

City Council Meeting (Budget Community Input)

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[4:13:09 PM]

>> Mayor Adler: I call this meeting to order, July 22nd, 2021. We are in city hall, but we still have the allowance for people to participate remotely under the governor's rules. And we have some people that are participating remotely. We have mayor pro tem behind us and participating. You're viewable, mayor pro tem, behind me, also on the screens that are in the chamber. Debra Thomas, city attorney, is also with us remotely. I just want to identify you. Colleagues, we're going to stay in this order. Probably the first meeting in August we'll draw lots to change seating arrangements as we do that every six months to shuffle it up so that you get to meet new people. What? Oh, this is the new shuffle.

[4:14:10 PM]

This is the new shuffle. >> Pool: I mean, to be fair we sat like this one or two meetings last year and then we all went on pandemic. So it feels very new. Maybe we could just leave it be. >> Mayor Adler: I think we'll call this the new shuffle. We don't need to reshuffle. All right, we have a quorum present for our meeting. Today we're going to take care of a few items of business and then we're going also hear some announcements. Manager, did you want to start us off? >> Cronk: Thank you, mayor and council. It's great to see everyone. As you know we presented the proposed budget on July 9th and today we are here to hear from the public on that budget proposal. But to start us off I would like to ask our spectrum budget officer Kerri to talk through the highlights of this budget and give us just a broad overview of what's included.

[4:15:15 PM]

>> Thank you, mayor and members of council, I would like to also recognize and thank all the community members here today to provide your input on the proposed '22 budget. Prior to speaker comments I would like to give a high level overview of the proposed budget. It's a budget that I am proud to have been a part of to have had the opportunity to work on, along with the amazing staff in the budget office and all of the departments across the city. In addition to the staff work led by our city manager and the executive team, there has been enormous input from numerous stakeholders, including mayor and council, board and commissions, community members and organizations. Although we have been through a difficult 14-plus months as a community and worked through challenges related to the ongoing pandemic, and unprecedented weather events, the city has proposed a budget that includes continued investments in the areas that are most pressing to our community, all while working within a 5.5%

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property tax revenue cap. I would like to specifically highlight the onyoung investments to our commitment to address homelessness in our community with \$65.2 million in funding across 13 departments that will allow the city to focus on reducing inflow or preventing homelessness, addressing crisis response through emergency and temporary shelters, establishing housing stabilization, including \$31.1 million. To provide permanent supportive housing, wraparound services for psh and hotel conversion strategy repairs. And finally, public space management for homeless encampment cleanup. Our proposed budget also addresses affordable housing which includes full funding for the housing trust fund and \$9.6 million, as well as \$79 million in voter approved planned capital spending to support the strategy housing beauty. Through one time funding this allows for funding to

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the Austin animal center to allow for critical repairs to the play yard and the purchase of additional kennels. In addition it includes capital funding of \$2.8 million of planned spending and renovation of the city's cultural centers, including the asian-american resource center, carver museum and the mexican-american cultural center, as well as 1.2 million in planned capital spending for the design work for the new Daugherty arts center. When we look at the general fund, public safety continues to receive the largest share of our pump. In our proposed budget we include funding for the opening of the loop 360 fire station which includes 16 fire positions and 12 ems positions. We also ensure compliance with the new state legislation house bill 1900, by creating a police budget that addresses the concerns of this new defunding law. Even while flying to the state law, this council, the city manager and the staff,

[4:18:16 PM]

reaffirm our continued commitment to reimagine public safety with a total investment of \$29.1 million in this proposed budget. Which includes 27.2 of ongoing funding for the office of violence prevention, the office of police oversight and the equity office, as well as 1.9 million in new one-time funding to begin implementation of several reimagine public safety task force recommendations, including training for victim service counselors, expansion of the community health worker program and a technology solution to better inform violence prevention policies. Finally, as we look at the proposed budget and the impact to the community, the typical tax and ratepayer, we have been able to develop a budget that has an overall increase of just .25% to the typical taxing ratepayer. Through it council action the homestead exemption has been increased to 20% and

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the over65 exemption has increased \$25,000. These positive community changes have been implemented and the city manager's budget still achieves the 14% reserve policy which further strengthens the financial viability of our city. Again, I am proud to have worked with the council, the city manager and executive team, all of the departments across the city and the community at large to develop this proposed budget. We are able to present a balanced budget at the 3.5% revenue cap and address some of the more pressing needs of our community. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have prior to opening for citizen comments. >> Cronk: Thank you, Ms. Lange. And again, I appreciate your work through this process. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you very much. Colleagues, if there are no questions we'll go to our agenda here. There are three items on our agenda to begin with to set three public hearings all on

[4:20:19 PM]

July 29th. Is there a motion to approve items one, two and three? In essence in consent format. Councilmember Kelly makes the motion, councilmember alter seconds that motion. Those in favor of setting the public hearings please raise your hand. It's unanimous with those of us on the dais and the mayor pro tem also voting yes. That gets us colleagues to the main work of today's business. It's great to see people in this chamber again. We have about 70 speakers that had signed up. Some remotely and some here in person. We're going to take the remote speakers first. Our rules say we have the first 20 speakers speak for three minutes and then the rest for one minute. Because this was set for this kind of testimony and because we've set it specially, without objection I have extended the time for speakers to speak to two minutes if you're not in

[4:21:19 PM]

that first group. It would increase our meeting time for been a hour so we'll go ahead and get started. The first 10 speakers remotely and the first 10 speakers here will get the three minutes. Everyone else getting two minutes. We'll begin with the remote speakers and the clerk will call the speakers. Councilmember tovo. >> Tovo: I wanted to let members of the public know that I will be off the dais previously, but listening through audio. >> Mayor Adler: Sounds good. I will have to duck out to get a phone call. If something happens, councilmember alter, can you take the chair? >> Alter: Yes. It's my understanding that the clerk will be calling the names. >> Mayor Adler: That's correct. Clerk, if you will take us through the speakers that are calling in. >> Yes, mayor. The first speaker is Molly Malone.

[4:22:25 PM]

>> Can you hear me? >> Yes, go ahead. >> This is Molly Malone calling from district 1 and I'm speaking in support of the Austin coalition budget priorities, which includes civilian crime scene technicians and non-sworn staff that review witness and surveillance video. And also to make sure that we eliminate welfare stakes and civilianize this by investing in community health workers. And the expansion of community health centers instead of welfare vehicles. So just as the things that are going on to make sure that we are reimagining public safety, we want to make sure we're continuing on the path that was started awhile ago to support these efforts and to reimagine public safety. Thank you. I yield the rest of my name.

[4:23:26 PM]

>> Andrea black. >> Hi. This is Andrea black. I live in district 1. Can you hear me? >> Yes, we can. >> Thank you. I'm a member of undoing white supremacy Austin. I'm here reading testimony on behalf of communities of color united for racial justice from P Paulo Rojo. I'm a mother and a midwife and a volunteer organizer with icu I served on the reimagining public safety task force with hundreds of other community members who participated in the working groups and community sessions. As a task force we did many intimate and one big citywide listening session where we heard the powerful testimonies of persons harmed by law enforcement violence. We put in thousands of volunteer hours. Along the way I was voted co-chair of the task force and now feel personally accountable for the time, waiver hope and pain that so

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many community members poured into that process. The powerful vision of the rps recommendation includes long kel guestments from the police department, move to innovative investments in public

health and economic infrastructure of overpoliced neighborhoods that are black and brown. Nationally Austin has been framed as the city that has made the deepest defunding of policing though our city government has yet to put this vision into action. We received many invitations by organizations and media all around the country to share the supposed success of our reimagining process. Today we need our Austin government to display the vision and courage necessary for deep transformation in this historic moment. So I'm going to pause here. That was part of paulo's testimony. I believe one of the other speakers will go on. I wanted to say I too was part of the task force as

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one of the work group and I just am deeply disappointed. I know you're struggling with what's been happening at the Texas Legislature in terms of the obstacles put forward, but I believe there's a lot that the city can do to move forward with the vision for reimagining public safety. And I hope that you will invest significant funds, not just token amounts in the -- token amounts in the different proposals you will be hearing from that we want to prioritize today. So thank you. >> Michelle Edwards? Just one moment, mayor.

[4:26:44 PM]

>> Mayor Adler: Mayor pro tem, can you see the room to take over if I can't? Okay. Just wanted to mathematic sure. >> Harper-Madison: I assumed you didn't exclude me on purpose. I can't see anything. I can see ceremony Debra Thomas. >> Hello, can you hear me? >> Hello? >> Yes, we can. >> This is Michelle Edwards. Good. Sorry. My name is Michelle Edwards and I live in district 5 and I'm a member of undoing white supremacy Austin as well as district 5 for black lives. And I'm continuing the testimony from paulorojas. I understand that you were pushed against the wall and

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in a difficult position. As a mother and midwife it's difficult for me not to see your actions as a the perpetuation of a racist, capitalist system with hundreds of years of momentum. I also push myself to think about each of you, your own lives and families, looking at and believing in your full humanity and I believe you to truly listen and reflect today. If you decide to lot crumbs, a total of less than two million dollars to the reimagining public safety recommendations, while you are increasing funds to APD by \$8.5 million more than hb1900 requires, please realize that this will only confirm that the rps task force, like many city task forces in the past, was a farce. You will be confirming that to all of us who participated. So please listen, again, this is the second part of a series from Paulo Rojas as well as other community

[4:28:46 PM]

organizers. Please listen to everybody who is talking to you today. Thank you. >> Noel Davis. >> Hi. My name is Noel Davis. I live in district 2 and I'm a member of undoing white supremacy Austin. And I'm continuing the testimony from Paulo Rojas with communities united. And Paulo goes on to say during the rps task force process when the city council moved forward with the police cadet classes, with disregard for the reimagining public safety task force formal decision, many community representatives on the task force wanted to step down due to the city's lack of transparency. I met with you, city manager, and the deputy city manager, and encouraged my fellow task force members to stay involved in order to protect the integrity of the process.

[4:29:46 PM]

I continue to believe in the process and saw it through, despite the tremendous time, impact of being a volunteer co-organizer and the work -- and a working single parent. Please, do not disrespect the personal sacrifices taken on by me, my two incredibly patient kids and so many other committed families in our community. Now your community is truly at stake, both individually and collectively. Do not make hb 1900 the excuse for not truly advancing the reimagining public safety process in our city and please don't continue with business as usual. You still have time to move those \$8.5 million out of APD and towards the rps recommendations and you can find the additional resources needed. Have the courage. I will continue to expect more from you.

[4:30:46 PM]

That's from Paulo and that concludes Paulo's testimony today. And I also just want to take time to personally encourage you to please really consider what she's saying here, please move that money out of APD and into the rps recommendations. Thank you. >> Ty hovekci. >> Had you, can you hear me? >> Hi. I'm Ty from district 5 calling in support of Austin justice coalition [indiscernible] Priorities. Instead of putting more cops as Austin's problem, I encourage you to put funds into other initiatives that would be more to improve safety such as setting up an independent 911 dispatch and forensics lab, expanding trauma recovery services for survivors of violence, funding community rapid response and restorative justice teams. Adding park rangers, using ems staff on lake patrols instead of APD.

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Shifting certain APD tasks to non-sworn staffs. These programs go a long way towards minimizing the harm done to marginal lies communities by law enforcement. It would also allow the police to focus on

violent crime which is the actual job we want them to do and we want them to do that as opposed to inundated with other tasks that don't require armed officers. Thank you. >> Jen marguilis? >> Thank you. I'm Jen in district 1. I'm here to talk to you today as a mom, a community member, and someone with over 20 years of experience working in domestic violence. I had the honor of participating in two different work groups on the reimagining public safety task force, the reimagining 911 work group and the work group on services for survivors of violence and violence prevention. I have to say I'm profoundly disappointed with how the

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reimagining public safety recommendations are manifested in the city manager's proposed budget and I'm urging you in the strongest terms to rescue this budget from the brink of a colossal missed opportunity. One of the things we often teach in violence prevention work is that violence arises from systems and until we put time, and resources into changing the systems we will continue to be plague by violence. Research tells us this. Racism is systemic. Police violence is systemic. Public neglect is systemic. The abandonment of so many members in our community is systemic and we must build new systems that will nurture and support the well-being of every adult and child in Austin, not just those with money and privilege. We must do more than reiterate, reform and redecorate the systems that have caused harm generation after generation. This proposed budget has the largest allocation to APD that we've ever seen larger even than what was required by hb 1900. And this budget either

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abandons or short changes almost every single recommendation from the rps task force. We need to fund community solutions outside of policing as if they can truly make a difference. Because they can. Please listen to the coalition of rps task force members who have written to you and the people speaking on behalf of most of those affected by these issues. Thank you. >> Bethany Carson. >> Good evening, my name is Bethany Carson calling from district 4 and I'm speaking on behalf of grassroots leadership. I'm here today because we are deeply troubled that the proposed budget allocates a record high of \$4,242.8 million for the Austin police department, nearly \$8.5 million more to APD than required by APD 1900.

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-- Hb 1900. Under the new state law the city would be locked into this increase in policing for years to come. Reurge you to reallocate this \$8.5 million to community initiatives proposed by the reimagine public safety task force and to find other funding sources to fill this gap between the paltry 1.9 million currently allocated to the proposals and the nearly 30 million needed investments for this first fiscal

year. Some of these priority include \$11 million for 10 neighborhood hubs, 12 million for a guaranteed income basic pilot program. Five million for community health workers. Two million shifted away from harmful surveillance and data sharing by the Austin regional intelligence center and reinvested towards universal immigrant representation through the public defender's office and a mandatory equity office review prior to consideration of city

[4:35:49 PM]

procurement, grants and city council agenda items pertaining to the reimagine public safety proposals. I would also like to expand a little bit on the Austin regional intelligence center. This is something that we've done a deep dive in as of late in the new report that we've released and this new York of surveillance and data sharing is actively harmful to all of us through the erosion of our rights and civil liberties and particularly harms the most vulnerable austinites. They conduct invasive surveillance on austinites by a web of surveillance and data sharing contracts as well as intern monitoring -- in-person monitoring. Many people may not know that the city of Austin is training confidential informants, these are private citizens, who are trained to support -- report suspicious

[4:36:50 PM]

difficulty, the blue league [indiscernible] Says that Aric is surveilling black lives matter activities and other festival. And this information is shared with a network of more than 20 local law enforcement agencies, in addition to federal agencies such as iOS and dhs. So this is something that is extremely harmful because it uses city resources to share personal information of vulnerable Austin residents including students and especially grants with federal agencies. [Buzzer] Placing them at greater risk of detention and deportation. >> Speaker, your time has expired.

[4:37:51 PM]

Cat Schaefer. >> Hi. My name is cat Schaefer. I live in district 1 and I'm a member of undoing white supremacy Austin. I'm reading testimony on behalf of community colors united of from racial justice from Dr. Pat tell who says hello, city council. My name is [indiscernible] Patel and I'm a physician within the safety net health system in Austin. Caring for individuals and families admitted to the hospital. Over the past 15 months this is primarily about caring for those hospitalized with severe covid-19 illness. I don't have to tell you this, but we're in the midst of an ongoing and worsening public health crisis. Our patients and our communities have and continue to struggle to make ends meet and the population health of low income and many communities of color have deteriorated over the past year. At this time it is a critical priority to invest in our public health workforce, not further policing. Specifically we need to invest in the hiring of

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community health workers from the community health network and training hub. Community health workers are frontline public health workers who are from and have a close relationship with the communities they serve. Because of this close relationship they build trust and serve as effective liaisons between health and social services and community members to facilitate access to services and improve quality of service delivery. At this time our community health workers in Austin are critical to the response of covid-19 for communities who have been marginalized. Their vaccination efforts and the effort to help families and the community have been critical to our covid response, but the current resources are insufficient and short-lived. We need to strengthen this through increased city funding. At minimum for this year that includes at least four million dollars to hire and train 50 community health workers and one million dollars for the development of a training and networking hub, supervision and evaluation model. We can think creatively to

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draw down hearts amounts of funding to help the agencies and organizations. I fully support the visionary recommendations of the reimagining public safety task force. I know the budget is tight, but this is minimum necessary investment during this ongoing pandemic that we can build on in future years. Thank you. >> Elliana hubbian. >> Hello, can you hear me? >> Yes, we can hear you. >> Hello? >> Yes, we can hear you. Please go ahead. >> Great. I wanted to be really quick, but my name is Elliana. I live in district 9 right now and I'm just calling in to again put my support with the reimagine public safety task force and to follow their recommendations and that an extra eight million,

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\$8.5 million to APD is disgraceful. It's really -- yeah. I've seen the stuff that the communities of color united and grassroots leadership is putting out and I would really urge city council to reallocate that money. That's what the community wants. So thank you so much. Thank you. >> Beverly Lazar. >> Can you hear me? >> Yes, we can. >> >> Okay. I am representing data and I'm advocating for no new money for APD. Instead we should invest in community hubs and guaranteed basic income and community health workers. We should increase the money

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to equity, an additional two million dollars to the equity office so that the office can provide review for reimagining public safety related purchases and decisions. Specifically I'd like to speak today in support of Austin justice coalition's budget priorities. The reimagining public safety task force recommendations I support include increasing funding, capacity and community engagement for the office of violence prevention that will be uniquely positioned to support the work of the reimagining public safety task force going forward. We absolutely must fund the creation of a trauma recovery center through the office of violence prevention. The trauma recovery centers provide free culturally responsive trauma informed therapy and case management for survivors of all violent crime regardless of any involvement with the

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criminal legal system or immigration status. We simply must address the needs of survivors who are traditionally underserved as people experiencing street and gang violence, communities of color, the homeless, and the lbgtq community. Thank you very much. >> Crystal Ericsson Collins? >> Hi. My name is crystal sir Rick son Collins and I'm a member of undoing white supercellly Austin. I want to echo the letters sent to you by communities of color united, grassroots leadership and alliance and [indiscernible] Austin. Four organizations dedicated to the reimagining public safety process that delivered recommendations for the city of Austin based on the input of many people who have suffered from

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structural disinvestment, racism and police violence here for generations. What people think makes them safe is housing, health care, treatment. Their basic needs met and end to police violence and social abandonment. The rps task force lays out the scope and scale of investment needed to create alternative forms of safety that do right not just for people to supposedly served by their current system, but also for black and Latino and Asian and immigrant austinites impeachment with mental illness or addiction, people who are struggling to make ends meet. And other people made vulnerable when we prioritize policing over community care. The proposed budget is nowhere near reaching the scope and scale of investment in community needed. I urge you to respond to the letter from these organizations and take up the work now to shift budget priorities towards the systemic solutions they propose.

[4:44:58 PM]

We'll be watching. Thank you.

[4:47:03 PM]

>> Proposed budget has only 200,000 for study. There's a growing body that's been on basic income programs. The mayor of Oakland, they are already piloting a program, poverty is not a personal failure. It's a policy failure. Guaranteed income presents one of the most promising tools, persistence, change, and mobility we've seen in decades. As our city grows and displacement of black and Latino austinites reaches crisis levels, it's time for action. We will be watching. >> Lira Amari Ramirez. >> Hello. My name is Lira Amari Ramirez. I'm a student at Austin

[4:48:04 PM]

community college and UT Austin. I'm speaking in support of the budget recommendation for college student grant program as our recommendation in January. This program would allocate a minimum budget of \$25,000 to be awarded at colleges that would best support their individual campuses and students. The college student commission represents over 100,000 students from Austin community college, Connecticut could not -- they have exacerbated high priority issues especially as students are vulnerable -- vulnerable to food insecurity. It will not only improve the quality of life but truly give students the opportunity to be successful in their classes and beyond. Thank you for your time. >> Mayor. I just wanted

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to thank -- sorry. I just wanted to thank the last speaker for her service on the student commission. This is an idea that came forward from our student commission, and I appreciate her being here today virtually to testify on behalf of that. I believe we have another speaker later who may do the same. Thanks again for the work on that -- on the student commission. >> Mary Chisholm. >> Hi. My name is Mary Chisholm, and I live in district 4. I'm speaking today in support of Austin justice coalition budget priorities including 10,000 fearless first responders, restorative justice and perfect manner conflict intervention. It may be many years before the improvements in the system of policing

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return dividends and increase community trust and improved relations with black and brown people. In the meantime, the harms that come from our system can be avoided with greater reliance on community-based response systems. These groups are already working in the community and in a variety of ways and with little support to respond to more calls, more events, and generally expand their successful model. So I am asking the city council to listen to Austin justice coalition and the other groups

to get them to move money to where we need it, not to the police department. I yield the rest of my time. Thank you. >> Timmy

[4:51:12 PM]

topj alojobi. >> Hello. >> Yes. Go ahead. >> I'm Timmy calling from district 7 to say that I'm against the proposed budget because it does not reimagine public safety in the way that the community has asked for. I'm concerned as to why we're spending more on the police. I want my tax dollars to be spent on the proposals that the rps task force spent time researching and crafting along our marginalized community members, myself included. I want to see my dollars fund neighborhood hubs where I can get food or help from my neighbors. I want to see them fund a cash-based guaranteed basic income program so that my neighbors and I can make sure we have our most basic need met without fear. I want to see them fund community health workers because they are the front line. I know what reimagining public safety can look like, and thanks to community, every single

[4:52:13 PM]

one of you in council does, too. There was a lot of rhetoric about taking time to research, taking time to find better solutions, and we did that. Giving a record amount of money to APD isn't reimagining anything. Shifting money to use money instead of using the funds for the community is. I beg of you, please stop acting as if another vision is impossible, even with hb-1900 in place. Thank you. >> Press one to delete and re-record your message, please three. >> Redi Spigner. >> Press star to send this message now. >> Amelia Casis.

[4:53:18 PM]

>> Good afternoon. My name is Amelia Casis. I'm calling in against the proposed budget. First I want to say the release of the budget undermined the task force. It's distributing 400 442 million to the police which is more than \$8 million over what is required under hb-1900. Meanwhile, only 1.9 million dollars are going towards the task force's recommendations. Approximately 400 to 1 distribution of dollars shows us reimagining was a point of action. We understand that the legislature has made the budget cycle particularly difficult, but the police budget should only meet the bear requirements and not more. We deserve this from our city

[4:54:18 PM]

leaders to have the courage to keep your word. Jumping to re re-- listen to those who come before you today. Consider asking for a waiver to keep 911 and forensics independent. Allocating 6.2 million without any real community accountability measures is an an an insult to austinites and those who lost their lives at the hands of police. Instead of funding the classes, one task force recommendations is developing [indiscernible] And greatly invest in neighborhood hubs that will provide equity-focused community resources. Have the courage to stand up to what austinites deserve. I yield the rest of my time. Thank you. >> Bradley move. >> Hello. This is Brad

[4:55:20 PM]

and I'm a resident of district 9. I'm calling to express any support to the budget priorities. Just to reiterate them, they are seek a waiver for forensics and 911 dispatch so they may be independent from APD. Decline to spend more on APD knowing the city won't be allowed to spend less. Invest in a long-term plan to expand 911 services. Expand services for violence and violence prevention, and fund community-based rapid response and restorative justice groups. That's it. Thank you.

[4:56:22 PM]

>> Redi Spigner. >> Please unmute, Mr. Spigner. >> Laura granfortuna. >> Hi. This is Laura from district 2. I am also speaking on behalf of the budget priorities. The city must prioritize the needs of austinites by keeping the 1 911 dispatch to be independent. Not independent dispatch system allows the city to match emergency responders. Austin studied the 911 call data and determined that most calls even those getting police response, were related to non-criminal and quality of life issues. Last year Austin added 67 much needed ems personnel and is in a

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position to service residents better. They joined national dispatch movement with cities that create dispatch systems to eliminate duplication, reduce overresponse and manage limited emergency resources more he efficiently. They have integrated 91 11 center for more than a decade. This is a vision from the mayor's office rather than the police department. As Austin has ground, the city should be allowed to restructure to help services be delivered without pen penalty. They should keep their word by requesting a wave -- waiver to allow 911 to serve independent. That's all. Thank you. >> Angelina martin. >> Hello. This is Angelina martin from city council district 2 speaking in support of the Austin justice coalition budget priority. Our city

[4:58:23 PM]

leaders helped us remanage Austin and we encourage you to continue down this path to make it better and reduce harm to those who call 911 and improve accountability. They have been visiting neighborhoods and your constituents are supportive of reform. The majority want to see this approach to public safety continue in our city. The community's priorities stand from the we fund budget tool from last year. We understand the outside forces, mandate return to the budget and we believe the city manager and council and the manager -- mayor -- we have earned as a national leader in comprehensive public security. People with mental illness are getting police response in many cases. We ask you to expand the fund and pursue projects that

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ensure first responders have somewhere else besides jail to take a person in crisis. >> Michelle manning Scott. >> Hello. My name is Michelle manning Scott, and I live in district 7 and I'm a member of undoing white supremacy Austin. I'm joining today in the call for investing more in the alternative proposed reimagining public safety task force. For example, the rps task force proposed a \$4.5 million to develop a workforce and train hub for community health workers bearing the brunt of inequity only gets 500,000 to complete the rollout of an existing community health worker program at a much smaller scope and scale. Real investment would be a game changer.

[5:00:27 PM]

Workforce opportunities for bipoc and low income austinites and improving health care and he can withity for communities of color. Research has shown that the kind of health worker program can transform outcomes for communities of color. You have to make the real investments. I hope you are listening. We'll be watching. Thank you. >> Lauren ortel. >> Hi. My name is Lauren ortel. I'm in district one, and I am also speaking in support of aj jc's budget priorities. While still wishing you had not launched the cadet classes before your curriculum review process was up and running, we are glad that the review has started and improvements are being made. We accept the two cadet classes in this budget

[5:01:28 PM]

but oppose adding a third. Mainly because the curriculum won't be fully evaluated until after the second class. At this moment, the review team has given feedback on four units representing less than one week of coursework. The cadets have finished the first month. We should not layer another class on top of those two putting greater pressure on the review process and adding cadets before anything has

been evaluated. Remember why we are doing this, to address serious concerns and allocations raised which by cadets related to content and teaching methods. The training at the academy in needs a lot of work. The material are improving and we will have a better academy when this is done. The bad news is, the process is already under great time pressure. Allow your own process to work. Thank you. >> Julia Vaughan

[5:02:38 PM]

Alexander. Please unmute. >> Hi. My name is Julia Vaughan Alexander and I'm a resident of district 9 and also a member of undoing white supremacy Austin. I don't have too much to add except that I do believe in supporting the reimagining public safety task force recommendations. They're essential to making Austin a place where everyone can thrive. We all benefit from that. I will say I think it's fundamentally unimaginative that you have added \$8.5 million to the Austin police department budget. I understand there are requirements, but I don't understand why you can't cut from other parts of that budget to make sure that you don't increase beyond what is required by the state law. Additionally, I think it's a great idea to request a waiver and do what we can to take departments that shouldn't be in APD out of APD. So I appreciate

[5:03:39 PM]

y'all listening and I really hope that you take all this community feedback and really listen and dig into your hearts and imagine a greater Austin. Thanks. >> Chavez Watson. >> Can you hear me, Janet? >> Yes, we can. >> Hey, I'm in district one and 10 times with working group 512. The proposal was ridiculous. After a year, we are famined but power outages was -- we can't believe the city wishes to fund our property taxes and your revenue outside of what the people have asked for, outside of what the people have reimagined. It took strength to sustain in this city. So why would the Austin police department receive anything more than they should. If the governor greets divides right-hand a the

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corner from you, we feel responsible for reminding you to reconsider this proposal and fund community initiative that's have taken on disaster relief and reform. We believe in sacrificing our time to say it doesn't promote safety in the city of Austin. Holistic solutions for those without does and we need a city funded workforce development as other Texas cities have. To achieve the public safety goals by non-police navigators, many are in fear of losing the walls that protect them from the weather. Why not a guaranteed basic income to support families in need of services? Even civil cases have no immediate gain, but I'm always listening. Fund the he canty office -- equity office instead of harmful surveillance and data sharing by the regional I will

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intelligence center: Last year, we showed up as families and working class female to -- people to demand you use the funds. This year we're here to remind you to listen. Working group 512 has worked in the communities that will benefit from existing rps priorities and even our ideas. Thanks for your time. >> Carolyn sums. >> Hi there. Can you hear me? >> Yes, we can. Please go ahead. >> Okay. My name is Carolyn sums. I live in district 9. I'm a member of undoing white supremacy Austin. I want you, council, to shift \$2 million away from the surveillance and data sharing of the

[5:06:44 PM]

so-called Austin regional intelligence center. Take the funding that's being used and use it for a review process for all city procurements, grants, and council agenda items related to reimagining public safety proposals. This isn't about a symbolic bump in equity office funding but an investment required to equip the equity office to implement a system of accountability for equities, to add recommended items as the task force records. It's too easy to call something reimagining public safety like you can call something a super food without meaningful consideration without the equity impact. It's just a label. We need a real equity accountability

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process and that takes real money. We'll shall watching -- we'll be watching. Thank you. >> Doris Adams. >> I'm Doris addooms. -- addooms. I live in district 5. We are uplifting the demands outlined in a letter sent to you on Tuesday by a coalition of four organizations that participated in the reimagining public safety task force. They are communities of color united for racial justice, grassroots leadership, ice out out of Austin, and Texas harm reduction alliance. The budget proposed by city manager a bandons your promise to the community to reimagine public safety and goes beyond what house bill 1900 requires by giving more to policing than ever. We urge you to

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follow the recommendations of the reimagining public safety task force and work with the coalition now to make real investments in our community a part of the 2021-22 budget. Those priority investments are -- you've heard these already -- 11 million for the first year funding for neighborhood hubs, 4.5 million for health care workers, 12 million for guaranteed basic income pilot and the 2 million shifting

away from the harmful surveillance and data sharing conducting by the Austin regional intelligence center and invest it instead to support the equity office's review of city purchases and reimagine public safety task force processes. At a minimum, you should reallocate the additional 8.5 million increase allotted to police in in this budget for these priorities. Additional funding to the police this year cannot be reversed in years to come.

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Reimagining public safety is not a brand. It is a responsibility to the community members you heard from last summer to readdress historic and current harms and build new systems of community care. It requires more than symbolic renaming, underfunded programs, and preliminary studies. It requires real investment in structures of accountability. Now -- >> Speak you are your -- speaker, your time has expired. >> Wi Herman. >> Hello. I'm will Herman from district 1 calling in support of Austin justice coalition and the budget priorities as well. The amount of funding

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recommendation versus an increase for the police budget is frankly shameful. The issue, you've got 12 -- 2% increase over time and then the 8 million they sent if you've got the same number of police actually working, but as many sources have shown, police are supposedly quitting Austin's police force in record numbers at a rate of 10 to 15 a month, I believe. We should be able to save money by not having all those salaries that are presumably older members who make a greater amount of money. Frankly, the fact that the police budget is being increased so close to a 2% increase is suspicious. So once again, emphasize that you should be reimagining public safety here in this city and that all of the

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promises made last year during the protests should be kept. We are all watching. >> Chris Harris. >> Hello. Can you hear me? >> Yes, we can. >> Great. My name is Chris Harris calling from district 9 representing Texas apple seed. I'm calling to oppose the proposed budget and to support a a full funding of the reimagine public safety task force recommendations which will increase public safety without surveillance, negative consequences of criminal legal system involvement, or the risk of violence that police often bring. Recognizing the impacts of hb-1900, every additional dollar invested in police above the fy '20 budget cannot

[5:12:50 PM]

be blamed on the state. Since that dollar figure can't come down, this budget suspects an unjustified tax on all future austinites and a capitulation to the politics completely unfounded in data and opposed to the cause of justice. For those that care about public safety, additional funding will not help. Especially in the form it's taking. Reinserting the forensics labs and 911 call center won't help. It's important they request a waiver to keep them independent. It improves public safety. It's also worth noting public statements from the governor indicate that his office intends to bring all the negative consequences of hb-1900 down on Austin regardless of what you do with this budget. Therefore, it's highly recommended that contingencies be placed

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in the budget enabling the 911 call center and the forensics lab to continue if Austin is being a defunding municipality regardless of what the budget figure is. Finally, let the record show that all. Rps task force recommendations could have been fully funded and then should with the upper income tax break you just cut via the homestead exemption. However you define it, will take a backseat to the rich. >> Emily sawyer. >> Hello? Can you hear me? >> Yes, we can. >> Hello. My name is Emily sawyer and I live in district 4. I'm speaking in favor of the

[5:14:51 PM]

budget priorities. They must recognize the hard work of the reimagining public safety task force. One way to do that is to begin implementing the recommendations through improving the functions of our 911 dispatch system by, one, increasing capacity for mental health responders to make sure calls are paired with the appropriate response and divert against policing that do not require police response. Fund a crisis line. Three, improving culture culturally care in a emergency response option including outreach on when and how to call for help. Four, conducting ongoing community accountability and evaluation. Having an emergency system that sends the right response to meet a person's crisis should be the bare minimum. Please do not spend one penny more on the police department than what is required by hb-1900 because that will be a legally

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required ongoing investment. Please do not bail on the citizens of this city because of push back from those gasping with the last breaths of a tired and unimaginative vision for our society. More police does not make us safer. Anyone who makes that argument ignores the violence done by the police themselves. Don't pass the budget the way it's written right now. Thank you. >> Jonathan grossan. >>

Instead Jonathan grossan. Can you hear me? >> We sure ask. >> I'm an educator here in Austin, and I'm also a member of undoing white supremacy us Austin. I want to ask you to resist the backlash and be bold in reshaping the priorities in our city budget. As

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nearly all of you committed to do last summer, we all know that backlash against progress for black and indigenous and latinx and Asian and other people of colored communities is nothing new. Sometimes that looks like misinformation campaigns. Sometimes it looks like violence. I might add sometimes it looks like committee work and task force that recommendations are taken into account. But sometimes it's more subtle. A study carving away toward racial justice. Symbolism and lip service take the place of real change and bipoc communities are threatened. Don't let that happen in Austin. As proposed in the city budget, it's dismissive of the real investments and changes we need. Don't let that stand. Don't back down. Black and brown lives are just as precious and threatened as they were last summer. Make the real investments for real change. We'll be

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watching. I also want to add that hiding behind house bill 1900 is disgraceful and you're not being required to spend this much on policing. Thank you. >> Scott Cobb. >> Hello. I'm Scott Cobb. I live in district 10, and I've been classified as a temporary employee for the city of Austin since 2016. I would have been on for longer. I started in 2011, but parks and rec parks and recreation [indiscernible]. There's nothing temporary about employees that work continuous lie for years and years. We worked throughout the pandemic

[5:18:56 PM]

either at the pool or as park monitors. Western we were often victims of physical assault. We worked during the peak of the pandemic risk are our health and the health of people we live with. We deserve to be included in the 2% across the board raise and the 500 stipend. We deserve other benefits such as extra pay for holidays. Lifeguards don't get extra pay like Costco and target. Lifeguards have saved lives including cpr incidence since 2018, including one time this year on the day before memorial day. I'm a veteran of the U.S. Army. I should not have to beg my public employer for holiday pay

[5:19:56 PM]

when the whole purpose of the national holidays is to instill civic pride. One of the five purposes for funds received for the rescue plan is providing premium pay for essential workers, offering additional support for those who have. The budget message says for all civilian employees. I'm happy to say our '22 budget includes a 2% pay wage adjustment and one time \$500 stipend. It does not say -- >> Speaker, your time has expired. >> Thank you. >> Timothy bray. >> I'm here to speak in favor of what undoing white supremacy Austin is saying about the police budget. I ask you not to hamstring yourself by going above

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what hb-1900 requires. Think about the future years. If you want to move things around, move things to different departments, what you spend this year, you're establishing a permanent baseline. This isn't affecting how much you're putting in this year but future years. With the covid pandemic and everything going on, we don't know what next year is going to bring, and I urge you to not -- more that we can do next year with the budget. I urge you to look in the commissioner's court. They hire a third party service that I heard is more efficient in terms of public testimony, and making sure we have money available to deal with public testimony in the future with all the challenging that covid has brought to the system, trying to run meetings. That might be more -- also, want to make sure we have technical systems to start new co-ops. They offer great a service to

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communities. >> Gabriella torres. Please unmute. >> Hello. Can you hear me? >> We sure can. >> Thank you. My name is Gabriella torres, and I'm a community member of the city of Austin and live in district 3 currently. I'm also a member of communities of color united for racial justice. So on April 20th of this year, the reimaging public safety task force presented a list to you of holistic recommendations that are really full of detailed changes that the city can make to move towards real public safety for our community. Now, I am profoundly disappointed that this year's budget only set 1.9 million for those recommendations versus

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allocating over 444 million for APD. As many other people said, this is an 8.5 million increase over the level required with house bill 1900. I want to emphasize that the recommendations that 29.5 million would be needed for the recommendation that's are most urgently needed in the context of not only an ongoing global pandemic but also post-winter storm. Those are 11 million to establish the first year funding for 10 neighborhood hubs, \$12 million to create a guaranteed basic income pilot program, 4.5 million for the development of a workforce and training hub of community health workers, and \$2

million shifted away from surveillance and data sharing conducted by the Aric and invested to support a mandatory equity office review prior to consideration of city procurement

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grants and agenda items pertaining to specifically the reimagining public safety task force. A few community organizations sent each councilmember a public letter that will need your response in detail about whether you intend to support these proposals, including the dollar amount for each initiative mentioned. We expect to hear from you soon. Thank you. >> Mayor, that concludes all the remote speakers. >> Mayor Adler: Great. Thank you. Colleagues, that gets us to the in-person list, about 24 people. First 10, three minutes. After that, two minutes each. We'll call the people here and see how this works. First person is

[5:25:05 PM]

corby jastro. You have three minutes. >> Good to see everybody. Good afternoon, mayor and council. I'm corby jsatro. I'm the president of the greater Austin crime commission. I had the pleasure of meeting the new class at a meet and greet last month. This diverse and impressive group is eager to serve this city. This outstanding class is a result of the work Austin police department and city staff over the past year have done to improve the training academy. Austin will be a national police training model. The greater Austin crime commission commenced city manage are for including funding for two classes in his proposed budget. We're also encouraged to see funding included for the loop 360 fire and ems station and 18 new ems personnel. We urging you to support the city manager's

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proposed budget and fund at least two police cadet classes next year. Thank you again. Appreciate you letting us be here. >> Thank you. Kerry Roberts. On deck is going to be Cole canau. >> Good evening, mayor and council. I'm Kerry Roberts, the executive director of the greater Austin crime commission and a district 8 resident. We've got challenging times, crime rates are up in categories that signal violent crime trends. Response times are slower. The police department will make further staff reallocations on August 1st. That means this year, 164 officers have been moved from specialized units back back back back to patrol. I'm hopeful that the evaluation of the -- the evaluation of

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the cadet class gives the council office to run two classes next year starting in February and June and to consider a third or modified class because continuing classes is the most important thing we can do now to address the alarming attrition and staffing crisis. We need to get beyond this annual triage and much like the work that council did on direction, plan for public safety needs to keep the community safe while complying with the revenue cap and the newstat Torrey budget requirements. We hope you'll support the proposed budget for two classes as corby mentioned, the fire station and ems personnel. We hope to visit with you about civilian positions that fire needs for inspection services and additional ems resources because as most of you likely know, ems faces a serious staffing are shortage as well. Among the lessoned we've learned in the pandemic,

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certainly investing in public safety and we appreciate your doing that. Thank you. >> Thank you. Pepper Medina is on deck. >> Good afternoon, mayor and council. My name is Cole kuno, a policy analyst. Starting the pilot reimagine police academy in was a significant first step in addressing APD staffing shortages. The cadets I met were excited to engage with the community and committed to the city's vision public safety. APD will have at least 156 vacancies by the end of July and if attrition rates hold, they will lose 90 officers by the time the cadet class graduates. Authorizing more classes in the

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fy-22 budget will help fill the vacancies. We are thankful for including two classes in the budget and ask that the council support these classes in the next budget. Thank you for your time. >> Thank you. Pepper Medina here? Next speaker after that is Colin Wallace. Is Colin here? What about suki? Is Chaz Moore here? They'll be on deck. >> Hello. I'm suki. I'm in d9, a senior

[5:30:12 PM]

policy director at Austin coalition. I'm speaking in favor of our budget priorities to seek a weaver from the governor to keep our forensics department independent without penalty in accordance with hb-1900 section 1 1 11 -- allows municipality to apply for a waiver in certain circumstances. So we've been through all the reasons over the last year to make this department independent and you all realize this goal only months ago, but as a reminder, on the topic of forensics and justice, the national academy of science recommended a decade ago that scientists should function independently of law enforcement administrators. Last year, Austin committed to making it independent. After nearly a decade of troubled management, audits, community input, and finally external investigation, all stakeholders approved moving it out of the police department. When this council approved in February of this year to

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make the lab independent, I think it should have been done years ago. It gives a third eye, not a police eye, to the evidence that's been examined. It won't be coming from the police department. It will be coming from a neutral third party. We support it. This department must remain managed as not independent unit in accordance with best scientific practices. That ensures the best lab services are in place to address all crimes, recognize changes in scientific practice and keep them up to date, generally improve wait times and case backlogs and pitfalls that lead to criminal cases being overturned because it was wrong or biased. Urge the govern tore authorize the city to keep the lab independent of the police department without penalty and build community trust and keep your word to keep them independent. I want to thank you for your time, and I encourage you to listen to the folks coming up.

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You'll hear more about the priorities outside of the ones you've heard in the call-ins and we encourage you to listen to the reimagine public safety task force. They put in so much effort and as we know, this current budget does not reflect what they are asking for. So I appreciate your time. >> Mayor. >> Yes. >> I just want to reassure those listening and I appreciate the testimony on this point that the independent forensics lab is something they have worked on for so long and Dr. Cadave has done a great job working leadership in that lab. So manager and I had a pretty long conversation about this yesterday. I think that we can come together as a a dais and do everything we can to make it a separate part of the budget as soon as possible and submit whatever documents we need to the state to ask

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for that waiver for this immediate budget process or for a budget amendment and then as a real backup, to submit direction to the manager for it to become independent in August of next year when the police budget -- because of the normal growth based on the contract could create enough space to become independent then. We might just have to have one bridge year. That's a long way of saying I think there's consensus, as you've said in your testimony, to get this done. I think that the community should expect it. I expect this dais will work together to do everything we can to maintain the Independence of the lab to exonerate people who didn't commit a crime and hold people accountable who did. >> Thank you. >> Thank you. On deck is Tara tucker. Is Tara tucker here? Okay.

[5:34:14 PM]

>> Hey, y'all. Good to be back in here. As always, I have something planned and then I hear people talk and then it changes. So I want to start off with this quick parable. In ancient times, there was a bolder. He hid in the bushes and watches to see if anyone would above of month -- move the bolder out of the way. Some of them passed by and walked around it, like 85% of people in this city. We have issues that we really need to work through, but we're going about our day. People blame for keeping the roads clear but none of them did anything about getting the stoned removed. That's another good portion of people in this city. We complain we don't make calls to any of you officers. We don't do any to get involved in the process. We just complain. One day a peasant came along carrying vegetables. The peasant tried to push them out of the way. He got it out of the way. After the

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peasant went back to pick up the vegetables, he noticed a purse lying in the road. The purse contained gold coins and a a note from the king that explained it. That may seem random, but I think that's important to me because I always try to tell people to get involved. If you show up on July 22nd at the one budget hearing, you didn't really do your job. If you didn't reach out to people on the days a, you didn't do your job. If you're taking majors from organizations about ask for this on July 22nd, you didn't do your job. I want to give a outshout to several that have constantly done the work because we need more of that. It's not just about today. It's not about trying to undo all the wrongs and all the ills of this budget and what's going on down at 1100 congress. It's about the community coming out as constantly as they can during a pandemic or not. We have zoom, Facebook, Twitter. All of you are on all these type of things, and I really hope people stop showing up just on the day of

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and get more consistent and get more involved leading up to days like this. I would like to say, I'm not blaming cronk for the overage. I hope you can work together to et go back to what house bill 1900 requires us to to do because it's my understanding that if you leave it with the overage, we have to stick with that. I think that's dangerous. It's a lot of people going to come up and ask for good stuff. I want to lift something up from Barbara Scott who has been a warrior in colony park. It's a food desert for about 13 years. I think that's unacceptable in a city like Austin. There's no reason that we should have any community, any neighborhood in the city that is a food desert that doesn't have access to health services. I would personally advocate that as much money of the overage money if you decide to take that away from the police budget goes to that. There's no reason for people to be hungry

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in Austin. Really hope that you all dare to do as much as you can with what we've got. I know hows bill 1900 sucks, but go as far as you can. I promise you there are enough people on both sides of the aisle that will willing to work to keep Austin safe and leading the way as well. Thank you. >> On deck, chapala Connelly. >> Hi. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today on the budget. I'm Tara tucker, Texas state director identifying new state priorities and increasing public safety for all, but in particular specifically health and safety for those in communities that are most harmed and least helped. We're the parent organization of

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crime survivors which is a network of over 6300 crime survivors across Texas. We're proud to be part of the advocacy community here that cares deeply about reimagining public safety. Many of our community partners have spoken to other priorities that came out of that task force.s I'm here specifically to talk about trauma recovery centers. Trcs would provide trauma services for victim of violent crime from communities most harmed and would reduce violence and promote healing. I provided council with a brief our organization released that identifies recommendations to state and local governments on ways they can use dollars to support victims and promote public safety. Our three recommendations

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are to establish trauma recovery centers that are widely available and highly victimized underserved communities to fund community-based victim services providers, to fund research, evaluation, and infrastructure to support and help sustain arp recovery funds, and also one that's more for the state. I am going to leave that out. I hope you'll consider adding trauma recovery centers to this budget. If you don't, I hope you dedicate a portion of the arp funds that have been given to the city. Police are important. I know that a lot of people feel that way. But it is also important to get to people and provide services to heal them from the things that police are needed for, even if they don't respond to police. That is what trauma recovery centers are designed to do, what they do so well, and they do it without costing the people who need the

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services. I just really, really believe our community would trauma recovery centers. Thank you. >> Thank you. Cathy Mitchell is on deck. Chapala, you're up. >> Good afternoon, mayor and council. I'm with Austin justice coalition, I live in district 9. I'm here to talk to you about dangerous roads of no return. Hb-1900 prevents Texas from ever reducing the police budget. That means that every dollar committed above the 2019-2020 allocation is permanent. That is a dollar that is taken away from any kind of public

participation or democratic control in the city of Austin moving forward. That is a dollar that is now under the control of the state. So we need to really, really be careful when we talk

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about allocating increasing, adding more money to the police budget. Any amounts added to this urge about et are permanent and even if the money added is for one time expense, irreversible increases include overtime for one-off special events. Austin is a city and they add up quickly. We have allocated money we can't take back. It's in the hands of the police and the state for good. So this is a very dangerous path for us to go down. Once funded, thighs increases become part of the mandatory minimum expenditure on the police. So that's why I'm here to say that we should scrub the 10 million that has been added to this urge about et and be cautious about adding anything to the police budget moving forward. This is a dangerous time. Yes, because important community wins that were transformative and inspiring have been taken away from us and

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everything that we won last year is at stake. That is the real danger of this moment. Fear mongering is not the danger. There is no data to support police prevent violent crime. There's no data to support that. We have major and important things coming up. The city is working on building lots of new permanent supportive housing, maintaining wrote around services for housing is expensive and it's something we badly need. There are a number of other key components. Chaz mentioned food deserts which are a major number in a number of districts in this city. We have other priorities, and we have to be very careful about any increases in funding moving forward because that's a path that we cannot -- it's something we can't take back. Thank you for your time. >> After Ms. Mitchell speaks, Kate Graziani.

[5:43:22 PM]

Is Kate here? Okay. You'll be on deck. >> So I, too, am going to go off message. A lot of people have spoken to some of the things that I wanted to make sure and say. I go want to highlight one thing. Can I take this off? Is it no? I want to highlight something because it hasn't come up yet. >> You can take it off when you're speaking. >> It's not very good fitting. >> I just wanted to highlight that ajc is coming to you today in support of something a little different for the ajc team, which is that we're partnering with

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the parks folks to ask you to look carefully at the parks rangers and youth program ask. You should have materials from them, I would assume, already. I don't want to go over all of that again. But in terms of the underlying philosophy here, the idea that we should send armed men into our parks when a variety of things are occurring, isn't that great. It's not a great idea. In fact, your parks people have been asking for park rangers for a long time. When I found that we only have 21 park rangers for 303 parks, that was kind of an eye popping moment for me. How do we get to a spot like that? When parks are so valued in this city, how do we get to such an underfunding moment? We get to it because we have been just funding police for a very long

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time. All the extra money we have always goes to more police. Last summer, this moment was the first time that we've broken that pattern. So now we have a moment where, again, as you've heard from so many people, we don't have to overfund APD. We should not do more than is required by 1900 because we can never roll it back. Instead, we have an idea here that's widely supported across the city that will allow for both security in our parks and also youth education and better youth programming and fully utilize the existing park buildings and spaces that we already have but we're not fully utilizing because we're not paying the people to do the services. So I just want to bring that up. I think it fits nicely with everything else that you're hearing. It's the kind

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of direction that the city should continue to go. Finally, I'm, perhaps, one of the few people you'll hear today whose actually on the curriculum review committee. I want to restate that I'm a little surprise surprised that the two cadet classes don't include the one that is already in. I would love some clarification on that. It was my understanding that the two classes were this one and the next one. I know speakers aren't supposed to ask questions. But all I will say is I would love to speak to you all more about exactly where we are in that process. It is a fruitful process. It is going very well in some respects, but it is, perhaps, much slower than you've been told. >> Great. Thank you. I think it's two classes in addition to the one that's happening right

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now. >> Okay. >> I think Francis Jordan is up next. Is Francis Jordan with us? You'll be up next. Go ahead. You have two minutes. >> Good evening. My name is Kate graziana. I'm from the drop-in center for people who use drugs in district one. I was a member of the reimagine public safety task force and thra that I help run. I was one of the recipients of the reinvested funds from APD last summer. So 11 months ago, we weren't here in person, but many of us were speaking to you all about the investments that you

are making, both away from our police and into the community strategies we know keep our people safe. I believe I said

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something to you all to the effect of real serious investment in prevention means that we won't feel the need for the large police force that we have and that we will replace it with equitable community health and wellness. That was a path we embarked on together 11 months ago. That was a commitment that you made to your community. We spent hundreds of hours as part of the task force process doing research, pulling together best practices from around the country, and I think with only 1.9 million allocated to the representations and a record high for the APD budget, the proposed budget really shows a complete depart you're from that path that we embarked upon 11 months ago. Of us who are trying to put into practice these programs , the reinvestments,

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we're only months into you are 0 projects and we can show you what you can do with funds if you invest them in community strategies. We also -- not only did I participate in the task force and give hours and hours to that process, we also embarked on a research project about public safety. No one said that police kept them save of all the folks we talked to. So at the very least -- >> Go ahead and close. >> Consider that 8.5 million over -- please adding those to the public task force recommendations. Thank you. >> Thank you. Ms. Jordan, come on down. Is stab Sabina here? >> I live in district five. One of our gyms, the entertainment complex is in need. I

[5:50:33 PM]

service and treasure the Austin rose wood corporation. It managing the east Austin community funded by the city of Austin. Although it was profitable prior to the pandemic, there's never been enough money to keep facilities up to date, nor has there been an increase in 20 years to keep up with inflation. With the building being shuttered for more than a year now, without an increase in the budget to cover the full operating costs, it will struggle to EP 0. -- Open. If for some reason it's unable to open its doors, temperature be --LE be a travesty. We've worked Har to improve the advisory operation and get a number of things in order. Dr. Did Roberson has been working like a champ, spending hours with city staff, board members, and our management company, and we are on the precipice he is of moving things forward to get back to the original purpose and

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vibrancy when it was originally created by the city. We need the city council to consider adjusting the budget to 1.6 million, the amount it costs to operate it. It has been requested every year, but this year, we are in desperate need of this addition because the allotted will not be enough. Please consider reviewing our original request and approving it. We will have a new general manager for the first time since it opened as our dedicated community member retired after 20 years of service. Let this gym -- set this gym up for success. I don't want to forget. We're thankful. We got 750,000. That was a need for years. In closing and shifting gears, as the board chair for the -- I'm done. Thank you. >> Please submit to the council the balance of what you wanted to say.

[5:52:38 PM]

>> Okay. >> Okay. Is Maggie Luna here? You'll be up next. Go ahead. >> Hi. Good evening. My name is Sabina. I live in district 1. I'm a member of undoing white supremacy. I'm here to echo what other folks have said so far. There's been a lot of talk about public safety and what reimagining public safety means. We have to understand that policing does not equal safety. Criminalizing black and brown people for existing or criminalizing behaviors associated with mental illness or addiction are being unhoused does not create safety. Investing infrastructure that will treat every austinite with dignity, care, and respect brings safety. This proposed budget dumps nearly every egg into the basket of policing. That's a rot on choice that makes no one safer and it's a huge step backwards. You can fix this. Fund community, not more policing. As a

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start, as others have said, shift the additional 8.5 million in the budget for policing over 2019 levels to community initiatives. Fund public health workers, neighborhood hubs, a basic income pilot and review spending process. We will be watching. Thanks. >> Thank you. Jim walker, you'll be up next. >> Hello. My name is Maggie Luna, and I am a resident of district 4. I am in support of Austin coalition proposal. I have many years of encountering our legal system. When I see the presence of police, my first thought is not safety. It tariff fees -- tare fees

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me to see one pull up next tow. My experiences have proven to me that doesn't matter. It does not make me as a person safe. My police interaction has proven to depend on whatever lens that officer may choose to see me through on that given day. On paper, I may look scary, but it only takes a moment for anyone to listen and find out that I'm not that person. There's a real opportunity right now for real

innovative investments in the community. It actually reimagining public safety. Impart of the public. Policing does not mean safe to me. So if we're talking about public safety, we need to focus on the public in question. After I had my first interaction with our legal system, nothing that I experience made anyone in my community feel safer. I came out vengeful, angry, and I no longer cared. I had nothing left to lose.

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Who benefits from an angry person with nothing left to lose. Hurt people hurt people. Let's stop hurting people and begin building them up and uniting them. Invest in the people. Give them a sense of pride and responsibility for the communities in which they live which will make us all safer. Thank you. >> Thank you. Bobby Garza here? Bobby Garza? What about Jen? Jen warman? What about Maddie O'Reilly? What about Enrique? If you'll be up next. Go ahead, sir, two minutes. >> Good evening. My

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name is Jim walker. I'm in district 9. I'm down here on land development code issues, but I'm happy to be here in support of the budget priorities. The ajc comments the city council to reimagine public safety in Austin. However, the efforts have barely scratched the surface. We ask you stay the course by not increasing the police budget above the level required by hb-1900. We ask you fund solutions that prioritize the needs of vulnerability Austin rights. The task force recommended community run first response such as the program run locally through fearless responders. Having culturally first responders that do not not impose a threat is a first step for first response for austinites. I would also say having

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served on a lot of boards and commissions myself, you've got to -- if you ask people to serve on a task force, you've got to really meet their recommendations and invest in what they are saying. I know that it's hard with hb-1900, but I strongly encourage you to listen to the input and try to do more in that direction. Thank you. >> Is Cynthia [indiscernible]. You'll be up next. >> I'm Enrique, a proud member of church and interfaith. I speak on our priority of addressing homelessness. At the next council meeting, we would like to speak about workforce development. On Tuesday, cti held a press conference calling on the city to release 84 million from the American rescue plan tied up. And for the

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county to allocate 100 million of ition stimulus dollars to help our homeless neighbors. The shell games need to stop and the city and county need to act now. I am here today to urge the city council to act quickly and release 84 million held in contingency. Only to be spent if another 200 million is raised from still unidentified sources. The delay not only risks lives but the money risks being reallocated to other priorities if matching funds aren't reached. People are in need of help yesterday. Every day that money is held in contingency is a day that people's safety and survival are at risk. I speak to people on the streets against the backdrop of the growth, prosperity, and rising property values in this city. The city needs to deploy the 23 million already approved for those experiencing homelessness and to immediately free up the

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84 million in contingency. The city has been given hundreds of millions in our federal stimulus dollars on top of being one of the wealthiest cities in the country. Spend this money now. As a person of faith, I take these matters seriously and personally. I take to heart Matthew 25 which says whatsoever you do to the least of our brothers, that you do for me. And whatsoever you don't do for the least of my brothers, that you did not do for me. You didn't delay the increase in the homestead exemption. So don't delay housing for our brothers and sisters. Thank you. >> Mayor. >> Yes. >> I just wanted to say thank you so much to our speaker and interfaith for their advocacy on support issues. I just wanted to make sure that my colleagues and the public knew that I did reach out to our homeless strategy officer this week to make sure there were not

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programs -- when we made that decision to put some -- make immediately available and can then have other -- and then have other funding be more contingent on that additional participation, we did make some immediately available. I reached out to our homeless strategy officer this week to make sure that we have not spent that. They have not been able to allocate or spend all of that funding. So as far as I understand, there are not programs that are not able to move forward at this point for lack of funding. I just think that's an important -- thank you for the opportunity to clarify that because I would hate for any members of the public to think there were programs that are not moving forward right now because the federal funding had not yet been allocated. Again, just to reiterate, our strategy officer is -- has assured me, there are not programs awaiting money. >> We're excited to see that happen. >> Thank you very much.

[6:01:47 PM]

>> Thank you. On deck is Amanda Lewis. Is Amanda Lewis here? Okay. You'll be up next. Go ahead. You have two minutes. >> Good evening, mayor and council. I'm an executive director of the Travis county democratic party. I'm here speaking tonight on behalf of TCPD & district three. The work this council has undertaken with the leadership from this community to reimagine public safety has been critical moving us forward as a city. We support that work and we believe it must continue. We support a comprehensive approach to public safety that does not rely on policing. We encourage you to continue this process and invest in EMS and fire response, mental health care services, gun violence prevention, affordable and quality housing for all, equitable health care services -- health care services and continuing participation in this

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process. We oppose the attempts from the governor and the legislature and other forces to halt this progress. Because these efforts are attempts to strip power from the voters who elected you and the communities you serve, we will remain opposed to those. We ask that you stand strong against those efforts as well to the greatest extent possible using all means available to you and that you continue making progress for the residents of Austin. Thank you. >> Thank you. Is Christina Garza here? Yes. Okay. You'll be up next. Thank you. You have two minutes. >> Hello. My name is Amanda Lewis. I live in D9. I am a cofounder of the survivor project and I've also sat on the reimagining public safety task force. I am in support of Austin

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justice coalition's budget priorities, and I want to say just as a task force member, hearing everyone's testimony, it really is so vital the work that is ongoing and the process of reimagining is a long, long process. I still have tremendous hope that we can get on track with it. I think the great things have happened. I think the office of violence prevention is a huge deal. The equity office is doing great work. I will say as someone who has been an advocate for survivors of violence and chaired that working group for the task force, the city does not have nearly enough services for people experiencing violence. Not enough culturally sufficient resources. There's not enough counseling and crisis work. I've talked before about the rape to

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prison pipeline and the trauma to prison pipeline when you don't have adequate resources to address someone's need after violence. They become criminalized and -- criminalized and they become unable to do the good work in our community. I think that's really important. I do want to add that since APD does have this extra money, that it can afford to pay the victims of crime of their violence out of its

own budget. They can also pay to settle lawsuits like the survivors -- sexual support survivors lawsuit. They can afford to pay victims counselors more money to do work. That is important to people that report violence. Thank you. >> Thank you.

[6:05:51 PM]

>> Good evening. We are a two generation education nonprofit working primarily with Spanish speaking families. Two generation, I mean we provide free early childhood education for kids under age of 3 while providing education for the parents. We work closely with hundreds of latinx parents and their young children for nine months, which results in health yore home environments, school readiness for kids and increase capital for parents. They go from being intimidated to running pta meetings, sitting on nonprofit boards including ours and considering their own education. We are proud partners of the ready families collaborative funded by the city of Austin. I'm here to thank you for allocating over 1 1 million dollars to early childhood education. We know that early childhood education is the best use of tax taxpayer dollars and yields investment & we're here to prepare,

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not repair. As you decide how to distribute funds, I ask you prioritize organization that's work alongside communities of color. I also ask that you consider an organization cultural competency and composition of the board, staff, and commitment to racial and economic justice. Early childhood education is not something that happens between a teacher and a student. It starts at the home and happens 24-7 with each interaction that a child has with their caregiver. I hope that you take this as an opportunity to not simply support healthy child development and investing early childhood education but to support the development of the family as a whole. Early childhood education programs are also the entry point for hundreds of latinx parents to access community resources, city programs and become more engaged. For example, during this past year, our Spanish speaking educators help parents apply for programs. They got 94%

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of our clients to complete the census and we're undertaking a vaccination effort. I hope you continue to invest in advance Austin and the ready families collaborative. Thank you. >> Thank you. I really appreciate the message about masking. Is Lewis here, Alfaro? Go ahead. Stephanie Hoffman here? You'll be up next. >> Good evening, mayor and can councilmembers. I'm Lewis Alfaro. I'm the associatibility director of Austin voices for education and youth, a nonprofit that works with schools to help them become community schools and runs family resource centers. Many of you are supportive of our work in

the past and we're grateful for that. Since campuses were closed during covid, we pivoting the 0 -- pivoted and worked to

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make sure families continued to receive services during this difficult period. Normal times we're serving 4,000 families a year. Wrap around supports for housing, utility, health care access, employment, let's -- et cetera. It had to change and we shifted virtually by phone. We set up a call center and ran over 70 large food distribution and community events. The central sex -- Texas food bank said we were the biggest. We were discuss. Because we are organized around a a resilience strategy and we deal with crisis on an ongoing basis family by family. We've provided the city council with a comprehensive list of the many ways that we've

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been supporting families during the pandemic. We wanted to come to thank you for your over 10-year partnership leg helping us to fund our family resource centers and ask you to think about doing more next year. Austin voices is requesting that you work with us to do a one-year pilot called resilient communities and schools. This will be based on our decade of success and our experience that we've had working with the neediest neighborhoods in the city. This would entail four community school coordinators and we will get you a written proposal and look forward to a discussion with you. >> Thank you. >> Mayor, if I could add one more thing. We are waiting to hear from the U.S. Department of health and human services on a million dollar grant we wrote in conjunction with a whole host of community partners, including Austin public health, to train 60 community

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health workers to do immediate work around covid vaccination. Fingers crossed we get that. If we don't, we would love to talk to Austin public health and councilmembers who may be thinking about directing additional money in that direction. >> Fingers crossed as well. >> Mayor, I would like to take a moment while he's here to thank Austin voices for your work. You were on the phone, I think, with many of us when it might be 1 1 11 -- 11:30 at night asking you if you could run a food bank at 1 1:00 in the morning. You said yes. You were helping people not Getty evicted. I think you've been a model for what community

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resilience and reimagining public safety task force talked about with neighborhood hubs at our schools. I observe that as we work on reimagining public safety and resiliency that we can continue to highlight your work. I just wanted to say thanks. >> Thank you, councilmember. >> Thank you. Last speaker is Stephanie Hoffman. Anybody else here signed up and I missed? Go ahead. >> Hello, council. My name is Stephanie Hoffman, and ask I've lived in district three now going on 15 years. I'm a member of undoing white supremacy Austin because I want to get on the right side of history. I want to continuously advocate and I'm showing up here in person because my call has dropped three times in past attempts

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to advocates indicate for neighbors and those who live in Austin. Across the board, the scope and scale of the reimagining public safety task force priorities have been shrunken to symbolic status. Some is of what the proposed budget calls reimagining actually goes directly to police for cadet academies: Victims services funds are proposed only for APD and not for the community victims services called for by the task force. I, too, have spent a lot of time on the reimagining public safety task force. So this is extremely important for me in coming out here to you today. We cannot shy away from funding alternatives to policing at all levels that make new systems of support and safety truly feasible. Anything else

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is lip service. The rps task force was clear that only reforming aspects of how police are trained does not protect black and brown austinites or people with mental illness or other community members made vulnerable by poverty and oppression. While police misconduct must be checked from training through to actual accountability measures, we cannot skip the biggest part, and that is restricting opportunities for police to harm people in the first place. We must create systems based in community care. Fund community, not more policing. We will be watching. Thank you. >> Thank you. Colleagues, those are all the speakers and items we have on our agenda. Some of you have inquired about whether or not we should be taking a look at additional meeting schedule in the first week or two of August.

[6:15:02 PM]

I want to make sure that's being looked at. I'm sure the folks will reach out to you. >> Just a reminder for the public, the second hearing on this urge about -- hearing is next Thursday. There will be another opportunity to speak on this proposed budget. >> Thank you. Manager, to you and your staff, thank you for all your work that went into preparing this budget. I think you put us in a good position to be able to deliberate. So thank you for that. Here at 6:15, this meeting is adjourned.