

City Council Work Session Transcript – 07/27/2021

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[9:07:37 AM]

>> Tech guys ready? >> Yes, mayor. >> Mayor Adler: Okay, thanks. All right. We're going to go ahead and convene today's meeting. This is Tuesday, July 27th. This is the work session of the city council. We potentially have a lot to get through today. A lot of it is in executive session today. It looks like the thing that makes the most sense to do is to begin with the budget discussion. The purpose of that is primarily to let council members daylight issues that they're thinking about so that the rest of us and staff get notice if it's possible on what might be coming forward. We have a long work session coming up next week. This is not intended to be that. This is more a daylight moment. So that's going to start with a presentation.

[9:08:38 AM]

Maybe we can get through this in 30 to 45 minutes, I don't know. But then we would then leave here and go to executive session. And we'll start in executive session, see how much of that we can knock out. Some of the colleagues wanted to be part of the executive session were not going to be here this afternoon so they wanted us to be able to have that earlier. We have only one item that's been pulled, so we would then -- after executive session -- there will be a hard stop at noon. Go from noon to lunch. If we come back and have some time we can do that. We have the Austin energy meeting today that's been set for 1:30. It's going to be 1:30 we'll move into that. Should be a short meeting

[9:09:38 AM]

today, I think, chair, like 45 minutesish or less. So we'll be able to take care of that. We have the other discussion items that are coming back that are available for us. Some of those things were put on the agenda kind of in a just in case kind of scenario. I think the maintenance issue is real short presentation from staff, opportunity to ask questions on covid. We're obviously not joining the county this morning. We should all be getting in our boxes this morning the handout that they give to us for that. They are available this afternoon if we want to call them. We can make that decision as we get close egg to the afternoon, but -- closer to the afternoon, but we can bring that back here to be available for us. We also have the meadows person here. >> Kitchen: I didn't mean to interrupt you. I wanted to say something

[9:10:39 AM]

about that when you're done. >> Mayor Adler: I was going to say that's the other briefing and my understanding is we have the consultant here to be able to talk to us so there will be a report on that. We have a hard stop at 5:15 because the meeting needs to be turned over to the evening commission. Councilmember kitchen. >> Kitchen: I was expecting we would do the Austin cares this morning because it's really part of the budget and it's set up as a very, very brief, if I'm understanding, a brief presentation and then the opportunity for question and answer. I'm concerned about separating it from the budget and having it -- >> Which thing? >> Kitchen: Austin cares, which is the meadows. I'm concerned about having that pushed to the end of the day. I think it's separated too much from the budget if we do that. >> Mayor Adler: My notes had indicated that the consultant was available in the afternoon. Only available in the afternoon, not available this morning. >> Kitchen: Okay. But can we do it -- I'm concerned are we going to

[9:11:39 AM]

lose people if we wait until the end of the day? City manager, do you know what time, city manager? >> Cronk: I don't offhand, but I do know she wasn't available 9:30 to noon. >> Kitchen: Okay. I didn't realize that. >> Mayor Adler: Also on executive session, we cannot do executive session in this room so we would go back to executive session. It's a smaller space. I don't know if it's the council's desire to go back into that smaller space. Certainly if you want to participate in that remotely you have the ability to be able to do that. >> Tovo: I just wanted to go over the calendar again. So we are going to begin with budget, then go to executive session to talk

[9:12:40 AM]

about open government, real estate, a couple of cases, potential election and then the personnel matter. We're doing all of that in one block? >> Mayor Adler: Potentially. If when we get back there council wants to do something else we can always come back out, but it would be the intent to try to get

through the executive session. >> Tovo: And then we have a brew briefings. >> Mayor Adler: If we have time after that we'll come back here. If we have time before noon we'll come back here and do the -- >> Tovo: Homelessness, covid. >> Mayor Adler: Right. And the pulled item. >> Tovo: Then we are breaking from what time to what time? >> Mayor Adler: From like noon to 1:00. >> Tovo: And from 1:00 on we'll a wrap up whatever,. >> Mayor Adler: Then we have the Austin energy meeting break and other than that we'll be pushing through. We have a 5:15 hard stop.

[9:14:03 AM]

Councilmember alter and then councilmember Kelly. >> Alter: When we picked up the one pulled item or at some point there are a couple of items that I'm asking some questions and trying to get my answers separately, but I wanted to surface that I'm doing that so that it's not a surprise on those items if I pull them on Thursday. I think they're mostly technical things that I'm trying to get clear, but if I don't understand or don't like the answers when I go through that -- >> When we do pulled items people can daylight other issues on other items as we do. We just won't have staff here for those. >> That's fine. I just think it would be useful for us to have that. >> Mayor Adler: There would be time and opportunity for that. I also want to make comment on one of my ifc's as well. Councilmember Kelly. >> Kelly: Yes, thank you. And thank you, councilmember alter, for bringing that up. That was my question as well when we would discuss pulled items. >> Mayor Adler: Yes, councilmember tovo. >> Tovo: Sorry, I still had a couple of questions that I wanted to ask.

[9:15:04 AM]

So with regard to the executive session we're going to go in that room and the remote option is what the mayor pro tem -- >> Mayor Adler: Is available to council members if they want. >> Tovo: But we can't see the room? Is it the same system where our colleagues off the dais could not see the in other words the room. >> Mayor Adler: You will see others in the room. >> Tovo: It would be like the earlier, like our previous version. >> Mayor Adler: Yes. >> Tovo: And when we talk about items, I also have some items to discuss that I did not necessarily pull. And I would also like to talk about our plan for Thursday. >> Mayor Adler: About what? >> Tovo: Our game plan for Thursday, kind of our schedule for Thursday at that time as well. >> Mayor Adler: Sounds good. All right. Manager, I'll turn it over to you to lay out budget and then we'll daylight budget thoughts that people have. >> Thank you, mayor and council. This is an opportunity for us to continue to hear from council as we prepare for next Thursday's work session.

[9:16:05 AM]

And I'm going to turn it over to our interim budget officer, Kerri Lange, who will be a brief intro and then the mayor's question, hopefully getting to each council member to highlight a topic or two that you want to make sure that we discuss at that work session. Ms. Lange. >> Good morning mayor and council and thank you again. Kerri Lange, interim budget officer. As city manager mentioned, today we will just begin discussions on the proposed budget to daylight for the August 3rd work session. We've included in backup for your reminder and information the taxpayer impact statement, the proposed budget snapshot and the fostering and resilient city worksheet. During the session today and throughout the week we will be discussing with you all to inform our agenda for next week. And just as a reminder, we do have the public input session, the community input sessions on Thursday, the full day work session on the third. I will be sending out

[9:17:05 AM]

further communication by the end of this week about the agenda for next week and to just confirm all the areas that we will be discussing next week and the process for budget [indiscernible] Approval. With that I turn it over to you all to begin discussion. >> So colleagues, we have a budget that will be given to us, we'll have a long session next week. I think staff is looking for indications from council if y'all want to give them as to things that you're going to want take a longer look at. Councilmember Alter. >> Alter: I have three areas I would like to be discussing in more detail on Tuesday's work session. I've talked a few times about the fire ems optimization efficiency

[9:18:06 AM]

study. I think it's called the dispatch equity study. This is a study I advocated for funding in recent budget years and I'm hoping there are useful lessons and savings opportunities included in its recommendations. It's my understanding the study is in its final stages and has some elements that would be useful for us for some of the budget conversations we're having. So I would like an update on that and both when we're going to see it and if there are some high level recommendations from it that might be relevant. I think they're particularly relevant because I think a any of us are interested in seeing further investments in ems and I'm hoping that that study will help us move forward with some of those.

[9:19:14 AM]

We know that our victim services division is one, if not the best of its kind in the country and it is that way in part because of the very high level of clinical services that we're able to deliver. It's my understanding that we've been able to do that by relying on grants to fund several ftes in years past, but this may not be the case anymore. There was some additional money, but I think it's actually replacing

grant money, not actually adding more services. So I'd like to have a briefing on the possible changes in funding this fiscal year and how we're absorbing those costs from the lack or the expected lack of those voca funds as well as information on staffing levels, recruitment and retention caseloads, services provided and the status of some of the reforms to victim services that came from the reimagining process such as the reporting structure. And I'd like for the victim

[9:20:15 AM]

services manager Bettina Clarke to be part of that briefing and if it's helpful my staff can give you that list in writing if you like. I think it's important to have a consideration about the 911 dispatch and staffing. Some of you may have seen the KXAN story over the weekend about the 911 call center. This is an issue that was brought to my attention awhile ago and we have been working having conversations to understand what the situation is with respect to the emergency communications department, having conversations with folks in the department and director Arrellano and Spencer cronk on it. And I think this is an important piece in our emergency services and I am concerned about vacancy rate issues and retention and I think we need a briefing on

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that to see if we can make some investments in that department to address concerns there with respect to the vacancy. >> So we were going to daylight things that would bring amendments or in funding more now or if I should wait on that, when is that appropriate time? Because I don't know that we need to have staff preparing documents for those things. >> Mayor Adler: I think at this point we're trying to daylight issues so you don't have to write something now. If you know something now and could throw them out, that would be helpful. >> I'm still working on a lot of details so I'll give some broad outlines and I would invite colleagues who are interested in helping to co-sponsor any of these amendments as I put them forward to reach out to me at a later date. So with respect to public

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safety, I am interested in additional investments with respect to wildfire, specifically supplements for the training that was planned. I am interested in phase 2 of the office of the chief medical officer and adding the additional paramedic practitioners and making further investments in ems. I believe I've identified some potential funding sources for these, but I'm still working out those options. Additional priorities, as would be obvious from the questions that I raised earlier, would be victim services and the 911 call center being staffed and will resource and then finally the office of violence presentation. And on the office of violence prevention while I'm talking about it, I want to talk about how impressed I've been with Michelle miles as our program manager and how diligently they were

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in helping to stand up that office. I want to get some more details on the specific allocations to see if we need more funding. And different things with that. Really I've been impressed with what other cities, including San Antonio, have been doing to properly resource their violation prevention work. I want to make sure we're setting up the ovp with success. I'm still looking if that area. And finally for health and environment I'm focused on climate resilience and sustainability, our parks and rec department and some small asks from our senior commission. >> Okay, thank you. Councilmember Kelly. >> Kelly: Thank you. Some things that are of top of mind to me and focus on this budget is definitely the 911 call center. Thank you, councilmember alter, for bringing that up. I want encourage and dig deep beer that as well.

[9:24:20 AM]

It's one of my priorities. I want to be able to talk to you further about that. I would also encourage my colleagues to go to the center at ctec and sit even for an hour with the telecommunicators. I did that recently and it was eye opening to the stress they're under on a regular basis. I would like to look into possibly lining the budget with the requirements of hb1900 to ensure that the police budget is set forth correctly. Acknowledging that APD has seen tremendous attrition, I encourage my colleagues for a modified police academy in addition to the two proposed academies. We need a robustly staffed police department to act as a resource for our community and with he need to respond in a timely manner currently because of the staffing levels. We have increased response times and that needs to change because we are in a staffing crisis. One way to get officers on the street quicker is to do that modified academy. Another thing that I'd like

[9:25:21 AM]

to focus on, we know Austin goes out of its way to be an animal friendly city. It's a great testament to the compassion we have for all living creatures. I also recently visited the Austin animal center to learn about a position that embodies just that. It's a grant funded animal services officer role. About two years ago the Austin animal center began to reach out to people experiencing homelessness through the Austin eats initiative using that animal services officer role. That officer has worked diligently to establish relationships with our unhoused neighbors to make sure that they are successful in allowing them to keep and care for their animals and to provide temporary support during speakers periods when that's not possible. This fte or full time employee, has kept approximately 170 dogs out of the shelters since January of 2021 at a cost of \$35,000 for every pet they've taken. This position is an efficient, compassionate use of taxpayer dollars, it allows people facing an already difficult situation to stay with the animals who

[9:26:22 AM]

provide compassion, considerate and stability to them. For anyone who owns a dog they know there's nothing more comforting than the unconditional love that they provide. And I feel this is an important role that needs to continue to be funded to help our unhoused neighbors. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember kitchen. >> Kitchen: Okay. I'm going to mention a combination of things that I've asked for more information on and then indicate where I think we might want to be taking some actions. The first one is Austin cares. As you know, councilmember Casar and I have been working on that for two years now, I believe. During the last budget cycle we passed an amendment to add additional funding as well as to put a process in place to fully implement the recommendations from the meadows center. You all may remember that this is the mental health diversion project.

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And our goal is over time that 100% of calls to our 911 call center that are not at immediate risk can be diverted to a mental health clinician. So we'll hear more. There is a memo that you have received about the progress to date and the additional actions that are needing to be taken to fully implement this project. So I am going to want to have some conversations about what is in the budget moving forward. And the extent to which we might need to add to the project. We most definitely need to finish the implementation of Austin cares and the memo tells us the various dates they are on track for. So we can have a conversation about that. I want to make sure it's fully funded. If we need to continue with

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our implementation approach from the meadows foundation, which has been very helpful for us to keep this project on track, then I want to have that conversation as part of the budget. This is an amazing program and I've been pleased with the progress to date, but I don't think we're done yet and I think that's clear from the memo. And I would like us to continue to make steady progress because we're not where we need to be yet. So that's a top priority. I'm also interested in understanding the path, whether it's this budget or another path, but the path for funding for iconic arts. Last December we passed -- I think it was December. We passed -- we got started on putting our iconic arts and music fund, and it's now into the economic development corporation and we started funding, but we didn't fully fund it. We set a goal of additional funding over the next number

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of years and so I just want to understand where that's at. The next thing is I think we need to talk about what is our funding for the housing and planning department, particularly with regard to anti-displacement activities. Some of those are learned project connect. Some of them are more general. So I'm wanting to -- this is just a question at this point. I'm wanting to understand what staffing we have in housing and planning to address that. As we all know when we pass project connect we took a precedent setting action on a national basis by dedicating funding for anti-displacement we've got to make sure that we've got the staffing in place to carry that out. A couple of other quick things. I want to understand what funding we have also in the funding department related to our transit oriented development planning and district level planning.

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And then the homeless strategy office, I want to make sure there's a path for the right level of funding for that office when they're ready to expand, so I just want to understand that. It's a question. And finally, I am interested in understanding better what our options are for keeping the APD budget at the level that we had it in our benchmark year. I know we've all been talking about the fact that there's approximately eight million or so in that budget that's over. The -- what our benchmark is by house bill 1900. And I would like to explore additional options for taking that eight million and not having it in this budget so that our budget is much closer to the benchmark budget and ideally at the benchmark budget. I understand there's some challenges with that so I want to have further conversations with you. So that's the key things. You know, I am interested in

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the -- some of the things that councilmember Kelly and councilmember alter mentioned so I'll get back with them on that, particularly those that are health related I've been working on that senior commission I've BP working on. Sounds like we have a good list of things so far to have conversations about. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember Fuentes. >> Fuentes: Is this on? Good morning, colleagues. My first time speaking on the dais. I'm excited to be here with you all this morning. Thank you. Councilmember kitchen, I join you in wanting to know more about our displacement prevention initiatives and really understanding the portfolio of work that the city of Austin is doing in regards to displacement prevention. We know that our city is a growing city. It's a prosperous city, but not everyone gets to share in that growth and so I want to make sure that we're doing right by our community, doing all that we can to invest in displacement prevention

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strategies. And for me that includes the creation and establishment of a community displacement navigator program. So I look forward to discussing with my colleagues a little bit more about that. And also just acknowledging the moment that we're in with the reentering of staying four and knowing how prevent the delta variant is becoming in our community. It's not lost on me that a huge part of this is due to vaccine hesitancy and one way, one strategy that we can employ to address this critical investment in our community is the investment in community health workers. And this is an area that comes recommended from our community, it was part of the reimagining public safety task force. It was also recommendation from the hispanic quality of life. So I really would like to dig in to what is proposed and what more we can be doing on that front? Community health workers are licensed professionals and it's often said that they have a ph.d in community

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and that's the type of individuals that we need on the front lines right now having those conversations with our community about why getting the vaccine is important. And when we talk about creating a stronger community, I think that is part of it. So those are the two areas that I'll be looking at and learning a little bit more about, having conversations around. And I look forward to our further conversations. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember Ellis. >> Ellis: I wanted to highlight some of the things that I've been working on. There are post posted on the message board as well so they will referenced there. Our portion of north loop capcog's clean air coalition, I have confirmation that that is included and baked into budget already so I'm very happy to hear that and happy to affirm that commitment to capcog. I also mentioned the

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programming workforce first that's handled by the otherwise foundation. I know this has been something that we have increased throughout the years and that I'm happy that the other ones foundation found its roots in data. They're obviously doing amazing work throughout the community of making sure that people experiencing homelessness have data to jobs and -- access to jobs and safe places to stay so we applaud those efforts and want to continue the workforce first programming. We also have talked a bit about ems. So I know that in the ask of the ems association there has been a couple of different items that have been brought bandera a few of my colleagues are also working on. I specifically am working on the 40 ftes that they have asked for half a year of funding for. This is obviously with the understanding that in future years we would want to make sure that ongoing funding is captured so that's very much on my radar and we're looking at how to make sure that those increases in staffing are funded. We did have a discussion

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with interim chief jasper brown and Selena Xie with the ems association and understand with the classes that they currently have planned there may be opportunity to increase the number of personnel that can be trained in those classes rather than having to find a third class to conduct. So we are having those conversations and positively moving forward and trying to make sure that we are able to fully staff our ems and increase staffing knowing how much we have been relying on them through the pandemic and through the winter storm and we really want to make sure that our ems medics are rested and have moments off for their own mental health and their own physical health. So we really want to make sure to support that. And I am currently going through some of the extra asks that the parks foundation has come to me and asked for assistance with. Some of these are ftes and some of these are just capital improvement projects so we are currently working at triaging what may already

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be baked in because we know we love our park system and we are always looking at ways to help with operations and maintenance. You know that we have good mechanisms for parkland dedication to acquire new park spaces, but we also want to make sure those spaces have programming and have playgrounds and have sports available to the folks who want to use the parks and that operations and maintenance funding is something that is sorely needed. We love our parks department and we want them to be able to do the best they can and so we're currently going through some of the asks that are in that sheet. And again these are posted on the message board and so these are things I'm working through. And I do have a question for our budget department. Maybe I missed, we usually have sheets that we are able to fill out, and I don't know if I missed that it came through the inbox or if they are yet to be sent for us B we are very eager to start filling those out. >> Thank you, council

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member. The sheets will be coming by the end of this week. >> Glad I didn't miss anything. I look forward to that, and some of the other initiatives that my colleagues have already identified, these sound like great things that we have moving forward, so now we will look at where to find that money and how to make that budget work because these are all great initiatives. >> Tovo: I think that would be a high priority for a fuller conversation next week. I had highlighted some amendments on the message board. Some are new. I had mentioned the campus food security grant program, ems as I mentioned?

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I have learned that the health care for the homeless program that we piloted with the downtown community court, the downtown Austin alliance, we piloted it -- piloted the additional funding. Of course that's already been part of the dacc services for awhile? It looks me from the answers I've gotten so far from the budget office that there is not that additional batch of funding in the approved budget. So that, certainly I would regard as a very high priority. I think we know we are lacking in those services and having that additional funding beginning in 2021 was really useful and so we want to see that continuing. So it makes sense to have that conversation in budget work session next week the staff have proposed in terms of phasing and some of those positions that are

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consistent, ongoing needs for the city. I know there are some being phased in the budget, but not to the extent that the work group had directed. One issue that has arisen since my post is the conversation that several of us have been having with Austin voices. They are -- we support the family resource centers, have been for awhile. And I have an initial that came out of the joint subcommittee and I believe I've had the -- been able to sponsor those budget amendments and they are now part of our ongoing budget. That support for the family resource centers with a little bit of additional investment we can really help them become part of that resilience hub network that we are -- that we have directed. And so Louis malfaro was here at the budget work session last week and has met with several of us, but I will be bringing forward an amendment to make that part of either our general budget or part of our federal funding.

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And we're still waiting on some answers with regard to that. I was really -- I am also troubled by the information that has been in the can KXAN reports this week about the 911 call takers. Manager, I hope that when we have that conversation next week in our budget work session that you help us understand why that's not been a highlight that the manager has brought to our attention. I would have expected that that would have risen to the level of both your attention and that you would have brought it to our attention and that it would be reflected in this year's budget. So I trust that we're having -- because councilmember alter has requested it, a conversation around that in next week's budget work session, but I would like to have a little bit better sense as we talk about that. I would like to have a little bit better sense of the timeline on those vacancies, and again why there wasn't a sense of urgency if it is the urgent situation that it and to be

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in our session yesterday. Councilmember Kelly, you said both on the dais and in the press that you wish your colleagues would go down and see what the call -- I have done so. It is a high stress job. I appreciate the work they do. And I would hope that the colleagues on the dais have done so as well. Many of us have done those kind of in-person views to see how our city staff and especially our public safety staff respond to that situation. So I regard that as a high -- depending on the unless that we're provided it does sound like -- information that we're provided it sounds like an area that needs attention in this year's budget. Thanks. I look forward to the conversations and would just call your attention. I've put lots of questions into the q&a and hope we'll be getting back answers to those and some of the questions that you all have raised as well. >> Mayor Adler: The 911 [indiscernible] Was something that was new. I think we're all looking

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for you to come back and talk to us. I also have been there to see our employees work. I think others have as well. But I think [indiscernible]. I'm sorry, but you coming -- I was going to say the 911 also is of concern, an issue that I was not familiar with. And I was asking -- I was reinforcing the message from councilmember Kelly and councilmember tovo to come back and councilmember alter to come back and talk to us about that. I also did point out that I've also been out there. I think that probably several of us or many of us have. But I would like to hear that as well. Councilmember Casar. >> Casar: So first I'd like to mention areas where either I'd like to deal with the staff and if appropriate we have a conversation as a group. One potential conversation would be to look at internal affairs, part of what we had discussed in last year's budget was whether or not

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any of those officers could actually be freed up for investigative work or police work and that we could look at whether our office of civil rights could handle some of that investigatory work. So I'd like to maybe have an internal conversation with the staff and see whether that is ready for a broader council conversation as well as I appreciate the memo on forensics. It may just be a short conversation about what the manager can do and what the staff can do around the forensics lab either this year or next. As far as further investment, I concur with councilmember alter around the office of violence prevention. I appreciate all the work that your office has done. I appreciate the manager's selection of Ms. Miles. I think she's been doing a great job. I've gotten some calls from people in the world of philanthropy who want to see that expand more quickly. If there are potential

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matching opportunities, potentially one time dollars may provide us enough funds to actually stand up the programming. So I look forward to collaborating with everyone on the dais on that. Last year we moved forward on funding our first new family violence beds funded by the city in many years. My hope is we could get that purchase done in this fiscal year. But we are hearing from real estate that if that doesn't get done this fiscal year with the increase in real estate prices we may need to add a little bit of money to that budget if we want to succeed in this real estate market. So I will be in touch with everyone about that. I appreciate councilmember tovo's leadership on the joint subcommittee and agree that the Austin voices staff at our schools really do resilience hub work, I would be interested in they also hire many community health workers as well. So I also agree with councilmember Fuentes that if there is work that we can do and within our federal funds or the existing city

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budget to add more of those communities facing staffing levels of that help with resiliency and community health at our schools, I think that is something that I would really like to support and support whoever chooses to sponsor those amendments and work jointly on supporting that work. Ems is critical. I know we have asked from ems and fire and also the parks foundation as it relates to parks rangers as well as our civilian employees and their cost of living issues. Lastly, councilmember kitchen, I look forward to the conversation about Austin cares and that is something that saves us resources if we're able to match the right response to the kind of call. And the last thing I will mention is if the petition is verified that we will be taking a vote on whether to adopt the petition or not before the budget is that I

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would like through a general range estimate around how many police officers the petition has been turned into us would mandate hiring. I know law may have to provide us a range based on a range of interpretations, but the numbers I see circulating in the four hundred to five hundred range is significant and I think we should take that into consideration as we work on this budget. It sounds like we're struggling on to get done here is maybe four community health workers or 12 park rangers or nine medics for downtown or a dozen more firefighters? Obviously that difficult task would be made impossible if we were mandated to hire several hundred, up to five hundred more police officers next year. I support having cadet academies in this year's budget meaning we'll have new police officers, but also new firefighters. And also new ems as we also want to add 911 call takers. I think that comprehensive view of our budget is the

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right view it's important as we choose whether or not to adopt the petition for us to be able to recognize that a dozen park rangers are getting our libraries back open or nine ems, not only would that be impossible, but we may actually be looking at cuts if we're talking about 500 more positions. So any information from the cfo and the budget office on that I think will be important for our budget deliberations. >> Mayor >> Mayor Adler: Colleagues, anybody else? Council member kitchen >> Kitchen: This really relates to our conversations most likely around the funding we've -- that we've talked about already with regard to homelessness but I want to flag it for people because I know that may be on a separate track in terms of that

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conversation but I do want us to have a conversation at a right time about phase two of the heal initiative. It's been successful so far with two locations and there are two in the pilot. This is the initiative, as a reminder to everyone, is the initiative that offers people housing and services to put them on the path to permanent housing. And so we've had success with the library area and the manchaca Ben white area and two areas coming along coming up -- one along Cesar Chavez and coming up on 183. They've done a great job with

[9:49:45 AM]

individuals. At the same time I want to have a conversation about phase two moving forward with that. >> Mayor Adler: If we're having an update on homelessness in the context of the hotel there could be discussion on the heal where we're discussing the heal or those limitations. Council member alter >> Alter: Thank you. I've been -- I just want to go back to 9-1-1 that when we have the briefing we're talking about the right thing. I've been asking questions about -- since June and the data I have provide one snapshot but really is the concern of the people who are leaving -- whostaying, getting the training and leaving. We have a lot of long-standing

[9:50:52 AM]

valuable employees who are getting the training. But we have a new cohort and have to understand the new cohort. Some of the data doesn't focus us in on the challenge with the recruitment and retention and is -- you know, obviously we want to take care of our long-standing devoted employees but the problem that we're trying to address is not going to be revealed by a vacancy rate and term of how long they've been in service because when you do that, you're not measuring who's leaving, why they're leaving and understanding that piece of it. You know, and then there's also the issue of whether they're having the breaks they need to have and other kinds of stuff. So, you know, when we have that

conversation on Tuesday, really hope that we'll have the benefit of the conversations I know that have been going on with the city

[9:51:52 AM]

manager's office in that department but really focusing in on the challenge we're observing and figuring out, you know, this is the piece of the puzzle that's impacting everything else and this is what we need to solve for in helping us to understand what that is -- I think is really important because the piece was still superficial and didn't get at a lot of the pieces and what's going and how we need to address it from a management perspective from what I've been able to gather, trying to understand it and have conversations. >> Mayor Adler: Yes. Council Fuentes? >> Fuentes: I would be remiss if I didn't show my strong support for EMS, especially when we know lives are on the line and how

[9:52:54 AM]

time matters. We use the location in my district for services and cases more locally. I wanted to thank council members for bringing up -- I love that there will be cross-over and synergy with community health workers so I'm learning more and to offer my support. Thank you >> Mayor Adler: Council member Tovo >> Tovo: I agree that there's synergy. We -- as I talked with office voices and thought through some of the other departments, we're working on a question that looks -- I think we need to better understand where we're funding community health workers because they're in our neighborhood centers -- we're proposing -- aph has proposed to

[9:53:54 AM]

hire new ones and I think we funded through the family resources center an existing grant. Let's try to get information about where they exist in our budget and whether those are the right places to be funding as we have that conversation. So I have -- I was actually at the moment drafting that question. I'm going to send it on for the Q and A and we can go through there and sort out how best to proceed >> Mayor Adler: Colleagues? I would also ask to reiterate what council member Casar asked for. As part of the process -- even to consider the elements if it doesn't get supervised. I have concerns knowing the police chief does not support it and recommends that a metric

[9:54:56 AM]

that automatically increases the number of officers is the wrong metric to use, but from a budget standpoint I am interested in learning what the budget impact of that would be, both in near-term budgets and long-term budgets -- >> Excuse me, mayor. With your mask on -- >> Mayor Adler: Okay. I'm also asking -- reiterating what council member Casar asked for -- let us know relative to the budget process. I imagine we'll consider it if the petition is approved or even if the petition is not certified, whether or not we should be doing those elements. I express some concern knowing that the chief has expressed that the information in the metric is not something he supports as being the wrong kind of metric, but I'm interested in

[9:55:58 AM]

knowing what the impact would be short-term budget and long-term budget with respect to that metric if it were in our budget. There are so many things people are asking for today in terms of additional mental health intervention, ems personnel. We're opening up new fire houses. We need additional firefighters. There's questions about parks and personnel and opening up libraries, so I am concerned, and we just need to know what with the impact of that petition would be and the community needs to know. Anything else before we go into executive session? We'll do that. City council will go into closed session to take up some items. The city council will discuss legal issues related to items

[9:56:58 AM]

e-4, which is city of Austin, e-5, which is the potential election, and pursuant to the code, the council will discuss legal issues and matters related to e-2. Pursuant to the government code, we'll discuss personnel matters related to e-6, employment duties, evaluation of the city manager. E-1 and e-3 will not be heard on Thursday. With that we'll go into executive session. It's 9:57. Let's work our way back there.

[9:58:00 AM]

We'll gavel that in at 10:05. Give everybody a brief rest break. All right. We're in recess.

[11:13:31 AM]

[Music]. [Music].

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[Music].

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[2:02:55 PM]

>> Pool: Hello, everybody. I am Leslie pool, chair of the Austin energy oversight committee. We've come back from executive session and we're still in a break from the city council meeting so I will now call us into order for the Austin energy oversight committee meeting. And it is Friday -- Friday. It is not Friday. It's Tuesday, July 27, and it is 2:03 P.M. I see we have a quorum and staff and I see on the TV we have the staff who have reports. I think we're ready to go. I've called this meeting to

[2:03:55 PM]

order and item is citizen communication. We have one speaker M Paul Robbins. Hi, Paul, come on up to the microphone. You have three minutes. And could I ask our staff to do a timer for three months. Thanks. Welcome, Paul. >> Before you start could you cue the powerpoint presentation, please? Okay. Council, I'm Paul Robbins, an environmental activist and consumer advocate. On January 20th I filed a complaint with the city auditor's office to review the customer assistance program. Informally known as cpa, for giving some of its money meant for low income rate payers to the wrong people or for the wrong purpose. Cpa is administered by Austin energy. The Austin water contributes about \$10 million to cpa a

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year. On July 14th the city's water wastewater commission voted unanimously to recommend that council place an item on the appropriate council committee agenda to discuss an audit of cpa in the next fiscal year to assure that these relatively scarce funds to help the poor are spent properly. I handed out the resolution to be passed out to you in hard copy. Two problems discussed in the January complaint to the auditor is the continuing -- are the continuing problem of awarding money to customers with high real estate assets and the lack of income qualification of participants overall. This slide is of the "Austin american-statesman" story in -- on December 1st, 2014, so this has been going on about seven years now.

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Here are three examples of the continued abuse in 2020. This is a 7100 square foot mansion with a tennis court and swimming pool on four acres in a gated community. The owner had a second home receiving cpa. Hires a recently built home in old west Austin worth \$1.7 million receiving cpa. Here is a modest duplex in Austin receiving cpa. It would be understandable if the owner did not own five properties in corpus Christi, including this waterfront home, so the owner has total assets of about \$2 million. The second problem is that there is no income qualification for all participants, just because a cpa participant doesn't own a mansion does not mean they are poor. They might have high salaries, own stock portfolios or own expensive cars and jewelry.

[2:07:02 PM]

There could be thousands of cpa participants in this category, we simply do not know. Since Sacramento's utility runs an income qualified low income assistance program that serves more customers than Austin's, we should seriously evaluate this alternative since Austin energy will not take the initiative, I again ask for an auditor's -- [buzzer]. -- Review. Thank you. >> Pool: Thanks, Mr. Robbins. And we have no other speakers, is that correct? Great. Moving on to approval of minutes, can I have a motion, a motion from councilmember Kelly. And a second from councilmember Ellis? Are there any amendments or edits to the minutes? All right. All in favor of approving the minute from the June 12021 meeting of our overnight committee please raise your hand. And that looks like

[2:08:02 PM]

councilmember tovo is also voting for this, I guess. Thanks very much. All right. We have two more meetings for this year scheduled in item number 2 are the two dates for the oversight committee meeting. And I have them handy. They're also in the backup. And just to read them into the record, chair, I have them pulled up if it's helpful. >> >> Pool: That would be great. Are you showing Tuesday,

September 8 and Tuesday November 16? >> Yes. >> Pool: And a second by councilmember Kelly and -- motion by councilmember

[2:09:03 PM]

Kelly and a second by councilmember kitchen. And these are 1:30 on these Tuesdays. Any comment or changes to these? Councilmember alter. >> Are you please repeat the dates? >> September 28, November 16. And any other comment? All in favor please raise your hand? And that looks unanimous on the dais. Thanks so much. Item number 3 is the general manager's report. And general Sargent, I see her face there, smiling face. >> Good afternoon, chair, vice-chair, can you hear me? >> Pool: We sure can. >> And committee members. I'm Jackie Sargent, Austin energy general manager. In addition to the general manager's report today, vice-president of power production pat Sweeney will present the update on the decker creek power station

[2:10:04 PM]

workforce planning efforts. Next slide, please. I will begin today with a short briefing on five of Austin energy's upcoming requests for council action. The first item is to authorize a three-year multi-departmental contract with RFD and associates. Austin energy's projected cost is \$1.9 million. This contract provides contract licensing, maintenance and services for Oracle products that are critical for security and performance of data-based systems. The next item is authorization of a contract with peerless manufacturing for \$3.2 million. This contract will provide replacement for ammonia evaporation skids for the generating units at sand hill energy center. The next item is authorization of a three-year multi-departmental contract with software 1 for

[2:11:08 PM]

Microsoft office 365. Austin energy's cost is \$1.57 million. This contract will allow for the purchase of various Microsoft cloud products and technical support services. Next slide, please. The next item is a construction contract with J Reese contracts for the Rainey street gas insulated contract for \$12.5 million. As we told you a new substation is needed to serve the development and redevelopment along the waller creek area. Developing this new substation is critical to support the anticipated demand in load growth and to provide redundancy that allows for necessary upgrades at the Brackenridge substation. The last item is a construction item with key Witt infrastructure south

[2:12:08 PM]

for \$3.1 million. Through this project Austin energy will fulfill its requirements to enable the interconnection of a large full party solar cell generator with the ERCOT transmission grid. Next slide, please. Now I would like to announce that we have launched Austin energy's largest DC fast electric vehicle charging hub to date with eight units. This new electric vehicle infrastructure fittingly built on our previous collaboration of electric drive is sustainable mobility showcase for Austin. It uses the latest charge point dual standard technology with especially proved reliability and speed and it is ADA compliant. It is energized this month and open for business. Next slide, please. Lastly, I would like to mention an upcoming Austin energy event. On Friday, August 20th, the city will host its 13th

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annual affordable energy summit. More than 130 representatives from community service providers who work with limited income Austinites are expected to attend. The summit provides an opportunity for our community partners to learn more about the city's customer assistance programs and utility services. Attendees also network with other service providers and provide input on city of Austin utilities programs. These programs have provided \$16.9 million in bill assistance to our customers during fiscal year '20 and '21. Next slide, please. With that it concludes my general manager's report and I am happy to answer any questions that you have. >> Pool: Does anybody have any questions from the general manager on their report. Great. Thank you so much, miss Sargent. And I think we have item 4 is the update on the Decker

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street power plan. >> My name is Pat Sweeney, vice-president of power production for Austin energy. I have a brief update on our transition program that we've had underway for some time now at Decker as we contemplate the last steam unit shut down at a later point this year or beyond. As we go through that we've offered throughout this time several training opportunities to our team and more recently we've been conducting job shadowing. We've completed six additional job shadowings since our last update to you before the summer began. We have two more pending. Those go a little bit slower in the summer as we have our summer operations underway and our focus at that point is safe and reliable operation. We will continue those on through the summer and into the fall. In addition, we continue to offer training opportunities as well as career assessments for any who still need them and have

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completed two retirement education sessions with city of Austin employee retirement system. Overall, we continue to be on a good trajectory for employees who have taken retirement opportunities or new job opportunities within ae. I expect that trend to continue. That's my update. If you have any questions I will be happy to answer them. >> Does anybody have any questions for Mr. Sweeney? Yes, councilmember tovo. >> Tovo: Thanks, Mr. Sweeney. You cut out at just one moment and I couldn't tell if you had given us a number of the employments -- who had taken retirement opportunities or if you were just saying that some had. >> No. I just said some. I didn't provide a number. >> Tovo: Okay. Thank you very much. Do you have a sense of where we are with the numbers of individuals who have found other employment versus taken employment? >> Yes. We're at about 18 right now.

[2:16:16 PM]

That's a combination of retirements and taking other opportunities. >> Tovo: How does that break down between those two choices? >> It's roughly half and half, which is good. And we've got more folks that we expect will take some other opportunities, but, for example, we've been adding district cooling plants and we have some new openings to staff those plants coming up that we hope they'll take the opportunities for. As well as some folks who have further indications that we'll have some further retirements. So between those combinations and the ones that we've had, and I think the ones that likely to see, I think we're on a good path to winding down the operations of the steam unit. >> Tovo: Thank you. >> Pool: Anything else? Yes, councilmember Kelly. >> Kelly: Thank you for the information that you provided to us today. I was wondering if it was available in memo format or if you might be able to send one to us just for further

[2:17:17 PM]

review? >> I'm sure we can do that. >> Pool: Great, okay. So the last item, future items for our upcoming meetings. If anybody has anything to offer right now I'll take it, otherwise we can put something up on the message board. All right. Mayor, I think we are all done with our oversight committee meeting for Austin energy utility. And so I will adjourn that meeting now. And it is 2:17 P.M. >> Mayor Adler: Good job. Colleagues, let's go back to the executive session room and we'll continue the executive session meeting. Yes, councilmember alter. >> Alter: I have to leave at 2:30. I just wanted to flag the items that I was getting information on just so that others might know if they wanted to look at those

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items -- and I'm talking to staff and hoping that I'll get my questions answered tomorrow, but for items 4 -- >> Mayor Adler: Before you do that, if we're going to do that, then we're actually not reconvened out here. >> Alter: I'm sorry. >> Mayor Adler: So I'm going to go ahead and just say that -- I'm going to

convene the city council meeting now here at 2:18 P.M. While we were in executive session earlier this morning we discussed item e2, both legal and real estate matters. Item e6. And we're back out now. I'm going to recognize you to identify other cases -- other matters you have issues with and we're going to head back to executive session. Councilmember kitchen. >> Kitchen: Just a quick schedule question. So we're going back to executive session.

[2:19:19 PM]

When do you think we'll take up the meadows? I said earlier that I have to step out at 3:30. >> Mayor Adler: As soon as we get back. I don't think it will take us that long on the remaining. >> Kitchen: Okay. >> Mayor Adler: If so we'll come back out if we need to. >> Kitchen: Okay. I just have to step out at 3:30. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember alter. >> Harper-madison: Marx if I may, councilmember harper-madison here. I'm sorry, can you say the last thing you said? >> Mayor Adler: Yes, I've reconvened the council meeting here today on July 27th, 2021 at 2:18 P.M. I announced we were back from the executive session, but we're in recess, we're going to go back to there, but before we go back out to executive session I'm recognizing councilmember alter who may not be able to join us back out on the dais for her to let us know what are the issues she anticipates coming up on Thursday that she wants to daylight. >> Harper-madison: Thank

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you. >> Alter: And by the way, I exited the executive session thing because we couldn't figure out how to do it so somebody might have to turn the meeting back on in the room. So I just wanted to flag that I am meeting with staff about 4, which is the arr contract agreement. I'm talking with staff about 8 and 43. Again, I'm hoping that in most of those cases I'll just get my questions answered and I won't have to pull it, but I didn't want to surprise anybody on those since they're big items. And that I may have some questions. And then I do have some questions about the St. Jonse, but I think another -- the St. Johns and I think another colleague is

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addressing those. It's more about how we handle the lease versus own piece of that. I think somebody else will cover that. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. So with that at 2:21 we're going to recess the Austin city council meeting and let's go back to executive session and turn back on that system. [Executive session].

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>> Mayor Adler: We'll go ahead and reconvene the session for today. We are out of closed session. While we were in closed session, we discussed legal issues related to items e1, e3, e4, e5, matters related to e2, personnel matters related to items 4:6. 6. E-6. We're going to begin some discussion items, begin with the meadows foundation. But before that we have a message of utmost importance. >> Thank you, mayor and council, I just want to do take a moment to wish my daughter a very happy birthday today. She turns 12 today and she's actually out of town for the phyte away from her mom and dad. She's a lovely, bright little girl, and I hope that I make her proud in everything that I do up here on council and that she's just a bright light to

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all her friends. Happy birthday, Rebecca. I love you so much. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Happy birthday, Rebecca from all of us as well. All right. This meeting goes downhill from here. [Laughter] All right. Meadows foundation. >> Thank you. Mayor and council, this is a briefing on the meadows health policy institute report regarding the health initiative. This was the request of councilmember kitchen, we're going to have the topic introduced and we have a consultant on the line for at least another half an hour. >> City manager, again -- again assistant city manager -- there we go. Mayor and councilmembers, thank you for this update to provide an update on questions you may have, an interim report developed by the city's consultant, the meadows policy health institute. Joining me virtually is in the

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B. J. Wagner, the assistant chief Hoffmeister, a.p.d.'s assistant chief and Mr. Murry with critical care. By way of background, council included funding in the fy 19 budget for first response to mental health incidents. The city executed a contract with the institute in January 2019, and in may 2019, we released a report providing recommendations in six major areas. With the fy 21 budget, council included funding to hire a consultant to fully implement the recommendations from the 2019 report. October 1st, 2020, the city contracted again with the institute to fully implement the recommendations creating the Austin cares program with the goal of diverting 100% which do not pose a risk to public safety would be diverted from a law enforcement response. Since contract execution, staff

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and integral care have worked closely with the institute to advance the program and I want to recognize the hard work and dedication of this team that has worked through the challenges and accomplished a significant milestone of adding a fourth triage question, mental health services to the 9-1-1 answering script, allowing call operators to immediately identify calls with a potential mental health component, triage those calls, and transfer non-minuter mental health calls to lanced clinician. Today meadows has not identified any other department in the country including a mental health services component in the 9-1-1 triage option, making this uniquely an Austin innovation. I submitted the report to mayor and council on July 15th, which presents the current implementation status of the Austin cares program. It includes the status of the six recommendations. I'd now like to hand it over to Ms. B. J. Wagner to provide a brief overview of the six

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recommendations and status update of each. If you'd like to follow along, the interim report is provided as backup with today's item. Ms. B. J. Wagner. >> All right. Good afternoon, and thank you all for having me today. Can everybody -- I'm assuming that everybody can hear me. I hate to ask that question knowing that it's a crowded room. >> Mayor Adler: Yes, we can. Thank you. >> Wonderful. I want to start with providing a brief overview of what our recommendations were, and as we get to each recommendation, then giving a status update of where we are with that particular recommendation. So we start with recommendation number 1. You'll see that we recommended that the city of Austin have a mechanism for having an advisory or feedback to the chief of police regarding mental health calls, mental health emergency calls for service. We identified that the behavioral health criminal

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justice advisor committee, already in place, looked to be a good fit for this. The it had all the right disciplines, including people with this experience, mental health clinicians, hospitals, and justice professionals. The status of this particular recommendation, I'm very pleased to report, this is one that is fully completed. It was read into the minutes that the chief -- assistant chief of police would be providing regular updates to the behavioral health criminal justice advisory committee, and that the committee as a whole committee would review these activities and provide feedback to the chief's office and guidance, as well as provide recommendations for ongoing improvements to the city's mental health response for mental health emergency calls. And I'm happy to say that recommendation number one is completed. Recommendation number two, so that we recommended that the

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city of Austin, particularly the Austin police department, collaborate with name central Texas integral care, to create an evidence-based or research informed mental health crisis call, identification and management training for all call takers. When we were originally doing our assessment, we identified some areas in which mental health emergency calls were not identified as a point of dispatch, and outcomes were less than optimal for those persons seeking help. And when we looked at the Texas training, Texas commission on law enforcement's crisis training for at all takers and dispatchers, it was not sufficient to cover topics identifying when an unstated mental health emergency is present, but also how to ensure that the right resources were going, and then also take into consideration a growing body of research on one of the most impactful variables for the outcome of mental health

[4:17:34 PM]

emergency calls, and that's what the dispatcher says to the officer en route. And so there's no existing training that takes that into consideration. I do want to identify that integral care in the Austin police department did a lot of work in providing mental health first aid training to the dispatchers and call takers in the 9-1-1 center, so that foundation is laid, but we need to move beyond that and create a research informed training that addresses the very things that led to some tragic outcomes in the city of Austin. So on the mental health training for call takers, we spent quite a bit of time developing some buy-in, project buy-in, getting on board and developing willpower and paths forward to create this training. I'm happy to say we are now in the curriculum development process. Our partners have what we call a mega outline, so we've created a curriculum outline

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for the training. We've also assigned to each particular discipline who's going to continue to develop that piece of the training, and we've asked that all of our partners from integral care to the police department have that information back to us by targeted dates at the end of next week. Once they get these drafts back by the end of next week, we can then compile it into one full curriculum body for review by external stakeholders. The career police institute, the executive advisory board is made up of persons with experience, academics, social scientists, police chiefs, and community members from across the state. So our first goal is to have that board review the training and provide feedback. So hopefully by the end of August, we'll have a completed curriculum, and it will be one -- again, an opportunity for Austin to take the state and national stage of having created a first of its kind training that helps call takers

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identify those unspoken crises and provide an appropriate response to avoid tragedy. We're somewhat behind where we wanted to be on this particular goal. It's taking us a little longer to get this curriculum developed, but hopefully we'll have this finished for y'all by the end of August and be able to have a good training schedule and facilitator's guide in place. Before we move, we have recommendations 3 through 6 remaining. Since I've covered two, I want to pause to see if y'all have any questions before I move to the next recommendation. >> Kitchen: Mayor, I have a question. Thank you very much, and I also want to say thanks -- thank you very much to everyone that's been involved with ubj in getting -- in implementing this over the last year Arellano and all the folks that are on the call. This is such an important program, and I really

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appreciate the efforts that you all are putting into it. I did have one question on number two. I want to understand what the timeline is after getting the curriculum ready to go, if I'm understanding correctly, the end of September is the time frame that the curriculum may be ready to implement. At this point in time, is there a plan for implementation and a timeline for implementation? >> One thing, to have the curriculum finalized, we actually had he paid to have the training completed by the end of September, but we're not able to get all of the training done before the end of September. Our goal is now to have the curriculum designed by the end of August and then develop a training schedule. We are not adding any more than -- I think we have six hours of current topics to be added to the eight hours of foundation that was laid with the mental health first aid. So every -- every call take her taker

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will need to go through the additional hours of training. We'll have to work with the police department to put that schedule together. Understand that there are some staffing concerns and some workforce band width concerns regarding pulling some dispatchers offline to go through training. We will have to be creative to see how we can get all of the dispatchers through a training now within 12 months. >> Kitchen: Would it be -- last question, and then you can go on. Would it be possible to actually put together the schedule by the time the curriculum is done, so when we have the curriculum done at the end of November, we would also know what the schedule is? You know, we are, as you said, running behind, and if we take a whole year to have to train folks, I think that's -- I'd like to move faster to the extent that it's possible. So I would just request that you all consider, acm Ariana, if you would consider having the schedule done by the end of

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September to we can have whatever conversation is necessary before how to get it had implemented.
>> Yes, counselor, we can do that. >> Kitchen: Okay. >> I know from our end, we'll absolutely be able to help the police department pull a schedule together. We've pulled together schedules to train 3600 officers within 10 months in some previous engagements, so I'm certain that we can absolutely pull the schedule together and master it with some curriculum, even if it means two-hour blocks, we'll be creative to make sure we get that done. >> Kitchen: Thank you. >> Then the mental health integrated dispatch was recommendation number 3. And that included adding the fourth option of saying mental health, when 9-1-1 is answered, it was one of the first things that we were able to accomplish, accomplished that in February. And then the next step has been to create a call tree to ensure that we can move as many calls that don't pose a risk to public safety as possible, to a mental health clinician, but also to retain that clinical

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consultation. That was borne from our assessment. When we looked at calls that had some unfortunate outcomes, and determined that there would perhaps have been likely a benefit to consultation, if the officer had had additional information and route. So this one posed two goals. One, to route as many calls as possible away from a police response, but to also ensure that that police response had high quality clinical consultation when they have to go. We have created a consultation policy. We've also created a call tree that will guide decision making for dispatchers to be able to send as many calls as possible to the clinical counselor, to the ccd, thec3, the call center clinician. We're looking at data now. There's some data work that needs to be done. The data is not very clear on what often the deciding factor is to spend that call. So while we have the policy in

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place and we have the call trees in place, there appears to be some subjectivity, which is not unheard of in public safety work. Public safety work is from a foundation of risk aversion. You have to operate from risk aversion to keep the people in your community safe. We understand there's going to be some risk aspects to changing the call center, but now we need to dig a little deeper in to see what are some of the barriers remaining to move calls that do not pose a risk to public safety to a mental health clinician. Some of that may be coding. A dispatcher may code a call that to a public safety professional, doesn't look like it has a mental health nature to it at all. And that's simply because mental health health nature coding is not secondhand to dispatching. So we're going to start taking a harder look at the data to see why these calls are not being moved over at the rate that we would anticipate that they would be. I believe that the policies are solid. I believe that the call tree is solid. I know that the dispatchers have been trained on both, the

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call takers and dispatchers have been trained on both. So our next step over the next 30 days is to work with our team and A.P.D. Communications and with the folks over at integral care. I know Don Henley has been a huge champion of moving as many calls as possible over to her clinicians, to see if we can't identify those hidden barriers, whether it's a nature coding or what have you, to getting these calls moved when a police response is not necessary. And so for recommendation number 4, sustainability of [inaudible] Including health expansion, we need to develop some buy-in and develop additional rapport around what does telehealth look like, is it a temporary or end to end service, how can it be a best service to expand the workforce across the city of Austin, and expand it again not only to just police, but to ems.

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I find myself saying frequently, including when I'm on calls to other departments across the country, that Austin is doing something that we've not seen in other cities before. One is peace in dispatch, but expanding telehealth with symmetry to the police department, as well as to ems is something, again, that other cities are not doing. That's typically done in a silo, where telehealth for ems is done for medical purposes and telehealth for the police department is done for what they call mental health. But we believe that mental health is a medical need, so it should be with ems and with the police department. We have developed a utilization guide, if you will, that has some officer-friendly language. We discovered pretty early on in this particular implementation that some of the language that was being provided to the officers was actually creating a bit of hesitancy to the officers to use telehealth. They perceived it as additional step rather than a care-giving

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step of service. And so now they recognize or are beginning hopefully to recognize that telehealth is a part of the trusted em program that they know and have used for so long. We believe that the utilization guide will appoint the officers with that comfort. I know the police department is continuing to provide the utilization guide to their officers and to encourage the use of telehealth -- telehealth and expansion. The baker sector, the patrol sec to her known as the baker sector has been fully implemented. The Charlie sector is in process now and David sector will be next. We have a work plan that we will identify that should allow baker, as well as Charlie and David, to be fully implemented by the end of August. We really don't see any barriers to that now, other than time or workforce band width, but we believe that you will have in your city baker Charlie and David, which are the majority of the sectors identified in our report, implemented by the end of

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August. And because the ems partners and Andy can probably provide better explanation of this, the software that they use is already in place on the ambulances to connect to telehealth, their implementation roll-out will be a little bit easier than having to provide the op heads to all of the patrol units to A.P.D. The op head distribution has slowed this down quite a bit and the ems will not have that particular easier. So we expect to see ems roll out just as quickly as A.P.D. Did I get that right, Andy, the software piece? >> Yeah. Yes. >> Kitchen: I do have questions about 3 and 4. Bj, would you rather finish before I ask any more questions? >> Oh, no, I think we can go ahead with questions right now, actually. >> Kitchen: All right. Let me go back to number 3, because number 3 is really kind of -- I mean these are all very

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critical and important recommendations. Number 3 kind of gets at the heart of our goal, which is to, you know, divert 100% -- 100% goal of diverting the calls that can be diverted. So if I'm hearing correctly, there's still work to be done that may be data-related, but there's barriers that need to be identified that are reducing the number of calls that are being diverted, if I understood that correctly. So when you gave an example of one that maybe relates to coding or data, do you have -- can you tell us a little bit about the -- what the timeline is there for identifying those barriers? And do you have a sense of what the next steps are in the timeline for that to get closer to our 100% goal? >> Absolutely. I think the primary barrier here is going to be achieving a comfort level of diversion within your call center.

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Again, public safety agencies operate on the principle of risk aversion, and that's absolutely necessary. We certainly would never recommend dismissing a protocol when it's well-placed. For instance, some of the feedback that we get states that a call may be miscoded because it was sent to -- it had a mental health services code applied when it was not appropriate. But nobody can say really why it wasn't appropriate. And so we have to dig a little deeper to see, is that objective, was there a weapon involved, was there significant fault in progress involved or something like that, or was it subjective, did somebody think it was not an appropriate call because it was not something they would normally assume was a mental health emergency. That again is not necessarily specific to Austin. Some of the most frequent mental health emergency calls that we see when we look at

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national, as well as state data, come from things that are otherwise coded as a disturbance or as a family disturbance, or as a welfare check, a 9-1-1 hang-up. Those calls have a lot of risk involved with them. So we have to make sure, and our next steps are to work with our communications team at A.P.D., to make sure the call tree training is being integrated with high fidelity, that the call tree training is being taught as it is to the dispatchers, to be able to make decisions based on a risk matrix. And that we're thinking about mental health services as not simply being when somebody says this is a mental health emergency, but being able to identify when this call that may have otherwise been assumed to be a disturbance, is a mental health emergency. That's a big culture change in the call center. So over the next 30 days, we want to go through and ensure that the dispatchers have received high fidelity training to the call tree. We want to take a good, hard

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look at those calls that folks are saying have been miscoded and get an understanding of why they perhaps said that a mental health code should not have been on that call, and how we can overcome some of those concerns and create a comfort level in the dispatch center to divert these calls to mental health professional 2. >> Kitchen: Okay. Thank you. That's another item I think we'll want to continue to hear feedback on. So if you want to keep going through your recommendations. >> Absolutely. So recommendation number 5 was to collaborate with the A.P.D. Crisis center intervention team and the community health paramedic program. In the report itself, we identified that Austin -- well, as a standard practice, the crisis center team at the Austin police department received mental health referrals and then determined where they need to be navigated to. Where we recommended is the chips program, on are the community health paramedics

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program, actually become into the that navigation process so that you have a medical agency, navigating medical needs, rather than having a police department determine whether this was a medical need. And so our next steps there are to -- I believe we have an appointment next week to finish mapping that process to determine how all of these referrals are coming into cit and identify a risk matrix that can be automated within the system so that the ones that have a public safety risk are the only ones that the police department are managing. And then those that need a health care follow-up will be -- will be navigating out of the chips program. The workforce band width, we'll have to take a close look to ensure the chip and cit band widths can do this integration. Frankly, it's so heavy now,

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it's not sustainable, I believe in the long-term, in its current phase, so there will have to be some kind of an adjustment or some kind of a change. We've recommended that em cott be part of this as well, but the end goal is to have year health care agency navigating health care referrals and not having the police department navigating those referrals. We're going to map that process next week. We're going to put in an old-fashioned white board, map it out and find the points where we can move this out of the police department and move it into chp when a public safety risk is not involved. >> Kitchen: I would just emphasize there that follow-up is critical because these are folks that cycle in and out of the system constantly, in and out of emergency rooms, in and out of our emergency response system, and so not only do we need to divert and handle the calls as they come in as mental health calls, but we immediate -- we need to follow up to do what we can

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to prevent this from happening again for that individual. So thank you. >> Absolutely. And you'll notice that -- if you're following along with the interim report, we are behind in recommendation number 5. The recommendations 1 through 4 have all been quite a heavy lift at a time that I believe the cit unit has seen some workforce migration away from their particular unit, so we've not had as many staff members as we would hope, and so this one continues to be tabled a bit until we were able to check off 1 through 4. We really intend to hit the ground running with this one. I do not believe this will be fully implemented by the end of September, but you will certainly have a complete game plan and map where there's no reason it should be able to be implemented, if not by the end of October, by the end of the fiscal year -- by the end of the calendar year, excuse me. >> Kitchen: So just quickly

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then, do you feel like the resources will be there to compliment it? Or do we need to be asking questions about resources? >> I believe that the resources were provided when chp received some additional resources. The resources at cit, frankly, are not robust enough to continue to manage the workload as it is. So if there's not a shift, I think you're going to see a tremendous workforce burden on that particular cit unit that is not able to maintain the current caseloads that they have. So there has to be a shift out of cit, even if this recommendation wasn't in there, I think that you guys would be looking at making a change to that particular workforce burden at some point. The resources are there. The workforce resources to do the planning have been strained a bit, as folks have migrated out of cit. But I believe that we can provide them with enough support to get the plan underway now. >> Kitchen: Okay. >> And in recommendation number

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number6, this is a place where I'm very excited about the progress that has been made. We made recommendation number 6 when we looked at use of force, a response to resistance Dade data, and we noticed there was statistically increases in use of force or response to resistance in certain Spanish speaking neighborhoods, where there were also high levels of poverty. And so we created the recommendation to follow along with the national -- what to do when you call 9-1-1 campaign, and it was to create call cards or pocket cards that officers could hand out in these identified neighborhoods that gave specific information in the Spanish language on what to say when you call 9-1-1 and what to do when the officer arrives. And then we also are putting that in simple Chinese so that it can be handed out in some neighborhoods that also had increased instances of use of

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force in that particular area. You'll notice map 11 of the big report. And so we have worked with Nani central Texas, and A.P.D. -- I want to give a big shout out to Karen reynes, I don't know if she's on the call but she's been a tremendous backbone here in moving this particular recommendation forward, and have created a pocket card that has very austin-friendly language but also culturally specific language on what to do when you call 9-1-1 and what to do when the officer arrives, that's being translated now into Spanish and Chinese, and it'll be on that map, just on routine patrol, to be handed out when they go to calls to be, to be left at churches, restaurants, or the like, but

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make to make these cards available. We're also working on a two-pager that can be taken to a community event. If they're holding a mental health event, they can have a longer document that discusses not only what to do when you call 9-1-1 and what to do when an officer arrives, but all of the good services that integral care offers for crisis prevention, as well as crisis response services. I believe that the translation will be completed -- let me check my notes here -- it's been September back to translation, that they should be finished within the next two weeks, then the printing process can begin. So I would expect to see these in your neighborhood by the end of August if not early September. >> Kitchen: Okay. Thank you. >> And it's something else that I'm excited about and if you don't mind me sharing, I was speaking with a large police department in the northern area of our country who was very%-@interested in this specific%-@recommendation because it's an%-@issue that they have been%-@looking to solve and had tried%-@to approach through things like%-@expensive social media%-@campaigns, posters, community%-

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@network personnel who would do%-@personal outreach and such in%-@town, and they had not thought%-@of the idea of giving pocket%-@cards to their officers to hand%-@out, because we know that%-@officers are making much more%-@frequent community contact than%-@anybody else.%-@and so again, I S in a piece of%-@your Austin cares project that%-@could very well have a national%-@impact.%-@p>> Kitchen: Thank you.%-@I have no are questions but I'm%-@going to let -- I think%-@councilmember Casar might have a%-@question.%-@he looks like he might.%-@p>> Mayor Adler: I also want to%-@give a chance to our first%-@responders to be able to speak.%-@p>> Kitchen: Go for it.%-@p>> Mayor Adler: If there's%-@anything that you wanted to say%-@about how this is rolling out%-@or its impact, I want to give%-@you a chance to do that.%-@>> Mayor, I'm not sure if%-@that's directed at anyone in%-@particular.%-@I can speak for ems and the%-@group at large, if that's --%-@P>> Mayor Adler: That would be%-@good.%-@>> Ye

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ah.%-@I think -- I am -- I'm very%-@pleased to say that this is%-@part of a culture shift within%-@the first responder -- changing%-@the way we respond and serve%-@those that are experiencing a%-@mental health crisis.%-@culture shifts don't happen%-@very quickly, so I'm excited to%-@be implementing some things in%-@a variety of different ways,%-@both on the ground, in the call%-@center, telehealth, and so%-@it'll take some time to figure%-@out which intervention we've%-@made or implementation we've%-@made that is yielding the%-@greatest success and focus%-@efforts as we move forward%-@there.%-@and some tangible changes that%-@I've seen, I keep -- our mdc,%-@our dispatch data, through%-@today, just keeping an eye on%-@what's going on. I'm%-@interested particularly in%-@psychiatric

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calls, to see that%-@the officers are requesting a%-@chb unit or looking for those%-@alternatives to a standard%-@police response, I think is%-@showing that it's not just%-@something that you write in the%-@policy and is done, but it's%-@actually taking -- taking%-@effect, in the field, taking%-@effect and impacting our%-@experience in the crisis.%-@it's kind of where the rubber%-@meets the road and we're seeing%-@results there .%-@P>> Mayor Adler: Sounds good.%-@what about from a policing%-@perspective?%-@I don't know if the chief --%-@>> It's chief F guajardo.%-@I agree with andy.%-@I think that a lot of the work%-@that we looked at and a lot of%-@the successes that we've seen%-@were successes in collaborating%-@with integral care.%-@obviously, we've got a lot of%-@national attention, and I can%-@let him speak to this

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, national attention with the clinicians' input at communications and our ability to add that fourth option, which, as Ken can attest to, is the first of its kind in the nation. So looking at it from a collaborative standpoint, looking at making sure that we're able to, if you will, reimagine how we provide our resources and our mental health services in a better way, and working hand in hand with integral care. From our standpoint, that's how we looked at the biggest success that we had, entering thing clinicians into communications. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Anybody else? >> Kitchen: I don't know if integral care, if don is there, if she wants to say anything from integral care's

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perspective. >> Thank you, mayor. I appreciate the opportunity to be able to be here today and talk about all the fantastic work we're doing as a group. What I can tell you, we've taken over three times as many calls to our 9-1-1 call center as we did all of last year, so I think we're trending in the right direction for sure. The training made a difference, being able to ask folks when they called if it's a mental health crisis, made a difference, being 24/7 with more than one staff on the floor, 9-1-1 has made a difference, so just being more accessible; right? So we've had more opportunities to take more calls. We've really staffed up during those peak times so that we can be available to take calls, and we've also -- are working more closely with ems in that 9-1-1 call center. We're quite proud of that. We've made more than one presentation to folks up in D.C. Some of the congressional staffers are interested. So I think we're doing good work and I've enjoyed working

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with my colleagues and partners in making a difference for our -- for our community. And we're happy that we're turning our focus on mental health here, crises being a health care crisis. >> Mayor Adler: Ms. Hadley, thank you. I want to give Ms. Murphy and Greg a chance to speak. We have 30 minutes left, 15 minutes for each of our last two presentations. So wiring going to move there. If you have additional questions, you can submit them or we can pull them back. Mr. Murphy, did you want to add anything to the conversation? >> Good afternoon, mayor and city council. Was that directed at me? >> Mayor Adler: Yes. I just wanted to give you a chance if you wanted to say something. >> Yes, sir. Thank you. No, the project is moving forward, as don said, we are making great strides, and it's -- we are a flagship for this project for the entire country, I can tell you that

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much. My integral care counterpart and I have spoken with 47 different agencies across the country about our program, and we had a three-day visit from Des Moines, Iowa, two weeks ago, who came

down specifically to look at our program. So while we can make improvements, we are constantly looking at areas we can make those improvements to make the program more effective. However, I am very proud of the work our folks have done in collaboration with integral care and EMS and with the mental health institute on this project. So thank you all for your support with the project. >> Mayor Adler: Great. Thank you. Councilmember Casar, you want to close this out? >> Casar: I will. I want to thank each of you here on this call. I've seen your chart of tasks and it's the most monster chart I've ever seen, I know it's a lot of work to implement our goals here. I will cut my questions just down to one because we're short on time. Do we have an estimate of how

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much -- how many more calls we think we can divert? We have the goal that you all have set or we have collectively set of 100% of mental health calls, where there isn't immediate risk to the responder, for it to be diverted, do we have a sense of both -- in the context of how much we are doing now, and then how much with some of the changes and the recommendations that you've presented here, how much more we think we can do? >> I say to know how much we're doing now, what the percentage of calls without a risk to public safety are, we need to dig a little bit more deeply into the manner in which that data is collected and measured to make sure that everybody's measurements are consistent and also valid. And then we'll have a specific number. But I also believe that once fully implemented with high fidelity, you will see at least

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85%, which was I believe the contract stated goal, or greater diversion of all calls without a public safety risk to a mental health professional. That is the way the program is designed, and I believe that this group here in Austin will achieve that before anybody else in the country. >> Casar: That would be great because one of the questions was going to be what do we need to do to be 2 best in the 2 the best in the country, it sounds like that's what we are already headed to do. I thank you and I appreciate Ms. Wagner, having your health from a national perspective, to help lead that culture change that we are all trying to drive. So please, manager, Ms. Wagner or any of our chiefs, if it looks like there's something that this council needs to do to help us achieve that best in the criteria goal of well over 85%, then I think please do come to us, but it's good to see there's this substantial progress. >> Kitchen: Mayor, I have five seconds. >> Mayor Adler: Okay.

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Five seconds. >> Kitchen: Ms. Wagner, do you have a timeline in mind that you think we should -- that we should touchback with you on where we're at on the numbers that councilmember Casar asked

about? I understand that there's more work that needs to be done in analyzing those, but do you have a thought on when we might get that done? >> I would like to give us at least four, if not five weeks, because we want to -- again, I want to give a nod to the amount of work that Ken and his crew over in communications are already having to do and make sure that we can do this with good quality and not rush them through it. But I want to be able to pull the call data that we have and clean it really well and understand, is this still some -- in the nature coding, how to identify that, and the reasons why people are thinking health

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codes should not be applied to some codes. That's going to have to be a mission we're all going to have to undertake. I would say if not four, at least five weeks to dig into that data, and check with us perhaps early September maybe and we'll have some better answers then. >> Kitchen: Thank you I think that would be helpful, and if -- >> Kitchen: Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: If you can give that to us, I think that would be helpful as well. Thank you for this work. It's a isn't it a fact of part of reimagining, how we do public safety, I think this is cutting edge work that we're doing for the rest of the country and is really important work, in the right direction. It's going to bring a lot of benefits to the community. We're going to spend 15 minutes on homelessness, 15 minutes on covid. We're up to 60 admissions

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today, over a hundred people in the icus. So I want to make sure that we get to that topic today. >> Cesar: And then the pulled item. >> Mayor Adler: And then we have the pulled item. >> Mayor? That takes us beyond our 5:15 so I'm not sure how we're going to accomplish that within our remaining time. Are we posted on Thursday for anything that would allow us to have a fuller presentation about the designated camping? I know we have lots of community members who are really interested in that subject, so I'm just -- >> Mayor Adler: Yes, I think we could address that in the context of the two hotels that are being extended, I think it's germane to that conversation. >> Tovo: Yeah. Because I have quite a bit I'd like to ask about and talk about, and I just know we'll not get to it today. So I appreciate -- my colleagues may want to at least start the subject, but if we could make space for it on

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Thursday, that would really be ideal. >> Mayor Adler: We'll make sure we bring it up in the context, at least on those two items, maybe more, but before we pass today, if there's any councilmember that wants to address this subject from the dais now, I want to give them opportunity to do that. >> I know there are people at home waiting, because they're curious about this topic. I didn't want to preempt if there's anything to share, but I wanted a chance to speak today and I'm happy to discuss it also on

Thursday too, I think it is an important topic. >> Mayor and council, again, we are prepared with a presentation. Clearly we won't have the time to go through that. We also just want to do review the memos that have come out since we were last able to have a public work session on this topic, but I don't know if

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Ms. Gray or officer -- maybe we can skip to the end of the presentation and just kind of do the bottom line up front if that's helpful, just to talk about where we're currently at and then any additional direction that we're going to need from council. >> I'm Diana gray, I'm a strategy officer, mayor, councilmembers, very happy to be here and particularly to see your faces in person. So today's briefing is focused on the directive of council to explore the possibility of the creation of designated encampment for people experiencing homelessness on city-owned property. You may recall that that resolution was passed in February of this year. There have been multiple intermediate reports looking at the properties that were available in the city portfolio, starting with over 70, providing council with the criteria that we were utilizing to look at those, providing some cost estimates, et cetera. The last memo, which was delivered last week, narrowed

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that to the two that were most apt, not perfect, but seemed to fit the criteria most closely. I want -- we do have here today to answer questions and to go through sort of, I think, process details that we think are critical to sort of the overall outlook for this, from zoning, from dsd, et cetera, but if we can go to the last page of the presentation. Or perhaps I'll just tell you what's on the last page of the presentation. >> Tovo: I don't mean to interrupt but can we make sure these get posted to the backup, to the public and council, also the covid briefing? >> Mayor Adler: This is the entire report. Yes. >> I think in summary, as we've gone through this now three-month process, with a lot of staff involved, a lot of time dedicated, and frankly a lot of, I think, interest,

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concern, expressed on the part of the community, is that, a, there were fewer city properties that seemed to be appropriate, based on the criteria that we have established, and that, in fact, it will take us some time to gain the entitlements that would be necessary to put such a property into service, and that that timeline would also take us past the September 1 date, upon which the new state law goes into effect, which would also require us to acquire state approval for the operation of such a campsite. We previously, I think, reported to you that the minimum we thought operating cost of these sites

would be somewhere between 1.3 and \$1.8 million a year. And, again, I think that is a preliminary estimate. So while we certainly want to

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be investing in crisis services and crisis beds for this population, it is not free. Finally, I think important and we have cpio here to speak to this as well, technical because of the newness of this model, because of what with it conjures for people in terms of what undesignated campments look like right now, there really would need to be a more extensive community engagement process before we -- I think we could move forward. So that, in and of itself, of course has implications in terms of staff time and resource. And all of this, I think, is in the context which we can also talk about either today or otherwise perhaps on Thursday, of other efforts that staff is engaging in to try to find in as agile a way as possible, crisis beds, which address the needs of our unsheltered

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population, respond to some degree about the concerns, about the implementation of the camping ban, meaning that people who might be particularly medically fragile or vulnerable to victimization, moving into areas that are less visible. So I think, began, we think that this is one of the options we have. We view this as a relatively resource-intensive endeavor from the perspective of both time and staff resource and financial resources, in the context of some other options that we do have. So with that I will pause and answer questions, and we have several folks from other departments here to answer the more technical questions you might have. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember Ellis. >> Ellis: Thank you, mayor for recognizing me. And I do appreciate you and your team working so hard on this. I know these are not easy conversations to have. I came into this conversation with an open mind and wanting

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to of a desire to look at the situation holistically and objectively. And with a strong commitment to do what's best for both our housed and unhoused neighbors in Austin. I supported the idea of exploring sanctioned encampments when we passed councilmember tovo's resolution and worked with the help of some of my constituents. I've also supported councilmember kitchen's heal initiative, which seems to be going smoot smoothly, purchase of hotels for housing, investing in supportive services, workforce programs and every other strategy that staff and the summit have outlined. We can all agree that we want to get folks off the street through safe and practical solutions, and when the news broke of the proposed locations in district 1 and 8 on Monday, which caught a few of us by surprise, we immediately started to receive calls from our constituents, worried about schools and day cares nearby, the lack of infrastructure and transportation, wildfire risks

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and a number of other concerns that we know is on city staff's radar as well. My team and I spent all of last week assuring folks that no decisions had been made yet, and if any encampments were to be ultimately approved, the road to get there would be long and it would be throw. We've had one-on-one conversations with constituents, hosted meetings with neighbors, I've talked with city staff and some of my colleagues. I've also spoken at length with the mayor pro tem who isn't here at the moment but is watching remotely. After a week of extremely difficult conversations, lots of research into best practices, and a good deal of reflection, the mayor pro tem and I agree that we should table this strategy for the time being. We believe our city's limited dollars and time would be better spent on getting folks into permanent housing rather than the band-aid tactics when we should be focusing on real long-term strategies that we've seen work. We'd like us to invest our money in proven solutions as have been outlined in the

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summit findings, as well as in our affordable housing goals. Both the mayor pro tem and I have long been advocates for abundant affordable housing and for practical and humane pathways to housing for those living without it right now. But at this time the tactic seems to be way more complicated than the benefits that we'd be able to realize. Instead, I'd like us to take a pause and stay the course on the solutions that we know will work. We have seen encampment and tiny home strategies executed really well by nonprofit organizations such as community first and the other foundation at camp Esperanza, we should focus on bridge and housing options as we have in the past. Through our upcoming budget we're making historic investments to combat homelessness. Let's spend that wisely on proven solutions. Again, I sincerely appreciate the work that staff is putting into this because I know that this is a difficult road, and I

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know that your team is very committed to finding workable solutions for our community. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Any further comments on this? We're going to come back to this on Thursday. We're going to discuss it at length. I have a lot I want to say on this, too. I imagine a lot of us do on the dais. Yes. Councilmember Kelly. >> Kelly: Thank you. I wanted to make a clarifying point in the beginning of your presentation, you mentioned this past February, my understanding is that the heal initiative was in February, and on may 6th, item number 70 -- >> Yes, I apologize. >> Kelly: Okay. I just want to do clarify that for the record, for the public to know the timeline. I appreciate that. I look forward to future discussions on this subject and I'm thankful that councilmember Ellis let us know what her thoughts were

today. Thank you for sharing that with us. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember tovo. >> Tovo: Yeah, thank you. So I think I need to clarify with you, Ms. Gray, are you suggesting -- are you making a

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recommendation that we continue to think about the strategy of designated camping areas, or are you suggesting that the time frame under which we would need to consider and then get entitlements for tracks and continue the review, it would take us behind September? I wasn't sure -- I know you're truncating your presentation so that makes it really challenging. Feel free if you would like to address this, instead on Thursday, but I didn't know if I was hearing a recommendation for moving from one direction to another. >> I think that what we would like to express today is that we would like some direction from council on this front. We are moving forward on various fronts to look at crisis capacity. This moving forward with an integrity and appropriate resources, in this particular area, will require substantially more staff time. It will take longer, I think, than initially was hoped, and it will take financial

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resources. And so I think that my recommendation is simply that council let us know if they would like us to proceed, we would like to see some of those resources identified. It is probably not viable for my team, and even with the substantial support of the other departments, to do this without some explicit, I think, commitment on the part of the body. >> Tovo: Thank you very much. And I hope, mayor, that we can have that conversation in a fuller way, if not on Thursday, then on Tuesday -- let me preface my next comments by saying, as I mentioned in a different setting, one of the two sites is -- yes, falls in district 1, but it is immediately across the street from district 9, so I have also been hearing from many, many constituents about this, and so I appreciate you continuing to clarify that these were -- this is -- these are two sites that are continuing to be in consideration, but are not

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moving forward on -- they are not scheduled for a vote or any kind of action at this point, and I know you've participated in some -- in at least one meeting that my office helped facilitate with some of those neighbors, both in district 1 and district 9. I certainly understand all of the challenges you're describing, and I understand all of the reservations that may exist. I think the challenges for our body is what are the alternatives. So, you know, majority of this council voted for comma a. To undesignated encampments, when that majority -- and I was not in it -- voted to lift the camping ban. And so we have had undesignated camping areas throughout our city, and they have caused enough concern among the surrounding community, and with their operation, this it is now making it, I believe, more

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challenging to do some of the housing strategies that we were already implementing prior to that, and some of the ones that we are now undertaking. And we have a very real problem before us in that with the passage of proposition B, we have people who are now required, under the city ordinance, to move from those sites, and we don't have places to offer to them to go. And so this -- this is, as we always talked about, is not an ideal strategy of having designated camping areas. It is resource-intensive. We want to be spending our resources for permanent housing opportunities and services to help people be successful in those, but we also don't have places -- those strategies take longer, and people need places to go now. So I don't -- this is a dilemma. And I don't have a resolution to that. So I hope that that's something we can take up on Thursday, knowing that the housing strategies that are really

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better options take more time. What shall we tell people in the meantime? I have several constituents who have emailed me multiple times now, asking, with the passage of proposition B, where would I suggest they go. And I don't yet have an answer to that question. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember Casar. >> Casar: Yeah. I mean, to that point, I, and I think all of us, have received some of those questions, and I know you, councilmember tovo, have likely received that even more given that your district has more unhoused people than any other part of the city. And we -- I and many of us on the dais, and many community leaders and most of the people that worked on services for those experiencing homelessness, made it very clear, both when we were considering criminal penalties associated with camping, and during the decisions around proposition B, that there would not be enough places for 1500 people to lay their heads at

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night if laying your head at night outside -- you know, outside of a shelter was to be criminalized. The fact of the matter is, even if we could move more quickly on some of these, that there simply -- we knew, everybody knew, on all sides of that campaign, that there would not be enough places for all 1500 people to go, which is the very reason that I could not support it. The goal was to add more places for people to go, and then you could -- and then it would make more sense to say you can't be here, you can't be here, because there are plenty of places for people to go. So now our job is to add those places in the interim as quickly as we can, and I hear what you're saying, Ms. Gray, that your office has limited resources to try to add those places. And, you know, some of those places -- we have voted to increase the amount of shelter space and permanent supportive housing space quite a bit here

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in this last year. Some of those locations were -- the ones that I'm most familiar with are the ones I've been most involved with in my district, multiple hotel properties, a former retail space that we're breaking ground on here next week to house 171 individuals, people that have four walls and a kitchen and a bathroom. And so I believe that we can achieve shelter in all different forms, but I want our staff resources to be dedicated towards helping as many people as we can, as quickly as we can, as effectively as possible, and so I'm looking forward to a longer conversation, but I am not committed to it being tiny houses, I'm not committed to it being new beds in our existing shelters, I'm not committed to it being hotels or campsites, I want it just to be the best thing that it is that we can do. So if the answer is that we are struggling to set up a certain kind of campsite, but instead we can set up tiny homes, or instead there's a hotel that we can lease and it can help just

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as many people, but they also might have a bathroom and four walls, I think that that is something good for us to do and move forward on. And so councilmember tovo, I think you framed it very well, as if this is one option, but we're struggling with it; what are the alternatives, if there are alternatives the staff can find, that you can get done, that we have -- fall within the summit plan, which we have budgeted for, and that you can get done more quickly and can help people just as well or better, then I would -- I would want us to do that. And so our goal -- I'm less committed to the shape of the shelter and more to it being the best investment of city dollars and the best investment of your time and our city staff's limited time to bring these resources to bear. >> Mayor Adler: So obviously a truncated conversation here today. What do we say to people that have an explanation that we're going to have a place for everyone to go to. I think that's an important conversation for us to have.

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You know, with the election, people said they did not want to have people in tents, and I think we have to follow through, and the manager is following through on the action that was taken by the -- by the community. At the same time, I think that most everybody that was voting for that wanted us to actually help that community, and to get them off the streets. And I don't see that vote is a vote that asked us to spend money to get people off the streets temporarily, but to actually get them off. I don't think that was a vote for us to spend our resources to do something that -- that is going to have people back on the streets quickly, because that doesn't get us where we need to go. We have to look at the available options that we have and what we have to do to be able to -- to be able to deal with this challenge that our community wants us to deal with. On Thursday, we had a vote, a couple votes, hotels that are

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being proposed for bridge housing. I want to better understand how that bridge housing fits in with solving or meeting the immediacy challenge. I want to have discussions that compare that, associated with heal, as juxtaposed to spending resources on sanctioned and camp areas so the community can hear those kinds of conversations. I want to know if we're trying to get services for people to keep them off the street, mental health intervention, substitute services, is there a difference between providing those services to someone that's in a bridge house, like we're approving on Thursday, or what housing, heal, gets them into, versus the sanctioned camp area. This is a difficult challenge. I think we have to air these issues so the community knows what to expect or not to expect, so that the community understands really well what the trade-offs are and what the choices are, and I think we

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have to have greater and greater urgency with respect to the goal of getting 3,000 people off the streets in three years, the senate plan or the opera strategy or heal, because that's what ultimately is going to meet this challenge for the community. But, we can do all this on Thursday. We have a chance to do it then. We still have covid and the pulled item to talk about. Councilmember Kelly, then councilmember tovo. >> Kelly: Thank you. One of the things that I really struggle with when it comes to tackling the homelessness issue on our city and our unhoused neighbors is really, like, how do we help everyone without painting such a broad brush across the spectrum, because each of these individuals has individual needs that need to be addressed, and from what I've learned, the more options that we have available, the better we will be able to address them. What I would be interesting in learning is what resources your

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office needs in order to be able to help the most amount of people possible and to get things done in a more expedient manner. I know that's not a fault of you or your staff, it's just the limited resources that you have available. So if you could set the expectation for us so that we can better assist you as a council, I think that would be appropriate. I also thought about what was being said earlier by my colleagues here on the dais, and I do still fully believe in councilmember tovo's resolution, and I think that if that is one option we have available, that we should be able to utilize it for our unhoused neighbors because I don't like the idea of waiting so long to approve purchasing of permanent supportive housing. I know that process takes a while, and we need an interim solution. So that's all. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember tovo. >> Tovo: Thank you. So I think, just to get back to some of the points that you all have raised, you know, absolutely, I believe it's better for people to have -- to

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have -- to be in stable structures rather than tents and tiny homes that might be temporary in nature. We have been pursuing this hotel/motel strategy, and I believe that our staff are bringing those properties to us as quickly as they can and as quickly as they're available. So we -- one question I want to tee up for Thursday is, that's not turned out to be the fastest of options either, so should we go back to thinking about securing some spaces that could be emergency congregate shelter, which is obviously not ideal in the situation we're currently facing with regard to the pandemic, but again, people still need immediate places to go. So I am still struggling to know all of these other things we're talking about are important, they're critical, I support the investments, have, have led on making these investments, and will continue to support them.

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But they're not quick ones and they're not immediate ones, and that's really where we are, in meeting both of those. Another thing I'd like to just tee up for Thursday, we do have the -- I keep forgetting -- ratification, the ratification of the extension of leases for the days inn and another -- another one of the hotels that had been leased for protective lodging. I had asked you, manager, and I apologize I hadn't put it into the Q and a, but I think it would be very useful to see some of these assets as they play out geographically. Days inn is in district 9. It is -- I also have several other assets serving individuals who are experiencing homelessness, including our two largest emergency shelters and others. There are areas of our city without -- without assets, and I think we need to be really mindful of where those areas are so that we can look to locating resources and assets in those, too, knowing that individuals experiencing

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homelessness are throughout our city, and that we have had public encampments in many areas throughout our city. Not all. So if it's possible, and again I apologize for not submitting this in a formal way, it may not be possible for Thursday, but if we could have a conversation at least on the high level, or work toward it in the weeks ahead, of getting a map of that sort, perhaps that's more realistic, getting a map of that sort in the weeks ahead. In thinking about our conversation on Thursday, and it does make sense to me, mayor, to have it more broadly, I would also like to talk about expectations of how we will operate our facilities so that the community can be assured of what they can expect when -- and so that guests in those facilities can be assured of what they expect in terms of the city's management and operations of this. >> Mayor Adler: All right. Thank you very much. >> Tovo: And thank you, Diana gray. >> Mayor Adler: I'm sorry. >> Tovo: I just neglected to

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thank our homeless strategy officer for the tremendous work she's doing, and the staff. >> Mayor Adler: The whole staff. There's so much happening, but we'll go into that further on detail on Thursday. We'll talk about choices we have and trade-offs involved. We have one last briefing that's on the virus. I don't then that we can spend much time on it, probably not, but before we pass over it, I just want -- colleagues, we got a copy of the report that was given to the county, we got it a little before 2:00. It is alarming, to say the least. The numbers we just got that are going to be reported today show that the numbers in our icus have now gone over 100, which was close to what we thought our capacity might be with the staffing that's been reduced. I'm sure there will be meetings tomorrow on that. I think that the number of admissions that's being reported tonight is 60, which gets us in the possible range

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for the health administrator to put us into stage V, which is red, just days after we have gone into stage IV. I want to read a social media post that more people need to hear. This is a social media post a few hours ago. This is posted by a nurse practitioner in our city. The covid census in my icu had been growing steadily, until today. Today, it blew up, blew up is all in capital letters. The icu is filling up with very, all in capital letters, sick, unvaccinated covid patients, still have yet to see one in the icu who is vaccinated. They are literally all on ventilators and/or ecmo lung bypass. They are much younger and were

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much healthier than the patient population we saw in prior surges. They are also getting sicker faster and dying faster. I am angry. I am so angry. I am also sad and dismayed. The third round is, was, entirely preventable. It is devastating to see and experience firsthand. The solution to this problem is very simple. Get vaccinated. Wear a damn mask in public. If we can spend 12 hours on respirators, car helmets, n95 masks, and full ppe, you sure as hell can wear a mask to the H-E-B. Avoid crowds and risky situations. I don't know what is the indicated action I think we need to have with the health folks and figure this out.

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I know that aisd has posted a survey on its website. I urge everybody to -- to take a look at that and let the school district know what families are feeling about their children. I note that the CDC is now recommending, as of today, I think changed policy with respect to masking indoors, inevitable, based on everything that we're seeing. Get vaccinated is still the primary message here. And then I'll just conclude

with I saw that the governor, in response to what we're seeing here now in these responses, in response to school districts that are asking for the permission to be able to protect their students by requiring masking in their schools, and can't do it because under what the governor is doing, they will lose

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financing and money to be able to run schools if they do that, that in response to that, the governor today issued a statement saying that every Texan has a right to choose whether they will wear a mask or have their children wear masks, and I don't know where we find that right, the right to be able to fill up our icu's and prevent people who are having heart attacks from being able to go there, the right to be able to put nurse insist our icu's and emergency rooms at risk, I don't find where that right exists. And I applaud ascension Seton today, which apparently is asking its associates to get tested in order to be able to work in a hospital. If I went into a hospital right now, I would want to make sure that everybody in that hospital that I was running into on that staff were people that had decided to get vaccinated. I think that would be my right. We have a problem here, and it

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is not getting appropriate attention or response. Sorry. Anybody else want to say anything else about covid before we move on? Yes, councilmember kitchen. >> Kitchen: I just want to say thank you, mayor. I know that you've been on the front line with this, and all of us really appreciate that and appreciate the messages that you are sharing with the public. They are so important, and I just want to say thank you for that, and I will echo those as much and as loudly and as often as I can. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Councilmember Ellis. >> Ellis: I'll be brief as I like to be. It's really been a struggle, as we're kind of going into this next phase in another wave, dealing with a variant that is spreading way too fast. I'm tired of wearing my mask too but I still put it on. I put it on for other people. I think about kids too I didn't think to get vaccinated, I

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think about doctors that are exhausted, I think about folks with immunocompromised systems and older folks. I'm tired of it too, but this pandemic doesn't care what you think. And I think it's really important that we do what we can to protect others because it's the very least that we can do. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember Fuentes. >> Fuentes: Thank you. I think we've all read and heard that this is the pandemic for the unvaccinated. And so for me, hearing that we are about to enter another stage, it's alarming. It's a call of action that we have to do more to address vaccine hesitancy. It's unfortunate that we don't have time today to receive a full briefing. I would like to request the daily emergency ufc

briefings that are given, because we are in a crisis marked for identification, and we should treating it as such. There's not a weekend that goes by that I don't hear from

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someone in my community that talks to me about a loved one that they have lost. This pandemic is still very, very real and prevalent in our communities. To echo councilmember Ellis's statement, we have to mask up and do right by our community. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: All right. As we close out our meeting, let's go to the one pulled item that we have. It's St. John. Councilmember Casar, you pulled this. You want to say something? >> Casar: Just very briefly I'd like to thank the staff who have worked so hard on this, all five of the proposers that put in so much work to send proposals to us, the community in that area has been asking about that property since I was first knocking on doors there, and we've passed many, many resolutions getting us to this point. And so given how many items we have coming up on Thursday, I just want folks to make sure that they saw on the message board some of the direction that we've put together to improve the project before it gets to its final phase, and

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would appreciate anyone else that wants to post things so we can incorporate them into the direction and get this long overdue project moving on Thursday. I have heard from some of my colleagues that having more two- and three-bedroom units and also really pressing for a lease and maintaining city ownership of the property was really important, and I'm happy to incorporate that and anything else that gets raised by the dais, would be happy to deliberate that, but we'd like to see if we can get this done on Thursday, given that there will still be several months more of negotiation with the -- with the proposed vendor. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember tovo. >> Tovo: Yeah. I also pulled this. I have some questions, both some that need to be answered probably in -- with staff directly, and not in an open session, because they're subject to the competitive matter. So some I maybe able to get answered before Thursday, some may require a conversation among our council.

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Thank you, councilmember Casar, for your leadership on this. This too is a tract that has generated lots of community excitement around its redevelopment and dating back to, you know, the at-large council. So I've been out to the tract lots of times, thinking and imagining what it can be as well. As I indicated to you, I will be -- have helped a motion sheet that I'll share as soon as it's ready to be posted. I do want to see that -- I do want to see a very concrete direction to staff that we would lease this and not sell by tract. I can talk more about the rationale at a later date if there's differing ideas about it. I think that

should always be our approach. I am not -- I am not yet familiar with exactly what's in the public realm, versus what's in the confidential proposals, so I will not provide any level of detail, except to say that,

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as I indicated to you, I will be providing very strong direction that the shift be to -- away from studio and one bedrooms and to two and three-bedrooms. We have to be able to achieve on our own land what we are always asking our private developers to achieve, which is housing for families with children, those who have caregivers, we have to be able to achieve more than -- more than studios and one-bedrooms, and I think we have some interesting proposals in front of us, that would like to push them. The mission statement that I'm bringing forward does look a lot like the one -- I think child care should be a default position to include a high quality child care in our negotiations. It can certainly be shaped by the community conversations as well. But it will be -- it will be in

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the motion sheet that I'm bringing forward. As with healthsouth, I would like there to be multiple check-in points so that we don't get to the point where an agreement is coming forward and a master development agreement and we're trying to negotiate. As we did with healthsouth, we asked how -- had a list of deal points we wanted to see included within that exclusive negotiating agreement and we asked the staff to come back if there were objections and asked for particular follow-up dates. There's, you know -- I think that's along the lines of what I'll be bringing forward for additional amendments/additional direction. >> Thank you. Councilmember Kelly? Kelly? >> I'm excited and intrigued by this location and what we'll be doing to move forward. In the city, we have an affordability crisis.

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That will lead to many people being homeless if we don't do something about it. I'm looking forward to more discussion on this. I have no less than eight to ten questions with follow-ups related to the property just to get more insight and learn more about it. I'm looking forward to that conversation. Thank you. >> Sounds good. If you could post those on the message board. Make sure you get really, really complete answers. Councilmember? >> I want to appreciate councilmember tovo. She's co-sponsored so many of the items to move this forward over the years. Haven't seen your motion sheet yet. Everything that you have listed and said aligns with what we've been hearing consistently from community members and would want to see in the project. Because at the stage that it is, it is a no subsidy project and if -- that means that it has certainly room to improve compared to so many of other

affordable housing projects that we put money into. The original proposals still have a ways to go while the

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proposal before us has listed that within one year of us selecting a builder could actually start construction. So it's been 13 years that nothing happened on the site, the fact that we're one year away is exciting. We would want it to be that kind of project we're proud of and I hope -- I hope and believe that the direction you're thinking of providing and my direction could pass on Thursday and we can get to that last few months of work. >> Obviously, timing, something we'll talk about on Thursday. >> Mayor, on that point, if we have to go into executive session on the item given that people are going to speak on this, are we thinking of going in executive session or bring up with consent at the beginning? >> I'm not sure it comes up on consent because I think people wanted to add to the issue and had some questions. I don't think it's a consent item. >> That's fine. Should I let folks know to come?

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Could we take it up as soon as we're out of executive session letting folks know we're going to come down, what time to come? >> Could we set a time certain? >> Basically, can we take it up after session? >> I think we could. We have a big session -- my hope is, you can talk to advocates and people that were pushing for this for a long time. This is something that clearly is going to pass. The issue is going to be what do we say we want to look at. There's not going to be a lot of time on Thursday for this. I think we have six or seven zoning cases that look like they may be discussion days. We want to make sure that we're making best use of the time that we have available. >> I think folks knowing it would pass would probably keep it pretty tight. But would probably it's easier if they know when folks should arrive. We'll just generally plan on the best we can. Not before -- >> We'll do it after the

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executive session. Just by way of notice, one thing on the agenda this week is item 118, which is reaffirming our work on the summit. I think it fits with the conversation we've been having here today. A little bit greater detail on that for folks that were asking to partner with us. There have been questions that people raised wanting to make sure we're not by that resolution trying to take over leadership or that we are appropriating dollars associated with that. I'll put in specific language to make clear that we're not doing either of those two things. Anything else before we adjourn our meeting for today? And with that here at 5:34, this council meeting is adjourned. [Meeting adjourned.]

[5:55:43 PM]