

# City Council Special Called Meeting Transcript –3/23/2015

Title: ATXN 24/7 Recording

Channel: 6 - ATXN

Recorded On: 3/23/2015 6:00:00 AM

Original Air Date: 3/23/2015

Transcript Generated by SnapStream

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[9:10:07 AM]

>> Tovo: Good morning. I'm mayor pro tem Kathie dove. Without further adieu our panelists are here and we have a quorum so we're going to get started. Mayor Adler will not be here today and I understand councilmember Garza will not be here this morning either but will be joining us for this afternoon. Today's policy work session is going to talk about an issue I know August of us have already been working with staff to make sure we -- how best to serve our constituents. We all get calls all day long from constituents with questions, with issues, with concerns, and we've got a very able administrative staff that assists us in all kinds of ways. So today's briefing as I understand it is intended to provide an overview of the various services and the various ways in which our administrative staff assist constituents every day, either through requests that come from our offices or directly from the public. So without further adieu I'd like to turn it over to chief of staff, ray beret, to set the stage and introduce our panelists.

>> Staff and city manager's office. I'm here to kick off your discussion on how city departments respond to citizen requests for service. Before I introduce the panel this morning I'd like to start by saying that customer service here at the city of Austin is a foundational element in staff's pursuit of being a best managed organization. In fact customer service was the core theme of one of our most recent executive retreats that included our directors and our assistant directors. Now we realize as staff that each interaction with our residents, businesses is really an opportunity to shine a lighting on our organizational values and we also recognize that each interaction provides us an opportunity to evaluate, as well as to see how we might be able to improve our services.

[9:12:11 AM]

While we have some of the most active departments in customer service here today it's important to know that every department is committed to using resident feedback in order to improve. As part of the budget process, we conduct a city-wide survey that benchmarks resident satisfaction across a range of severances. This information provides a valuable point of reference and the results are incorporated directly into the performance measures for many of our departments. In fact a number of our departments also conduct their own surveys as well as data analysis to help improve performance. So when you talk about requests for service this morning just know that it can cover a wide range of touch points from the front desk at a library or recreation center to permit or special event applications. So in order to provide you with information on how the city responds to citizen requests, staff's presentation this morning will focus on answering the following questions. First, what are the access points, the public uses to apply for city services. Second, what do citizen calls and e-mails tell us about what citizens are calling about. And, finally, how does the city use the data about the services citizens are looking into. And is it used to inform process improvements within those departments and/or processes. For today we wanted to -- let me see. For today we wanted to focus on the key points of entry for service requests. And for the city that includes 311, 911, the code department, and the automated citizen assistance program. Of course there are more, but we felt like this would be a good -- would provide you with a good overview given the amount of time that we have today. Just to let you know we do have other departments who are also here, not sitting here on the panel. We've got Austin energy, Austin resource recovery, someone from the police monitor's office as well as other departments.

[9:14:15 AM]

So if you do have questions regarding customer service regarding those departments they will be here as well. The individuals represent departments that arguably have the most public contact, a customer-facing over the broadest range of issues. Austin 311, for example, is our primary nonemergency resource for the public, they pride themselves on providing one stop, uncomplicated access to information about services. They're also through put for service requests across all departments. In the past year they've expanded their 24 phone and online request service to include mobile service requests. Sydney Perez, process manager with 311 is here today and we'll talk more about what she and her staff do.

>> Tovo: Sorry to interrupt would you mind pulling the mic a little bit closer.

>> Better?

>> Tovo: Much.

>> Sorry about. The 911 communication center processes about 1 million emergency and nonemergency calls each year. This extraordinary group of folks often handles call from people in their most vulnerable moments and does so with over 200 civilian employees. These are highly trained 911 call takers and police dispatchers who relay critical information from callers to our first responders. That would include police, fire, and ems, ensuring that they respond as quickly and as safely as possible. We do have representation from the police department here. I believe it was going to be chief Manley, but commander Jamel is here from the police department. He's going to talk to you more about what the emergency communications division and 911 in addition to other citizen points of access for service include, like the police department's district representatives and commander forums. Next we have Karl smart, director of the Austin code department. Ers here to tell you how his staff makes sure city codes and ordinances are met so that our community continues to be a livable city.

[9:16:16 AM]

The code department does this by educating, collaborating and partnering with neighborhoods, local businesses, nonprofits, and other city of Austin departments. The code department maintains the balance between code compliance and code enforcement by implementing programs to ensure a minimum standard is set and code officers identify dangerous and substandard conditions in each of the district that they are assigned. And finally we have Valerie Harris who oversees the automated citizen assistance program. It's something we commonly call as cap. This is a program run out of the city manager's office and serves as a quality assurance tool for customer service, all with the goal and the purpose of providing councilmembers and the city manager's office with an elevated level of response to constituent inquiries. It ensures a well-researched executive approved response to citizens and avoids any duplication of effort. Additionally it provides an electronic trail for realtime and historical tracking. So with that mayor pro tem and members of the council is a brief overview of who and what will be presented today. I'm going to turn it over to our respective representatives from the different departments, starting off with Sydney Perez from 311.

>> Good morning. As ray touched on, Austin 311, our mission is to provide uncomplicated access to city services and information. Austin 311 provides a single point of contact Foran citizens and visitors, eliminating any confusion for multiple Numbers and offices. So it allows us to serve citizens with a one call resolution. We give information to citizens regarding 31 departments and we accept service requests for 17 departments.

[9:18:19 AM]

20% of our staff is fluent in both English and Spanish. Austin 311 also serves as a business continuity and disaster recovery side for the utility customer care center. We have several access points for customers to contact us. We have the mobile app, customers can contact us via the website, e-mail, fax. They can call. And also open 311, which provides access to approve third party developers to use within their own app. So this diagram shows at a high level how service requests flow into the customer service request city manager and how they're transmitted to the departments to perform the work. Once a service request is entered from the various access points, city departments now have access to the information that they need to complete the request. And citizens can also receive updates by either calling 311 or checking the status on the web or on the phone if the request is issued via the mobile app. So what citizens are calling for, 80% of the calls are for information. The what, when, where, how, and why. For example, we have citizens who call just to ask if the library is open, what are their hours, if an animal shelter is open, what events are going on for the weekend. We also handle -- a result of the calls usually 20% of them will result in a service request. Our top five types from even if 2015 are APD nonemergency, Austin code, Austin resource recovery, complaints of loose dogs and loud music -- loose dogs and loud music. In addition to the top five requests we also offer over 200 service requests.

[9:20:21 AM]

Now, how do we measure our success? On a daily basis, we monitor and review our service levels and the types of calls that we receive to ensure that information is relayed accurately and also to ensure that we're staffed appropriately. So we review calls received, our service levels, and the quality. On average, we will receive over a million calls per year, which is about 2700 calls per day. We maintain a service level performance of 91% of calls that are answered within 30 seconds. And quality of service received per survey results resulted in 90% of customer satisfaction. Data performance reports. Percent of -- excuse me, department service requests, percent of work within service level set by a department. So each department sets an expected service level for performance on a specific service request. This expectation is then conveyed to the citizen about the time the service request is submitted. So if a certain department is deeming their -- the service request will be -- if it's Austin resource recovery, for example, if we -- if the service level is agreed that they'll pick up missed garbage within eight hours we convey that to the customer. Simply an example. The total amount of overall and now by council district. In March 2014 we added the council district geolayers into the C.S.R. City manager to report per district. So we planned well in advance so you could have an opportunity to view the activity within your district. Also department reports. We view monthly status reports and we share them with our client departments, and they also receive scheduled performance reports for their specific needs. We're always reviewing the department reports in the event of repeat calls from customers stating that perhaps there wasn't a service request fulfilled.

[9:22:26 AM]

We'll look at it to make sure that the request did transmit accurately. And we also have reports per the open data. So data is uploaded daily of new updates, new and existing requests. The you in request and updates to existing requests. They can also view by council district. So those reports are available as well. Lastly a chart representing the volume of service requests that we receive per department. And any questions?

>> Tovo: Colleagues, do we have questions for Ms. Perez about the 311 city manager? Councilmember Houston.

>> Houston: Thank you so much for that information. I have one question. How do you survey the people that use the 311 city manager?

>> We perform a -- we have a vendor who will conduct surveys for us.

>> Houston: Randomly or --

>> Mm-hmm.

>> Houston: Sometimes you'll say if you hold on to this call at the end you can take a survey. Is that what you do?

>> No, we don't do the automated survey. We are planning to send out e-mails after a call or perhaps if they use a mobile app we want to find a way to be able to survey citizens shortly after their request is completed.

>> Houston: Sorry I'm -- so if I call in, which I do often, and talk about whatever, my garbage not being picked up, then how would you survey me? How would you know if it got picked up within the eight or 24 hours or whatever?

>> Okay. We have performance reports, and we have the ability to check on the status of service requests on a daily basis.

[9:24:29 AM]

So we have access. We see when the service request is transmitted to whatever client department is receiving that service request, to the point that it's retrieved, worked, and closed. So if we see that a service request is enclosed in a timely manner -- because they're all -- we have everything set per the service request -- per the service level of that service request. So if it's running delinquent we have a liaison who will contact that department to advice them, and that's checked daily.

>> Houston: Thank you.

>> Mm-hmm.

>> Tovo: Other questions? Okay. Well, thank you very much.

>> Thank you.

>> Mayor pro tem moving onto Mr. Carl smart.

>> Good morning, mayor pro tem, councilmembers, I appreciate the opportunity to come before you. The Austin code department, our mission is to provide quality education and code enforcement services for our citizens so that Austin becomes a more livable city. Our primary access point for calls and requests for services comes through 311. These are the categories of different service types that we receive, and as you stated earlier, most of them are requests for a code officer to come and visit the site, to see if the problem is a violation and then to see what action is necessary in order to help correct the violation. And you see with this pie chart that most of the calls or service types that we receive are requests of a code officer to come out. Over 19,000 just in the year 2014. We have several other short-term rental appointments and billboards and signs, but primarily citizens want a code officer to come out to the site and take a look at the problem.

[9:26:35 AM]

These are our top violations that result from the calls that we receive, both from the residential and the commercial side. Spring is coming so high grass and weeds on vacant lots and in some cases vacant structures will be number one on the residential side. And unsafe building conditions on the commercial side. So these are the top five on residential and commercial. Our service requests kind of looks like a bell curve when you graph it out monthly. The springtime, summertime are our high months for service requests, and then it tapers down during the winter months. So it's starting to really ramp up now the month of March, April, may we'll be getting more and more calls for services, primarily -- primarily high grass and weeds but not limited to that, a lot of different other nuances. Requests for services during the week, pretty level Monday through Friday. Friday it tapers off a little bit. Saturday and Sunday low, but we still get calls. 311 still gets calls for code services on the weekend also. This one is also somewhat similar to a bell curve as far as the times. Primarily 8:00 to 5:00 is when we get most of the calls for services for code, with it really being high during the midday hours, late morning, midday. Now, what we do with these services, these calls -- actually, this is labeled cocomplaints, more like code violations, really actual violations. We can break them out by district so we can provide information to council and to citizens on how many different types of violations occur in each of the district.

[9:28:41 AM]

Let me just point out the middle column, it says "Land use" really the property abatement column, it should be switched. Property abatement is the highest and that's the high grass and weeds and trash and bebureau, junk on properties, those kind of complaints. So property abatement is the 8500 calls and land use is the 3800 calls. And if we graph that out, it will look like this in a bar graph by district. So you can see -- look at your particular district and see -- get an idea of the volume of code complaints, code violations that are occurring by different types. The green, again, is the property abatement and nuisance violations. The blew in blue in the middle, land use, zoning, work without permit, those kind of violations and the red is the structural conditions, building code violations, housing code, property maintenance code violations. This map just shows a -- the hotspots of where those service calls are coming from and code violations are located. On either side of the I-35 corridor but you can see most of the hotspots are on the east side of Austin, really some intense areas there in different -- and this is by council district. Our access for service requests is really a partnership in progress. We've got -- with Austin 311, where the calls come in primarily and then they channel to Austin resource recovery, and one of our partners.

[9:30:46 AM]

They actually help to process those calls and put them into the -- our computer city manager, which is the Amanda city manager. They put them in Amanda and then they're assigned to a code officer and it comes to Austin code and Austin -- a code officer will respond and go and visit the site and check out the complaint. So it really is a three-way partnership here. How it works, the citizen calls for service, they call into 311, which makes it really simple and efficient. They generate that service request and then submit it to Austin resource recovery. The customer service unit in Austin resource recovery will process it and enter it into the Amanda city manager and then it's assigned to a code officer. At the bottom you can see our response times. Our processing time and the response time. Both of those, about three and a half days. We're working to reduce that time, that response time. We really would like to get that down to a couple of days, and we've got a couple of improvements that are going on now that will help reduce processing time and reduce response time. Little bit of an overview. When callers call in, they're all given a service request number, and they can actually use that service request number to find out the status of their case. They can call back, give that service request number, and then get the status of the case, has it been inspected, was a notice of violation issued, what is actually happening, or was there no violation? In a number of cases there's no violation. So they can get that status. Some callers may request anonymity. We realize that some callers are concerned about possible retaliation from neighbors or even in some cases tenants concerned about retaliation from their landlords and they want to request anonymity.

[9:32:57 AM]

They can do that. They'll still get a service request number and be able to call back and check the status of the case. Citizens may also request that Austin code call them back and give them the status of a case. So we can do that. Of course that doesn't work with anonymity. You have to give your name and phone number to do that. All citizens can do a public information request. P.I.R. Get information on the case, actually get a copy of the case history, all the notes that were generated on that particular case that was put in the file, placed in the file. There are some -- there is some information that is protected. If the case is being investigated and prepared for legal action, the case is moving forward to court and the investigative notes may not be available until after that case is decided. But for the most part, it can get updates on what's happening with that particular case. One of the improvements is that our C.T.M. Department of communications technology management department is working on a change to the city manager, improvement to the city manager, so that 311 can enter the information, the service request, directly into Amanda, thereby cutting out one stuff, not having to send it to Austin resource recovery, to have it input by customer service there. So that will save time, processing time. And so we look forward to that, and we understand that we're moving forward and hopefully within the next few months we'll see that improvement occur. That will certainly streamline the process and allow for -- allow for a quicker response time. Additionally, we're working on becoming more transparent, placing more information on the website, on the web page, so citizens can access that information.

[9:35:04 AM]

Right now they can go in and find the status of a short-term rental cases, find out the status of repeat offender cases, get to know their code officers, putting mapping information, interactive maps on our web page. So we're working on that. Additionally looking at adding a new city manager called civic insight where citizens can actually go to a map, click on address, click on a property address, and actually get information on the status of code cases. So becoming more transparent, providing more information to our citizens is our goal. I'd be glad to respond to any questions.

>> Tovo: Councilmember Zimmerman.

>> Zimmerman: Thank you. Thank you mayor pro tem. Thanks for coming, director smart. We have a public hearing this evening, I hope, that you'll come and help us in our public hearing for public safety committee, but I wanted to quickly ask you about this issue of public information requests. We've had some rather famous cases in Williamson county of prosecutors illegally withholding information from the defense. Michael Morton is a very famous case of that. I guess I'm having trouble understanding what the legal grounds are for code enforcement to not release information to P.I.R. I don't understand that. Maybe you can explain that to me.

>> Well, I don't think that's the case. We're doing public information requests daily, and getting information out all the time. If we're preparing -- in the process of preparing a case for legal action, then that information may not be available until after the hearing is -- the trial is done. But otherwise all that information is available through a public information request.

>> Zimmerman: Okay maybe you didn't understand. Is there a legal proceeding for discovery?

[9:37:06 AM]

Do you make a distinction between municipal pal -- a criminal case at municipal court where you have to file discovery as opposed to public information requests? Because the defendant is entitled to the information that you have that you're going to prosecute them with in a trial.

>> Yeah.

>> Zimmerman: In a misdemeanor trial.

>> Absolutely. I think they can get that through the prosecutor but not necessarily through our office, but through the prosecutor handling the case. That might be a question legal might want to respond to also.

>> Tovo: I believe our council has stepped off but it does sound like that would probably be a body of information that we should get from our legal counsel about what they can release and when. Councilmember Houston.

>> Houston: Director smart, if you would describe to us briefly the flow chart you did a beautiful one for me. Because people don't understand why it takes so long and there's some steps that you having to through before you can even get to that legal stage. Could you kind of briefly describe what that chart looks like for us so that we know?

>> Yeah, I'll be glad to. And I think we've included it in the presentation this afternoon at the public safety committee, but the first step of course we get the request in from 311 is to have an investigator going out and take a look at the problem because a lot of times the calls that we get are problems, but they're not necessarily violations of the code. So the inspector really has to make that decision. They have to go out, take a look at it, and reviewing the code, does it match up as a violation? If it's not a violation, the case is closed at that point. If it is a violation, then a notice of violation must be issued. The owner must be put on notice that it is a violation and given reasonable time to comply. And so some research has to be done to make sure we've got the owner, owner's information correctly, and any interested parties, like if there's a mortgage on the property or there are other partners, are they a corporation that owns it?

[9:39:18 AM]

So there's research that has to be done. The notice is issued. The Normal reasonable time is 30 days. Sometimes it's more, depending on what the -- the scope of the violation, the number of the violations. And then the owner is given time to correct those violations. Also, the owner has an opportunity to appeal. They can appeal the notice if they so choose. If they think something is wrong, if they think the inspection is wrong or the notice is not correct, then they can appeal that, either to the director or to the billing and standards commission or to the board of adjustment. And so there's some options there. At the end of the period of time that is given in the notice for compliance, the inspector has --has to go back or if the property owner calls them prior to the inspection notice, the inspector must go back and see if the work was done or not. If it's corrected the case is closed. If it's not corrected then a decision is made onto -- to move on with legal action. We've added a you in alternative legal action with the administrative hearing, hearing officer is able to hear certain types of cases. So that decision point is made, then it goes to municipal court, B.S.C. Or admin hearing, hearing is held, trial is held, and a decision is made at that point. If it's at the building of standards commission, an order is issued and specific time for compliance is given or a penalty. If it's at municipal court, if it's guilty then a fine may be imposed. If it's not guilty, case maybe may be closed. Admin hearing, same process. If it's guilty there may be a fine, a penalty. If not, the case is closed. So it's several steps that we have to go through along the way.

[9:41:19 AM]

>> Houston: So is it reasonable to say that sometimes these cases could drag on for six, eight months?

>> Or even longer in some cases, complex cases. We try to get a case done as quickly as possible, and a lot of times cases are handled within a day or two. A lot of times the inspector will go out to the site and there may be a violation, such as, let's say, trash and debris and the owner will say I didn't realize it was a violation, I'll take care of that, give me a couple of days, and we advise -- that's where we advise inspectors to allow some leniency, so a couple of days, we'll come back, check it, it may be done without any notice of violation at all, by working with that property owner. Then other cases get more complex. Like, for example, if there's -- you've got to replace the roof, you've got an addition that was done without permitting. Those processes are going to take a while. They're going to having to through planning and development review to get proper permits, to get contractors to do the work, and so we try and work with folks who are making progress or taking steps toward compliance. Try to work with them to get things done.

>> Houston: Thank you.

>> You're welcome.

>> Tovo: Mr. Smart, did I understand that you said you prepared a spreadsheet -- excuse me, a flow chart for the public safety committee this afternoon?

>> That's correct.

>> Tovo: Thank you.

>> I'd be glad to share that with all of council.

>> Tovo: I was going to ask you if that was provided as online backup for today's meeting. If not, if you wouldn't mind making it available to everybody, I think that sounds like a very useful resource.

>> We'll make sure that is available, yes.

>> Tovo: Super. Councilmember Gallo.

>> Gallo: Thank you very much for being here. I know you've probably been very busy over the last couple of weeks.

[9:43:19 AM]

You mentioned a couple of things, there's some improvements that are scheduled to kind of help through the process and you mentioned the technology was some of it.

>> Right.

>> Gallo: Question is what are the other improvements? And I also have a question with how many staff members you have and how many actual officers do you have that are responding to code compliance?

>> Okay. Appreciate that question.

>> Gallo: Multiple questions.

>> That's good though. I'll start with the last question, staff members. Our full-time employee staff is 108 positions and I don't have the exact number of officers, but it's approximately 65 officers, code enforcement officers that are on staff. And as far as other improvements, technology is one of the main ones, but other improvements is making sure that we've got our neighborhood code officer program in place. The officers -- neighborhood code enforcement program assigns officers geographically. So we've got the city divided up into 33 sections, district. And an officer assigned to each of those district. That officers get to know -- to get to know that district that officer is to work closely with neighborhoods in that district and to handle the general complaints that come in through 311 in that particular district. So making sure we have that program fully staffed, officers in each of those areas I think is going to really make a difference. On top of that, a different layer, specialty layers, like for multi-family program, for

apartment complexes there's a layer of officers that handle that, short-term rentals there's a layer, licensing program with hotels, motels, rooming houses, boarding houses, billboards, signs, et cetera, there's inspectors who handle those areas. But our primary area and the primary improvement we're looking for is the neighborhood code officer, who works closely with the neighborhoods.

[9:45:26 AM]

And we're probably -- we'll be looking over the next five years at expanding that neighborhood program, adding more officers to make sure that they can handle the geographical area that they're assigned to, making sure that one -- that one officer has enough that they can -- doesn't have too much, that they can handle it and respond timely to the requests for services.

>> Gallo: So is that a program that's in process right now, that you're actually implementing.

>> Yes, it is.

>> Gallo: It's just not fully staffed.

>> That's correct.

>> Gallo: How far are you from being fully staffed on that?

>> I think we're very close, maybe three officers, I believe, from fully staffed. Then we'll also review it again. It's 33 geographic areas, as the city continues to expand we're going to try to reduce the size of those areas. As we reduce the size, I think we'll improve the program.

>> Gallo: Okay. Thank you.

>> Tovo: Thanks. Councilmember Renteria.

>> Renteria: Yes, Mr. Smart, I just want to ask you what kind of process do y'all have when you go to a low-income family housing and you think that it needs a lot of repair and in violation of code? Can you explain what kind of procedure y'all do with that particular family? Do y'all give them any kind of referral to, you know, agencies that might be able to help them out?

>> Yeah. Thank you, councilmember. Excellent question. I think that -- couple of things we've done, one, we've added an outreach section, outreach employee, staff person, who is like a case manager. And that person is to assist code officers when they get into those kinds of situations. A lot of times we find ourselves inspecting properties and issuing notices of violations where the property owner, the family, is a low-income and do not have the resources to take care of -- take care of the violations.

[9:47:34 AM]

We work closely with neighborhood housing and with other agencies, and, yes, we make those referrals, urban league, meals on wheels and more and other agencies out there that can actually help provide the resources to help people who are in need. And that case manager can come in and work closely with the family, doing things that code officer, you know, is not necessarily assigned to do, but that case manager can hold their hands and help make sure they get to the right agencies and get help. And those are cases too, going back to councilmember Houston's question, that -- they can take a lot of time. The time will run out on the notice of the violation, we'll extend it sometimes, if necessary, or combo to the building and standards commission and get an extended period of time in order to get compliance because it's a special case or special cases. We run into those quite on and we've got a number of them now that we're working with and we're fortunate that we've got a list of resources around the city that can help in interfaces situations like that.

>> Renteria: Thank you.

>> You're welcome.

>> Tovo: Some of.

>> Houston: One more thing. I know you get a lot of grief, bless your heart. I feel sorry for you sometimes.

[Laughter]

>> Houston: But on this chart that you showed, district 1 has an extremely high complaints against property abatement. Can you help me kind of understand what that might be about?

>> Yes, ma'am. The -- primarily it's vacant property, vacant lots with high grass and weeds. And the other high one is junk, trash, debris on properties and vacant lots and all. So we deal a lot with that. And so the areas that are underdeveloped, still have a lot of vacant properties, you'll see a higher rate of violations there.

[9:49:42 AM]

One of the things we're looking at, for lack of a better term, is repeat offender program for vacant properties. Those that annually go through the same process. They have high grass and weeds. We cite highias and weeds and give a short amount of time, ten days for it to be corrected. If it's not corrected we have a contractor that will actually go out and cut the lot, cut the property, get it -- go ahead and get it cut and then we bill the property owner for that cost, and then place a lien against the property. And

so we've got a number of those certainly every year, that same repeated action. So we're looking at setting up a program where we can get those taken care of a lot quicker, not waiting on the complaint. Right now we're primarily reactive so we get the complaint and go out. Those that are constantly repeating every year we want to put them on a proactive program so we proactively go out and check every year, go ahead and take the action without waiting so much. A couple of things. One, the state law allows us to give one notice per season, per year. One notice. And then if it's not corrected, not taken care of, the next time it overgrows or we get a complaint complaint we do not have to go back and issue another notice. We go straight to cutting the property, getting it back into compliance, and then bill the property owner. So we're looking at a program to actually cut down the amount of time it takes to get that done. And we'll be coming back to council once we get that refined and tell you more about that program.

>> Tovo: Thank you very much, Mr. Smart. I know you're doing a presentation for the public safety committee this evening or one of your staff is, about code processes so with my colleague's permission we'll take one last question from councilmember Gallo and move on to the next section.

[9:51:47 AM]

>> Gallo: Just to follow up a little bit on some of's, what percentage of the billing that you do would you say you actually collect versus putting liens on the property?

>> Very low. Unfortunately, a lot of times the liens just remain on the property for years and years. Our collection rate, probably may be higher than some other major cities because the -- because of the real estate market here. And properties sell more often. When they sell, combo to closing they realize they've got an encumbrance against the property and they'll call and take what it takes to clear it. The city will get reimbursement that way. Still it's a low percentage. I don't have that number but I'd be glad to get that percentage for you. I can tell you that it's probably low, probably around 20, 25%, but we'll check it to be sure.

>> Gallo: Then does your department have to carry the cost of paying for that within your budget?

>> Yeah, that's correct. That's correct. Included in our budget is funds to do the cutting and cleaning of property. We'll clean property of trash and debris also in cases like that. We have a budget for boarding vacant buildings and deemulationses, tearing down unsafe structures so we expend these funds, bill the property owners, but don't always get those funds back. So each year we're having to budget for that kind of thing. I can tell you in the legal -- and the legal department can add information to it, but we've looked at -- we have contracted out with a collection firm, to help do the collections on those kinds of bills. And we're hoping that we'll see an increase, and we should see an increase in the collections of those kinds of bills.

>> Gallo: Okay. Thank you.

>> Looking forward to that.

>> Tovo: Councilmember pool.

>> Pool: I just had one I think last really quick question for you, Mr. Smart.

>> Yes, ma'am.

>> Pool: What -- how often does it happen that a certificate of occupancy is incorrect for a you in owner of a commercial building?

[9:53:58 AM]

I'm not asking that maybe very clearly, but we have -- let's say we have a commercial building that is a, I don't know, nursing home and then it's sold to a group home and they don't have the proper permits?

>> Yeah.

>> Pool: How does that play out with the code department?

>> It ends up being a code violation. It doesn't happen too often, but it does, it does. A certificate of occupancy is issued for a particular use by our planning and development review department. And then the property is sold and the use changes without getting a permit and making sure that their certificate of occupancy is upgraded. So we get a complaint call, code goes out, finds out about it, and we end up having to issue a notice of violation advising the owner what they need to do. They needing to back down to planning, pull permits, get their C.O., certificate of occupancy upgraded. Doesn't happen too often but it does happen. We're finding that to be the case a lot of times with residential uses that change, group homes, halfway homes, commercial uses, offices, retail business, a lot of things like that. A lot of land-use violations.

>> Pool: That may be something we'd like to look at in the public safety committee, councilmember Zimmerman, and maybe we can look at how maybe to have at a policy level -- make that harder for that to happen, even if it only does happen infrequently. Thank you.

>> You're welcome.

>> Tovo: Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Smart.

>> All right. Mayor and council our next speaker is commander Darrell Jamel with the police department.

>> Good morning, my name is Darrell Jamel, commander of the emergency division for the Austin police department.

[9:55:59 AM]

This morning my presentation will cover three areas, first our department's access points are used by citizens to request city services. Second how the data we collect from these service requests is used within our department. And then third, how we report the data that we collect. The two main access points that citizens use to request city services from the Austin police department are 911 and nonemergency. In 2014 our division handled just over 1,000,911 calls. We also handled nearly 250,000 nonemergency or service request calls that were transfers from 311. Included in that number are 46,000 calls that ended up being police reports that we did take via the telephone and that freed up officers on patrol from having to take that number of calls. After 911 and nonemergency, which are the two major areas that citizens use to contact our department shall there's a multitude of other avenues. These include but are not limited to our district representative officers, commander forums, contacting officers who are on duty, walk-ins, online reporting city manager, which is I report Austin, and phone calls to other department units and offices throughout the city. The way we use the data that we collect is done in several ways. First we use it to plan our staffing and scheduling in our call center. The three areas we plan for in that aspect are 911, nonemergency and teletype operations. Our phone city manager interfaces with reporting software that allows us to track the data we use to schedule our staffing within the city manager. Second we use the information that we gather to assess our performance in relation to our performance measures. We do this internally on a constant basis, looking at the service level in the center, as well as on a weekly basis in a meeting with our managers where we break that information down and look at it on an hour by hour basis throughout the week that just passed.

[9:58:13 AM]

On a departmentwide basis we use it -- in a monthly meeting we call comp stat and that's a process our department uses to analyze crime and disorder decoration provide us with strategic problem solving and accountability. For example, one of the metrics related to services in my division is call process time. The national standard for call process time is 90% answer rate within ten seconds. Currently we normally operate at the mid-90s, 94 to 95%. Thirdly, we report -- the reports the officers and our nonemergency personnel generate feed into our department's record management city manager or R.M.S. The information in the record implement city manager within our department allows to us analyze crime trends and patterns and employ resources accordingly throughout the city. The fourth way we use the data is the annual citizen survey. We get feedback related to the performance areas our department provides related to public safety and we adjust our resources accordingly based on these priorities. Our department reports the information for the city as a whole, over all looking at the city, then by region and sector. The regions and sectors are the geographic areas within the city that our department uses to

deploy our resources. For example, region 4 is southwest Austin and it contains two sectors. Both our computer-aided dispatcher, C.A.D. City manager, and record management city manager record information based on these geographic areas. Currently we do not report this information internally by council district. However, residents can search crime data by council district using online crime viewer. This service just came online February of this year.

[10:00:15 AM]

And we're working in other areas of the department to provide information by council district. Some of those are available now, and some are ongoing in development. With that I'll open it up for questions related to these areas.

>> Tovo: Councilmember Houston and then councilmember Zimmerman.

>> Houston: Thank you for being with us this morning. I'm going to ask you the same question that I asked the 311 process manager. How do you survey the people regarding your emergency services?

>> We don't have a mechanism to automatically survey on callbacks. We do that any time anybody calls back with a concern or a question. That's routed to a communications supervisor for follow up and all those are documented and recorded within the city manager and reviewed by us.

>> Houston: So where it says citizen survey specific to emergency communications it's really on a citizen initiated call back in to say I'm not happy or I am happy? There's no consistent way to survey people who use emergency services?

>> That was speaking in reference to the annual city survey that the citizens are surveyed on related to city services and there are some specific areas related to timely processing of 911 calls and the speed of emergency police response.

>> Houston: So that the one that the assistant -- so that the one that the -- I'm in school, assistant city manager spoke to earlier?

>> That's correct, yes.

>> Houston: So as I said, the last time we had that conversation, we had some concerns in district 1 about who y'all are surveying because y'all are getting much higher rates than I would get when I go out and knock on doors. So I'm not sure who -- what the survey represents so at some point I would like to know that.

>> Absolutely. What I can tell you, councilmember Houston, is that we do an annual survey. It's a city-wide survey done by the E.T.C. Institute.

[10:02:18 AM]

What goes out is a survey to approximately 2500 citizens across the city. I'm not sure about the demographics on the sample but it's a random sample and it is to my understanding very representative of the city itself. And I believe it's got a very high confidence level. At I believe 95%. But I can certainly provide you more information about that survey. In fact I would be able to provide that to the entire mayor and council.

>> Tovo: Councilmember Zimmerman.

>> Zimmerman: Thank you, mayor pro tem tovo. I'd like to repeat a question now that our legal counsel, Austin city legal counsel is here. The question about public information requests in the context of both code enforcement and other 311 activities, right, because people will call in and of course some of that is public information but what we've been hearing that some P.I.R. Requests have been rejected, claiming I'm not sure what, but information is not being released. So maybe our legal counsel can give a general idea of what is that policy where our public departments are claiming they don't have to release information, information probably that's been handed over to prosecutors? So maybe you can speak to that.

>> Counsel, I apologize since we moved on I just sent the order who was here to answer those questions back upstairs. I can summon her back down here and we can respond in a little bit.

>> Zimmerman: That would be good.

>> Tovo: If I can suggest we'll hear from the whole panel and ask Ms. Link to prove provide some information about that.

>> I can speak a little bit about our department.

>> Tovo: Sure. Helpful.

>> We computer everything and make sure we're in compliance with the Michael Morton act, done before it actually took effect. Within our division anything relevant to a criminal case is going to be forwarded to the prosecutor and as an ongoing criminal investigation we defer to them and let them make that judgment because that really is in preparation for a criminal trial so that decision sup to them, as far as what's discoverable and what they release in that case.

[10:04:31 AM]

It would be preemptive of us to release something without checking with a prosecutor or city attorney first.

>> Zimmerman: Before we go on that a really important point that needs some policy discussion and deliberation and the reason for that is very, very valuable -- information that's very valuable to the public or to a defendant, to someone that's been accused, that decision on what's important and what's not, that should be probably be made by the taxpayers and the city of Austin and not by city staff, I mean, as a general rule because -- right, because that could definitely be abused.

>> That's why we always defer to city legal on that and let them give us guidance along with the prosecutor on that.

>> Tovo: I do see Ms. Link here. If Ms. Link, if you'd like to provide a brief response. To councilmember Zimmerman's question. Councilmember Zimmerman would you like to restate your question? I'm going to ask we keep the exchange pretty short. Sounds like there's a larger discussion you'd like to see happen and probably the public safety committee would be the appropriate place that's where it aligns. I want to be sure we have time for our other voices here today.

>> Zimmerman: Sure. The general question here is we have public information requests, mechanism here, right, in city government. And the question has come up, sometimes when there's a municipal case that code enforcement might refer or some prosecutor might refer to the municipal court, our people are getting resistance or push back on doing public information requests. And so I guess my question is what legal basis is there for the public city department to say, well, you can't have that information because we're sending that to a prosecutor? And people say, wait a minute, that information is public. Whether you're going to prosecute me on it or not, public information is public information.

[10:06:35 AM]

>> Patricia Link, assistant city attorney. Councilmember, I think the best way for me to answer this question is we have two different systems. The public information requests are guided by state law under the government code, the public information act, and that sets out the framework for how the city, how its staff, when it receives a request, how it evaluates that request and how it responds. If the city wishes to withhold certain information that is not confidential by law, then they ask the -- we ask the attorney general for an opinion. And the attorney general's office will rule on that opinion. If there's a situation where someone is in a criminal situation, criminal court, then they go through that process to determine or to get the information that they're seeking. So if they were to make a motion to ask for a case history for photographs, anything like that, just as an example, they go through that municipal court if it is that municipal court, they would go through that process and they can file a motion for that information and it follows that process on and on. It's two separate tracks and it's two separate issues when it comes to a general public information request versus information requested as part of a prosecution.

>> Okay. Pros.

>> Zimmerman: Again, for the non-lawyer people, when you're in discovery, a court situation, you generally need a lawyer. The average person on the street, right, is not going to know how to file a motion for discovery in his criminal case with code compliance, right? They're not going to understand that. But people do know how to file public information and I can make a public information request without hiring a lawyer, right, and I should be able to collect all the information I need. But if I have to get a motion for discovery, now I've going to hire a lawyer.

[10:08:36 AM]

Can you see why people would be concerned about the difference?

>> Tovo: Ms. Link, I don't know if you had a response to that or wanted to make one or do you feel you've provided the information?

>> I think I've --

>> Tovo: Responsive to the question.

>> If there are any other questions about the process, I can potentially respond a little bit more to that.

>> Tovo: Sure. I guess I would -- if individual councilmembers have additional questions are they welcome to contact you.

>> They can contact the attorney's office, yes.

>> Tovo: Very good, thank you. I think we should move on. We're going to try to end this panel discussion about ten minutes early so we can get to the other voices in time for us to ask follow-up questions of staff, if need be.

>> Mayor and council our final staff panelist is Valerie Harris who oversees the automated citizen program, we commonly refer to as cap.

>> Good morning, mayor pro tem and councilmembers.

[Off mic]

>> Tovo: Valerie, can you adjust your speaker? This sounds funny. Maybe commander Jamel would switch.

>> Is this much better? Thank you. I'm Valerie Harris. I'm with the city manager's office, and I oversee, as Mr. Beret says, the citizens assistance program. We have the responsibility of following up on city complaints and concerns that come from citizens as they're brought to the attention of the city

manager's office, as well as your offices in the city council. We have over 150 single points of contact throughout the city, in the city department directors offices.

[10:10:40 AM]

And in the city council offices, as well as the city manager's office. The purpose of our program is to provide the mayor and council and the city manager's office with an elevated level of response to constituents and citizens. We ensure that we provide an executive-approved response to citizens. It's usually the concerns are regarding city services and customer complaints about how they were provided this information. And so we follow up with the director's office to ensure that we've addressed all the concerns for the citizen. This is our efforts to avoid duplication of services. The city manager also provides an electronic trail for realtime and historical tracking, and so we have the ability to -- ability to back and look at every certain that came through the city manager throughout the time that we've had the city manager. It's been about 15 years that we've had this one in place. So cap, I know that some of our councilmembers are not too fond of the alphabet soup that we're in but the automated citizens assistance program is a user friendly database and follows the work flow from department to department, all the way up through the city manager's office. It provides this generation of our responses to the citizens inquiries. So this is the closure of the loop between the complaint when it comes in and as it goes back out to the citizens. So they get a follow-up from us directly. The process we follow is for the councilmembers as well as the city manager's office to enter the citizens requests through our citizen's assistance form and that goes directly into our database.

[10:12:45 AM]

This is the information that is collected from the citizen about their complaint that they have provided themselves, and we provide that to the department for the investigation and follow-up. So the city departments and the different divisions are then assigned to the citizen assistance form and they're asked to review in a timely fashion to provide that response. And, again, that response is vetted through the -- not just the division and the division manager's office, but it goes up through the department director's office, all the way to the city manager's office for direct response to the citizen. The benefits of this program are to provide a guarantee of city response directly to the citizen. We create this electronic record of their concern, and it's traceable. It assures that the executive offices have taken a look at this response to the citizen and ensures that we have that type of oversight. We do have seven to ten day turn around window for it. Some of the concerns that come in, they do ask -- some of the citizens would like a more quickly responded response, and if it's something that has to take less than 24 hours, we can give it a designation of a fast track. However, we do ask for that high level review, and it's

not always available for every 24-hour turn around and so at times like that we defer from the city manager and go directly to the department. So if we need to have that sort of immediate response, we can get that directly from the department itself we also provide what we call a C.A.F.

[10:14:48 AM]

Check back. That is once the response is complete, once the city manager is closed for that particular issue, we can go back and take a look at it if the citizen still has concerns. And if we -- if the follow-up is warranted on that already approved and closed response. This is the cap, acap work flow. Once we receive at step one we get the request in from the citizen. It can come in the form of a phone call, an e-mail, fax. They can walk into our office. There's also -- we're working on upgrading our city manager to receive mobile app applications as -- but in the interim, what we've been able to do is create a e-mail interface through the city manager's website. This link is available if you would like it to be attached to your own individual websites as well. It goes directly to -- it generates an e-mail that is entered into the city manager. So that the way that the citizen can send in their complaint. At step two, it's assigned to the departments. We have the ability in the city manager's office, because we have each and every service group represented to look and see which departments have the relevant information and would be the most appropriate to respond. We can then collaborate with each other and combining a response, if there's more than one department that is involved in this. We have a lead department or the subresponding departments, and they are asked to combine one comprehensive response to the citizen. We are one city, so we respond with one voice. At step three is where the city manager's office comes in. Once that department director has signed off on -- approved the response, it goes to the assistant city manager's executive -- their assistants to review and make sure that we are providing that high level executive review.

[10:17:00 AM]

It gets approved at that point, and then it goes on to step four where the citizen will receive the response from the departments. I'm open for questions.

>> Tovo: Thank you very much, Ms. Harris. Thanks for all the work you do. I know we keep the customer assistance -- what does cap stand for?

>> Automated systems assistance program.

>> Tovo: Very business busy and I'm sure my colleagues do as well. Councilmember pool had a question, councilmember Gallo you'll be next and councilmember Houston.

>> Pool: I think the cap program and the citizen action form was one of the first forms that I became really familiar with in my office, and I appreciate all the work that staff do. It seems that the information you gather over time is a really rich source about areas of information of concern for residents and would be a great place to look for process or -- yeah, process improvements. Is there a link back in your work flow that evaluates the type of concerns that are raised over a given period of time that then when we're looking at -- during budget deliberations, that that information is fed back in through council for specific improvements or just a general reporting on -- just in general the kind of concerns that our citizens have?

>> The city manager has built in reports that can be generated that we can look at trends by district, by area, and regarding topics.

[10:19:01 AM]

I believe the -- our budget is tied in there in reporting with our -- the types of services that the departments have been asked to review on an annual basis. So we do have that information if you'd like.

>> Pool: I would love that. I think my colleagues here would probably appreciate a report generated specific to each individual district now that we have them. And it could be a real useful document that will help us to help staff, if there are resources that are missing or more closely and specifically target our activities the way we deliver services to our citizens.

>> Yes. Our -- the city manager was built in house so our our communications technology management department, they can make sure it's tailored to the needs that we're asking for.

>> Pool: Thank you. Thank you so much.

>> Tovo: Councilmember Gallo.

>> Gallo: Thank you so much for being here. And I really want to applaud what you and your office have been doing. I know as we've been getting used to the process here and now that citizens have a particular councilmember and council of that they can call for problems, you guys have just been great and we have had such good response, both in learning the city manager and also being able to know which departments are best to handle. So I know the people that we are helping in our district really appreciate it, and so do we. So I just wanted to say thank you for all the help that you have been to us over the last couple of months. Thank you.

>> Thank you.

>> Tovo: Thank you, councilmember Gallo. Councilmember Houston snoop.

>> Houston: And I just want to add my thank you to that. We went through three days of training at the Hilton, and then I got back to work and nobody told me about the citizens assistance program and so I was kind of like, so why did they keep that a secret so that I didn't know it?

[10:21:02 AM]

Because the day that we got sworn in, the next day there was a crisis so we weren't sure what to do with it. Thank you so much for being available to staff, to help walk us through that and help us use that city manager effectively.

>> Thank you.

>> Tovo: Let's see. It looked like councilmember Zimmerman had a concern -- question but he's off the dais. Anyone else before we move on? We can always cycle back. I just want to add my thanks and also to say to our 311 staff, I think you all do a fabulous job as well. I occasionally call in as a private citizen, not on my office line, to report or ask a question, and it's -- I'm always greeted with a very pleasant, very informative person on the other end of that line, and I know our citizens are as well as when they call so thank you very much and, again, thanks all of you for the work that -- for all of the service you provide to our public. We're going to switch now to the other voices and we may have some additional follow-up questions for our staff after we hear from the other voices so we've allowed time for that. Our first other voice will be Shaun G. And Randy Chapman. Each of our other voices will have three minutes. Mr. G. Thank you very much for being here with us.

>> Good morning. Okay to speak from here? I brought my glass case but not my glasses and so I tried to bring notes in and read them without my glasses but I think I'll be able to do this. My name is Shaun.

>> Troxclair: 5 G. Shaun G., I live in -- just so you know, I'm an economic development consultant, little bit of a land developer as well but lived in east Austin for about 15 years, served as president of the Chestnut neighborhood revitalization corporation, building affordable housing and most recent retired vice president of the Sweet Hill neighborhood association.

[10:23:04 AM]

I wanted to talk to you about two issues and thank you again, mayor pro tem and councilmembers, for inviting me to speak about two issues, one, development review and how the neighborhood planning contact teams can be more included in that, specifically at the M.L.K., T.O.D. And then also code enforcement as it relates to neighborhood issue in the Sweet Hill neighborhood at 1307 Waller.

>> Houston: There G., some people may not know what t.0679d. Is.

>> You standard us not to use acronyms, you're right. Transit oriented development site so at the mlk commuter rail and all the land associated with that. First the mlk transit oriented development site. We spent as a neighborhood literally thousands hours helping to plan that specific site plan and, you know, we're very excited, donated a lot of property, chestnut commons built there, people fund built there, sustainable food center, creative action facility is there. And now there's a lot of dirt turning and I spent about 30 minutes online last week in development will have site trying to understand what projects had been submitted. Gray star is getting ready to submit a project there, and as to much as we can understand, there is no commercial aspect to all of the development that they're planning. It appears to be almost all multi-family, which was quite a surprise to us because we were very adamant about our biggest priorities being affordable housing but then also some level of retail. There's nothing to walk to in that whole chestnut neighborhood to go to for a grocery store. Councilmember Houston can attest, there's not a lot of retail over there. And what's discouraging to us is that we were not notified of any of that. So 1 my policy recommendation open this before I move on to the next case is I really do believe and we've talked mostly about code enforcement here and there's not anybody from development review, perhaps they're busy still reading the Zucker report, but I do think that there is a need that any development that is being planned, whether or not it's requesting a variance or not, that the neighborhood planning contact team get an need e-mail notification.

[10:25:26 AM]

That is a very simple thing to set in place. Otherwise it puts in place this continued process of neighborhoods being in fear, not sure what's going on.

[Buzzer sounding]

>> Is that my three minutes are up?

>> Tovo: That is indooody three minutes. Would you like to take let's say a minute, minute and a half to focus on code compliance.

>> That's it on that issue. The larger issue --

>> Tovo: Thank you for that suggestion.

>> Thank you for giving me more time. The larger issue was 1307 waller so this is in the sweet home neighborhood, the history of this, it is my neighbor, and we have an easement agreement, the easement I've never had access to this land because it's a drainage and electronic easement. In our easement agreement it was stipulated they could not build anything in that easement, they built a driveway, they built their pump house for their pool, which is in the -- underneath an electronic easement in my

setback and without any sort of permit. The city is well aware of this. I had a conversation with Carl smart last week. The city had sent out numerous notifications. I believe the city is now taking that to municipal court. But the biggest thing there is there has not been much follow through and action on the city. I'm being sued, neighbor is being sued, we're spending thousands of dollars every month while the city gave this neighbor a notification that they could not rent or sell that house, specifically because this pump house was built under the electronic line and -- trick line posing a safety hazard. Mr. Smart informed me last week the legal team has since changed their opinion about that. We were not notified of any of that. So my point here is meanwhile citizens who are being mostly impacted by this that did nothing wrong are spending thousands of dollars a month, a week on legal fees while they are now illegally using their facility to rent their house to sour patch kids, whole other issue, making \$5,000 a month, while the city does nothing.

[10:27:27 AM]

We all know what to do, and the city has a process, I understand that process. But, you know, that first notification was way back in September. And it's extremely frustrating and from us sitting off the dais it appears you all do not care. So my points there are follow through and action, provide the impacted parties' clarity on best contacts, what the process is moving forward with the city and the owners there, and if there are any changes, like a legal opinion has been changed, communicate that to the most interested parties. Otherwise, we're having to call everybody we possibly can, put everybody onto an e-mail distribution list when we send these notifications out because we don't know who to contact, who the point of contact is. So I'm a little frustrated as you can tell, not the only one in the sweet hill neighborhood. Thank you very much for your time and if you have any questions I'm happy to answer them.

>> Tovo: Okay. Thank you very much.

>> Thank you.

>> Tovo: Seeing none, we will move on to Mr. Chapman. Thank you, Mr. Chapman, for being here.

>> Thank you. Good morning.

>> Tovo: I'll say next up is Mr. L.

>> My name is Randy Chapman. Some of you may know me because of our work at Texas legal services center, representing a utility electric customers. We were -- participated in the utility rate case to help make improvements in the cap program, which had been beneficial. I speak here -- I've heard a lot today, core values, good customer service, and like councilmember Tovo said, 311, my experience, always been great. What I would like to say, though, and based on my own personal experience and

hours and hours of aggravation in dealing with Austin energy and their customer service department, is to create an acap program for the public.

[10:29:33 AM]

Not just your offices. I think Carol B. Was over here not too long well -- not too long ago, excuse me, to suggest an office of consumer advocate, ombudsman that people can go to, a one-stop shop like each of you now have for the public. Somebody who will resolve the complaints. My personal experience with Austin energy had to do with getting two utility bills and being a victim of identity theft. I sent the mayor a copy of a letter, sent a copy councilmember tovo, indicating that I sent Austin energy. nevertheless they threatened me with disconnection. It explained what the problem was. My wife calls Austin energy. The people at the customer service department can't access written correspondence. We thought we had it fixed. The letter said add my wife as an authorized agent, gave them our billing number for our bank so we could be automatically debited to a new bank account. It all straightened out. Last week I get a phone call from the collections department, again being threatened with termination. And again they say, well, that's the correspondence department. We aren't allowed to read their stuff. We need an acap program for the public. We need a customer office of consumer advocate that the public can go to. They should not have to go to your office or pull political strings or have to call the upper management in Austin energy to get things done. That's my comment. Any questions?

[10:31:37 AM]

>> Tovo: Councilmember Zimmerman.

>> Zimmerman: Thank you, Mr. Chapman. Not to be too cynical here, but what would make you think that setting up an ombudsman and another bureaucrat would make things any different? I'm trying not to be cynical, but why would that make any difference in the world?

>> I think there are two things that are going on. First of all, I think they can do it and should do it with the existing funds that they receive through utility bills. Austin energy, billion dollar budget, can do that with their existing staff. Two, I think when you create something like an office of consumer advocate, city of Houston has it in the mayor's office there, it creates somebody to track the response from start to finish and then get back with the individual customer, consumer, your constituent, and say have we fixed this? Are you happy? I think continental airlines years ago from worst to first there was a book written that said, and it enabled people who are at the call center to in essence empower them to make decisions. Unfortunately the people -- front level people at Austin energy don't have that authority, and unless you know the magic word escalate -- my wife was told there's no appeal right. That is absolutely

wrong. So I would say use existing resources, target that just like you have an acap program, create an office of ombudsman with existing resources. Any other questions?

>> Tovo: Councilmember Gallo.

>> Gallo: Thank you so much for being here. And as chair of Austin energy committee and councilmember pool also is vice-chair, I really appreciate those comments and suggestions and we will definitely take that up at our meeting.

[10:33:41 AM]

We look forward to you attending those meetings and bringing that forward so that we can ask questions and move forward on something like that.

>> Well, our office has helped a handful of people who are -- who have had problems and called Austin energy and we can only help the very, very low income and even only a few of those. But one person called Austin energy after getting a bill over \$10,000 because the landlord, not her, but the build didn't fix a water leak. In the end rather than work with the customer, the lady was forced into bankruptcy. And that was the only way the bill got paid because -- even though she was willing to make individual payments. But that's not the job of my office. It should be the job of an ombudsman.

>> Gallo: Thank you, thank you.

>> Tovo: Councilmember pool, did you also have a question for Mr. Chapman?

>> Pool: Yes, I wanted to echo what councilmember Gallo is saying. I agree that what is missing is someone to take responsibility and has the authority to do the kind of investigation that that's necessary. An ombudsman would be a really good idea to kick around. I thank you for bringing that to us.

>> I'm pleased to hear that. Thank you.

>> Tovo: Very good. Thank you. Mr. Layton Burrell is next. And after that Mr. Johnnie Limon. Thank you for being here.

>> Thank you, mayor pro tem and councilmembers. Thank you for inviting me. I am don Layton Burrell with the brentwood neighborhood association in district 7 and apparently I am a big fan of 311 because I use the app, I make calls and I use the online service requests. Just as a for instance -- and I'm going to speak specifically to 311 today, probably at ray's thing, cross fit.

[10:35:49 AM]

But 1512 Koenig lane I made -- and this is -- let me just back up. I do a lot of zoning land use cases for the neighborhood association. So I'm constantly calling about things that have to do with zoning. And yet there's no zoning category in the 311 apps in terms of zoning violations, change of use, wrong zoning or that sort of thing. So I had called about a case on Koenig lane in September of last year, just as an example. Extensive site work. This is what I gave to them. Extensive site work exceeding impervious cover limits under residential siding and roofing permit. Being prepped for commercial use without change of use permit. Permitted as homestead yet owned by an off site LLC, and you might want to check on the floodplain designation, also unpermitted second driveway curb cut. The email response that I got back -- and again, when I'm tracking 20 or 30 cases a month in our neighborhood, the subject line just gives me a number. Tells me nothing about whether this case has to do with the church over here, cross fit over here or this case that I've just given. So the email itself comes back and it says, thank you for reporting this other category and here's your number. So within 10 minutes I got a service request resolved email back saying that the issue was resolved. And so I think that's misleading to neighbors that if it's closed or resolved that somehow somebody's gotten out there in 10 minutes of me calling at 6:00 at night on a weekday and handled the case. So I put in a request to 311 talking about routing and saying that what we need is some tracking because all resolved or closed means in 311 is that it's been sent to code enforcement, planning development and review or some other department.

[10:38:06 AM]

That's all that that means. It doesn't mean that the case is closed or that it's been resolved. And unlike what --

[buzzer sounds]

-- Carl said -- let me just wrap this here. Many of the code violations that I call in are punted to pdrd, planning, development and review department, sorry, and take months and sometimes years to resolve. One case in our neighborhood, similar thing that I called in to 311, we've had a church having a school that has been -- is now finishing up its second year without the proper permits. And it is not being acted on by code enforcement because it is in the rezoning and they keep getting extensions, 180 day extensions. So from again a long time user of the system, I think it's important as the other gentleman said, to have some sort of follow-up on these things. To be able to know this is this case and this is what's being done and this is who it's assigned to and this is the action being taken, very defined thing. Thank you for your time. If you have any questions.

>> Tovo: If you for that very good suggestion about the email nomenclature. Does anyone have another question? I see some curious looks on the dais, but I guess no -- Ms. Pool, councilmember pool? Mr. Layton Burrell, you do have a well.

>> Don, I just wanted to thank you for coming in and for all of the efforts over a long period of time that you have quoted to helping brentwood neighborhood on code issues. And we're working currently with Mr. Layton Burrell on a couple of things going on in district 7 and I think there may be some suggestions for improvements or reform that may come from our work with the neighborhoods.

[10:40:09 AM]

>> And I'm always available to the various city departments to talk about the very specific minutiae of what we deal with. Just can't do it in three minutes.

>> And something so easy as getting an email that says it's resolved, but you only know what that really means because you've been doing it for some time. If I had gotten that I would be like okay, it's resolved, but what did they do? And there isn't any information. Something definitely needs to be adjusted and I'm sure there are some other things we can do to be more transparent and clear when we're communicating with the residents.

>> Yeah. Often we know it's been passed on to a department, but we don't know who is working that case, what their timeline is, are they going to send it to municipal court. Have they given extensions? There's just a total lack of communication on follow-up.

>> Absolutely, yeah. With the community engagement taskforce I hope to work on the deficits of information and the gaps that we have. And I may ask if you would be interested in helping with that taskforce.

>> Absolutely.

>> Thank you.

>> Tovo: Thank you again. Mr. Limon. And our last speaker will be Ms. Cora Whiteside.

>> Good morning, mayor pro tem tovo and councilmembers. My name is Johnnie Limon and I am here on behalf of speaking of one of my brothers because he had a doctor's appointment. I thought it was very important to be here today and thank y'all for letting us speak. But my brother about a year and a half ago he got in trouble with electricity bill because we figured out that we kind of think that his old central air and central heat unit that he has in his home. And he lives by himself and he's 100% disabled. And so anyways, he made arrangements with Austin energy, you know, to pay, you know, the past due plus his current bill.

[10:42:11 AM]

But one thing that maybe that could possibly help people like my brother and other people that are on a fixed income or disabled is that being that my brother is on the payment plan, you know, he still gets charged late fees. And of course I didn't know that and my brother doesn't know that either, didn't know that until we got some help from two advocates, kara and ruby, and thank god that I do know them and I was able to contact them to come and see. They checked on my brother's bills and they determined that he still gets charged a late fee. And I think that maybe, you know, it seems like the late fees is already being charged when those late -- when those bills came in a year ago or whatever, but like they still keep getting charged those late fees, you know, so I think that's something that could help people in that situation would be by not charging them the late fee because as it is they're having trouble, but at least they're paying. They've made arrangements, but this late fee just kind of keeps adding on more and more cost to them, you know. So that's kind of what I would kind of like to see is something that to happen to help some of the lower income people or people that are disabled. And also, I would like to also tell you about a problem that happened a couple of weeks ago with my brother is that he received a notice that he was going to be -- his services were going to be terminated because he had defaulted on his payment plan. Well, he holds on to every single paper that he gets, all the bills and everything. And the people that he talked to he always writes their names down. So he came to me and asked me, look, here's a bill. I paid it. And I got this letter they're going to terminate me.

[10:44:11 AM]

He said, and I don't know what to do. I said well, first of all, you've got to call them. So he called and the lady that he talked to said, well, you know, evidently you didn't make a payment. He said here, I've got the bill right here. So he read it to her.

[Buzzer sounds]

>> Tovo: Please take some additional time and finish your comment.

>> I'll try to finish as soon as possible. So he called them back and so the lady said let me check on it. Then she said, sir, I'm sorry, evidently somebody here dropped the ball because you did make the payment. So I'll go ahead and make sure that your services don't get terminated. So he said okay, thank you very much. I understand, people do -- can drop the ball once in awhile. So later that same afternoon, it was on a Friday, they called him back, the lady called him back and said sir, I am happy, you will be receiving a termination notice within 24 hours because, you know, evidently you paid your bill two days late. My brother said well, my arrangements are to pay them by the 12. And yes, but the utility bills were due this time on the ninth. So for that reason they said that he was going to receive a termination notice. And he was going to have to pay the whole total amount. And that was like over \$4,000. So he said there's no way. He said do you know what? I'll just live without electricity. There's no way I'll be able to pay that. So again he asked me, who I know through my community service I do know

these two ladies, that they were able to call -- they got involved and they called upper management and they called right back and said your service is okay. You will not be terminated.

[10:46:12 AM]

But the problem here is what about people that don't know, don't have, you know, people like ruby that don't know about ruby or Ms. Brinjski, what do they do, sit back and have their utilities cut, terminated? And I think what the gentleman was talking about, having somebody that could really follow through would really help some of these people. Thank you very much.

>> Tovo: Mr. Limon, thank you very much for sharing that experience and that story. And I think there are several points that you've raised that I hope we can consider as we begin meeting on our Austin energy committee. I know we've had a group, I'm not going to name it because I got the name wrong and it caused all kinds of issues, including an Austin monitor whisper, but we have had a work group working at area acknowledge management, basically payment plans, and I believe they will hopefully be able to present to us soon and offer us some recommendations. And if their recommendations don't include some of the issues you've raised, I hope we can as a group consider some of those points.

>> All right. Thank y'all very much. Thank you for listening.

>> Tovo: Councilmember Renteria has a question for you, Mr. Limon. .>> Renteria: Until we get that problem fixed, I would say you tell anyone to go ahead and call each district office because we can help you until we come up with a solution on where the citizens can automatically call and receive that help. Just tell them, hey, you can always call my office if you have any of those kind of problems.

>> All right. Thank y'all very much.

>> Tovo: And our next speaker is Ms. Cora Whiteside. Thank you very much for being here.

>> Good morning. My name is Cora Whiteside. A year and a half ago I had problems with Austin energy.

[10:48:14 AM]

They sent me a notice that they was going to turn me off. I said if you could wait a couple more days, I will get my social security check, but they terminated me anyway. Now, I had to go through a whole lot. They came out and they really helped me and I got my lights back on. Now, my problem is that I sleep with an oxygen tank. If they turn my lights off, you know, I won't be able to sleep. I will have to go into the hospital. So my thinking is if they could set up some kind of program for people who are on fixed income and senior citizens and people who have medical problems.

>> It would be really great to help us out like that. So that's basically what I'm up here for is to still seek help, and Austin energy has risen their price so it's almost impossible to pay that bill, get my medication and buy food. So I've got to pay the bill first and do without my medication. So we could set up a program to give us a break and that would be great. Thank you.

>> Tovo: Thank you very much, Ms. Whiteside. And Austin energy does have some programs to assist customers and so I hope that we will receive some information through our subcommittee, but I know we have staff here as well who can provide information about that. Colleagues, we do have a few minutes.

[10:50:15 AM]

We have about 10 minutes. We finished with our speakers a little bit early. As you know, we still have staff here from code compliance, from Austin energy. If you have follow up questions about any of the issues that have been raised by our public speakers, now would be a great time to do so.  
Councilmember Houston.

>> Houston: Thank you so much and thank you everybody for coming out this morning. I think especially the people who put a human touch on some of the things that happen in the city that sometimes we're not aware of. I have a question and I'm not sure who to address this to. The people in Swede hill have been working on the issue in their area since last year. And it seems to me that -- I've said this before. Neighbors appear to be in a bind because we're talking about people's property rights and we're talking about our rights to live in that community and in that neighborhood next to a situation that we think is illegal, but we don't know what to do with it. And so it puts us in the position of being police dogs, and yet when we come to the city and say this is going on next door in the neighborhood, I'm not sure -- we're not getting the runaround, but we're not getting the best advice that we could get in order to protect ourselves in that position. And so can you help us -- help me, Mr. Smart, understand what neighbors can do when something comes up like Mr. Garrison has talked about and they've been working on it since September of last year?

[10:52:18 AM]

>> Councilmember and members of the council, it is a tough situation for neighbors, and we asked them just as the police does to help us out by calling us and letting us know when there's a problem. And we try and protect them by allowing the an no, ma'am anymorety so you can call in anonymously and don't have to give your name. We try that. But at the same time sometimes it takes patience and working on a particular issue until we can get compliance. Again, sometimes compliance comes quickly and easily and

other sometimes there are these lengthy processes like someone mentioned the rezoning. That takes awhile. It's got to go through the planning and development review department. And I know those names have been changed, but -- and maybe the planning commission, maybe even a committee of the planning commission, like codes and ordinances, and then back to the commission and then to council. There's processes sometimes that are lengthy and we certainly ask neighbors to be patient, but at the same time be diligent because we're going to stay on it until it gets done. We're not going to drop it. And I guess one of the key things for us and for the city is to be more transparent and provide more information so citizens and neighbors know what's going on with the particular cases. Sometimes it's taken awhile, it's taken some time for a reason and to be able to communicate the reasons I think that would certainly help. But we ask them to be patient, work together with city departments and don't be shy about calling city departments and asking for the status of cases, calling directors if necessary in order to get that done. We find ourselves -- we're put in the middle of cases when a citizen calls or a neighbor calls and we put ourselves right in the middle between the person who is complaining and the person who owns the property or is responsible for the property who must comply.

[10:54:32 AM]

So we put ourselves in the middle and yes, we must protect the rights of both the neighbor, resident who is calling and complaining, but also protect the rights of the property owners and the responsible parties. So we work in the middle and sometimes serve as like mediators in order to help reach compliance, reach a resolution with the property. So I think the main thing for us is to be more open, accessible and provide more communication as to what's going on with the case. I don't know if that answers --

>> Houston: Well, it does. And I think the critical part for me is for people not to wait to call in. They're working several jobs and it would be nice for someone to pick up the phone or send them an email or text and say this is where we are because when people don't hear anything they're not sure what's going on. So when you put the onus on the resident who is already in a difficult position to follow up with you rather than have paid staff follow up with them, I think if we could reverse that somehow that might give some rest to the people who are trying to do both ands, be good neighbors and be police officers in their neighborhood.

>> I think what you're talking about is true. You're improving customer service in that we're being more proactive in getting back to residents and letting them know the status of the cases. Certainly from an Austin code perspective, we're certainly working on that, improving that customer service, improving that communication. Sometimes we get so busy responding to complaints we neglect going back and providing those updates to persons who have called in. Thank you for that.

>> Tovo: Councilmember pool.

>> Pool: Mr. Smart, do you know on average how many complaints, how many open files each of your staffers works in a given month?

[10:56:38 AM]

>> Not exactly, councilmember. Last year in 2014 we were showing over 17,000 cases, and for those 65 or so code enforcement officers we're averaging a high rate of caseload at this point. That average is probably around 300 cases per inspector, which is high. So we certainly want to bring that down and we will be looking at ways to do that. Certainly we talked about improved technology, but sometimes it comes down to resources and having the right number of staff persons out there in the field responding and handling these cases. So they've got a combinations things. They have new cases, new things coming in and doing their initial inspections, but they're also going back and doing reinspections to see if the work has been done, they're those. And we're working now for them to become more proactive versus totally reactive. We are 97% reactive and we're good at it. We're good at responding. But we've got to get better at becoming more proactive too. I think the balance -- there's a need for more balance. Having the time and the resources to proactively inspect properties versus just reacting is really going to make a difference. We're working on that.

>> I would be really interested in advance of our budget discussions this year to have you look at process improvements, review the processes and maybe make some suggestions so we could look at that when we're making decisions on appropriations and maybe there we can help improve the processes.

>> Yes.

>> Thanks.

>> Certainly we'll look at that. Thank you.

>> Tovo: I'd like to invite in just a minute our Austin energy staff who we have here just to come up and respond very briefly and offer any resources that might be useful to council, but in the interim can I ask our Austin police department representatives if one of you could come up and just very, very briefly describe the mental health officers that we have on staff?

[10:58:58 AM]

Occasionally some of us may get calls that we need to refer -- we need to reach out for some additional help from our staff. So if any of you are prepared to do that or if it would be more appropriate to

address in our afternoon session, that would be fine as well. I want to make sure that our colleagues know of the range of resources we have available within our police department.

>> Yes, thank you, councilmember. I can speak to that. I don't have a great deal of in-depth on that, but the way I can describe to you the process, we call those -- we used to call them mental health officers. They're called crisis intervention officers and they're actually housed on the campus of the state hospital and they work closely in conjunction with the other mental health service providers in the county. Any officer can respond to a call for service dealing with somebody that's potentially emotionally disturbed or dealing with a crisis. All officers receive two days of training in how to respond to those type calls so every officer in the department has a basic level of training of how to recognize the need for a crisis intervention team. Once they get there and make that assessment, then if that determination is made and they are not a certified crisis intervention officer they are call for one of those officers who has more in-depth training to respond and deal with that situation from start to finish, whether it's a resolution at the scene or getting that person whatever level of intervention they need. Sometimes it could be admission to a facility or just putting them in contact with the resource provider that they need.

>> Tovo: I really appreciate that summary. Thank you. That's very helpful. Occasionally my office has gotten a call or an email that raised some questions or concerns and they needed assistance well beyond what my office could provide and we've been able to reach out to our city management staff, and for just really some information about who the best resource was for that individual.

[11:01:01 AM]

So thank you.

>> You're welcome.

>> Tovo: And lastly if I could invite our Austin energy staff, Ms. Gutierrez, up. If you would like to provide any additional information.

>> Yes. Good morning. My name is Junea Gutierrez. I am the customer care service of Austin energy. Under needs me I have the contact center, the utility contact center and the 311 contact center as well as a group that we call the escalated resolution team that handles any escalated customer's issues. I wanted to let you know that you will be hearing quite a bit about our customer assistance program in our next council committee on Austin energy. There is quite a bit of information that are going to be presented to you that includes information about our customer assistance programs, our payment arrangement programs and our medical vulnerable programs. And those things will address some of the concerns that we've heard this morning from our citizens. Also I'd like you to know that there are several recommendations that have been provided by a working committee on payment arrangements in arearage management and those recommendations will also be presented during the council

committee on Austin energy. And those recommendations will also address some of the issues that you've heard this morning. So I can answer any direct questions as well.

>> Tovo: Thank you very much. Will that be this Thursday or is the presentation you're discussing a future council committee on Austin energy agenda?

>> I think you will get a little bit of it within the financial discussion that is prepared for this Thursday, and then we can do an additional deep dive at a future meeting.

[11:03:07 AM]

>> Tovo: That sounds great. Thank you very much. I know we have lots of questions from the experiences that we heard about this morning, but also our individual concerns that we hear from our constituents. Thank you very much for being here. Okay. Well, council, we stand adjourned to 12:30. At 12:30 we will reconvene for our policy workshop on public safety. And we have about 13 presenters coming so I hope we can all be down here on time to start right at 12:30. And lastly, thank you for all of the members of our public and all of our staff for being here today. This was a very, very useful session. Thank you.

[12:37:48 PM]

>> Okay. It looks like we have six councilmembers. Mayor pro tem Kathie tovo. We have a large panel and other voices who are going to contribute to the dialogue as well. Going to have about ten minutes of a framing of the issue from Ariano and the family justice department. We'll break into our panel and then we'll have about an hour and a half of discussion. But you see, we do have a large panel. So, assistant city manager Arriano, would you frame the dialogue for us.

>> Thank you, mayor pro tem and councilmembers. It's my honor and daunting task to provide information about how we do public safety and launch some of the conversation that you're going to have with your panel. So safety is a very important aspect of the services that the city provides. If you can think about the services that the city broadly delivers it's to set the foundation for individuals to launch into areas of their interest and be successful in their interest areas. So public safety is very important. If I could talk about Maslow's hierarchy of needs. There are five of them. The first is physiological needs, shelter and food. But the second is about safety. Safety and security so you as an individual can feel safe in your home, on the streets, where you work and play. So then again, you can be more concerned about achieving the things that are interesting to you. So we'll talk a little bit about the services that we provide and some of the challenges that we see coming forward. So these services we provide to our

residents and to the people and businesses that come here and come and utilize our facilities, our parks, and so forth.

[12:39:57 PM]

So it's a broad responsibility. Again, when I think about the things that we do in order to accomplish that, I think it's a great achievement on the part of all of the departments that are involved in this. So those departments are police officers, firefighters, medics, and code officers. Those are the front lines but by no means the only departments that help service the citizens of Austin and includes some of these that are in the background. Homeland security emergency management, the municipal courts and the downtown Austin community court. And the offices of police minor. All of these serve to provide the full spectrum of services if you will as we've defined them here in the city of Austin. I can tell you about interdepartmental collaboration because it's important on how to deliver services. It isn't just one department trying to do it all. It's important that we do it in collaboration with each other. As an example, the code department has an enhancement team, a concept to bring in multiple departments to address code issues in neighborhoods so that includes Austin resource recovery, police department, fire department, planning and development review, pdr, as well as others as necessary in order to address particular problem areas within our community. So that's just an example of what we do interdepartmentally. But we're not alone in how we do this. Austin police has its own force as does the university of the tks. Travis county has a emergency services as well as we do fire services that we have automatic aid agreements with.

[12:41:59 PM]

At the state level, the department of public safety. At the federal level, the major partners there, the drug enforcement agency as well as the federal bureau of investigation. I would like to take a moment to introduce Robert Jeffries, the county executive for public safety the county and for him to provide a few remarks on how we collaborate.

>> Thank you. Thank you for inviting me. Thanks for inviting me to be a part of the panel today. The city and the county in the justice world, I'm the county executive of the justice of public safety. I'm one of the executives that reports directly to the Travis county commissioner's court. We don't have a county administrator as you have a city manager. A different setup. We serve as liaison from them to many of the elected officials who are in the criminal justice community. We partner with the city on a number of things, the big one, obviously, is the central booking facility between the city and the county, the sheriff's office and the APD. We partner with the city sobriety center. We partner with you with the APD drug lab. We provide funding for one of the chemists there. Provide overtime to help speed cases

through the court system. We have the council of at-risk youth on the re-entry round table. And on a number of other programs and projects and committees where we work with the city very closely. Trying to address a crisis in the city proper through the command system. So when we stand up the emergency center, we have representation from all of the different agencies that help to address the issue at hand.

[12:43:59 PM]

One more comment I would say that in my experience I have not seen in previous cities is the conference call that we have on all of the different agencies when we have inclement weather upon us. So that's a very helpful venue for the different agencies to determine what the weather is going to be coming up and what we can do in coordination with whether or not we delay opening of the facilities and so forth. But I would say that with all of these partners, the most significant partner we have, really, is the community. The community is involved when we have an EMS call or a response to burglary or theft, we need individual for an individual that calls to get direct service to them. That's one end of the spectrum. In between, there are advantages with establishing partnerships to get feedback on the different initiatives we might have currently. More importantly, we have a relationship so that going forward we can explore different ways on how to deliver a service that provides a more effective way to maintain public safety services, coming of those examples is leveraging our services, it provides information to the services that each of our departments do and has the opportunity to inform individuals that might be interested in the service with one of our public safety departments. Emergency response teams, where public safety services might not be able to get to them. Community bike tour from the code department informing neighborhoods about different issues, how codes are applied within the neighborhoods, fire department, the education on wild fire.

[12:46:08 PM]

Police departments and the neighborhood watch kind of environment. And emergency medical technician training for students at Austin high school currently being done at Egans high school. Those are all examples of community outreach and how we might collaborate with the neighborhoods. This is part of the perspective public safety. We're getting in front of issues and making people safe. At the other end of that, the reactive services that all departments have. So, for example, for as a police department, we strive to arrive within 7:30. For responders, fire, 8:40, 90% of the time. The emergency medical service arriving at a priority one call within 9:59, 90% of the time. So this is all in terms of the spectrum of the work we do is reactive. But we can go through the allocation. We'll go through three major challenges in front of us. We'll be growing demand a metric threat and constrains resources.

Austin is the fastest growing city. We've heard the 110 per month on average of people coming to Austin. That's just coming to live. We have a popularity victim -- victim is not quite the word, but we enjoy the growing popularity as we just saw with the south-by-southwest. Asymmetric threat. What I mean is borrowing the term from the military experience, if I can loosely define it as the threat that we have to address comes both small and large.

[12:48:15 PM]

So if you think in terms of medical response, we have to respond to somebody who sprains an ankle, has a cardiac arrest situation to a mass casualty incident or we have to respond to a single family dwelling to something as large as a wildland fire. Or having to respond to a lone wolf situation like a burglary or break-in to organized crimes with drug cartels in our city. That's a threat. Then finely, constrained resources, like all departments here within the city; we have to be very thoughtful and in terms of the resources that we do have and being responsible for the taxpayers' dollars. So we can compete like all of the other services here to try to put forth the best solution within the constraints of the budget and physical environment. Those are the three constraints and somewhat related to that leads to the role of the council. At this point, trying to ensure public safety within our city. And through the policy guidance that the council sets out, the city manager produces and recommends a budget that they adopt and then operationalizes the policy guidance. In the near term, the ordinance amendment and procurement contract that was on the last city council meeting that was referred to the public safety committee. Coming up on the agenda this week, the Austin department classification ordinance amendment, you may not know, but council is responsible for adopting the ordinance classification for the public safety sworn departments by local government code.

[12:50:19 PM]

And so the fire department is coming forward with a recommendation, and the downtown Austin community has social service contracts that they're proposing for adoption for your consideration. So in summary, we have a lot to be proud of. The men and women that you see here in terms of management do their best to try to propose and propose improvement, processes, adoption of technologies that help to maintain the public safety environment that we enjoy here in the city of Austin. But I wanted to recognize in particular the men and women at the front line in terms of the firefighters, police officers, emergency medical medics, and the code officers that really are -- that interface with our citizens and do the best that they can in order to make Austin the most liveable city in the country. And with that, I'll take any questions or pass off to the next speaker.

>> Tovo: Colleagues, any questions before we hear from the panelists? Great, thank you for that overview and I want to echo our thanks to all of our first responders who are here today. Colleagues, I also neglected to say that councilmember Garza is representing the city this afternoon at the capital metro board meeting so she won't be joining us but she is on city business. So why don't we begin with Marco Frazier, our police officer. Thank you for joining us. Each presenter will have 5 to 7 minutes to provide us with some information, ideas, and an opportunity about 45 minutes for our staff, our city staff, to join in that conversation as well.

>>> Good afternoon. I'm Margaret Frazier, your police officer, I'm the monitor, smaller part of the government, only consists of nine personnel.

[12:52:26 PM]

What I want to do is give you a very, very brief overview because we have a will the of panelists and I know you have some familiarity and I think probably the answer sometimes is more helpful in these situations. The office of police monitoring was established in 2002, the goal was to improve the relations with the Austin police department and the city of Austin. There were issues that had to do with the minority community. The way that we provide our services has evolve over the years. A lot of that has to do with the cooperation quite frankly for the Austin police association and allowed for the expanded role for Austin and the state Zhen's review panel which works closely with us and is actually a group 7, citizens who review certain types of cases. Our goal is to resolve an issue, we want to do it promptly because letting it fester doesn't work well. A lot of times we do a great deal of educating the public. I call it why the police do what the police do. That's not to make excuses for the police, but to help the people understand what the process is and what's going on. We find folks they think they're unhappy with the police department, but in actuality, it's another division. We ask what color shirts were they wearing trying to figure out if it was deputies instead of the UTPD. If people would stop going to the dark blue, it would make our job easier. People running around looking the same. Sometimes it's the code compliance people. We try to refear people out.

[12:54:29 PM]

If it is a situation they want to file a complaint, we have put in place in the last year and a half, an immediate united nations program. And we had in the last year a process where we referred the person out to a supervisor of the officer and they have a complaint or a concern and we follow up to make sure that the supersooizer has contacted that person, that person is satisfied with the response. And we also take what's called the formal complaints. The map you have up in front of you is by the different factors of the Austin police department. It doesn't match up to the council districts. It will give you some idea.

It's pretty well described somewhat throughout the city downtown area has the most complaints. The Charlie districts, east Austin, most likely, Ms. Houston, in your area. We're the over seer in all investigation, internal and external investigations. I always tell the public if there's an officer involved shooting, look at the cotton top on the screen and that's how you know I'm out there or a member of our staff will be out there. That's our job, to ensure the public that the investigation will be fair and thorough and there won't be a question of whether or noted that the facts have a role in that. And every officer involved shooting is our goal to make a recommendation to the chief.

[12:56:32 PM]

And with the latest agreement with the city of Austin, the Austin police association, those recommendations become public, which I think is very important important for transparency. See if I can figure out how to work this thing. No, that was probably not it. I have job security for anybody involved in electronics. I thought that's what I did. All right, here's a couple of things that we have to deal with. One has to do with the stops and searches by the Austin police department. We talk a great deal about the fact that if you're an African-American in this community, you stand a one in six chance if you're stopped of being searched. If you're Latino or hispanic, 1 in 9. If you're caucasian, you're 1 in 22. And I guess the one with the least opportunity is stop and search and members of our Asian community. But we continue to look at that. This is just an example -- just want to give you an example of some of the analysis that we try to do of the statistics to provide a more thorough picture of perhaps what is going on in our community and the reasons that perhaps the people feel as if they're being singled out. These are the -- this is 2013. The type of complaints that were received. Code of conduct, we get a lot of complaints about quite frankly rudeness and that sort of thing. Also a lot having to do with interviews. Basically the people feeling the way they were treated. We've seen an uptick in people complaining about the thoroughness and timeliness of investigations, like calls and things like that. And then here is the 2014 statistics which was relatively similar. So with that, I think -- you want to take questions with each one of us.

[12:58:36 PM]

Why don't we do brief questions? If you have brief questions right now for our police monitor?

>> I'll kick us off with one. The last comment you made, you're seeing an uptick in the complaints regarding thoroughness. Is that a perceived lack of thoroughness? Or an overthoroughness?

>> No, I don't think it's overthoroughness when you talk about investigations. I think mostly mayor pro tem, what we see are complaints about timeliness, that people are dissatisfied with how long it takes for

something to happen, particularly and often with burglaries. You know, so you may get a situation where a person calls and wants to complaint because the detective told him that it was going take, you know, six, nine months or more for fingerprints to be processed. And the person is upset with the detective but it's quite frankly -- the detective's not the one controlling how long that takes. Then often they're upset with how the complaint is being handled. We suggest when they start with the formal complaint process, we'll say talk to a supervisor. We won't even do the form. And we refer them back and they're like he told me the same thing, she told me the same thing. They're not really upset with the deliverer of the message. They're upset with the message.

>> Tovo: Thank you for that clarification. Councilmember Zimmerman?

>> Zimmerman: Thank you, mayor pro tem. This is a quick question. These are not deep dives or shallow dives. But if we kind of back up and think about some of the problems that have happened in Ferguson.

>> Yes, sir.

>> Zimmerman: And the potential for these kind of things to blow up, how do you assess where we are with the police monitor?

[1:00:37 PM]

Are you satisfied we have one of the monitor offices, maybe general comment in that area.

>> I've been there four years. I think we provide a valuable service. There are things that could be done to increase the transparency and the analysis that we're able to do to provide both to the council and to the public to understand that they are coming from more of a truly independent source. So I think there are things that can be done. But I think in this community when you think about the fergusons and things like that, that there is a -- probably panel members address it. But there's a trust level in the community by the levels being here. The result is not always what the public wants but the public has a feeling someone is watching out for their interests.

>> Zimmerman: Quick follow-up. I've received suggestions I think I'd like to see come before the entire council. But there's been recommendations to consider moving your office so the police monitor function more directly reports to the city councilmembers, to the elected officials so that if the crisis comes up, the people are going to be calling us, right? Because the voters el elect us. So if your office were able to work directly with us and same to be able to subpoena a deck cam video, my understanding is it should be public information. The information could get out sooner and we avoid the protracted situations where distrust has a chance to breed, right? If we don't get the information out quickly, it allows people to speculate about what's going on.

[1:02:39 PM]

Not a question right now but something to think about in the future. You could give us your comment IFS you like about whether it might be better to have your office under the elected city council.

>> I don't know that any city hadn't been asked that question. What I would say is my level of integrity and my level of independence and me speaking out for what I feel to be the truth is, is it going to change who I report to? So I think we can serve the public well under -- I think it's a policy decision and my job is to implement policy, not to make it.

>> Tovo: Thank you very much. We appreciate all of your work.

>> Thank you.

>> Tovo: And next up is judge KO. Remi KO is a former associate judge for Austin municipal court and a public member of the public safety commission. Thank you.

>> Thank you, mayor pro tem. I thank you members of the council for having us here today to present a little bit about some of the concerns that are out there in the community. I'm here today to primarily address concerns about cultural competency and language access. But I do want to note, since we do have limited time, that the other area that I do have a lot of perspective on especially having been in central booking and work in municipal court is our approach to homelessness and our use of criminal law to deal with that situation at the moment. I think there are a lot of serious problems, policiwise, with how we as a city choose to deal with homelessness. So I hope that becomes part of the discussion as well. Today I'll talk about language access and cultural competency. One of the things that I think a lot of people are aware of in the city, and certainly the councilmembers know is that part of Austin's explosive growth includes an explosive increase in the diversity of Austin.

[1:04:40 PM]

The fastest growing community is the asian-american community and as you know it's many, many different communities lumped into one demographic category. But as a result of the increasing diversity, we now face a lot of challenges when it comes to cultural and linguistic communication. I think that many of you, if not all of you, saw the news item recently involving an elderly Indian immigrant gentleman in Madison, Alabama. He was the grandfather who is putting his newly born grandson to help take care of him. At 9:00 in the morning while taking a walk through the neighborhood, he was approached by a couple of officers who apparently didn't know how to respond or wasn't -- wasn't sure how to handle a situation where someone didn't speak English and couldn't communicate and as a result of the misunderstanding, this grandfather was physically taken down and ended up paralyzed and

suffering permanent paralysis. And it turned out later on that he had been walking. He hasn't even been behaving suspiciously in any way. But it was a real problem. Fortunately, in this situation, I think having happened recently after some of the other incidents around the country, the response to other authorities seemed to be prompt and appropriate. But, the reason I want to bring that up is because we here in the city of Austin, the Asian community, and it affects other communities besides the asian-american community know about the risk in this situation because we had something similar happen here. This is only one incident that I'm aware of. But a few years ago, we had a Nepalese gentleman who was stopped for suspicion of drunk driving. He could not speak English. Culturally, the way he responded is the way he's known to respond in his country which is when he stopped, he exited the vehicle and did a sign of submission which is holding his ears and yelling to the police, "I submit" which resulted in the man being taken down with a taser.

[1:06:50 PM]

Clear that the gentleman can't understand what's going on. The officers are shouting at him to respond to his questions before he can even say anything, they ask the next question. At one point they bring in a Spanish interpreter to attempt to interpret for him. They also accuse him multiple times throughout the encounter of lying about not being able to speak English, of understanding what's going on and purposefully pretending to not understand. The gentleman as a result resulted in serious injuries, a very disturbing incident and the entire Nepalese community became concerned and scared about that incident. And, of course, talking about the community of refugees, people who have come to the United States because they are escaping in many cases official oppression, escaping the fact of living somewhere where law enforcement authorities unlike here are not used to protect the public safety and are used to enforce specific agendas. Given those concerns, there's been a lot of discussion around the language of access and competency. We've done a good job of putting forward some good written policies on paper. We know the translation to policy and action or practical results are very, very different. And part of the challenge we see out here in the community is that a lot of times it doesn't seem like the policies on paper or the things that are being adopted at the top are reaching the rank and file down to the bottom. A lot of this ends up being the lack of availability for resources and time for training and things like that. But at the same time, it's this sense that we don't always have a commitment to making sure that things follow up. We don't do the data collection at the back end to see did things change? Are results occurring? So we do have this continued sense of mistrust out there in the community. I recently dealt with a situation involving an international student at UT, a phd. Who because of misunderstanding was in a very serious situation in which she had an interpreter language line being used by an officer and mistranslated, the interpreter mistranslated what the person said and made the officer believe that the person was trying to attempt suicide at the time which resulted in much more serious elevated and escalated physical encounter that led her to be charged with serious felonies that threatened her immigration status.

[1:09:20 PM]

She had been in the United States -- first time the outside of her own country she had been in the United States for just two weeks at that point. So that just happened a few months ago. So we know at the end of the day, that whatever we have on paper, whatever we say we pay lip service to in terms of the access, how to translate to real results and we continue to see problems with cultural competency language access. We understand the challenge that the community faces because I think too often when you approach language minorities or culturally minority communities, we take approaches that are developed for other communities, like the African-American community and the Latino community and they don't work when you apply them with the Asian communities with the literally hundreds of potential languages and cultural backgrounds you have to look at in one community. This is something the council needs to look at hard in terms of the good start I think we've made in the conversations and the policy moves, but really make sure they translate and trickle down. The real challenge, I understand, is a lot of the traditional outreach mechanisms, they only hit the people who are already engaged. And the people we need to reach, the people who need to be brought into contact in the circle of trust with our community and public safety agencies are the people who don't show up to forums, are the people who are not involved in the community organizations in their own communities who have the greatest degree of barriers. Those are the hardest to reach. But at the same time, those are the population that are most likely to result in the misunderstandings, misinterpretations that can result in serious problems, not just in terms of how a specific incident is handled but how that trickles down and how that affects the perception among the community in terms of the relationship with law enforcement. I just want to throw there at the end that this is a two-sided issue. It's not just people who are stopped or who are subject of interest in investigations, but also people who are in the community trying to report crimes, people are trying to get assistance. These same issues end up anecdotally, we hear a lot from small business owners in the community who don't call police when crimes occur, when they're the victim of crimes.

[1:11:26 PM]

They don't feel comfortable. It may not be an issue of a lack of trust. They don't know they can function in the environment without something going wrong. They have a fear of the unknown. That's something we have to address. We have to create a comfort level. Thank you very much.

>> Tovo: Thank you very much. You raised some challenging issues and important concerns that I hope our public safety commission will look at. Councilmember Kitchen has a question?

>> Kitchen: Thank you, v much. Those are very disturbing and eye opening for us. I appreciate that. I also wanted to take you up on your offer to talk about how we treat homeless individuals. I don't know if this is the appropriate time to talk about that or not, but I would certainly want to hear what your thoughts are on that.

>> Well, I can give, I think, a very over -- an overview statement.

>> Kitchen: Okay.

>> My sense is that this city has taken a step in the last several years towards criminalizing more and more incidents of homelessness. And being a judge in the municipal court and being in central booking and seeing the result of that, the impact is that we have had no real improvement, I think, in terms of the life, the quality of life and the available resources for homelessness because of that policy. We have seen actually, if you look at the statistics, we've been successful in reducing homelessness in the city, that's because of the implementation of housing first policies and things like that. But in terms of the safety side of it, we increased the regime that has the effect of, a, tying up a lot of court resources dealing with the same people for offenses like camping outside or lying on the sidewalk. This creates a cycle where these people end up falling in to huge amounts of debt and they can't get the criminal things off of the record, end up having to spend ennowhere mouse amounts of time in jail, they can't pay. And it basically frustrates and short circuits the process of getting the folks the real help that they need to get out of the homeless situation or at least reduce the incidents and the negative consequences surrounding that.

[1:13:28 PM]

And I think that we need to take a serious look at how much effort, time, money, we're spending on this particular approach to homelessness. I think at the end of the day, it ends up being bad all around. You end up wasting money that could be better used on better ways to improve public safety. You end up not helping the homeless folks that are in the system. And you tie all lot of resources with officers on the street and in terms of the courts and the justice system ofe up sensually going through what I like to call a pantomime. This dance of processing homeless people in and out of the system constantly with no real end or purpose other than to churn money through the system which we can ill-afford given the challenge challenges that we face.

>> Kitchen: Thank you very much. I would like to follow up with you on that and as well as the committee.

>> Tovo: Councilmember pool?

>> Pool: On the point you were making with the problem of language -- language is the language barrier and shopkeepers, for example, looking at crime and may not want to report it. Do you think it would help if we expanded or reinstituted or put more resources toward community policing?

>> Absolutely. I think the few organizations and parts of the community that have had positive relationships with police and haven't been able to improve on that are the ones that have felt -- there are a few groups that have been able to engage some of the district exuberance and things like that and inviting this to community events and getting them out and things like that. You may have heard there's a murder of a member of the Chinese community, a person who ran and owned a Chinese school here for many years. That murder remains unsolved. There's frustration in the community surrounding that. At the same time, in many ways it demonstrated when APD and the community came together to do a good job because members and people in the community really actively reached out to the district reps in that area.

[1:15:28 PM]

Brought in the chief, brought in other folks, had a lot of public hearings and forums with the community following that incident, not just addressing that specific incident but concerns about safety that business owners in the area started to have at the same time. More things like that, I think, are helpful. And we know community policing requires them there to be enough time and resources for the officers to engage in that. But, again, I -- I want to emphasize that those steps often make good entries to the question and the policies at the top. Oftentimes that's not followed up with the further action to get it all the way through. So a district rep might attend an event with the community, come out of it, really educated, wanting to make some changes but doesn't have the resources or backup or support necessary to make sure every person in that district, every officer has the education and training that comes out of that, that gets the benefit of what the district reps and other people who are engaged in the community directly benefit from. That's still a problem on the backend, that implementation. And, again, we rely on the things like language. Having used it in the jail, language speaking folks. That's a language I speak so I can understand what's going on. It's maybe 60%, 70% accurate at best. We're talking about people being informed of their constitutional rights and things like that. You can imagine that in a tense situation where a police officer is trying to communicate with somebody and they're having to talk through a phone, a cell phone with somebody who's -- with no real certainty as to the accuracy of that translation, a lot of problems can arise. And whether that person is trying to speak to the officer is trying to report a crime or whether they're being investigated for a crime, in both instances, you're opening up a lot, a big can of worms.

>> With the group of the Asian community here in Austin, it would seem that maybe more resources are beginning to be available, like what you're talking about maybe people who have a better grasp of the translation skills, because it's not just -- there's a skill set that's necessary and maybe you could help us with the resources, maybe we could get a better listing of who to call and have a more robust list?

[1:17:49 PM]

>> The thing is, there are great resources in the community I developed that are out there. We find that the challenge sometimes is that even when we make available capacity that's in the community, there's not always the best responsiveness from the city. That's another issue we can identify. Sometimes the agencies we work with, for whatever reason, right? I understand sometimes it's bureaucratic inertia, sometimes it's the rules they operate under and they're afraid of getting in trouble for not doing things in a certain way, we run to a lot of obstacles even when we offer that help and there needs to be more thought from a lot of these agencies that we deal with on when you run into a situation, the solution offered by the community isn't offered for whatever reason. The answer isn't we can't do it, the answer should be how do we figure out a way we can do it.

>> Pool: Your raising these issues today may help us move forward to making some of the positive changes we're talking about. We have to have a capacity to respond to all of our citizens equally.

>> I speak from the Asian community. But the issues are not unique to my community.

>> Pool: Absolutely.

>> Increasing Numbers of African immigrants, a Latino pop yule lags that's very large and deals with some of the same issues. We've been fortunate on the Spanish side, we do have more resources. But it's not uncommon to see things we hear reports and I've seen this myself that officers will respond to the incident and have people all involved in the incident translating for each other and you might in a family violence situation, for example, we've heard stories of Asian immigrants where the victim is having her words translated by the accused abuser so --

>> Okay, thank you so much.

>> Tovo: Councilmember Zimmerman.

[1:19:50 PM]

>> Zimmerman: Thank you for coming and pointing all of this out. You point out one of the problems, mass immigration, the critics of the open border and mass immigration policy. We could have -- how many countries could immigrate here. There could be 100 -- people from 100 different countries from all kinds of languages. It seems like you're suggesting really an impossible, impossible task to put on police or emergency responders that we're supposed to be able to know what country we're from and figure out a way to communicate with you. I guess I want to be on the diametrically opposed side that

you're proposing. We have a huge problem with property crimes for pretty much the entire city not being investigated, not being followed up on. We heard -- the police are saying, well, it's going to take me six months to get a set of fingerprints off of your burglarized house and run those through and do any kind of investigation. It's completely unreasonable to put another burden on our police that they have to be able to communicate on 100 different languages. It seems -- I'm sorry, I want seems crazy to me. I really disagree with your point of view on this.

>> I mean, inunderstand your perspective, councilmember. But I guess my response is what is the alternative? We have a population that's already here and unless you just want to essentially cede an entire community to lawlessness, inmean, we can already see the results of that in certain communities, we've seen how the secured communities program has frustrated officers to investigate Mexican drug cartel related crimes because of the lack of trust and communication between the Latino community and the officers here. I'm sure if we were to do the same type of essentially ignoring or writing off the entire community that you're just inviting the growth of criminal enterprise, criminals are not stupid. They can see opportunities when they arise.

[1:21:51 PM]

And if they know that a certain community is not going to get responses from police because of their language barriers, well, that is a community that is ripe for targeting. And part of the reason why when you look at STA ties ecks, immigrants are far, far more likely to be the victims of crime than they are to be the perpetrators of crime compared to native born Americans. And I mean it's -- I can't see where that would end up benefitting anybody in larger community to simply have officers say, we're not going to do it. And the reality is there are plenty of communities in the country where departments have been successful in addressing these issues. Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Miami, Washington, D.C., Seattle, San Francisco. These are all departments that deal with probably more diversity of language and culture than the city of Austin has right now. They've managed to develop methods to deal with that. I simply don't think that shutting our eyes and sticking our head in the sand isn't the way to respond to this issue. And at the end of the day, you know, we can talk in theory or academically about change as the concept of what we want, doesn't change the fact that we have a majority/minority population here in the city of Austin. Doesn't change the fact that the fastest growing pop yule lageses are immigrant communities. These the same communities that I would also remind the councilmember generate most of the jobs and the new business in this city. I mean, there's been successful.

>> Zimmerman: I got it, thanks.

>> Tovo: Thank you for being on this panel.

[1:23:53 PM]

Mr. Roberts the next speaker, the executive director of the greater Austin crime division. Welcome and thank you.

>> Thank you, good afternoon. Thank you for the invitation to participate. For 18 years the greater Austin crime commission has worked to support public safety planning and law enforcement in central Texas. And we're proud of our partnerships with city of Austin's public safety agencies. I think you can look to the experience of the past two weeks during south-by-southwest to see the professionalism of our first rep responders. How important that is to the city. And in the 18 years, the crime provision has been around for Mr. Of those, councilmember Renteria, the organization is proud to work with him and support the east Austin crime watch and the east side rangers and we value those community partnerships as well. Our president is Paul Bure. And I'm joined today, though, by several members of our public affairs committee who are sitting behind me. Our immediate past president, ambassador Pam Williford and two of our directors. And the crime commission has a board of about 60 business community leaders who are very obviously very interested in public safety and its importance to our community. During ambassador Willard's tenure as president, the commission worked on a comprehensive public safety study. The first part of that is completed, a police four strength analysis and assessment that will be released Thursday. The idea really is to get away from the sort of blunt instrument we've used in previous years which is the ratio which I hate to even say out loud for fear that it will get traction once again. But of officers per thousand. And this goes to councilmember pool's question directly, actually, when it comes to community policing. And that is that a better measurement of patrol productivity and community policing really is the amount of what's unfortunately called by the academic, uncommitted time.

[1:25:58 PM]

We like to say neighborhood engagement time or community engagement time, but that's the time that characterizes those officers that are assigned to patrol. This is the time that they have that the officer has when they're not responding to calls for service. And the studies of best practices for other cities show that the goal for community engagement time or uncommitted time or community policing should range from 25 to 50%. What we've seen in the last 25 years, however, in Austin is that we've experienced a steady decline and the percent of uncommitted time. In fact, in 2009 to 2014, APD's total time for patrol officers citywide declined from 33% to 19%. So we think getting to 30% is sort of our initial goal. And a much better measure of police forestrength is going to using this uncommitted time work analysis. We think it's a model that will work together as a police department and we also hope in the months ahead to be able to use the same sort of analysis for the fire department as well. The crime commission is very interested, as you might imagine, in the public safety resources. I'm sure you know, the largest part of the budget that you're asked to deal with every year, very interesting in arising issues,

looking at what we need to do, you know, years out, so that we don't fall behind as we have been in manpower for the police department. We look forward to working with you.

>> Tovo: Thank you, Mr. Roberts. Any questions? Councilmember Renteria?

>> Renteria: I want to make a comment that working with the class and Mr. Roberts.

[1:27:58 PM]

And he's been more than willing to come in to our neighborhood and show our neighbors how to look up crime statistics and do crime prevention. It's a very successful program that they have that by working with communities like east Austin, not only do we have empower the citizens here to call the police. And we learned how to do it the proper way by calling 911. We said, hey, if you see something suspicious, do not call 311. Call 911. And by doing that, it empowered our neighborhood where, you know, we are looking out and we actually when we find someone that's actually stealing property crime -- property off of our neighbors, we actually not only call the police, but we also follow them to make sure that they identify or get stopped. Because that's been the biggest problem that we're facing here in Austin is that the people just get back their -- their bicycles or get someone and they just let them go without calling 911, knowing that this person is going to go later on and break into somebody else's house or steal something out of their yard. So I really want to think that.

>> Thank you, councilmember. And it's programs like the ones that councilmember is involved in, restored runberg, the commission is honored to have a seat on that group, the economic development seat. We see there going was to the question of community policing, even though the citywide average for uncommitted time is 19%, there are -- and Mr. Winstead, in fact, points this out frequently that that figure is much lower in parts of the city where it often probably will be much higher than our target. And so, you know, we're -- we're hoping that as we move toward 30% that we increase the amount of community engagement time that police have in areas of the city who, you know, who need it more.

[1:30:06 PM]

>> Tovo: Very good. Thank you. Our next speaker is Mr. Gary Bledsoe, Texas -- president of the Texas naacp. Thank you for being here today, Mr. Bledsoe? Welcome.

>> Thank you, very much. Thank all of the members for inviting us to appear and present to you today, I want to commend you for what you're doing. I will make my comments generally speaking in regards to -- kind of lost my voice rooting for the lady longhorns last night. I know the local branch presence had a real good relationship with the chief and the has worked on issues. I want to comment generally on the

things that the state conference that we're trying to get changed and things on a national level since I sit on the national criminal justice committee, the naacp as well. And some of the things we've done in terms of identifying the problem. But I will leave in one or two aye the ems that are historical in reference to the discussion I had in Austin to maybe help make the point. To begin with, years ago, a little over 20 years ago when I was a local branch president here, I met with chief Irving. And we had had an issue regarding the similar type of issues that have helped cause this forum to be put together today. And told the chief about some incidents and he was aware of them. Some directly involve me. And he said, you know, Gary, I'm going to have to do this sensitivity training. He hired the doctor to come in and coordinate that. He said, you know, 60% of our guys don't need it. 20% will benefit from it. And there's 20% I can't do anything with. And it's kind of an interesting comment. That's foreboding because I think generally speaking when you look around the country, you have many more really good police officers. But the problems are that the problematic officers engage in activity that others end up supporting due to cultural issues that cause there to be a real blemish with some police in the eye of the minority community.

[1:32:24 PM]

That's really somewhat unnecessary. And I think one of the problems obviously is that too many of us in society and whatever position we might be in allow this to happen when we really in many ways know the truth. On the state level, the naacp, after the Ferguson incident and the matter up in New York, we joined with Texas for African-American congress person who decided to host forums around the state to address the issues that have been raised. And so we had one at UT Arlington and we have another one scheduled at Texas southern. And the Texas state conference actually put on such a forum for the black caucus here at their confab a couple of weeks ago. And there are some things that I think are really worth noting there. In the forum up in Arlington it was shocking to the congress persons how much support of issues raised by the community that African-American members and the police departments actually showed. Because what was occurring is they had the same things happening to them whether they were high-ranking or low-ranking when they were off duty as if they were not an officer. So they had concerns there. And congresswoman Johnson said you need to have a forum where you focus on what African-American officers, some of their experiences. So we have had -- that's the approach that we took in the forum that we had in the black caucus. But we had officers from Killeen, from dps and Houston, Arlington, ft. Worth. They all had issues where they said really what the community is saying has a lot of validity. There are, indeed, real concerns and reference to these issues. And they need to be dealt with. And so I think they had a very good and important perspective to share with us.

[1:34:31 PM]

Now some of the specific problems that we have identified that we think might really help if they're addressed and trying to improve the situation would be, number one, understanding the historical context that we exist in and understand how there's historical context that provides for, you know, wrongful accusations and reference to African-Americans that's been an underpinning for many, many years. I would even reference a couple of books that I think would be worthwhile to look at. Obviously the book about the new Jim crow is clearly one book. But I think there's another book called slavery by another name by Doug Blackman, an unbelievable book that talks about the historical background with a lot of this. I think they're clearly worth a lot of reading. One issue we identified is screening. We think with a all of the really good police officers out there. All of those that myself and others have and needed and utilized their support and backing and difficult circumstances that there's still a lot of people that somehow get through and they seem to have real biases or psychological issues. So it seems as though that the screening processes that are used are not effective and needs to be something done in regard to the screening that's done. It seems as though in many ways the psychologicals that are done used to eliminate people who might be good officers than to screen out those that might be bad. Secondly, there's an issue of training. We can look at issue S issues such as the Michael brown situation in Ferguson that involves a training issue. Because my friends at APD tell me, you have everything under your belt that's taught that is trained you to be able to deal with some -- some person who would be stronger than you might be bigger and be more physical than you are.

[1:36:44 PM]

If women officers deal with that every day and they're able to effectively deal with people who are much stronger and bigger than they are. So Michael brown was an unarmed officer, there were many means at the disposal of the officer to deal with that situation. And I think also in issues of bias. And issues as sheriff Frazier talked about earlier talking about racial profiling. It takes training to change that. If you look at issues such as one in 22 versus one out of 1 out of 22 versus 1 out of 6, there's discrepancies. There's a reason for that. I think at some point, I don't know if the sheriff has done this, at some point, when you drill down a do an analysis, if there's such a variance between what's expected for that percent of a population compared to another percent of a population, that could be a great concern. Another -- besides training, one of the issues with training that I want to mention is that senator got us past that requires eight hours of sensitivity training every two years for officers around the state and 40-hour mandatory training. But what we've seen around the state is there's sensitivity training and there's sensitivity training. And sometimes it's not really that significant or that probative and won't really get at the issue. So I think one needs to make sure that the program that's put together and presented to help improve the individuals and the outlook and their perspective that that program and their perspective is real. It's well thought out and it's truly intended to reach the desired results.

[1:38:50 PM]

That's improving attitudes and improving the relations between the people who wear the uniform and rightly so and the community. The other issues are that the corrective action we find in many departments is not there. You find with corrective action, it seems as though that the department has a better record. So you look at the Travis county sheriff's office, I think they've had a record we can cite to ohs because they control a lot of the issues whether it's profiling or use of excessive force and in other ways. I think one has to look at the department to see what is the mechanism of corrective action. How does the internal affairs department function? Is there -- what about any other monitoring apparatus. How does it function? And the other issue that relates to corrective action would be the issue of prosecuting attorneys. Probably one that's more of a friend than a prosecuting attorney is David eskamia. Like him and others that are exemplary in what they do. There's a code procedure that Watkins in Dallas gave new meaning to when he became the district attorney up there. That is the number one obligation of the district attorney or the prosecuting attorney sees justice is done. It's not to convict someone blindly because they've been presented to you in their minority. The number one obligation is to ensure that justice is done. That should be a provision that supplied by statute, policy, whatever, two police officers as well. One of the other things that we are.

[1:41:01 PM]

We're trying to require the use of body cameras. So we're working with police agencies around the state and organizations put together by senator west trying to address that issue. But as the component part, we've been working with professors from Texas southern university and helping us on this. And one of the things we want to make sure of is what we have a requirement of body cameras that there's enough mechanism in place to make sure they're properly utilized. Because that's what Mr. Ko mentioned earlier and that is, you know, you can have a policy, but the question is how will that policy apply? So in cases of political magnitude, people who work together all the time, the investigation shouldn't be put together by individuals that work with them that's presented to a district attorney. Sometimes a district attorney's hands might be tied to what's being presented to them. Discussion for this issue all around the nation. It needs to be honest discussion. Not just lip service. There have to be people free to speak on all sides of the issue. They can lay the issue out well. There needs to be diversity and law enforcement and I think a lot of the things that he mentioned earlier about language barriers and things of that nature, diversity helps to cure a lot of it and have real diversity and how fairness and how one has punishment or polices a force. And I think those are some of the issues that we think would help to address the problem. In many ways, some communities will step forward and put together a program in policy that would be exemplary.

[1:43:03 PM]

That is what we are hoping to do. The affinity and the police departments around the need for it around the country. No one wants to be a victim of crime. People want to be left alone and treated fairly. I think that will encourage people to come forward and create camaraderie with people and help them solve crimes. Years ago when I talked to Greenberg, we brought her here to speak, when I had a group put together a minority in the court in conference with the attorney general, one of the things that chief Greenberg said is he put guys on the beat and send them out to the minority community, the learning community, to learn on the first name basis, they were required to respect the community and because of the relationships they were able to create, they were able to really solve many crimes in south Carolina. Thank you.

>> Tovo: Thank you very much. Councilmember kitchen?

>> Kitchen: I wanted to follow up on your statements about the body cameras. I know that's something that the police department I think might have been pursuing or may have been investigating. So I was wondering if you have any comment on the status of that locally?

>> I don't know the status. I'm sure they're working with them. I know it's been discussed. Not sure what they have.

>> Kitchen: Okay, thank you.

>> Tovo: Thank you, councilmember Houston.

>> Houston: Thank you, thank you, Mr. Bledsoe for your comments. You said Cynthia Alexander. I wanted to say her name is Michelle Alexander, the mass incarceration, the new Jim crow. I wanted to make sure we had the right author.

>> That's correct, thank you.

>> Tovo: Other questions? Thank you for the reck member

[1:45:04 PM]

-- recommendations. I have know chief Acevedo talked about that recently at the neighborhood's council meeting. So the next speaker is josh Jackson of the regional disaster program. Excuse me, he's the program officer for the regional disaster program of the red cross. Thank you for being with us.

>> Thank you, mayor pro tem, thank you, council, for the opportunity to speak. We're great at titles and acronyms at red cross like we are in the city. The red cross is a service that's provided in our community all across the country. I find a lot of times when I go out, people know what the red cross is but they don't. But I wanted to take a step back to explain how we're structured and what it looks like before

talking about what the community would expect in a disaster recovery. So the red cross is it a universal organization with unity in each country so each country has the own society with the red cross. The services provided in each country dependent on what the country looks like. Here in the United States, we focus on disaster relief, training, services on the blood services products. Withe do international services and working with our friends in other Arias. I work in the county regions. We go out to Laredo, all the way out to west Texas, midland Odessa. We cover big geography. We have San Antonio in our region. We keep very, very busy in disaster response. We have 100 responses each year. That's 1500 families, depending on the size of the family, several thousand individuals. Here in the city of Austin, we respond to house fires, reaching 300, 400 austinites affected by disasters. As that scope, the red cross and disaster relief scales up. Small family house fires every single day in this region every ten years. Here in the city of Austin, every 2 1/2 days or so. The family that has disaster cost needs.

[1:47:06 PM]

What we do for those is provide immediate emergency assistance. Volunteers that are trained on psychological first aid skills. They have monetary assistance. The people have a place to go to have food to eat, clothes on their back. To make sure their health and mental health needs are met right away. Trained nurses and trained mental health professionals on call 24/7 to meet those needs. So working with the families, we continue to work with them through recovery to make sure that they're able to find new housing and get back to where they were before the disaster. So we start small. We respond to all types of events. The large ones, hurricane evacuations, hurricane tornadoes, all of those events. We focus on one part of recovery. That's the heart of what recovery and disasters. Intakes a community to recover. We're one part of that. City of Austin, city of Austin departments, making sure we're working together to make sure that disaster cost needs are met. So a long history to work with the government. We're chartered by congress. We're very much integrated here in the local response plans. The biggest rep source strains in the past, hurricane evacuations from the coast. We work closely with the city of Austin. The local school district, and the other city and county governments for the cash plan. We also work with aviation disaster plan, we're the co-lead for that with NTSB. What does the community expect? It goes down to what does the individual need?

[1:49:07 PM]

That's a wide question. Communities recover because of the community. The communities that have the tight bonds do better, great example of that, bastrop, the community that's been in long-term community has finally rebuilt homes and is starting to address long term mental health needs. You see that in west, a strong community that's recovering from a disaster that hay two weeks ago. The

successful operation, you see the collaboration we saw in the beginning, governmental entities working together with nongovernmental recommendations. We had the same challenges. By working together as part of the unified team, that's how we work together to find the recovery needs. Part of that is sharing of information. One of the great things here in the city of Austin is we do share information. Making sure they get the right information out there as soon as possible. Really what you see is folks that have had a disaster, they work for any piece of information they can get. They're hungry for information. We can't get that to them fast enough. It's important we run things down quickly. We don't address rumors. We get the facts out there as quickly as possible. So folks can make decisions on how to recover. 98% of disasters are not presidentially declared, no FEMA money. The communities must face the challenges with the resources they have on hand. The mgms must face challenges with resources they have on hands. So we're all struggling to meet the needs with limited resources. One of the challenges, opportunities we have. I work in disaster so I don't fund raise. Ngos have to fund raise in disasters to provide long term services. If they can raise more funds, they can provide more services. There's a balancing of there's a terrible event. How do we get the American people to recognize there's a great need to channel that money. To the red cross, the salvation Army, another agency that provides the disaster relief, but making sure the generosity of the people is recognized and the story is told is something that we have a great opportunity to do as well.

[1:51:19 PM]

We're running on time, unless you have questions, I'll stop.

>> Councilmember Houston and then councilmember Zimmerman?

>> Thank you, mayor pro tem. Thank you, sir. For those people watching or listening to this, could you tell them what ngos are?

>> Yes, I'm sorry, nongovernmental organizations.

>> Again, a quick question. If you can summarize your thoughts. How does the -- I always struggled with the balance between the private charities which for thousands of years they've been responsible for taking care of a lot of the things that you up point out. There seems to be in my lifetime a lot of encroachment from government to basically pretend its's a charity as well? How do those dynamics play out with the red sdmrosz.

>> Great question. Thank you, councilmember. From my perspective, when folks have a disaster, whatever resources they need for daily living, their needs become exacerbated because of disaster. No one can meet the needs alone, especially when it comes to financial resources. Disasters, you can see the infrastructure going down. People unable to work. They don't have resources because of that. The quicker we can respond, businesses are open, utilities back on. People getting back to the daily living, the faster they'll recover. So it's a balancing act more than anything.

>> Thank you very much for your partnership and all of the work you do in our community. Our last panelist is Mr. Mike levy in the ems and wild fire constituent and member of our commission. Welcome, Mr. Levy.

>> Thank you councilmember tovo. I'm going to start with ems. They expected me to speak on both ems and wild fire.

[1:53:23 PM]

We dodged a bullet for Halloween floods two years ago. The opportunity for major loss of life and the major loss of homes, significant. Could have been much worse. Firefighters said, you know, 60 seconds to three or four minutes. It made the difference in how they responded. For ems personnel, there was a real frustration in not being allowed to have input in the manager's review process after the -- after the flood. There was no mention as there was on the shelf a previously prepared management plan that had been done two or three years before the flood itself in the review plan, review. It was prepared after the flood it was not mentioned. And more importantly, the feet on the street were not consulted on it. And that was a problem. The review done by management was extraordinarily inactive. Proceed to wild life fire. Two days ago -- two days, four, five days ago from the county, we can -- the magazine for the casualty company fire and risk, insurance and risk, they listed Austin as number three in the nation in terms of risk. Just as important they side the highest risk were 35,000 homes in Austin with reconstruction of \$9 billion, not million, billion dollars.

[1:55:28 PM]

With we were asked to talk about recovery. When you have that kind of the loss, there will be no recovery. We have talked about fire lines. Its's really cosmetic. What we learned in bastrop, they did studies in the fire. Small embers flew, because of the high winds, several miles. And got in the eves and the homes were destroyed, not because of heat or flame, but because of flying embers. In your pact, you'll see a resolution for the public safety commission from three years ago on what Austin needed to do. Most important wasry sources. Including stations. We have the committee putting together the recommendations on the council on capitol items to be -- is that the way the process worked? The top of the list is the station on the 360 corridor. Only two stations that can help keep the movement. And that was the last public safety commission meeting and management that said we're short about six stations in Austin. One of the reports that we won't go in to said there's a standard put out by the insurance industry in terms of the number of ladders in the number of miles and the number of engine companies in an X number of miles and we're not meeting those standards. In Colorado, there was a major fire started by a public utility that was trying mitigation.

[1:57:32 PM]

It started a major fire. Thousands of acres were destroyed. Firefighters and civilians were killed. The commission begged, pleaded, and asked that the public -- the water utility get out of the fire fighting business and give it to Austin fire. Which makes sense. They have not been allowed to. For some reason, the manager's staff has continued to keep the water utility in the fire business. Obviously the fire department can do that job much better. Fuel mitigation is critical. The amount of fuel mitigation that's been done is basically like a handful of sand along two-mile beach. A lot has been done. Fire department is charged with working with partners, as a result, the partners partners who are stakeholders have mitigation. There's fears of plan scraping. But that's not what we're talking about. We're talking about fire breaks and other things that can help minimize, you know, keep the loss of lower revenue and higher. And we are the only major city that has not adopted wild fire codes. As you will see in the article, what the casualty insurance company is planning on doing as a result of what we now know in the top ten city, two California cities and Austin is either cutting coverage all together, making it unavailable to homeowners, or Quinn up the rates if they decide to give rates.

[1:59:33 PM]

They know what the risk. They know what the city to do what they believe is necessary to manage the risk to some degree, not total, it's impossible. We have to ask what can we do? We need to do more than what we're doing now. This has been a constant issue in front of the public safety commission. This is what we've looked at since the inception of the commission. And it's been frustrating that the manager's office, the staff has been basically nonresponsive to the issues. I appreciate the opportunity. To visit with you about this. And we hope that at some point along the lines, this is to discuss certainly in the budget process. Thank you.

>> Mr. Levi, thank you for being here and your comments. Any questions for Mr. Levy. Colleagues, we have several -- yes, councilmember Zimmerman? Sips thank you mayor pro tem. Could you elaborate a little more about those wildfire codes.

>> Well, they're national codes about a whole range of things that community should be doing in terms of mitigation. And we have presented the bob nix and the firefighters association have lobbied hard on these codes, and we still don't have what we -- what we need and if community deserves. The question we had was what would be the biggest differential.

[2:01:47 PM]

By the way, when we're talking about all these homes, we're talking about going fairly significantly in and away from the actual vegetation. What we're going to see is what we saw in the Waldo canyon fire in Colorado -- in Colorado Springs and in the north Texas fires where, you know, one home catch, homes either side, jump the street. Those homes will start playing like a checkerboard, you know, go to the checkerboard, go to the houses behind them, jump the street and so forth and so on. As you can see, they've come up with 36,000 homes that are at risk, and that's obviously not just homes along the -- close to vegetation that are ignited by the heat and the -- of the vegetation. Austin is worse than -- far greater risk than Colorado and California, because we have persimmon and cedar. They have oils. They don't ignite, they explode. And increase the intensity of the fire.

>> There's a --

>> Zimmerman: There's a couple of other things here, if I could, on fire insurance. I've been talking to some insurance agents regarding homeowners insurance, and they're telling me that instead of just increasing rates, if you're in a wildfire, you know, high-risk area like Austin, especially outside the city limits, they're starting to just not write policies.

>> That's in this article I just gave you. They cannot manage this risk, even if they took a chunk of it to Lloyds, they can't manage it so. The only way they can manage it is either not to write it at all, to even out their package of policies around the country, or quintuple rates.

[2:03:56 PM]

10 or the other -- one or the other will happen. And based on what I've heard, casualty insurance companies will not be writing any homeowners insurance at all.

>> Tovo: Councilmember Houston has a question.

>> Houston: Thank you. Mr. Levy, for fear of alienating all of the public safety people in this room, do you have any suggestions I'm not suggesting that you want banks to pay for it, but it's a hard one. Because we have this risk, how you manage it. All we can do is raise our hands and these are -- you know, these are ideas. Some of the ideas don't cost any money like the -- you know T code adoptions. Others, not insignificant like stations and personnel. The biggest thing y'all can do is to allow appropriate mitigation. That's not expensive. It just frees the fire service from the controls that it has. They basically have not been allowed to do mitigation, and the one utility is essentially doing the mitigation. It's absolutely essential. We're not talking about money as much as we are talking about the will of the council to say, hey, to the manager, do something. Right now we've done essentially nothing.

>> Tovo: Councilmember Gallo.

>> Gallo: Thank you for being here. Those of us that represent the western portion of the city, district 6 and my district 10. Disid -- did I say 8 or 10? 10 is on my mind. We all realize that we have been incredibly lucky with the fire risk and we saw steiner ranch not that long ago, just recently stillhouse canyon, there was a fire in the observatory, and due to the incredibly fast response of our wonderful fire department, it was put out before it was at risk to a large community -- risk to a large community.

[2:06:21 PM]

It could have gotten out of hand very quickly. I think for us to continue to depend on luck instead of being active and trying to do some of the things that you have suggested and really be proactive about that, I appreciate you bringing all of this to our attention, and I hope that the council will appropriately address these concerns, because we're not going to stay lucky forever. And I think the western side of our city is at a huge risk. So even simple things like that that we can start helping our homeowners be proactive and have some skin in the game with -- with helping to provide safety for their family and their home, I think we can do. But thank you for bringing that conversation to us and, certainly those of us that represent the western areas of Austin, will continue the dialogue.

>> Steiner ranch, if I have a minute, steiner ranch is another big bullet we dodged, because there was no wind. Former mayor Leffingwell was there watching, and he said he was scared, as were all the firefighters out there, that if we would have had even a minimal wind, we would have been, you know, within two hours, it would have been in the center of Austin.

>> Thank you.

>> Tovo: Councilmember Zimmerman.

>> Zimmerman: Thank you mayor pro tem. We have an agenda item on the 26th, I don't know if you've looked at it, it's item no. 7. It's a proposal from the fire department to reorganize. There's a battalion chief position right now that was going to be reassigned to district chief. Are you familiar with those reorganizations?

>> Yes, I am.

>> Zimmerman: Do you support that or not?

>> It's not that I don't support it, it's the way management is going to fund it by taking resources, dollars, away from the wildlife division.

[2:08:33 PM]

We need resources, we need senior personnel, and they were basically taking the funding for senior personnel to fund a division chief or two, and putting in -- instead of somebody knowledgeable, experienced and engineered, like they do in fire planning, basically, I think, they're replacing them with secretary of management is saying, well, you know what, this person will be over the wildfire division, but it doesn't work that way. It's management 101. This person will have responsibility over two to three sections of the fire department, will not have hands-on responsibility. You don't take resources away -- this is a time to add resources. A final thing, councilmember tovo, and I think we need to move on, is that bob nix with the association was the force that articulated and lobbied the council for the wild,land and fire division, and just like Marquette with the ems association, both bob and Tony have been the forces that bring information, real information, notdy luded information -- not diluted information to the council. I would urge the council to seek guidance on both these critical issues from both bob and Tony. Tony's faced with a terrible challenge is we went from two paramedics on an ambulance to one paramedic and 1emt. The public safety commission and the council was told, promised by ems management, that they would not do this until they had an opportunity to measure it with four inner city stations, and they would not roll it out until we saw the results. Then we found out -- they started rolling it out.

[2:10:37 PM]

We said, hey, look, you promised the commission, but more important the council you would not do this. And they said, well, the manager's office said we had permission to do that. This is something I don't think the community expects.

>> Tovo: Councilmember pool, did you have a --

>> Pool: I just had one additional thing I wanted to say. I wanted to underscore what councilmember Houston said about the size of the budget that is dedicated to our first responders, and then when we're looking at trying to manage resources, we really need to manage within the amount that is out there, because it is a huge amount that is dedicated to first responders, for good reason, but there are also lots of other civic services that our residents expect and demand. I've looked at the parks budget, for example, and parks have been chronically underfunded for way too long. And I will be working very hard to increase the share of the budget that is allocated for our parks and rec, and there may be some good things that roll out with regard to that that may help us with public safety. Because if our parks are better managed and maintained sh, we may have more people out in them. And we can look at our budget and how everything fits together and working within the constraints that we will have when we - - when we have those conversations later on this year. But I do thank you for your service, Mr. Levy, over so many years, and we appreciate having you at the table there to bring your comments to this.

>> 30 seconds, councilmember tovo.

[2:12:40 PM]

>> When people say bastrop looks like a moonscape as you drive. That vegetation that is black, it will never grow again, parks will never grow again because the soil got mineralized. We will lose everything. The question right now is is it better to lose something now or lose everything down the road. I can't answer the questions. Those are policy questions for y'all.

>> That's exactly correct. It's the policy decisions that we'll have to bat around up here, and we're not unaware, and we will be trying very hard to balance all of the needs of the community. Thank you. Mayor Taylor thank you -- mayor pro tem, thank you all so much. What a great panel. We have three other voices to hear from, and I want to make sure that we call them up no later than about 2:20, but we do have a few minutes to hear from our staff, if our staff have comments they would like to make or any questions they would like to address, why don't we take until about 2:20 to do that before we hear from our other voices. Colleagues, do you have any specific questions for our staff? Councilmember Gallo?

>> Gallo: There we go. Sometimes it's a little slow. While our public safety individuals are here, and I see a lot of them out in the audience, I just wanted to say thank you very much. I had the opportunity to ride with the police department on Saturday night on one of the polaris vehicles, which is not real large, and open-sided through south by southwest downtown, and it was really an experience. I am -- most people that know me know I'm fairly fearless. It was incredibly intimidating to be in the middle of those crowds where there was not 1 inch of free space. And to know that just in a heartbeat something very bad could happen very quickly thank you to everyone.

[2:14:56 PM]

You have all kept our city very safe when, you know, they say hundreds of thousands of people, but I think it was closer to a million from what I could tell that were here, and not in the best behavior and in very crowded conditions, so thank you to all of you that did that, and know you're very appreciated. I look forward to my tour next year. Thank you.

>> Tovo: Thank you councilmember Gallo. Well said. If there are no specific questions for our staff, let's go ahead and turn to our other voices. I understand that Mr. Manor will go first. Mr. Maynor will go first, he is representing building bridges brick by brick. And then we will hear next from our -- from David Escamilla. Mr. Maynor, thank you very much for being here. You're welcome to come to either podium.

>> Good afternoon, and thank you for this privilege. My name is Mike Maynor. I'm a native austinite. I grew up in east Austin. I'm also an administrator with Travis county health and human services and veteran services, and also I'm a licensed minister, a licensed social worker and also a licensed advanced certified mediate, and to the other six, there were several officer-involved shooting in Austin and the community asked sheriff Hamilton at that time to work with acting chief Cathy Ellison to spearhead some ways in which we could bring some harmony to the community. The in 2006, the national crime prevention council out of Seattle, Washington, spearheaded that and came in, the status of directions and law enforcement community. Out of that resulted, sheriff's office, brick by brick.

[2:17:03 PM]

I'm reading from points to make sure I stay on track. And also to open to coming back and visiting with the council. And sworn in office, he came down and participated in some building bridges activity. He was still in calf calf at

-- California at that time. We gave a call to him and asked if he could come down. He showed his commitment even before he became on the payroll to come and support the communities and look at the issues and ways we can take care of Austin, Travis county. I want to bring some points to you, since I have the opportunity. I think you have some great assets already at your disposal. You do make the policy decisions, as people will know, if you haven't received my e-mails, you will get the handout and we'll share with some ideas real quickly. One, I think your quality of life initiatives could be stronger utilized, both with the African-American commune

-- community, the hispanic community, to look at ways to support you with public safety and policy and how they can be more culturally specific, or at least give you other perspectives to consider. And possibly running things by them, either before, during, and after that come to your attention might be an opportunity to optimize that resource. Also during building bridges, we not only look at law enforcement came out of that 116 recommendations, but we also include the Austin independent school district, police department activities, the Austin community college, included in activities, of course APD, Austin police department and the Travis county sheriff's department. As they said, people just look at badges and officers and gun, and don't see anything different.

[2:19:04 PM]

Boy, that went quickly. No. 2, I would suggest you might consider looking at working with chief Acevedo using your commander's forums that you already have in place as a way to get stronger community input by having swot sessions, which gives the public more opportunities to look at ways and have

concrete-specific ideas about what's working well, what maybe can be improved, what new ideas and what really are challenges to work at the lower level to where the folks who are boots on the ground can engage themselves in relationships. This builds on the concept that APD, Austin police department, has already with this emerging program that it does with cadets when they have direct face-to-face with different cultures to go through products to which they can bring back more sensitivity, rather than just limiting it to the cadet program, this would be a way of expanding and continuing it even after they become sworn officers, having commanders do these kind of sessions, I think would offer you some insights. Again, we deal with youth and which want to bring about where the youth may be able to bring satisfaction feedback. Youth have a perspective, they will one day be taking your place and my place, and it's too late to wait until they get out of high school to really engage in what I consider real-life situations. So start asking them as customers of you in this community how we're doing in these evaluations. And we've been working to look at ways in which we can do that and there's also ways I think in the immediate future, but it might come to your attention also. A third opportunity would possibly be useful would having -- the community said in 2006, use the boy scouts and girl scouts as ways in which you can utilize resources in this community. And they have a merit badge, and chief Acevedo is a very high-engaged person with that crime prevention merit badge.

[2:21:10 PM]

I think it has outstanding opportunities to be elevated and shouldn't be limited to boy boy scouts. Whether it's 10 districts or other districts, whether you're in district 10 or 1, we are a community, and I think that build bridges in itself, so I could suggest you look at something that's low-hanging fruit. I wanted to bring these ideas about you, and I'm not a status quo person. And I want to leave you with one more thing, is that your millennium youth entertainment complex was built for all of us, not just for black and browns and one of the things, chief Acevedo is very involved in doing a town hall jamboree there every Saturday. He's got support. It's another way to build bridges. We had two youth-involved deaths in that area. If you haven't had a chance to visit the youth millennium complex, I would suggest you do it. I know you've got to have a quorum issue, but individually that has a real rich history of just saying where we are with our heart in our community and what we're really trying to accomplish and deal with. So I thank you for your time and I appreciate this opportunity. Thank you.

>> Tovo: Thank you. Next we have our county attorney, Mr. Escamilla, who is here on behalf of the attorney justice council. Stheu, and then we will daish here next from Nicoleholt.

>> Thank you, mayor pro tem and councilmembers. My name is David Escamilla, it's my honor to serve as the Travis county attorney but I'm here specifically on the invite representing the community justice council. I'm current chair of that body. For those of you who are not familiar with it, the community justice council is a multisystem collaborative structure.

[2:23:12 PM]

It's provided for in Texas statute. Its main statutory functions is statewide are really to -- statewide are really to approve the adult probation, budgets and particular programs they'll do on a biannual basis. We also from time to time are called upon to convene public hearings with regard to the placement of certain corrective facilities in your community, and the community justice council is set by statute and has very broad and diverse membership, everything from public school officials, public school board members, to judges, prosecutors, community -- community advocates and homeless, echo are involved. Very broad group. This has been an interesting discussion to listen in on. Wide ranging issues dealing with everything from -- you know, from the issues of wildfire, which is important to me and where I live, councilmember Gallo in west Austin, to other issues of cultural competency. And this is what we have to deal with in public safety and community justice, we, too, carry a large, large plate to have to handle. I come to you really to speak on just really one focus, thanked is with this wide-ranging issues and duties that you have before you, I've always felt there is a need for a broad-based, diverse venue where these issues can be discussed outside of the silos of the city, the county, the school district, any particular advocacy group. The community justice council is one of those bodies, but it has its limitations. I mentioned to you what our statutory obligations are. Ronnie erl takes credit for creating it in state statute long ago, and his purpose was to try to convene all of these various entities and stakeholders together to talk about community justice, to talk about all these various issues that have been before you.

[2:25:27 PM]

We have never been funded, and so we have struggled to be able to carry out that particular mission. We also are stakeholder member, partner member with the community advancement network, and I think of all the expanded membership of can, we're the only partner that carries that niche of public safety and community justice. What I want to bring to you really quickly is that we may be gone. There is a bill filed in the legislature now, it's been sent to corrections committee, that would abolish the community -- abolish the community justice councils from around the state. Around the state, other counties don't use their community justice council as we do. We use it as much more than those statutory duties. Adult probation chiefs around the state have found that this is just unwieldy to have to go to community justice councils once every two years to get their budget approved and forward to the state, and they think things are more efficient not to do that and just go to the district judges to do that. I understand their rationale. We have a unique purpose here, but I think that is in jeopardy. I'm not here to ask support to save it or not. We have some ideas that might allow us to keep it. We don't need a statute to create a group or to have a group to convene us all, but I do want to leave here impressing upon y'all that there is this need. There is a need for all of us to be able to -- and I'm talking about law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, probation, adult and juvenile, schools, all of us to get together and

talk about these issues. One of the main things y'all have had to face in talking about wildfire, and others, are the resources that are going to be involved. Y'all have to set priorities. And I have found from my clients, the county commissioners court, when these issues hit them, they look for organizations they can trust that are talking about these same issues and helping to guide them on priorities, because we don't have enough money or resources to fix all of our problems.

[2:27:29 PM]

So I would urge you, as you move forward on dealing with these, that you --

>> Tovo: Councilmember Zimmerman.

>> Zimmerman: Thanks. What is that budget.

>> Zero. We are not included on any budget. We rely really on the voluntary services of Mrs. Darla gay, many of you probably know Darla who's provided by the district attorney's office part-time. It's really just whatever spare time she has staffing for our needs.

>> Zimmerman: So if it's zero, how can your funding be kawl -- cut.

>> No, it's not cut. Ab lol -- abolish the statute story.

>> I'm here talking about the opportunity to be lost.

>> Zimmerman: Why couldn't the opportunity still be there as free individuals and getting together what we want to do.

>> Which is why I mentioned in our talk I don't need a statute to get us together.

>> Zimmerman: Yeah. There you go. Thanks.

>> Tovo: Thank you very much. And now we will hear from Nicole holt, the executive director of Texas standing hall. Thank you, Mrs. Holt, for being here with us today.

>> Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you all today. It's been quite interesting to hear everybody's presentations. I am the executive director of texans standing stall. We are a statewide nonprofit, we work to make alcohol and tobacco irrelevant in the lives of youth. We do that by working on community health and safety initiatives and through what we call law enforcement and public policy objectives. And so with that I was asked to the speak to you about alcohol, because that's quun of the main issues -- one of the main issues that we talk about alcohol.

[2:29:29 PM]

So I will get to it in three minutes or less now. The thing that I find about alcohol policy is that most people don't know much about it at all. And so they liken it to tobacco policy, and the truth is that we are way farther along when it comes to public health and safety issues around smoking, ordinances and smoking, health activities than we are -- than we are with alcohol. So with that public health policy, as it relates to alcohol, the implications on health and safety are not very well understood, and so with that I'd like to show you a couple of things. One, if you open your packet that I gave you, you'll see that there is what we call -- it's a tool that we use with college campuses, but there's a little triangle here, and we refer to that as the drinker's pyramid. And most people think that the bulk of the problems that are caused by our society are by these people at the very top, which are very few, when actually most of our public health and safety problems, like traffic fatalities and so forth, are caused by the people who perceive themselves to be moderate drinkers who are drinking safely. I would imagine there's a large number who are out there at south by southwest who would deem themselves as perfectly in control of their faculties but were, in fact, over the legal limit. And having the potential to cause themselves or others -- themselves or others harm. I'm sure chief Acevedo and his staff would attest to that. So with that, I want to bring your attention to who the bulk of the drinkers are that are causing the problems. Often, they're underage, that's a large portion of our problem-causers, and young adults, people for whom it's still pretty possible for you to drink quite a lot and show up for work the next day, even if you're underperforming, who can work through the hangover, so to speak, or -- or just don't show up to college classes, those sort of things -- sorts of things.

[2:31:37 PM]

So when you think about alcohol use and what policies we should have in place in order for it to be a public health and safety issue, you have to think about things that your city can govern. It's not about an individual drinker, it's about a community problem and how the community handles that drinking -- handles alcohol availability, really, and the opportunity to drink. So a couple of things that you should be aware of: There are no mandatory server or sell training in Texas. So you can serve alcohol without ever having been trained on how to check anyone's ID or whether or not someone's overconsumed. We have a large number of temporary permits. I had somebody send me some numbers from TAB. The numbers are something like 23 total for the year, 17 for south by southwest in Austin. Temporary permits do not require any training either, you only have to be a nonprofit in order to get them. These are people who are having temporary business locations, they're not necessarily invested in your community, they come in, they sell their alcohol, and they move on. The problem with that -- contributes to a large number of public safety problems including truancy, which people don't think about, but truancy, violent crimes, vandalism, and the list goes on. So I just want to kind of draw your mind around when we talk about alcohol and we think about public safety, that it's not just about drinking and driving, although that that is a major concern, Texas is the worst in the country, even though we have a lower population than

California with drinking and driving fatalities, and Austin, which is the fourth largest city, is also the fourth highest in its traffic fatalities. And chief Acevedo has done a great job of working at trying to address that issue.

[2:33:37 PM]

That's the kind of public policy approach we're talking about. And so what I would -- I would encourage you all to consider, it's something we would certainly support, because we get phone calls to our community asking, like, how can we stop this outlet from asking to sell alcohol across the street from our middle school. And people think, oh, it's a middle school, it's not a big deal. We can sell alcohol across the street from a middle school. Well, the average age of first use in Texas and in our community is 12, and that's middle school. So we don't want alcohol outlets selling alcohol across the street from a middle school, but they don't know how to go through the waiver process. They come up here and ask you to vote for the waiver or not, and more times than not, the waiver is permitted. So there are things a like that that we can do that wire require that we have a lit more education. So it's a large topic, I could go on and on. We've provided you with some resources. Please K and texans standing tall, we are statewide, we are located here and we live here, so we would be willing to host a work group if you all would consider having leaders who have influence on this work in a work group where we could talk about what are the things that we could do to address some of the temporary permits, and tab would be willing to be a part of it, if you all have folks that would be willing to be a part of it, then we'd be willing to put that together. But we don't want to just have another meeting to have a meeting. So thank you for your time and attention.

>> Tovo: Thank you very much. That's a great suggest for one of our committees to consider, maybe the neighborhood and planning committee. Thank you very much for the information you provided.

>> All right. Any questions? Troofs great. I see many of our city staff in the audience, thank you for participating and available to answer questions, although I don't believe we had any for you.

[2:35:38 PM]

Thank you very much to our police chief, art Acevedo for being here, and to our fire chief, chief Kerr for being here through the whole presentation as well, along with many, many others. Are there any remaining questions? Okay. Well, thank you very much. And thank you, our panelists, for all of your -- all of your participation here today. We stand adjourned.