

Judicial Committee Meeting Transcript – 02/26/2018

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>> Flannigan: Morning, everybody. Let's call this committee meeting to order. It is 9:32 A.M. We're in the boards and commissions room. We can go ahead and start. Do we have any citizens communication? Any people signed up for citizens communication? Is Mr.-- I guess Mr. Pena is not -- I don't see him. Is he in the hall? That's all right. He signed up for items too so we can -- >> [Inaudible] >> Flannigan: Why don't you give your name to the clerk and we can have you come up and speak. Yes, yes, yes, come on up. Come on up. And press the button. There you go. >> Is it -- >> Good morning, council members. My name is pa trisho [inaudible] I'm a criminal defense attorney and I just found out on Saturday that judge Eric Cary's job was up for review and that the Austin criminal defense lawyers association was recommending against reappointing judge Cary. And I became concerned because as a criminal defense law attorney I've dealt with him in the past. He has the graveyard shift at the booking in Travis county. He -- he's in charge of determining whether a person can get out on a personal bond or not. And other magistrate functions, but that's -- that's mostly what I deal with, and that's how I have -- I know him. I'm also concerned about the fact that the committee maybe does not have input from the district judges and the county judges, which have concurrent jurisdiction with the municipal court over -- over personal bonds, and I think it would be wise to ask them whether they

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have any input or whether they've known him to improperly grant bonds. Judge Cary is very fair, I think releasing someone from jail on a personal bond is a big deal, and as a citizen of Austin I feel that he's the perfect man to make the call of who can go home or who can simply wait for a district judge or a county judge on the -- on the next morning. Over the weekend I -- I asked for support from fellow attorneys. I don't have a lot of their cell phone numbers, but considering it was such short notice, I have letters of support from Raul Garcia, from Steve Turro, from vasegi, from Jason Jarvis and from Daniel Garcia, and a few other attorneys also offered me their support but could not send me a letter. So I want you to consider recommending judge Cary for reappointment and also if you have any questions for me I'll

gladly answer them. >> Flannigan: Thank you, Mr. Garza. >> Thank you. >> Flannigan: I think that's all we have signed up. I don't see Mr. Pena right now. Let's go to item no. 1, approving the draft minutes. Do I have a motion for the draft minutes? City council member Casar? Council member pool seconds. All in favor, raise your hand. Approved unanimously. Item 3, discussion of possible action on candidates for municipal judge appointment. I want to start just by saying what a really thorough process this has been. I want to thank judge statman for her role in convening our panel for the clerk Mary Jane grub and her efforts putting together the data and the needs of the court, and really, the speed in which that we put this together. You know, you have -- by the charter requirement to make this process complete by the

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end of March, and I'm excited that we're going to get there. It was not something that we thought we were going to get to when we started this process last October, and I want to thank my committee members for your hard work in getting this process put together as well. The panel that we convened represented a wide swath of the legal community, criminal defense attorneys, indigent defendants, minority bar associations, researchers, prosecutors, and that's on top of all of the other survey data and other input that we got from across the region -- from across the community. So I'm excited to have this process move forward. I think there will be more comment after -- if this recommendation passes. Would one of my colleagues like to make a motion? All right, council member Casar moves. Would you - - would you like me to read out the names in the -- >> [Inaudible] >> Flannigan: You have a second? Delia -- council member Garza seconds. So the names on our proposal for presiding judge, Sherri statman, downtown Austin community court judge Michael coffee, our full-time associate judges, Barbara Garcia, Alfred Jenkins, Mitchell Solomon, George Thomas, Steven Vigorito. For central booking facility overnight judge Patrick Mcnelis. For substitute judges Fernandez occur aye, Belinda Herrera, Teresa jefers, Stanley Kerr, Ronald Meyerson, Evelyn Mckee, Ryan Ellis turner, Kenneth Vitucci and John Yeager. >> Pool: Is that a full list that fills all of the positions or do we have a couple of additional openings now to fill at a subsequent time? >> Flannigan: We'll discuss this under item 4, but there will be four vacant substitute judge positions based on this slate of recommended judges. And we'll discuss what those -- what that process

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looks like under item 4. Any other comments? Council member Garza? >> Garza: You know, this -- I just want to talk about the lens I had coming into this and the one that I will have, because there will be some vacant positions, in considering other judges. These positions are extremely powerful positions, and they're not elected. And so it's really hard for the public to hold, if there is something that isn't going -- isn't fair, it's hard for them to be held accountable. If there is something going on that's -- that seems to be something that we don't want to see in our judges. You know, and the decisions that these people make, they affect people's lives. They affect significantly, and you know, as someone that represents one of our lower and highly hispanic districts, many of the people that I represent are

affected by what happens in this court. How -- and you know, in the position that judges are in, they're given such wide discretion, so there's very little, you know -- I don't want to see consequences, but there's very little room for criticism or changing in outcome because of the high degree of discretion that they're given. And so, you know, my office is the one that drafted the indigent defendants resolution, out of extreme concern of our -- of our prison becoming a debtors prison. The decisions made there, you know, as I said, affect people's lives. The way that bond is set could put -- could put families into debt. You know, when you're facing a decision of I can go try to borrow \$1,200 from my family or I can sit in jail for five days. Some families are going to go into debt, you know, to make a decision like that. Hearing scenarios of the level of professionalism in

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some of these courts greatly disappointed me. Hearing, you know -- as an attorney, I know when I was practicing in front of associate judges, when you saw where the docket was that morning, it would -- it would change your strategy almost. It would -- you know, if you knew you were in one person's courtroom, you knew you would maybe have to tell your client don't say this, because this makes the judge mad or don't do this, and that's not how it should be. You know, it should be based on professionalism and fairness and compassion, and so I -- going forward, and I know you said this is a future item, but since I'm making my comments now, I really hope whoever applies for these vacancies, it's not just a job. It's -- it's because you care about people, it's because you care about justice, it's because you care about outcomes. These are very powerful positions, and I hope going forward we hear levels of professionalism and fairness in our courtrooms, and if not, this is -- this is the only setting that we really have to change, to change our municipal judges. >> Flannigan: Council member Casar? >> Casar: I'd like to take this moment to standing the -- thank the staff, my colleagues that worked on this and the panel. I think what we heard back from the panel was largely recommendations in every direction. We have some really -- had unanimous recommendations from prosecutors and defense attorneys that we couldn't get to agree on hardly anything else about folks that they thought were excellent judges, and then people who they thought had done, you know, good work over some time, but that if we really want to have the best municipal court judges possible that it was important for us to create new opportunity. And so I thought that it was really -- the process really played out in a way that was surprising to me. I thought that we were going to have mixed

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recommendations, but the panel's ability to dedicate the time and really come up with unanimous recommendations pretty much across the board, working alongside our city staff, I think it was really important and helped -- helped us get to this place, and I -- you know, fully stand behind the work that the chair has put together and is that the committee has done as we send this recommendation along to the council. I also -- council member Garza's comments, but probably couldn't put it in better terms than those, but just wanted to thank the -- thank everybody that put so much time into the process. >>

Mayor Adler: Council member pool? >> Pool: Yeah, I just wanted to add my voice to my colleagues. It was a really strong process, and in working with the presiding judge I think we're all hopeful that the process that was crafted based on how it was done in the past can continue to go forward and really set the standard for how best to get in good recommendations and also to do solid objective assessments of the people that we invest the power and the responsibility in for our municipal judges. It is the first -- I think it's the lowest level of the court system in the cities, and it's really important that we have good, strong, fair judges in place, and I'm very impressed with the level of talent that we have going forward with our judges, and I look forward -- we have one new name on this list, and I hope that now that we have an ability to fill some additional slots and have a second round of interviews and assessments, that we can bring to our communities notice that these positions are available and open, so that we can attract the best and the brightest. Thanks. >> Flannigan: All right. All those in favor, raise your hand. It passes unanimously. Thank you all so much for all of your work and the panel's work and the staff's work to put this slate of recommendations together. Item no. 4, future items. So this list of recommendations will be on the March 8 city council

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meeting for final approval. Upon approval there will be four vacancies, just substitute judge vacancies, so unless there's an objection from any of the community members, we'll have human resources post that job tomorrow, and we'll start accepting applications just for those four substitute judge positions. At that point we will repeat our judicial review process. We will go through the same steps that we did the first time around. Hopefully we will then be prepared to make a second set of recommendations at our judicial committee meeting on April 19, and then those recommendations will be on the city council agenda on April 26, and that's how we'll move forward to finish the bench. All right? Council member Casar. >> Casar: And I think for confidentiality, for the public's sake, we tried our best to get as many bright and folks from diversity and background, first time around. I'm glad we've added one person from that process, but I think once and if we approve this -- the recommendation for the last item, that it will be more clear that there's openings and, you know, we then can more broadly encourage folks from all sorts of walks of life that are interested in this to apply, and I look forward to -- if our recommendation passes council to be able to look at that -- that pool of talent. >> Flannigan: I'm glad you brought that up. The first draft of our process was to identify the number of vacancies before we asked for applications, but because of the compressed timeline that the charter put us in, we didn't have an opportunity to do those separately. So we will get there, I think, as group. Is that it? Anybody else? Is that it? All right. I guess we are closing the meeting of the judicial committee. Thank you all so much.

[12:59:47 PM]

>> Good evening and welcome to the 2018 state of the city address. Introducing the mayor, please give a warm welcome to council general Carlos Gonzales Gutierrez of Mexico. [Applause] >> Good evening, everyone. I am profoundly grateful for the invitation to introduce mayor Steve Adler. I am honored, as I

consider Steve a personal friend, just as I am, a popular mayor who serves everybody, including, of course, the Mexican and Latino communities in the city. I have been the counsell of Mexico since may of 2016. Constant times I have called mayor Adler for help, advice and support. He's always responded promptly. I've had plenty of opportunities to watch him in action from attending the community workshops after immigration authorities detained 52 Mexicans in a single weekend, to helping the hundreds of immigrants, who came to Austin in search of shelter after Harvey. From receiving the Mexican governors and mayors who often come to learn more about Austin's best practices in governance to leading a litigation of Texas entrepreneurs to different cities in Mexico. From supporting our efforts to organize casa Mexico during south by southwest to facilitating the move from our old location in downtown, to our new premises in east Austin. Mayor Steve Adler, has always been there for us. There is one particular instance that I would like to share with

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you, in which I had the privilege of being side by side with mayor Adler. In November of 2016, mayor Adler visited Mexico City. He was perhaps one of the first if not the very first U.S. Mayor visiting Mexico City after the last federal elections. I think it is fair to say that in November of 2016, Mexicans were anxious, let alone surprised by the results of the U.S. Federal election. Do not blame us, please. [Laughter] >> In that context, your mayor's visit to Mexico, received great media coverage. Everybody wanted to talk to him. And everybody asked him the same question, all related to the campaign promises of the president elect. How is Mexico supposed to pay for the wall? What about the immediate deportation of 6 million Mexicans. When are the United States going to leave fast that? I saw your mayor respond to each and every question with a calming voice that characterizes him, the voice of someone who knows how to reduce uncertainty in the midst of a crisis. He did not avoid any reporter nor did he take the easy way out of claiming those questions went beyond his jurisdiction. He responded firmly and clearly, and in multiple occasions, I heard him conclude his remarks with a phrase that stayed with me for good. He said, and I quote, Austin has

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always been an open, plural and inclusive city for newcomers. It has been like that in the past. It is currently that way, and it will be the same in the future. There is absolutely no reason to believe that Austin will be less welcoming to immigrants in the years to come, end of quote. Mayor Adler's standing on immigration policies on defending the rights of minorities, along with his vision for economic development, and year-round planning, have undoubtedly contributed to make Austin one of the best cities to live in the United States. He is a true example of leadership, intelligence and humanity. Now, ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to introduce the 52nd mayor of Austin, Steve Adler. [Applause] >> Mayor Adler: I like the music. So, mayor pro, my colleagues on the council, manager, secretary of state, council general Adrian Ferrell, commissioner Trevillion before I begin what I want to say, I want to thank consul general Carlos Gonzales Gutierrez of Mexico for

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introducing me this evening. You know, people don't realize, I think, how closely we work together these days. It hasn't always been so. It used to be that we got together just on fun occasions, like the opening of casa Mexico at south by southwest. But times have changed, and so has our relationship. I want to tell you something that probably a lot of people don't know. When the immigration raids began, early last year, and Austin was made a particular target, we had no reliable access to information about what was going on, except what we got from our friend, the consul general. At that moment we found ourselves in common cause in service of this city, and all of its people. That bond was strengthened when hurricane Harvey looked like it was headed right at us and his government immediately offered shelter to any Texan that needed it. You and your wife were in our local shelters, tending to all of our guests and, again and again, you demonstrate that you care about people, all people, yours, mine, and ours. Consul general Gutierrez, you are have the biggest challenge facing our two counsel tris. Tonight I pledge not only continued brotherhood and friendship but continued vigilance on our efforts on immigration. We want our neighbors to be safe in Austin, regardless who they are and where they came from and

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we know preserving trust in our community, helps make us the safest big city in the state. We will not use fear to divide our community and consul general, you can count on Austin, Texas. [Applause] So, let's go ahead and begin. You know, now more than ever, I really relish the opportunity for us to be able to take stock of a year's progress, and to measure ourselves against the needs of the future. In these turbulent times we must deliberately and seriously speak and act in ways that are true to who we are. Our city continues to face formidable challenges, and be cannot pretend that we do not see them. We need to act and to plan for what the future is bringing us. So, the question I think you should be asking is whether or not your council has the will to seize the moment and to act on the scale of our challenges. And the answer to that question, when you look back a year, and you look ahead of a year, is, yes. Ten years from now, 20 years from now, a new generation of austinites are going to be asking us what we did at this great time of risk to preserve and protect the magic that is Austin. This is our moment. And we must act with our eyes clearly focused on the future. You know, last year, when we gathered for this same purpose in this room, I said that if the world completely lost its mind, we would continue to be Austin,

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Texas. I did not mean that as a challenge at the time. [Laughter] >> Mayor Adler: The world has certainly kept up its end of the bargain. You know, it seems that our country is losing its way around the world. Here in Austin, though, we know who we are. And if we made -- if we remain true to ourselves, we will always find the solid ground on which to build our future. Tonight we know the state of our city is stronger than ever. And this past year, we repeatedly reaffirmed who we are, in fact, we shouted it to the whole world that we are Austin, Texas. The Austin metropolitan area added 30,000 jobs this past year. We've got the lowest unemployment rate in two decades and in fact, we have the second lowest unemployment rate in the country. We're still the safest big city in Texas. We lead the state in start-ups and venture capital, and in patents. We are the best place to start a small business in the country. We're the best place to live in America. You know, but in Austin, Texas, we should never measure our progress by how we are doing compared to other states. We can only say that the state of our city is strong if we are affirmatively building a future in which to preserve the spirit and soul of this city. In this last year, your city council and city staff have laid an important foundation for the future in many ways. Chief among them are traffic, affordability, on racial and economic equality, on

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homelessness, and on climate change. And this coming year, we are poised to build further on that foundation in even bigger and more transformative ways. So, let me start with one of the top challenges in Austin. So that's traffic. So, thanks to your council, our staff and the 2016 mobility bond that you passed, we're doing more actual work than ever before. We've made our four top crash intersections safer, reducing collisions by as much as 67 percent. We started working on the next two. Even though there is much to do citywide traffic deaths are at a three-year low. By the end of 2020, we're scheduled to build 30 new miles of sidewalks to make your neighborhood safer, and for safer routes to school for your children. The city is joining with the state on loop 360, 2222, 620, and with council member Flannigan's leadership, we're putting \$120 million bond and txdot is matching that with \$230 additional million. And with a few more years you'll be able to drive down loop 360 and never stop at a traffic light. We're executing the 2016 mobility bond on the most traffic corridors, north and south of Lamar road. Guadalupe. Riverside, and it's propose that all of the corridors get major work, we're talking 50 new turn lanes at 30 intersections, 120 smart signals that time themselves automatically. 30 miles of repaved streets. We're talking about safety

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improvements that include upgrades at 13 of our next most crash prone intersections, 40 new mid block pedestrian crosswalk signals. We're talking about 75 miles of connected sidewalks and paths and 40 miles of bike lanes along the corridors and 100 miles of bicycle route connections. And you know what that all means? The engineers tell us that all of this work will reduce traffic delays by 25 percent on the corridors that we mentioned. This is the work that you were expecting us to do and these are the results that you were expecting us to get. But even with executing the bond on time and on budget, our work is

just beginning. We must continue planning for the future. This spring, our city staff will propose our city's first comprehensive locally focused strategic mobility plan. This is the plan that will set out a long-term mobility vision, and one that -- one that coordinates our city's long-term planning with capital metro, the regional mobility authority, the metropolitan planning organization or campo, and what we will see, are three data-driven mobility scenarios that show a new way of thinking about mobility, one focused on travel time and reliability, and access to opportunity. Another on affordability, and another on forecasted growth. With rigorous public engagement process beginning this year, Austin will adopt a north star for future mobility investments. Capital metro, is going to bring forward this year a mass transit vision for the entire region. That losing urban rail proposition of 2014 presented to us to consider a small segment

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of an entire system. This year, with varying modes, we're going to get to see the entire system. There might be nothing more important to the future of this city than these new visions for better transportation future, for our city and our region, and we look to council member kitchen and council mobility committee to begin the process to secure that future and we count on the leadership of council members Garza and Renteria and kitchen who sit on the capital metro board and council members alter and Flannigan, kitchen who served with me on campo, where I was just elected vice chair. We also have to work on affordability. Our work on affordability is never going to be finished so long as our economy continues to grow. And we've taken real steps to help ensure that the people who work at our city can afford to be able to live in our city, too. So, the first thing when you think about affordability, people think about housing and that's where we're making some important progress. You know, for the majority of us in this town that don't own homes, rents are finally leveling off. Supply is increased, and now we're finding a greater balance between supply and demand. Rents were flat last year and they are anticipated to be flat again this year and while it is not the only factor, housing supplies impact on housing cost, is real. The council's also increasing the supply of subsidized affordable housing and since this council took office in 2015, we have increased spending from the affordable housing

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trust fund by 530 percent. From the time we took office until now, this city has incentivized or co-invested in the construction of more than 2,000 completed income-restricted affordable units and more than 6300 are in progress. Important leadership has come from council members Casar and Renteria and others of us on the council. More homeowners we're making important progress on permitting reform to make it cheaper and easier to add a bathroom to your house. The expedited permitting process that this council approved last year is producing big result this year with a tenfold increase in expedited permits and nearly all of the projects that have gone through the expedited permitting process get their permits within one day of going through the review meeting. We're refunding

explicable jumps in water bills and making sure that does not happen again. For seniors and disabled, we've increased your property tax exemption for the third year in a row and we lowered Austin energy electric rates, but we're not done yet. We need to give the seniors and the disabled another property tax exemption break for a fourth year and this year I hope to join my colleagues on the council to be able to lower water rates for everybody. The affordability crisis is hitting our musicians and artists particularly hard. And this is not new but what is new is how this council is moving forward to help, working with artists in the music and arts commission to implement the music and creative ecosystem only bus resolutions. We are moving forward with professional development and on

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revenue opportunities, with a bus king pilot. Facebook live series, live music venue guide. And last week we passed council member kitchen's ordinance focused on creating facing for creative communities. The new chapter 380 incentive program that is now being developed and will soon be presented to council will propose a focus on encouraging new creative spaces. I want to call out the leadership of Gary Keller who is helping to take care of musicians and music venues. Because he is an important example of how our city benefits from the extraordinary and silent work of many of our citizens. You know, there's one music arts initiative I think that deserves some really special mention. We've seen really promising results for the successful trial of the later live music hours on red river. After 20 years of -- if you're honest, it's warfare between music venues and neighborhoods. We now find them working together to ensure both the vitality of the live music scene, and the peacefulness of our neighborhoods. And that's not an isolated example. Within two months, artists and venue owner, residential property owners will be bringing to the council an agent of change proposal, with consensus rules, governing how new sound, operates in old neighborhoods, and how new neighbors live when they move in next to already established venues. And this is an example, and perhaps the best example, of how Austin needs to move past the

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old paradigms are who's fighting who in our city and into a future where we value collaboration, listening to and respecting, one another. We need to find the truths in each other's realities. That is the only way that we will preserve the best of our city. To help the working poor get out of poverty, we have to be able to train people to take better jobs. And that's why I hope our council will adopt this year the master community workforce plan, and I am proud to have joined with county judge Sarah Eckhart, who I saw walk in. There you are, thank you. We asked our workforce development community to bring to us the first ever regional workforce development plan and they did. And I think it's been adopted now by the county and by the community college. Working together, are chambers of commerce, businesses, workforce, agencies, local college, community college, have presented us with a plan to move 10,000 people, economically disadvantaged local residents into middle skill jobs by the year 2021. You know, we have as many good jobs here as we have good people. But they don't match up. And we need to help

people that live here now to get the training to fill those jobs and we are going to get this done. This year, your council is going to reform how it does economic incentives. This is part of creating a more affordable Austin for the folks that live here. We're going to focus this tool to more specifically achieve the benefits our community most

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values and most wants, and I think we need to thank council member Casar for his leadership and passing the recent ordinance on earned sick leave because even as it was primarily about keeping the community safe and healthy, it is an important piece of helping to make sure that people that work in Austin can afford to live here. Now, I joined many, if not nearly all of my colleague, and I think we may be taking action in just a week or two to ensure that the city adopts for itself, the same regulations that were in the ordinance on sick leave that we just passed for the community. But, you know, any truly honest conversation about affordability, must also address the rapid rise of property taxes. We all know that property taxes are going up way too fast. They are going up way too much. In fact, for the median priced home in Austin, in the aid area, all property taxes in the last five years have gone up \$1408. That's \$1,408 over the last five years. And that's a lot of money. But here's my question for you. Did you know that over \$1,000 of that, \$1,02 of that, did not come from any increases in the city taxes, any increases in the county taxes, any increases in hospital taxes or taxes that were used to fund aid schools or all of those taxes put together. 1,023 of that increase, comes

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from the state. So, that brings me to something that, for my money, I have always thought was missing in state of the city addresses. Charts. So -- [laughter] -- It's actually a bar graph. This is the number I was just talking about. I want to stop on this for a second so people see this. Taxes have gone up just over \$1400 in the last five years. Of that \$1400 increase, only \$209 of it comes from the city of Austin. Only \$242 of it comes from all of the other taxes, the county and the hospitals and the others. The amount of money that aid spends to educate children in the Austin area has actually gone down over the last five year from median price homes. \$1,024 of the property tax increase that you feel is the aid recaptured tax. It's the amount of money that aid collects that goes to the state that doesn't come back. I'm going to show you these numbers a different way, just because I'm up here and already have bar graphs. I'm up here channeling Ross Perot, but I was told I couldn't say that. [Laughter] >> I'm going to show you these numbers a second way because I want you to see what this is. Over the last five year, this is this year, last year, and the year before and the year before, the average property tax for the median home has gone up from 4653 to 6061, which is a total

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of \$1,408 over that five year period of time. The city of Austin tax has gone up from 1,041 to 1,250. It's gone up. That much, relative to the -- all of the other taxes: County, hospital, which has gone up from \$1,225 to \$1,467. School taxes, have actually gone down from \$2,032 to \$1,965 but look at this number over the last five years, when you're feeling property taxes are going up. The recapture that the state collects, the state property tax, was at \$355 in the year 2014. And this year, it is \$1,078. The state property tax in the last five years has gone up 288 percent. When people talk about property taxes going up, they are not talking about the city, or the county, or the amount that the aid spends to educate our kids. It is the state property tax. If the state property tax was not going up like this, we would not be talking in this community about the rise of property taxes. It's important to realize that the state of Texas this year will take more of your local property tax dollars than the

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city of Austin gets. When people are saying property taxes are going up too much, they are talking about the state property tax. And it is hard to believe that the governor is even talking about trying to limit city and county and school district taxes, and limiting it to 2.5 percent increase per year subject to a popular vote, when the state property tax has gone up 288 percent in five years. It is high time that the state legislature finally does something about increases in property taxes and if they are really going to do something, then our state leaders cannot divert us away from the real problem. It is the state property tax. To fix its runaway tax, the state must fix an appropriately fund school finance system. Nothing else will give us property tax relief in Austin. You know, one of the most important aspects of this council's work on affordability is redirecting resources and effort to where they can do the most good and this focus requires us to address racial and economic inequities. The long economic boom we're enjoying here is not color-blind. Even after years of robust high job growth, unemployment and black and hispanic households is way too high. Did you know that in Austin, life expectancy is ten years greater on the west side of this city than it is on the east side of this city? That's ten additional years to love your family. That is ten more years to achieve so that you can leave something behind. That inequity is something that

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we inherited but not something that we have to pass on to our children. The spirit of east Austin framework that was initiated three years ago by council members Houston and Pool and Renteria and Troclair and me, is about to bring in a council the fruits of the most extensive public engagement process that I have ever seen and it's been a long time in coming and under the umbrella of that framework, we initiated the mayor's task force on institutional racism and that task force has provided racial equity training for 210 corporate and non-property and government and education and grass roots leaders with another 160 to be trained later this week. 70 whom are going to be trained entirely in

Spanish. I hope thousands of people in our community have the opportunity to undergo that training, and it is a testament to her commitment to this work that council member alter opened up her office budget to help fund other council member staffs to be able to attend the training this week. And thank you for that. That task force work is also seeing real tangible results. Out of 247 unique recommendations that that task force on INGs institutional racism gave us, 60 of them have already been implemented, and an additional 96 actions are either under way, or are planned. Our city is finally taking steps to implement the colony park master plan 2 and it's important that this grand master plan community is being planned in partnership with the community itself, and it's going to serve the holistic needs of longtime

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residents with council R sill member Houston's continued leadership, that neighborhood will soon have its pool and much more. A special thanks to the colony park neighborhood association for their persistent passionate, knowledgeable engagement, because they have taught us the true meaning of community engagement. This council created our equity office, and it's already begun realizing the vision. It has just completed an analysis of the racism task force recommendations. It's begun making racial equity an integral part of each department's practices and policies as well as ensuring that equity is embedded in priority strategic outcomes. Council is adopting to guide its work. Racial equity is something we include from the get-go and not something we check as a box at the end of the process. [Applause] And after years or decades of studies and resolution, this council is poised to do something real about displacement in the eastern crescent. You know the city auditor gathered all of those reports and ideas and turned them over to a newly created, council created antidisplacement tank force and our city is eager for that task force to do its work. So that those ideas, together with new ones that are arising now from the community, have a place for them all to go, to be assessed and compared and analyzed and discussed, so that the best of them can come back to the council. The task force will review and inform the recommendations with a parallel study conducted by U.T. Austin, initiated by

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council member pool that maps the vulnerability of displacement for all austinites and will also offer specific tools that correlate to the susceptibility of displacement. We cannot repeat the mistakes of the past any more than we can afford the cost of the status quo. Our job is to present an unacceptable future. So, after years of unimplemented ideas, we need to do something to address displacement. We need the antidisplacement task force and U.T. Study to reflect the urgent certainty that their ideas will be taken up by the council following their deliberative process. This council has shown a special willingness to try new things, and put new resources behind the mission of housing the homeless. And I want to thank the mayor pro tem, mayor pro tem toe tovo, or all of work she's done over the many years to address this challenge. We are excited about the new innovations you have championed like the interdisciplinary host teams that this council expanded this year and pay for success model around

which you have rallied this council to begin to rally support more broadly in the community. The city had a successful federal pilot program in helping homeless youth. We've got inhouse innovation team on a \$1.5 million Bloomberg grant to develop smarter ways to house our most vulnerable neighbors, Alan graham and many in our community are launching the expansion of the very successful community first model. This council, city staff, our public safety officers and community stakeholders have acted to address the downtown

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drug crisis, and with council member troxclair's leadership we're creating a pilot temporary work program for those experiencing homelessness and weep are on our track to meet our goal of 400 new permanent supportive housing units by the end of this year but for all that we have done, there is no doubt that we need to do more to help those experiencing homelessness. We need to set a specific goal, and then we need to fund it. So, let's make the echo plan goal the city's goal. We should commit to housing the homeless, not more homeless, not most of the homeless, our goal should be finding homes for all of the homeless as we find them. [Applause] You know, we know how to do it. We are among the cities that have achieved effective zero homelessness among our veterans, and soon, our city staff will be coming to council armed with our audit reports and the echo plan so that the council can focus holistic policy direction. Bottom line, we all know that we're going to need to find even more money if we are serious about addressing the homeless challenge. We are going to have to find all of the new revenue streams possible, and that's why the concept of the downtown puzzle is attractive to me. Your council has asked the university of Texas to study a possible expansion of the convention center and to report back this fall. There are questions to be answered. And if that study comes back with favorable answers, then we should move forward to capture the associated \$10 million per

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year in tourist dollars that may well be available to invest in rescoping the arch downtown and helping Austin to meet its homelessness challenge citywide. And because we know that our children and grandchildren won't have much of a future if we don't halt man-made global warming, each of us as residents of a city, a state, a nation, and the world, must do everything we can to try to save our planet. And as your mayor, I am proud to have joined almost 400 other U.S. Mayors to adopt, honor and uphold the Paris climate agreement. I reiterated this city's commitment last October, the Paris climate conference, and again in December, when I signed the Chicago climate charter at the North American climate summit. Last year, this council, thanks to the leadership of council member pool, upped our renewable energy goals from 55 percent in 2025 to 65 percent by 2027 with the request to tell us how to get to 75 percent. This is one of the most ambitious clean energy goals in the country, and we are well on our way to achieving that goal. We're beginning the process to close our only coal plant and increase the use of renewal clean power at Austin energy. [Applause] Last year, we bought more solar

and wind to push us over 50 percent renewables by the year 2020. And the economics of that energy has gotten so competitive that the last renewal energy contract we entered into, will serve to

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reduce rate payer cost in our city. So, tonight, you know we're talking about a lot of big ideas, but here's the one that you might not have heard about but might be the biggest one of them all. This year, we will work on one of the most important projects in our city's history, and a big part of our future, a 100-year water plan for the city of Austin. This long-range water plan will ensure that as Austin continues to grow, we have a diverse and reliable water supply for the coming century. This plan should have strong recommendations to strengthen our water conservation programs, to expand our water reclaim system, and I expect the plan to advance relatively new, but reliable technology, such as aquifer storage and recovery, as a way for storing large amounts of water, and to avoid excessive evaporates racial. The time to fix the roof is when the sun is shining and prepare for the drought is when the Lakes are full. Let's talk about code next. Status quo is our worst enemy. Anyone who loves this city knows we cannot afford the cost of not getting the code revisions right. Everyone in this room knows that codenext is not what is causing today's demolition of existing homes, today's increasing traffic and unaffordability, but it does provide us the opportunity to find part of the answer. I am encouraged that the most

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recent staff recommendation for mapping is closer to the Austin bargain of preserving and preserving the neighborhood quality of life and hosting the supply growth on corridors and establishing transitions to make it all work. I still want to see greater alignment and I want to see more ways of achieving affordability in housing. So, I encourage our volunteer boards and commissions to work diligently, to get the code revision in good enough shape to that when it comes and it reaches us on the council we can give Austin a new land development code that works. Now, we're going to take as much time as we need to get this right. But we have to get it right. Managing growth to preserve the spirit and soul of this city will be difficult, but it will be impossible if we don't get a revised land development code. We can get it done this year. Let show the world how we would work productively through our differences, for a greater good, and for a better future. You know, council members kitchen and alter and I, we posted over 50 specific goals for codenext that we think, we think might well identify many of the common goals that are shared by most of those involved in the codenext discussion and our last work session council member pool said she was signing on, too. If enough of these goals reflect common ground then we are well on our way to achieving a codenext consensus and we can do this together. And then I point out to you, get ready, because it looks like we're going to have another bond election in November.

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Soon, council is going to get recommendations from the citizens panel and I'm excited to hear that it is likely to include a call for affordable investments for affordable housing, in infrastructure, parks and flood mitigation, in capital maintenance and in the Mexican-American Resource Center, Mac and Asian American Resource Center in the Carver Museum along with other needed projects. The work being talked about in this bond is work that is long overdue and it will pay dividends far into the future. You know, if we're going to do the big things that are needed to plan for the future, then we have to work together. And if we're going to work together, then we have to address what can charitably be called a gigantic honking mess in our civic life. The recent indictments of Russians for influencing our political lives have given focus to a gnawing realization of our political discourse, simply the way we talk about our future, as a city, as a state, as a country has apparently been intentionally poisoned, and it's not just that it may have happened. Look at the tools that they chose to use. The alleged Russian infiltration of our political discourse set out to exacerbate divisions in our country, and to increase our distrust of our own institutions. Regardless of whether the allegations are true, we see those divisions and distrust on the rise, even in our own city. Hyperbole and political discourse is making enemies of

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those that merely have differences much finance. We can't let that happen here in Austin, Texas. And some already see warning signs. We're not going to plan successfully for the future unless we fix our present, and we need everybody pulling together to be our best selves. Tonight, let's take a second to consider that Austin has a rare opportunity to lead the way out of this mess. Austin is emerging as a voice that's offering reason and progress in a world that is not getting enough of either these days. We can show that to move past this crisis point in politics, we will get better at listening to each other, and speaking as if we are all bound together as Americans and Texans and then Austinites. We are each so much more than the labels that are used to reduce us to one dimension. As a city, we should reject politics based on dangerous stereotypes and simplifications intended to make us scared of, and to distrust, one another. You know, this coming year, we choose what kind of future our children face. It's going to be a big year. This year, we must act affirmatively and deliberately and proactively, to set ourselves on a course to meet the challenges of a future in a way that preserves who we are. We are Austin, Texas. This year, we are going to be considering a potentially adopting a new land development code for the first time in 30

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years. A comprehensive strategic mobility plan. A first ever council strategic plan. A regional mass transit plan, our first ever regional workforce development plan, a new economic development incentive program, a 100-year water plan dedicated funding for the homelessness. I'm sure we'll discuss an associated convention center, expansion, bond propositions, to go before the voters in November. So

I'm looking at my colleagues here. There's a lot coming to us this year. That list doesn't even include things, like taking real action on displacement and gentrification once we hear back from the task force and public safety contracts, including the consideration of a new approach to public safety that keeps us safe, that honors what brought us here, improves processes and institutions and explores new officers for community policing in the context of a budget that seeks to minimize crime and not just respond to it. There's a lot on our plate this year. And you want to know who does most of the work? Would all of the members here of city staff, please stand up so we can recognize you and have a thankful community acknowledge you. [Applause] And city manager, welcome home.

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You know, you have in your first week, so many things have happened. [Laughter] You know, you sat through a 14-hour past midnight city council meeting, and you're still here. I think that's a good sign. But I want you to know that you arrive here with both great expectations, but also, with abundant goodwill. Welcome. So many wonder what the future holds for our great city, so, let me say this earnestly. Austin can, must, and will lead in this new century. Indeed, the complexities and connections of today's world have ushered in a new Austin moment, a moment when our state-wide and national and global leadership is essential, even if we have to lead in new ways. It is a moment when those things that define us as a community, openness, innovation and creativity, determination and devotion to core values, compassion, sustainability, and, yes, our keep Austin weird risk taking attitude have never been more needed. This is a moment that must be seized through hard work and bold decision with an eye on the future as we lay a foundation for a lasting and more equitable prosperity for decades to come. Yes, we are still Austin Texas. We have done big forward-looking

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things. And, yes, we're going to keep doing the big things that get us ready for the future. It is our moment and Austin is up to the challenge, regardless of what happens elsewhere. Together, we will show the world what Austin is made of. Thank you very much. [Applause]