

City Council Special Called Meeting (Joint Meeting with Travis County Commissioners Court) Transcript – 06/08/2021

Title: City of Austin

Channel: 6 - COAUS

Recorded On: 6/8/2021 6:00:00 AM

Original Air Date: 6/8/2021

Transcript Generated by SnapStream

=====

Please note that the following transcript is for reference purposes and does not constitute the official record of actions taken during the meeting. For the official record of actions of the meeting, please refer to the Approved Minutes.

[9:12:52 AM]

>> Thanks for bearing with us, some technical difficulties there. So we have a quorum present and we've got myself, and commissioner Travillion and commissioner Howard here, and we have commissioner Gómez and commissioner Shea remotely. We will call to order the meeting, June 8, 2021, and the time is 9:12 A.M. And I will pass it over to you, mayor. Mayor, can you hear us? Maybe our technical --

>> Is he frozen?

>> I can hear you.

>> Judge Brown: No, he is not frozen.

>> Okay, all right, all right.

>> Natasha is back in her room.

[9:13:54 AM]

>> Mayor, can you hear us?

>> It's time to start your portion of the meeting. I wonder if his audio is working. He's muted.

>> Are you talking to me?

>> Yes, ma'am. I'll give the mayor another moment, judge, but if he can't hear us in a couple minutes I'll take the liberty of starting the meeting if you're comfortable with that.

>> Judge Brown: Mayor, can you hear us now?

>> It's cool, we are good.

>> Mayor Adler: Can you hear me, Andy?

>> Judge Brown: There you go. I called to order --

>> Mayor Adler: (Indiscernible) Andy, did you say something? All right, I think that I can hear people now.

[9:14:54 AM]

>> Judge Brown: Okay. So, go ahead, we called the commissioner's court to order and I pass it to you, mayor, to call the city council to order.

>> Mayor Adler: Okay, sorry about that. We call the city council meeting portion of this to order here at 9:14. We have a quorum. Judge?

>> Judge Brown: All right, thanks. And I just want to make sure that you can hear me okay, mayor?

>> Mayor Adler: Yes.

>> Judge Brown: I have a question here -- knock, knock --

>> Mayor Adler: Who's there?

>> Judge Brown: Yoda lady.

>> Mayor Adler: Yoda lady who?

>> Judge Brown: Why are you yodeling? Sorry about that, my apologies.

[Laughter]. All right, do we have any callers for Travis county public comment on the joint briefing?

>> No, sir, judge, we don't.

>> Judge Brown: Okay, thanks, Larry. Okay, so we are going to have a couple briefings today and we

[9:15:56 AM]

have a hard stop at 11:00 A.M., so to manage the length of the briefing, we will have one question each. And then after the covid briefing I think that we'll have a briefing on the Austin county census 2020 after-action report. So I will go ahead and pass it over to Dr. Walkes, are you starting us off today?

>> Yes, sir.

>> Judge Brown: Okay. Go right ahead and we'll hear from you and then A.P.H. And then an update from the Travis county vaccine side as well.

>> Are you going to show the slides? Thanks. Good morning, everyone. I'm desmar Walkes, the new medical director for A.P.H. And

[9:16:58 AM]

Travis county, city of Austin. I would like to give you a situational update on covid-19 in Travis county. This graph shows us the case numbers since the beginning of the pandemic and we see that our case numbers are dropping. We have a total number of cases right now of 83,962 cases. 229 active. And we've had, unfortunately, 873 deaths. Next slide, please. This compares the six major metropolitan areas in Texas as far as cases go, and we see that Travis county has the fewest number of cases as compared to the other areas in Harris,

[9:18:00 AM]

Dallas, El Paso and Lubbock counties. Lubbock county has fewer than Travis, but we're much lower than the other higher counties. Next slide, please. Can you go to the next slide. I'm going to cover this later on. Next slide. This slide shows, again, our case numbers and our numbers continue to fall since our second peak in mid-january. Next slide, please. When we look at the U.T. Consortium data, it shows that given our current trajectory, we will continue to show a decline in cases, all things considered if the memorial day weekend and the recent graduation celebrations were carried out in

[9:19:02 AM]

a covid-wise fashion, we hope that trend will continue. And so far it has been holding steady. Next slide, please. This looks at our admissions and discharges over the course of the pandemic. Next slide. To break that down a little bit further, we have as of June 7th, 78 covid cases in house. 30 patients are in I.C.U. And 13 of those patients on ventilators. In the last 24 hours there's been 11 admissions and 11 discharges, which keeps us at stage two level. Next slide, please. Next slide. And then if we look at our hospitalizations based on age, we see that there's been a slight increase in the number of

[9:20:02 AM]

cases admitted to the hospital in the age range of 80 and above. We have gone from seven cases to 14 this week, this past week. There's been a slight decrease in the age 20-29 age group. A slight uptick in the 30-39 age group. Next slide, please. One thing that I neglected to mention on the previous slide is that our moving average on hospitalizations is 11 admissions per day. In this slide we're looking at the school-aged children in our county and what their positivity rate is. And we can see that high school-aged children with positivity rate of 2.4%. Middle school, 1.3%. That's up just a little bit from the previous period of may 16th

[9:21:04 AM]

through may 22nd when we reported around 5%. Elementary school shows a positivity rate of 1.6%. And that too is up a little bit by 1.3% when it was last reported to you in may 16-22nd time frame. And in preschool children, they have a positivity rate of .8%, up from slightly from .6%. And this likely is due to schools now out, we've had some graduation activities and other extracurricular activities. So, again, it stresses the need for us to be covid-wise and wear masks, social distance, wash hands, and get those that are unvaccinated, vaccinated. Next slide, please. If we are break the admission

[9:22:06 AM]

information down based on race, for the past week of may 31st through June 6th, you will see that we've had 22 cases in the hispanic population. 41 reported as white. We've had 14 reported as black. Three reported as Asian. And two as "Other" which is a category that's used when people do not want to report and/or there's several different races and so they go to the "Other" category. Next slide, please. Can you go to the next slide, please. If we look at the data regarding

[9:23:08 AM]

deaths and, again, the six counties with large metropolitan areas, you will see that Travis county has the fewest deaths at 80.4 per 100,000. And then the numbers that are listed for the other counties. Next slide, please. To further break that down, just to comparing the highest death rate, unfortunately, for El Paso and the lowest terror Travis, and I wanted to look more closely at our high-risk populations and the black residents in our county. In El Paso, where blacks represent 3.1% of the population, they represent 1.3% of the deaths. And in Travis county, where blacks represent 8% of the population, they represent 10.5%

[9:24:08 AM]

of the deaths. Next slide, please. And looking again at hispanics who also represent a high percentage of the groups that is disproportionately affected by disease burden, illness and death, in El Paso, hispanics represent 82.8% of the population, and 89.4% of deaths. And in Travis, where the hispanic population represents 33.6% of the population, and 46.3% of deaths. Next slide, please. This slide is looking at breakthrough cases which are cases that develop in those who have been vaccinated. Yesterday the C.D.C. Director,

[9:25:13 AM]

Dr. Bruchel brulins ski, did a press release and to encourage people to be vaccinated by discussing some of the post released data that shows that 81% of folks are protected after one dose of vaccine, and 91% who are fully vaccinated are protected from disease and have less severe illness, less fever, chills, two days less lying in bed. So less severe illness if they do have a breakthrough case. And in Travis county, we've delivered 1,092,927 doses and we only had 158 breakthrough cases. We've had 38 -- 30 males, 54 females who had pfizer who had breakthrough cases and 10 males

[9:26:15 AM]

and 37 females who received modern who had a breakthrough covid-19. And 9 males and 18 females who received the Johnson & Johnson, who had a breakthrough. Next slide, please. And then another area of concern, the variants of concern. B117 in the U.K., and the 1351, the sub-african, and q1, the Brazil and the b1427 and b1429 which are the California variants, we've had no cases of the variant this week, 51% of the variants thus far have been in females and the age range is anywhere from 8 to 87 years of age. For the cases that have been

[9:27:16 AM]

seen in total of the 265, were cases related to foreign travel, two of them Mexico, one from the U.K., and one from dubai. Next slide, please. So we are in stage two. This is just a reminder of what that represents for us. Five to 14, seven-day moving average of hospital admissions. To get to stage one, we're looking at getting below 5 on our seven-day moving average of hospitalizations, or reaching 70% to 90% vaccination herd immunity being achieved. And, of course, this decision will be made based on all of the factors that are occurring at the time of the decisions made,

[9:28:16 AM]

but these are some of the general guidelines for this. We are really close. We have been shown by the U.T. Consortium data that we're going to have probably a little bit more of a prolonged stage 2, given that masks are not mandated, so it's more of a personal choice which we're urging all to make that choice to be covid-wise, to wear masks, wash hands, social distance, and try to when possible to be in situations outdoors when you are with crowds of people, especially people that you're not living with or who are unvaccinated. And we urge that everybody take advantage of being vaccinated, so that we can get to the stage

[9:29:18 AM]

1 scenario. There's been a sense that we're at the end of this -- we are not. Those of us who are physicians practicing treating patients remember and see still people who have had covid and get it again. I've seen patients who have been impacted to the point where they've had memory issues and had to leave their job, been very weak and tired and short of breath for several weeks. I've seen the heartbreak of somebody who is young getting covid with very mild illness and then finding themselves faced with the guilt of having been with somebody that's older than them in their family that they love dearly who got the disease and succumbed to it. Next slide, please. If you look at our current state

[9:30:21 AM]

of progress toward herd immunity, we have 45% of our population fully vaccinated. 13% partially vaccinated. 7% confirmed cases. And then that 12% of estimated additional cases is based on a factor that's been calculated by the consortium that we arrive at by multiplying our population by that number -- that factor to come up with the 12%. And those are people that may have mild illness or for whatever reason have not been tested and identified. And then we have 23% of people who are vulnerable. And those include people who are unvaccinated. So I urge us to use our same energy that we used to get the vote out and to get the vax out. Let's get people vaccinated.

[9:31:21 AM]

Thank you for listening to this presentation, and I pass it on to Adrian.

>> Thank you for sending me that invitation asking me to unmute myself. I couldn't find the button. The interim director for Austin public health. So the first slide that we see here is our typical update from the vaccine dashboard, which shows the number of doses combined from Austin public health and community care. This week, for the week ending

[9:32:22 AM]

6-5, I know that there was a lot of interest about zip code penetration. So this shows the number or the clients and particulars of those vaccinated during that week. The lighter numbers representing areas of opportunity. If you look at the Travis county data from this, you can see where we are, broken out by race and ethnicity. And the number for "Other" and "Unknown" is something that we want to dig in deeper. Anecdotally, we know that these numbers represent individuals who were uncomfortable with selecting or identifying their race and ethnicity when they were given the registration information. We're hoping with a little digging that we will see that there's an underrepresentation of the numbers for blacks and hispanics in our county.

[9:33:24 AM]

Going to T next slide, we can see the report by age. 12 and up. We have 55% of our population fully vaccinated. And the number for the 12-15 year Olds -- I know that was of interest last time -- we have 20,534 residents in between the ages of 12 to 15 who have received at least one dose of the vaccine. For ages 65 and up, we're at 75% totally vaccinated. So now this map looks at first dose distribution by zip code. Again, the lighter numbers are where we are less than 50% of vaccine penetration. And this is the type of map that we are using to inform our community-based and pop-up strategy. So this map I will say is as of

[9:34:25 AM]

may 28th -- and we hope to update it biweekly and share with commissioners and council

-- of note in 7-8, we have our clinics so we hope that those numbers will increase and in 77858 which is where walnut creek clinic is, and so we are hoping that as we drive residents to these two areas that we'll see an increase for those particulars, and that as we continue to work on our pop-up strategies we'll be able to focus on the lighter-shaded areas. If you look at distribution by week, broken out by race and ethnicity, you can see in the beginning here in January it's when we were mostly focused on our mass vaccination at Delco. Week 14 is where it gets really

[9:35:25 AM]

interesting, where we see greater representation or greater diversity of representation. And this is the week that our pop-up strategy and some more of our community-based clinics were in full swing. And so we can see that there is good increase in the hispanic population with the implementation of these strategies. The representation of the Asian population is on par with their representation of the community. We're still seeing numbers that need to improve in the black and African American community. And then if you look at it further by specifics, so groups broken out by week, you can see here for the Asian population, it's remained at a good pace. Here for the black population,

[9:36:26 AM]

we can see the increases towards the end of March, and then the spikes again in may and then in June where we had more concentrated efforts with our faith-based partners. In the hispanic population, again, we can see significant increases. This week in February I believe represents when we did that first clinic at sacred heart, and then you can see the numbers steadily improve as we began to implement more of those at sacred heart and then other faith-based communities and the hispanic latinx population. And then to look at it by sites here, this shows the breakdown for little walnut creek and pflugerville and southeast library. And we can see that there's a good representation in the hispanic, latinx population,

[9:37:27 AM]

again, in the Asian population, some work to do with black and African Americans. If you look at the pop-up sites, and these include greater mount Zion Baptist church which is on tennehill lane. Iglasius and our lady of Guadalupe and the missionary, we see significant increases in the number of hispanic and latinx residents that took advantage of those clinics. And here at St. James it's a significant amount of black and African American residents that took advantage of that clinic. And then just to compare, because the eps areas thought that it was important to our mass vaccination sites to point out that even though the proportion of hispanic and black residents were low at these sites proportionally, they did

[9:38:28 AM]

play an important part in vaccinating members of that population, because the numbers here are significant, 4,677. So there is some efficacy with the mass vaccination sites for vaccinating our populations of color. And then again this shows the breakout for sacred heart, just to demonstrate our focus outreach strategy can have a greater impact. And, again, breaking it out for St. James missionary to show the increase in the proportion of black and African Americans that sought out vaccinations at that site. And so we find that information encouraging and we plan to continue along that course. Using the updated maps to draw attention to areas of focus for

[9:39:33 AM]

juneteenth, June 18th, we have made a decision to keep operations open. It's a holiday now for city employees as well as many state employees and we're hoping that folks will take the opportunity of the day off to go to get vaccinated. Our P.I.O. Is working on a full push to drive people to these events. The first one is in partnership with brant E.M.A. Church on crammer lane and we'll have our standard operations open at little walnut creek and at southeast library at the hours listed here. And then on the day of festivities, where most of our communities celebrates juneteenth we plan to have a presence. We will be at little walnut creek library, working with our partners at the county. We plan to be at del valle, and we are in conversations with the organizers for the celebrations planned for rosewood, and for givens park, to be present.

[9:40:34 AM]

And we are also planning or scheduled to be at our lady of Guadalupe. And I thought that it would be nice to end the presentation on a reminder of what Dr. Walkes started earlier, that masking continues to be important, and we know that good behavior shows that we need to not only provide information to allow people to make good decisions for themselves, but we also have to provide access to resources. So this past Saturday, from Austin transportation and public health were out giving away P.P.E. We gave away 654 P.P.E. Bags and those packets usually contain four to six masks and some travel-size as well as family-sized hand sanitizers. We gave out 600 disaster relief

[9:41:35 AM]

boxes, and 600 boxes of food and veggies, and 300 boxes of feminine hygiene products, excuse me, as well as 500 pillows. And so just as a reminder as a year-to-date with our P.P.E. Distribution events, we have served over 17,000 families and provided over 59,000 masks, and 18,000 bottles of hand sanitizer. And so we are definitely having a full circle approach, and not only encouraging people to be vaccinated, but encouraging them to continue to practice safety measures and providing them the tools, resources and information to do so. Now with that I will end our presentation and ask if there are any questions.

>> Judge Brown: Thanks. I think that we have chief

[9:42:36 AM]

Bailey and constable morales to give us an update on the Travis county efforts as well.

>> Thank you, judge, court, and council. Chuck Brotherton, with emergency services. Just wanted to update the court and council briefly on our continuing operations, our mass vaccination operations at the Travis county exposition center on decker lane. We are continuing weekend operations, Friday, Saturday and Sundays typically for mass vaccination drive-thru at expo. Even as we transition to strike team operations and pop-up events. So we will -- we plan to continue at expo, so long as there is demand. This past weekend, we delivered 1,385 doses over Friday, Saturday, Sunday at expo. In addition to about 228 that we delivered at some pop-up clinics

[9:43:38 AM]

that chief Bailey and constable morales will tell you about. So we see this continuing through June likely into the summer, and perhaps shrinking our footprint at expo for the drive-thru operations even while we continue supporting through the pharmacy operations supporting our strike team operations. So with that, I will turn it over to chief Ken Bailey with Travis county E.S.D. 11.

>> So, good morning, council, judge, commissioners court. Thank you for having us again. I would like to start by saying that constable morales and I will be brief, but this is a combined effort of a lot of people, not really just us. Obviously, Travis county, Seton, A.C.C., Austin public health, there's a number of partners collaborative as part of that.

[9:44:40 AM]

The data that I'm showing you is specific to our strike team efforts from the beginning. And thus far from the strike team perspective we have delivered about 16,000 doses. I'd like to highlight that 83% of those are to -- to people of color. Because of the way that it's broken down with it, the white shows to be a large number, but when you break that down to those that are hispanic and then the non-white population, it runs about 83%. We are seeing a large uptake in the number of people under the age of 20 that are taking the vaccine, which is obviously with the changes from the C.D.C. Guidelines for pfizer. Th auinst public health had mentioned the zip codes that have the least amount of vaccine penetration.

[9:45:40 AM]

We highlighted those, and those have become a priority for the strike teams. And then the question which seems to us to be important is, what have we done in those zip codes? And I will give you one as an example. You know, it's less than 50% of that population is vaccinated with at least one dose. But when you look at the next slide, and you see where we've taken or strike teams, we have been in 78617 but how effective have we been is the larger question and, clearly, constable morales and others are

starting to focus on our messaging in these areas so that we can bring those numbers to a higher level. And then I'd also like to point out that the last two weeks in those areas that have had less than 50% that are priorities,

[9:46:41 AM]

the last two weeks of doses, which include H.E.B., Austin public health and tcfr, Seton, all of the providers represents about 20% of the effort that went into those seven or eight zip codes. And then the last thing that I've mentioned is that we have coded for the strike teams in some of these hard-to-reach zip codes so that we can start going street-by-street, whether or not it's the left side of the street or the right side of the street, with our efforts to educate and to do some outreach, which constable morales is going to speak to in regards to our next steps with those outreach efforts. Constable morales?

>> Good morning, council, commissioners, judge, and mayor. Right now we're currently focusing on outreach and education, so that whether our teams are out there they can be more successful. Together we're working on a unified message along with

[9:47:42 AM]

Austin public health, Seton, community of care, and other community groups, so that we don't send mixed messages. You know, such as locations, types of vaccines, ages, calendar events, responding to questions, information of the vaccine, health use and concerns. Right now our committee outreach is one of the focuses that as a team and a group that we're out there and we'd like to make sure that people have answers to some questions like, you know, the vaccine hesitancy, um, the reliability of the vaccine, and the types of vaccine given and the ages that can be taken. You know,, for instance, we'll have a pop-up event on June 12th at the millennium youth complex. That is 100% vaccine education with our community partners. You know, along with commissioners gómez and Travillion and mayor pro tem

[9:48:44 AM]

harper-madison, and Renteria, coming together as a group and reaching out to our faith-based leaders or our trusted faces in the community, our familiar faces in the community and our non-profits --

>> (Indiscernible).

>> I'm sorry? Making sure that we can actually bring that information for anyone that has those questions or those hesitancies of why they should take the vaccine and how healthy the vaccine can be. And our main focus on community outreach is, again, using those trusted people in our community. You

know, a lot of the times we had a discussion on, you know, do you know who your elected official is? Or do you know who your reverend is? Do you know who your priest is? Do you know who the person at the community center is? Those are the people that we want to make sure that we get out there and we get our message out. You know, right now in the last two weeks we've worked on some of that part, and with the help of Travis county, we were able to get some staff members out to

[9:49:45 AM]

where we made almost 2,000 phone calls. We had almost 2,500 complexes and mobile homes, and text messaging is about 2,000. So, you know, as we increase that information and that effort, we want to make sure that the people are comfortable with us getting out there, and we want to make sure that people are comfortable with the message that we're giving. You know, it's a scary process because some people are just unfamiliar with what we've got going on. Just like before I said we are working to reach the hard-to-reach areas, those people with lack of transportation, lack of wifi, access to technology, you know, those are the areas that are our focus and concern. I'll move it back to chief Bailey on that.

>> We're happy to answer any questions that you might have. Chuck, do you have anything in addition to.

>> Thank you, chief, just one other mention that I'd like to give a shout out to judge,

[9:50:47 AM]

mayor, court and council, to the Texas army National Guard. They have been supporting our efforts both at expo and continuing to support us as we move into the community with strike teams. So lieutenant José Torres and his folks have been instrumental in continuing to support and to make our operations successful. So with that, we'll turn it over to y'all for questions.

>> Judge Brown: Thanks very much for all of that. So we'll start with questions, commissioner Gómez recognized first if you have questions or comments.

>> Gómez: Judge, I don't have any questions. It appears that we are -- we're going to where people are, and that is a very good strategy to try to reach as many folks, and given the time to ask questions and to get answers sufficient enough for them to want to get vaccinated. So thank you you all very much for that effort.

[9:51:49 AM]

>> Judge Brown: Thank you, commissioner.

>> I don't have any questions either and I want to acknowledge the work of all of our staff and especially the E.S.D.S and the constables and I agree with commissioner gómez, it does seem that these sort of targeted strike team efforts, which I know that my colleague, commissioner Travillion, has been pushing from the first that we were having these hearings are really paying off. And I want to just acknowledge everyone's hard work and efforts to try to protect our community and to keep it healthy, so thank you all.

>> Judge Brown: Thanks. Commissioner Travillion.

>> Travillion: I'll echo my colleagues that I really appreciate the extra efforts that have been made by our staff. I think that we've been willing to go out, and seeing a willing willingness to go out into the community and, judge, I think that you have made extraordinary efforts as well to make sure that people have access to vaccine. We are planning a couple more

[9:52:50 AM]

events -- a few more events between now and juneteenth and I want to just make sure that we continue to have a volume of vaccinations that we need, because as we look at what is being planned by our constables on the -- at the millennium center this weekend, I think that could be a big event with a lot of people. I think that juneteenth will be huge as well and there will be a number of events, and with a lot of trusted people all around the city. So I just want to make sure that they have the supply that they need to serve those difficult-to-reach parts of the community who we know that will be out for events. So I just want to thank all -- thank you all for all of the efforts that have been done and let's redouble our efforts between now and the 4th of July to make sure that we're reaching as many people as we can. So thank you.

>> Judge Brown: Sounds good, and the one at millennium is this Saturday, I think it's like 9:00

[9:53:50 AM]

to 1:00, does that sound right?

>> Travillion: Constable morales, can you give him --

>> Yeah, it's actually 9:00 to 1:00, and to show up and more education with our vendors. There you will have free food, working with the community care to give out gift cards for families. We'll have cona ice on site. And we want people to feel comfortable asking those questions when they come to this event so that we can assure them that, you know, it can be safe and try to answer any additional hesitancy questions that they have.

>> Travillion: You know, I might have to at some point to get some type of contest between the constable and I to see who has the best barbecue -- so, you know, I might have to throw the gauntlet down, constable, to see what you know.

>> It's funny that you say that, commissioner, because the guy that I got is actually your friend, that is a friend of ours. Actually works here in our office. So it's going to be tough so we kind of focus on the barbecue.

[9:54:53 AM]

>> Travillion: All right, we'll check on that.

>> Judge Brown: And it's 12 up and for Saturday, so the pfizer on Saturday?

>> Yes, sir, we will have a vaccine team on site and it's 12 and over.

>> Judge Brown: Okay, awesome. Thank you so much. Commissioner Howard.

>> Howard: Thank you. My question might be best directed to Charles Brotherton. On the map shared in the most recent presentation, it doesn't include the entire Travis county, like north of the river. And I'm curious as to why is that? Is that just -- is this the shaded areas where we've done strike work, or do we - is this the -- a lot of my precinct is not shaded on the map. And I'm curious about the age of the people reflected in these statistics. Is this all human beings or just folks 12 and over or what?

>> Commissioner Howard, I will defer to chief Bailey.

[9:55:55 AM]

He is the creator of those maps.

>> Commissioner, are you speaking to 78645 and 78641?

>> Howard: Yes.

>> That's my error. I'll have that corrected and get it back over to you. And these are first doses, or at least one dose is what we were seeing.

>> Howard: Okay. But out of what -- you know, I'm surprised that we don't have more folks with complete dosage on, you know, out west. And so is this all ages or just

--

>> It is all ages. And I can actually get you a breakdown. All of the data that I have is specific -- is from dishes, and I have it divided into an east and west as well. So I can get that to chuck, who

[9:56:57 AM]

can get it to you today.

>> Howard: I'd appreciate that, thank you.

>> Judge Brown: Thanks. Don't have any questions, I just want to say thanks, constable morales and chief Bailey and commissioners for all that you are doing and thank you A.P.H. For also being a great partner in all of this. I think that the strike team effort across the city and the county is moving things in a good direction. So I'll pass it on over to you, mayor.

>> Mayor Adler: I just thank you and, again, commissioners, thanks for the joint session. And our colleagues, we're going to go one through 10, let's begin with the mayor pro tem. Do you have any questions I don't see the mayor pro tem now, but I did earlier.

[9:57:58 AM]

We can come back. Councilmember Fuentes, do you have any questions?

>> Fuentes: Yes, thank you. My first question is, first, I want to say thank you to chief Bailey and constable morales for all that you're doing for our community. It's just incredible to see the data that y'all laid out, where you were able to show us the targeted zip codes you're working on as part of the strike team effort, and then show us where you've been in that zip code. I super appreciate that level of detail and information, and am so grateful for the hard work that y'all are doing to get our community vaccinated. Chief Bailey, when you said you were going street to street, you were speaking my language. I was like yes, that's exactly what we need to be doing. I want to extend my gratitude to you all and I'm so grateful for the strike team effort. My question is around just trying to understand, you know, what is the plan to get the zip

[9:58:59 AM]

codes that have less than 50% of the population vaccinated with one dose? How are we going to move those zip codes, and what are the coordinated strategies? I want to ensure that our strike team effort with the county and with the county spearheading is aligned with the public health department's effort. So, director stirrup, if you could speak to that. And also, if you could touch on the city's mobile vaccine program, how that's going. Has than been utilized? Any type of information there that we should be aware of. So, that's my first question.

>> Thank you, councilmember Fuentes. As my colleagues from the county pointed out, you know, the first thing is to make sure that we are having consistent messaging and that we're all saying the same thing. So there is a concerted effort to work on campaigns and to make sure that we're sharing the same

[10:00:01 AM]

information. When we talk about vaccine hesitancy, you know, we -- I read a good article this week and it spoke to me, because now we're really talking about vaccine equity. All of the things that we're doing to be in those communities that folks either haven't had equitable access or need additional information. So it will be a combination of all the things that you've heard today. So first we need to make sure that we're continuing to provide up-to-date, real-time information, accessible at different points in communities. I love the health fair model approach, you know, drawing people in with lots of joy and good food, and then giving them some information. And then if you can get them over the next hump, give them a shot. That is classic strategy for that. So, you know, it's really about creating those opportunistic moments for people to get

[10:01:02 AM]

vaccine. And so as we begin to shift from our sites, we will join our county partners in doing more of a strike team approach. Typical, back in the day before covid, we were at Walmarts, giving screenings for blood pressures. We plan to use the same model for the vaccination strategy. Leaving places like southeast library and little walnut creek, because they're neighborhood hubs that people can still gravitate to and have connection with, and coupling that with using the map to see where we're below 50% and deploying our teams in those areas. They hit the nail on the head. The trusted partners that will be having events that we can tag onto. It will be a combination of messaging, providing good

[10:02:03 AM]

information, and then making sure that we have equitable opportunities in places where people work, play, and live to get vaccinated. And I don't know if my partners from the county want to add anything to that.

>> Yes, that's right.

>> There is joint information, a team from both county and city that are working together to craft messaging that is consistent that has the same artwork, but editable text that we can use for door-hangers, posters, all of that literature that we're handing out to make sure we have consistent messaging and branding, if you will, for our combined efforts.

>> Fuentes: Thank you.

[10:03:03 AM]

The other question I had is around the community goal to get to 70% vaccinated with one dose by July 4th. You know, I really -- it would be helpful if we were able to get some type of progress update as we have the different weeks go by from now until then to see how we're moving that needle. I want to get a sense of how successful those efforts are when we have the health fairs and juneteenth, just trying to see -- because of the collaborative efforts, this is how much we're able to move to hit the goal. As much as we can share that we're trying to reach 70% by July 4th and we're at 66% with at least one dose of Travis county, is that right?

>> Yes, that is correct.

[10:04:04 AM]

>> Fuentes: That would be helpful. I don't know if this was mentioned, I was a little late joining. But I want to extend a happy birthday to commissioner Gomez and just want to wish you the best year yet, and hope you have a great day.

>> Shea: You beat us to it, councilmember.

[Laughing]

>> Great. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Councilmember Renteria.

>> Renteria: Yes, thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Wait. I had skipped mayor pro tem. And happy birthday, commissioner.

>> Harper-madison: Thank you. I appreciate it. I wasn't on camera because I got a call from my mom so I could sing happy birthday to her. So, happy birthday, commissioner Gomez, you and my mom are birthday twins, geminies. I don't have any questions. Like my colleagues, I want to extend the most gratitude for

[10:05:04 AM]

having watched all of these initiatives and departments come together and I think we finally have found our stride with, like you said, constable morales, just knowing where people are. I think we're moving in the right direction now. And I just look forward to continued guidance from everybody here on how to best get the word out to our constituents. I'm getting more and more questions from people who previously stated that they were hesitate. So I think the outreach efforts are starting to penetrate communities and that makes me very hopeful. Thank you, everybody.

>> Mayor Adler: Okay. Now, councilmember Renteria.

>> Renteria: Thank you, mayor. And also, happy birthday, Margaret. I'm a little concerned about looking at these 878, 41 and 44. You know, I know in some of these locations, especially in

[10:06:06 AM]

the Riverside area -- maybe -- found any opportunities to set up any pop-up clinics in that area. It seems like at 38 point something percent vaccinated, is that just one shot, or is that the ones that haven't been totally vaccinated? I'm really curious in that area that it's that low.

>> 38% represents one dose. So this map shows the distribution of one dose per zip code. And so yes, the team is constantly working on where we can be and then future reports I hope to come back with -- either we completed an event, or this is where we plan to be. But that's the purpose of having

[10:07:07 AM]

this map in front of us, to make it visual of where we need to be and who we need to connect with.

>> Thank you. I know there's a lot of hesitancy in my community. I have enough here -- I'm trying to convince them that it's just the opposite. And so if I have enough -- a lot of people out there, that are the same way that he is, a child, he's afraid. I'm trying to convince him. But it's very hard to send out that message to people, especially when they're hesitant to take that. And I believe that if you get it closer to them where it's within a short distance, where they can walk or it's a short drive, that you'll get a lot more people taking it.

[10:08:07 AM]

So I'm glad we have identified those zip codes and now we can concentrate on them. So, thank you very much and I want to thank all the other staff and the constables, and the county commissioners that are helping out. So I just want to thank y'all. You're doing a great job.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Councilmember Casar.

>> Casar: I really appreciate the latest data that shows to us, as councilmember Renteria said, what we have known, which is that places like 78753 and 41 not only aren't at 50%, but they're below 40%. So that's important for us to clearly see. But then for us to know that what we're doing is actually directly addressing that inch in the other map you showed to us that the places where you have administered the most doses

[10:09:08 AM]

when you're talking about our public efforts are places like 78741 and 53. What I've been searching for is to see have we really identified and continued to get a sense of the problem. And is the majority of our work directed right there. And I think this is the first presentation where we've seen that you all -- we can show clearly to the public that we're aware of the continued disparities and the continued need, and that we're focusing our resources directly at that. I want to echo the thanks of everybody that's spoken so far at that continued effort, knowing that that effort is far from down, knowing that we have parts of town that are still under 40%. I know y'all know that and are working that. I appreciate that we now have maps that can show that to the community. I am going to send a question in for our next presentation on the mortality rate, because I do think it is important for us to

[10:10:09 AM]

show those disparities that we have. But I also want us to be able to show and understand, even if some of the disparities may not be quite as severe in a place like El Paso, when you have three to four times the death rate in those cities, I think it's clear that the mortality rate for Latinos here is lower than El Paso, or Bexar or Harris county, even though we have a disparity in the death rate. So I do think having those numbers would be really helpful for next time, for us to show our community where we're falling short, but then also what we're doing that is working. Because I think people -- for us to continue taking careful behaviors and encouraging people to get the vaccine, it is helpful for people to see what is working. I really appreciate this presentation, because I think it gives me and members of the public clarity about what the path is moving forward.

[10:11:10 AM]

And I just want to thank everybody that's really working to target those places that are under 50% or even under 40%. So, thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Okay. Thank you. Councilmember kitchen.

>> Kitchen: Thank you. I don't have any specific questions at this point. I do want to thank our staff. And I also want to say -- I appreciate the questions that councilmember Fuentes was asking and pointing out the importance of the targeted outreach that the county is engaged in. I really appreciate that effort and am hopeful that that's going to produce really good results. And then I agree with what councilmember Casar was saying. We need to really understand what it is that's making a difference. So, again, thank you to everyone who's involved in this effort.

[10:12:12 AM]

And I hope that we can just continue the push to get as many people vaccinated as we can.

>> Mayor Adler: Okay. Thank you. Councilmember Kelly.

>> Kelly: Good morning, and thank you. First off, happy birthday, commissioner Gomez. I hope you have a wonderful day. Second, I wanted to thank all of the staff at both the city of Austin and Travis county for being able to provide these meetings for us jointly. I can think of no better way to communicate and collaborate across different government entities and work together to help solve problems across our communities. And for that, my heart is very full and I'm super thankful. So, thank you very much.

>> Mayor Adler: Councilmember pool.

>> Pool: Thanks. Just going to amplify all of the good wishes to commissioner Gomez, and to our staff for continuing to see improvements in our community on vaccination rates. Still hoping for that 100%

[10:13:12 AM]

achievement, which I hope we see really, really soon. So, thanks to everything.

>> Mayor Adler: Councilmember Ellis.

>> Ellis: Thank you, mayor. Happy birthday to everyone whose birthday it is.

[Chuckling] Are we seeing that the vaccines that are currently out are being as effective toward different variants as we would hope, or is there some more work being done to make sure our covid shots in the future are effective against those variants?

>> So far we're seeing that they are effective. There's ongoing research to collect data. And there is some talk of the boosters that are being developed, that they will have some focus on some of the variants that may need special attention as far as vaccines go, similar that we do with flu vaccines.

[10:14:13 AM]

>> Ellis: Okay. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Councilmember Tovo.

>> Tovo: Thanks very much. The information you provided today about the more granular detail about zip code level and percentages based on age, the number vaccinated and whatnot was really very, very useful. I wondered if you could summarize for us any research that you're aware of that explains the difference -- the different responses that women appear to be having to the vaccine in terms of the number of breakthrough? I know slide noted something that seems to be supported, women appear to

be having more breakthrough cases than men. And I'm wondering what some of the prevailing theories are.

>> I don't believe that we have that data as yet. It's 51% women and 49% men in

[10:15:14 AM]

the breakthrough slide that I showed. So it's still early in the process. And I'm sure that we'll get more information as we go forward.

>> Tovo: Okay. I'm aware that there have been some other articles talking about how the vaccines may be slightly less effective for women. And so I'm -- thank you for pointing out that the data here in Austin is still pretty close in terms of breakthrough rates. Okay. Thanks. That's it.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Councilmember alter.

>> Alter: No questions, and I join my colleagues in thanking everyone for their hard work.

>> Mayor Adler: Great. Thank you. Thank you to -- welcome, again, to the combined meeting of the council, Dr. Walkes, and the commissioners. I also want to thank -- for the presentations today that have the demographic information over

[10:16:15 AM]

time. I think that does tell us and reaffirm that the direction we're taking is in fact moving the percentages that we want to get to, the most vulnerable over time. It's kind of interesting. We see that the mass events get to more people so they get to greater absolute numbers of communities of color, the more targeted events don't get to as many people, they get to the greater percentages. Clearly the direction we need to be going, fewer and fewer people are going to the mass sites. I would also like to see the mortality numbers, both for what we're doing here, but also compared to other jurisdictions to see if other folks are doing something that we need to take a look at to be able to do better. I would be interested in knowing, do we have the data or the numbers to be able to present the percentage of people

[10:17:15 AM]

that are new cases, or the percentage of people that are new hospitalizations that are vaccinated or not vaccinated? Is that data available?

>> I've asked for that, mayor. We do not have it as yet. But as soon as I get that, I'll distribute it to the group.

>> Mayor Adler: I think that would be an interesting thing to see and it may help with the hesitancy issues just to get that information out as well. There was a city that's now publicizing -- I think their numbers were something like 98%, their hospitalizations for people who had not been vaccinated, which is an incredibly high number that I'd be interested in knowing if we're seeing the same kind of thing here. But congratulations to the county and the strike teams, and what we're doing with aph, targeted stuff. That seems to be really working. We now have a track record to really be able to look and see

[10:18:16 AM]

who the trusted partners are in the community that are delivering the greatest number of targeted people at events for us to get vaccinated. And I urge you all to rely on them and look at those track records. Some of those folks I think are asking for additional support in order to amplify their voices, if that makes sense to do based on the track records we're seeing. I hope we're considering that. Judge, I think that takes us through all of our folks, if you want to tee up the next item.

>> Judge Brown: Item 2, the Austin Travis county census 2020 after-action report. And we're going to have a briefing from Travis county intergovernmental relations officer Julie wheeler and city demographer Dr. Lila Valencia, as well as John long.

>> All right. Good morning, commissioners and council.

[10:19:16 AM]

I'm Julie wheeler, the Travis county intergovernmental relations officer. The judge has already announced my co-presenters. Our goal is to give you all an after-action report on the joint efforts of the city and county around the census. Because there's been some change in membership between both bodies, I wanted to give you a quick background on the importance of the census, how we arrived at this joint partnership, what our local campaign looked like, what the data we received so far is telling us, and some recommendations and next steps for going forward. So, I'm going to share my screen so you can see the presentation. Hopefully I can do this easily and quickly. Can you -- are you all seeing that?

>> Yes.

>> Perfect. Is it in presentation mode? I've never done presentation mode in the joint session before.

>> Judge Brown: I think you need to go to full screen.

[10:20:17 AM]

>> Perfect. We've got presenter. I don't think there's any way to overstate the importance of the census. Once every decade, the census bureau is tasked with counting every person in the United States, whether they're homeless, overseas serving in the military, it doesn't matter. The goal is to count you. With that data, \$1.5 trillion annually are distributed based on that data. That's anywhere from Medicaid, Title I, transportation. Most recently we saw this with the allocations for C.A.R.E.S. And ARPA funding. For every one person not counted, the county stands to lose \$1,500 per year per person. You can imagine cumulatively what kind of impact that has to our community should we have an undercount. Reapportionment is based on the census data. Dr. Valencia will talk about that. Texas stands to gain two seats. We'll go into more detail about that. And more importantly, redistricting happens from the state level and for city council

[10:21:19 AM]

districts, and commissioners court precincts. The data touches every aspect of our lives. For the next ten years, we'll live with this and it will help inform our decisions, which is why it was important at the time that we put investments into this to make sure we could get as accurate of a count as possible. So I'm going to give you a little bit of background from 2010. We're going to go back in time. At that time, there was a joint partnership between the county and city. This isn't necessarily something new. That effort was led by Bruce, constable for precinct five, Deece, and Ryan, former city of Austin demographer. Steps they took, similar to what we did this time, which was the creation of a complete count committee that was led both by the mayor and the judge, brought together different community and institutional leaders that created the backbone for who became active participants with this effort. They also worked closely with the census partnership

[10:22:20 AM]

specialist. So it was a robust effort, but to a much smaller degree. In 2018, when everybody came back together again and started looking at how do we plan for the 2020 census, they looked at what worked and what needed to happen to move this to the next level. I know that in 2018, we have had a lifetime since then. To remind what the census was going to look like, there were a number of challenges. We knew the citizenship question was at the forefront of everybody's mind. It was undecided whether or not that was going to be asked on the questionnaires. We understood the chilling effect it would have. As a community, we would need to overcome that, regardless of the outcome with the inclusion of that question.

[Clearing throat] Ultimately it was not put on the questionnaire, which was great, but there was a lot of damage done with the early confusion. Additionally, the census moved to an online tool that had never been used before. There were concerns about the

[10:23:21 AM]

rollout of that. It had a rocky implementation process. And that gave us obvious concern. The thirdly, it happens every decade with the census, was the census going to be adequately funded? Would there be enough partnership specialists to provide the level of support we would need at the community level. With those in mind, along with concern's about the state's participation -- I state didn't have much of a coordinated effort. There wasn't a statewide complete count committee. There wasn't any sort of funding that was provided. All of that at the state level came more from institutions and wasn't really something directed by the state itself. With all of that in place, the census action team, the three members I mentioned before, myself included, started to look at how do we come together and make a more formalized, robust process. Recommendations were made that it would be very beneficial to have some sort of collaborative funding. We were very lucky that both

[10:24:22 AM]

entities agreed to put in an initial investment of 200,000 each along with a joint position, which was the census program manager. One of the things they learned from 2010 is this was a campaign. And you all have run successful campaigns or you wouldn't be here today. You all really understood that it's important to have somebody here who day after day is staying on top of things and is there to help coordinate, run interference on any sort of problems or resources we may need. The idea was there needed to be one dedicated staffer who would live, eat, and breathe this, for better or worse, but they would be the person shepherding this process along. That being said, there was the city and county jointly funded this position, put money in for this community collaborative fund that drove the efforts of helping to put on events, helping to put together materials, any other support that was necessary to help formalize this process of the

[10:25:23 AM]

census. Really quickly, I do want to thank Matt, who is not here to present today and Joyce. Matt is with the city of Austin. Joyce is the former president of the league of women voters. They helped staff the community collaborative and were instrumental in helping formalize this process and really putting in a lot of effort to keeping this effort going and staying successful, especially in the light of all of the challenges we knew going into it along with the challenges that we didn't know to expect, that came about. So, to give you a quick snapshot of some key timeline dates, this was a long effort. We started as

early as 2018 really looking at preliminary planning around the census, what needed to happen. In October of 2018 then county judge Eckhardt and mayor Adler announced the creation of the committee, the collaboration of institutional community leaders, grassroots leaders, the foundation of our community who helped put together this effort.

[10:26:24 AM]

In 2019 we had our kickoff meeting. So it was one year out from the census with that group coming together. Census program manager John came on in August of 2019. And then I think we all know what happened in 2020. We had a campaign planned and in March of 2020, the first stay at home orders were issued by both the county and city because of covid. I didn't put all of the dates in here, but just to give you a quick understanding, the census was supposed to be completed July 31st, 2020. That date changed numerous times due to covid. It was extended out, shortened, extended, shortened. That made it a very complicated process for trying to manage a campaign with an ever-changing target date and ultimately ended in the middle of October and wrapped up our formal process. I'm going to pass it over to John and he's going to give you guys an overview of what our

[10:27:24 AM]

local campaign looks like, how we came together with different community leaders and what our media strategy looked like.

>> Thank you, Julie. I hope you all can hear me all right. I'm on microphone. Am I good?

>> Yes.

>> Awesome. Thank you so much. And thank you, Julie, for passing this baton on and all the early work you put into creating this role and allowing this campaign to happen. I came in in the middle of August in 2019. We tried to wrap our heads around what a campaign around the census would look like, especially with the ever-growing distrust, the citizenship question, and the absence of the state as a collective organizing entity. Thankfully through conversations with other folks around the state, especially with local leaders based here in Austin, we were able to come up with a three-tiered plan. One would be our institutional strategy, which would be

[10:28:25 AM]

harnessing the collective institutional heft of the different entities involved. We had our countywide complete count committee. Several of y'all served on that. What empowered that was the interlocal agreement that created my staffing role and the administrative support to support it. Once we had

those institutional blocks built, which were not easy, we started to build up the grassroots teams around that. This was based on evidence and research we were seeing from other parts of the country and some successful action by groups like Houston in action down in the city of Houston, Harris county, where they were building community organizing teams around the hard-to-count populations versus that institutional countywide umbrella. And we'll dig into more of that in a minute. But that media strategy, which was really effective catching folks on the radio waves, we were able to collaborate with our four surrounding counties on a plan for Spanish, English, and different print media as well. Julie, if you'll jump us to the next slide. Here's just a brief snapshot of

[10:29:27 AM]

the different folks that were involved with the countywide complete count committee. New members would be added, some folks would jump off as capacity allowed. It's a lot of different folks. We tried to get the everyday names we're used to working with on a large scale, trying to figure out what their capacity was to place into this effort. A lot of it was either through direct funding or indirect organizing capacity, helping us out. Next slide, Julie. You know, given how tight that timeline was when the campaign started and how fast the census came along, what we ultimately decided to do was hunker down with the institutional groups that would give us the biggest bang for our buck, the partners that touched the most of the hard to count communities we were working to get counted. I'll dig more into what those communities were and who they were, but just highlighting a few folks. Austin ISD and the Austin coalition did an amazing job. We figured -- we didn't, they told us the parent support

[10:30:29 AM]

specialists would be that great touchpoint where we could really connect through to these community members, these families would trust them. And we had a lot of great messaging conversations. You can see a snapshot of that in the slide. Once covid came along and folks were at home taking classes, the school districts sent out school buses with banners and digital pop-ups saying hey, you've got to take the census. This is incredibly important. Our healthcare partnerships were really big. Central health really led on that, but community care, sendero, all those folks jumped in as well. We were able to talk at their clinics. And we were able to call through their database. You can see their mapping we used to track their clinics. And the city of Austin, like the county, provided a big institutional heft. I've got an example of the traffic signs you may have seen driving around while the census was going on. And there were a lot of folks who really helped out with that, especially the public libraries. Excuse me, the bookmobile.

[10:31:33 AM]

You may not guess, the Austin code department, the planning department, Plo, the transportation department helped build our website. So it very much was an all hands on deck, folks coming in who had the talent to help. Julie, next slide, please. All right. Now, here -- really made the difference. All those partnerships we just talked about in the institutional lense provided a lot of resources, but this is where we dug in deep. Who were the hard to count here in Austin, Travis county? We grabbed U.S. Census bureau data. We had our demographer and partnerships at the census bureau help us say these are likely to be our hardest to count communities, the largest one being the hispanic/latino population, the immigrant population fearful of that citizenship question. Our black/african American population members who were suffering from different things like displacement, or smaller share of the overall population.

[10:32:34 AM]

And then, of course, also our growing Asian more than population, which we had a number of barriers including language and culture. Thankfully, we have an amazing network of community groups in austin/travis county. Our Asian American community complete count committee was the first step forward. They organized organically. A number of community members came together. You can see there, that was their catch phrase, count us in. Our black/african American community, CCC grabbed folks from all over the county in different neighborhoods and institutions. A number of commissioners and city councilmembers helped out with these different groups as well. Our hispanic/latino community team had different groups like the hispanic chamber of commerce teaming up with constable morales and commissioner Gomez, all the Latino organizations. They came together in a united effort to figure out what the strategies were. Our job was to help fund them. We had our lgbtq ia + that was

[10:33:35 AM]

up for a national award with their digital advertising that they were doing. So we had a number of other grassroots-based groups, but I wanted to highlight these. You can see some of the different materials they put together. Julie, next slide, please. Great. This was our third little strategic priority here, media. We were really lucky that Williamson county, bastrop, hays, Caldwell were all down to organize, in part because the United Way in greater Austin had fundraised and developed some dollars in partnership with Austin community foundation, the St. David's foundation. We were able to jointly go after a \$60,000 grant that we were able to turn around and partner with univision, Telemundo, to get leaders on airwaves and social media. On the bottom right-hand corner, you can see we blended the institutional grassroots and media strategies. That was a pop-up at a

[10:34:36 AM]

supermarket where we had outreach folks from precinct four, live social media of the most popular radio dj telling folks to come out for the specials and take the census while you're out there. Our media, although it was traditional in some ways, it grew to be very nontraditional as we identified that was a very effective tactic. Julie, next slide, please. And the group that helped organize that media component was our digital team, largely volunteers from city departments, those different community teams, groups like open Austin, who just decided the census was good. I used to joke it was the digital nerds using their powers for good to help us. They created a ton of different online resources, themes that community groups could post. We worked with the mayor and county judge, we identified school lunches as something our community groups identified with. We hammered down the census, it's all about funding school lunches. We had a website where both the county and the city all plugged

[10:35:38 AM]

into and Julie, if you can go to the next slide, please. They also did something really important. And this is relevant to the conversations that have been occurring earlier this morning. By having a collective strategic map, a tool that both the public could use, and it's a little more simplified, this was our under the hood map that volunteers helped us build. Our African american/black community group could say how are our zip codes doing. They're doing their campaigns. How are our hispanic/latino census tracks doing. With our hispanic/latino leaders, we could track the census tracks day after day. The constable would send a letter to mailboxes, we'd have auto-robo calls, play digital ads, we could see the number go up. And it was this kind of collective data-sharing and analysis that really worked. And at this point, I'm going to hand it off to our new city demographer, but someone super familiar with this effort, because she was helping educate

[10:36:39 AM]

me and get me on board while she was with the state demographer's justice, Lila Valencia.

>> Thank you, good morning, councilmembers and commissioners. I'm Lila Valencia and I have the great privilege of serving as Austin city demographer. I'm excited to share the fruits of the labor of the countless community leaders and civil servants in the effort that John described. All of these efforts were made possible through your joint investment in the city's and areas greatest asset, the people of austin/travis county. I'll start by sharing some numbers. You may have already heard of different percentages describing the nation and state's performance in the 2020 census. Admittedly, the census bureau has a number for everything. Sometimes these metrics can get a little confusing. I find it helpful to think about these metrics as parts of a whole, the whole being the total response or enumeration rate. This rate is the percent of

[10:37:42 AM]

housing units reconciled or processed out of the universe of housing units and addresses across the country. This is a good measure of success for the census bureau. At the end of the data collection period, 99.98% of housing units and addresses nationwide were enumerated and a similar percentage in Texas, about 99.96%. So this is an important metric because it lets us know that we're starting at a good base line for the count of the people who actually live within these housing units. The parts that make up the whole, the total response rate, are self-response and nonresponse followup. The self-response rate is the percent of housing units that responded on their own by phone, by mail, and for the first time ever in 2020, online. This is known to be the most accurate type of census data that we can get and it's also the best metric by which to evaluate the work of the Austin/Travis County Collaborative because they were tasked with motivated households to respond on their own to the

[10:38:43 AM]

2020 census. The nonresponse followup makes up the remainder of the whole. This is all census workers going door-to-door to follow up with the housing units that did not respond on their own. Once they get there the census worker determines if that housing unit is vacant or occupied and attempts to get response to the census form questions. Now, this response may come from the actual individuals who live there. If it does, these data can be just as accurate as self-response. But it can also be attained by a proxy. These are typically neighbors or landlords that may have some information on the occupancy status of the housing unit, as well as some information on the people who live there. It's important to note that these rates represent -- do not represent actual counts. These only represent the share of housing units that the census bureau processed in that master address file. And so the counts are really only going to be available after the processing and release of this housing unit level data.

[10:39:45 AM]

So, next slide, please. So, using the self-response rate as the key metric, how did we do. 67% of housing units across the nation self-responded to the 2020 census. This was about a half percentage point higher than the share that self-responded in 2010. For Texas, Texas ranked 39th compared to other states and this was lower in 2010 when they ranked 35th. Our self-response rate dropped from 64.4% to 62.8%. Next slide, please. You can see Austin here compared to other select cities. Next slide, please. And self-response rate among Texas counties ranged quite a bit from a high of about 75.8% in Fort Bend right outside Houston to a low of 18.6% in

[10:40:47 AM]

Edwards county, which is in west Texas, with generally suburban communities and rural areas, or suburban communities outpacing urban and rural areas. Travis county was among 29 or 11% of counties statewide that met or surpassed the 2010 self-response rate and Austin was among 283 or 23% of cities that met or surpassed the 2010 self-response rate. Most notably, together, the austin/travis county care was the only large Texas city combo to beat the 2010 self-response rate. Other large counties, namely Bexar and tarrant surpassed their 2010 self-response rate, but the corresponding principal city did not. I have no doubt that the fact that Austin and Travis county beat their 2010 self-response rate as a combo is due to the effective contain and unified

[10:41:49 AM]

efforts. Next slide, please. When can we move? We already have to some extent, the apportionment file was released next April. This file included the population counts for the nation, states, and district of Columbia. Texas had been projected to gain three congressional seats. However, a lower than expected count for Texas relative to population estimates from the census bureau, along with a better than expected count for other states resulted in Texas gaining only two seats. This was more than any other state gained but it was still low projections. Some in the media noted the lower than expected counts for high-growth, high-latino states like Arizona, Florida, and Texas. And the higher than expected counts for coastal states like California and New York. Also with sizable populations. And one key difference between these states was the lack of state funding for census

[10:42:50 AM]

outreach efforts in 2020. As early as August 16th, the census bureau will be releasing what's commonly referred to as the redistricting file. This is the -- our public law 94171 file. The fully processed easier to use file will be able September 30th. This data file will include data down to the block level on total population, race and ethnicity, voting age or 18 years and older, and occupancy status for housing units. And so these are nursing homes and college dormitories, etc. This file will be the first time we get to see the count for city of Austin and Travis county. Despite the lower than expected counts for the state, I'm really optimistic for the count for Travis county and Austin. And I really think it will be stronger in large part due to the contributions and investments made by both council and the county court, as well as the community efforts in

[10:43:52 AM]

effective austin/travis county campaigns. Now, the redistricting file will support the work of the city of Austin's independent citizens redistricting commission, as well as the Travis county's commissioners court redistricting process. And in the spring of 2022, more detailed data will be made available. These

detailed data, some of the examples include household type, relationship to householder, as well as the full age detail, not just voting age and up. And then for the first time, the census bureau has released more detailed data quality metrics than ever before. The first set was released with the apportionment data. Another file was released last week. These quality metrics, as well as the post-enumeration survey where a sample of units that participated in the census count are reinterviewed -- all of these metrics help us to determine the quality and accuracy of the and assess for under or sometimes overcounts of the

[10:44:53 AM]

population. We're going to continue to monitor these metrics and to be extra vigilant for the undercount of historically undercounted communities such as communities of color, but also important in the case of Austin and Travis county, the college-aged population that lives off campus. Covid-19 had a pronounced impact on this population and we need to ensure that an accurate count was obtained. What if we determined that a significant undercount was obtained? The census bureau has a count resolution operation that provides a mechanism for government entities to request a review of their official 2020 census count. Now the census bureau will use these updated counts to inform other products, like estimates that begin to be released in 2022, and they also create what are called erota information on the website, and so sometimes you'll look at a population number and it will have a little

[10:45:55 AM]

asterisk on the top right corner. That indicates that official count had to be modified due to this count process, however, the resolution is not a mechanism to change the counts that are used in apportionment or redistricting or any other official 2020 census data products. But they're still very important because many of the funding programs that Julie mentioned earlier on in the presentation rely also on these estimates. Now before I turn it back to John to describe recommendations for 2030, I want to thank you one more time for your investment in the 2020 census. Even during a time when your systems and organizations and families were stretched thin trying to address unprecedented demands of covid and the pandemic induced recession, you understood the importance of the census and the intentional count needed to reach our historically neglected communities. And because ever these joint efforts, I'm really eager and

[10:46:55 AM]

excited to see the counts for Austin and Travis county and I would be happy to come back and present these data to you at a later date. John?

>> Awesome, thank you so much, Lila. As she noticed it was that investment by y'all, the city and county, that allowed us to provide those resources. So let's go into reflections who it was like there in 2020. The environment, again, we weren't the only shop in town. There was the federally funded census program that was with partner specialists and there was our program itself that combined the city/county and a privately founded United Way project that had its own administrator and providing grants to partners on its own as well. As Lila noted there was no state effort, and I can't hit that note enough how much that really hurt us as a state and it was thanks to efforts of folks like Dallas county judge Clay Jenkins and others coming together and putting us all in a room, that we were able to still stay connected.

[10:47:56 AM]

Next slide, please. And more locally here focused besides the state's funding, we have underbuilt infrastructure when it comes to our institutions can fund and empower our grassroots partners. There were headaches and hiccups as we tried to get dollars and resources to these community teams that strained the relationship and but for their commitment to this effort I'm not certain that we would have been able to keep going, so, again, I want to just highlight the grassroots leaders and how important that they stuck with us, they recognized the importance. But we need to recognize as a city and a county that we could have done better -- we did good but we could have done better with making connections. Volunteer burnout was especially felt during COVID which was its own human beast to deal with, but the infrastructure that is in place it helps to prevent that type of burnout and it deepens the bench and broadens that trust with different folks. So that way we're not relying on

[10:48:56 AM]

the same folks time and time again. Julie, next slide, please. So here's some quick-fire recommendations. Start earlier. I was able to come on a year beforehand and that our leaders were rocking and rolling, but, frankly, we should start tomorrow planning for the census in 2030. Those hurdles are not going anywhere and they might get higher between now and the next 10 years. Divide and collaborate. There were times early on where there were three primary campaigns that I mentioned that a lot of us were doing the same thing and we had to figure out on the fly, okay, you grab that, and I'll grab this, and, you know, building that out. If we could have avoided that earlier we might have hit other things harder. Again, avoiding duplication. And then staff up earlier. So, again, there was a lot of work, especially building out the grassroots teams that should have taken over years to get these folks ready to go and connected with the institutional level and we did that in six months and 30 days at some times and it was the leaders of the

[10:49:57 AM]

community who made that magic happen. Next slide, please. So at the top, data, data, data. You know, the data from the census bureau and the data that Leila is providing us and our digital team was churning out, that is what allowed to us prioritize which communities and institutional partners we'd work with, but then it allowed us to check ourselves. Not all of the strategies we did worked. That was the strength of our campaign is that we would admit that on our census action team calls. We have to look at the numbers, we had that dashboard and we put money in this and we tried to do this when pivoting with covid and that doesn't work. There were old-school tactics to hone in, but for that data and that ability to check ourselves along the way we wouldn't have been able to know what was working. And inch wide, mile deep, those were the community teams. It's good to have that county-wide, but if we had the hard-to-count community would be, we would have had more time building and strengthening that organizational infrastructure, leading into it.

[10:50:58 AM]

Institutional partners are most likely to jump at the table. But trying to get these folks who have other jobs and other commitments and have the weight of the world on their shoulder, we've got to get with them first and we've got to focus with them. And intersectional campaigning. I was proud as the campaign moved along it became less of what is my specific community getting out of this, you know, what is my specific community -- and it was sharing strategies and sharing tactics, sharing resources. It was a really beautiful thing to watch. So, again, I want to commend those folks for doing that. Lastly, and use what we have. I like to show folks this door hanger. This door hanger is not just a piece of Orange paper, it's grassroots input on the wording for it, and it was our tax assessor and the county volunteer programs that provided the printing. It was the league of women voters and precinct 4 deputies out putting it on doors and tracking the efficacy and the public health book diagnose mobile going out -- bookmobile and hosting the events after these door hangers would go on

[10:51:59 AM]

the door. So it represents use wag we have and getting out there. Next slide, please, Julie. So one big idea and that was quick fire things to work on, but, y'all, there's something really cool that we could do that would build on the relative success that we had. We did good, we did better than most here in the state, but this is Texas. So the one big idea, the one big opportunity that we have is to continue to fund this type of work. The hurdles that the hard-to-count populations were overcoming were not unique to the census. They don't go away, they get worse year after year. And I know that y'all hear this all the time. But if we could spend the next 10 years dismantling hurdles that we know that exist that the data proves up, if we could strengthen and build out that infrastructure between our institutional partnerships and these grassroots leaders who really know how to put those resources to work, that is

the secret sauce. That is the magic that can make something really great happen 10 years down the road. Similar to how we're investing in transit, and how we're

[10:53:01 AM]

investing in infrastructure, this type of community organizing is in itself infrastructure that, you know, requires annual operating budgets and commitments from our institutions. Why should we do this? Right now a lot of the grant-making entities, you know, have a lot of the power when it comes to who can get funded. What we could do if we actually annually organized and fund this kind of work, you know, this type of collaborative that was formed, we can put the grass roots leaders and their networks upfront. They can dictate the strategy. They can dictate the priorities and then we'll do our job, which is getting the resources to them. And long term that investment will pay out big-time 10 years down the road where we know, as noted earlier for everyone that we get out of county, we lose out. Next slide, please. So how do we do this? First and foremost we need to continue to invest and support a county/city collaborative focusing on these priorities. We did it with the census and we know how to work with the joint funding mechanism. It's just about recreating that

[10:54:02 AM]

and keeping it going further and trying to tackle these things that we have identified. It's using the data that we've mentioned to help to lead that effort. It's not anecdotal but we know, you know, what are the biggest issues. And then it's engaging these folks. I'm really proud of the folks in our asian-american community that have continued their asian-american A.C.C., and they rebranded it as a civic county coalition. Like we did early on, we need to follow their example, we need to keep funding that work and supporting them however we can. And then maximizing our public investment, where we put up dollars like we did with y'all's investments initially at \$200,000 each and we were able to go and partner those dollars and to the local campaigns that were organizing and say, hey, it only makes sense for us to work together and not to be in silos organizing. So that's one big idea. There's those very specific recommendations that y'all can take a look at, but this big one would require action to try to keep that collaborative going, funding it annually, and seeing

[10:55:03 AM]

it as the infrastructure that it is for big things like the census. Next slide, please. And, thank you, there's a ton of folks that Julie and Leila have mentioned on this call and we have forgotten dozens and there's thousands of hours from the city and county with different staffers from different departments that just poured their hearts into this. And when you talk about the hundreds of volunteers that represent those different census community teams, I mean, it becomes impossible to list them all, but I just want to

thank those folks first and foremost and then thank y'all, the city council commissioner report and mayor Adler and the former judge Eckhardt for putting this together and putting the budget behind it that we needed and believing in it. It would not have been possible without your institutional support. So thank you y'all so much.

>> Judge Brown: Julie, do you have any other comments?

>> Mayor Adler: Can't hear you.

[10:56:04 AM]

>> Judge Brown: You're muted, Julie.

>> Sorry. I had a transition. To echo what Lila and John said, this was such a huge undertaking and, you know, we started out with a very clear plan and direction of what we hoped to see and I have to give credit to everybody who was an active participation, y'all as our funders and cheerleaders and supporters. Covid really did kind of knock the wind out of our sails and required that we really shift how we do this. But I think that good things have come out of this and it would be a shame to sort of lose that momentum that we have. I think that covid has been a prime opportunity to show how these partnerships have been strengthened and I think that we have been successful if getting through the pandemic in part because of that coordination that happened through the census. We're happy to answer any questions that you all have, and we'll be back taking later on about redistricting which is part two of this, but, again, happy to answer any thoughts, concerns or questions about the census that you guys may have for us.

[10:57:05 AM]

>> Judge Brown: Thanks, Julie. We'll run through the order and see if there are any questions on our end. Start with commissioner gómez.

>> Gómez: I don't have any questions, judge. I think that it was great to be part of the process. And we really formed a lot of very neat collaborations and so it was -- I'm glad to see that we think that this is -- this was a good process. And that we're ready to move on. Thank y'all, thank you, John, and thank you, everyone -- Julie, everyone. Thank you so much.

>> Thank you, commissioner, and happy birthday.

>> Gómez: Thank you.

>> Judge Brown: Commissioner Shea.

>> Shea: My thanks as well to everyone who was involved. I think that we did a remarkable job in spite of the state just being an absolute barrier on

[10:58:06 AM]

something that's so critical. And I think that people really need to understand, frankly, how irresponsible I think they have been on this whole process. And I really -- I really support John's kind of big idea recommendation, because we need to have better mechanisms for engaging larger community on virtually everything. I think that where we really saw it spring into action in addition to the census work was during winter storm uri. We didn't have enough first responders. We just don't, if you do the math. We don't have enough first responders when there's a large crisis like that. And we depend on these grassroots, in many cases organic efforts, frequently by our neighbors to help out. And I think that the more that we understand that and try to make use of it that the better we'll be as a community. So I like that idea as always

[10:59:07 AM]

with the legislature putting a stranglehold on our funding resources. We have the problem of figuring out how do we fund something like that, how do we maintain it. How do we continue it over time. But I like the general direction of it, and I certainly support it. But thank you all for your great efforts.

>> Judge Brown: Thanks, commissioner Travillion.

>> Travillion: I would like to, as my colleagues have, first I would like to say happy birthday to commissioner gómez. It is -- it is especially to have someone around who -- special around who has been here and watched us grow and evolve in so many ways. In a lot of ways, some of the things that began to happen from the very beginning happened because of her relationships in the community and in the courthouse. So she pulled this together for our first meeting. She encouraged people to participate in the process. I have to thank John as well for

[11:00:10 AM]

his method because he did not come in and try to tell communities how to organize themselves. He came in and asked the community to organize itself and to partner with him. So when there were parts of the latinx communities and there were parts of the Asian community and parts of the African American community, many of them organized themselves and worked with him and he provided a space for us to communicate with each other. Resources for us to share with each other. Brought in a number of people from different disciplines with different tools so that we could understand what was available to us, work together, and bring in other resources when we needed to. So, you know, the push and pull of the process, you know, oftentimes there's more encouraging than herding, and I have seen them do an excellent

[11:01:11 AM]

job in making sure that he invited the community into the table and gave everybody an opportunity to serve in their own way. So I was very pleased with the work that he did with the communities that I saw him work with, and I think that this exercise has been as successful as it could have possibly been, given the challenges that we had and the significant challenges. The ice discussion that has gone on. We were in the middle of a pandemic and then we had a snowstorm of the century. All of those things happened, and I still think that he did an extremely good job, and the team, led by Julie, did an extremely good job of giving us the best opportunity that we could to lay a strong foundation that we can continue to use as events and activities occur in

[11:02:11 AM]

community. So thank you for the work that you've done and I look forward to continuing to work with you.

>> Thank you, and thanks to everybody who worked on this. I just continue to be grateful that I live, you know, in Travis county where, again, we are standing out in the state of Texas as a team between Austin and Travis county. From the presentation earlier about covid, to this one about the census, we continue to shine, and I'm grateful for that. I really like the big idea echoing commissioner Shea. I mean, think about the messaging that we could be sending out about fire prevention through trusted teams that get to know a community, a neighborhood, and about vaccinations. So I think that we're on to something and I think that the city is on to something, talking

[11:03:12 AM]

about the resiliency hubs. I think that we need to continue to partner and to just grow the community trust through engagement and messaging and conversation. So let's keep working on the big idea. Thank you.

>> Judge Brown: Thanks so much, John and Dr. Valencia and Julie. And, mayor, I pass it over to you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. I'd like to add thanks as well, and as commissioner Howard has said, it really was the court and the council joined together to -- to add some resources in the absence of them. Thank you so much, John, and your team, for being probably the most resilient campaign I've ever known. Every time there was a course that was set, there was a need for a course adjustment, and the

[11:04:13 AM]

results relative to everyone else doing this were just really strong. I also applaud, as commissioner Travillion did, the way that you went about that in trying to empower parts of our community to -- to organize and to follow their lead. But mostly I just wanted to reemphasize what commissioner Shea said with respect to the state. The failure of the state to come in the way that other states did that were able to maintain greater representation in congress because of the investment, the fact that didn't happen in Texas is -- is horrific and it's something that our citizens and residents have been paying for for the next 10 years. It was -- it was difficult to see relative to the competitive nature of what this process was.

[11:05:15 AM]

Mayor pro tem.

>> Harper-madison: Thank you, mayor, I appreciate that. I think that I will echo the sentiment that everyone shared so far and I would like to say a special thanks to a former employee, now active -- robustly active law student, Neil Armstrong who worked so hard on this campaign, and I am surprised that he was able to walk after, that it was a real slug. So, again, thanks everybody who worked so hard to do this really important work. I really do look forward to talking about redistricting when you come around again. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Counselor Fuentes.

>> Fuentes: Thank you, yes, I want to thank everyone for your work and give a shout out to the hispanic complete count committee, especially the hispanic Austin leadership team which was so creative and innovative in their outreach efforts. They created videos so that

[11:06:16 AM]

folks could get counted and understand the importance of being counted, and it was super great, and I am just so grateful that they were able to come together and to see that partnership between P.A.L. And the hispanic complete count committee, and I'm thrilled to see that Austin Travis county is the only city/county to have beat their 20 numbers, that's amazing. So I definitely will share that out with the community. And let people know that we did a great job. I also want to echo my support for us establishing a city/county collaborative and maintaining that effort moving forward. And, certainly, it was highlighted I think by commissioner Shea the need is tremendous, and we've seen it in times of disaster. There are many, you know, as the community has a conversation around resilience, there's many instances that we have seen in just the past few years where having that type of system in place and solidified really will help -- will help our community

[11:07:17 AM]

in need and it will help us to have a better improved response. And so I do support that effort and just I wanted to vocalize that and I think that it's certainly needed. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Counselor member Renteria.

>> Renteria: Thank you, mayor. Yeah, I also want to do a shout out to one of those who worked on the campaign, David. He and his brother were out there working and doing a lot of great work over there in the area. But I have a question that I don't know if it's talked about. We'll get the data for Austin, city of Austin and do -- or do we have the data already on the population?

>> We don't have those data yet. We will get those data between August 16th and September 30th.

[11:08:23 AM]

>> Renteria: Thank you. And thank you for all that you've been doing for us.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Councilmember Casar. I don't think that he's with us. Councilmember kitchen.

>> Kitchen: Thank you. This is very helpful to -- particularly understanding which data will arrive, you know, at which times for us. I think that it will be really important when the data comes to us in August or September that we can really talk through it and understand it because of the implications that, as you have described, that will impact the district and also impacts a lot of other aspects of what the city does. So hoping that very shortly after it comes out, that Lila, you can come back and talk to us, and I'm not sure if -- I may

[11:09:26 AM]

have -- mispronounced your name

-- that our city demographer come back to us and really go through the details with us. So I would appreciate that.

>> I'd be happy to do so, and, yes, it is Lila.

>> Kitchen: Thanks, I just wanted to make sure that I pronounced it right.

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Councilmember Kelly.

>> Kelly: Thank you, staff, for putting this presentation together and it was very comprehensive and answered a lot of questions that I had with the information presented. I know that it's not easy to

present in front of an elected body like this, and having been staff before, I know that there's a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes to get us to that point today. So for that I'm appreciative. Thank you again.

>> Mayor Adler: Okay. Councilmember pool.

>> Pool: Thanks to all, and I wanted to ask miss wheeler a quick question. Hey, Julie. I was curious -- the other

[11:10:27 AM]

governmental entities within Travis county, beyond the city of Austin, are they also part -- or were they also part of the efforts and do you see that if this continues going forward in advance of the 2030 census, do you see any involvement, including the other elected bodies?

>> Yes, absolutely. So there's so much to cover that we didn't get to talk about every single thing that we did, but part of those complete count committees were sort of sub-groups of entities and there was a government sub-group. We had both state government leaders as well as our small cities. So they stayed actively involved as well, which did really help to lead our effort and that it wasn't just Austin or Travis county and it's realm everyone who is part of Austin and Travis county. And to where covid has been a weird silver lining to it is that collaboration really has continued with those small

[11:11:27 AM]

cities and our other local government entities as well, because we didn't have that through the census and it made sense, to keep talking and communicating, there's so much to learn from each other. There's so much collaboration. And it's a better way of mobilizing resources to make sure that we're reaching our audiences that we need to reach. We work better whether we don't operate in silos. So, thank you for that question and, yes, absolutely, we want to keep as engaged with our other partners as we can.

>> Kelly: Thank you as well.

>> We had houston-tillotson and we invited everybody to that government group.

>> Kelly: That's great. Thanks, commissioners. That's good to hear. And also that they would be able to help us with the financing of the continued effort, if we are going to keep going, because then, you know, there's a lot to be gained from that. Thanks so much to everybody and, Julie, congratulations on your

[11:12:28 AM]

position there. And it looks like you have managed to get through the legislative session in good shape.

>> Thank you very much. I'm standing, so it's a good start. Thank you.

>> Mayor Adler: Councilmember Ellis.

>> Ellis: I have no questions but I am appreciative of the heavy lift. I know that we want to see 100% but it shows when we look city-to-city in Texas, how well we've done and how hard you work. So I really appreciate everybody's efforts on this.

>> Mayor Adler: Councilmember Tovo.

>> Tovo: Y'all, just to add my thanks. I have no further questions either but thanks to all that have participated on it. And those not here today but helped to support the effort in a variety of ways, including a lot of our community organizations that you have referenced. I know that many, many of them were really active and worked hard throughout this process.

>> Mayor Adler: Councilmember Alter.

[11:13:30 AM]

>> Alter: I

>> Alter: I guess I'm last, other than the mayor. I will echo what my colleagues have said. Thank you very much. Thank you to all the community members who worked so hard to make these results possible.

>> Mayor Adler: Okay. Great. Thank you. Judge, I'll turn it back over to you.

>> Judge Brown: Thank you, mayor. I think we are all done today, so I want to say thank y'all so much for the reports and all of your hard work. And I will go ahead -- it is 11:13, so we will adjourn and then come back at 11:20. And mayor, I will pass it over to you.

>> Mayor Adler: Sounds good, judge. Thank you. And again, thank you to the court. Today is June 8th. It's 11:14. We're going to adjourn our portion of the joint meeting here.