

## Regional Affordability Committee Meeting Transcript – 03/28/2016

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[2:05:17 PM]

>> Garza: Good afternoon. I'm the chair of the regional affordability committee. Today is Monday, March 28th. It is -- is the time down there? It's 2:05. I'm calling the meeting to order. The first item is approval of minutes so I will entertain a motion to approve the minutes. Moved by member Mitchell. Is there a second?

>> I'll second.

>> Garza: Seconded by commissioner Shea. All in favor say aye. Any opposed?

>> Show me abstaining.

>> Garza: Member Kaplan is abstaining from the minutes. We have a new member, Sherri Greenberg will be our representative from central health. The next item is our citizen communication. We have a couple speakers. You have three minutes to address anything related to affordability that is not on the agenda today and the first speaker is bill oaky.

>> Good afternoon and thank you. I am bill oaky [inaudible] This year. Sorry about that. The mic wasn't on, but I'm bill oaky with Austin affordability.com and we're celebrating the fifth anniversary this year of the blog. What I would like to talk to you about is what I am calling the homeowner retention initiative. As everyone knows, it's terribly difficult to be able to afford to stay in your home in Austin now because of rising appraisals and rising property taxes. And so I got to wondering if there were any financing mechanisms out there where somebody could offer an investor a share in the equity of their home in return for an equal share of the profits when the home is sold so that hopefully people could have lower payments or reduced property taxes or something in consideration of the investor's involvement.

[2:07:40 PM]

And I spent the last several weeks doing a very deep dive in the research into it and it's just amazing how many things are out there. And it turns out that there is actually a national guru, so to speak, who wrote the book on it, shared equity mortgages and shared appreciation mortgages in 1997. His name is Andrew Kaplan of New York university. And I spoke with him and I'll talk to you guys later about how that went. It went very well. But I have found in this handout that I have for you, I've listed a whole bunch of the internet resources that I have found. There is a U.S. House bill 3519, the preserving American homeownership act of 2015. It's still in committee, but it's interesting that it's out there and it deals with a forum of shared equity mortgages. And I will just tell you that this is a wide open field. There are land trusts. There are all different kinds of homeownership sharing arrangements. There is co-ownership of homes. There's lots of things to delve into, and, of course, it's a legal issue too. And the

first person that came to mind when I got into this was mayor Steve Adler. If anybody could wrap his head around it and figure out a way to make it work for Austin he could. And some of you forks could. There is amazing talent on this committee and I'm really quite humble to have the opportunity to make this presentation to you because I think that if we have a homeowner retention initiative, that is the opposite of the recruitment. Because when you bring new people in, it squeezes the old people out. So we need a solution, we need a creative, innovative solution and I hope this is it. I also wanted to say there's real people involved in Austin affordability and there's this book called "Invisible in Austin" chapters written by some caught in the formate afford built thing.

[2:09:52 PM]

It does involve real people. The final thing I would like to say, I want to thank you all for accepting my recommendation to create an affordability strategy plan and I'm hoping that the livable cities report, and they are going to be making, you know, a summary of it today and the full report will be coming next month. I'm hoping some of the cat gears will help you formulate the strategic plan that will be proactive and give us an opportunity to really make a dent in Austin affordability so that we don't become like San Francisco. So thank you much -- so much for your time.

>> Garza: Thank you for all your work and thank you for your suggestion for the strategic plan and everything you articulated is the exact reason why we created this committee.

>> That's great. And thank you for creating the committee.

>> Garza: The next speaker is David king.

>> Thank you, chair, committee members. My name is David king and I would like to kind of add on to what bill just mentioned and have a couple other suggestions that I think would help us here and I hope you will consider is, you know, we have these density bonus programs and affordable housing programs, which are important for our city but we don't really have the resources to monitor and track to make sure they are actually getting built and actually occupied by low-income families. So I'm here to advocate for enactment of an affordable housing monitoring fee that can be added to each housing unit that's in a development project that's taking advantage of the den time sensitivity bonus -- density bonus to help the city have enough resources to follow up in those projects and make sure they have those affordable housing units and make sure they are occupied by the families they are intended for. Some of these programs are 40 years, 30 years or in perpetuity.

[2:11:53 PM]

We need to start establishing this fee to make sure that our program is really effective and it's achieving its goals. The next thing I would like to suggest is that we enact a tenant relocation license requirement for all development projects that will dislocate low-income families. Seattle, Washington has such a license requirement. You cannot get a master use, construction demolition or change of use permit in Seattle if your project without a tenant relocation license if your project is going to dislocate low-income families. So what this does is it says on the very front end of the process, if your project is going to dislocate low-income families, you have to have a plan on how you are going to help those low-income families relocate right at the beginning, not after you've got your zoning and your permits. That's way too late in the process. So this helps. It gives leverage to the families who are going to be dislocated to have that process at the front. Once you get the license and you have the plan in place, then you can proceed to get your other permits. I think that would be important for us to do as well.

>> [Inaudible].

>> It's in Seattle. And also I would like to ask -- ask you to consider establishing an affordability impact statement for all residential demolition permits. We always hear that we're demolishing affordable

houses that are a little older but yet there's no analysis of that impact. And I think that we should have that as part of the demolition permit requirement, that if you are going to demolish an older house or multi-family there that needs to be an analysis to see what impact is that going to have on affordability. Then I advocate for establishing a living wage for all governmental entities, many are represented here, and to do what Austin has done and establish a livable wage for all contracts, subcontracts and for all government employees that you -- that you deal with in your particular governmental entities. And then finally I would like to advocate for -- that you would in your legislative agenda recommend to the state that cities be allowed to set a minimum wage for all the businesses in their city.

[2:13:02 PM]

I know we're talking about the Texas legislature --

[buzzer sounding]

-- And I'm sure that that idea is going to be buzzed out just like I am with the legislature. But we must try. Thank you very much for your work here.

>> Garza: Thank you. I think that's all the speakers. Anybody else? Okay. The next item is the briefing on tenant eviction trends that was requested by commissioner Shea, and I don't see any speakers before that so we'll go ahead and call -- sure, sure, if you want to give an intro, commissioner.

>> And I want to acknowledge Christie Moffett from the Travis county staff for compiling a lot of this data. We didn't send it out in advance, but in case people didn't have a chance to check their email, this includes a compilations of evictions through the multi-step process. And very interesting and I don't know if we're able to get this up on the screen, it includes scatter maps that show where the eviction petitions were gotten, and this is just for last year, per zip code, the actual evictions per zip code or the judgments, I guess, and then the writs of possession. And the memo lays out the eviction petitions are essentially those where a landlord essentially goes to the court and we're going to have a number of speakers who can describe this in better detail than I can. But the eviction process begins when the landlord files an eviction petition in the justice of the peace precinct where the property is located. And then they are served with the petition and date to appear in court for trial. So the initial Numbers of those eviction petitions that were filed is 7,745 in all of Travis county.

[2:15:10 PM]

Just for last year. Now, there's a winnowing process, about 55% of those petitions result in judgments in favor of the landlord for the tenant to be evicted. And then the final number on this document is the actual writ of possession which, again, we're going to hear in more detail about that today, but that's where the person is actually evicted. And that number is 1,477. So there's a lot that happens between that 7745 number and the 1477 number and I think we're going to hear more details about it, but they did note that zip code 78741 contained the most eviction petitions. And I think there's extra copies of this report on the end if folks in the audience want to have a copy of it. So zip code 78741 contained the most eviction petitions. 1,037. The most judgments, 592, and the most writs of possession, 150. The other zip codes that had a significant number of filings, 78702, which as you can see on the map is east Austin. Is notable as having a higher than average number of eviction petitions that resulted in an eviction judgment. And additionally zip code 78728, which I think is north Austin, north central Austin, had a higher than average number of eviction judgments that actually resulted in a writ of possession. 48%. So I'm really appreciative of the representatives of legal aid and the tenants council and the constable's office who agreed to come and speak. I don't know if it makes sense to have all three of them but we can begin with Robert doing get and-doggett.

[2:17:20 PM]

>> I work at Texas Rio grande legal aid. I've been doing this type of work, landlord-tenant, many other things, but that's how I started 25 years ago. And appreciate the opportunity obviously and I'm very encouraged that the committee is interested even looking at this issue. Obviously I recognize folks from aid and they are well aware of the incredible impact that an actual eviction case places not just on the district but the families, the teachers, the classroom. So I won't get into the impact of an eviction on so many things that surround us. I was asked to come to talk a little about the process and possibly causes, possible solutions. There's no way, no way we can scratch the surface, I'm going to tell you, in 20 minutes. I'm happy to tell you that there's lots out there, there's many things that I think that you all would be interested in in terms of things that you can do that don't cost money. That would actually have an impact on this city. And so with that said, the statistics that are being handed out, I've looked at them, I actually have my own that I generated independently and they are similar. Keeping in mind that evictions start off with a landlord just giving a notice to vacate that's in writing. But a landlord might just say move and people do. So these Numbers that you are seeing are just a sort of one way of looking at it. The actual Numbers of situations where a tenant is being school district to move against their will, not consensual, are much larger. But a notice to vacate is the first step of the formal process. The law allows them to give a 24-hour notice to get out if the lease allows it. After that 24-hour period is up, one day is up, they can file in the justice of the peace court the petition and that is filed in the precinct where the property is located.

[2:19:23 PM]

And there are roughly 7,000 to 8,000 of those filed every year. I've looked at the last five years. It's in that zone. There's a variety of factors why an eviction is, you know, ultimately filed. In other words, obviously the tenant may not have moved voluntarily. And so the landlord goes ahead and goes forward with the filing. Then the landlord might go forward to judgment. The hearing occurs within two to three weeks. The whole process, you understand, from start to finish is roughly a month. There's exceptions to that. There's appeals. The appeals of the process are less than 2% of the cases. Of the 7,000 roughly, maybe 200 I think last year were ultimately appealed so they took longer. But really the process we're talking about is about a month. It's one of the fastest processes in the nation. So -- and by and large that can't be touched. It's state law and rules of procedure promulgated by the supreme court. But there are things you might be surprised you could do. There's things that the city of Austin did with regard to source of income discrimination and obviously that was fought back and forth in both the courts, and by the way the city and legal aid intervened and supported the city on that case, and obviously the city was victorious at the court level, at the legislative level. It was pared down. But the point was that it wasn't completely wiped out. There is still an ability or there still is something that says that a city can prohibit certain types of source of income discrimination. My point being is that there are things that local government can do that can make a difference that's not pre-empted by state and federal law, and that the legislature through a negotiation process allows cities and local governments to do. So it's not something that I think anybody throws their hands up and says there's nothing we can do, no, there are things we can do.

[2:21:24 PM]

We pick the ones and listen to the stakeholders, and as mentioned by the previous speaker, the relocation ordinance, stakeholders involved, and I think we can reach some solutions that will be productive. But back to the process, the evictions filed, then it goes to hearing. Most all of those

judgments if it goes to a judgment are in favor of the landlord and those are occurring very quickly, they are a very quick process. The trials are, you know, in the neighborhood of 15 minutes or so. Mine might be longer, but most are unrepresented parties and they are fairly quick. I would say the majority of them are for nonpayment of rent. It's that simple. And then at that point after the tenant -- if a tenant loses that case, then the judge gives them five days to move. So if there's a dispute, for example, you were doing this wrong, you parked in the wrong place, this kind of thing, the tenant is under the impression at that point that they could win the case and they could. So there's no plans to move at that point. The first time they know they are in trouble really in a disputed case is at that point where the justice of the peace makes the decision and they are given five days. And that includes weekends and holidays. After the five days expires, they can appeal in that time period. They are going to have to pay money, poor or not, they are going to have to pay some money to appeal that case ultimately to stay in possession. And then if they haven't appealed, then a landlord can pay for a writ of possession to be issued by the court. And so when you hear the statistics about the thousand -- roughly a thousand writs of possession issued, that's what happened. The landlord went back to court, said I won the case, I want a writ to forcibly have the tenant and their belongings removed and that's what's happened in that case. Now, what happens at the constable will tell you, so correct me or I'll be corrected soon if I'm incorrect about this, the landlord requests a writ be issued, usually issued in the same day and the constable is given a copy of that paperwork and they usually make arrangements to supervise the persons -- the removal of all persons and property.

[2:23:44 PM]

24 hours notice. If I've got a court order to set you out tomorrow and the exclusion, the only exclusions that exist on raining, sleeting or snowing, a constable is not allowed to forcibly remove someone from the premises if it's raining, sleeting or snowing. Now, constables do have discretion. They can postpone that a little as I've had that happen regularly, especially if someone is in the process of moving. If they are literally in the process, I've seen many constables say look, they are getting out, let's let them finish and they give them another day. So they have discretion and a lot of them use it wisely. I'm not aware of any problems in Travis county saying the landlords aren't moving fast enough. I haven't heard that. So that's the general process. If you look at the statistics, you are actually seeing a lower value than actually exists. It's like foreclosures. Keep in mind we're not talking about just landlords and tenants, we're talking post-foreclosure provisions. If a foreclosure occurs by a lender, the lender obtains title and they give a notice to vacate and they file the eviction case. There were 100 foreclosures that occurred that went to sale last year in Travis county. 103. Some of those were commercial, some were residential. The point is it's the same process. Now, I'll tell you I think some of the interest in this particular issue may have generated from the recent -- a rediscovery of the situation where all of a tenant's property, their possessions was placed on the front lawn and it was a lot of stuff and it was taken by other people. And I'll tell you that does happen. I'm not sure of the percentages. I think they are lower, obviously much less than a thousand a year, but that does happen and there's things that can be done.

[2:25:44 PM]

The city of Garland is utilizing a procedure and has for the last five years, but it was actually codified by the legislature last session to make it clear that they were allowed to put a container on the front lawn and the constable authorized or required the landlord to put the property that's being removed into a container and the city of Garland has been doing it for five years. At some point they felt uncomfortable about doing it so there's been a change to state law that specifically allows it. I don't have specifics how often they use it in Garland or how much it costs, but it does exist and it's designed to protect tenant

property. Also designed to prevent the free for all that occurs in someone's front lawn or neighborhood of all this stuff. I will tell you it's more likely to occur in a post-foreclosure eviction more than likely than an apartment complex scenario but the sheer size and amount of personal property sometimes left behind. That's only in a situation where a tenant has a lot of property and aren't there or have no resources to actually get a van and have people that are strong enough to remove it all. So often, as the constable will correct me, constable when they typically execute a writ there may be people there, usually they get most of their stuff. It's the bigger things that they can't move and things that they don't want anyway. That's probably the majority of the situation. I don't know the specifics. Bottom line is that's the process of eviction. It impacts not just landlords and tenants but homeowners. And it could be homeowners subject to a variety of scams or creative schemes that people get involved in in search of affordable housing. The more we squeeze the city, the more people resort to lots and lots of creative things to afford housing and sometimes that is not done by professionals. You know, not real estate folks that do this every day that have reputations to protect.

[2:27:46 PM]

Sometimes it's folks trying to make a quick buck. And when that happens, there's a lot of people that are put in the cross hairs that are taken advantage of that end up in eviction court and oftentimes it's too late. It's too late by then. The eviction has been done, the foreclosure if it's a homeowner scenario, so I say again there are things that this committee could look into that could address these kinds of problems. That could try to prevent these kinds of situations from ever happening that are, frankly, reasonable. For example, a bank, as you know, I have a mortgage still and I get -- I get a mortgage statement every month that says how much money I've paid, how much I still owe that is correct kind of thing, at the end of the year I know how much interest I've paid, I could take it off my taxes. That's not required by smaller scale lenders that have two or three houses. And guess what, disputes arise on how much money they've paid, how much late charges were assessed, how much interest. At the end of the year they don't know how much money they can deduct for their interest. Something like could be done. It's not prohibited, it wouldn't impact the ones that already identify. Something so simple could prevent a dispute between folks so they know as they go how much they paid. Seems so simple, right? But you actually could help resolve or prevent a dispute from happening. I've taken up too much time, but that's just one, one example could cause eviction. Right now there is no cause. A landlord in a private landlord-tenant relationship, there is no cause requirement for any reason. They just decide, well, that's a breach, you parked in the wrong parking spot. We're going to rely on the justice of the peace to make sure they realize that's ridiculous, but there's nothing in the law -- there's no ridiculous requirement. A good cause eviction is something that's found in lots of places and lots of situations. So that's just, again, that's just one small thing that could make a big difference and prohibit the worst situations where people could be evicted.

[2:29:52 PM]

In addition, of course, to rental insistence and these kinds of things. But other things you can do to make a difference and I do appreciate your time.

>> Do you have a list of model legislation you could provide so we wouldn't have to reinvent the wheel?

>> Absolutely. Some of it has been sitting around waiting for this moment. But I haven't distributed it because, again, I need to know from you what you want and I can address it, give you whatever you would like. We're certainly on the front lines, I'll just say it that way.

>> Garza: One thing you said in the beginning there's a lot of things that can be done that don't cost a lot of money, a list of that --

>> I'm happy to do it. Give me a little time and a little notice and it can be done.  
>> Garza: Can this be considered your notice?  
>> A notice to get out?  
>> Garza: To create that list.  
>> Yes, yes, and I'm happy to meet with any and all. Obviously we had very good relationships with the Austin apartment association, with the lenders in the community. We're happy to meet with them and prioritize some things that they might be agreeable to. We're not talking just pie in the sky.  
>> Thank you. My name is Terry Mitchell and this is interesting to understand this. Can you -- these evictions that are happening, is it -- are they legal? Two questions really and so answer them separately, I guess. I would -- are the great majority of them for nonpayment or you have parked in the wrong space -- which is mostly nonpayment?  
>> Mostly nonpayment and mostly undisputed nonpayment. I didn't pay, here's what happened, I got behind. Sometimes late fees build up and sometimes the late fees are a little excessive, that kind of thing. By and large, yes, folks just couldn't pay.

[2:31:53 PM]

And for whatever reason. You know, and so what I look at is the ones where it's clear there's something else going on. Like sometimes landlords won't take the money and they will say its nonpayment of rent. Well, the reason I refused it is blank, blank, blank. You have to watch yourself on nonpayment. Is it because a tenant didn't pay and should have and the answer is yes. I can give you more specific stats, but my gut reaction 25 years that's my experience. I'll give you an example where something could be done about this problem. What if you are on a month to month. I lived on a month to month tenancy for 12 years. Me. Some tenants are on month to month or at the end of the term they go month to month for a while. Sometimes tenants are giving even less than a month's notice rent is going up to. I'll give you chapter and verse. What if there was a requirement before you raise someone's rent by 10% you give them at least 90 days notice so they could prepare for that increase. It's not a rent cap. Remind you, it's not a rent cap. You can raise it as high as you want, but if you go over 10%, you need to give me more notice. Crazy? No, because if you expect someone to pay that amount you do need to give them more time if it's more than 10%. Is that the magic number? Is 90 days -- no. I'm just throwing something out there that doesn't cost money, that makes sense. Is it reasonable? I think it's reasonable. A landlord that knows they are going to raise the rent by more than 10% has figured it out in advance. It's not some magical number. Yes, what happens is new owners buy the property and they say we're going to do this and who cares. The occupancy rate in Austin is 99%. Somebody else will rent it without regard, without regard to the impact on the community, the impact on the school district, the impact on lots of things.

[2:33:55 PM]

So what this city or county -- a county can do things too, by the way. It could make a difference. But think about it, if they don't get the 90 days notice, raise it \$200, a person says I couldn't pay it. I wasn't ready for that big jump. So there you go. There's a case, a situation where it might make the difference on the margins. Someone might not ever be able to pay \$200 a month but sometimes make things happen to get us to the end of the school year. They know how big a change that is to their kids. Just an idea.

>> Thank you. That's very helpful. Is your impression that evictions are climbing?

>> No.

>> Residential mortgages in the past used to pretty standard fare for one percent of the mortgages to fall into default and foreclosures to happen. Historically in most places that was a fairly common

characteristics. It rose substantially in the housing crash or whatever, but is this Normal a typical what you are seeing here?

>> 7,000 roughly? It's just in the last five years, actually decreased slightly. It's been hovering around 7,000 to 8,000 the last five years. But again, it depends on lots of other factors. It's easier to think about in terms of foreclosure. If I've got equity in my house, if I'm falling behind on mortgage, it's smart person or someone knows who is smart, don't let it get foreclosed on, sell it, get your equity out. So the foreclosure never goes through. Are they being displaced forcibly, but yet that number doesn't hit the foreclosure number. So that's why we saw in, you know, not as much in Travis county, but in other locations, you know, in '07, '08, folks were spiking. There was no equity to gain so they stayed in as long as they could.

[2:35:58 PM]

But the answer to your question is I haven't seen the actual Numbers of evictions rising in the last five years. They've been hovering in the 7 to 8 the last five. I haven't looked beyond that but I could for U the problem is evictions, the Numbers themselves, you know, that's just one way to measure it. And so you got to look at the other factors to know what's going on. But it's still a pretty serious number.

>> Two quick questions and I apologize. Is -- my impression is for example when people are homeless, my understanding it's predominantly loss of job or medical expenses and they are just teetering on the edge, they have no reserve and all of a sudden they lose their home. Is that the type of thing you see causing the evictions is a loss of a job or some big expense they didn't anticipate and can't pay their mortgage?

>> It's certainly a percentage but a lot of times more gentrification. We've seen the new buyers coming in, mobile home parks, I'm involved in more mobile home park situations than I ever have in my career in the last year and a half. I'm not promoting mobile home parks, but I will tell you they do fit in certain situations. And I've seen that happen and, of course, the displacement from apartment complexes. Lake view apartments, the whole thing was wiped out. Before we were concerned about the issue and now, of course, Oracle is built up and that was incredible affordable housing. One of the last ones still left there. And those people are all gone now and were not treated well. Hopefully the relocation ordinance will at least take a tiny sting off of it. And I mean tiny. They still don't have a place to go, but you do bring up a very good point which is reentry, reentry, what am I saying? I'm saying someone who has had an eviction filed against them will have trouble renting anywhere in the city now. Even if you win the case, think about it, you are a landlord and you've got a 99% occupancy rate, you can pick and choose are you ever going to want to rent to someone who has had an eviction filed against you?

[2:37:11 PM]

No. I'm going with one with a clean record. Even if you win the case. When you have a criminal record, if someone charges you with a crime, you go to jury trial, you are acquitted, you can get that record expunged, eliminated from your record. In some situations it can be sealed. Does that exist in housing, no. Can the county look at a process to allow a tenant to look into expungement of record. That allows people to actually get somewhere else, right? And protect your record. Never before -- today is the day where eviction records are being tracked. You can type it in right now, tenant tracking service. All over the web a landlord can get an eviction record on any prospective tenant for 20 bucks. It will get their credit rating and also eviction. Once filed it doesn't come off. It would be helpful if we in certain situations just like folks that are charged with crime you would think that folks charged with eviction would have a similar right and so they can start over. So they are not facing basically leaving the county or leaving, you know, their community because they can't find another place to live if they could afford



it. That's one example we could do. And the county could provide a process with help from the JP courts, you understand. In other words, provide that forum that we could get together and come up with something reasonable that makes sense and be a model for the state because nothing exists like it in the state, I can assure you.

>> Thank you very much.

>> I've taken up too much time.

>> Garza: We're at our 20-minute mark and we have more speakers.

>> Anywhere else in the country, I know that commercial tenants, it's a very frequent contract that if the owner of the commercial property protests the property tax appraisal and gets it lowered, that they have pass along that reduction to their commercial tenants.

[2:39:19 PM]

Are you aware of that provision being afforded to residential renters anywhere?

>> Absolutely never.

>> It seems to me if it's good enough for commercial tenants that it should also apply to residential tenants.

>> Know, bargaining power, 99% occupancy. There's not a lot of negotiation in commercial so you are going to see a lot more differences. The Texas apartment association is the one generally speaking that drafts the model that's being used. The other Texas association of realtors. I guess you could go to legal zoom or Home Depot and pick up one, but none of the form leases would ever allow for things like that. But there are things that could be done that would condition if you were to lower an appraised value or change the assessment, that's a way to, if you will, provide the hook, leverage. If we were to grant this, then they would have to be a participating landlord in a program that would say if you planned to raise your rents by more than 10% in a year, you would agree to give 90 days notice. Those types of things could be points just like the relocation ordinance. If you want a site plan, if you want to redevelop, if you want new zoning, you've got to provide a relocation plan. Similarly here, I think that's exactly something a county could do to help convince folks to do the right thing. If they weren't already so --

>> Thank you. Could we have the other speakers up at the same time?

>> Garza: Sure. Thank you for that.

>> But if you want to stay up there I think we're going to ask the other two to come up.

>> I'm probably all wrong so I'd rather sit here while they tell me what's wrong.

>> We have the new executive director of the tenants council, if you could introduce yourself.

[2:41:20 PM]

>> Juliana Gonzalez, brand new director of the Austin tenants council. Tenants council has been working in Austin on these issues since 1973.

>> The red light.

>> It's on.

>> My name is chief dependly Manuel Jimenez with Travis county constable precinct.

>> Garza: If you all could -- I think you have prepared remarks, but we have two more items after this that councilmember kitchen needs to leave by 4:00 so that's why we're trying to keep it -- we're already outside of our 20-minute window, but if you want to start.

>> I think Robert hit most of the things -- we're all seeing the same people, right? And so there's not much more to say beyond what he described to you. There's a small difference in the Chinese that he and I serve in that -- the clients that he and I serve. We're typically talking to clients long before they enter legal proceedings. We're talking to clients who have gotten a notice to vacate, a piece of paper on

their door or a phone call. When they advance through the stages of eviction into legal proceedings like you are seeing on your statistics here, that's when they tend to go the direction of legal aid and that is certainly when they hit the court system. Okay, so the 7700ish petitions that you are seeing here, yeah, I would just reiterate the point that Robert made that there are many, many more people impacted by this process that aren't hitting the court system. And that's particularly true in the current market where landlords are just really under no pressure to work it out. I would also agree with Robert that most of the -- most of the tenants we talk to are being he convicted because of nonpayment of rent and I would agree that the definition of nonpayment of rent can be very vague and broad.

[2:43:29 PM]

So in the scenario he described to you, he talked about a case where a landlord might raise rent \$200 a month without very much warning, 35 days notice, say. And we talk to clients all the time who are continuing to pay the old amount that they were being charged through a period that I think is relatively reasonable, like 90 days. And so their nonpayment of rent is constituted by the difference. And then late fees of almost that same amount are being assessed on top of that. So yeah, to call it nonpayment of rent doesn't exactly capture what we think is really happening there. And I guess the only other thing I would put out there is -- yeah, I would just agree this is an issue that's really complicated and that's not very well captured by statistics. But it's very, very linked to the amount of affordable housing we have available in Austin. So as we have more affordable housing and a little bit more vacancy, we'll lesson see people churning through different neighborhoods, different zip codes, different apartment complexes. We'll see a lot mortality in your schools, for example -- lot more veil availability. We said 20 minutes. We're here to try and craft some solutions that abide by state law but might open a few corners and windows here in this area.

>> I'll be very brief. I'm just going to talk about some of the stuff we see as constable deputies out there. A lot of things that we hear is the rent has gone up, we can't afford, we've been living in an apartment complex 20, 30 years and now we have to move. That's a lot of the stuff that we hear. A lot of things we see when we're doing the evictions, we're there to be a mediator, we're there to keep the peace between the landlord and tenant.

[2:45:35 PM]

Some of the stuff is make sure when the moveout is being done that the tenant's property is being treated with respect and dignity. We have neighbors that approach and start inquiring about people's property while we tell them they can't take it, it's theft. We let the landlords know they have 24 hours to come back and get the tenant property. If they see anybody to call 911. Once everybody is gone more than likely a lot of items are taken. A lot of evictions, the houses are empty. There's quite a few of them where it's fully furnished and the stuff is going out on the curb with nobody to protect it later. It's a MIX whether the tenant is present or not.

>> Garza: Any questions?

>> And maybe this would be more of a request for information down the road. I heard that maybe there isn't a consistent process that's used across the county and Robert, you sort of alluded there is some constables or JP's that grant more time. I would be interested in getting more specificity on that. I hear apartments in west Austin have places where somebody is being evicted they keep furniture or personal belongings in a vacant apartment or storage and allow those individuals and other parts of town that doesn't necessarily happen. You also alluded to I think the city of Garland had a proposal where they put a container in front of their property and then previous ten E. Tenants can come by and pick that up. I would be interested in getting more specifics on that. Also are you seeing on section 8 housing in

particular whether it be the housing authority, which by the way the mayor appoints all the -- I would be interested in what you are seeing in section 8 housing, is it about the same, different?

[2:47:36 PM]

That's a low hanging fruit where the city has some authority and they appoint the board of directors to the housing authority. In the district that I serve I see that all the time. Last week right before Easter there was a family getting evicted. I saw someone taking furniture out and when I drove back there were people grabbing things. It's almost like the families are, for whatever reason, already dealing with the Tackett they don't have a place to live but their belongings are -- just a reminder, 55% of the people no live in Austin rent. And so I think we should be -- anything that we can do to be proactive to address these issues would certainly be important.

>> One of the things we're not allowed to do is ask the landlord to keep the property on site like in another apartment, we're not allowed to do that. The storage facilities, what was talked about, that's in state statute. Also using a warehouse, a bonded warehouse is available, but it's hard to find one in Austin that's willing to do it.

>> Montgomery, I believe Montgomery county had a successful program of allowing a warehouse, that's allowed in state law. In Garland it was mentioned they do a special container that's on the property itself. That the constable puts it into. But I'm happy to give you more information when there's more time.

>> Garza: I don't know if there ever is going to be more time.

>> I have lots and the rest of these folks do too.

>> Garza: Who pays for the containers?

>> The city does. The city of Garland stepped up on that. State law that was just passed prohibits charging the landlord or tenant any fee. What I think it came from, I think part of the city was doing it for the good reason, some of the city wasn't. They didn't like all the trash that was blowing down the street. And just people they didn't like in their neighborhood. You know, but some of them were concerned and so they went ahead, both sides, whatever side you are on, they agreed if they had a cane other the side of the property they would put it there and the constable now is authorized to order the landlord's people to put those personal belongings in a cane their the city provided and it's only there for like a day or two and the tenant only has that long to find a -- find something to remove it.

[2:49:03 PM]

I'm happy to find out more information from Garland on how much it costs, et cetera and at least present that to you. To be honest, that's not what we're really here about. We're really here to see if we can do something to prevent wrongful evictions or unfair. At the end of the day at least we ought to do them in a civil way so at least people don't lose everything they have.

>> Garza: Any I guess draft legislation, ordinance would be helpful, things that we could, you know, put into action possibly quicker would be you helpful.

>> Kitchen: Chair? Yes, and I would add to that. We're going you more work to do, but sounds like you could do it quickly. A list of concrete examples including, you know, the draft legislation. And if you could tell us which jurisdictions. You've got a lot of jurisdictions represented here. So city, county, you know, whatever. If you could help us understand where these -- what levels these can be done at, that would be helpful.

>> We'll do it.

>> And if you could distinguish between those that could be done within the confines of current law and those that would take some change whether it be state or local, I think that would be helpful.

>> I just wanted to try to understand, I'm sorry if I missed this, why you think that the number of evictions has remained steady or has gone down over the last five years. I know you said the example about some of them don't always make it all the way through the court process, but in the example of foreclosure, it's not -- you don't have that kind of equity built up in a rental so I would have assumed with the increasing population, increasing cost of living we would have seen an increase in evictions. >> I would love to tell you skyrocketing, we must -- but I'm just going off the statistics offered by the office of court administration. I checked from fiscal year 2011, new cases filed was 8700.

[2:51:03 PM]

Fiscal year 2012 was 8600. And 2013, 8200. And 2014, 7700. So I mean the trend is down in terms of filed cases, but again what we're seeing, you know, what we're seeing on the actual cases filed is only a snapshot of that particular thing. And you have to consider how many notices to vacate were entered. There's no -- I mean because people move now, people move before an eviction is filed. Once an eviction is filed on your record you are going to have trouble renting. Could be word is out if they really wronged you, sue them later, but don't let an eviction be filed against you because it will hurt your record. I don't know exactly why the filed Numbers have gone down by a thousand in the last year, but I will tell you I think it's in this zone. I don't think we're seeing a trend like next year we're going to have a thousand fewer. I think it's going to bump up and down. I will tell you the smart play if you are a renter is not let an eviction be filed against you until we get some sort of procedure that would allow you to expunge that from staying on your record especially if you have been successful in the eviction case. Does that make sense?

>> Yeah, I think you have something to add.

>> I don't very hard Numbers, but when we're doing evictions off east Riverside, some of the apartment complexes that were being remodeled and we were there quite often, once the people moved out, the apartment complexes remodeled, people paying larger rents that can afford it, we don't go back to those apartment complexes so much anymore. So the people that couldn't afford it have already been evicted and the people that can are there. So it seems like there's certain areas of our precinct where we never go to evictions because people can afford those properties and that can be part of it.

[2:53:04 PM]

That sort of transition where it's already been gentrified, people have already moved out.

>> That was my theory. People using low-income housing are moving out of the city and county, I think. We had this crazy conversation last week where we thought what if we got eviction data from manor or whatever. The other thing that I think is going on is landlords are protecting themselves up front from having to enter an eviction kind of situation. So anecdotally, I don't have Numbers on this, but we are seeing many more tenants on month to month leases. So, you know, it's easier to just ask somebody not to come back next month than it is going through an entire eviction process. I just think the environment is shifting.

>> I have a couple quick questions again. As a percentage of apartments and rental properties, this number you said is going down, 1,000 from last year, whatever, but the number of apartments coming on line is going up considerable, 5% a year, 3%.

>> But at what rent level essentially?

>> But there's always -- whatever is a prime apartment today in ten years it's going to be class B and another ten years it's going to be low-income. It's almost always assuming there's a rolling number of apartments that kind of roll down to the bottom of the low-income and appeal to that. Do you know what I mean by that?

>> I do and I'm sorry to say I haven't looked at the statistics. I can only imagine that the rents compared to median family income essentially, when evictions for nonpayment occur where it's clear that the tenant does owe the money, right, it's going to be a relationship between the rent, the average rent amount and the median family income of the area and I haven't checked those statistics. I haven't been curious, but I would bet that is changing.

>> I'm just thinking this number you said is going down.

[2:55:04 PM]

It's now 7700 and it was up to 8600 or something like that.

>> Correct.

>> But in that amount of those five years there's been a lot more apartments that have come online.

>> That's right.

>> And then the other question I had was during evictions, how much time does it take to evict an average apartment, two bedroom, I mean does it matter? You bring other deputies or constables with you?

>> The deputy constables are there just to keep the peace so we're there to watch. Still the landlord hires the people to move the property out. Some tenants sometimes have a U-Haul, can't afford it, trying to find someone to help them move. After two hours, then the landlord has to pay an hourly rate that the county assesses for going over that two-hour period. It's usually about an hour to two hours.

>> Okay. Thank you.

>> Robert, these are Travis county statistics and it just occurred to me, I was just looking a couple weeks ago about housing trends. And poor incomes on the homeownership side where being pushed to the far periphery. Outside -- oftentimes outside Travis county, bastrop county and maybe Williamson county and stuff like that so it will be interesting, while Travis county may be going down, I'm curious to see what those jurisdictions are doing. Are poor income folks.

>> I agree completely and I'm sorry to say I wasn't adequately prepared for this meeting. I should have pulled those Numbers but that's a good point and I would like to provide those at a later time.

>> We do know that the increase in the poverty level for surrounding counties is increasing dramatically.

>> It's the whole suburbanization of profit that we're seeing in this region.

>> Madame chair, since this is on our long-range plan and goal list of priorities, is there a mechanism where we can ask our staff -- I'll be happy to work with you on expunges issue, but is there a mechanism for helping to I guess come back to this body with some recommendations that have gone through a little bit of a process.

[2:57:22 PM]

You made an offer on several specific items to meet with others involved and see if you could come up with some priorities or recommendations.

>> Sure. Yes, it is. It's actually one of the items on our strategic plan that we were going to talk about to get more information on it. So we can -- if you could provide those -- that draft legislation and bring back up a presentation maybe in a couple months we could have a presentation when the agenda is no sought heavy possibly.

>> Happy to.

>> I'm happy to talk about what the county can do.

>> Thank you.

>> One quick question. I know where the constable gets paid. Where do you guys get your funding to do all your work?

>> Many sources actually.  
>> Both of you, both groups? Tenants --  
>> We're primarily government funded.  
>> Okay.  
>> Garza: Thank you all.  
>> Appreciate you coming today and presenting.

[Applause]

>> Garza: Agenda item 4 is a briefing from livable city representatives regarding an an an an an forwardability report. I don't believe we have any speakers so if you want to go ahead and start your presentation.

>> So we have a power point. We have a power point. How do I see if it's fired up? Okay. Well, I want to thank councilmember Garza and the committee for allowing livable city to come to you today and give you a preview of some of the ideas that we will be putting out in our report which is due to come out in April.

[2:59:34 PM]

A preview of some of the ideas. Livable city is a -- civic organization found under stand 2002 and today you will be hearing from four of our board members, Elizabeth Mueller, David foster, Katherine Nichols and myself, Michael Odon. Livable cities started in 2002, we did a quality of life survey and afford built came up as a major issues. Most recently we conducted a sort of multi-year public engagement and research effort. The result of which and some of the ideas which we're going to present to you today.

>> Garza: Do you want to introduce yourself --

>> Do you want to introduce yourself and committee members?

>> I did.

>> Garza: He did.

>> Sorry.

>> I think we're having some technical difficulties.

>> It's flashing. Well, let me just say that I think a broad and crucial finding of our work is that reclaiming affordability really requires attacking the problem in a number of directions, a number of areas of costs of living for citizens of Austin in the region. We have to think of ways to reduce costs of living for people in individual areas such as housing, transportation, but we also have to analyze more deeply and more innovative ways how we can reduce the combined cost of living. Looking for ways that living costs relate to each other and how we can reduce sort of the sum of those costs. So for example can we find and develop places that minimize the sum of housing costs, plus transportation costs, plus water and electric costs, plus tax costs.

[3:01:47 PM]

Can we find those places where those things together can lead to a more affordable out come. So it's really a multi-dimensional problem, has to be attacked on a lot of levels and we have to think about ways to think of these costs in combined or integrate ways. Our report will focus on seven areas of household expenses, taxes, housing, transportation and water and utilities. Water and electricity. Health care, food and household telecommunications. Because of time limits we're going to talk about five, transportation, health care and I'll start with taxes. It's a little -- it would be slightly more compelling if I could have the power points, but accounting for inflation, we find that budget and tax increases have largely been driven by the needs to serve a rapidly growing population in the city of Austin and the region. There have been significant increases in property taxes in some jurisdictions, but in some cases

these property tax increase have substituted for other revenue sources, for example, in the utility transfers and other fees and revenue. The big issue in terms of taxes as specifically related to affordability is the sharp regressivity in Texas. Texas generally has a low state and local tax burden, but for low-income households the tax burden of state level taxes is high. In Austin the lower your share of income, the higher the proportion of your income you spend in local and state taxes. So as the region grows and as we have to financier advises for more and more people, the -- the areas that are affected most are in the middle and low-income strata because their taxes as a share of their income are higher than the taxes of higher income houses.

[3:03:59 PM]

We have a slide which from the institute of taxation and economic policy that shows that compared to high tax states such as California and Massachusetts, the bottom 40% of the income distribution in Texas actually pays a higher share of their income in state and local taxes in Texas than they do in high tax states such as California and Massachusetts. High income households on the other hand pay much lower shares of their income in Texas than they do in California or Massachusetts. So the affordability problem in terms of taxes we really see it as it affects property rich and income poor homeowners which is the real problem in terms of taxes and renters. So we make certain recommendations or a few of the recommendations they make in the report have to do with local action that city and county governments and other local jurisdictions can make, and then we also propose and argue coalition of local officials should come together and push for reform in state tax structures. In terms of local actions, we would urge leaders from all local jurisdictions to continue to push for the equalization of residential and commercial property appraisals. This was a big issue last year, took strong action. I think the appraisal district is much more aware of this problem and we think it is a real important issue because if we can rebalance commercial residential appraisals that would allow us to lower rates and still maintain revenue and that's important. Secondly, we argue that we should -- we should consider whether perhaps a moratorium on incentives to attract new firms and employers to Austin should be considered given our current booming economic growth.

[3:05:00 PM]

And if we offer public incentives how we could better target them to provide living wage jobs for lower and -- middle and low-income workers. Finally at the local level we argue that rate reductions are much more effective in terms of targeting the people that really have affordability problems that share property tax exemption. Share property value exemptions tend to just benefit homeowners and higher income owners disproportionately. At the level of the state, and I think local officials across the state are beginning to realize that to make any significant progress on reducing tax burdens for low and middle income household burdens is going to require changes in state tax law, and I just wanted to touch on three recommendations we make here. One, we argue, again, that local officials come together and really push at the state legislature to make sure that there is a disclosure of sales prices for residential and commercial property sales. We're one of only four states in the entire nation that doesn't have some disclosure of sales for commercial and residential properties, and that allows on more accurate and appraisal evaluation and more balance between residential and commercial appraisals. Secondly we argue that, again, local officials should push for flat dollar amount homestead exemption versus shared value reductions. Those are much more Progressive, they are much more effective at getting tax relief again to middle and low-income homeowners. And then more aspirationally we would argue state and local officials should explore a circuit breaker provision. 19 states have a circuit breaker provision and basically this circuit breaker says that if your property tax burdens exceed a certain share of your

disposable income past that threshold, you get tax relief, you get property tax relief or tax rebates back to you.

[3:07:10 PM]

So those are proposals at the state level that we would urge local officials to really put -- to push for. So I'm going to turn it over to Elizabeth Mueller who is going to talk about recommendations in housing.

>> If it's

>> Can you hear me? That means it's on. Without my visual AIDS --

>> Kitchen: Is it not possible to get their powerpoint up?

>> [ Off mic ]

>> Kitchen: Flicking doesn't help. Thanks.

>> That's probably worse. Okay. So, in terms of housing affordability, I think you all have our handout? Okay. So, what we're telling you is pretty much in there, but we had beautiful slides to show you. Yes, yes. Yeah.

[ Off mic ]

>> So, as we've been hearing today, and a lot recently, really, the shift in affordability -- or the issue of affordability here is a lot about where you live. We've been seeing a shift in affordable locations within our region with major impacts on low-income households. The two main challenges we need to think about are prevented the large-scale displacement of low-income households who live in the center of Austin, often in locations that are beneficial to them because they provide them access to transit and other things that make it possible for them to live on low incomes. And the other challenge is we need to create more inclusive patterns of growth. And I think we're all aware that within the last few years, Austin has been call the out in a few high-profile reports, one about the suburbanization of poverty that was put out by authors at the Brookings institution that said that our suburban poverty rose in Austin between 2000 and 2011 by 143%.

[3:09:13 PM]

We saw a recent reporting on Kut about the growth to the east of Austin, especially, you know, the impact that was having on those communities in many different ways, the strain on social services and schools in particular. You know, there are dimensions within that that we need to think about. The other report was about economic segregation, that highlighted how Austin remains highly segregated economically. And that's notable to me because that means that in the context of sustained growth over many decades, we're somehow replicating and deepening that pattern. So we need to think about, how're we doing that, and how do we grow differently. How do we grow in a more inclusive way moving forward. So the recommendations I wanted to highlight right now are, first, about preserving access for low-income renters who currently live in the central city. And when you see my slide, you'll see I have a map that my research assistant at UT made for me last year that shows all of the class C apartment properties in Austin, both large and small, and where they're located in relationship to core transit corridors. And you'll see there's a lot of them that are very close to these corridors. And we looked to see what percentage are close to them. Three-quarters of them are within a half mile of a designated cortransit corridor, and two-thirds are within a quarter mile. We want to prioritize and change these to support transit. But if we don't think about this problem, we're going to end up redeveloping and displacing a lot of people. So we need to think about that and be strategic. And part of how we can do that is, right now Austin is in the middle of starting the process to create its first affordable housing plan. And I happen to have -- over on the counter, there's a flyer that gives information about all the upcoming places where you can go and giveinput.



[3:11:22 PM]

We need to think about how do we integrate preservation goals that are specific for these corridors. So we're thinking about, where do we know we have a lot of these units that could be lost, and let's try and prioritize those areas for preservation so that, you know, we're working on multiple goals at once. We're keeping transit-dependent people near transit, keeping people housed in the center of Austin. Let's link that to imagine Austin. Those planning processes are things we've set in motion through imagine Austin. Let's connect those things now. Another thing that we need to do is prioritize long temporary long-term affordability. We need to think about the affordable housing strategies we've using that can ensure that what we create remains affordable. Community land trust, a really important tool. Cooperative ownership models can be an important tool for that. That doesn't mean just that people own a stake in their property. Sometimes it can be cooperatively owned by a nonprofit owner, and people cooperatively manage it, and that can provide stability, control, for the tenants, a lot of the aspects we think of as being associated with ownership, but for renters, and allow them to reduce the cost of managing their properties. So, those are two things we can do through how we currently prioritize the housing funds that we have. And then another thing that we can do as an action step is support the creation of this preservation fund that housingworks and other partners in the city have been talking about. That's a fund that we hope will have money from social investors but also might have money from different public entities that see a benefit, because it serves multiple goals. The next area where we wanted to prioritize for recommendations is the idea of how do we grow differently.

[3:13:24 PM]

So how do we increase housing options for a range of household types across the city. So right now in the codenext process we're talking about how do we try and increase the diversity of housing types that we're adding throughout the city, particularly adjacent toners and corridors. If we're densifying those corridors, can we have, kind of, other types that, kind of, provide that buffer between the single family neighborhood and the corridor that are smaller and might be more affordable? But also, how do we create housing diversity in new subdivisions? We talk about what we're doing in the center of town. If we're creating homogenous homeowner, single family neighborhoods without much diversity in terms of the size of the homes, of the lots, whether or not someone's allowed to rent there, whether or not we create a transit hub and make it possible for renters to live near that area, are we just replicating some of that economic segregation there. So, I think we need to think about that in codenext. In our affordable housing plan, we can think about how do we use the different types of affordable housing tools and funds that we have to match locations to housing types. So if we're creating family housing, are we trying to prioritize putting it in areas that give a family access to good schools. If it's for elderly people, are we providing them good access to services. We think about these things strategically and try and connect the different goals that we have. So I'll stop there and turn it over to David who will talk about transportation.

>> Thank you, Liz, and committee members. My name is David foster, livable city bored member.  
-- Board member. I'm presenting on the water and electric utilities. The single biggest takeaway that we want you to get today on transportation is that prioritizing transportation options, providing more transportation options, is a key component of making the region and the city more affordable.

[3:15:28 PM]

For most residents, transportation is the second-highest household expense after housing. In spite of that, most transportation planning does not consider the impacts of the transportation decisions in the spending. They don't consider the impacts that has on affordability. And as with many other aspects of what we're going to talk about, this is even a bigger issue for lower-income working families, as they spend a greater share of their incomes on transportation. And the reason for that is because lower-income households often have to travel farther distances to get to their jobs because of the lack of affordable housing, less shopping centers, and so forth. So, commuting time is actually highly correlated with your ability to escape poverty. The longer your commute time, the more difficulty you're going to have of getting out of poverty or moving up on the income ladder. It's important to appreciate that when you're talking about transportation costs, we're not just talking about the cost of gasoline. We're talking about maintenance, about insurance, about depreciation and so forth. The American automobile association estimates that the average American car that's driven 15,000 miles a year costs \$8,800 a year, and that's a huge amount of money. So, what we need is for state and local governments to consider the impact of transportation decisions on affordability. And we're not doing that. We're not providing transportation options that we know can bring down the cost of living for most households. For example, the campo 2040 regional plan estimates we need \$35.1 billion over 25 years, 2.8 billion will come from the city of Austin. Key projects in this planning include the proposal to modify parts of I-35, at a cost of \$4.3 billion.

[3:17:33 PM]

We're not making anything approaching a comparable level of investment in transportation options. What we're doing instead with most of our transportation dollars is directing them towards expanding and extending roadways, leaving fewer dollars available for more affordable transportation options. So, let's see. So if you look at housing and transportation -- I'm sorry. Let's see. So, national studies say that households are transportation-burdened when they spend 20% or more of their income on transportation. And there are reports that go back at least to 2000 that look at cities like Houston, Atlanta, Dallas, and how much out of pocket money households spend on transportation in cities like that compared to cities like Philadelphia and Boston, which have much more diversified systems. So the more auto dependency you have, like in Houston and Dallas, the higher the level -- the share of your out of pocket spending on transportation. In Dallas, Houston, Atlanta, cities like that, it's 25% or more, whereas in cities with more transportation options, Philadelphia, Boston -- Boston, it's ten or 12%. That's the biggest single takeaway on transportation. We need to develop a comprehensive plan a prioritizing transportation options, to improve mobility, accessibility, and affordability. And what that means is more spending on transit, urban trails, bikeways, and sidewalks. And that will help low-income households. So now I'm going to move into the energy and water portion of the report. And here again, to get at affordability, we need to think of affordability in its many dimensions. And rising utility bills are contributing to the affordability crisis.

[3:19:38 PM]

We're paying energy and water bills in Austin today that amount to 5% of the living expense for the average household. It can be a much higher proportion for low-income households. Energy rates and water rates have tended to go up in recent years. Austin energy's rates went up by 7% since 2012. Austin water utility went up 13% last year alone. I should just issue a warning here. Some experts say water is likely to be more expensive than energy in the years to come in places like Texas as we face population growth and our water supply is threatened by recurrent drought and climate change. We've had a lot of rainfall recently, of course. Lake Travis is 100% full. But the experts, including Dr. Catherine,

who has been engaged by the city of Austin to do long-term projections on this, that this is just part of a boom and bust cycle that's very consistent with climate change. And nobody really expects the reservoirs to remain at that level going forward. So more people, less water, probably means there'll be a tendency for water rates to increase. Now, Austin does have the advantage of owning both of its electric and water utilities, and this is something that we certainly encourage that to continue. There's talk about privatizing Austin energy, opening it up to competition. This would be a bad move. Owning the utilities allows Austin to transfer some proceeds into the general fund. It was 105 from energy in '15, \$38.5 million, I believe, from Austin water. Without those transfers, we either have to cut core services and value programs, or raise property taxes, or some other revenue stream to make up for that shortfall. Now, in both water and energy, conservation is the most cost-effective way to meet future demand. I have a wonderful slide you can't see that I pulled from the legislative budget board of the state agency in 2012 showing graphs how much it costs per acre foot more municipal conservation versus building new reservoirs, etc.

[3:21:54 PM]

Many studies have pointed to the same thing. Conservation, for water, is the most cost-effective way to meet future need. And not not only true generally, but it's particularly true here for Austin, because of our contract with the lower Colorado river authority. Back in 1999, the city of Austin reached a contract agreement with lcra and prepaid -- wrote them a check for \$100 million for water that we could take from the Colorado river up to 201,000-acre feet two years in a row. It's called a trigger. If we hit that trigger two years in a row, we have to start paying for all the water we use, in addition to the \$100 million we paid in 1999. So the longer we delay that trigger, the lower our rates will be. And Austin water utility estimates a 10 to 15 million dollars annual rate hit on ratepayers if we hit that trigger. Also, you can't get around the trigger by bringing in water from another source like the Willcox aquifer, which some cities are considering doing or doing already in the region, because however much water you bring in from another source will also count towards that 201,000 acre feet trigger. What doesn't count is reclaimed water, gray water, and conservation. So Austin benefits enormously by continuing to invest in conservation programs. That's the biggest single takeaway, I think, on the water and energy piece of that, is conservation is the most cost-effective way of meeting future need. Switching to energy, I have another graph that you can't see that shows the same thing, investing in energy efficiency and conservation is also the cheapest way to meet energy needs, whether it's solar, wind, coal, gas, etc. Investing in energy efficiency is the best way to meet energy needs. Now, as a matter of policy, Austin energy's rates should be on the lower 50%. They're a bit more than that right now, because of the low cost of natural gas.

[3:23:57 PM]

But at the end of the month, people don't pay an energy rate, they pay an energy bill. Even though the rates may be in that top 50%, just barely, energy bills in Austin are lower than every other large city in the state except one. The reason is households in Austin use on average less energy than these other cities. And that's because of our investments in energy efficiency and conservation. The biggest single takeaway is to continue to invest in conservation programs, rebates for weatherization, hvac, solar. On the water side, continue to fund turf grass replacement and so forth. It also means, I think, that we need to keep our tiered rate structures in both the water and energy side so that the people who use the least water and energy pay the least amount. I would beware of arguments talking about average cost of service, because what -- drivers the need to invest in infrastructure is peak demand. And it's the higher water users that are fueling the perceived need to invest in a plant like that. It's not folks who use

less than 2,000 gallons a month, which by the way, my household does. It's necessary we preserve these lifeline rates for affordability. And I also think as we look to new subdivisions, we need to make them water and energy efficient as much as we possibly can. Kb homes in southern California doubled the zero subdivisions where the homes produce as much energy as they consume, because they're so energy efficient and have solar panels built into them. Water use in these homes is 70% less than for the typical home because of energy-efficient appliances, but also rainwater harvesting, the right kind of landscapes, graywater systems, and using things like ac condensing as well. There are ways we can do this. We just need to go ahead and get on it.

[3:25:00 PM]

Thank you.

>> I'm going to be talking about health. Healthcare is expensive. When a catastrophic injury or illness occurs, healthcare costs can be devastating, particularly true when it's combined with income loss due to an inability to work associated with those situations. These costs often result in bankruptcies, home foreclosures and evictions, the things we were hearing about. Studies suggest medical costs lead to more than half of all bankruptcies, and that's only taking medical costs into account, before the influences of lost income. And then, even for people who are able to avoid a bankruptcy, there are a lot of negative effects of the medical expenses, including things like spending down savings, entirely or to a great degree, or being forced to take on a second job to meet those expenses. Health insurance can reduce these negative outcomes, but because of copayments and out of network charges, a major health issue can be very expensive even for people with insurance. Additionally, health insurance can be a major expense in its own right. That's particularly true for individual who is fall into a health insurance gap. These are people who make too much money to qualify for medicaid, but too little to be eligible for the health insurance subsidies available through the affordable care act. And because the state of Texas opted out of the medicaid extension, that means 1 million texans fall into this gap and have few options for affordable insurance. When discussing healthcare, I think it's important to include mental health costs. The cost of failing to address mental health needs early and effectively can be devastating to an individual, to the family, and to the community at large.

[3:27:05 PM]

Most insurance companies cover at least some mental health and substance abuse services, but many times there are really strict limits on the amount of time that people can get those services. And for people without insurance, there are very long wait lists in most cases for affordable mental health and substance abuse services. Travis county residents have better affordable healthcare access than those in many parts of the state, thanks to central health, which is our voter-approved healthcare taxing district. Central health plays a major role in ensuring that their healthcare resources for low-income and under-or uninsured residents, and they've collocated clinics to provide mental health and substance abuse services at the same locations as medical services are being provided. So, turning to recommendations, we have three major recommendations in this area, and each of these recommendations has a lot of, sort of, sub-recommendations. But I'll just focus on a couple of the sub-recommendations within each of the areas. So our first recommendation is to create a comprehensive partnership to try to achieve 100% health insurance coverage across the Austin metropolitan area. And we'd like to see the city of Austin and other governmental entities partner with central health, Travis county, the area school districts, and local nonprofits to try to ensure that everybody in the area has health insurance, or get as close as possible to that goal as we can. So to achieve that goal, one thing we'd like to see is a coordinated effort to expand health insurance enrollment assistance programs.

[3:29:13 PM]

These kinds of programs are already being provided through central health and local nonprofits, but we would really like to see those programs be expanded in a coordinated way, and see the governing bodies take a role in that. Furthermore, we'd like to see those governing bodies themselves work to ensure that their own employees, including part-time and contract, can obtain insurance. That's one recommendation, to develop a coordinated plan. Again, without the powerpoint, things were all nicely laid out. But I can mark where I'm going. The second sub-recommendation under the comprehensive partnership is to develop programs in public schools to ensure that all children who are eligible for the chip program get insurance and that they maintain their insurance. And the nice thing about making sure children are enrolled in chip, it makes sure the kids can get access to health insurance. But typically when the children are enrolled, it often brings their families into contact with health resources. Okay. So the second broad recommendation we have is -- which is a really broad one -- is to strengthen, expand, and promote access to preventive care for all residents. Certainly, if we can prevent health emergencies, then people are going to be much better off in the long run. So, we'd like to, again, see the city of Austin and other local governments to work together with central health, school districts, nonprofits, and the state capital metro to improve access to preventive care for all residents. The austin-travis county community health improvement plan has been -- makes a variety of recommendations and provides information on the current health status, but that effort could build on that plan. And we'd like to see the plan ensure, among other things, we'd like to see the plan ensure that local safety net clinics are located so that they're accessible through transit, and also, I think people mentioned the suburbanization of poverty earlier.

[3:31:29 PM]

That's been identified as a real gap for safety net clinics. And so it would be good to see more locations in these suburban areas that are starting to see high poverty for the people who live there. Here, too, in terms of trying to achieve preventive care for all residents, here, too, we think that schools could play a role in expanding preventive care. For example, school nurse programs potentially could be expanded to serve community families and community members. And school-based interfaces like family resource centers and maybe also parent support specialists are ideally suited to connect families with preventive care. So, we'd like to see those kinds of programs supported and expanded. To improve access to mental health and substance abuse services, the central health partnership with integral care, you know, that recent effort to collocate services and clinics could be expanded and continued and expanded. And then additionally, aid is now bringing -- now has a program in some of their schools in which they're bringing therapists into the schools to provide mental health services for students. And it would be great to see those kinds of programs in which mental health services and physical health services, preventive services as well, are being brought to places where people already are. And so we'd like to see those kinds of efforts expanded. And then our final broad recommendation is to use codenext -- well, more broadly, to ensure a healthful environment for people in this community. And in particular, to use the codenext process to provide an environment that encourages health, for example, through safe walking and biking routes across the city, and looking more broadly, to promote things like green infrastructure, which can reduce flooding and pollution, which can also have serious health costs for people.

[3:33:49 PM]

>> Garza: Thank you for that presentation. Does anybody have any questions?

>> Kitchen: Oh. I just wanted to say thank you. I mean, just excellent, excellent recommendations. And very thoughtful. And at a level that really should make us all think about how we can put these kinds of things into place. So I appreciate the level of strategic thinking and policy thinking combined with specific recommendations. So. And I will appreciate the powerpoint. I know you all did a whole lot of work on the powerpoint, a whole lot of work. And we will look forward to seeing it. So.

>> I did have a couple questions. Thank you. It was very detailed. I look forward to seeing that. Back to the taxes for the property -- Dr. Odon, is that right? So you had commented about the flat dollar reduction. What was that statement, flat dollar versus --

>> Yeah, we think that -- I know there were efforts of the legislature in the last session to allow cities to - in other words, the homestead exemption would be \$5,000, or \$10,000 versus a share of the value of the property. And a \$5,000 exemption would mean a lot more than --

>> I see. And you do have that. Ms. Shade pointed that out. Thank you for that. Do any states in -- you mentioned the four states. Texas does not have sales disclosure. I'm on the appraisal board for Williamson county, on the school district for Round Rock aid. I got appointed to that. It's been very interesting, very enlightening. We talked about this last time, getting the lawsuit -- getting an update on the lawsuit between the Austin and the Travis county. But do any states have graduated taxes for properties just like graduated taxes for income?

[3:35:52 PM]

So if you have a \$100,000 house or a \$1 million house, instead of it being 2 cents per hundred dollars, does it get more?

>> As far as I know, no state has a, sort of -- you know for certain. But I don't know of any state that has, you know, a sort of Progressive property tax. But lots of states have different mechanisms, exemptions, including the circuit-breaker revision, which we highlight, that really limit the burden of property taxes after property taxes, a share of your income, goes past a certain threshold. 19 states have that.

>> Okay. All right. Thank you.

>> Thank you very much. I have a couple of questions. In the past, when I would be looking at median family income and looking at what can income provide in relation to median home price, I've been running across statistics lately that used to, it was because we had a middle income that the middle class was the largest component. And we're now reading all these articles about how that is shrinking. And it's gone from 61% in 1971 to below 50% now. And this is across the country. And that same statistic said that even though median family incomes are going up, it's really a barbell effect. The growth in jobs is occurring at the higher end, 21%, and the lower end, 29%. And so looking at an average or median family income, that seems to mask some of the problem. If you have two guys making 20,000 and one making a million, there's a high median family income, but the two guys can't live near the million-dollar guy. When I look at 29% that are making lower incomes, then I look at our housing cost and the problem for those folks is pretty great, and it's really difficult.

[3:37:59 PM]

>> Yeah, I think you're absolutely right to point that out. The old saying, the average is -- your feet are nice, and your hands are in the fire. But, we did use -- we tried to, in our work, in the report, use median versus mean. Because median is the most of limits the effects of this, you know, fast growth at the top, fast growth at the bottom. But, yeah. I mean, we have an increasingly polarized wage and income structure. I've recently done some work that shows that's definitely true in Austin. We've got growth at the high and low end, not much in the middle. So that's -- you know, that's a problem. And the burdens are at the low and middle end. The ones that really -- if the question you're asking is, can I find a way,

any way to live affordably in Austin, it's most pressing for people in the middle and lower tiers. That's where we focused.

>> It's a misimpression for me to look at a median family income and say I have to target the family of four at 76,000. There's a whole bunch of people that aren't getting close to that.

>> Absolutely. That's true. Half, or a lot.

>> Garza: Somebody else?

>> I want to thank you for this presentation. I look forward to seeing the slides. And also to give some more thought to -- I think what you're talking about here, which is not to look at affordability in silos. To really look at the nexus, those -- you know, where those circles intersect with mobility, housing, workforce, wellness, and some of these others that you mentioned. I think that's really critical. And whether you put housing in the center and spokes coming off from mobility in the center or whatever, it doesn't matter to me.

[3:39:02 PM]

But I think that if we take one such as mobility, we can see how it was mentioned. And that without that mobility, how do you get from your housing to your transportation? Without that mobility, how do you get your child to well-children checkup so there's no hearing deficiency which can be a lifelong problem? How do you, without that mobility, get yourself to a clinic? And so I think that any additional information you have that ties these together with specifics, I'm very much looking forward to, particularly in with mobility for the underserved.

>> Shea: I'll add my voice. It's great to be able to utilize so much talent from our academic sector. We don't always, I think, take advantage of the great academic richness that we have in the community. So this is really, really valuable. And it shows that you've given a lot of thought and brought a lot of your professional expertise. I have been particularly concerned about the structural inequity that's built into the appraisal process. And I think it really is contributing to just horrific burdens on longtime residents. So I've got two questions. One is, your knowledge of -- or if there's a cite or a source to get more information about the circuit breaker mechanism, and how effective that's been in the 19 other states. And then my other question has to do partly with the appraisal issue. And I'd like your thoughts on this. I appreciate the recommendations about, you know, legislative efforts to try and fix the structural inequity. But what I'm afraid has happened is that the legislature, after breaking the appraisal process, some of the legislature, they are now proposing as the solution to put tax and revenue caps on local communities which will effectively strangle communities for the basic resources to provide basic services.

[3:41:14 PM]

It won't fix the structural inequity. It will just rob communities of the resources to provide an education, to provide sufficient police force, to provide streets and, you know, water, and sewage, and all of that. So, I'm really alarmed that the legislature is headed in absolutely the worst direction on this issue. And I think partly because some of the leadership there really is dedicated to the groverer Norquist view, the goal is to shrink government until it's small enough to drown in the bathtub. They're hostile towards government. I don't know if you have any thoughts on that, if there's any particularly compelling ways to get them to view this differently. But I'm interested in the circuit breaker, and any thoughts on the legislative.

>> I can provide you information on the circuit breaker mechanisms as they're used around the country. I can do that for sure.

>> Shea: That would be great.

>> The broader issue -- we looked most closely at the city of Austin budget. But really, you know, you can cap spending or whatever, but you have to realize that like everything else, spending is subject to inflationary pressures. It costs a little more to pay 500 linear feet of highway two years from now than it does this year. You're not increasing the amount of government services, you're just -- due to inflationary pressures, it's going up. And then you've got more people. So you're not changing the standard of service, you just have to give it to more people. That costs money. I don't know how a cap would work. But I know, or my sense is, at least, that local officials in lots of cities in Texas are really struggling with this. And, you know, it may be somewhat, you know, unprecedented, but I really think in a coalition of local officials came together and said, you know, we really need a more, kind of, rational tax structure -- and nobody -- I mean, there's an argument -- and it's a legitimate argument between a proportional tax system, meaning taxes shouldn't redistribute income.

[3:43:19 PM]

Everybody should pay the same share. And a Progressive system, people that have a little more should pay a little more. There's an argument between those two. I don't know anybody in any part of the political spectrum that aren't used to a regressive tax system, which redistributes households from high-income households to low-income.

>> The reverse.

>> Sorry. So, I don't know -- you know. A regressive tax structure, I don't know any advocates for that on the right, the left, no matter where. So. I think that's a real issue that has to be addressed.

>> Thank you. The report's very thought-provoking. Thank you very much for taking the time. And I'd like to -- commissioner Shea has talked about the shrinking government. And I'm not even sure if that's the problem at the legislature. I know it's one of the thoughts. But, you know, the real trend that I have seen for a while, and I'm sure at least one -- four of our agencies here, if not the rest, the school districts, basically, it's push it down to the local level so they can stand up there and say, well, we don't raise taxes.

>> Shea: It's the bad local governments that raise the taxes.

>> It's the bad local government. It's those school districts. You know. And I think that is really the kind of thinking that has really put us in a bind here. And I know Paul's ready to jump on this, because we talked about this the whole lunch. But I think that's problematic. And I think you're right. There's a lot of local governments out there, municipalities, and some of the larger school districts that are talking about this.

[3:45:20 PM]

I'm afraid, though, that it's not getting a good hearing in the rural and smaller school districts, or medium-sized school districts. Because I think that's what's going to have to change, really. What's going to have to change is, you know, the legislature being in a position to say, we're going to be fair on this, and have -- we're going to do our fair share. And right now I -- the trend, certainly in the last 16 years, or maybe longer now, 8, 9, 10 legislative sessions, is to take everything they can find and say, that's a local issue. We'll push it down to the local municipality. We'll push it down to the school district. And that's really, to me, the problem. You know. I don't know if that really shrinks government into a bathtub. What it does is, it pushes it into our bathtub.

[ Chuckling ] And we all are, you know, forced to make, you know, raise taxes or do things that definitely affect affordability. I mean, you know, I see at least four -- in your breakdown, on your components of, you know, what -- four or five things, probably, that -- you know, could go on and on -- that are really affected by that philosophy. And it comes down to the local folks having to do something about it,



because we're not going to stop educating people. We're not going to -- [ chuckling ] -- Shut off the water. We're not going to stop anything that -- the services, I don't see us shrinking services. What I see is just putting more burden on localities.

>> Just real quickly, since I can't let this opportunity go by without talking about recapturing chapter 41. We would welcome your advocacy and leadership to talk about recapture.

[3:47:23 PM]

You mentioned that the tax burden, specifically the impact to low and middle-income households, and the fact that without recapture, we could lower our tax rate, save the average homeowner at least a thousand dollars a year. So I'm forever optimistic that at some point, we'll be able to address that issue. I was really most appreciative of your recommendations, particularly around the health and the family resource centers. I remember when we had health clinics in the schools. Perhaps we should revisit that, particularly since we have under-capacity, underutilized schools and fits, and the fact that our local revenue at the school district is based on the average daily attendance of our students. And the fact that we're the fourth-largest employer in the call in sick. It would be great if they could have a clinic or health facility within our schools. It makes absolute, perfect sense for us to do that. I'm really appreciative of all of your recommendations. I plan on taking this to the intergovernment relations committee to see what we can add to the legislative agenda. I'm coordinate to see if we can have you come incorporate. And if we can get the powerpoint presentation emailed to us, that would be great.

>> And I know that hitting on the legislature is a popular topic amongst a lot of the entities that are represented here. And I think that our time and energy is better spent addressing the many things that have been brought up that are within the control of the local entities. There's plenty of things that we can do at the local level. And as much as we like to say, oh, well, it's the stated fault -- I mean, the state says, it's the local's fault.

[3:49:27 PM]

I mean, we're not doing any better sitting here blaming them. So there's plenty of things that we can do on our own. Our time and energy is much better spent addressing those things rather than going to the capital and wasting our time advocating for policies that are simply -- come down to an ideological difference of what the best path to prosperity is. There's just a difference of opinion when it comes to tax policy. And economic prosperity, and what the best way is to provide jobs and create an economic environment that allow people to prosper individually. I, of course -- I mean. We all are entitled to our different opinions on that. So I just -- I hope that we can focus more on that. And I mean, as far as the -- capping the local -- the cap that you brought up, I don't know the details about that. But the reality of the situation is that the city of Austin, at least, is spending more money every year when adjusted for population and inflation. So it's not that we're growing too fast, or that we're not taking into account inflation, and, you know, we're not going to be able to keep up with roads and our basic services and infrastructure if we don't raise taxes. We are spending more money every year after taking into account population and inflation. So, from my perspective, local government is growing. We do -- we have the revenue to do it. Austin in particular is in a unique position of having, you know, more -- money than ever before. So I know I try to stay quiet, you guys.

[ Laughing ]

>> Troxclair: Generally. But I just felt like I had to pipe up and say, I for one

--appreciate a lot of policies the legislature puts in place to make sure that Texas has a great climate for me to live in.

[3:51:34 PM]

>> Garza: I guess I would just add that there are some, definitely, ideological differences. But I think when we present Numbers that our low-income families pay a higher portion of their income because of tax policies set by the legislature, I still think it's worth the effort to try to change those to help our lower-income families, because while there has been a lot of jobs created in Texas, they're low-earning jobs that I would say, in ways, Texas is sort of the Walmart of states in that we don't pay our workers enough, so they have to go and get subsidized homes, and the rest of the federal government sub-sidizes texans to get healthcare. But, anyway, thank you for your presentation. Somebody else?

>> Kitchen: I would just -- oh. I wanted to say thank you for your presentation. And for the rest of the folks on this committee, I plan to bring some of these specifics back, because I think that we can take action on a lot of the things that were recommended.

>> And we'll give you our final report when it's released in April, including our estimates on the campo basis. There's lots more stuff. We'll make sure you get a copy of that.

>> I was just going to say, on some of these issues, there's been a lot of bipartisan efforts at the legislature. The revenue cap, that discussion's been ongoing since the 1990s. And traditionally, there's been a bipartisan group of legislators who have worked together to say, no, we want local control on that. So, it's not always that you see partisan rifts. Sometimes you see bipartisan coalitions around these. Also, I would like to encourage everyone, as far as the flyer, we have on the atx housing, the community conversations, encourage everybody to participate.

[3:53:37 PM]

Thank you.

>> Thank you.

>> Thank you. Our next item is 5, a briefing on the affordability intention index as a tool. I think Elizabeth Miller's going to present on this as well. And I think we have copies presentation. Since we're having technical difficulties.

>> Okay. So I'm changing hats. I'm sitting here now as a UT professor talking about something that I think would be a good project for the region and relates to my own research area. So, what I'm talking about is a little different than what's listed on the agenda. I was -- I thought I was coming to talk about the idea of

--regional equity atlases.

>> Kitchen: I think we just named is the wrong thing, so go right ahead.

>> So. I think this relates a lot to what we were just talking about. Since really a big theme for us in trying to think about how can we work on affordability in many different dimensions is being more conscious of the relationships between different things that we're doing, being conscious of when these are spatial relationships that we need to have in mind, and how do we have better information to guide us on doing that. So that's kind of the idea behind doing equity atlases. They -- you can see my slides here. But the basic idea is they give you a way to see disparities visually, and access to key resources, and how those patterns might affect residents' health and well-being.

[3:55:41 PM]

But they also allow you to see the interaction between some things. So some things, like transportation in particular, can be an important vehicle for providing access to things. It can be a way to lower the cost of commuting to work, combined with a lower house price. It can really help a family's budget, be able to meet other needs in their budget. The idea of this is to use it as a tool to try and both see disparities,

see problems, but also see ways that we can work on solutions in a more coordinated manner. Initially, a lot of these were created. They were like the traditional atlas, where you have the book and look at the map. But, increasingly, they're being created as interactive websites where you have the ability to go to a web page and look at the layers. You pick the layers you want to look at. Your region can say, we're really interested in this thing. We're going to put in some administrative data that we have locally and transportation data, or other things, and we'll connect it to other types of data. And use it for our own purposes. So, I think it can be a great tool for a region to help bring people together to talk about what are the issues we want to work on, bring together different kinds of entities or jurisdictions like you have on this committee that might be facing similar types of problems, and thinking about how you might coordinate what you're doing based on information. It can be a way to provide information that other groups in the community can use to better-analyze what issues are for themselves. Let's see. So just moving on a little bit, I think the purposes are fairly clear. There are four examples from around the country that are pretty well-developed. So, I just put together a little bit of information here on the types of issues they were able to focus on in each region.

[3:57:42 PM]

So, Atlanta's is newer. I found it difficult to access their interactive map, so I don't know how well that works. But a lot of the issues they seem to be looking at are related to jobs, housing balance, and where is it possible to live and have access to jobs, particularly for low-income people. And also, social service issues. What are some issues with getting to different types of social services via different forms of transportation. Denver's is really interesting. And they do have an excellent website. And you can see some of my slides are from that website. It's [denverregionalequityatlas.org](http://denverregionalequityatlas.org). They have a great interactive website. And the motivation for theirs was really that they were expanding their rail transit system and they wanted to think about what benefits there could be to putting the lines in different places. So they've used this as an opportunity to map and think about investments in affordable housing, investments in economic development, other things, and try and align those things more. And they've also identified gaps in what they've put forward, areas where they need to do better. Los Angeles has developed those mostly to focus on the issue of displacement and prevent it and ensure there's ongoing affordability in key areas. And Portland was the first region to do theirs. I have a hard copy of their -- you know, the original equity atlas that they did. But they've done a lot of different things with it. But just one example is, they noticed that many low-income neighborhoods had very limited access to nature in different forms. So they created a local grant program that supported programs that have enabled them to expand access in particular areas. So, for each community, it's really about thinking about what are the issues. First you can use the maps to help you understand what some of these disparities and issues are.

[3:59:45 PM]

But then you can try and use them to think more strategically about the kinds of tools you have and the ways you might invest your public money. So if you look at the Denver -- the first Denver slide, which you can do this at home. It's interactive. You could do it now if you have your laptop with you. What I did on this one is I turned on layers that showed their current and future rail lines. They don't have bus lines as an option on their map. Obviously, we would care a lot about that here. I made -- the circles are one-mile buffers around each rail station. I was showing the percentage of households that are non-car commuters. So you can see how they relate to the rail stations. And if this was in color -- oh. Let's see. Oh. Okay. So the next page actually added a color layer that you can't see here, but you can see when you do this yourself at home. I then added a layer that's about the share of household income spent on

housing and transportation. And you can see, then, that it's mostly central areas that have the lowest share of income being spent on those costs, but not only. There's also a station in Lakewood, one of the suburbs in Denver that seems to do pretty well on that. That's interesting. Have they done economic development or job development near that station in a way that's made it possible for people living there to commute fairly inexpensively? I'm not sure, since I don't know the Denver context that well. But those are the kind of things you could look at, you know. So some of the things that I found in searching for examples of what they had done with it are on the following pages. So there was one where -- you know, they were looking at many -- they offer the choice to low-income families to go to -- if they live near a school that's a low-performing school, that they can go to other schools.

[4:01:48 PM]

So then they wanted to see, well, what kind of access do they have via transit to different-quality public schools? And they found that very few of the new rail stations they were putting in would provide any kind of access. So if they're promoting school choice at the regional scale, they're not really helping the situation. And currently, the top quartile of schools, 15.4% were within a mile of a transit station, which is too far to walk. But, that was an example where they have the school choice initiative. But it may be meaningless if people really have to rely on transit to try and take advantage of this, they can't. They also did a similar also sis looking at high-quality pre-k programs. They're thinking about access to a program that they've created that's supposed to provide a benefit and may not be providing that benefit. The next example I found was about the access of low-skilled workers to jobs via transit. So on this map, the darker areas are areas with a higher percentage of people with a high school diploma or less. And then the dots are colored. In color, you can see where the job centers are. And I've actually done a similar kind of mapping here where I've mapped where the jobs that are lower-paying jobs that low-income people would be more likely to have, where they're located, and tried to see which corridors in our city provide people access to the most job centers that provide the kind of jobs they're likely to be able to get. So, you know, so that's just another example of what you might do with an equity atlas. We do have things that have happened in our region in the past that provide us with some information that we could build on in such an effort. So we have the central Texas sustainability indicators project, which I don't think has put out a report in a while.

[4:03:50 PM]

I have the 2012 report here, which had these great maps. And the maps usually showed which direction we were moved on -- moving on a particular item. But they don't show interaction between things, necessarily. We've had a couple of rounds of opportunity mapping efforts here we created an index on a number of different items and then added it together and kind of graded parts of our region in terms of overall access to opportunity. Those, I think, I find those a little less useful, because they're kind of a black box. It's very hard to unpack them and figure out what we could do to improve areas. There's just too much in each of those indices. And they -- sometimes they have the danger of being used to say, "Bad area, don't do anything there,," you know, rather than helping us see opportunities for action. Children's optimal health has done some useful mapping --related to education. We have unique local data that's been developed that we might draw on in doing such a map here. But I think really the issue -- the starting point would be to think about what are those areas that we're investing in now where we might foster a conversation between different jurisdictions. Think about trying to align goals, or think about relationships between things we're doing. Come up with -- you know, think about what kind of data we have on those issues and come up with metrics that would be useful to look at. Create a kind of online interactive mapping tool that we could use that would

help us both diagnosis our problems, but track our progress towards coming up with solutions to that. And this is an idea that at UT we've kicked around for a long time. We thought we would be the natural place to be the data warehouse, house a lot of this information.

[4:05:50 PM]

We have students that are, you know, wizzes at GIS doing this mapping of various sorts of data. So we could host such a thing and make sure that it's kept up to date. Really, the key thing, these tools are just tools. And for them to be useful, we have to have a meaningful process. We have to have people bought into it. We have to have clear purposes for the information. And, you know, think strategically about what we might do with it. So. That's it in a nutshell.

>> Go ahead.

>> Is that an actual offer from UT?

>> Not for free.

[ Laughing ]

>> What struck me as you were going through this is that the community action network also gathers a lot of different data.

>> Yes. They have their dashboard.

>> Shea: A report that's sort of pass/fail.

>> Right.

>> Shea: An indicator. But, this is really valuable. I mean, I was struck, for instance, by the scatter map on the evictions data.

>> Yeah.

>> Shea: And it really is incredibly important for the community to understand where this stuff is happening, if for no other reason than we can look at our own districts and precincts and see how serious certain problems are. I'd be very interested in it. And I don't know how we proceed, but there would be opportunities for collaboration with other groups as well, like the community advancement network.

>> Yes.

>> Liz, do you have any idea of what the scale of this is? I mean, I get the impression it's not taking eight maps you have right now and overlaying them on each other. I think there's probably a good assimilation of data.

>> Mhmm.

>> Do you have any idea of the scale of this? This would be helpful, because my sense is that there is, for example, that with the core of jobs we have in the core of our city, there's a huge jobs/housing imbalance, meaning the range of jobs in our urban core, we have a lot of people that work in that core that can't live anywhere close.

[4:07:03 PM]

And so then, therefore, we have a transportation problem.

>> Yeah.

>> Mitchell: How hard do you estimate it is to put this together?

>> It really -- you know, it depends a lot on what kind of information we think we need. If we need to get -- you know, there's public data sets we can get fairly easily. But there might be other ones that we have to buy. It's often -- the challenge with things like this is -- well, some of it is just sort of the logistics of doing things like these, different scales, do they match. But some of it is more just being very conscious of what we need it for. Because the temptation with these kind of tools can be to just throw all kinds of

information into it and kind of, you know, it can quickly get a little out of control. I think we need to be clear about what it is we're doing and think about, are there things that we are investing in, and how do we represent those things, what kind of information do we need from the city, or capital metro, or the appraisal district, or what have you that we might want to put in here. You know, we have the, kind of, technical skills at the university to put it all together. It's more coordinating the right information and being clear about the purposes and the kind of interface that would be useful to people. So, I don't -- that's kind of big. Since I'm not the super mapping person, it's hard for me to estimate.

>> Mitchell: \$25,000 or \$250,000?

>> Probably inbetween, but I would hesitate to say where.

>> Mitchell: Right.

>> I'd want somebody with more of a technical person --

>> Mitchell: This might be a good tool for planning for a city to determine, wow, we have low-income jobs here. We need to make sure we're matching housing with that.

>> Yes.

>> Mitchell: Or we have -- different type of things.

>> Yeah. From the mapping that I've done about different corridors and displacement, we do have pretty good access from our central corridors to most of those job centers on our bus system.

[4:09:14 PM]

So that's part of why I think it's so compelling to work on this preservation issue. You know, once we get farther out, we don't have very good access that way.

>> So I can just elaborate on this a little further. I have a group of master's degree students at the school of public affairs working on a full-year research project class. There's about 14 of them, city of Austin challenges, and looking at mobility, workforce, housing, wellness, and some other areas. And in the fall, they did some mapping on bus stops and at census level this spring, they are doing gis mapping of looking at sidewalks in the eastern crescent, we focused now. Bike infrastructure, sidewalks, and also acid mapping in the infrastructure, where do you have the schools, or the airport located. We'll be doing something on April 12th, and that information should be going out tomorrow. But, anyway. So it's time-consuming. I wish we had this tool now. I agree that it's something that we need in this community. Policy link, a 501(c)3, has been promulgating this for a while. And some of these other cities have adopted it. And I'll be happy to share, you know, what we come up with as far as our students. And I know the sustainability indicators is looking at cranking up again. In fact, with a home at the Ibj school. So I think that there's a lot that can be done in this area. I wish we had this tool now.

>> Yeah. I think it would make a lot of sense to coordinate the things that we're already doing.

>> Right.

>> Instead of having lots of different reports.

>> I concur.

>> Yeah.

>> I'd like to add to that. I think this data would be great. And as long as it's the more accurate, more timely it is, and the more recent it is. I could see this being a year old, two years old.

[4:11:16 PM]

And there's so much change going on. So if Round Rock, we have new subdivisions and roads. There will be blockades and things like that. But, one of the things that we see from our area is commuters -- people come down -- they still work in Austin. But they keep moving farther out because that's what they can afford. The cost of housing can be twice as -- their dollar can buy twice the house or whatever.

But as we heard, I don't know who said it earlier, the cost of transportation is, what, 55 cents a mile the IRS says, \$8,000, on 15,000 miles. So, there's a huge cost just in the gas and the wear and tear and all that.

>> Yeah.

>> But the time is also involved. I know we talked about this before. Daycare. If somebody drops their child off in Round Rock and drives down here to get a job and makes \$20 an hour, 40,000 a year, if they're late picking up their child because of an accident or something, boom, they've wiped out a couple hours of work for the day. But, I think something about when I see these real estate ads on Sundays in the paper, they always show neighborhoods in Round Rock, and Williamson county, they say, just minutes from downtown Austin.

[ Laughing ]

>> They show this map. And. Yeah. It says if you come at 3:00 in the morning on Sunday morning or something like that. But I think that's deceptive. People go on the weekends, the traffic's not too bad. They say, this looks pretty good. Most people are getting smarter. There's so many tools that are available. But it's just -- and then, you mentioned mobility. When Round Rock, when we use the word mobility, we use it, but I think you mean, how do you get to that last mile from the bus stop to your office or whatever. Is that what you mean?

>> Yeah, there's kind of that continuum. There's the first mile, the interim, and the last mile. How do you cobble them together. You're talking about the total cost burden. One of the measures we look at is taking all those housing costs, whether it's your mortgage or your rent plus your utilities and your taxes and adding to that your transportation cost, which could be all the cost of owning your vehicle, or it could be your transportation cost of using transit.

[4:13:34 PM]

If you add all that together and it's greater than 40%, then your total cost burden is considered very high.

>> The transit, if you take buses -- I think Ben we're says, riding the bus took him two hours, two changes, all of a sudden you wiped out two hours' worth of your work. When we talk about mobility in the school district, we talk about students leaving from one school, going to another. They leave an elementary school, they might come from Austin. We see -- we're asking our school district to get a better idea, how many students are coming from Austin area, or Del Valley, or Pflugerville, any school district that touches ours. Half of our enrollment growth comes from neighboring districts because people are moving, for whatever reason, jobs, they might save a couple hundred dollars on their apartment in they move a mile away or so. So there's all of this amalgamation of reasons why people move, and why they're there and the cost of it. But it's just amazing that we're all in this together. And I appreciate this group being together, because we're all kind of seeing different sides of this problem. And I appreciate UT being willing to propose an idea. As long as the data's fairly real-time and it's not two or four years old -- sometimes, census data, by the time you start building for that, then everything's already changed. Highways have changed or whatever.

>> Yeah. Census data is a challenge now, because the lower levels of geography -- the sample size is so small, you end up having to average together over several years, so you're not getting as precise an estimate. I'd be happy to, kind of, develop some sort of more concrete proposal. And maybe talk to some of you further before doing that.

[4:15:34 PM]

>> Sure. I was going to say, if this is something that councilmember kitchen says she would like to pursue. So, if you could come up with a package and a suggestion, and maybe a cost, and we'll get with you and put it on a future agenda.

>> Okay.

>> Garza: If there's no other questions, we'll move on to the last item. Thank you for your presentation.

>> Okay, sure.

>> Garza: Both items. The last thing is, we did that strategic plan where Catherine facilitated. She has a draft. I think she's going to pass it out, of our priorities -- the priorities that we came up with. And she's just going to go through a couple questions so we can get clarity, and then we can maybe finalize this at our next meeting. And, of course, if anybody wants to add something that maybe they hadn't thought of until some of the presentations today -- that was part of the reason we didn't want to finalize it. We wanted to see what kind of information we'd get from these, the livable cities, and the other presentation.

>> Does anybody -- have you all this a chance to -- are all of y'all just getting this for the first time?

>> I tried to open the attachments. I couldn't.

>> Okay.

>> [ Off mic ]

>> Why don't you sit at a mic? Either one.

>> Hello? Okay. So, based on the information I gathered with you all last time, this is -- this document has different goals already.

[4:17:45 PM]

So they're all grouped into major topics. So let's go to the first one, strategic and goals number one is housing affordability. That was a big one for you all. And so these have to turn into action items. The highlighted in yellow are not action items yet. For example, number 2. Let's take that one as an example. Support the work of other housing corporation nonprofits and other community efforts. And the action items would be a briefing and then the identification of opportunities. So, in number 1, I know councilmember troxclair, you talked about the tax burden with taxes entities, and councilmember Garza also spoke about it. If we could turn that into an action item, it doesn't have to be right now. If you can provide us some feedback, then we can turn that into what are the next steps to be taken for that. Okay? And then number 2, in red, you'll find things that it either should be support or engage.

>> Garza: Hang on one second.

>> Yeah, sorry.

>> Garza: Go ahead.

>> Troxclair: I guess I just wanted to ask if -- I know sometimes we get confused between affordability -- like, little a or big a, you know, capital, affordable housing with a capital a or not. So when we're talking about our goal one, housing affordability, we're not talking about necessarily sub-dized housing?

>> No. That's a good segue to something that we have to be aware. One is attainability, another is affordability. That's the little and big a. It could happen that we could change some of the language here to clarify those things, or add more language. So goal one, when it talks about housing affordability, I did an introduction. And it talks about the overall household affordability. But, in number one, for example, if we want to pull that item and make it its own goal because you're talking about the big a, then we can do that as well.

[4:20:01 PM]

That's the type of feedback that I wanted to get from you guys.



>> Troxclair: Great. Thanks.

>> Okay.

>> Garza: Yeah. I think the general is attainability. It's not necessarily subsidized housing, it's just affordable housing.

>> I'll change that language to reflect that.

>> Troxclair: Or cost of living, maybe. Housing and something.

>> Yeah. When you say affordable housing, you think subsidized. Housing affordability means, you know, across the whole spectrum of residents being able to obtain housing.

>> So I'm going to clarify a bit in the paragraph that introduces that topic.

>> Okay.

>> Okay? Okay. Number 2 in red -- this is just an example. In red you'll find some of the items I laid out in red to see if you guys are okay with how it's worded. So, for example, number 2, I put support, but it could be engage. So if y'all feel strong about either or, please feel free to give me some feedback on that end okay? And again, this can be right now or you can email me and we can put this together, okay? Any questions? So, as we move along, there is number 3, encourage the creation of permanent affordability in diverse parts of the city. You guys had asked about briefings about land trusts, and what previous bonds have done, some studies, and the creation of several tools. And I think the presentations y'all had today of professor Mueller and professor Odon are great feedback as well, so we can add some of that into this as well. And number 4 and 5 is the same thing, it's the strategic housing plan that's taking place right now. And the use of public land. Number 6 is the eviction be -- notices.

[4:22:56 PM]

I know commissioner Shea mentioned that last time. We saw a briefing, so I made some notes based on the information we gathered today, so I'll update that.

>> We didn't really stipulate it, but if we could provide a little bit more structure for the followup, I think Robert Doggett offered to help convene stakeholder groups to prioritize recommendations and bring it back to us. Do we need to identify staff, or do we need to take more concrete actions?

>> The action items that you took today, based on the information I gathered, is that you wanted to look at a consistent process that would apply relocation throughout. And then you guys asked for a briefing on the list of items that can be looked at to help avoid some of the impact, not necessarily tied to a budget. That's what I heard today.

>> Shea: Lessen the impact that a way that's not a big cost burden on the jurisdictions.

>> Exactly. And you talked about the mobile -- he talked about the mobile home parks in the city and how they're being affected. So a briefing about that, as well.

>> Shea: So far we're just asking him or some of things colleagues to come back. I'm just wondering if we need to identify any staff to work on it.

>> If you want to we can do that as well.

>> Garza: You mean city staff, or what --

>> Shea: At the county level, he specifically talked about examining whether or not it would be possible to expunge, eviction filings or petitions against people where it was determined that they -- an eviction wasn't warranted. I'll pursue that with the county attorney, or the legal folks on my end at the county level. But a number of these, I think, are city-oriented. So I'm happy to reach out to the county staff. I just don't know if it would be more beneficial for us to identify any city staff to let them know about what we're working on, connect them up with him.

[4:24:08 PM]

>> Garza: Because this body doesn't really -- I mean, we can give, like, advisory action ideas. I was thinking more that he would present -- I think Sheri spelled it out, what can you do local, what can you do at the state, what can you do at the county. And then he could present those options. And then the action item could be that one of us chooses to pursue that. So you choose to pursue -- and then you can work with your staff. And if I choose to pursue, I think the tenant relocation ordinance, I can work with my staff, is what I was thinking.

>> Shea: Okay.

>> I had a suggestion for the -- because we were talking about how housing affordability can be confusing, maybe take out the subsidized housing ones and put them in a different role.

>> Okay. Actually be two, three, four. I think those would be in a different . . .

>> Okay. I'll do a goal one and goal two, and we'll split those. Okay. And then number 7 is -- this was councilmember kitchen. But it was work with school districts and the city of Austin to determine what mechanism exists to transfer some functions or activities to the city of Austin as long as those functions or activities serve the city. This is a resolution. And she's going to give me more wording on that. There's a resolution where they're trying to do a tax walk.

>> Yeah.

>> And so she's going to -- she took over ownership, so I'll get more feedback from her on this one.

>> Okay.

>> It's my understanding on that one, the city council adopted that. I can't remember the timeline in which the city manager is supposed to report back to you all. I want to say officially it's my understanding that there's some disagreement between your city attorney and the mayor's office and some of the councilmembers that seems to be holding some stuff up.

[4:27:17 PM]

I said I would be the messenger from the school district to encourage that whatever those issues are, that we figure out what they are. Certainly, the board members are more than willing to help address the issues, but I understand there's pushback with the city attorney on that.

>> On this one, I put as an action item a briefing after they come back with that. Is that something y'all would like to do? Because it is a resolution from council. And so council will get briefed on it. I'm not sure -- I'll check the date, but if y'all want to get a briefing --

>> Garza: Did we do a resolution? I thought we talked about that in work session, and then it was some weird direction.

>> No. You guys did a council resolution.

>> We did. A couple of days.

>> The only thing that I would want to stress on behalf of aid is the fact that we moved our budget adoption process to June 20th. That's when we adopt our budget. And so if there's going to be anything where we're going to be able to facilitate a formal conversation about a tax swap, our, unfortunately, timeline is that we're adopting our budget June 20th. And so if that's not going to happen, then we want to pursue conversations like we've done last year about our parent support specialists and all those other positions and how we can -- and the same goes for the county, too. Because the county has been supportive of that, also. And judge eckhart last year was very supportive. But at the same time, felt there was a cleaner way for us to do that. So that's just -- I wanted to say that.

>> Okay. And then the other big one is transportation. And we heard a lot about it today as well. And so the first one was work with different entities to identify key actions from the cost of transportation. And so you all talked about car traffic and how to use technology.

[4:30:17 PM]

Number 1 and 2 are similar because they do reduce the cost of transportation, but at the same time, I separated them and y'all can give me more feedback if you want to put them together again.

>> Garza: I wonder if that's where we could add the tool that she was talking about.

>> Okay.

>> The equity tool, certainly we can look at it in the gis mapping that my students have been doing, has looked at transportation. But other areas, too. So you could look at where your workforce centers for workforce training are located. It can cut across anything we want. It's just having the human power to get it done.

>> Garza: Actually, you have that under other efforts.

>> Mmhmm.

>> Garza: That's fine, I think.

>> Okay. And then -- yeah. If we move along, there's the -- also, you all talked about the housing and transit and jobs action team plan. And so if y'all want to get a briefing about that, that kind of has to do with the tool that professor Mueller talked about, as well. There was a working group that was put together and did a briefing on that, so we did get a memo, and we can get some staff to update you all. And then goal 3, 4, and 5 -- 3 and 4 were talked about briefly last time. If you all want to expand on it, it's fine. Please note that at the beginning, in the introduction, I talk about this being a two-year road map. And y'all have a lot. But if you do want to add more on it, it'll overlap just for the second year. So don't feel shy on doing that. So you can add more.

>> Garza: The 3, 4, and 5 are highlighted because you need action items?

>> Yes, I do.

[4:33:18 PM]

>> Garza: Okay.

>> Those we talked briefly, but they didn't really have an action item tied to it. And on the other efforts, I mentioned, some of these can fall into any of the categories. They can fall into transportation, affordability, housing. And so if we want to leave it at just other efforts, because codenext is huge. And then the smart growth matrix and the equity atlas is also big, so they can just be separate efforts, okay? That's it. Y'all can just email me, and we'll get this done for next time.

>> Okay.

>> Any questions?

>> What do you want from us, just to give you our comments? You're looking for -- these are recommendations on priorities, or say again?

>> Garza: The yellow highlights, we need action items. So any ideas that -- of something we could do to achieve or talk about, or address.

>> These last three goals, 3, 4, and 5.

>> Garza: Yes. And any other place where you think we're missing something that, you know, you thought of in the meantime since we had this discussion, or -- feedback on any parts of it, but mainly just the action items for the yellow highlights is what --

>> All of the yellow highlights?

>> Yes.

>> Even goal one?

>> Yes.

>> Tax burden, taxes entities, whatever feedback we have, essentially.

>> Yes.

>> Send it to you?

>> It would be Katherine.  
>> I get emails from Katie. Who's Katie.  
>> Right there.  
>> Can I send it to her?  
>> I'll give you my card. Let me do that.  
[ Laughing ]  
>> And I want to keep it as short as possible, but also precise. You guys have a lot. This is a whole lot. But just provide me the information, I'll be happy to add it. Any other questions?  
>> I would also say, any of the recommendations that came from the affordability report that Louisville city presented -- we don't really have, probably the time to go through them now, but I would like for us to look for opportunities to incorporate that.

[4:36:36 PM]

Plan for this year?  
>> Two years.  
>> I'd like to incorporate recommendations.  
>> I noted that already.  
>> In the yellow? I don't see where it's noted.  
>> Since she presented today, I just wrote notes.  
>> Shea: You've written it in there. Great. Thank you.  
>> Garza: We do need to intertwine the two, but there's a lot in here already that they addressed.  
>> Shea: Yeah, there's a lot of overlap.  
>> There is a lot of overlap.  
>> Garza: Did you have anything else? The  
>> I was just going to say that we should also look at overlap, not wanting to recreate the wheel with any other strategic plans that the other entities have, whether it's central health or other research we know out there now or forthcoming that we can use and not have to redo efforts.  
>> And then just on the eviction items, do we need to make note as part of the straight quick strategic plan that we'll follow up with jurisdiction actions?  
>> Yes.  
>> Okay.  
>> I'll note those.  
>> All right. And the last item is discussion of future agenda items. We're going to have hopefully a final draft of the strategic plan once she -- or we provide any feedback to her. Does anybody else have any?  
>> It occurs to me that it might be good given the housing -- the first housing plan that is being worked on with these community conversations that it might be good to have an update on that.  
>> It's already in your strategic plan. It was noted last meeting under . . .  
>> No, she means the next agenda.  
>> Oh.  
>> We're talking about the future agenda.  
>> It's ongoing, just starting those meetings.

[4:39:40 PM]

>> Troxclair: On the strategic plan, I guess I could send it to them. But, has bill seen this? Since he was the one that first brought the strategic plan plan idea to our attention, I'd be interested in his thoughts or feedback.

>> I haven't shared. You guys are the first.  
>> Troxclair: Do you mind sending it to him?  
>> Sure.  
>> Troxclair: Thanks.  
>> Since we talked about the tax swap, can we have that on our agenda for may?  
>> Sure. Yes.  
>> Because I think --  
>> Or we can have an update.  
>> The council is supposed to get an update from the city manager in April. Maybe by the time --  
>> Yeah.  
>> Great, thank you.  
>> Garza: Go ahead.  
>> Can we also get an update on the appraisal challenge? I think that would be really useful for the committee.  
>> Didn't we ask for that last time? Are you talking about the Austin?  
>> Yeah.  
>> That might require executive session. I'm not sure -- we can ask if this body can have an executive session, but --  
>> You are allowed to.  
>> Garza: Yeah, but it's between the city attorneys and city council usually, not other entities. It wouldn't be --  
>> If it's nonexecutive session, factual updates, where it stands.  
>> Garza: Okay. Sure. We'll look into getting a presentation. If there's no other comments or concerns, we are adjourned at 4:42. Thank y'all for coming.  
>> Thank you.  
>> Did you all get copies of the material they presented? If you could send us -- in particularly, I'm interested in the atlas. I'm going to forward it to those folks. Thank you.