach allocations of that right now, which we're not, then maybe just identifying those as high priorities. I should say that I'm working with multiple, you know -- subquorum of you to bring forward a resolution related to hotel occupancy tax and then allocation along the lines of what we just talked about with regard to homelessness, a planned allocation for this year of how we would spend that funding in terms of the distribution between heritage grants and city needs and other things. So that's hopefully going to be ready for the next agenda. Then the other one that jumps out at me at the moment, I will likely bring this forward as budget direction with regard to a short-term rentals, we are, I believe, in a position of -- well, I think it would be appropriate to do a cost of service analysis on -- particularly with regard to what we spend trying to enforce our ordinance with people who are not in compliance, they're not registered, not in compliance, and they simply just keep collecting violations and going through the administrative process. I think in those cases I would be really surprised if those are coming in at the cost -- if we are recovering our costs on dealing with those individuals. And the -- we've had several -- we've had testimony and several of our

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boards and commissions have recommended changes to our multi-family efficiency proposed changes within the Austin energy budget, and so that's something I'm working on amendments to as well. And I know my staff is in conversation with ae, the -- what we have -- the substance of the testimony has been that we are poised to make reductions to the amount of money that we spend in multi-family energy --

with low-income weatherization program and also the multi-family energy efficiency program. And I want to reshift that back to where we're currently investing it. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. >> Casar: Mayor. >> Mayor Adler: I'd like to learn more about that too because there was some question in that debate that I guess staff was saying it was a demand issue. And if that argument is being made, I'd like to understand that better. Yes, Greg. >> Casar: So to the process question, I echo your good luck to all after us to figure out as much as we can figure out. One -- I do think that what councilmember kitchen brought up, it's not the only example but one example of where I have questions about how exactly that works because -- let's not even talk about that program in particular but if staff in looking at things finds actually here that's \$600,000 that probably wouldn't get spent in a timely enough way and could address some of these things, how staff figures out what to allocate that too short of a council vote, which I don't want to call concept menuing, I just want to call council voting on a question that's raised to us. You know, I just think there needs to be some clear process of how we handle that if it seems like there is money that can be moved. In some cases if it's clean community fee or what have you it actually can't be moved to lots of different things so there may be some clear paths to where money should go. In some cases I just think -- I don't think we should shy away from there sometimes being some votes so we can determine the majority well of where some money could go.

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I also have rehandout almost the same thing as what I discussed without having a written handout at the last work session, and have narrowed it and focused it on -- say, on those issues that I've raised really addressing our top ten indicators to respect the process we went through where -- as a matter of fact many of the requests the manager has added into the budget do address our top ten indicators but some do not so I have made sure to focus what I've put here as priorities as things that really address what we came together as a group to work on. The first one here being health equity issues and the fact our auditor found dove springs and east rundberg area are really where we're lacking preventative care services, people being able to go in and get a checkup. We have our clinics already full in the area. So I raise it again because it's just something I repeatedly see in my district. And the cost laid out by the departments are here. There's a feasibility cost and additional design cost. And I am already talking to lots of other governmental agencies about ways they can ship in so if we put some money in we can maybe make up the rest from other folks. On the relationship violence issue I've raised that again because, again, some of our key metrics are reducing violent crime and fair administration of justice. Again, I don't see very much happening in our budget to prevent relationship violence, which is so much of the increase in violent crime, as the mayor has said. And so so much of our budget is geared towards emergency response but actually, you know, we know that relationship violence there tends to be very little justice that happens. Folks have issues with reporting that and there are proven modes of prevention, and so I've listed that here. And I think that that potentially could be addressed through just reranging our existing public safety outcome dollars to try to incorporate and address this need. Again, I don't think it necessarily has to be an

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addition. It's just if we are going to be an outcome-based and strategically oriented organization we should look at the increase in violent crime, a lot of it is relationship violence, what are we doing in our existing public safety outcome dollars that we could reorganize to address that need. I'd say the same thing as it relates to potentially our emergency response to merge issues and addition walk-in clinic that people came and talked to us about. I concur with the mayor pro tem's point that we should be doing tenant education and housing safety as part of our affordable housing work because our market affordable units that we count on and that we keep adding up or trying to preserve and protect are only really valuable insofar as people know their rights in them, are safe in them, and that they are suitable for people living in. Sure. I just had one last thing to say, then at the bottom of the list I've also just included two other segments of things that I talked about that are -- mainly address our top ten indicators but I think of in a different category, which is successful programs that are going that address that help people in need that are facing reductions based on decisions of other levels of government or because we've 1-time funded them so here I have listed making sure we're thinking about mcot, aid programs, grant on deportation defense, and I've heard that our workforce development money is a bit in flux. Finally the last thing I listed was totally separately from all of this, the continued issue of keeping our promises to address the harm created by the sexual assault evidence kit backlog I think regardless of our strategic planning is something that we've all committed to working on and what's in the budget adds the capacity of about one more counselor. One temporary person into a permanent position and adds the capacity of about one more counselor. I think we've been asked in the last budget session to add seven. We deferred that through

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contract negotiations and now we're at a place where we're adding about one, but I think -- you know, I've listed on here that I think if we can go from one being expanded to two or three makes a lot of sense. So, again, I really am trying to move away from, I think as the council is trying to move away from, this big broad concept menu that isn't necessarily geared towards a strategic purpose and I've tried to frame these issues up in keeping with what we said we wanted to prioritize. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Mayor pro tem. >> Tovo: Just very quickly. So as I understand it and I think these are important areas to identify, the planning improved response to mental health issues is the same planning, councilmember kitchen. >> Casar: Correct. >> Tovo: And I think at the top of your page, tenant support and housing safety, I think the -- >> Casar: It's not exactly the same as what you described but I'm sure we can square it. >> Tovo: I think the 115 may be, because that corresponds with the 115,000 that I am proposing we use for a clinic for tenants rights. My guess is we're both working with the information from Basta so that is the same -- >> Casar: Community fees work I think might be overlapping and separate from so there's some of the tenants rights and tenant support that I think qualifies under clean community and then some that would not. This isn't trying to be super precise because I imagine other people might; like you said, ways of saying this so we get as much consensus as we can get. >> Tovo: Got it. Thank you. That's helpful to know how it connects with what I proposed. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. And then Alison. >> Kitchen: I have a quick process question. City manager, do you -- not to put you on the spot but I'm



trying to plan how the day is going to go on Tuesday. Because I don't want to create a bunch of paper if we don't need to do that but do you think that you will be shooting for bringing us

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back a proposed approach? For some of these things? And then we would just be responsible for amendments for what we might want to bring and are those ifc-type amendments with four people, or are we doing the bucket kind of approve that the mayor suggested, which I like that approach. I just want to get some clarity so that I don't -- I know what to walk in on Tuesday with. >> Appreciate that. Certainly, I think two things. One, I think there has been a conversation today that could be packaged in a way that at least would be -- I don't want to call it a staff-proposed amendment but certainly some discussion item that could address many of the larger needs that were brought up in the big categories that we had today. But I do think that there will be amendments that will be brought forward. I am going to recommend that they do have coauthors, if you will, so we have a form that we'll putting on the message board for your consideration and we'll make sure that that gets out hopefully by Saturday and so you have some time this weekend and Monday to figure it out. I think we can maybe do it today but I want to talk with staff after today's conversation because I do think at the end of the day there will be still some areas that individual councilmembers will want to bring forward. >> Kitchen: Okay. >> Mayor Adler: Alison. >> Alter: I want to point out that Monday is rashashana so if we can get that out today that would be very much appreciated. My very first week on council we started the strategic planning process, and I have tried very hard to invest in that process and for that to be the way to communicate priorities and investment approaches. So I very much echo some of the concerns that were brought up earlier about we need to understand what the process is moving forward because if we have to go do

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resolutions for everything, then that's a different process. And I would like some clarity on that. [ Alarm ] >> Mayor Adler: All right. We can -- I think we've hit -- do we need to reconvene? Latch laugh [overlapping speakers] >> Alter: I guess I must have hit the buzzer on exactly that -- [ laughter ] >> Alter: -- The challenge that we -- >> Mayor Adler: You're sneaky and hit the alarm. [ Laughter ] >> You arranged it with security. >> There we go. >> Alter: So to underscore that, there -- you know, for me, an area that has not been invested in this year, and while my hope is that it will be invested in through our budget process, I really want to underscore that for the priority of climate resilience there were not really any new monies put into that. And that was identified as a top ten priority. There was some dsd fee changes to have tree compliance but no investments with that or really having to do with city trees or our parks or elsewhere. You know, we can't touch a tree for 90 years, we're 23409 -- we're not doing a lot for that. I would like to see another way, whether general fund or something staff can do to get a couple more people out there taking care of our tree canopy. We have had, I don't know how many days of above 100-degree weather in a row this summer, but that tree canopy, if we don't maintain it, is going to be something that we really regret years from now. It's not a lot of money, and

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we have not made those investments in those priorities. I passed out earlier councilmember pool's suggestions for the recycling. That's also, again, part of that climate resilience insofar as it helps us with our zero waste goals. And I've mentioned multiple times the pard deferred maintenance, which for me was one of the reasons I really wanted to us fully fund that bucket and any more money we can put into that bucket I think is important, but that backlog, that is where people co come in contact with the city very often is through our parks and our playgrounds. And so we also have the government that works that is -- you know, that the quality of our facilities. So those are some of the things that I am focused on. For a few of you who got an email in response to queries my office made, atd is willing to reallocate funding to cover the balance that we didn't have covered and it will be coming to us when they do the contract for that funding. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Ms. Houston. >> Houston: Thank you, mayor. >> Mayor Adler: Then Pio. >> Houston: I want to thank the city manager and staff and all the departments for the hard work they have done over these past many months of putting forth a budget that addressed the strategic plans that we identified and the work that was done in all of those meetings. The way we're doing the budget this time is very different than the last three budget cycles, and so I can understand and appreciate some of the anxiety and the need to recreate something that we're comfortable with rather than accepting a budget, working with staff to see where those little tweaks can be made. Mayor, unfortunately, doing amendments is a concept menu. I mean, I'm looking at stacks and stacks of amendments that will soon

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have to play out in that same way we did them, the concept menu the last three years. It was my hope that we would be able to at least try this way and see. I think the -- we've tried to do -- I think the manager has tried to put as much as he could into the priorities that we asked him to and remembering the tax implication that everything we do has on the property tax owners in the city. And not just our property taxes, but looking cumulatively at the property taxes of all five jurisdictions because, you know, this is the way we do ours but then they do theirs differently, but all of that impacts property owners, commercial and residential. And so it's saddening that we go through this and are going to go through this again. I watched the aisd board have their work session, and they were talking about ways to cut, not ways to spend. Where can we reduce the spending to still do the kinds of things that need to happen but understanding that they didn't have unlimited resources? And we never have those difficult conversations. We always have how much can we add to the budget rather than what can we do to make this a budget that's fiscally sound and yet addresses the needs of the citizens and most of the special interest groups because we're still getting emails today about we need to add this and we need to add this. Again, it's a culture change. People are used to doing it this other way, and so rather than reward people for doing it the other way, we need to try to stand firm and try to keep the budget 4.9 would be my hope. If not something like five-point -- somewhere into six. I don't know how we're going

to do that and we're getting to the same conversations, and -- that we get into every year about adding this. Because everything that we

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talk about in this work session is important to somebody. In this town. And it's important to most of us. I care about tree canopies. But do I care about that more than? Do I care about that having additional acquisition of parkland when I cannot activate the parkland that we've already acquired? So we haven't had those difficult conversations as a council, about how do we shape this in a way that we can say let's try it this way and then start making tweaks the next time it goes around to be able to address some of the issues that people have brought up and will be bringing up. Councilmember kitchen, you talked about the enhancement of art spaces and additional \$100,000, the Bloomberg philanthropy just gave 26 nonprofits \$43 million, I think, \$46 million, I think, in the city of Austin local nonprofits. We need to make sure that we're not duplicating some of those services because some of the things they talk about, one-time services, to help people get the kind of training they need, acquire the kind of space that they need, practice their art. And I just need to make sure that we are not duplicating and that at least we're aware of what it is that's going on because we may in fact be duplicating some services that we could take some things out and then use those funds that they're getting from another private source to fill in behind. I don't want to -- and, you know, we have a tendency to -- I'm not addressing any particular thing except I did just see this in yours about the one-time funding sources and it just reminded me about the Bloomberg philanthropist. That's I'm going to try to stick with this process because that's what we committed when we talked about strategic plans, what all of our priorities are, we rolled it up into ideas and bucket and the staff and

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city manager have produced something, and so I'm going to try to stick with this and I'm not going on the put any amendments out because to me that's the same as a concept menu. >> Mayor Adler: Pio. >> Renteria: Thank you, mayor. I didn't put out any amendments either, but I want to remind the city manager that I have a section in my district which is south of Ben white, and it's called, you know, St. Elmo's area and there's a part there if you ever go down there, there's a very small part there at battle bend and then another one that shares with the park that the city has that's right next to St. Elmo's elementary, and that's the only area they have for recreation there. And they have been requesting just to put some lights out there so they can be used at night so people can walk and exercise. And so if there's ever -- if there's a possibility of there's some funding that look into that, I would really appreciate it. Because there's nothing out there for these people. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Delia. >> Garza: I have three highlights and I lost my train of thought. I agree with what councilmember Houston just said. When the manager unveiled his budget, I was -- I thought it was a really, really good thing. I didn't know what wasn't in there. I'm really concerned about moving -- about what happens on Tuesday because in the past we kind of had a certain amount of money and we did start kind of making amendments and

we knew when we got to that end the amendments were done and we were done. This is a different scenario where we don't have that

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bucket and we could be, you know, everyone is going to be voting for things they support and we could have this giant bucket not knowing what any of that is replacing. And so I'm really worried, I wish you luck as well. I'm inclined to on Tuesday if, you know, seeing what the manager has proposed as a middle ground and moving that budget because I don't know -- and if there's not six votes, there's not six votes, but I was happy with what was presented. There is an incredible amount of need in so many different ways, but we have limited -- you are right, councilmember Houston, we've -- people continually are asking the city to fund stuff and it's needed, but we have limited ability to be able to do that and keep the tax rate -- I was the one proposing we go all the way to eight. Seeing what the manager includes in his final proposal, I hope to be recognized to move that. You know, some of my resolutions were included in the budget, some were not included in the budget. Some of the things I've asked for might make it in there and some of them won't. And, you know, I think we all need to recognize that it's incredibly hard to make every single person on here happy, but it's -- much of this work is compromise and I hope the mayor will recognize me to do that on Tuesday. >> Mayor Adler: Anybody else have anything? Mayor pro tem. >> Tovo: It seems, you know, I think the first year we did budget I recommended we start with proposed cuts so that we knew what additional funding we might have. It seems to me in this situation it might be best to start with a vote on whether or not we are

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increasing the rate beyond the city manager's proposed budget. You know, I can go either way on that as to what is more productive. Do we figure out first what there is strong support for to add or do we figure out first whether there's a will to raise the taxes because those obviously have to go hand in hand unless we've identified cuts. In terms of amendments, which, again, I would be happy to elaborate on why I think this, but they are wildly different from then could September menu, and I would suggest -- I think it's been helpful to have people who have prepared these sheets put them in context of the strategic plan, but for next week I would say just the amount maybe a small description and the item along the lines really of that list that you put together, councilmember kitchen, would I think just help us organize. But I absolutely support and think, you know, absolutely support being able to do amendments. I would not support creating sort of a process over the weekend where we have to get co-sponsors and whatnot to bring forward amendments. That's not a process we use for any other kind of amendment and I wouldn't support it becoming the way we do this process. And so I would say, you know, somebody makes an amendment who doesn't get a second, well, we're moving on to the next one. I would say if we handle amendments that way that we have a system where we allow, you know, go down the dais and allow people to make amendments and come back around again. >> Mayor Adler: Alison. >> Alter: I just really wanted to briefly comment on councilmember Houston and councilmember

Garza's comment. There's a question in the Q and a where I asked what programs we had stopped doing in the last five years, and it's very rather short and very enlightening. I believe the next step in the strategic planning process is to get to the

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point where we stop doing other things and we reprioritize along the lines of our strategic plan. Quite understandably we're not there this year, but I just want to signal that that's where I'm hoping that we are going to be getting to. We do owe it to our community to be investing where we're going to have the most bang for our buck, we need to do it equitably and across the city, but we do need to start thinking about what we need to stop doing so that we can really move the needle on the things that we have prioritized through our strategic plan. I don't think we're going to be able to do that effectively next week, and I look forward to seeing what the city manager comes up with and, you know, will seriously consider, you know, supporting that if it addresses, you know, enough concerns. That are outstanding. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Anything else? Ann. >> Kitchen: I was just going to say, I do support and agree and am very excited about the process, the road we've gone down in terms of the realigning the budget to our strategic goals. I think that is a process and I think -- I'm looking forward to the next budget cycle being even more aligned, you know, along the lines of what are we cutting, what are we realigning, how are we being effective in meeting our goals. With that said, I think this time it is appropriate to bring forward amendments if we have them. I'm looking forward to what you all come back with from the city manager's office and what you all come back with, I think that will help us a whole lot. I do think this is very different than the concept menu in which we had a long list including really tiny stuff on them. So I think at the end of the day the amendments we end up will most likely be the ones we need to vote on but I'm not anticipating a long list

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like we did on the concept menu. >> Mayor Adler: I'm anxious to see the form on the amendments. I'm looking out the things that were handed out today, and councilmember Casar, I like you indicated met metrics and strategies because it helps me put it in Connecticut text of the work -- context of the work we've done so I hope that's part of the form. >> Garza: I don't plan on at this time bringing any amendments. I have voiced my support for the early childhood fte as well as if there's a way to bring down the recycling cost in the parks. I have talked to budget about using my own remaining budget for financial literacy programs in our library and I would like to know from staff how we -- if that's an amendment at the very end that shows how I transfer remaining balance of my budget into the library with the very specific purpose of financial literacy programs because it's my understanding they already do that within our budget so this would just be increasing the capacity. And so I didn't know if that was - - and then -- although I don't intend on amendments, I was considered, and I hate to open this can of worms, but a budget rider with respect to my resolution on families not flippers. I'm grateful that there's funding in the budget for it. I don't know if that's -- if hiring a consultant for that amount was the

direction I was hoping for. The resolution did ask for a report back date and that never happened so I didn't have the opportunity to get a report back and understand what was being suggested. It was just put in the budget. And so I probably will be asking for a budget rider to just give some very general maybe direction to that as well as a budgeted rider with regard to park lighting. I know there are very specific -- each park has a different scenario how it could fund lighting and so if there's direction we can

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give via a budget rider that says we will commit to maybe one park a budget cycle of working with those different stakeholders because the group of stakeholders for every park is different. Sometimes it's aid, sometimes it's a neighborhood association, so that's another one. And lastly, I just -- because folks are listening and I am not -- I don't plan on bringing any additional amendments. Again, I -- there's a lot of need out there and I wish I could, you know, lead on funding all these great things, but I was very grateful that we passed the -- adding the two additional fire stations, and that was a huge, giant investment and one that I said then was at the very least we have to be providing good public safety things. And so because of that, because I'm grateful that my colleagues supported that, that it's in the budget, it's hard for me -- it's going to be very hard for me to second any other amendments as well as possibly vote on other amendments. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. I think we're done. Do you want to close? >> You'll hear from my office and finance and we'll be working with you starting this afternoon. Just appreciate the conversation today and those comments we concluded with as well. Thank you very much. >> Mayor Adler: Manager, really good job, thank your staff. Ed, this is -- we're so close to having something that works so well so let's see. It is 11:40, and this meeting is adjourned.

[1:00:20 PM]

>> Welcome, welcome, to the city council district 3 candidate forum. Wow. It's almost election time. Welcome, again. This forum is sponsored by the city of Austin ethic review commission and moderated by the league of women voters of the Austin area. I'm Carol with the Austin area league of women voters. The Texas league was founded in 1919 and consists of both men and women members. We are a nonpartisan organization. The league does not support or oppose candidates or parties. We are an all-volunteer organization. I want to thank those volunteers that you see around. Thank you very much for volunteering your time today. Thank you. (Applause) >> We are pleased to have a Spanish translator for you this evening. We also, on the back table, there are 3 X 5 cards and ladies standing around that have cards and pens if you would like to submit a question, we'll try our best to get it in. We have been taking questions from the public. I do want to let you know that the forum is being televised live and is being recorded. And you can go to the [austintexas.gov/atxn](http://austintexas.gov/atxn) and see this recorded for later. Now, this is -- I'm going to address the candidates. You are seated in ballot order starting at my left. The format will be as follows. You will have a one-minute opening and a two-minute closing statement. You will have one minute for each question. Our timekeepers will hold up the cards. Keep your eyes, please, on the timekeeper. You'll see a minute and then you'll get a 30-second warning to wrap up your thought and

conclude in the second half of the minute. The red card is stop. According to the guidelines, this is for the audience.

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According to the guidelines of the league of women voters there must be no applause or demonstration of support or opposition from the visitors in this room during the forum. Candidates are asked to refrain from any personal attacks. I will intervene if there are personal attacks and help you get back on track, and you may you'll lose your time for that question. Mr. Jacobson, we will begin with your opening statement. >> First off, I have to say, thank you. This is the best 28th birthday present I could ask for. Thanks for this forum on my birthday. I'm running this race from a place of love, a deep connection to the city. In the '50s my grandfather was a founding member. He left a mark on the legacy of the city. I'm proud of my father's almost 40 years as a plumber building the buildings we know here. What troubles many is I have not seen a place for me here anymore, and I see something disappearing. It's linked to the lack of leadership we have to not move on the important issues of the day when it comes to development, affordability, equity, and transportation. One is missing in action and we need to move forward with open hearts. We need to listen to our neighbors and empower the voices all over the spectrum, from the east side to south Austin where my mother and grandfather grew up. Everyone needs an equitable voice at the table. >> Ms. Alamanza. >> Hello. I'm running to confront the status quo that held the city back for decades. I want to promote an accountable people's government to take on the housing crisis. I want to make sure that our public land is used for public,

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not for private profit interests. I want to make sure that the community is listened to and that they have a say in the codenext rewrite development plan. They were shut out. We also know that the incumbent voted against the ballot petition that was signed by over 31,000 voters. Of course we have to go to court and sue. It is now on the ballot. Also, we do not promote high density because high density will displace thousands of people and continue to keep Austin unaffordable. And to me, let's work together to reclaim, remain, and rebuild the city for all people. >> Thank you. >> Thank you. >> Mr. Renteria. >> My name is Sabino "Pio" Renteria. I'm honored as the first city councilmember for district 3. I want to thank the ethics review commission and the league of women's voters for hosting this forum, providing a wonderful opportunity for our community to get involved. I also want to thank my district 3 constituents for supporting me over the years as we fight for change at city hall. Our accomplishment has only been possible because of the overwhelming support from neighborhood leaders, small business owners and organizations who have worked with my office on initiatives to improve the quality of life of all austinites. For those who are new to our city and our district, welcome to Austin. I look forward to working with you, too. A little bit about me. I'm a native austinite, a product of Austin public school. I served on ptas, city boards, and commissions most of my life. >> Thank you.

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Mr. Motwani. >> Thank you. I'd like to start by thanking the league of women voters for executing their mission to engage our citizens in our democratic process, born from a movement that's now more important than we might have imagined in our current day and age. I currently work at United Way as the chief information officer, where our mission is to fight poverty in Austin. And that is exactly where I would like to bring the conversation back. We often find the conversation around Austin focused around economic growth, but really the challenge is economic mobility, and particularly in our district. I intend to help solve for that problem set and bring the conversation back to sustainability, affordability, and relief for individuals, children, and families and seniors who are struggling and suffering. And I humbly request your vote. Thank you. >> Thank you. Ms. Cohen. >> Good evening, everyone. Thank you so much for having me. I'd like to quickly thank the league of women voters. Your diligence in ensuring the community is educated and informed and making sure they're registered to vote is very, very important. Thank you for what you do. Again, my name is Jessica Cohen. I'm the transgender candidate running for district 3. This is a big deal. When you vote for a transgender candidate you're ensuring a Progressive vote. I'm a normal, everyday person who got sick and tired of the hour drive to get to work. I'm sick and tired of our budget being majorly compromised of our infrastructure and not being changed. I'm tired of seeing things that should be happening that aren't. So I decided I would go out and make the changes myself.

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I'd appreciate it if you'd listen to what I have to say. >> Thank you. Mr. Valadez. >> I would like to thank the league of women voters for hosting this forum, as well as you for taking time out of your day to be here. My name is James Valadez, I'm running for Austin city council to bring neighborhood values back to district 3. I'm a native austinite, a graduate of our public school system, a former division one athlete and a proud university of Texas alumni. In the past I've tackled affordable housing issues on the city's community development commission. I've been a Travis county democratic party precinct chair. I've also been appointed to the aid task force focused on making our skills more nimble to better compete with charter schools, who we are losing kids to. Currently I sit on the city's board of adjustment where we hear and decide variance requests from the land development code, as well as interpretation cases brought forward by stakeholders. I also have the pleasure of serving on Travis central appraisal district's board of directors, where I am an appointee by the Travis county. Thank you. >> Thank you very much. We'll start the questions first with Ms. Almanza. The question is, do you see any relationship between our city's efforts to attract businesses that provide jobs and the rising property taxes for those of us that live here? And if so, what can the city council do to lessen the impact of rising property taxes? If you do not see any connections, please explain. >> There's definitely a connection between what kind of businesses we are recruiting to Austin. If we are recruiting large businesses that only employ people with certain degrees and not looking at people who have



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just finished school, or who are dropouts, then of course we're not looking at an equity distribution of a job market. And we know that when we bring high-class paying workers that we're also seeing an increase of property taxes. But more or less we're seeing an increase in rentals of housing, an increase of housing for ownership. And so we have seen the impact not just on that, but the impact on transportation, the impact on our cultural assets, the impact on the bus system. Because we are now seeing that the routes have been eliminated and that people are having to walk further just to get to where they need to go. >> Thank you. Mr. Renteria. >> Yes. Thank you for that question inch .you know, we're a city that's been the most desirable place to live. We have created so many jobs that our unemployment is 3%, around that. And our biggest problem is that our reluctance to go out and build more housing, more density. You know, we're facing, in the year 2030, we're going to have to build over a hundred thousand apartments here in this city to keep up with our growth. You know, over the years, we have said that if we don't build it they won't come. And we learned over these years that it just doesn't work that way. We need to be more creative. We need to build more affordable units. And we need to work to make sure that our children are able to stay here and live here. >> Thank you. Mr. Motwani. >> Yes. I absolutely see that relationship. And typically when referring to the businesses that come in to Austin, we're typically referring to the large tech companies that are bringing high-paying jobs. So there's absolutely a relation there, because folks in

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high-paying jobs increases demand in the housing market, which is going to increase the costs in certain areas, and increase the tax rates. Excuse me, the tax burdens. Now, what I think needs to happen is that part of the incentive packages associated with bringing these types of businesses, specifically extremely large businesses that are bringing high-paying jobs, is a link directly to training for middle skills jobs. The problem here is that despite that we are at a 3% unemployment rate, we have 40,000 people underemployed because they don't have the skills to bridge from low wage to high wage jobs. That's what I would be working to do in our district. >> Thank you. Ms. Cohen. >> Absolutely agree. The type of businesses, these large corporations are wonderful for the city economy, but do not help maintain that flavor of Austin that the small businesses provide. While increase the housing cost, they're inadvertently causing all the people that make Austin Austin have to move out of Austin, the people who live here can't afford to live here long. We need some sort of incentive package from the city to help not just the small businesses, but to either subsidize or incentivize low-cost housing, not just affordable housing, more housing, low-cost housing so the people who work here can live here. >> Thank you. Mr. Valadez. >> Yes. I absolutely see a correlation between the two, and specifically I want to draw everyone's attention to the Oracle development over off of lakeshore where Oracle was brought in and incentivized, but also acquired adjacent apartment complexes, which were working-class apartments.

And I think there will probably be a strong correlation to the under-enrollment or lack of enrollment moving forward going

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into elementary and middle schools in the area as a result of the displacement of workforce housing and the moving in of six-figure salary employment. We need jobs that our working class can secure. We need better training to ensure that we can get them there. I also want to harp on the 80% mfi, the standard throughout the city when we're building new housing. We're calling that affordable, but the median income in our district is fall below that standard. It's not affordable to the folks that are here. Thank you. >> Mr. Jacobson. >> Speaking from the perspective of a restaurant manager, not a land developer or real estate agent, all I hear right now, false choices. Is there a correlation, yes. But do we have the opportunity through the council to control this growth and engage with it? Yes. Because I can tell you the restaurant that I work at, for three years there were people with all kinds of mixed immigration status, backgrounds, economic class. They been fit because we have tech workers patronizing our restaurant. We need to lean into the change. We need to recognize we have the power to do it and quit advocating that we're not going to do anything. We can tout figures all we want, but if we don't go head-on into the issues, control this as best we can, then we're going to end up with the predicament we're in. Growth does not have to equal displacement. That is a false choice. We have an opportunity and if we don't seize it we're going to suffer the consequences. Let's give voice to the folks that are facing these issues. >> Thank you. The next question will be for Mr. Renteria. What aging infrastructure, from bridges to storm drains that control flooding, do you see that should be addressed while you are in office? How will you address the issue given that these same issues may

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exist in other districts in the city? >> Could you repeat? I'm sorry. >> Yeah. What aging infrastructure, like bridges to storm drains and flooding, do you see that should be addressed while you're in office, and how will you address the issue given that the issue may be in other districts also? >> Yeah. We're addressing our transportation problem. We just passed the largest mobility bond election, \$720 million. We have built miles of sidewalks. We have done major improvement in intersections to make them safe. I know we have borrowed \$30 million in bailouts for the onion creek flooding victims that were there. You know. We have made a huge commitment on investing -- on securing our residents from flooding. You know. We have embraced the zero traffic death. That's one of the biggest concerns. I have lost three people that worked or helped -- had friends that got killed on Riverside. So I invested my quarter cent money on the Riverside corridor. >> Thank you. Mr. Motwani. >> Well, I'm not going to get into the traffic or the bridge in the park that's been collapsed for a while. What I will talk about when it comes to aging infrastructure that we don't typically think about as infrastructure is really the support safety net that we have in the city, our social service system. It has not kept up with the growth, the economic

growth that our city has experienced. In our district, 70% of the children under six years old are living in poverty -- 70%. We need to make sure that we have early childhood education

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systems that are well-linked with our public schools, that offer high-quality early childhood education. That's the best possible investment that we can make for the best outcomes, both economically and healthwise. Not only that, we need to have a coordinated social service delivery intake and referral across the city if we really want to see good outcomes. And those kinds of elements need to be linked up with our workforce system as well. >> Thank you. Ms. Cohen. >> Since you touched on sewers and storm runoff, I wanted to bring up onion creek because it's fresh in everybody's mind, the buyouts and what the city was trying to do to help the residents of that area who had lost their homes, displaced in an area that was supposedly non-floodable. We just wasted an enormous amount of money on the construction of the waller creek bridge, another area that I think is probably pretty important. Due to the fact that so much of our storm runoff gets to town lake through that tributary, we need to start focusing on smaller runoffs, larger storm drains, bigger bridges so they have enough room to make it down to town lake. We have to spend more money, which nobody wants to hear. But it's the only way we're going to ensure that these type of situations don't happen again. >> Thank you. Mr. Valadez. >> I want to make sure that we're utilizing our quarter cent fund and parkland dedication fees accordingly. Every time these large-scale multifamily projects are constructed there's a bit of funding in there that can be utilized to create safe paths to schools for our children, sidewalks, and pedestrian beacons. So making sure we're utilizing those fundings we have in place right now is the first call to action as a councilmember.

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We need to specifically look towards a wildfire relief plan where our city is a system of parkland and trails and systems. So we need to ensure that we have a plan in place to make sure that if a wildfire were to take place, not just our flooding and our issues such as that, but specifically what we do in case of emergency. So having master plans associated with any -- thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Jacobson. >> I can tell you what we can do first is talk to residents that live off suburban drive that have flooding in their house from the an industrial development down off of Ben white and 35 that's been there for 25 years and they've been asking for help from the city council and nothing's been done. We can start there. But we can come back to the fact that in codenext we've talked about new developments having better, less impervious cover, better water reclamation processes so there's less runoff in the streams. We can make sure that the next time that we come to do land development -- and this didn't seem to be the most contentious issue -- that we can have the leadership that will make sure these smart, green, environmentally conscious decisions are incorporated. So let's start by talking to residents in district 3 and making sure their houses respect aren't flooding. >> Thank you. Ms. Almanza. >> In the people's plan, we recommend one of the recommendation is looking at drainage review and an environmental

review policy, because when we look at infrastructure, we can't ignore that east Austin has always been underserved. I mean, people of color were put here in east Austin according to the master plan in 1928. But the infrastructure did not follow. And we can see from the recent floodings that have happened from the 1980s to most

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recently the flooding where people actually lost their lives. So we have to look at the whole drainage issue and make sure the infrastructure is completed. We have to make sure that when we're now -- codenext would have been high density and more impervious coverage. What would be the impact on communities around or downstream? When we look at the point apartments that build a detention pond the size of a football field, during the rain we had the water overflowed. So we have to take into consideration climate change and how it's impacting the whole drainage system. Thank you. >> Thank you. The next question will begin with Mr. Motwani. And it is effective community policing may require more officers than in the city police department. And the current council is willing to hire in this year's budget. Will more officers or some other approach help address issues that you see currently existing between members of this district and the police department? Why or why not? >> I don't think it's easy to say binarily that more officers is going to be a solution. The notion of community policing could be something that could assist, especially when it comes to relationships with the residents. I think an initiative like this would require very, very serious outreach to residents across the district, because the district spans many different areas, all of which have distinct relationships with the police. Those of us who have read the mayor's task force report on institutional racism and systemic inequity understand that there are certain regions that are disproportionately affected by discrimination, not just in the policing environment, but also banking and finance, in the ability to just thrive and maintain assets, to own property, where we're allowed to live and work, etc.

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So I think that, you know, it's not appropriate for me to give a binary answer that more officers would be correct. Outreach would be necessary. Profound. >> Thank you. Ms. Cohen. >> This is kind of a tough question for me, because I understand our community is growing. And more often than not, I like most of the Austin police officers I deal with, especially downtown. However, from a personal experience, until you've been held on the side of the road and called "It" or "That," there is no way, no way I could bring myself to hiring more officers until we fix the problems with the ones we have. It's an incredibly personal issue for me. They have the money for officers. If they can afford drones for their vehicular homicide unit, they bought two new drones, \$10,000, there's got to be money for more officers that we can use towards the ones right now for education. >> Thank you. Mr. Valadez. >> I think specifically we need to be focusing on making sure that the offer count that we have is keeping pace with our population growth. So we need to hire officers as they are needed based on the increased population, make sure we're keeping our streets safe. Specifically I want to make sure that there's programs in place

for our youth when they get out of schools, and while their parents still aren't home from work. So between the hours where there is that un-supervision period, we need to have athletic and academic, artistic programs at their disposal that are productive. We need to make sure that APD knows we're going to give them the resources that they need to do their job successfully. But at the same time we need to

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foster community goodwill and make a concerted effort to hire officers from the neighborhoods in which they are being tasked with patrolling. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Jacobson. >> I think what my fellow candidates have raised here are all very pertinent points of consideration. But we need to really start by listening to the wants and needs of our desire. We need folks that are going to go out and knock on doors and get a good consensus of where the status is or what the climate is like with the relation with the police department. We need to ensure that our officers, who are working hard, get the resources they need. There's an increased amount of community engagement that we could have here to get a better representative idea of what increased resources we need. I think there's a dialogue that's going on that hasn't happened and we need better engagement with our brothers and sisters throughout the district for sure. >> Thank you. Ms. Almanza. >> Yes. Being a native of east Austin, I understand the long history that the people of color have had to endure with the police department. And I think that community policing has come a long way, but there's a lot more that needs to be done. I believe that all the police officers should take the undoing racism class, because we don't just have individual problems. We have a structured, systemic problem. And as long as the systemic problems continue that you treat people of color and low-income people different than you do a more affluent society, we will continue to have these problems. So I think that yes, we need to work more. We need to make sure that the police department reflects the communities that they serve. We need to make sure that they live in the communities they serve. And I've seen this in different countries. And how the police brutality has gone. And we need to make sure that if there are police that constantly offend, we need to make sure that they are no longer in the police department, because that's not who we want.

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Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Renteria. >> Yes, I support community policing. In fact, we were one of the first neighborhoods that implemented community policing here in east Austin. And as people that live here in this community can testify, this is one of the safest neighborhoods in east Austin. And it was because that we were able to reach out and work with some 67 of the toughest kids in this neighborhood through community policing. We were able to work with them, get them through high school. Every one graduated except for one. The problem we're facing right now is more of a budget program. We know that we need to higher more police officers, you know. We just don't have the budget right now to hire that many. But we are going to -- there's 40 are graduating just here this next two weeks, so we are graduating more police officers. And if the budget would allow us, we would

increase more and hire more police officers. >> The next question will start with Ms. Cohen. What do you see is the most pressing transportation need in district 3, and how will you address it? >> The Riverside expansion was a good start for district 3, for the southern part of district 3. I think now we need to focus more on more of the east-west routes through the city, especially on Cesar Chavez and 7th street, places where we could really expand the roads over into the east side to allow more traffic without maybe as many lights, and giving maybe a more direct route towards 183 so it would be easier to get to the airport. >> Thank you.

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Mr. Valadez. >> As a city, we've had some success with traffic light timing. Specifically we've had this experience on Chavez through the central business district. So I would move to try and expand our pilot programs in the traffic light timing to meet the demand that is on the roads at any given time. As mentioned earlier, I think we need to make sure that we have connectivity with our sidewalks and our park systems so that bicyclists and walkers, and so forth have better connectivity through our trail system. When it comes to our bus lines and our rail systems, I think we need to have clean and prompt, and reliable service and ensure that it's affordable. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Jacobson. >> As someone who spends two hours going from Riverside to north Barnett road to get to work, we're in a dire situation for traffic. First we need to talk to our residents who have been disserved by the bus routes. We need to make sure the most vulnerable among us can get to work on time. Second, we need to say we deserve a 21st century transportation system. Project connect has good ideas. We need a rail line going from the airport to Riverside down to republic square like ten years ago. We need to think about how do we innovate on final mile solutions and getting the disabled, elderly, young children from their front doors to the bus door. We have the potential to harness the creative power in the city to do that, but where has been the conversation, who's been talking about that? We have an opportunity in two years possibly with the bond election. Do we want the same cohort of folks that failed on project connect to try to sell the bond election? I don't know. We've got a lot of opportunities and district 3 is at the forefront of needing some serious change. >> Thank you.

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Ms. Almanza. >> Yes. One of the things we can do is make sure that all the highways have the HOV, higher-occupancy lanes so the traffic can go. We need to look at more synchronizing the lights. But we need somebody on the capital metro board that will stand up for those people that are not choice riders. We need to make sure we eliminate bus fares, that senior citizens are riding free, just like we have bike racks we need to put baby stroller racks. We need to make sure there's cross-town connections, express. And we need to make sure that the bus service is 24 hours. We're way behind the time. People work late at night. They need to be able to go. I've seen the handicapped at city council, they have to leave by a certain time. They can't testify because the bus service doesn't serve them. Doing those different things on the transportation is some way that we can improve. We need to make

sure that there's equity in the distribution of sidewalks. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Renteria. >> Yes. I played a key role in getting the council to approve the mobility bond. You know, that's including the major improvements in corridors on Riverside, airport, and pleasant valley. We're investing millions of dollars in sidewalks, safe route to schools. You know, safer and more efficient intersections. You know, we also made major improvements on pleasant valley, elmont, south congress. We also approved a turn lane there in montopolis to the health and wellness center. We also improved crossing at Mary gold terrace. We put traffic in a desolate road. There was a traffic fatality. We funded signals at south Harris and El Paso. Traffic cut-in on west St. Elmo,

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and sidewalk near St. Elmo elementary. >> Thank you. Mr. Motwani. >> I like to keep Austin weird, but I think it's really weird that we're talking about traffic lights up here. When it comes to transportation, really, you know, when it comes to light timing and buses and routes, have the engineers sort that out. Make it work. The question is, as Ms. Almanza and Mr. Jacobson said, make it accessible. We need to allow our seniors to be able to access these routes, particularly in our district. What's disproportionately represented are single female households. These are single female households who have children. And imagine riding the bus across town, paying multiple fares, carrying children around, and doing that for hours trying to make it to medical appointments on time, to job interviews on time, trying to find childcare so you can even do these things. We need to just make our transportation accessible, human-centered, promote quality of life and make sure that we have comprehensive social service delivery to surround those elements. >> Thank you. Our next question starts with Mr. Valadez. What is the next step for any comprehensive overhaul of the city's land development code to address issues such as gentrification, affordability, and the uniqueness of our neighborhoods, and how do you plan to address this? >> That's a great question. We need to first figure out what we learned from the first process. We need to sit down and set priorities as a community for what we value as a city. And so we would end up building a pyramid off of those concepts, right. So at the bottom, which would be the priority, if we all decide

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as an community it's an environmental concern, we would end up having long discussions about flood mitigation and things of that nature. And then if we move to transportation, we would talk about parking requirements and so forth. But specifically the things that I want to see preserved in a subsequent land development code would be the neighborhood plans, which imagine Austin calls for to be included in any subsequent code write. I'm also concerned with compatibility, specific as it pertains to our corridors, which east Austin and south Austin have many. And it could adversely -- thank you. >> Mr. Jacobson. >> I think the first thing that we need to do is to give voice to the most marginalized communities among us and respect what our neighbors have to say about how we build things and where we build them. That is the most critical indictment of the past process. A lot of us can agree we

need high-density corridors. It's insulting to hear folks go around and say we need a more intellectual conversation. That's not what we need. We need to have leadership that has a more heartfelt conversation about people concerned about what their neighborhood is going to look like, what their houses are going to look like that they've lived in for 30 years. There's a lot of smart data and ideas on ads, setbacks, lot sizes and what have you. But at the heart of this issue and why it fell apart is because people didn't get a voice. We didn't involve people on the margins. We're throwing out the system and doing crazy things. We need leadership that listens to people, values their voice, and starts restoring equity to a city that is long overdue for readdressing imbalances. >> Thank you. Ms. Almanza. >> Could you repeat the question? >> Certainly. What is the next step for any comprehensive overall of the city's land development code to address issues such as gentrification, affordability,

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and the uniqueness of our neighborhoods, and how do you plan to address this? >> Thank you. I think one of the most important things is that we have got to vote for proposition J, because proposition J gives us a choice that we've never, ever had before on having a voice of comprehension plan. So any new land development comprehension plan we are going to have a voice, and that's never been given to us before. I think the other thing is we have to return back to the district plans. We spent 13 million divided the city into 52 planning districts. Let's return to that, because that is more participation at the neighborhood level. I think that we need to also correct the small neighborhood plans that do have problems right now and make sure they go. And we need to make sure that we get away from the high density in our communities, because high density we know does not equal affordability. We know that studios are running 1500 to 2,000. We know that homes in the most poorest communities are selling for \$360,000. >> Thank you. Mr. Renteria. >> Yes. I was the only district in district 3 that created the homestead and passed the homestead preservation district where we reclaimed 10% of the added value and reinvested into affordable housing. We also worked with -- I passed a resolution to help the displaced tenants relocation assistance program, which would help people being displaced from low-income apartments and mobile homes. You know, my whole plan is to provide mixed income, mixed housing like we did at Mueller. Over 25% of those people in Mueller are low-income people. I supported Rebecca Payne, senior housing. We know we need density. We provide 72 feet for the

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housing authority -- 60 feet at the housing authority so they can triple their size to help the 30% low-income people there. >> Thank you. Mr. Motwani. >> One thing I like about our mayor is that he can acknowledge a failure. He aptly did so with the codenext process, indicating that it was poisoned. The first important step is outreach and doing it comprehensively and correctly. There are ways to do it. In a minute I can't explain that. Secondly we need to evaluate really just development, but housing affordability through a people-first paradigm. At the end of the day it's a best practice economically. We all know it. To not spend more than 30% of income on housing. So if we work back from our median



income in our district, which is in the 30s, we're looking at a thousand dollars a month. Do you think a family of four is going to be able to spend \$12,000 on mortgage or rent and make it? At this point if we're talking about our district, code is not what's going to bring affordability. Policy is going to bring affordability. In addition to that what I'm also seeing and hearing is that for homeowners who are better off but still can't maintain that property tax burden, just the ability to subdivide their homes is expensive. >> Thank you. Ms. Cohen. >> The first thing I wish we could do is get our \$8 million back. Since that's not going to happen, we need to look at the way the current land code is written. It's in a euclidian format, which refers to the village of euclid, a court case from 1920, a hundred years old. Why are we still using these same type of zoning laws from a hundred years ago? We're supposed to be at the forefront of Progressive values and technology. Let's start acting like it. Transects, it's a newer style of zoning where you can use dense core areas inside of

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neighborhoods that allows the neighborhood to maintain its culture while still expanding small retail shops and affordable, lower-priced housing. I think that's where we should really focus, building up, not out, keeping it affordable. >> Thank you. The next question we'll start with Mr. Jacobson. And this may be the last question. We'll have to see if we have time for another one after that. What is your position on the call for a comprehensive city anti-de-placement program, and how, specifically, do you suggest encouraging city council to work with the community and the grassroots proposals that have come before the current council? >> May I have you repeat that? >> What is your position on the call for a comprehensive city anti-displacement program and how, specifically, do you suggest encouraging city council to work with the community and the grassroots proposals that have come before the current council? >> These are very important and pertinent issues that we need to address. But I'm a bit saddened that we've gotten to a place where we're looking towards outside groups and we're looking to grassroots organizations to tackle issues of displacement. I think there's a big place to wonder where has council been on these issues for four years, why have we had to involve the folks on the fringes to deal with this. We have a big toolkit to deal with these things. I think at the core of it is how we listen to people, hold space with people, listen to their perspectives. And in a vacuum where that's not happening I think we are seeing a mushrooming of these movements and this dissatisfaction with

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what's going on at council. I really think there's an opportunity to just go out, knock on doors, talk to people, get engaged and you can get a better pulse on what's going on. >> Thank you. Ms. Almanza. >> First I want to start by saying it was the adoption of the Cesar Chavez plan, which I was -- we fought against -- that opened the floodgates to gentrification. At that time we said if you blanket zone our communities with commercial service mixed use, you're going to make sure that people of color no longer live here in Austin and you're going to see that people will not qualify for housing relocation and federal loans because they are not zoned single family. Those are some of the issues that was brought

on by the first adoption of that plan. We're working with the anti-displacement task force. Really it is the people's plan that has the answer. It is talking about establishing a low-income housing trust fund run by grassroots people and administered by them. It's talking about using public land, because that's where the cost is, is land, to do building low-income and moderate housing. It's also about the right to stay and the right to return. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Renteria. >> Yes. I cosponsored the fair housing initiative, which will provide more mixed-income development, comprehensive real estate and market analysis that we need, non-description for voluntary programs like smart housing and density programs. Also, smaller houses in high-opportunity areas. You know, we're doing a public investment in affordable housing with the new housing bond that we just approved. And we're taking it to the voters, \$250 million. So I have a track record that already proves what I'm doing. And bringing in -- we have created thousands of affordable housing here since I've been on

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the council. >> Thank you. Mr. Motwani? >> Could you erepeat that? >> What is your position on the call for a comprehensive city anti-displacement program and how specifically do you suggest encouraging the council to work with the community and the grassroots proposals that have come before them? >> My position is yes, in as much as working with -- looking specifically at grassroots proposals, I'm not familiar with those proposals. I would then recommend that we very specifically and profoundly engage with those organizations as well as their stakeholders and learn more about the proposals and make those evaluations. To continue the discussion around housing and affordability that we were discussing before, property tax relief is also a pretty commonsense solution. Enabling folks to be able to stay in their homes, giving folks the recourse to be able to, if necessary, what we're hearing is subdividing is the only option. If necessary to subdivide one's home there needs to be relief. It can't be cost prohibitive to do that to stay in your area. Putting affordable housing in certain areas is important and a start. But it's far more important and far more ethically imperative to allow folks to be able to stay in the homes that they were raised and grew up in. >> Thank you. Ms. Cohen. >> I think an anti-displacement program would require having committees comprised of citizens from each district who can help mediate between the city council and those people who are suggesting these grassroots solutions. I've heard some really good ones, everything from, you know, suing the state to lower the Texas education recapture fund, to working with a privately

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owned apartment complexes, to provide incentives from the city so that they will lower the overall rent. I think the best solution might be a mix of both where we work both with city council from a grassroots perspective, but also using maybe either like I said, district-appointed citizens or even possibly city employees who are familiar with the district. >> Thank you. Mr. Valadez. >> When I hear this question, I specifically think about the people's plan, which was recently adopted by council, so I'm excited to see how that plays out moving forward. Specifically one of the things it calls for is a call to action to utilize

city-owned property for the purposes of preserving and protecting and fostering affordable housing throughout our city and our communities. Recently, a soccer stadium was approved in north Austin on a very high-opportunity area that was on a bus line, on a transit line, west of 35. And I find it incredibly disingenuous that out of this process where we had no rfp and developers from the community offering to purchase this lot for over \$20 million, we agreed to subsidize a soccer stadium and get 130 affordable housing units out of the deal and called that square. Thank you. >> Thank you. We will now have to go to the closing statements. They will be one minute. We hoped for two, but we have to -- they'll quit televising this at 7:00. So we'll start with Ms. Almanza. >> My name is Susana Almanza and I am the founding member and director of poder, environmental social justice organization

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that's been around for 25 years. I'm a native of east Austin, a longtime community organizer, educator, mother, and grandmother. I participated in the civil rights movement, taking up issues of police brutality, housing quality, equity within the housing and healthcare as a right and not a privilege. I overcame poverty, prejudice, and segregated school to take on some of the most powerful transnational corporations in the world. I will advocate to preserve and expand the supply of low-income and moderate housing, make sure that we control public land for public uses, preserve and provide funds for small business and cultural assets, and also work on a citywide livable wage of \$15, and adopt and implement the people's plan and also the recommendations made by the African-American, Asian, and Latino hispanic quality of life commissions. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Renteria. >> During my time on the council, we have built thousands of affordable housing, created a homestead preservation district, added millions into the housing trust fund. We raised the living wage at the city, invested in job training programs, provided funds for after-school programs, and we also stood up to trump and fought back against the racial profiling and family separation policy. I am proud of my record. But there is still much work to do. And I hope to earn your support so I can keep fighting for our community. Thank you. >> Mr. Motwani. >> My name is amit motwani. And I'm here to humbly request and earn your vote. Our district uniquely -- with respect to affordability? In away that not many other districts in Austin are. And affordability means something different to a whole lot of people in our district,

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to the majority of people in our district. It's not about I'm getting to work a few minutes later. It's about my home is food insecure. I need to be able to get my children to school. I don't have the skills I need to be able to obtain a job to keep up with these rising costs of living. I'm on a fixed income and I can't do that. I just want to stay in my home. These are the affordability issues that I am here to work on. And I will bring accessibility, access, representation and voice to our district. And I hope for your vote. People first. >> Thank you. Ms. Cohen. >> They say the hardest part about running for office is fundraising, but it's actually this. It's getting out in front of everyone and putting yourself out there, and trying to talk without sounding like an absolute fool. The change I want to bring may not always flow perfectly from

my mouth, but if you'll talk to me, especially on the street or at my office, or call me, I promise you that I actually know what I'm talking about. I've been an emt for 25 years. I have worked from east Althoff to downtown. I have seen every bit of the front lines of city that you can imagine, good to bad. I'm a problem-solver. I fix broken things. If I can save a life, I can help save the problems of this city. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Valadez. >> I want to talk about the three attributes I believe will make me a great councilmember if elected this November. They happen to be tied to specific things I've been given throughout my life and I carry with me every day. The first was given to me by my mother, a silver dollar. It reminds me to look after every dollar and spend it wisely. A skill I would bring forward to the budget process and attempt to bring meaningful relief to residents and business owners.

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The second from my father, a slice from the oak he was given at the parks department. It reminds me in every dispute, the answer almost always rests in the middle, which we can apply to the codenext rewrite process. The last thing is my grandfather's dog tags that I wear around my neck from his service in World War II. Every time I feel them, I am reminded that being brave enough to do what you know to be right and standing up for what you believe in is the most important thing that you can do. >> Thank you. Mr. Jacobson. >> Hi. I'm Justin Jacobson. And I want you to know I'm in this race because Austin is interwoven with the fabric of my being. I buried my mother 10 1/2 years ago after two years of being homebound, a prescription drug addiction, cancer. I have a big heart and a lot of love and I know my brothers and sisters need a leader and a voice at council who's going to validate, respect, sit and be witness to their concerns. That's what we need. Right now we're not leaning in fully to the challenges facing our city when it comes to our traffic getting longer. My rent hasn't gone down, my commute isn't shorter. We need to address that. We need heart to do that, to listen to our neighbors, because they're leaving. Their houses are getting demolished while we sit and talk about who knows what. Give an opportunity to bring a fresh perspective. We need a new generation of progress in the city of Austin to go with the young candidate, the person sitting at the confluence of these pressures and perspectives to give you something that will really change your life. >> Let's give a round of applause to all of these candidates. Thank you very much. Thank you, thank you. [ Applause ] >> And that applause was also for you all for coming out. Thank you so much for coming out. And I just want to tell you that for all of you, there is more information on who you can vote

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for. There is a website called [vote 411.org](http://vote411.org). If you will go to that website, it will tell you every elected office that you are eligible to vote for in November. The Austin league of women voters, we publish a voter's guide for this county. We also have it in the libraries. But it's going to be online. It is at [lwvaustin.org](http://lwvaustin.org) and you can see our guide there. Early voting begins on Monday, October 22nd. Tuesday November 6th is election day. You may vote at any polling place that has a sign that says vote here, or vote aqui. Texas law requires identification, and the website and our volunteers can give you

information regarding what is required. Again, thank you so much for participating in our democracy. Have a good evening. [ Applause ]

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>> Mic check.

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>> Welcome to the district 1 live candidate forum sponsored by the city of Austin's ethics review commission. I'm Frances McIntyre with the league of women voters of the Austin area. The league partners with the city of Austin ethics review commission and the city to provide these forms to allow you to hear from all the city candidates. The Austin league of women voters was founded in 1919. And it's a nonpartisan political organization of men and women promoting informed and active civic participation. We wish to be clear that the league never supports or opposes candidates or parties, but exists to empower voters with information they can use to make their own decisions. Atxn is livestreaming this forum and will be repeating it several times before the election. We commend the city and atxn for providing information for the public and exposure for all candidates. The city has provided us with translators, I believe, tonight. Tonight candidates have one minute opening statements, one minute closing statements, and each question will be answered in one minute. Our timekeepers over here will hold up the cards at the 30-second mark and then a red card when the time expires. So keep your eyes on the timekeepers. All the questions originated from the league or the public and have not been seen by the candidates. According to the league guidelines, we ask for no applause or demonstrations of support or opposition from the audience. Candidates are asked to refrain from any personal attacks on their opponents.

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So let's begin the opening statements with Ms. Avini. >> Thank you to the league of women voters for hosting this event tonight. We appreciate it. I'm running to remind the people of this city that Austin belongs to the people of Austin and not to real estate investors and for-profit corporations. For too long Austin has been ignored at -- for funding and finance of west Austin and much of the environmental resources that west Austin has, and those resources should be protected, but it's time for east Austin to be given the proper attention and care that it deserves. We must not support gentrification and displacement which for too long has been ignored by this city. Thank you. >> Good evening, everyone. Thanks for having us. My name is Natasha harper-madison and I'm a native east austinite. I'm a cancer survivor and a community advocate and I want to make an impact on public policy in the most impactful way and that is by becoming a city council person for this great city of Austin. Thank you for your time.

>> Good evening. I usually start in a certain way by asking people to say pay for power. But I'll start, my name is Lewis Conway, junior, I grew up on Coronado hills and Barcelona. I went to Andrews, pierce, Reagan. I also went to HT, but I also went to prison from this area. I'll start off the same way I met my wife. I went to prison for eight years and I used to be a strip club deejay. So I come from a background that isn't necessarily -- that scared me for a minute. Yeah, so I'm governor I've got to hurry up. I want to have health care for all, I want to end cash

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bail, I want to provide menu childcare vouchers as well, making sure that we drop the property taxes. I'm the only person that has done the work as far as moving an ordinance into legislation and going to protect that legislation at the state Lege. >> Good evening, thank you all for having us. My name is reedy Spigner and I'm a candidate for city council district 1. For those of you who may not know me, I'm a third generation austinite whose roots run deep throughout the community. Today Austin is experienced enormous growth and each day our city is growing by 100 people per day. This is making Austin one of the fastest growing cities as well as the fastest gentrifying cities in the nation. In east Austin this growth has cost our community greatly. Our population of children under 18 have declined, our legacy to residents of working families are declining. Our city is -- is growing at enormous pace. I feel like city government must address all the challenges and issues that come with such growth. I have a vested interest in this community and that's why I'm running for city council district 1. Thank you. >> Good afternoon, my name is Mariana Salazar and I'm running for Austin city council district 1. I'm running -- unfortunately we are currently in an affordability crisis in Austin and too many of us are left out from the prosperous Austin that everybody Braggs about. I'm running to work with others to provide access to affordable housing options, to provide access to better paying jobs with benefits. So improve public transit and active transportation options, improve childcare options for our working family, work towards having pre-k for all and make sure district 1 gets a fair and equitable treatment at city hall. As a working mother raising two young children in east Austin I know the struggles of my district.

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As an immigrant I've had to work extra hard at everything I do. I'm proud to be the only immigrant out of 28 candidates running in the different city races. As a public servant with 15 years of experience serving our communities, I know how to work with others to create real and lasting solutions. >> Thank you, Ms. Salazar. >> Thank you. >> Good evening. My name is Vincent Harding. I am running for city council because I love our community and believe I'm the most qualified person running. As an attorney, real estate agent, someone who has worked at the Texas legislature, city council, former chair of the democratic party, former member of the board of adjustments, I have not only led in publics, I have persuaded public institutions to do things they've never done before. Personally I'm a first generation college graduate that went to the university of Texas school of law where I met my lovely wife Megan, a civil rights attorney. I have heard on the issues of affordability, displacement, transportation, health

care, criminal justice reform. We have some serious challenges. My campaign theme is all hands on deck because I believe together we can solve these problems and we can build a coalition of a future Austin that people of all ages, races and economic statuses. So please visit [vinceharding.com](http://vinceharding.com) and I would love to have your support. >> Hello. My name is masala Ramos and I am running for councilmember in district 1 as well. Before I speak I want everyone to take a moment and think of some fear that can be tangible, intangible or something totally made up. I'll give you a few seconds. Some of you may have thought of spiders, rodents, snakes. Some of you may have thought similar to me, one of the

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greatest fears, your electricity bill in August. Now, in the east side one of the fears that a lot of our neighbors have that's permeating through the communities is that of change. The fear of change is defined as the act or instance of making or becoming different. But with right leadership I believe that this -- >> Thank you. >> Can become empowerment. >> Thank you. >> We will begin our first question with Ms. Harper-madison. And it's on transportation. From new highways and intersections to bike lanes and bus routes, what do you see as the most pressing transportation need in district 1 and how will you address it? >> That's a good question. I actually just talked about transportation with a constituent today who is struggling if for no other reason she's having to make the commute from pflugerville into Austin to work. She pays about \$9,000 annually to cover the cost of her commute. So I'd like to see housing built in a way that people can live closer to where they work. I think multimodal transportation is something we obviously have to address and we have options with mobility. We absolutely have to address our public transportation situation, the shortage, the lack thereof. And for the love of all things holy bus stops need shelters. So that is definitely one of the things that's at the top of my list. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Conway. >> Yes. So for us I agree that transportation has to be a first priority for district 1. I've lived in Austin all my life. I've ridden a bus since I was eight or 10 years old and we understand that the same bus routes that are present during the era where

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black folks were serving white folks on the west side, that same bus porn is there today. So I think it's imperative for us to increase the frequency of routes. I think it's imperative for us to deal with the sidewalks. Again, I deal with a constituency that doesn't have access to cars, that doesn't have access to different types of transportation. So they depend on sidewalks, they depend on bus routes and these bus routes, I know for the folks who come to my events at night, they have specifically spoken to the cap remap program not being beneficial for them. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Spigner. >> I think transportation needs to take a step forward. I think we need to be innovative when we're thinking of transportation. First of all, I think people who ride buses are not comfortable as they're waiting for the bus stop. First of all, we must need to make these avenues or these individual bus stops comfortable so that people will be able to take the bus and be comfortable while they're waiting for the bus. Second of all, I think that we need to rearrange the routes. A lot of these routes go in densely plated areas, but

there's -- populated areas, but there's also other densely populated areas throughout the district that do not have bus routes and bus routes are needed. So I think we need to come together and have a public-private partnership type of situation for transportation so that we can implement routes that are effective for people who need to utilize these services on a daily basis. >> Thank you. Ms. Salazar. >> I'm a working mother. I have two small children, a five-year-old and a two-year-old. And one of the things that we struggle on a daily basis as we walk to school is missing sidewalks. We have to get into a busy road even though we live close -- very close to the school. We have missing sidewalks on something that should be a high priority. We also can't walk to a grocery store that is close

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by because we have missing sidewalks. So for me it's important that we move forward and we support the sidewalk plan, a beautiful plan that we have, but unfortunately we haven't prioritized and funded to advance the ball. I also support as a councilmember, I will support dedicated bus lines just like we have in Guadalupe and Lavaca streets, we need more of those throughout the city and for sure we need them in east Austin. And I would advocate them as a city council. >> Thank you. Mr. Harding. >> Yes. I believe we need to create the transportation system we have of the 21st century. That should include all forms of transportation, buses, rail, cars, bikes, walking and yes, even scooters. When it comes to mass transit we must improve the experience. It is way too hot outside to have people waiting for 45 minutes or an hour. We need more shelters, we need more benches. When it comes to mass transit efficiency, we must be able to get people from point A to point B faster. We do that through dedicated lanes. Look at almost every major city across the world they have dedicated lanes. So when we start thinking about sidewalks we need to make sure those things are safe for people that may be disabled or young or elderly. I also believe that we should look at forms of technology, autonomous vehicles coming, we have synchronized lights. There's a lot of things we need to be doing. We need to focus on all aspects and make sure that we have the mass transit system that we want for the 21st century. >> Thank you. Mr. Ramos. >> I believe that we should actually be looking towards public transportation in the sense of an upgraded rail system. We have numerous amounts of Texas cities that have rails that gets you from point A to point B to point C to point D, all the way to Z. I believe that Austin should be on that rail system as well to get us moving

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further. I also believe that the sidewalks in our neighborhoods need to be revamped and created in certain areas. I mean, off of Maple and Manor Road, there's only one sidewalk, and that starts in one block and ends in one block, and we need to change this. >> Thank you. Ms. Avini. >> Hello. I keep hearing a lot about sidewalks, especially in district 1. There's a great deal of district 1 that exists in a watershed, and every time we lay down sidewalks, we do increase the risk of flooding. And none of us want to be flooded out of our homes and apartments. So I think it's very important that we -- yes, we increase sidewalks, but do so with materials that are environmentally friendly and porous. So this is



something that I'm concerned about because I see the city laying down new sidewalks, but they are cement sidewalks that do increase the risk of flooding. In terms of other areas of transportation that are important to me, I think we need to address the issue of bike lanes because too many people are getting hit and dying and that's not acceptable. We also need to increase the frequency of bus routes and we need to ensure that more people have access to buses and enjoy taking them. People don't take buses because it takes two hours to get somewhere that it would take 30 minutes to get to if you were driving a car. So these are my main concerns. >> Our next set of questions, we'll start with you, Mr. Conway. >> Yes, ma'am. >> Regarding affordability, rising tax burdens are caused by rising appraisal values and affect homeowners and renters. Some people who have lived in their family homes for generations cannot afford these taxes. What can be done to address rising property values that are driving many austinites out of their homes? >> Thank you for your question. That is something that we early on began to deal with when we built our plan. We thought about tax abatements, we thought about tax freezes.

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Specifically for fixed incomes and specifically for incomes that may be vulnerable. And we believe that gentrification begins with the land assessment process. That is the way folks have been taxed out of their homes on the east side. When I grew up on the east side there were black folks all throughout the east side. As you look down 23, 24, 25, we can see that the property values have risen as a direct result of land assessments, which is the direct factor of displacing folks, folks who have lived there for years can no longer afford to pay their taxes as they begin to try to pay their mortgage as well. So for us it's about tax abatements, it's about tax freezes, but it's also about community land trusts, which will fix the tax rate for many years. >> Mr. Spigner? >> Yes, that's a very good question. One thing that we have seen throughout the district is people getting displaced because they are unable to afford taxes. Many are working families, many are long-term residents, and many are people who have simply moved into the neighborhood. One thing that we need to look at is tax -- freezing taxes. And this can be done by looking at it as it relates to income, as it relates to age, and as it relates to the time that you've lived in the neighborhood. These are some of the things that we will need to look at and provide some great options to implement some policy to decrease the tax burden on homeowners, especially the elderly and especially long-term residents of the community. >> Ms. Salazar? >> So my dad is currently 76 and he's still doing manual labor jobs. He works at the golf course off 51st just so that he can pay his rising housing costs, obviously including property taxes. This is something that is of great concern to me and I

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have been attending the anti-displacement task force. I can just tell you three things and we can talk more about these things. Something that I will support, community land trust, and it's the idea where you can buy -- you can own your property and not your land, and that way your taxes aren't the highest because of the land and that's one way of keeping property taxes under control. I would support a homestead exemption program enrollment. I have learned that a lot of people qualify, but they simply

haven't applied. So that's such an easy program that the city could be doing. And a third thing that I would on -- I will tell you more another time. [Laughter]. >> Mr. Harding. >> Everywhere I go this is what I hear about, displacement, displacement, displacement. So I think first and foremost to have an honest conversation about property taxes, we must look at the fact that the state of Texas is not paying their fair share of public education. This has been the highest driver of cost because we are sending half a billion dollars back to the state of Texas. So let's continue to fight to change that at the state level. Here locally, state law permits us to raise taxes up to eight percent each year without an election. This year the council has mandated a maximum of six percent, which I think is good stewardship as we're trying to control taxes. You've heard about land trusts, you've heard about homestead preservation districts. I also think we need to look at private non-profit partnerships to help people pay for taxes. So I think we need an across the board solution, both government, private businesses as well as non-profits, to help people stay in their homes. [Bell ringing]. >> Mr. Ramos? >> I do also believe that taxes should be dealt with at a higher level. Right now we are at eight percent. There was a vote for -- to lower the appraisal rate to

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six percent. I believe we should even get it lower than that. I will definitely advocate to try to get a four percent rate for appraisal rates at the lower level. I also believe that if we go back to preserving our neighborhoods and homes this will stop a lot of the new development of teardowns, rebuilds and new tax assessments on a quarter-million-dollar versus a half a-million-dollar home within that same community. Actually implement design standards. We can see taxes leveling off a little easier within the next couple of years. >> Ms. Avini. >> Hi. I think it's important for us to be aware that 33 other states in this nation have property taxes prorated based on income. So if I'm elected I will use my platform on city council to reach out and find out if we need to have a constitutional amendment in Texas in order to address this on a statewide level. I think it's also important for the city to be aware that real estate investors who are often multinational companies or out of state investors buy our -- buy up homes in east Austin, fix them up, flip them essentially and then cause a reassessment of their neighbors' homes who weren't fixed up. So this is really unjust and this is what's causing those reassessments. And I think it's very important that the city begin to address it. >> Ms. Harper-madison? >> The trouble with going last is that they said it already. [Laughter]. So some of the things that I would definitely focus on have to do with education. When people don't know what their options are, they certainly don't access them. So knowing that you are eligible for a homestead exemption and having somebody help you apply for

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it is essential. I have a couple of clients who sold their homes if for no other reason, there were foundation repairs that needed to be done and roof repairs that needed to be done, and the tax burden in addition to the cost of the repairs scared them. They didn't realize that there are home repair programs who would cover the cost of the repairs. So making certain that people have access to

information I think is extraordinarily helpful. I would also definitely like to take a look at community land trust options. I think a lot of people don't realize that having the opportunity to sell your property, a part of your property to somebody in your family and keep it in your family, would make it more affordable. I would push for -- [bell ringing]. Thank you. >> We're going to go to public safety and the police in district 1. Community policing is just one service provided by the police. What can the police do better to serve the citizens of district 1? Are there areas or problems that need to be addressed by the police? Mr. Conway, we are starting with you. Sorry. >> Going first again? >> No, Mr. Spigner, I'm sorry. >> Could you rephrase the question one more time, restate the question. >> Community policing is just one service provided by the police. What can the police do to better serve the citizens of district 1? Are there areas or problems that need to be addressed? >> Absolutely, there are areas and problems that need to be addressed. First thing that I think that the city of Austin police department needs to do is they think they need to take some cultural -- some cultural training, cultural responsive theory training so that they'll know that the people that they're dealing with, how to approach them and how to approach them in a respectful and responsible manner. I think that we've seen a lot of aggressive policing, and I think a lot of that policing has been based on race. I think the one thing they need to do is understand their constituents and the people that they are policing. They're here to protect and serve. So one thing that they need to understand is everyone black or everyone hispanic

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is not doing anything negative. They need to approach them as if this is true. Because we see a lot of aggressive policing and it seems like everything happens before they inquire about what's going on. I know -- I've known several times that I've gotten stopped and they didn't ask me for my license and my insurance. The first thing they asked me was do you have drugs, do you have weapons? >> Thank you. Ms. Salazar. >> Two weeks ago I joined an officer on a police ride along. We responded to most of our time. We actually responded to mental health calls. We responded to some domestic violence calls. And we were also on a the lookout for a stolen car. At the end of the day I was exhausted, but it was clear to me -- and I then did an ems ride along too and we responded to many mental health calls. So one area that as a councilmember I will advocate is having a better mental health response and that in my mind may be a collaborative team of maybe paramedics, mental health professionals and public officers. So that's one area. We only have one minute. >> Mr. Harding. >> When I came to Austin the concern I heard from everyone in Austin was when is the democratic party going to say something about black kids being shot by the police? So I drafted a resolution, I pushed for reforms, and I brought the decision makers to the community and handed the microphone to the community to ask questions directly. And I think we need that level of engagement where the police are accountable for R. To their constituencies and we can talk to them directly. Secondly, we need greater levels of accountability. When brionne king was thrown to the ground and they said that black people have violent tendencies, that

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officer should have been disciplined for that but because of the terms of the contract he couldn't be. So we need accountability and high pay so that we can continue to have or recruit best officers. And then lastly, we need to increase diversity of officers as well as we need to incentivize officers to live in the communities that they are in. So those are the things that I want to push for as well as Chris to the police monitor's office. >> Thank you. Mr. Ramos? >> I believe officers should be asked to come into our neighborhoods, actually interact with our communities on their day's off, get to know the people that they're policing. Studies have shown that the police force in New York ones one of the -- once one of the famous mayors actually enacted these programs, community outreach with police officers on the beat, crime dropped lower because people felt more comfortable to come to those officers. That's what the police are here for, that's what they're supposed to do. They're supposed to be our friends. So if they're in your community and you see their face everyday, they're -- you don't feel as threatened on both sides of the aisle. >> Ms. Avini. >> After knocking on doors throughout the district, I've repeatedly heard -- I've been encouraged by people of all races to support the police and have them show up. So not showing up has been one issue that I have repeatedly heard from constituents in district 1. In talking to police and in hearing the struggles that they have -- in fact, I attended a justice coalition meeting and a policeman showed up. He said that we simply don't have the resources to address mental health crisis. So I think that Mariana's idea of bringing psychologists and perhaps social workers in the emergency response is a really good idea.

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>> Thank you. Ms. Harper-madison? >> I'd like to start by saying I think something we all have to acknowledge is that we need police, right? Something else I'd like to say is I think by and large the officers who represent the Austin police department do a great job and care about their job and care about the citizens of Austin. Now, can we do better? Absolutely. Oversight, accountability and transparency are all issues that we should address. We should give the monitor's office more power to investigate instances of I am propriety. I think we have to start once again with education. I think going to the training level, the academy level, the modules that represent non-violent interaction, that represent non-lethal interaction would be very important. I also think it's super important that we have a police contract that benefits both officers and the citizens of Austin. >> Thank you. Mr. Conway. >> Thank you. So I think if I understand the question what is what can the police do. First of all, I was involved with the police contract, the meet and confer contract from the very beginning. And what got me engaged is the fact that there was no citizen oversight and because I had been to prison I was not allowed to be part of that oversight process. And my argument was that we are the community that is most directly impacted by law enforcement so somebody from the community should be on that panel. Part 2, community safety should be more important, should it be more important than community policing? And we have to look at it through that lens. Thirdly as a tertiary point is as a product of law enforcement engagement, we have to look at treatment before arrest. We have to look at folks having access to mental health facilities before

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arrest, and we shouldn't be looking at our jails as mental health institutions. Right now our jails are housing our mental health patients. [Bell ringing]. >> Our next question will start with Ms. Salazar. And this is regarding code enforcement. According to particular website such as airbnb and home away, short-term rentals are all over our city. The large number of listed properties are not reflected in the small number of licensed properties. What is your assessment of how code enforcement is handling this and why? >> I would like to first start by saying that I recognize that short-term rentals are a source of income for a lot of people that have fixed income. So it's something that we are welcoming of. In terms of code enforcement, I think there are many ways that code enforcement could be better enforcers. For one they probably have limited capacity. I don't know that for a fact, but they could be using some other revenue that they themselves are getting from their taxes from the short-term rentals to increase the capacity to be better code enforcers. I know there's a licensing process to do that and there's no reason why they couldn't be visiting. There's homeaway, airbnb, all of this is public so they have the information. It's probably a matter of organizing the team in a better way so that they can be better enforcers for the city. >> Mr. Harding? >> Yes. As it relates to short-term rentals, I'm in favor of getting rid of type 2. I do not believe we should be allowing large companies or investors to buy homes and essentially operate them as rentals, I'm in favor of getting rid of those and phasing them out. But as Mariana mentioned there are some people who

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use them as a way to pay for mortgages. So I think the rules we have need to be specific regarding who the individual is that owns the property, whether or not there's a homestead exemption on the property or not. Just to transition really quickly to renters, we are the only district that saw an increase in the percentage of renters. So district 1 has 53% renters, 47% owners. So we need to make sure we provide protections to renters so if there is a landlord that is routinely violating code that we can make sure that we give them the protections they need to get the code enforced and that they are protected and not retaliated against. >> Mr. Ramos. >> I think right now there's also an issue with the city of having a cap of who can actually apply for short-term rentals. And I think that we should, one, increase that so that people can do it in the legal sense. There are also a lot of people who do this because they just can't afford their homes or just can't afford their taxes. So I believe that we give those people a break in the sense of we make sure that if you're applying for a short-term rental that you live in the property and that that is your residence. That will tax investors, but at least the people of Austin can remain in their homes and still afford them. Thank you. >> Ms. Avini? >> I don't think that we should be restricting what property owners are allowed to do with their homes. I find that very problematic. I also lived in New York City for a number of years and I saw the ways in which people in apartments would rent out their apartments simply to help make rent. So I have a hard time with this idea of licensing and with being overly restrictive in terms of distributing those licenses.

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I do have a problem very much with investors buying up homes, as Vince Harding said, and not following the rules or mistreating their renters. >> As it pertains specifically to strs, I would say that I agree that we should get rid of type 2 strs. That's problematic for a lot of reasons. If a person doesn't live in the home they shouldn't be able to rent out parts of that home. And also that said, I would also agree that we shouldn't -- too much government is problematic and too many rules for what people do in their homes is problematic. I think people should be able to do whatever it is that they want in their homes if they're not causing harm to anybody else. So that to say, I think the thought -- the imagery of code enforcement cracking down on regular people just renting out a room in their home, it sounds gross and undignified and I don't like it one bit. I think code enforcement should do what they do, which is to enforce code, where like Vince said renters are living in substandard properties. I think they have plenty of work to do that doesn't include them enforcing rules about strs. >> Mr. Conway? >> Yes, ma'am. Thank you. So I live on a street with two airbnbs. Many of the homeowners live in those homes. Part 2 of that is the people that I know who are being regulated by code enforcement, they can't even afford to pay their taxes or their mortgage. So for me we have to look at it on the front end. It's an affordability issue. As folks can't afford to pay their taxes issue. It's not a code issue. If folks aren't in danger of losing their home to taxes, if folks aren't in danger of losing their home to high mortgages, then we don't have a code issue. But the problem with regulating folks is that the folks in Cavalier Park, the

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folks who can't afford to maintain their home, who can't afford to refurbish their home, they are being regulated out of their homes because they're being fined -- fines that they can't afford. So we've got to look at something else besides regulation as a way for us to determine how homeowners should be able to use their property to make money. [Bell ringing]. >> Mr. Spigner? >> Can you hear me? I think that as far as short-term rentals are concerned it's one thing that we have to realize here. Austin is a city of the future. When we're talking about airbnb and other things. This is offered worldwide and nationwide. This is a really, really up and coming thing. We're kind of millennial type of thing. I think others of us look at it as a negative thing, but I think that this is part of the attraction in Austin, Texas. We have -- we're a worldwide city, we have visitors from all over the world, all over the United States of America, so I think that it's something that we need to look at and regulate it a little more differently as opposed to making it more restrictive. This is something that people could come in and enjoy our city and this is part of them enjoying our city. So I think it's something that we need to look at, take another look at it and implement policy so that we can kind of restrict it to a certain amount -- a certain -- I guess you could say a certain -- [bell ringing]. Sorry about that. [Laughter]. >> All right. We're going to start with you, Mr. Harding. We're talking a little bit about public health. Health care and health disparities occur across many dimensions from race and ethnicity to socioeconomic status, gender, age, disability status. And in light of Austin's exploding population and rising income inequality, do you think the city should create and/or expand

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particular health services to meet these needs. And if so, how. >> Yes, I do. And so when I think about health, the first thing I think about is life expectancies. And it is sad that in Austin, Texas that someone who lives in 78724 has a life expectancy that's 15 years less than someone eating correctly, exercising well and also just have really good food options just period in our neighborhoods. >> Thank you. Ms. Avini? >> The other day I met a mother and her young Latina daughter and her daughter had an ear infection and she couldn't afford to take her daughter to the doctor to get something very simple, which was antibiotics. So this is the kind of

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situation' that we have on the east side. Meanwhile we have these really fancy hospitals being built on the east side. For example, in the Mueller center. And I'm concerned that the local community somehow doesn't have access, free access to health care that they very much need. We cannot have wealth creation in just a tiny portion of the east side without providing access to all people in east Austin. >> Thank you. Ms. Harper-madison? >> Yes. So something I'd like to propose, and this is not just about health, right? It's about all the issues that affect people who are generalized. My proposition is that we have what I like to call a community quarterback. A person who is able to go by zip code and take a regular community needs assessment to address preventive health care, to make certain that people are taking their medications as prescribed. A couple of my clients will -- they make their medications stretch. And you're not supposed to make your medications stretch. You're supposed to take it everyday, but you're also supposed to take it with food. So when you don't have access to healthy food, you don't have the ability to prepare your food, then what do you do? That's another thing that this community quarterback could help to alleviate to determine who needs more in-home care to ensure that they are getting what they need by way of access to medication, access to medical treatment and access to necessary screenings. >> Thank you. Mr. Conway? >> I am going to say what everybody else is scared to say, universal a health care for everyone in district 1. We created a pilot program called district care, which is based on a San Francisco program that has been successful for 10 years. It would only cost us \$45 million. For the last 100 years we have not had any hospitals on the east side. The Mueller hospital is not a hospital for adults. There are no urgent care hospitals on the east side. So what that means is that we're not looking at population health, we're not looking at health care overall. We want to use the ems as a

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home based health care system as opposed to a system that's putting out fires. We don't want to privatize any health care system. We believe that health care is a human right and everyone deserves that health care. District care will provide health care regardless of your income, regardless of

immigration status and regardless of your housing status. And again, we already have the money for it. Central health is giving \$35 million a year to UT for the Dell medical school that has been earmarked for poor people's health. [Bell ringing]. We're already paying for it. >> Thank you. Mr. Spigner? >> I think access to health care is a very big thing in east Austin. I think that we need to have programs that educate people about health, about food, and about things -- and about wellness dealing with health. I think we need to have access to health care facilities. As you know we don't have any health care facilities on the east side. We have many small doctors offices, but no health care facilities. We don't even have a cancer treatment facility in east Austin. And we know that we have a high rate of breast cancer and other types of cancer in the east Austin area. So this is something that we'll have to look at and we'll have to implement. Like you said, there's money that's been set aside for this, but we're not getting any of the money on this side of town. We have access to no health care facilities. So this is something that we'll have to look at and maybe we'll have to make it a public-private partnership so that we can solve this problem and address these issues. Thank you. >> Thank you. Ms. Salazar? >> Thank you. So east Austin has been neglected for so many years until this day we all feel it. When I was pregnant myself, I had to travel 10 miles to go to -- to go to weekly visits. That is a horrible thing for someone who is pregnant, but imagine me times thousands of people that are in east Austin. Unfortunately we live in a medical desert.

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We talk about food deserts, but we also have a medical desert. And for me, just to keep it concrete, two priorities I would like to see, I would like to lobby central health so that we have better and more access to clinics in east Austin. There's no reason why having our population needs, we have so limited community care clinics and central health clinics. And the other thing that I want to see more is mobile health care integration, better navigation. We have M.A.P. Services. I did interpretation for a patient recently and they didn't even though know they could access M.A.P. >> Thank you, Ms. Salazar. This is going to be our last question before we go into closing remarks this evening. And Mr. Ramos, we'll start with you. What is your experience and background that makes you a good representative of this district? >> My experience primarily stems from the fact that I belong to a great association, the holy cross neighborhood, and right now we're actually in the middle of getting our preservation application for historic designation. A lot to say. Once we do that we'll have design standards implemented throughout the neighborhood and our community that combat the developers and allow us to move forward while developing still the old ways of our homes. I'm also a foreclosure consultant specialist. I've traveled to Chicago and other places helping people stay in their homes and advocating for foreclosure prevention. >> Ms. Avini? >> Hi. I was born and raised in east Austin.

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I was actually born at home in the home I currently live in. And I'm deeply concerned about inequities that I have seen growing up over time. These inequities have not reduced, they've gotten worse. I'm a



recent graduate of Yale and Oxford. I got full scholarships. I studied social policy. And directly addressed municipal governments and the way that we have structured our governments to prioritize profit over people. And I'm in a position I feel to very much address and restructure our city government so that we prioritize the needs of the people of East Austin. And at the very least acknowledge them and are held accountable for them. >> Ms. Harper-Madison? >> I feel like I'm uniquely qualified to represent District 1 because I know District 1. I know District 1 as a person whose formative experience was spent in poverty. I believe it made me stronger, it made me resilient and it made me tenacious. I'm uniquely qualified to represent District 1 because I'm a small business owner. As you can imagine there are a myriad of elements you go through as a small business owner. I'm a mother. Have you ever had negotiations with a two-year-old? I am uniquely qualified because I'm a mother. I think we underestimate the relevance of being a mother and being able to think on your feet and anticipate people's needs and be compassionate and be patient and be able to manage a calendar. I am uniquely qualified because I'm a community advocate. I have the altruistic heart and the practical mind of a person who would be uniquely qualified to represent District 1. Thank you. >> Mr. Conway? >> Yes, thank you. So I believe in experts, I believe in listening to the experts, and I've spent the last year listening to experts. And we believe as a criminal justice organizer that people who are closest to the problems are closest to the solutions.

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And so I believe my work as a criminal justice organizer passing ordinances like fair chance hiring, helping pass paid sick days, helping to end the juvenile curfew, helping to bring about the affordability bond, all of those issues are not only issues that I led on, but issues that I was deeply involved with. So my activity at the state Legislature and working on both sides of the aisle to make sure that Austin -- aisle to make sure that Austin maintain a fair chance ordinance and that every city across Texas maintains that ordinance makes me uniquely qualified at the state Legislature. I was also building that coalition at the city and making sure that we had fair chance hiring possible, as well as a freedom city resolutions. [Bell ringing]. >> Mr. Spigner? >> I think. I feel that I'm qualified. I have 18 years of governmental -- state governmental experience. I worked with the jurisprudence committee with Royce West as a policy analyst. I've worked with the department of state services as an emergency management preparedness quality assurance coordinator so I've worked all over the state of Texas in 254 counties. We reached out to every one of those. And I've worked in hurricane responses so I believe my emergency preparedness experience makes me unique. Also I worked with the office of the attorney general and we give out various grants to communities and we give out several grants in Austin. So I feel that I know the community, I know the state and I'm a long time resident of the community. I've been in this community almost all my life. I've mentored in this community, I've coached in this community. I've given to this community and I've also advocated for this community. I was one of the persons on the ground level for the 10-1. I remember when we were out advocating for that. So things that have happened in this community I've been a part of and I feel that I'm uniquely qualified because of that. [Bell ringing]. If if >> Ms. Salazar. >> Thank you. I am uniquely qualified to be a councilmember because I

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have served my entire adult life to public service. For the past 15 years I have worked alongside businesses, community leaders, residents. I have even lived as a community organizer, I lived among the community. So I have a unique perspective of both someone who has been an advocate and has been advocating for the community, but I have also been creating solutions. I have worked ending homelessness and that work has resulted in thousands of people moving from streets to housing. I have created home ownership. I have led communities to transform their own change. So I'm uniquely qualified to be able to navigate our complex government, our complex regulations, and innovate from within, creating real solutions. I'm also qualified because I'm a mother. [Laughter]. And an immigrant. But I don't have that much time. >> Stop. [Laughter]. >> Mr. Harding. >> I believe I am most qualified because I have the most transferable skills. As an attorney I represented public entities, meaning I dealt with open records, open meetings, procurement, I negotiated contracts with software companies, I helped buy and sell real estate. As the chair of the Travis county democratic party, I helped raise over a million dollars. We passed the largest affordability and transportation bonds in Austin's history and we had the highest level of voter registration. I built coalitions across this city. So the key thing for a councilmember is to not only know your district, but can you get to six votes? That's the key goal as a councilmember. So I've built coalitions across the city, I have challenged the status quo, persuaded the status quo to do things we've never done before. I've also worked at the Texas legislature, the Houston city council. So I have been involved in politics and I have been focused on serving the community. I have been driven by my faith and believe politics has been the avenue I've been called to be in. So I would love to have your support. [Bell ringing].

[6:52:46 PM]

>> Thank you. Yeah. Now we're going to start our closing remarks. And we have done this. As you know you're seated in ballot order, so how we're going to start on the closing is we're going to just go the opposite of the way we started. We'll start with Mr. Ramos. You will each have a minute and then we'll go this direction. Mr. Ramos. >> I believe that we need to be proactive in our neighborhoods by implementing design standards, updating our classrooms and providing financial aid to our teachers so that they can empower our children. I also believe that public transportation is a very big issue that we need to tackle head on by implementing a new rail system. I believe that with the right leadership we can execute and get to these goals. Thank you. >> Mr. Harding. >> Thank you for being here this evening. A recent article came out entitled proven under pressure. I've been under pressure my entire life. As a three-year-old my mom had a heart attack and I was the only person at home. So I had on to call ems for them to be able to get there and take care of her. And thank god she's okay. A year and a half later I needed surgery myself. And before that I accepted life into my life. So at the age of five I had experienced a whole lot. So I have spent my entire life focused on serving people, whether it was in approximate college organizing people to help during hurricane relief, whether it was in law school, waking up students to go feed the homeless, or after law school getting involved in politics, volunteering my time and doing everything that I could to make this community a better place. So I would be

honored to have your support and thank you so much for being here this evening. >> Thank you. Ms. Salazar. >> My name is Mariana Salazar and I'm running for Austin city council district 1. I'm running because I would like to see better public transportation in district

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1. Only four percent use public transit. I'm running because our schools are under resourced and I would like to see better schools. I would like to see the city be a better supporter of after school programs. I'm running because I would like to see us have better representation at city hall. All too often I go to city meetings and there's no childcare. I would like to see childcare in public meetings. I would like to see interpretation so that Thursday meetings people can just show up and that speak other languages and be able to participate. I'm running because I believe it's time for us to work towards free pre-k in Austin. We have been leading in many areas. We can lead in the pre-k area as well. As a working mother, an immigrant who all too often is treated differently, but wants to create a city that can welcome everyone, I'll be there. I'll make sure that we include -- we create an affordable inclusive and prosperous city for all. >> Thank you very much. Mr. Spigner. >> Thank you once again. Let me be clear that my platform is focused on solutions for district 1 and not differences. Whether your color, your across, your gender, sexual orientation or party affiliation, my platform will not pit one against the other. It's not black versus white, gay versus straight, you settled to understand that we need unity, Austin needs unity and not division. We welcome everyone. First of all, my commitment is to my neighborhood and to the citizens of district 1. To the citizens of district 1. And I would love to contribute to its growth and prosperity. I cannot do this without your support and I cannot do this without you. I look forward to gaining your support, standing with you to make Austin a better place for everyone. Thank you so much. I appreciate your time. >> Thank you. Mr. Conway. >> Yes, ma'am, thank you. We are the only candidate that has been endorsed. We've been endorsed by the working families party. We've been endorsed by the workers defense fund.

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We've also been endorsed by democratic socialists of America. All those groups are champions for working people. They're champions for poor people. They're champions for folks who have been on the outer margins of democracy. So as I said, I've been spending the last year listening to the experts, people who are experts in their conditions of losing their homes to property taxes, of having no access to health care, of having no access to the things that we claim that Austin has been built to provide folks. So I'm running because I believe people deserve a champion. I believe people deserve a leader. I believe people deserve the access to have the best quality of life possible. And I believe that it's my job to not only usher that in, but when I become city councilmember, you become city councilmember. And I think it's important to put one of us in office. >> Thank you very much. Ms. Harper-madison? >> Thank you. I really appreciate y'all's attention and patience this evening. I'm running for city council because I believe in this city and I believe that the citizens of Austin deserve integrity driven, passionate,

pragmatic leadership. And I also don't believe that that has to mean that you have past political experience. Frankly, I think it's time for us to have regular citizens be a part of what happens with municipal government. I want to make sure to point out as a person who does not have past political experience, I also do not have any political debts. I made the commitment to run for city councilmember because I believe that this city can be better and together we can make it happen. I'm running on the platform that includes affordability, access, equity and transportation. I really appreciate you guys being here this evening. Thank you. >> Thank you. Ms. Avini. >> My name is mitrah ravine and I'm running for city council district 1. I do not believe that it is

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the appropriate model for city and states nationwide. I believe that we must oppose short-termism and trickle down economics because it's harming the people of district 1 and many people of color on the east side. This is not acceptable. We must challenge the control of our city council by the chamber of commerce and the multinational corporations that have undue influence on the chamber of commerce. In addition, I'm running on the platform of challenging growth in imagine Austin. We cannot have a population growth that is so rapid that we are not able to afford it and so we start charging higher and higher property taxes in order to pay for it. We also need to challenge environmental racism and environmental justice which has been a long practice in the city of Austin. We also need to challenge the affordability crisis and find out what is the true root cause of our problems here in Austin. [Bell ringing]. >> Thank you. Candidates, if you would stay up on the dais until we have a short closing. Let's give these good candidates a round of applause. [Applause]. Thank you. The league urges all registered voters to exercise their right and privilege to vote in this election. Early voting is Monday, October the 22nd through Friday, November the 2nd. Election day is on November the 6th. The Austin league of women voters is nonpartisan voter's guide will be available some time before early voting begins and can be found at that time in the public libraries in Travis and Williamson county and miscellaneous other places as well as being online at [www.lwvaustin.org](http://www.lwvaustin.org). We urge you to use vote411 when all the information from the voters guide is online.

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You can get your personal ballot there and see the candidates that you will be voting on. Thanks to the ethics review commission for setting up -- and the city for setting up this wonderful stage with the microphones that work. And all of the volunteers, the league volunteers, which you've seen around the room. We certainly appreciate their help too. And we appreciate your participation so give yourselves a big hand. [Applause]. Thank you.

[8:00:25 PM]

>> Welcome to the district 1 live candidate forum sponsored by the city of Austin's ethics review commission. I'm Frances McIntyre with the league of women voters of the Austin area. The league partners with the city of Austin ethics review commission and the city to provide these forms to allow you to hear from all the city candidates. The Austin league of women voters was founded in 1919. And it's a nonpartisan political organization of men and women promoting informed and active civic participation. We wish to be clear that the league never supports or opposes candidates or parties, but exists to empower voters with information they can use to make their own decisions. Atxn is livestreaming this forum and will be repeating it several times before the election. We commend the city and atxn for providing information for the public and exposure for all candidates. The city has provided us with translators, I believe, tonight. Tonight candidates have one minute opening statements, one minute closing statements, and each question will be answered in one minute. Our timekeepers over here will hold up the cards at the 30-second mark and then a red card when the time expires. So keep your eyes on the timekeepers. All the questions originated from the league or the public and have not been seen by the candidates. According to the league guidelines, we ask for no applause or demonstrations of support or opposition from the audience. Candidates are asked to refrain from any personal attacks on their opponents.

[8:02:29 PM]

So let's begin the opening statements with Ms. Avini. >> Thank you to the league of women voters for hosting this event tonight. We appreciate it. I'm running to remind the people of this city that Austin belongs to the people of Austin and not to real estate investors and for-profit corporations. For too long Austin has been ignored at -- for funding and finance of west Austin and much of the environmental resources that west Austin has, and those resources should be protected, but it's time for east Austin to be given the proper attention and care that it deserves. We must not support gentrification and displacement which for too long has been ignored by this city. Thank you. >> Good evening, everyone. Thanks for having us. My name is Natasha harper-madison and I'm a native east austinite. I'm a cancer survivor and a community advocate and I want to make an impact on public policy in the most impactful way and that is by becoming a city council person for this great city of Austin. Thank you for your time. >> Good evening. I usually start in a certain way by asking people to say pay for power. But I'll start, my name is Lewis Conway, junior, I grew up on Coronado hills and Barcelona. I went to Andrews, pierce, Reagan. I also went to HT, but I also went to prison from this area. I'll start off the same way I met my wife. I went to prison for eight years and I used to be a strip club deejay. So I come from a background that isn't necessarily -- that scared me for a minute. Yeah, so I'm governor I've got to hurry up. I want to have health care for all, I want to end cash

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bail, I want to provide menu childcare vouchers as well, making sure that we drop the property taxes. I'm the only person that has done the work as far as moving an ordinance into legislation and going to protect that legislation at the state Lege. >> Good evening, thank you all for having us. My name is reedy Spigner and I'm a candidate for city council district 1. For those of you who may not know me, I'm a third generation austinite whose roots run deep throughout the community. Today Austin is experienced enormous growth and each day our city is growing by 100 people per day. This is making Austin one of the fastest growing cities as well as the fastest gentrifying cities in the nation. In east Austin this growth has cost our community greatly. Our population of children under 18 have declined, our legacy to residents of working families are declining. Our city is -- is growing at enormous pace. I feel like city government must address all the challenges and issues that come with such growth. I have a vested interest in this community and that's why I'm running for city council district 1. Thank you. >> Good afternoon, my name is Mariana Salazar and I'm running for Austin city council district 1. I'm running -- unfortunately we are currently in an affordability crisis in Austin and too many of us are left out from the prosperous Austin that everybody Braggs about. I'm running to work with others to provide access to affordable housing options, to provide access to better paying jobs with benefits. So improve public transit and active transportation options, improve childcare options for our working family, work towards having pre-k for all and make sure district 1 gets a fair and equitable treatment at city hall. As a working mother raising two young children in east Austin I know the struggles of my district.

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As an immigrant I've had to work extra hard at everything I do. I'm proud to be the only immigrant out of 28 candidates running in the different city races. As a public servant with 15 years of experience serving our communities, I know how to work with others to create real and lasting solutions. >> Thank you, Ms. Salazar. >> Thank you. >> Good evening. My name is Vincent Harding. I am running for city council because I love our community and believe I'm the most qualified person running. As an attorney, real estate agent, someone who has worked at the Texas legislature, city council, former chair of the democratic party, former member of the board of adjustments, I have not only led in public, I have persuaded public institutions to do things they've never done before. Personally I'm a first generation college graduate that went to the university of Texas school of law where I met my lovely wife Megan, a civil rights attorney. I have heard on the issues of affordability, displacement, transportation, health care, criminal justice reform. We have some serious challenges. My campaign theme is all hands on deck because I believe together we can solve these problems and we can build a coalition of a future Austin that people of all ages, races and economic statuses. So please visit vinceharding.com and I would love to have your support. >> Hello. My name is masala Ramos and I am running for councilmember in district 1 as well. Before I speak I want everyone to take a moment and think of some fear that can be tangible, intangible or something totally made up. I'll give you a few seconds. Some of you may have thought of spiders, rodents, snakes. Some of you may have thought similar to me, one of the

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greatest fears, your electricity bill in August. Now, in the east side one of the fears that a lot of our neighbors have that's permeating through the communities is that of change. The fear of change is defined as the act or instance of making or becoming different. But with right leadership I believe that this -- >> Thank you. >> Can become empowerment. >> Thank you. >> We will begin our first question with Ms. Harper-madison. And it's on transportation. From new highways and intersections to bike lanes and bus routes, what do you see as the most pressing transportation need in district 1 and how will you address it? >> That's a good question. I actually just talked about transportation with a constituent today who is struggling if for no other reason she's having to make the commute from pflugerville into Austin to work. She pays about \$9,000 annually to cover the cost of her commute. So I'd like to see housing built in a way that people can live closer to where they work. I think multimodal transportation is something we obviously have to address and we have options with mobility. We absolutely have to address our public transportation situation, the shortage, the lack thereof. And for the love of all things holy bus stops need shelters. So that is definitely one of the things that's at the top of my list. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Conway. >> Yes. So for us I agree that transportation has to be a first priority for district 1. I've lived in Austin all my life. I've ridden a bus since I was eight or 10 years old and we understand that the same bus routes that are present during the era where

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black folks were serving white folks on the west side, that same bus porn is there today. So I think it's imperative for us to increase the frequency of routes. I think it's imperative for us to deal with the sidewalks. Again, I deal with a constituency that doesn't have access to cars, that doesn't have access to different types of transportation. So they depend on sidewalks, they depend on bus routes and these bus routes, I know for the folks who come to my events at night, they have specifically spoken to the cap remap program not being beneficial for them. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Spigner. >> I think transportation needs to take a step forward. I think we need to be innovative when we're thinking of transportation. First of all, I think people who ride buses are not comfortable as they're waiting for the bus stop. First of all, we must need to make these avenues or these individual bus stops comfortable so that people will be able to take the bus and be comfortable while they're waiting for the bus. Second of all, I think that we need to rearrange the routes. A lot of these routes go in densely plated areas, but there's -- populated areas, but there's also other densely populated areas throughout the district that do not have bus routes and bus routes are needed. So I think we need to come together and have a public-private partnership type of situation for transportation so that we can implement routes that are effective for people who need to utilize these services on a daily basis. >> Thank you. Ms. Salazar. >> I'm a working mother. I have two small children, a five-year-old and a two-year-old. And one of the things that we struggle on a daily basis as we walk to school is missing sidewalks. We have to get into a busy road even though we live close -- very close to the school. We have missing sidewalks on something that should be a high priority. We also can't walk to a grocery store that is close

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by because we have missing sidewalks. So for me it's important that we move forward and we support the sidewalk plan, a beautiful plan that we have, but unfortunately we haven't prioritized and funded to advance the ball. I also support as a councilmember, I will support dedicated bus lines just like we have in Guadalupe and Lavaca streets, we need more of those throughout the city and for sure we need them in east Austin. And I would advocate them as a city council. >> Thank you. Mr. Harding. >> Yes. I believe we need to create the transportation system we have of the 21st century. That should include all forms of transportation, buses, rail, cars, bikes, walking and yes, even scooters. When it comes to mass transit we must improve the experience. It is way too hot outside to have people waiting for 45 minutes or an hour. We need more shelters, we need more benches. When it comes to mass transit efficiency, we must be able to get people from point A to point B faster. We do that through dedicated lanes. Look at almost every major city across the world they have dedicated lanes. So when we start thinking about sidewalks we need to make sure those things are safe for people that may be disabled or young or elderly. I also believe that we should look at forms of technology, autonomous vehicles coming, we have synchronized lights. There's a lot of things we need to be doing. We need to focus on all aspects and make sure that we have the mass transit system that we want for the 21st century. >> Thank you. Mr. Ramos. >> I believe that we should actually be looking towards public transportation in the sense of an upgraded rail system. We have numerous amounts of Texas cities that have rails that gets you from point A to point B to point C to point D, all the way to Z. I believe that Austin should be on that rail system as well to get us moving

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further. I also believe that the sidewalks in our neighborhoods need to be revamped and created in certain areas. I mean, off of Maple and Manor Road, there's only one sidewalk, and that starts in one block and ends in one block, and we need to change this. >> Thank you. Ms. Avini. >> Hello. I keep hearing a lot about sidewalks, especially in district 1. There's a great deal of district 1 that exists in a watershed, and every time we lay down sidewalks, we do increase the risk of flooding. And none of us want to be flooded out of our homes and apartments. So I think it's very important that we -- yes, we increase sidewalks, but do so with materials that are environmentally friendly and porous. So this is something that I'm concerned about because I see the city laying down new sidewalks, but they are cement sidewalks that do increase the risk of flooding. In terms of other areas of transportation that are important to me, I think we need to address the issue of bike lanes because too many people are getting hit and dying and that's not acceptable. We also need to increase the frequency of bus routes and we need to ensure that more people have access to buses and enjoy taking them. People don't take buses because it takes two hours to get somewhere that it would take 30 minutes to get to if you were driving a car. So these are my main concerns. >> Our next set of questions, we'll start with you, Mr. Conway. >> Yes, ma'am. >> Regarding affordability, rising tax burdens are caused by rising appraisal values and affect homeowners and renters. Some people who have lived in their family homes for generations cannot afford these taxes. What can be done to address rising property values that are driving many



austinites out of their homes? >> Thank you for your question. That is something that we early on began to deal with when we built our plan. We thought about tax abatements, we thought about tax freezes.

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Specifically for fixed incomes and specifically for incomes that may be vulnerable. And we believe that gentrification begins with the land assessment process. That is the way folks have been taxed out of their homes on the east side. When I grew up on the east side there were black folks all throughout the east side. As you look down 23, 24, 25, we can see that the property values have risen as a direct result of land assessments, which is the direct factor of displacing folks, folks who have lived there for years can no longer afford to pay their taxes as they begin to try to pay their mortgage as well. So for us it's about tax abatements, it's about tax freezes, but it's also about community land trusts, which will fax the tax rate for many years. >> Mr. Spigner? >> Yes, that's a very good question. One thing that we have seen throughout the district is people getting displaced because they are inaudible to afford taxes. Many are working families, many are long-term residents, and many are people who have simply moved into the neighborhood. One thing that we need to look at is tax -- freezing taxes. And this can be done by looking at it as it relates to income, as it relates to age, and as it relates to the time that you've lived in the neighborhood. These are some of the things that we will need to look at and provide some great options to implement some policy to decrease the tax burden on homeowners, especially the elderly and especially long-term residents of the community. >> Ms. Salazar? >> So my dad is currently 76 and he's still doing manual labor jobs. He works at the golf course off 51st just so that he can pay his rising housing costs, obviously including property taxes. This is something that is of great concern to me and I

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have been attending the anti-displacement task force. I can just tell you three things and we can talk more about these things. Something that I will support, community land trust, and it's the idea where you can buy -- you can own your property and not your land, and that way your taxes aren't the highest because of the land and that's one way of keeping property taxes under control. I would support a homestead exemption program enrollment. I have learned that a lot of people qualify, but they simply haven't applied. So that's such an easy program that the city could be doing. And a third thing that I would on -- I will tell you more another time. [Laughter]. >> Mr. Harding. >> Everywhere I go this is what I hear about, displacement, displacement, displacement. So I think first and foremost to have an honest conversation about property taxes, we must look at the fact that the state of Texas is not paying their fair share of public education. This has been the highest driver of cost because we are sending half a billion dollars back to the state of Texas. So let's continue to fight to change that at the state level. Here locally, state law permits us to raise taxes up to eight percent each year without an election. This year the council has mandated a maximum of six percent, which I think is good stewardship as we're trying to control taxes. You've heard about land trusts, you've heard about homestead preservation districts. I also think we need to look at private non-profit partnerships to help people pay for taxes. So I think we

need an across the board solution, both government, private businesses as well as non-profits, to help people stay in their homes. [Bell ringing]. >> Mr. Ramos? >> I do also believe that taxes should be dealt with at a higher level. Right now we are at eight percent. There was a vote for -- to lower the appraisal rate to

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six percent. I believe we should even get it lower than that. I will definitely advocate to try to get a four percent rate for appraisal rates at the lower level. I also believe that if we go back to preserving our neighborhoods and homes this will stop a lot of the new development of teardowns, rebuilds and new tax assessments on a quarter-million-dollar versus a half a-million-dollar home within that same community. Actually implement design standards. We can see taxes leveling off a little easier within the next couple of years. >> Ms. Avini. >> Hi. I think it's important for us to be aware that 33 other states in this nation have property taxes prorated based on income. So if I'm elected I will use my platform on city council to reach out and find out if we need to have a constitutional amendment in Texas in order to address this on a statewide level. I think it's also important for the city to be aware that real estate investors who are often multinational companies or out of state investors buy our -- buy up homes in east Austin, fix them up, flip them essentially and then cause a reassessment of their neighbors' homes who weren't fixed up. So this is really unjust and this is what's causing those reassessments. And I think it's very important that the city begin to address it. >> Ms. Harper-madison? >> The trouble with going last is that they said it already. [Laughter]. So some of the things that I would definitely focus on have to do with education. When people don't know what their options are, they certainly don't access them. So knowing that you are eligible for a homestead exemption and having somebody help you apply for

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it is essential. I have a couple of clients who sold their homes if for no other reason, there were foundation repairs that needed to be done and roof repairs that needed to be done, and the tax burden in addition to the cost of the repairs scared them. They didn't realize that there are home repair programs who would cover the cost of the repairs. So making certain that people have access to information I think is extraordinarily helpful. I would also definitely like to take a look at community land trust options. I think a lot of people don't realize that having the opportunity to sell your property, a part of your property to somebody in your family and keep it in your family, would make it more affordable. I would push for -- [bell ringing]. Thank you. >> We're going to go to public safety and the police in district 1. Community policing is just one service provided by the police. What can the police do better to serve the citizens of district 1? Are there areas or problems that need to be addressed by the police? Mr. Conway, we are starting with you. Sorry. >> Going first again? >> No, Mr. Spigner, I'm sorry. >> Could you rephrase the question one more time, restate the question. >> Community policing is just one service provided by the police. What can the police do to better serve the citizens of district 1? Are there areas or problems that need to be addressed? >> Absolutely, there are areas and problems that need to

be addressed. First thing that I think that the city of Austin police department needs to do is they think they need to take some cultural -- some cultural training, cultural responsive theory training so that they'll know that the people that they're dealing with, how to approach them and how to approach them in a respectful and responsible manner. I think that we've seen a lot of aggressive policing, and I think a lot of that policing has been based on race. I think the one thing they need to do is understand their constituents and the people that they are policing. They're here to protect and serve. So one thing that they need to understand is everyone black or everyone hispanic

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is not doing anything negative. They need to approach them as if this is true. Because we see a lot of aggressive policing and it seems like everything happens before they inquire about what's going on. I know -- I've known several times that I've gotten stopped and they didn't ask me for my license and my insurance. The first thing they asked me was do you have drugs, do you have weapons? >> Thank you. Ms. Salazar. >> Two weeks ago I joined an officer on a police ride along. We responded to most of our time. We actually responded to mental health calls. We responded to some domestic violence calls. And we were also on a the lookout for a stolen car. At the end of the day I was exhausted, but it was clear to me -- and I then did an ems ride along too and we responded to many mental health calls. So one area that as a councilmember I will advocate is having a better mental health response and that in my mind may be a collaborative team of maybe paramedics, mental health professionals and public officers. So that's one area. We only have one minute. >> Mr. Harding. >> When I came to Austin the concern I heard from everyone in Austin was when is the democratic party going to say something about black kids being shot by the police? So I drafted a resolution, I pushed for reforms, and I brought the decision makers to the community and handed the microphone to the community to ask questions directly. And I think we need that level of engagement where the police are accountable for R. To their constituencies and we can talk to them directly. Secondly, we need greater levels of accountability. When brionne king was thrown to the ground and they said that black people have violent tendencies, that

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officer should have been disciplined for that but because of the terms of the contract he couldn't be. So we need accountability and high pay so that we can continue to have or recruit best officers. And then lastly, we need to increase diversity of officers as well as we need to incentivize officers to live in the communities that they are in. So those are the things that I want to push for as well as Chris to the police monitor's office. >> Thank you. Mr. Ramos? >> I believe officers should be asked to come into our neighborhoods, actually interact with our communities on their day's off, get to know the people that they're policing. Studies have shown that the police force in New York ones one of the -- once one of the famous mayors actually enacted these programs, community outreach with police officers on the beat, crime dropped lower because people felt more comfortable to come to those officers. That's what the police are here for, that's what they're supposed to do. They're supposed to be our friends. So if they're

in your community and you see their face everyday, they're -- you don't feel as threatened on both sides of the aisle. >> Ms. Avini. >> After knocking on doors throughout the district, I've repeatedly heard -- I've been encouraged by people of all races to support the police and have them show up. So not showing up has been one issue that I have repeatedly heard from constituents in district 1. In talking to police and in hearing the struggles that they have -- in fact, I attended a justice coalition meeting and a policeman showed up. He said that we simply don't have the resources to address mental health crisis. So I think that Mariana's idea of bringing psychologists and perhaps social workers in the emergency response is a really good idea.

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>> Thank you. Ms. Harper-madison? >> I'd like to start by saying I think something we all have to acknowledge is that we need police, right? Something else I'd like to say is I think by and large the officers who represent the Austin police department do a great job and care about their job and care about the citizens of Austin. Now, can we do better? Absolutely. Oversight, accountability and transparency are all issues that we should address. We should give the monitor's office more power to investigate instances of I am propriety. I think we have to start once again with education. I think going to the training level, the academy level, the modules that represent non-violent interaction, that represent non-lethal interaction would be very important. I also think it's super important that we have a police contract that benefits both officers and the citizens of Austin. >> Thank you. Mr. Conway. >> Thank you. So I think if I understand the question what is what can the police do. First of all, I was involved with the police contract, the meet and confer contract from the very beginning. And what got me engaged is the fact that there was no citizen oversight and because I had been to prison I was not allowed to be part of that oversight process. And my argument was that we are the community that is most directly impacted by law enforcement so somebody from the community should be on that panel. Part 2, community safety should be more important, should it be more important than community policing? And we have to look at it through that lens. Thirdly as a tertiary point is as a product of law enforcement engagement, we have to look at treatment before arrest. We have to look at folks having access to mental

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health facilities before arrest, and we shouldn't be looking at our jails as mental health institutions. Right now our jails are housing our mental health patients. [Bell ringing]. >> Our next question will start with Ms. Salazar. And this is regarding code enforcement. According to particular website such as airbnb and home away, short-term rentals are all over our city. The large number of listed properties are not reflected in the small number of licensed properties. What is your assessment of how code enforcement is handling this and why? >> I would like to first start by saying that I recognize that short-term rentals are a source of income for a lot of people that have fixed income. So it's something that we are welcoming of. In terms of code enforcement, I think there are many ways that code enforcement could

be better enforcers. For one they probably have limited capacity. I don't know that for a fact, but they could be using some other revenue that they themselves are getting from their taxes from the short-term rentals to increase the capacity to be better code enforcers. I know there's a licensing process to do that and there's no reason why they couldn't be visiting. There's homeaway, airbnb, all of this is public so they have the information. It's probably a matter of organizing the team in a better way so that they can be better enforcers for the city. >> Mr. Harding? >> Yes. As it relates to short-term rentals, I'm in favor of getting rid of type 2. I do not believe we should be allowing large companies or investors to buy homes and essentially operate them as rentals, I'm in favor of getting rid of those and phasing them out. But as Mariana mentioned

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there are some people who use them as a way to pay for mortgages. So I think the rules we have need to be specific regarding who the individual is that owns the property, whether or not there's a homestead exemption on the property or not. Just to transition really quickly to renters, we are the only district that saw an increase in the percentage of renters. So district 1 has 53% renters, 47% owners. So we need to make sure we provide protections to renters so if there is a landlord that is routinely violating code that we can make sure that we give them the protections they need to get the code enforced and that they are protected and not retaliated against. >> Mr. Ramos. >> I think right now there's also an issue with the city of having a cap of who can actually apply for short-term rentals. And I think that we should, one, increase that so that people can do it in the legal sense. There are also a lot of people who do this because they just can't afford their homes or just can't afford their taxes. So I believe that we give those people a break in the sense of we make sure that if you're applying for a short-term rental that you live in the property and that that is your residence. That will tax investors, but at least the people of Austin can remain in their homes and still afford them. Thank you. >> Ms. Avini? >> I don't think that we should be restricting what property owners are allowed to do with their homes. I find that very problematic. I also lived in New York City for a number of years and I saw the ways in which people in apartments would rent out their apartments simply to help make rent. So I have a hard time with this idea of licensing and with being overly restrictive in terms of

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distributing those licenses. I do have a problem very much with investors buying up homes, as Vince Harding said, and not following the rules or mistreating their renters. >> As it pertains specifically to strs, I would say that I agree that we should get rid of type 2 strs. That's problematic for a lot of reasons. If a person doesn't live in the home they shouldn't be able to rent out parts of that home. And also that said, I would also agree that we shouldn't -- too much government is problematic and too many rules for what people do in their homes is problematic. I think people should be able to do whatever it is that they want in their homes if they're not causing harm to anybody else. So that to say, I think the thought -- the imagery of code enforcement cracking down on regular people just rent outing a room in their home, it

sounds gross and undignified and I don't like it one bit. I think code enforcement should do what they do, which is to enforce code, where like Vince said renters are living in substandard properties. I think they have plenty of work to do that doesn't include them enforcing rules about str. >> Mr. Conway? >> Yes, ma'am. Thank you. So I live on a street with two airbnbs. Nary of the homeowners live in those homes. Part 2 of that is the people that I know who are being regulated by code enforcement, they can't even afford to pay their taxes or their mortgage. So for me we have to look at it on the front end. It's an affordability issue. As folks can't afford to pay their taxes issue. It's not a code issue. If folks aren't in danger of losing their home to taxes, if folks aren't in danger of losing their home to high mortgages, then we don't have a code issue. But the problem with regulating folks is that the

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folks in cavalier park, the folks who can't afford to maintain their home, who can't afford to refurbish their home, they are being regulated out of their homes because they're being fined -- fines that they can't afford. So we've got to look at something else besides regulation as a way for us to determine how homeowners should be able to use their property to make money. [Bell ringing]. >> Mr. Spigner? >> Can you hear me? I think that as far as short-term rentals are concerned it's one thing that we have to realize here. Austin is a city of the future. When we're talking about air air bnb and other things. This is offered worldwide and nationwide. This is a really, really up and coming thing. We're kind of millennial type of thing. I think others of us look at it as a negative thing, but I think that this is part of the attraction in Austin, Texas. We have -- we're a worldwide city, we have visitors from all over the world, all over the United States of America, so I think that it's something that we need to look at and regulate it a little more differently as opposed to making it more restrictive. This is something that people could come in and enjoy our city and this is part of them enjoying our city. So I think it's something that we need to look at, take another look at it and implement policy so that we can kind of restrict it to a certain amount -- a certain-- I guess you could say a certain -- [bell ringing]. Sorry about that. [Laughter]. >> All right. We're going to start with you, Mr. Harding. We're talking a little bit about public health. Health care and health disparities occur across many dimensions from race and ethnicity to socioeconomic status, gender, age, disability status. And in light of Austin's exploding population and rising income inequality, do

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you think the city should create and/or expand particular health services to meet these needs. And if so, how. >> Yes, I do. And so when I think about health, the first thing I think about is life expectancies. And it is sad that in Austin, Texas that someone who lives in 78724 has a life expectancy that's 15 years less than someone eating correctly, exercising well and also just have really good food options just period in our neighborhoods. >> Thank you. Ms. Avini? >> The other day I met a mother and her young Latina daughter and her daughter had an ear infection and she couldn't afford to take her daughter to the doctor to get something very simple,

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which was antibiotics. So this is the kind of situation' that we have on the east side. Meanwhile we have these really fancy hospitals being built on the east side. For example, in the Mueller center. And I'm concerned that the local community somehow doesn't have access, free access to health care that they very much need. We cannot have wealth creation in just a tiny portion of the east side without providing access to all people in east Austin. >> Thank you. Ms. Harper-madison? >> Yes. So something I'd like to propose, and this is not just about health, right? It's about all the issues that affect people who are generalized. My proposition is that we have what I like to call a community quarterback. A person who is able to go by zip code and take a regular community needs assessment to address preventive health care, to make certain that people are taking their medications as prescribed. A couple of my clients will - they make their medications stretch. And you're not supposed to make your medications stretch. You're supposed to take it everyday, but you're also supposed to take it with food. So when you don't have access to healthy food, you don't have the ability to prepare your food, then what do you do? That's another thing that this community quarterback could help to alleviate to determine who needs more in-home care to ensure that they are getting what they need by way of access to medication, access to medical treatment and access to necessary screenings. >> Thank you. Mr. Conway? >> I am going to say what everybody else is scared to say, universal a health care for everyone in district 1. We created a pilot program called district care, which is based on a San Francisco program that has been successful for 10 years. It would only cost us \$45 million. For the last 100 years we have not had any hospitals on the east side. The Mueller hospital is not a hospital for adults. There are no urgent care hospitals on the east side. So what that means is that we're not looking at population health, we're not

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looking at health care overall. We want to use the ems as a home based health care system as opposed to a system that's putting out fires. We don't want to privatize any health care system. We believe that health care is a human right and everyone deserves that health care. District care will provide health care regardless of your income, regardless of immigration status and regardless of your housing status. And again, we already have the money for it. Central health is giving \$35 million a year to UT for the Dell medical school that has been earmarked for poor people's health. [Bell ringing]. We're already paying for it. >> Thank you. Mr. Spigner? >> I think access to health care is a very big thing in east Austin. I think that we need to have programs that educate people about health, about food, and about things -- and about wellness dealing with health. I think we need to have access to health care facilities. As you know we don't have any health care facilities on the east side. We have many small doctors offices, but no health care facilities. We don't even have a cancer treatment facility in east Austin. And we know that we have a high rate of breast cancer and other types of cancer in the east Austin area. So this is something that we'll have to look at and we'll have to implement. Like you said, there's money that's been set aside for this, but we're not getting any of the money on this side of town. We have access to no health care

facilities. So this is something that we'll have to look at and maybe we'll have to make it a public-private partnership so that we can solve this problem and address these issues. Thank you. >> Thank you. Ms. Salazar? >> Thank you. So east Austin has been neglected for so many years until this day we all feel it. When I was pregnant myself, I had to travel 10 miles to go to -- to go to weekly visits. That is a horrible thing for someone who is pregnant, but imagine me times thousands of people that are in east

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Austin. Unfortunately we live in a medical desert. We talk about food deserts, but we also have a medical desert. And for me, just to keep it concrete, two priorities I would like to see, I would like to lobby central health so that we have better and more access to clinics in east Austin. There's no reason why having our population needs, we have so limited community care clinics and central health clinics. And the other thing that I want to see more is mobile health care integration, better navigation. We have M.A.P. Services. I did interpretation for a patient recently and they didn't even though know they could access M.A.P. >> Thank you, Ms. Salazar. This is going to be our last question before we go into closing remarks this evening. And Mr. Ramos, we'll start with you. What is your experience and background that makes you a good representative of this district? >> My experience primarily stems from the fact that I belong to a great association, the holy cross neighborhood, and right now we're actually in the middle of getting our preservation application for historic designation. A lot to say. Once we do that we'll have design standards implemented throughout the neighborhood and our community that combat the developers and allow us to move forward while developing still the old ways of our homes. I'm also a foreclosure consultant specialist. I've traveled to Chicago and other places helping people stay in their homes and advocating for foreclosure prevention. >> Ms. Avini? >> Hi.

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I was born and raised in east Austin. I was actually born at home in the home I currently live in. And I'm deeply concerned about inequities that I have seen growing up over time. These inequities have not reduced, they've gotten worse. I'm a recent graduate of Yale and Oxford. I got full scholarships. I studied social policy. And directly addressed municipal governments and the way that we have structured our governments to prioritize profit over people. And I'm in a position I feel to very much address and restructure our city government so that we prioritize the needs of the people of east Austin. And at the very least acknowledge them and are held accountable for them. >> Ms. Harper-Madison? >> I feel like I'm uniquely qualified to represent district 1 because I know district 1. I know district 1 as a person whose formative experience was spent in poverty. I believe it made me stronger, it made me resilient and it made me tenacious. I'm uniquely qualified to represent district 1 because I'm a small business owner. As you can imagine there are a myriad of elements you go through as a small business owner. I'm a mother. Have you ever had negotiations with a two-year-old? I am uniquely qualified because I'm a mother. I think we underestimate the relevance of being a mother and being able to think on your feet and anticipate people's needs and be compassionate and be patient and be able to manage a calendar. I



am uniquely qualified because I'm a community advocate. I have the altruistic heart and the practical mind of a person who would be uniquely qualified to represent district 1. Thank you. >> Mr. Conway? >> Yes, thank you. So I believe in experts, I believe in listening to the experts, and I've spent the last year listening to experts. And we believe as a criminal justice organizer that people who are closest to

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the problems are closest to the solutions. And so I believe my work as a criminal justice organizer passing ordinances like fair chance hiring, helping pass paid sick days, helping to end the juvenile curfew, helping to bring about the affordability bond, all of those issues are not only issues that I led on, but issues that I was deeply involved with. Soy activity at the state Lege and working on both sides of the ale to make sure that Austin -- aisle to make sure that Austin maintain a fair chance ordinance and that every city across Texas maintains that ordinance makes me uniquely qualified at the state Lege. I was also building that coalition at the city and making sure that we had fair chance hiring possible, as well as a freedom city resolutions. [Bell ringing]. >> Mr. Spigner? >> I think. I feel that I'm qualified. I have 18 years of governmental -- state governmental experience. I worked with the jurisprudence committee with Royce west as a policy analyst. I've worked with the department of state services as an emergency management preparedness quality assurance coordinator so I've worked all over the state of Texas in 254 counties. We reached out to every one of those. And I've worked in hurricane responses so I believe my emergency preparedness experience makes me unique. Also I worked with the office of the attorney general and we give out various grants to communities and we give out several grants in Austin. So I feel that I know the community, I know the state and I'm a long time resident of the community. I've been in this community almost all my life. I've mentored in this community, I've coached in this community. I've given to this community and I've also advocated for this community. I was one of the persons on the ground level for the 10-1. I remember when we were out advocating for that. So things that have happened in this community I've been a part of and I feel that I'm uniquely qualified because of that. [Bell ringing]. If if >> Ms. Salazar. >> Thank you. I am uniquely qualified to

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be a councilmember because I have served my entire adult life to public service. For the past 15 years I have worked alongside businesses, community leaders, residents. I have even lived as a community organizer, I lived among the community. So I have a unique perspective of both someone who has been an advocate and has been advocating for the community, but I have also been creating solutions. I have worked ending homelessness and that work has resulted in thousands of people moving from streets to housing. I have created home ownership. I have led communities to transform their own change. So I'm uniquely qualified to be able to navigate our complex government, our complex regulations, and innovate from within, creating real solutions. I'm also qualified because I'm a mother. [Laughter]. And an immigrant. But I don't have that much time. >> Stop. [Laughter]. >> Mr. Harding. >> I believe I am most qualified because I have the most transferable skills. As an attorney I represented public entities,

meaning I dealt with open records, open meetings, procurement, I negotiated contracts with software companies, I helped buy and sell real estate. As the chair of the Travis county democratic party, I helped raise over a million dollars. We passed the largest affordability and transportation bonds in Austin's history and we had the highest level of voter registration. I built coalitions across this city. So the key thing for a councilmember is to not only know your district, but can you get to six votes? That's the key goal as a councilmember. So I've built coalitions across the city, I have challenged the status quo, persuaded the status quo to do things we've never done before. I've also worked at the Texas legislature, the Houston city council. So I have been involved in politics and I have been focused on serving the community. I have been driven by my faith and believe politics has been the avenue I've been called to be in.

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So I would love to have your support. [Bell ringing]. >> Thank you. Yeah. Now we're going to start our closing remarks. And we have done this. As you know you're seated in ballot order, so how we're going to start on the closing is we're going to just go the opposite of the way we started. We'll start with Mr. Ramos. You will each have a minute and then we'll go this direction. Mr. Ramos. >> I believe that we need to be proactive in our neighborhoods by implementing design standards, updating our classrooms and providing financial aid to our teachers so that they can empower our children. I also believe that public transportation is a very big issue that we need to tackle head on by implementing a new rail system. I believe that with the right leadership we can execute and get to these goals. Thank you. >> Mr. Harding. >> Thank you for being here this evening. A recent article came out entitled proven under pressure. I've been under pressure my entire life. As a three-year-old my mom had a heart attack and I was the only person at home. So I had to call EMS for them to be able to get there and take care of her. And thank God she's okay. A year and a half later I needed surgery myself. And before that I accepted life into my life. So at the age of five I had experienced a whole lot. So I have spent my entire life focused on serving people, whether it was in approximate college organizing people to help during hurricane relief, whether it was in law school, waking up students to go feed the homeless, or after law school getting involved in politics, volunteering my time and doing everything that I could to make this community a better place. So I would be honored to have your support and thank you so much for being here this evening. >> Thank you. Ms. Salazar. >> My name is Mariana

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Salazar and I'm running for Austin city council district 1. I'm running because I would like to see better public transportation in district 1. Only four percent use public transit. I'm running because our schools are under resourced and I would like to see better schools. I would like to see the city be a better supporter of after school programs. I'm running because I would like to see us have better representation at city hall. All too often I go to city meetings and there's no childcare. I would like to see childcare in public meetings. I would like to see interpretation so that Thursday meetings people can just

show up and that speak other languages and be able to participate. I'm running because I believe it's time for us to work towards free pre-k in Austin. We have been leading in many areas. We can lead in the pre-k area as well. As a working mother, an immigrant who all too often is treated differently, but wants to create a city that can welcome everyone, I'll be there. I'll make sure that we include -- we create an affordable inclusive and prosperous city for all. >> Thank you very much. Mr. Spigner. >> Thank you once again. Let me be clear that my platform is focused on solutions for district 1 and not differences. Whether your color, your accent, your gender, sexual orientation or party affiliation, my platform will not pit one against the other. It's not black versus white, gay versus straight, you settled to understand that we need unity, Austin needs unity and not division. We welcome everyone. First of all, my commitment is to my neighborhood and to the citizens of district 1. To the citizens of district 1. And I would love to contribute to its growth and prosperity. I cannot do this without your support and I cannot do this without you. I look forward to gaining your support, standing with you to make Austin a better place for everyone. Thank you so much. I appreciate your time. >> Thank you. Mr. Conway. >> Yes, ma'am, thank you. We are the only candidate that has been endorsed. We've been endorsed by the

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working families party. We've been endorsed by the workers defense fund. We've also been endorsed by democratic socialists of America. All those groups are champions for working people. They're champions for poor people. They're champions for folks who have been on the outer margins of democracy. So as I said, I've been spending the last year listening to the experts, people who are experts in their conditions of losing their homes to property taxes, of having no access to health care, of having no access to the things that we claim that Austin has been built to provide folks. So I'm running because I believe people deserve a champion. I believe people deserve a leader. I believe people deserve the access to have the best quality of life possible. And I believe that it's my job to not only usher that in, but when I become city councilmember, you become city councilmember. And I think it's important to put one of us in office. >> Thank you very much. Ms. Harper-madison? >> Thank you. I really appreciate y'all's attention and patience this evening. I'm running for city council because I believe in this city and I believe that the citizens of Austin deserve integrity driven, passionate, pragmatic leadership. And I also don't believe that that has to mean that you have past political experience. Frankly, I think it's time for us to have regular citizens be a part of what happens with municipal government. I want to make sure to point out as a person who does not have past political experience, I also do not have any political debts. I made the commitment to run for city councilmember because I believe that this city can be better and together we can make it happen. I'm running on the platform that includes affordability, access, equity and transportation. I really appreciate you guys being here this evening. Thank you. >> Thank you. Ms. Avini. >> My name is mitrah ravine

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and I'm running for city council district 1. I do not believe that it is the appropriate model for city and states nationwide. I believe that we must oppose short-termism and trickle down economics because it's harming the people of district 1 and many people of color on the east side. This is not acceptable. We must challenge the control of our city council by the chamber of commerce and the multinational corporations that have undue influence on the chamber of commerce. In addition, I'm running on the platform of challenging growth in imagine Austin. We cannot have a population growth that is so rapid that we are not able to afford it and so we start charging higher and higher property taxes in order to pay for it. We also need to challenge environmental racism and environmental justice which has been a long practice in the city of Austin. We also need to challenge the affordability crisis and find out what is the true root cause of our problems here in Austin. [Bell ringing]. >> Thank you. Candidates, if you would stay up on the dais until we have a short closing. Let's give these good candidates a round of applause. [Applause]. Thank you. The league urges all registered voters to exercise their right and privilege to vote in this election. Early voting is Monday, October the 22nd through Friday, November the 2nd. Election day is on November the 6th. The Austin league of women voters is nonpartisan voter's guide will be available some time before early voting begins and can be found at that time in the public libraries in Travis and Williamson county and miscellaneous other places as well as being online at [www.lwvaustin.org](http://www.lwvaustin.org). We urge you to use vote411

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when all the information from the voters guide is online. You can get your personal ballot there and see the candidates that you will be voting on. Thanks to the ethics review commission for setting up -- and the city for setting up this wonderful stage with the microphones that work. And all of the volunteers, the league volunteers, which you've seen around the room. We certainly appreciate their help too. And we appreciate your participation so give yourselves a big hand. [Applause]. Thank you. >> Welcome, welcome, to the city council district 3 candidate forum. Wow. It's almost election time. Welcome, again. This forum is sponsored by the city of Austin ethic review commission and moderated by the league of women voters of the Austin area. I'm Carol with the Austin area league of women voters. The Texas league was founded in 1919 and consists of both men and women members. We are a nonpartisan

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organization. The league does not support or oppose candidates or parties. We are an all-volunteer organization. I want to thank those volunteers that you see around. Thank you very much for volunteering your time today. Thank you. (Applause) >> We are pleased to have a Spanish translator for you this evening. We also, on the back table, there are 3 X 5 cards and ladies standing around that have cards and pens if you would like to submit a question, we'll try our best to get it in. We have been taking questions from the public. I do want to let you know that the forum is being televisedlive and is being recorded. And you can go to the [austintexas.gov/atxn](http://austintexas.gov/atxn) and see this recorded for later. Now, this is -- I'm going to address the candidates. You are seated in ballot order starting at my left. The format will be as

follows. You will have a one-minute opening and a two-minute closing statement. You will have one minute for each question. Our timekeepers will hold up the cards. Keep your eyes, please, on the timekeeper. You'll see a minute and then you'll get a 30-second warning to wrap up your thought and conclude in the second half of the minute. The red card is stop. According to the guidelines, this is for the audience. According to the guidelines of the league of women voters there must be no applause or demonstration of support or opposition from the visitors in this room during the forum. Candidates are asked to refrain from any personal attacks. I will intervene if there are personal attacks and help you get back on track, and you may you'll lose your time for that question.

[9:05:03 PM]

Mr. Jacobson, we will begin with your opening statement. >> First off, I have to say, thank you. This is the best 28th birthday present I could ask for. Thanks for this forum on my birthday. I'm running this race from a place of love, a deep connection to the city. In the '50s my grandfather was a founding member. He left a mark on the legacy of the city. I'm proud of my father's almost 40 years as a plumber building the buildings we know here. What troubles many is I have not seen a place for me here anymore, and I see something disappearing. It's linked to the lack of leadership we have to not move on the important issues of the day when it comes to development, affordability, equity, and transportation. One is missing in action and we need to move forward with open hearts. We need to listen to our neighbors and empower the voices all over the spectrum, from the east side to south Austin where my mother and grandfather grew up. Everyone needs an equitable voice at the table. >> Ms. Alamanza. >> Hello. I'm running to confront the status quo that held the city back for decades. I want to promote an accountable people's government to take on the housing crisis. I want to make sure that our public land is used for public, not for private profit interests. I want to make sure that the community is listened to and that they have a say in the codenext rewrite development plan. They were shut out. We also know that the incumbent voted against the ballot petition that was signed by over 31,000 voters. Of course we have to go to court and sue. It is now on the ballot.

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Also, we do not promote high density because high density will displace thousands of people and continue to keep Austin unaffordable. And to me, let's work together to reclaim, remain, and rebuild the city for all people. >> Thank you. >> Thank you. >> Mr. Renteria. >> My name is Sabino "Pio" Renteria. I'm honored as the first city councilmember for district 3. I want to thank the ethics review commission and the league of women's voters for hosting this forum, providing a wonderful opportunity for our community to get involved. I also want to thank my district 3 constituents for supporting me over the years as we fight for change at city hall. Our accomplishment has only been possible because of the overwhelming support from neighborhood leaders, small business owners and organizations who have worked with my office on initiatives to improve the quality of life of all austinites. For those who are new to our city and our district, welcome to Austin. I look forward to working with you, too. A little bit

about me. I'm a native austinite, a product of Austin public school. I served on ptas, city boards, and commissions most of my life. >> Thank you. Mr. Motwani. >> Thank you. I'd like to start by thanking the league of women voters for executing their mission to engage our citizens in our democratic process, born from a movement that's now more important than we might have imagined in our current day and age. I currently work at United Way as the chief information officer, where our mission is to fight poverty in Austin. And that is exactly where I would like to bring the

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conversation back. We often find the conversation around Austin focused around economic growth, but really the challenge is economic mobility, and particularly in our district. I intend to help solve for that problem set and bring the conversation back to sustainability, affordability, and relief for individuals, children, and families and seniors who are struggling and suffering. And I humbly request your vote. Thank you. >> Thank you. Ms. Cohen. >> Good evening, everyone. Thank you so much for having me. I'd like to quickly thank the league of women voters. Your diligence in ensuring the community is educated and informed and making sure they're registered to vote is very, very important. Thank you for what you do. Again, my name is Jessica Cohen. I'm the transgender candidate running for district 3. This is a big deal. When you vote for a transgender candidate you're ensuring a Progressive vote. I'm a normal, everyday person who got sick and tired of the hour drive to get to work. I'm sick and tired of our budget being majorly compromised of our infrastructure and not being changed. I'm tired of seeing things that should be happening that aren't. So I decided I would go out and make the changes myself. I'd appreciate it if you'd listen to what I have to say. >> Thank you. Mr. Valadez. >> I would like to thank the league of women voters for hosting this forum, as well as you for taking time out of your day to be here. My name is James Valadez, I'm running for Austin city council to bring neighborhood values back to district 3. I'm a native austinite, a graduate of our public school

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system, a former division one athlete and a proud university of Texas alumni. In the past I've tackled affordable housing issues on the city's community development commission. I've been a Travis county democratic party precinct chair. I've also been appointed to the aid task force focused on making our skills more nimble to better compete with charter schools, who we are losing kids to. Currently I sit on the city's board of adjustment where we hear and decide variance requests from the land development code, as well as interpretation cases brought forward by stakeholders. I also have the pleasure of serving on Travis central appraisal district's board of directors, where I am an appointee by the Travis county. Thank you. >> Thank you very much. We'll start the questions first with Ms. Almanza. The question is, do you see any relationship between our city's efforts to attract businesses that provide jobs and the rising property taxes for those of us that live here? And if so, what can the city council do to lessen the impact of rising property taxes? If you do not see any connections, please explain. >> There's definitely a connection between what kind of businesses we are recruiting to Austin. If we are recruiting large

businesses that only employ people with certain degrees and not looking at people who have just finished school, or who are dropouts, then of course we're not looking at an equity distribution of a job market. And we know that when we bring high-class paying workers that we're also seeing an increase of property taxes. But more or less we're seeing an increase in rentals of housing, an increase of housing for ownership. And so we have seen the impact not just on that, but the impact on transportation, the impact on

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our cultural assets, the impact on the bus system. Because we are now seeing that the routes have been eliminated and that people are having to walk further just to get to where they need to go. >> Thank you. Mr. Renteria. >> Yes. Thank you for that question inch .you know, we're a city that's been the most desirable place to live. We have created so many jobs that our unemployment is 3%, around that. And our biggest problem is that our reluctance to go out and build more housing, more density. You know, we're facing, in the year 2030, we're going to have to build over a hundred thousand apartments here in this city to keep up with our growth. You know, over the years, we have said that if we don't build it they won't come. And we learned over these years that it just doesn't work that way. We need to be more creative. We need to build more affordable units. And we need to work to make sure that our children are able to stay here and live here. >> Thank you. Mr. Motwani. >> Yes. I absolutely see that relationship. And typically when referring to the businesses that come in to Austin, we're typically referring to the large tech companies that are bringing high-paying jobs. So there's absolutely a relation there, because folks in high-paying jobs increases demand in the housing market, which is going to increase the costs in certain areas, and increase the tax rates. Excuse me, the tax burdens. Now, what I think needs to happen is that part of the incentive packages associated with bringing these types of businesses, specifically extremely large businesses that are bringing high-paying jobs, is a link directly to training for middle skills jobs.

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The problem here is that despite that we are at a 3% unemployment rate, we have 40,000 people underemployed because they don't have the skills to bridge from low wage to high wage jobs. That's what I would be working to do in our district. >> Thank you. Ms. Cohen. >> Absolutely agree. The type of businesses, these large corporations are wonderful for the city economy, but do not help maintain that flavor of Austin that the small businesses provide. While increase the housing cost, they're inadvertently causing all the people that make Austin Austin have to move out of Austin, the people who live here can't afford to live here long. We need some sort of incentive package from the city to help not just the small businesses, but to either subsidize or incentivize low-cost housing, not just affordable housing, more housing, low-cost housing so the people who work here can live here. >> Thank you. Mr. Valadez. >> Yes. I absolutely see a correlation between the two, and specifically I want to draw everyone's attention to the Oracle development over off of lakeshore where Oracle was brought in and

incentivized, but also acquired adjacent apartment complexes, which were working-class apartments. And I think there will probably be a strong correlation to the under-enrollment or lack of enrollment moving forward going into elementary and middle schools in the area as a result of the displacement of workforce housing and the moving in of six-figure salary employment. We need jobs that our working class can secure. We need better training to ensure that we can get them there. I also want to harp on the 80% mfi, the standard throughout the city when we're building new housing. We're calling that affordable, but the median income in our

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district is fall below that standard. It's not affordable to the folks that are here. Thank you. >> Mr. Jacobson. >> Speaking from the perspective of a restaurant manager, not a land developer or real estate agent, all I hear right now, false choices. Is there a correlation, yes. But do we have the opportunity through the council to control this growth and engage with it? Yes. Because I can tell you the restaurant that I work at, for three years there were people with all kinds of mixed immigration status, backgrounds, economic class. They been fit because we have tech workers patronizing our restaurant. We need to lean into the change. We need to recognize we have the power to do it and quit advocating that we're not going to do anything. We can tout figures all we want, but if we don't go head-on into the issues, control this as best we can, then we're going to end up with the predicament we're in. Growth does not have to equal displacement. That is a false choice. We have an opportunity and if we don't seize it we're going to suffer the consequences. Let's give voice to the folks that are facing these issues. >> Thank you. The next question will be for Mr. Renteria. What aging infrastructure, from bridges to storm drains that control flooding, do you see that should be addressed while you are in office? How will you address the issue given that these same issues may exist in other districts in the city? >> Could you repeat? I'm sorry. >> Yeah. What aging infrastructure, like bridges to storm drains and flooding, do you see that should be addressed while you're in office, and how will you address the issue given that the issue may be in other districts also? >> Yeah. We're addressing our transportation problem. We just passed the largest

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mobility bond election, \$720 million. We have built miles of sidewalks. We have done major improvement in intersections to make them safe. I know we have borrowed \$30 million in bailouts for the onion creek flooding victims that were there. You know. We have made a huge commitment on investing -- on securing our residents from flooding. You know. We have embraced the zero traffic death. That's one of the biggest concerns. I have lost three people that worked or helped -- had friends that got killed on Riverside. So I invested my quarter cent money on the Riverside corridor. >> Thank you. Mr. Motwani. >> Well, I'm not going to get into the traffic or the bridge in the park that's been collapsed for a while. What I will talk about when it comes to aging infrastructure that we don't typically think about as infrastructure is really the support safety net that we have in the city, our social service



system. It has not kept up with the growth, the economic growth that our city has experienced. In our district, 70% of the children under six years old are living in poverty -- 70%. We need to make sure that we have early childhood education systems that are well-linked with our public schools, that offer high-quality early childhood education. That's the best possible investment that we can make for the best outcomes, both economically and healthwise. Not only that, we need to have a coordinated social service delivery intake and referral across the city if we really want to see good outcomes. And those kinds of elements need

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to be linked up with our workforce system as well. >> Thank you. Ms. Cohen. >> Since you touched on sewers and storm runoff, I wanted to bring up onion creek because it's fresh in everybody's mind, the buyouts and what the city was trying to do to help the residents of that area who had lost their homes, displaced in an area that was supposedly non-floodable. We just wasted an enormous amount of money on the construction of the waller creek bridge, another area that I think is probably pretty important. Due to the fact that so much of our storm runoff gets to town lake through that tributary, we need to start focusing on smaller runoffs, larger storm drains, bigger bridges so they have enough room to make it down to town lake. We have to spend more money, which nobody wants to hear. But it's the only way we're going to ensure that these type of situations don't happen again. >> Thank you. Mr. Valadez. >> I want to make sure that we're utilizing our quarter cent fund and parkland dedication fees accordingly. Every time these large-scale multifamily projects are constructed there's a bit of funding in there that can be utilized to create safe paths to schools for our children, sidewalks, and pedestrian beacons. So making sure we're utilizing those fundings we have in place right now is the first call to action as a councilmember. We need to specifically look towards a wildfire relief plan where our city is a system of parkland and trails and systems. So we need to ensure that we have a plan in place to make sure that if a wildfire were to take place, not just our flooding and our issues such as that, but specifically what we do in case of emergency.

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So having master plans associated with any -- thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Jacobson. >> I can tell you what we can do first is talk to residents that live off suburban drive that have flooding in their house from the an industrial development down off of Ben white and 35 that's been there for 25 years and they've been asking for help from the city council and nothing's been done. We can start there. But we can come back to the fact that in codenext we've talked about new developments having better, less impervious cover, better water reclamation processes so there's less runoff in the streams. We can make sure that the next time that we come to do land development -- and this didn't seem to be the most contentious issue -- that we can have the leadership that will make sure these smart, green, environmentally conscious decisions are incorporated. So let's start by talking to residents in district 3 and making sure their houses respect aren't flooding. >> Thank you. Ms. Almanza. >> In the people's

plan, we recommend one of the recommendation is looking at drainage review and an environmental review policy, because when we look at infrastructure, we can't ignore that east Austin has always been underserved. I mean, people of color were put here in east Austin according to the master plan in 1928. But the infrastructure did not follow. And we can see from the recent floodings that have happened from the 1980s to most recently the flooding where people actually lost their lives. So we have to look at the whole drainage issue and make sure the infrastructure is completed. We have to make sure that when we're now -- codenext would have been high density and more impervious coverage. What would be the impact on communities around or downstream? When we look at the point apartments that build a detention pond the size of a football field, during the rain

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we had the water overflowed. So we have to take into consideration climate change and how it's impacting the whole drainage system. Thank you. >> Thank you. The next question will begin with Mr. Motwani. And it is effective community policing may require more officers than in the city police department. And the current council is willing to hire in this year's budget. Will more officers or some other approach help address issues that you see currently existing between members of this district and the police department? Why or why not? >> I don't think it's easy to say binarily that more officers is going to be a solution. The notion of community policing could be something that could assist, especially when it comes to relationships with the residents. I think an initiative like this would require very, very serious outreach to residents across the district, because the district spans many different areas, all of which have distinct relationships with the police. Those of us who have read the mayor's task force report on institutional racism and systemic inequity understand that there are certain regions that are disproportionately affected by discrimination, not just in the policing environment, but also banking and finance, in the ability to just thrive and maintain assets, to own property, where we're allowed to live and work, etc. So I think that, you know, it's not appropriate for me to give a binary answer that more officers would be correct. Outreach would be necessary. Profound. >> Thank you. Ms. Cohen. >> This is kind of a tough question for me, because I understand our community is growing. And more often than not, I like most of the Austin police officers I deal with, especially

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downtown. However, from a personal experience, until you've been held on the side of the road and called "It" or "That," there is no way, no way I could bring myself to hiring more officers until we fix the problems with the ones we have. It's an incredibly personal issue for me. They have the money for officers. If they can afford drones for their vehicular homicide unit, they bought two new drones, \$10,000, there's got to be money for more officers that we can use towards the ones right now for education. >> Thank you. Mr. Valadez. >> I think specifically we need to be focusing on making sure that the offer count that we have is keeping pace with our population growth. So we need to hire officers as they are needed based on the increased population, make sure we're keeping our streets safe.

Specifically I want to make sure that there's programs in place for our youth when they get out of schools, and while their parents still aren't home from work. So between the hours where there is that un-supervision period, we need to have athletic and academic, artistic programs at their disposal that are productive. We need to make sure that APD knows we're going to give them the resources that they need to do their job successfully. But at the same time we need to foster community goodwill and make a concerted effort to hire officers from the neighborhoods in which they are being tasked with patrolling. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Jacobson. >> I think what my fellow candidates have raised here are all very pertinent points of consideration. But we need to really start by listening to the wants and needs

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of our desire. We need folks that are going to go out and knock on doors and get a good consensus of where the status is or what the climate is like with the relation with the police department. We need to ensure that our officers, who are working hard, get the resources they need. There's an increased amount of community engagement that we could have here to get a better representative idea of what increased resources we need. I think there's a dialogue that's going on that hasn't happened and we need better engagement with our brothers and sisters throughout the district for sure. >> Thank you. Ms. Almanza. >> Yes. Being a native of east Austin, I understand the long history that the people of color have had to endure with the police department. And I think that community policing has come a long way, but there's a lot more that needs to be done. I believe that all the police officers should take the undoing racism class, because we don't just have individual problems. We have a structured, systemic problem. And as long as the systemic problems continue that you treat people of color and low-income people different than you do a more affluent society, we will continue to have these problems. So I think that yes, we need to work more. We need to make sure that the police department reflects the communities that they serve. We need to make sure that they live in the communities they serve. And I've seen this in different countries. And how the police brutality has gone. And we need to make sure that if there are police that constantly offend, we need to make sure that they are no longer in the police department, because that's not who we want. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Renteria. >> Yes, I support community policing. In fact, we were one of the first neighborhoods that implemented community policing here in east Austin. And as people that live here in this community can testify, this is one of the safest neighborhoods in east Austin. And it was because that we were

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able to reach out and work with some 67 of the toughest kids in this neighborhood through community policing. We were able to work with them, get them through high school. Every one graduated except for one. The problem we're facing right now is more of a budget program. We know that we need to higher more police officers, you know. We just don't have the budget right now to hire that many. But we are going to -- there's 40 are graduating just here this next two weeks, so we are graduating more

police officers. And if the budget would allow us, we would increase more and hire more police officers. >> The next question will start with Ms. Cohen. What do you see is the most pressing transportation need in district 3, and how will you address it? >> The Riverside expansion was a good start for district 3, for the southern part of district 3. I think now we need to focus more on more of the east-west routes through the city, especially on Cesar Chavez and 7th street, places where we could really expand the roads over into the east side to allow more traffic without maybe as many lights, and giving maybe a more direct route towards 183 so it would be easier to get to the airport. >> Thank you. Mr. Valadez. >> As a city, we've had some success with traffic light timing. Specifically we've had this experience on Chavez through the central business district. So I would move to try and expand our pilot programs in the traffic light timing to meet the demand that is on the roads at any given time. As mentioned earlier, I think we

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need to make sure that we have connectivity with our sidewalks and our park systems so that bicyclists and walkers, and so forth have better connectivity through our trail system. When it comes to our bus lines and our rail systems, I think we need to have clean and prompt, and reliable service and ensure that it's affordable. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Jacobson. >> As someone who spend two hours going from Riverside to north Barnett road to get to work, we're in a dire situation for traffic. First we need to talk to our residents who have been disserved by the bus routes. We need to make sure the most vulnerable among us can get to work on time. Second, we need to say we deserve a 21st century transportation system. Project connect has good ideas. We need a rail line going from the airport to Riverside down to republic square like ten years ago. We need to think about how do we innovate on final mile solutions and getting the disabled, elderly, young children from their front doors to the bus door. We have the potential to harness the creative power in the city to do that, but where has been the conversation, who's been talking about that? We have an opportunity in two years possibly with the bond election. Do we want the same cohort of folks that failed on project connect to try to sell the bond election? I don't know. We've got a lot of opportunities and district 3 is at the forefront of needing some serious change. >> Thank you. Ms. Almanza. >> Yes. One of the things we can do is make sure that all the highways have the HOV, higher-occupancy lanes so the traffic can go. We need to look at more synchronizing the lights. But we need somebody on the capital metro board that will stand up for those people that are not choice riders. We need to make sure we eliminate bus fares, that senior

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citizens are riding free, just like we have bike racks we need to put baby stroller racks. We need to make sure there's cross-town connections, express. And we need to make sure that the bus service is 24 hours. We're way behind the time. People work late at night. They need to be able to go. I've seen the handicapped at city council, they have to leave by a certain time. They can't testify because the bus service doesn't serve them. Doing those different things on the transportation is some way that we can

improve. We need to make sure that there's equity in the distribution of sidewalks. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Renteria. >> Yes. I played a key role in getting the council to approve the mobility bond. You know, that's including the major improvements in corridors on Riverside, airport, and pleasant valley. We're investing millions of dollars in sidewalks, safe route to schools. You know, safer and more efficient intersections. You know, we also made major improvements on pleasant valley, elmont, south congress. We also approved a turn lane there in montopolis to the health and wellness center. We also improved crossing at Mary gold terrace. We put traffic in a desolate road. There was a traffic fatality. We funded signals at south Harris and El Paso. Traffic cut-in on west St. Elmo, and sidewalk near St. Elmo elementary. >> Thank you. Mr. Motwani. >> I like to keep Austin weird, but I think it's really weird that we're talking about traffic lights up here. When it comes to transportation, really, you know, when it comes to light timing and buses and

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routes, have the engineers sort that out. Make it work. The question is, as Ms. Almanza and Mr. Jacobson said, make it accessible. We need to allow our seniors to be able to access these routes, particularly in our district. What's disproportionately represented are single female households. These are single female households who have children. And imagine riding the bus across town, paying multiple fares, carrying children around, and doing that for hours trying to make it to medical appointments on time, to job interviews on time, trying to find childcare so you can even do these things. We need to just make our transportation accessible, human-centered, promote quality of life and make sure that we have comprehensive social service delivery to surround those elements. >> Thank you. Our next question starts with Mr. Valadez. What is the next step for any comprehensive overhaul of the city's land development code to address issues such as gentrification, affordability, and the uniqueness of our neighborhoods, and how do you plan to address this? >> That's a great question. We need to first figure out what we learned from the first process. We need to sit down and set priorities as a community for what we value as a city. And so we would end up building a pyramid off of those concepts, right. So at the bottom, which would be the priority, if we all decide as a community it's an environmental concern, we would end up having long discussions about flood mitigation and things of that nature. And then if we move to transportation, we would talk about parking requirements and so forth. But specifically the things that I want to see preserved in a subsequent land development code would be the neighborhood plans, which imagine Austin calls for to be included in any subsequent

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code write. I'm also concerned with compatibility, specific as it pertains to our corridors, which east Austin and south Austin have many. And it could adversely -- thank you. >> Mr. Jacobson. >> I think the first thing that we need to do is to give voice to the most marginalized communities among us and respect what our neighbors have to say about how we build things and where we build them. That is the most critical indictment of the past process. A lot of us can agree we need high-density corridors. It's

insulting to hear folks go around and say we need a more intellectual conversation. That's not what we need. We need to have leadership that has a more heartfelt conversation about people concerned about what their neighborhood is going to look like, what their houses are going to look like that they've lived in for 30 years. There's a lot of smart data and ideas on ads, setbacks, lot sizes and what have you. But at the heart of this issue and why it fell apart is because people didn't get a voice. We didn't involve people on the margins. We're throwing out the system and doing crazy things. We need leadership that listens to people, values their voice, and starts restoring equity to a city that is long overdue for readdressing imbalances. >> Thank you. Ms. Almanza. >> Could you repeat the question? >> Certainly. What is the next step for any comprehensive overall of the city's land development code to address issues such as gentrification, affordability, and the uniqueness of our neighborhoods, and how do you plan to address this? >> Thank you. I think one of the most important things is that we have got to vote for proposition J, because proposition J gives us a choice that we've never, ever had before on having a voice of comprehension plan. So any new land development comprehension plan we are going to have a voice, and that's never been given to us before.

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I think the other thing is we have to return back to the district plans. We spent 13 million divided the city into 52 planning districts. Let's return to that, because that is more participation at the neighborhood level. I think that we need to also correct the small neighborhood plans that do have problems right now and make sure they go. And we need to make sure that we get away from the high density in our communities, because high density we know does not equal affordability. We know that studios are running 1500 to 2,000. We know that homes in the most poorest communities are selling for \$360,000. >> Thank you. Mr. Renteria. >> Yes. I was the only district in district 3 that created the homestead and passed the homestead preservation district where we reclaimed 10% of the added value and reinvested into affordable housing. We also worked with -- I passed a resolution to help the displaced tenants relocation assistance program, which would help people being displaced from low-income apartments and mobile homes. You know, my whole plan is to provide mixed income, mixed housing like we did at Mueller. Over 25% of those people in Mueller are low-income people. I supported Rebecca Payne, senior housing. We know we need density. We provide 72 feet for the housing authority -- 60 feet at the housing authority so they can triple their size to help the 30% low-income people there. >> Thank you. Mr. Motwani. >> One thing I like about our mayor is that he can acknowledge a failure. He aptly did so with the codenext process, indicating that it was poisoned. The first important step is outreach and doing it comprehensively and correctly. There are ways to do it. In a minute I can't explain

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that. Secondly we need to evaluate really just development, but housing affordability through a people-first paradigm. At the end of the day it's a best practice economically. We all know it. To not spend more than 30% of income on housing. So if we work back from our median income in our district,

which is in the 30s, we're looking at a thousand dollars a month. Do you think a family of four is going to be able to spend \$12,000 on mortgage or rent and make it? At this point if we're talking about our district, code is not what's going to bring affordability. Policy is going to bring affordability. In addition to that what I'm also seeing and hearing is that for homeowners who are better off but still can't maintain that property tax burden, just the ability to subdivide their homes is expensive. >> Thank you. Ms. Cohen. >> The first thing I wish we could do is get our \$8 million back. Since that's not going to happen, we need to look at the way the current land code is written. It's in a euclidian format, which refers to the village of euclid, a court case from 1920, a hundred years old. Why are we still using these same type of zoning laws from a hundred years ago? We're supposed to be at the forefront of Progressive values and technology. Let's start acting like it. Transects, it's a newer style of zoning where you can use dense core areas inside of neighborhoods that allows the neighborhood to maintain its culture while still expanding small retail shops and affordable, lower-priced housing. I think that's where we should really focus, building up, not out, keeping it affordable. >> Thank you. The next question we'll start with Mr. Jacobson. And this may be the last question. We'll have to see if we have time for another one after that.

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What is your position on the call for a comprehensive city anti-de-placement program, and how, specifically, do you suggest encouraging city council to work with the community and the grassroots proposals that have come before the current council? >> May I have you repeat that? >> What is your position on the call for a comprehensive city anti-displacement program and how, specifically, do you suggest encouraging city council to work with the community and the grassroots proposals that have come before the current council? >> These are very important and pertinent issues that we need to address. But I'm a bit saddened that we've gotten to a place where we're looking towards outside groups and we're looking to grassroots organizations to tackle issues of displacement. I think there's a big place to wonder where has council been on these issues for four years, why have we had to involve the folks on the fringes to deal with this. We have a big toolkit to deal with these things. I think at the core of it is how we listen to people, hold space with people, listen to their perspectives. And in a vacuum where that's not happening I think we are seeing a mushrooming of these movements and this dissatisfaction with what's going on at council. I really think there's an opportunity to just go out, knock on doors, talk to people, get engaged and you can get a better pulse on what's going on. >> Thank you. Ms. Almanza. >> First I want to start by saying it was the adoption of the Cesar Chavez plan, which I was -- we fought against -- that opened the floodgates to gentrification. At that time we said if you blanket zone our communities

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with commercial service mixed use, you're going to make sure that people of color no longer live here in Austin and you're going to see that people will not qualify for housing relocation and federal loans

because they are not zoned single family. Those are some of the issues that was brought on by the first adoption of that plan. We're working with the anti-displacement task force. Really it is the people's plan that has the answer. It is talking about establishing a low-income housing trust fund run by grassroots people and administered by them. It's talking about using public land, because that's where the cost is, is land, to do building low-income and moderate housing. It's also about the right to stay and the right to return. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Renteria. >> Yes. I cosponsored the fair housing initiative, which will provide more mixed-income development, comprehensive real estate and market analysis that we need, non-description for voluntary programs like smart housing and density programs. Also, smaller houses in high-opportunity areas. You know, we're doing a public investment in affordable housing with the new housing bond that we just approved. And we're taking it to the voters, \$250 million. So I have a track record that already proves what I'm doing. And bringing in -- we have created thousands of affordable housing here since I've been on the council. >> Thank you. Mr. Motwani? >> Could you erepeat that? >> What is your position on the call for a comprehensive city anti-displacement program and how specifically do you suggest encouraging the council to work with the community and the grassroots proposals that have come before them? >> My position is yes, in as

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much as working with -- looking specifically at grassroots proposals, I'm not familiar with those proposals. I would then recommend that we very specifically and profoundly engage with those organizations as well as their stakeholders and learn more about the proposals and make those evaluations. To continue the discussion around housing and affordability that we were discussing before, property tax relief is also a pretty commonsense solution. Enabling folks to be able to stay in their homes, giving folks the recourse to be able to, if necessary, what we're hearing is subdividing is the only option. If necessary to subdivide one's home there needs to be relief. It can't be cost prohibitive to do that to stay in your area. Putting affordable housing in certain areas is important and a start. But it's far more important and far more ethically imperative to allow folks to be able to stay in the homes that they were raised and grew up in. >> Thank you. Ms. Cohen. >> I think an anti-displacement program would require having committees comprised of citizens from each district who can help mediate between the city council and those people who are suggesting these grassroots solutions. I've heard some really good ones, everything from, you know, suing the state to lower the Texas education recapture fund, to working with a privately owned apartment complexes, to provide incentives from the city so that they will lower the overall rent. I think the best solution might be a mix of both where we work both with city council from a grassroots perspective, but also using maybe either like I said, district-appointed citizens or even possibly city employees who are familiar with the district.

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>> Thank you. Mr. Valadez. >> When I hear this question, I specifically think about the people's plan, which was recently adopted by council, so I'm excited to see how that plays out moving forward.



Specifically one of the things it calls for is a call to action to utilize city-owned property for the purposes of preserving and protecting and fostering affordable housing throughout our city and our communities. Recently, a soccer stadium was approved in north Austin on a very high-opportunity area that was on a bus line, on a transit line, west of 35. And I find it incredibly disingenuous that out of this process where we had no rfp and developers from the community offering to purchase this lot for over \$20 million, we agreed to subsidize a soccer stadium and get 130 affordable housing units out of the deal and called that square. Thank you. >> Thank you. We will now have to go to the closing statements. They will be one minute. We hoped for two, but we have to -- they'll quit televising this at 7:00. So we'll start with Ms. Almanza. >> My name is Susana Almanza and I am the founding member and director of poder, environmental social justice organization that's been around for 25 years. I'm a native of east Austin, a longtime community organizer, educator, mother, and grandmother. I participated in the civil rights movement, taking up issues of police brutality, housing quality, equity within the housing and healthcare as a right and not a privilege. I overcame poverty, prejudice, and segregated school to take on some of the most powerful transnational corporations in the world. I will advocate to preserve and

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expand the supply of low-income and moderate housing, make sure that we control public land for public uses, preserve and provide funds for small business and cultural assets, and also work on a citywide livable wage of \$15, and adopt and implement the people's plan and also the recommendations made by the African-American, Asian, and Latino hispanic quality of life commissions. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Renteria. >> During my time on the council, we have built thousands of affordable housing, created a homestead preservation district, added millions into the housing trust fund. We raised the living wage at the city, invested in job training programs, provided funds for after-school programs, and we also stood up to trump and fought back against the racial profiling and family separation policy. I am proud of my record. But there is still much work to do. And I hope to earn your support so I can keep fighting for our community. Thank you. >> Mr. Motwani. >> My name is amit motwani. And I'm here to humbly request and earn your vote. Our district uniquely -- with respect to affordability? In away that not many other districts in Austin are. And affordability means something different to a whole lot of people in our district, to the majority of people in our district. It's not about I'm getting to work a few minutes later. It's about my home is food insecure. I need to be able to get my children to school. I don't have the skills I need to be able to obtain a job to keep up with these rising costs of living. I'm on a fixed income and I can't do that. I just want to stay in my home. These are the affordability issues that I am here to work on.

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And I will bring accessibility, access, representation and voice to our district. And I hope for your vote. People first. >> Thank you. Ms. Cohen. >> They say the hardest part about running for office is fundraising, but it's actually this. It's getting out in front of everyone and putting yourself out there, and

trying to talk without sounding like an absolute fool. The change I want to bring may not always flow perfectly from my mouth, but if you'll talk to me, especially on the street or at my office, or call me, I promise you that I actually know what I'm talking about. I've been an emt for 25 years. I have worked from east Althoff to downtown. I have seen every bit of the front lines of city that you can imagine, good to bad. I'm a problem-solver. I fix broken things. If I can save a life, I can help save the problems of this city. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Valadez. >> I want to talk about the three attributes I believe will make me a great councilmember if elected this November. They happen to be tied to specific things I've been given throughout my life and I carry with me every day. The first was given to me by my mother, a silver dollar. It reminds me to look after every dollar and spend it wisely. A skill I would bring forward to the budget process and attempt to bring meaningful relief to residents and business owners. The second from my father, a slice from the oak he was given at the parks department. It reminds me in every dispute, the answer almost always rests in the middle, which we can apply to the codenext rewrite process. The last thing is my grandfather's dog tags that I wear around my neck from his service in World War II. Every time I feel them, I am reminded that being brave enough to do what you know to be right

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and standing up for what you believe in is the most important thing that you can do. >> Thank you. Mr. Jacobson. >> Hi. I'm Justin Jacobson. And I want you to know I'm in this race because Austin is interwoven with the fabric of my being. I buried my mother 10 1/2 years ago after two years of being homebound, a prescription drug addiction, cancer. I have a big heart and a lot of love and I know my brothers and sisters need a leader and a voice at council who's going to validate, respect, sit and be witness to their concerns. That's what we need. Right now we're not leaning in fully to the challenges facing our city when it comes to our traffic getting longer. My rent hasn't gone down, my commute isn't shorter. We need to address that. We need heart to do that, to listen to our neighbors, because they're leaving. Their houses are getting demolished while we sit and talk about who knows what. Give an opportunity to bring a fresh perspective. We need a new generation of progress in the city of Austin to go with the young candidate, the person sitting at the confluence of these pressures and perspectives to give you something that will really change your life. >> Let's give a round of applause to all of these candidates. Thank you very much. Thank you, thank you. [ Applause ] >> And that applause was also for you all for coming out. Thank you so much for coming out. And I just want to tell you that for all of you, there is more information on who you can vote for. There is a website called [vote411.org](http://vote411.org). If you will go to that website, it will tell you every elected office that you are eligible to vote for in November. The Austin league of women voters, we publish a voter's guide for this county. We also have it in the libraries. But it's going to be online. It is at [lwvaustin.org](http://lwvaustin.org) and you can see our guide there. Early voting begins on Monday,

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October 22nd. Tuesday November 6th is election day. You may vote at any polling place that has a sign that says vote here, or vote aqui. Texas law requires identification, and the website and our volunteers can give you information regarding what is required. Again, thank you so much for participating in our democracy. Have a good evening. [ Applause ]