

## Housing and Planning Committee Meeting Transcript – 9/25/2018

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>> Casar: good morning. I'm Greg Casar. I am the chair of our housing and planning committee. I hereby call this meeting to order at 10:41 A.M. Today is Tuesday, September 25, we're at Austin city hall in the boards and commission room. Vice chair alter is not present because she's out of town on city business. Councilmember Renteria should be joining us in the next five or ten minutes but we have quorum.

We're joined by councilmember Flannigan, councilmember kitchen, now that you're no longer a [indiscernible] -- Just a regular member, and me, Greg Casar. I would like to start with the first item on the agenda, which is approval of the minutes from our meeting August 14. Is there a motion to do that.

>> Kitchen: I move. >> Casar: Moved by councilmember kitchen, seconded by councilmember Flannigan.

Anyone opposed? We'll pass that by acclamation. Next is item number 2, which is citizen communication. Do we have any speakers to speak on any items not on the agenda? I don't think so.

Okay. Then we will move on to item number 3, which is our briefing from neighborhood housing and community development regarding priorities and strategies for 2019. >> Good morning, members of the committee. Rosie truelove, director of neighborhood housing and community development. We are excited to be here today to talk about what we see as our priorities and strategies moving forward. And how we're going to be developing a nice comprehensive approach to implementation of the strategy housing blueprint, including the potential affordable housing bond. So as far as an agenda, we're going to go through

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why we want to set some priorities and strategies, what our potential goals and recommendations are that are being considered, our blueprint implementation strategy, funding sources that we have available to us within the housing department, what we see as a potential bond implementation plan or the approach that we're taking, rather, and next steps for moving forward. So as you all know, planning efforts are underway to implement the housing blueprint, to review recommendations from several reports that have come out since we largely formulated the recommendations in the strategic

housing blueprint. We are at the cusp of developing a new consolidated plan. We're working to be prepared to deploy the 2018 housing bond if approved and to address multiple council resolutions. Our desire is to work proactively and to get ahead of all of these issues. A lot of the things that we have in front of us are very interrelated and to develop an effective and comprehensive approach to deploying all of these strategies and actions is critical to the housing department so we can manage our workload moving forward. We're going to be working to identify key themes. We're very interested in realigning our funding sources and to develop a strategy for the potential new housing bond and to promote synergies through a strategic work plan. So goals. In April of 2016, we passed the strategic housing blueprint. This is our ten-year housing policy document. Included in that it calls for 64,000 affordable units below 80% mfi over the next ten years with 135,000 total. It also laid out what we found to be our community values through our extensive public engagement in the creation of the affordable housing blueprint, including preventing households from being priced out of Austin,

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fostering equitable, integrated and diverse communities, investing in housing for those most in need, and to help austinites reduce their household costs. It's important for us that we undertake these strategies in a coordinated messenger so we can maximize the positive impact that we have in addressing Austin's affordable housing challenges. None of that is new. We've talked about that, but I'm going to keep bringing up those community values and those blueprint goals to remind folks that might be hearing about this even for the first time. Since we adopted the strategic housing blueprint or largely formulated the strategic housing blueprint, we have a number of other reports that have come out. One being the presentation that came from the UT study, which was looking at gentrification. We have the mayor's task force on institutional racism and systemic inequities, people's plan has come forward. We have our analysis of impediments to fair housing choice that was the current one that dates back to 2015 and we are in the process in anticipation of our consolidated plan going to the federal government in August of 2019 of refreshing that analysis, so we will have a new set of recommendations or strategies that are going to come from that. Lastly, we have the anti-displacement task force, which is still under development, and we hope to have some recommendations coming from them in the coming months. All of these strategies from these plans and reports fall into the five community values that were identified in the blueprint. So we think it makes sense to consider them for implementation. We're also working under Austin's strategic direction 2023. The implementation of the blueprint is aligned with the Austin strategic direction 2023, which supports cross-departmental collaboration to develop an act on recommendations to reduce the number of

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households and businesses displaced from Austin due to unaffordability, to implement the highest potential impact actions identified in the strategic housing blueprint, acknowledging Austin's history of racial segregation and counter it by applying an equity perspective to the land development code and

associated programs and policies, aligning with community priorities as articulated in imagine Austin, and ensuring affordable housing options throughout Austin, and then defining and enacting our response to homelessness, focuses on efficient and effective use of our resources to address disparities, prevent homelessness and support affordable housing. The blueprint is completely in line with the strategic direction, and we're looking forward to the opportunity you to collaborate with our peer departments across the city, specifically when we're looking at implementation and preparation of the bond implementation -- preparation and implementation of the bond in the acquisition program and working with economic development and with our office of real estate services. If you look at the different outcomes of all of these studies and strategies, we have currently under review 65 actions from the strategic housing blueprint, the university of Texas gentrification study with 56 actions, the people's plan had 19 actions, the anti-displacement task force's is as I said still in development. The mayor's task force on institutional racism and systemic inequities had 40 housing-related actions, fair housing action plan in 2015 had 32 actions and we're having that refreshed, in development right now for 2019. So that's more than 200 actions on the table right now that we're trying to sift through and see what aligns with what and how we can take advantage of synergies and see what's going to lead to the best and most optimal implementation. In addition to that we have

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26 open council resolutions dating back to January 2017, with 72 that have been closed, dating back to January 2014. So we've been a little busy in housing, and we have a lot on our plate. So we're taking this as an opportunity to look at all of the potential actions that have been generated and to see how we can take all of that data and create an effective implementation plan. So we have many different plans with many different strategies. Generally all of these strategies address the five key community values that have been identified during our community engagement, and we're in the middle. We are in progress. And our goal is to implement the high impact priorities and short-term targeted strategies while laying ground work for our medium and longer term strategies. Of course our goal is to build regular touch points with council so that we can -- into our time line so that we know and you know when we're going to be coming back for regular policy guidance at critical decision points. So current state is a big mishmash in maroon up there. In progress, we're working to lay everything out and do some analysis to see how we can become more target the and strategic and maximize staff's effectiveness. >> Casar: Rosie, we have a couple folks, at least councilmember kitchen with a question, so when this is a good break point before we get into implementation. >> Absolutely. >> Casar: Councilmember kitchen. >> Kitchen: Two questions. On the plans to align with, on page 9, my thought was that the homeless action plan would be one. I don't remember the exact name of that plan. But that that would be one to coordinate with. You know, at this point we've adopted one plan ? But I know that was a plan that the community developed, and that I think our staff is in the process

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of coming out with a plan around homelessness. >> We are. >> Kitchen: So would we not want to include that on slide 9? >> We'll certainly look at that. I want to make sure we have a targeted staff group that's working on implementation of our homeless strategy, development and implementation of that, so I don't want to circumvent that process or usurp that process. So we'll certainly look at anything that might have come up through that that might not necessarily be covered through the homeless team that's working on that right now. And then factor that in. >> Kitchen: The reason I ask is, my thought was that what you were working toward was including strategies, and so my thought is, you know, hopefully all those strategies are already in the strategic blueprint but in the case that they're not, I would want to be sure and maybe an additional level of detail, I don't know. So I would -- I wouldn't -- in an effort not to silo, I think it would be important -- and this is a comprehensive strategic housing plan and there are goals in it related to the homeless tier. So am I hearing you say -- >> We will look at it, yes. >> Kitchen: You would include -- on the same level that you're doing with these other plans? >> I want to look at it and I want to have a conversation with acm, Sara Hensley, to make sure that she's aware of what we're doing and that we're not trying to work at cross-purposes, but, yes, it should be included. >> Kitchen: Okay. Because I'm not understanding why you wouldn't. That's my only concern. >> Well, there's -- there may be things in that plan that aren't necessarily housing-related. >> Kitchen: Sure. >> So we'll be including the aspects that would be housing-related is. >> Kitchen: That's what I mean, sorry. >> But not the larger homelessness prevention plan. >> Kitchen: Well, a lot of homeless prevention is, you know, keeping people in housing and then rapid rehousing and permanent

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supportive housing. That's what I mean, the housing part of it, not the social services part of it, but about the housing part of it. >> Then we're on the same page. >> Kitchen: Okay. Last thing is just a request. Maybe you can just tell us, the council resolutions and direction, I'd love to have that list. >> Sure. >> Kitchen: The list of the 26 and the list of the 72 or you can point me to where I am see it. >> It's all in the council item update report system, but I think it might be easier for us to pull that information for owe, prepare a report and get it back out to the committee. >> Kitchen: Okay. Thank you. >> Casar: Members, any other questions? I do want to flip to that slide 12 with the arrows on it . Just because to me I think that was what visually spoke to me the most about where we are at. I think there's so much urgency in the community, displacement is happening so rapidly, prices are rising so much, there's a lot of pressure for us to do something but that has sometimes led us to keep on passing things and keep on saying we need to do so many things but that doesn't work when we're missing funding and focus, and so I think to the funding issue, that's why the council put the bonds on the ballot and is doing other things in our budget. I think we also need to focus and I'm looking forward to the rest of the presentation about if we get the funding how we can have the most impact. But I think I want to be a little bit empathetic to ourselves at our current state is like that because of the urgency in the community because people know it's such a high priority issue that there's a feeling that we have to do something, and that's why our current state may not have enough funding or seems like it has lack of focus but I think fixing those two issuing and in this committee focusing on getting funding and focusing it making a lot of sense. So this visual of the arrows just really makes a lot of sense to me? >> Yeah. This

is really kind of the -- all of the rest of the stuff is more detail about the individual pieces or the individual arrows or different aspects, but really we're just trying to

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get -- take a moment and get it all in front of us and figure out how we can get it pointing the right direction. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember Renteria. >> Renteria: I just would like to know, do we have any money left on our housing bond from the previous -- >> I'm about to tell you that in about three slides. >> Renteria: Thank you. >> If you give me a break I'll get you there. Speaking about -- so one of the things in front of us, obviously is creating a bond implementation strategy, but when I think about the bond, I think about it in terms of one piece of a much larger -- it's actually a much larger piece than it was potentially in previous years but it's a piece of our strategy to implement the strategic housing blueprint. The bond implementation is a subset in my mind of our strategic core implementing the strategic housing blueprint. So we're talking about components of this will include identifying our goals, annual goals, our specific goals. We have with our federal dollars in our annual action plan, we lay out specific goals and we haven't necessarily done that on the housing side, the bond side in the past so we're going to be giving consideration, in addition to some of the goals we've talked about, maybe district-based goals in the larger implementation of the strategic housing blueprint but how can we break things down into measurable chunks and really plan for implementation to specific goals? Looking at data and reporting, we want to make sure that we're, you know, taking a page from the implementation of the \$720 million corridor implementation -- or mobility bond and the work that the corridor program office has done. We want to make sure that we're providing transparency and that we're reporting on everything and that we're very open with all of our data and our information. Some of that might be highlighted through some challenges that we have right now in capturing data, so that might be something that we come back and talk about what we might need to get in place to be able to

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really be reporting back to the public to be held accountable as we would like to be. So that's going to be part of our implementation plan. We anticipate that we will need consultant services. We anticipate that we're going to need some financial consulting, some legal consulting, potentially some real estate consulting, even above and beyond what might be additional staff or partnering with our city department, the office of real estate services. But we are looking forward to that interdepartmental collaboration and we'll be working with our peers and also with folks like the corridor program office so that we can make sure that we're taking advantage of the work they've already done and some of the ground work that they've laid for accountability and communication with the public. We do anticipate that there will be additional staff that we're going to need, not just for implementation of the bond but for implementation of the blueprint at large, and that's going to be in the form of financial analysts, potentially analytics manager or managers, real estate staff, compliance and monitoring staff, the more units we put on the ground the more our compliance and monitoring requirements grow, and that's

beyond just additional consultants or -- consultant services or contract dollars added in the budget this year. There will be a need for additional staff and that's going to continue to grow over time so that's going to be a recurring theme. We will probably need additional planning staff to be able to help put all of this together, and marketing and communication staff. That's just kind of our initial guess. Some of that will be able to be funded with the bond. Some of it will not be and we'll be coming back when we come in January with a plan on what that would look like and what could be funded with the bond. So moving into our funding sources, so if we have -- if approved by the voters we have affordable housing bonds, we have, obviously, our community development block grants, home

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investment partnership grant. Those are our two federal entitlement formula grants that come every year from H.U.D., we have general fund, housing trust fund, homestead preservation district and the tax increment reinvestment zone that goes along with that, hpda, housing assistance fund, in lieu fees from density bonus programs, and then we have development agreements. Each one of these has constraints, so to speak, what it can and can't be used for. Some of them are very specific in what they're called out for that they can and can't be used for. What I would like to do and what we will be doing before we come back in January is to get a good understanding of our funding sources and what potential restrictions might be there and what are good ways to leverage them to get the most. If we want to fund displacement programs or anti-displacement programs, rather, we want to make sure that we have a good way to fund that. That's not something we could potentially do with general obligation bonds. It's not something we may be able to do with -- we could probably do it in part with our federal funds, so how does that come up through the consolidated planning process? Might that be something we want to focus on with the housing trust fund? We've talked about wanting to make sure that we're generating units with the housing trust fund, but that's a flexible source of dollars because it's general fund based so it might -- we might benefit as a community from being flexible in how we use it and that's some of the analysis we're gonna do between now and when we come back to you in January. We do anticipate getting a memo out with a little bit more information on the housing trust fund in the next hopefully before the end of the week. If you look at our funding sources in comparison with each other, you can see how much bigger our bond portion is potentially compared to what we have traditionally been getting from the federal government, which is about ten to 12 million. And the housing trust fund this year was about

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5.3 million, but when you include, you know, density bonuses and other sources then you're looking at approximately 5 to 7 million. >> Casar: I think on that slide, maybe this is the most appropriate time for councilmember Renteria to ask his question about that -- the bar on the left is -- the large purplish bar is how much money if the bonds pass. >> Pass, that's right. >> Casar: I think to councilmember Renteria's question -- >> There's nothing left. >> Casar: There's nothing left. So if the bonds don't pass then there

isn't that bar on the left. >> Yes. >> Casar: And we just have what is there. >> Which the next section talks about where we're at with our 2013 bond? >> Casar: We did the bond public meeting in our district last night, first one out of the gate. Just to clarify, there's unspent bond dollars but they're already obligated to projects. >> They're allocated to projects. >> Flannigan: Some of my constituents are very smart about going and looking up to do that. >> That's great. >> Flannigan: It will show there's money but it's all been obligated to projects. >> Yes. We have not encumbered the funds for all of the bond dollars but we have allocated them to projects, committed them. Pick your word. Obligated typically means encumbered but we haven't encumbered all of the dollars because we don't have yet executed loan agreements. >> Flannigan: I just wanted to make sure it was clear to the community, nothing left. >> Nothing left. >> Flannigan: But you will see it in a chart somewhere. >> Casar: Meaning if our funding sources are 50 million from the city bonds, ten to 12 from the feds and 5 to 7 million from fees, that short of the bonds passing, the bar on the left won't be available for new projects. >> Correct. >> Casar: Because the prior bonds have all been spent. I did have one question. You had mentioned I think what you're saying is that some of the housing trust fund money could be used on certain anti-displacement programs that aren't capital -- as much capital as, say, the bonds, but wouldn't things like home

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repair, which we've funded in previous bonds -- >> Sure. >> Casar: Is that in conversation about some of the anti-displacement work we're doing to fix people's homes and therefore is bond money going to anti-displacement specifically -- >> Specifically home repair is anti-displacement, definitely something we envision happening with our general obligation bonds, actually see us increasing that program so we can do more home repairs through our go-bond program. We do fund some home repair programs through our federal funds as well, but this would just be a different source to fund maybe not a home repair measure, anti-displacement measure but maybe others. >> Casar: In previous bond programs, the city's bond contribution was about the same size as the federal bonds? >> I would say pretty roughly. >> Casar: And now this is the change we're proposing. >> Yeah. So okay. I lied. Sorry, councilmember Renteria, we're going to talk about the consolidated plan process and then we're going to talk about the bonds. So this will be the first consolidated planning process we are going through with the new 10-1 council structure. The consolidated planning process is our five year paperwork to allocate our resources. The action plan is our more detailed, you can think of it as our more detailed one-year plan. You've seen us come to you every year for a one year plan for federal dollars, application to federal government for our grant dollars. Then the consolidated annual performance and evaluation report, caper is what we do at the end of the year where we tell them what we did with the money with what we said we were gonna do. The five year plan is what governs what we can do on an annual basis with our action plan and we've taken an approach over the last maybe three to four consolidated plans of doing basically the same thing, same

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set-contracts, same programs, just kind of, you know, let's just do what we did last time, that seemed to work great. We would like to take a little different approach this year. First we're starting the consolidated planning process in January, outreach in January, rather than waiting until April or May to do that, with the goal of hoping to bring back the consolidated plan for council consideration in May so that we can then work on programming the dollars if there's gonna be any changes to how we utilize them so that we can get started on that for 2019/2020. So we're backing everything up a little bit and I think that's going to be a good process that will allow us to -- we really want to do some better engagement around the issue and really listen to the community and get their perspective on what we can use our federal dollars -- make sure they understand what we can use our federal dollars for and then find out what they think we should be using our federal dollars for. So you'll be seeing more about that, and we'll be starting that in January. But we're excited about that. And I think this will probably be something that we'll continue throughout the upcoming years, where instead of bringing the action plan just in time to be turned into H.U.D. In August, we might bring it in May. If we have to bring it back in August so there's blessing of the final dollar amounts then we'll take that action but we really want to get input on the federal dollars earlier so that we can implement those dollars effectively in the coming year. Bond implementation. So in our 2013 affordable housing bond we had 19 rental and ownership developments, 2,253 housing units with [indiscernible] Being deeply affordable, average investment of 24 how 8600 per unit, more than 600 repairs and a leverage ratio of seven to one, big

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increase to our 2006 bonds which I believe the leverage ratio was four to one. We have as I said earlier 100% have been either invested or committed to projects, including the last 2 million was to continue the general obligation -- the go repair program for the coming fiscal year. And that contract went to council last week. So more than two-thirds of our bond was utilized for rental housing, which includes the housing first psh that you can see that we spent 67% of the bonds or will spend 67% of the bonds on rental opportunities, and 2% on ownership, 10% will actually go towards housing first, permanent supportive housing, which we're very excited about, acquisition of 3%, home repair was 18% of our bond for that total of 65 million. These are some of the examples of the great work that we've been able to work with our housing development partners to accomplish. The first row of photographs is bluebonnet studios. It's in district 5. It has 107 affordable units with 22 at or below 30% mfi and eight units at or below 80% mfi and it does serve formerly homeless individuals. The middle vote Jeremiah campus, district 3, 35 affordable housing units at 50% mfi and below, dedicated to helping young single mothers. The lakeline station apartments on rut length spur is in district 6, 28 affordable units, 60 units at or below 50% mfi, and 48 units at or below 60% mfi, and this one serves families with children. So these are just a few examples of what we've been

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able to accomplish? >> Casar: Coincidentally chosen not based on which councilmember -- huh? Funny how that works? >> Casar: Housing all over the city. >> So our 2018 bond, you guys all know this, city council has recommended the \$250 million affordable housing bond be deployed in four different programs or buckets. The recommended dollar amounts here are not -- they're kind of our estimations. They're not binding. And the programs are intended to be flexible in that respect so that we can be responsive to both market conditions and opportunities. Our programs are rental housing development assistance projects, acquisition and development, home ownership projects, home repair program, and the new program is our land acquisition program, which will allow us to acquire and hold land, including acquisition of publicly owned land for future use with the potential to achieve multiple community goals, including affordable housing development. As I said we're currently already doing three of these programs. So let's focus on the fourth one, which is our new one. So we're in the process of developing criteria that will align with the strategic housing blueprint in various city resolutions that have been passed, that will help us to implement -- to develop the details of this program, including a process for purchase development and management of property, goals for the number of euaffordable units, preserved affordable units, affordability levels and the length of affordability. We're looking to have a strategy that's going to maximize the effectiveness of the funds to meet program goals and potential time line for implementation, including the estimated staff and resource requirements for the program development and implementation. And we noted the council resolutions that have already been passed, specifically beyond the strategic housing blueprint but the item that actually called the bond or the contract with the voters and

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then the preservation of multi-family properties and mobile home communities that are home to low-income households. And that resolution number is referenced there. So next steps. We have a lot of work to do, and we're looking forward to diving into it. Some of which has already been started. But our implementation plan is being drafted. We anticipate, hope to come back to you at your meeting in January, with a matrix of additional recommendations informed by the other plans and studies, including an anti displacement strategy, preservation strategy and criteria. We're looking at the potential of having these additional recommendations somehow incorporated into the strategic housing blueprint. We like -- we think it's beneficial to have a single document that really defines our housing policy moving forward. We're not saying that it should be a one for one of all the recommendations that are in there, but we want to do that analysis and see what really makes sense and what would be the most beneficial there. We're also looking at the overall strategy with short term, medium term, long-term actions to meet our community goals. Largely what we've already been talking to you about with the implementation plan for the strategic housing blueprint. It's going to be going out for public comment in the next couple weeks, and ultimately it will be coming back to you and then going through the land development code adoption process, including going to planning commission and whatnot because it's envisioned to be an amendment to the strategic housing blueprint, which is an amendment to the imagine Austin comprehensive plan. So that process will be underway. Then we have our funding matrix with recommendations to better align resources, which we talked through, and our bond

implementation strategy, including our land acquisition strategy and criteria. We're trying this in with our consolidated planning

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process, responses to relevant council resolutions, including the density bonus recalibration recommendations that have come forward. We're very interested in bringing forward a realistic staffing strategy and how we can accommodate that and time line for the above items, including those regular policy guidance touch points for council to engage. What questions do you have? >> Casar: Councilmember kitchen. >> Kitchen: Okay. Let's see. So I have a question about -- let me just start with the time line. So when do you think we'll actually implementation it? Or I guess -- >> Bring the implementation plan for -- >> Kitchen: Well yeah. It just sounds like a long time, but I guess what you're doing right now is aligned with it. You're just trying to get all the process working, right? >> Yeah. >> Kitchen: I didn't realize that it had to go through -- how long does the amendment to the imagine Austin process take? >> So there are a few factors in the time line? >> Kitchen: Okay. >> One of them is that the anti-displacement task force has not yet made recommendations. And so we would really like to be able to have those recommendations to put together a matrix of the recommendations from the various plans to put out in conjunction with the draft blueprint implementation plan to note that we'll be looking at all of these recommendations in tandem with the overall blueprint implementation plan. So I don't want the blueprint implementation plan to get ahead of these important recommendations that will be coming out from the anti-displacement task force so that's part of the timing that we're dealing with. In terms of adopting the --

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potential changes to the blueprint itself and the blueprint implementation plan, if we do want those adopted as part of imagine Austin, it's not necessarily an incredibly drawn-out process, but it does involve going to planning commission and council and some public notices that go along with that. >> Kitchen: So what do we think an estimate -- actually, really my question is -- what I'm really concerned about is not when we, you know, adopt the plan, per se. I want to know when we're going to start using it to guide our decision-making? So that's really what I'm concerned about, because it's sound to go me like it could be almost a year before we did that so that's what I'm concerned about. >> So it's already guiding. >> Kitchen: Okay. >> -- What we do? >> Kitchen: All right. >> We've been working for months on reformulating and retooling our program guidelines for the rental housing development assistance program. It's been a guiding force in even bringing us here today, because we recognize it's guiding us on how we might need to change our implementation of our federal dollars. It's been guiding us since the day we adopted it. >> Kitchen: Okay. >> Because we don't have a formal implementation plan and we haven't worked through adopted stated goals for numerical, you know, by district areas, just because that hasn't happened does not mean it is not absolutely guiding and we have been orienting everything that we have been doing since it was drafted around the strategic housing blueprint. >>

Kitchen: Okay. Will we get it adopted in time for it to be a document that we can refer to for our next budget? >> It should. >> Yes. I don't see any problem about that. >> Yeah. >> I mean, it's sort of -- it depends a little bit on

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how we -- you as a group wants to think about incorporating some of these additional recommendations from the other plans and whether those just become part of our implementation strategy. Maybe we don't actually -- and, again, I think this is something that's for discussion. Do we need to amend the blueprint itself? Or can we just include those other strategies within the implementation plan? So that will have a little bit of impact. It's not an overly drawn-out -- >> To be clear, we don't have an answer on that or recommendation on that yet. We just received only a handful of days before the council did the UT report, we're still wading through that. We're working through -- with the anti-displacement task force and we'll be working on their information coming forward. So we're actively trying to perform that analysis on what we have on the table in front of us and trying to determine if there's anything that we think needs to be incorporated formally into the strategic housing blueprint or whack just be part of the strategy or how we can address all of this that's come up since we adopted the document in April of 2016. >> Kitchen: Okay. I appreciate that, but I -- but so I just encourage us to move as quickly as possible. >> Yes. >> Kitchen: And I almost encourage thinking about amending the implementation plan as you get additional recommendations as opposed to holding things up. So I just feel like it's -- you know, we passed the blueprint itself, you know, almost two years ago, if I'm remembering correctly, and we passed the implementation plan -- well, it's been a long time. >> Mm-hmm. >> Kitchen: So it's been a long time. And I really would like to see this -- see this adopted and see this coming back to us. >> As would we? >> Kitchen: Okay. >> There's not anything about what we're proposing

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with this presentation today that keeps us from having that on the same trajectory it's been on. >> Kitchen: Okay. >> There's no delay associated with incorporating this into that. We know that we're going to have public comment on the implementation plan itself and we'll have to resolve and work through the feedback that we get. So having that come back to you in January with the rest of the bundle of items is completely within the schedule that we had envisioned. >> Kitchen: Okay. I think that works. My thing is that I really want to use this plan for the council to be able to help guide our decisions about funding and, you know, working with you guys, of course. But I'm really looking forward to seeing this kind of concrete plan to help us guide our investments. >> Casar: I've suggested, too, that we should think about what to put in the comp plan and whatnot because if any group of citizens or staff or council thinks of something else that needs to be added to the implementation plan or taken out, if we have to go through a comp plan amendment process every time for that, there's some challenges there. At the same time I see the power of making things concrete and saying this is our plan and we're sticking to it and that's what we decided but I think we should continue to consider that balance and whether the

implementation plan can live just like our strategic direction plan outside of the comp plan or whether it should be in the comp plan. >> And we're -- >> Casar: I know you're thinking about it. >> We're thinking about all that too. >> Casar: Any other questions? >> Kitchen: I have more but I'll wait. >> Casar: Councilmember kitchen, you've got another question. >> Kitchen: Just quick. On page 26, just a question. Maybe this is a time line question. So the -- this is on the bond. The updating to align with the strategic housing blueprint, so that will come back to us at some point so we can -- this is talking about the program guidelines and the scoring criteria are in the process of being updated for the existing

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programs? >> Yes. >> Kitchen: So that will come back to us at some point? >> Yes. >> Kitchen: Do you have an idea of when that would be? >> That's anticipated to be part of all of this that's coming back to you in January. >> Kitchen: Okay. All right. And then that last question, then, is just I didn't want the -- I think I understood what you were saying but I didn't want there -- the public to have some misunderstanding about it. >> Yes, ma'am. >> Kitchen: So this allocation of the dollars, although flexible enough for us to be able to react, you know, and take advantage as the -- the market and other things, it is the allocation across the buckets that the council voted on. >> Correct. >> Kitchen: So I just want the public to understand that doesn't mean -- even though we have some flexibility that doesn't mean we intend to get rid of a bucket or put all of it in another one or massively put things in other buckets. >> That's correct. If we get to the end and let's say the rental housing development assistance bucket is 90% spent and the land acquisition bucket is completely spent and we have an opportunity to acquire the perfect thing then we want to be able to move on it even if it means going up or down across those dollar amounts. >> Kitchen: Sure. But the process for doing that, there's a committee that you work with that has to approve what we spend these bonds on, right? >> Yes. We have still in effect the housing bond review committee. We're actually look at increasing their scope to have them be reviewing all of the investments that we make, whether it's housing bonds or local dollars, other local dollars or federal dollars. We think it makes sense to have that extra perspective and viewpoint on our investments. >> Kitchen: Okay. >> Casar: And so is it a good summary that you've heard that we want the housing department to be more strategic so you've put together a strategic plan, you've heard from the community that we want it to be more of a priority and wanted council to put more funding behind it. We needed new strategies, so you've heard that and now what you're communicating back to us is that you've

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heard that and that means we have to focus as a council, we have to prioritize the strategic planning, funding has to happen for some of these things to be put on the ground and then, finally, you're letting us know staffing is going to be an essential component of doing what folks need in the community. >> Thank you for summarizing that for me. I appreciate that. [ Laughter ] >> Casar: I'm just saying -- >> Yes, absolutely. >> Casar: Those are key messages, seems to be key messages of this. Obviously with really

useful detail. >> Yes. We have absolutely heard and we're setting back with what we hope is going to be a nice comprehensive strategy that will allow us -- will set us up to really be effective and deliberate in our actions. And we have a lot on our plate for the next three months, and we look forward to bearing our heads and getting to work. >> Casar: Thank you for all of the urgency and thoughtfulness in putting this together. Thank you. >> Thank you. >> Casar: Okay. Committee members, we have just one action item on today's agenda, which is -- >> You might have public comment on this. >> Casar: Oh, yeah. Thanks for joining us, Walter. Go ahead and -- speaking on item number 4. >> Walter morrow, director at foundation communing. I wanted to add some good news. We got a modest grant from neighbor works America to hire a consultant to look at general obligation housing bonds and how they're administered around the country. I thought the chart was really interesting, showing the blue bar, federal funding in the middle. You know, that bar is half of what it used to be over the decades. It's just federal funding for affordable housing has declined and so Portland and Denver and L.A. And Austin and other communities have issued local housing bonds to try to make up the gap. So the small grant we got

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and the consultant, they're going to inventory all the other big cities that have got envoter-approved housing bonds and then dive deeply into at least several case studies on how they're administered, you know, what are the priorities for funding? Are they competitive rounds? How are they scored? What's the income target how are they staffed? So we're excited to share all that information with city staff between now and the end of the year and hopefully that helps inform what's happening around the country. >> Casar: Great. And you're saying that the report back, you would get -- have all that information by the end of this year? >> Yes. >> Casar: Great. Just in time. The other comment I'd appreciate the opportunity to make is just to advocate that we've got to staff the bonds appropriately. And that might be, you know -- maybe there's a 2% of the housing bonds are carved out to make sure that there's proper administration and oversight, legal support, to -- it costs some money to make sure that bond funds are invested wisely and I just want to advocate for that, even at this early stage. >> Casar: And I would say that when we pass this year's budget, there was additional direction to the city manager that acknowledged and recognized that we didn't add staffing for the housing bonds in this budget because the bonds will be decided in November. But some direction to the manager that if those bonds are to pass that we should given it the kind of level of priority and urgency the mobility bonds had because when those -- when the transportation bonds pass we recognized that we have to administer them quickly and wisely and transparently so there has been staffing brought forward to do that with those along with a great public website so people can see how that's being used and that would be my expectation as well. I think that's what the council set in our budget. Councilmember Renteria.

[11:28:08 AM]

>> Renteria: I want to always thank Walter. Your foundation is one of the -- a godsend to Austin. >> Thank you. >> Renteria: You know, when people ask me about different groups and nonprofits, there's

two groups in Austin that does wonderful work and that's Guadalupe and your foundation. So I want to thank you. I really listen to your leadership, you know, and would take advice very seriously so I want to thank you. >> Thank you. We couldn't do our work without support from the city and the voters, and we're hopeful about this election for and we're hopeful about this. >> Casar: Thank you. Anybody to speak on the community development commission before I hand out a motion? So, item number 4, as you know, we passed the bylaws for the community development commission. The council just passed last Thursday the authority of this committee to fill the four interim seats between here and February, where then all seven seats will be available. Then in February, our committee will have four seats to fill and health and human services will have three seats to fill. So for this interim time period, the guidance that's been given to us by the state is that four seats need to be filled with public elected officials or their designees. So the motion that I'm handing out, which I had mentioned last Tuesday, is just for the interim period that we recommend the full council, the following public elected officials, representing districts one, two, three, and four, neighborhoods that currently exist. And then those councilmembers can either attend the meetings by this recommendation or they can have their representative attend, which of course their representative would have to be approved by the council. This would just function between here and February based on the rules we passed last week. Is there a motion to do this?

[11:30:08 AM]

>> Well, I just have a quick question. So, here in February, do we have to re-appoint the whole seven in February? >> Casar: Yes. In February, there will be new terms. >> Kitchen: Okay. >> Casar: And based on the rules we passed last week our committee will fill four of those seven. And then the health and human services committee would fill three of those vacancies. Does that make sense? Any other questions? >> And I do want to note that all 15 seats will actually have to be refilled, so the community's will need to undertake new elections for those. >> Casar: And eight of those are decided by community members. >> Correct. >> Casar: And seven of them are decided by the council. >> Correct. >> Casar: Great. Okay. >> Renteria: I move. >> Casar: Move by councilmember Renteria, seconded by councilmember kitchen. Any discussion? All in favor say aye. That's approved unanimously and we'll send this all to the council. The last item on our agenda is if we want to discuss any future items. Of course, we can always talk about that offline as well. Councilmember kitchen. >> Kitchen: At some point, I don't know what the right timeline is, but I wanted to suggest that we hear from our staff on the homeless plan that's being developed. >> Casar: Right. >> Kitchen: With the focus on the housing aspect of it. >> Casar: That sounds good. We'll reach out to the housing department on that front and see when the right time would be for that. That would make good sense to me. Anything else? Okay, great. Well, on that note, then I will call for the adjournment of the housing and planning committee meeting. Thank y'all very much. We'll see you soon.

[3:00:18 PM]

>> Welcome to the district 1 live candidate forum sponsored by the city of Austin's ethics review commission. I'm Frances McIntyre with the league of women voters of the Austin area. The league partners with the city of Austin ethics review commission and the city to provide these forms to allow you to hear from all the city candidates. The Austin league of women voters was founded in 1919. And it's a nonpartisan political organization of men and women promoting informed and active civic participation. We wish to be clear that the league never supports or opposes candidates or parties, but exists to empower voters with information they can use to make their own decisions. Atxn is livestreaming this forum and will be repeating it several times before the election. We commend the city and atxn for providing information for the public and exposure for all candidates. The city has provided us with translators, I believe, tonight. Tonight candidates have one minute opening statements, one minute closing statements, and each question will be answered in one minute. Our timekeepers over here will hold up the cards at the 30-second mark and then a red card when the time expires. So keep your eyes on the timekeepers. All the questions originated from the league or the public and have not been seen by the candidates. According to the league guidelines, we ask for no applause or demonstrations of support or opposition from the audience. Candidates are asked to refrain from any personal attacks on their opponents.

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So let's begin the opening statements with Ms. Avini. >> Thank you to the league of women voters for hosting this event tonight. We appreciate it. I'm running to remind the people of this city that Austin belongs to the people of Austin and not to real estate investors and for-profit corporations. For too long Austin has been ignored at -- for funding and finance of west Austin and much of the environmental resources that west Austin has, and those resources should be protected, but it's time for east Austin to be given the proper attention and care that it deserves. We must not support gentrification and displacement which for too long has been ignored by this city. Thank you. >> Good evening, everyone. Thanks for having us. My name is Natasha harper-madison and I'm a native east austinite. I'm a cancer survivor and a community advocate and I want to make an impact on public policy in the most impactful way and that is by becoming a city council person for this great city of Austin. Thank you for your time. >> Good evening. I usually start in a certain way by asking people to say pay for power. But I'll start, my name is Lewis Conway, junior, I grew up on Coronado hills and Barcelona. I went to Andrews, pierce, Reagan. I also went to HT, but I also went to prison from this area. I'll start off the same way I met my wife. I went to prison for eight years and I used to be a strip club deejay. So I come from a background that isn't necessarily -- that scared me for a minute. Yeah, so I'm governor I've got to hurry up. I want to have health care for all, I want to end cash

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bail, I want to provide menu childcare vouchers as well, making sure that we drop the property taxes. I'm the only person that has done the work as far as moving an ordinance into legislation and going to

protect that legislation at the state Lege. >> Good evening, thank you all for having us. My name is reedy Spigner and I'm a candidate for city council district 1. For those of you who may not know me, I'm a third generation austinite whose roots run deep throughout the community. Today Austin is experienced enormous growth and each day our city is growing by 100 people per day. This is making Austin one of the fastest growing cities as well as the fastest gentrifying cities in the nation. In east Austin this growth has cost our community greatly. Our population of children under 18 have declined, our legacy to residents of working families are declining. Our city is -- is growing at enormous pace. I feel like city government must address all the challenges and issues that come with such growth. I have a vested interest in this community and that's why I'm running for city council district 1. Thank you. >> Good afternoon, my name is Mariana Salazar and I'm running for Austin city council district 1. I'm running -- unfortunately we are currently in an affordability crisis in Austin and too many of us are left out from the prosperous Austin that everybody Braggs about. I'm running to work with others to provide access to affordable housing options, to provide access to better paying jobs with benefits. So improve public transit and active transportation options, improve childcare options for our working family, work towards having pre-k for all and make sure district 1 gets a fair and equitable treatment at city hall. As a working mother raising two young children in east Austin I know the struggles of my district.

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As an immigrant I've had to work extra hard at everything I do. I'm proud to be the only immigrant out of 28 candidates running in the different city races. As a public servant with 15 years of experience serving our communities, I know how to work with others to create real and lasting solutions. >> Thank you, Ms. Salazar. >> Thank you. >> Good evening. My name is Vincent Harding. I am running for city council because I love our community and believe I'm the most qualified person running. As an attorney, real estate agent, someone who has worked at the Texas legislature, city council, former chair of the democratic party, former member of the board of adjustments, I have not only led in publics, I have persuaded public institutions to do things they've never done before. Personally I'm a first generation college graduate that went to the university of Texas school of law where I met my lovely wife Megan, a civil rights attorney. I have heard on the issues of affordability, displacement, transportation, health care, criminal justice reform. We have some serious challenges. My campaign theme is all hands on deck because I believe together we can solve these problems and we can build a coalition of a future Austin that people of all ages, races and economic statuses. So please visit vinceharding.com and I would love to have your support. >> Hello. My name is masala Ramos and I am running for councilmember in district 1 as well. Before I speak I want everyone to take a moment and think of some fear that can be tangible, intangible or something totally made up. I'll give you a few seconds. Some of you may have thought of spiders, rodents, snakes. Some of you may have thought similar to me, one of the

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greatest fears, your electricity bill in August. Now, in the east side one of the fears that a lot of our neighbors have that's permeating through the communities is that of change. The fear of change is defined as the act or instance of making or becoming different. But with right leadership I believe that this -- >> Thank you. >> Can become empowerment. >> Thank you. >> We will begin our first question with Ms. Harper-madison. And it's on transportation. From new highways and intersections to bike lanes and bus routes, what do you see as the most pressing transportation need in district 1 and how will you address it? >> That's a good question. I actually just talked about transportation with a constituent today who is struggling if for no other reason she's having to make the commute from pflugerville into Austin to work. She pays about \$9,000 annually to cover the cost of her commute. So I'd like to see housing built in a way that people can live closer to where they work. I think multimodal transportation is something we obviously have to address and we have options with mobility. We absolutely have to address our public transportation situation, the shortage, the lack thereof. And for the love of all things holy bus stops need shelters. So that is definitely one of the things that's at the top of my list. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Conway. >> Yes. So for us I agree that transportation has to be a first priority for district 1. I've lived in Austin all my life. I've ridden a bus since I was eight or 10 years old and we understand that the same bus routes that are present during the era where

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black folks were serving white folks on the west side, that same bus porn is there today. So I think it's imperative for us to increase the frequency of routes. I think it's imperative for us to deal with the sidewalks. Again, I deal with a constituency that doesn't have access to cars, that doesn't have access to different types of transportation. So they depend on sidewalks, they depend on bus routes and these bus routes, I know for the folks who come to my events at night, they have specifically spoken to the cap remap program not being beneficial for them. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Spigner. >> I think transportation needs to take a step forward. I think we need to be innovative when we're thinking of transportation. First of all, I think people who ride buses are not comfortable as they're waiting for the bus stop. First of all, we must need to make these avenues or these individual bus stops comfortable so that people will be able to take the bus and be comfortable while they're waiting for the bus. Second of all, I think that we need to rearrange the routes. A lot of these routes go in densely plated areas, but there's -- populated areas, but there's also other densely populated areas throughout the district that do not have bus routes and bus routes are needed. So I think we need to come together and have a public-private partnership type of situation for transportation so that we can implement routes that are effective for people who need to utilize these services on a daily basis. >> Thank you. Ms. Salazar. >> I'm a working mother. I have two small children, a five-year-old and a two-year-old. And one of the things that we struggle on a daily basis as we walk to school is missing sidewalks. We have to get into a busy road even though we live close -- very close to the school. We have missing sidewalks on something that should be a high priority. We also can't walk to a grocery store that is close

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by because we have missing sidewalks. So for me it's important that we move forward and we support the sidewalk plan, a beautiful plan that we have, but unfortunately we haven't prioritized and funded to advance the ball. I also support as a councilmember, I will support dedicated bus lines just like we have in Guadalupe and Lavaca streets, we need more of those throughout the city and for sure we need them in east Austin. And I would advocate them as a city council. >> Thank you. Mr. Harding. >> Yes. I believe we need to create the transportation system we have of the 21st century. That should include all forms of transportation, buses, rail, cars, bikes, walking and yes, even scooters. When it comes to mass transit we must improve the experience. It is way too hot outside to have people waiting for 45 minutes or an hour. We need more shelters, we need more benches. When it comes to mass transit efficiency, we must be able to get people from point A to point B faster. We do that through dedicated lanes. Look at almost every major city across the world they have dedicated lanes. So when we start thinking about sidewalks we need to make sure those things are safe for people that may be disabled or young or elderly. I also believe that we should look at forms of technology, autonomous vehicles coming, we have synchronized lights. There's a lot of things we need to be doing. We need to focus on all aspects and make sure that we have the mass transit system that we want for the 21st century. >> Thank you. Mr. Ramos. >> I believe that we should actually be looking towards public transportation in the sense of an upgraded rail system. We have numerous amounts of Texas cities that have rails that gets you from point A to point B to point C to point D, all the way to Z. I believe that Austin should be on that rail system as well to get us moving

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further. I also believe that the sidewalks in our neighborhoods need to be revamped and created in certain areas. I mean, off of Maple and Manor road, there's only one sidewalk, and that starts in one block and ends in one block, and we need to change this. >> Thank you. Ms. Avini. >> Hello. I keep hearing a lot about sidewalks, especially in district 1. There's a great deal of district 1 that exists in a watershed, and every time we lay down sidewalks, we do increase the risk of flooding. And none of us want to be flooded out of our homes and apartments. So I think it's very important that we -- yes, we increase sidewalks, but do so with materials that are environmentally friendly and porous. So this is something that I'm concerned about because I see the city laying down new sidewalks, but they are cement sidewalks that do increase the risk of flooding. In terms of other areas of transportation that are important to me, I think we need to address the issue of bike lanes because too many people are getting hit and dying and that's not acceptable. We also need to increase the frequency of bus routes and we need to ensure that more people have access to buses and enjoy taking them. People don't take buses because it takes two hours to get somewhere that it would take 30 minutes to get to if you were driving a car. So these are my main concerns. >> Our next set of questions, we'll start with you, Mr. Conway. >> Yes, ma'am. >> Regarding affordability, rising tax burdens are caused by rising appraisal values and affect homeowners and renters. Some people who have lived in their family homes for generations cannot afford these taxes. What can be done to address rising property values that are driving many Austinites out of their homes? >> Thank you for your question. That is something that we early on began to deal with when we built our plan. We thought about tax abatements, we thought about tax freezes.

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Specifically for fixed incomes and specifically for incomes that may be vulnerable. And we believe that gentrification begins with the land assessment process. That is the way folks have been taxed out of their homes on the east side. When I grew up on the east side there were black folks all throughout the east side. As you look down 23, 24, 25, we can see that the property values have risen as a direct result of land assessments, which is the direct factor of displacing folks, folks who have lived there for years can no longer afford to pay their taxes as they begin to try to pay their mortgage as well. So for us it's about tax abatements, it's about tax freezes, but it's also about community land trusts, which will fax the tax rate for many years. >> Mr. Spigner? >> Yes, that's a very good question. One thing that we have seen throughout the district is people getting displaced because they are inaudible to afford taxes. Many are working families, many are long-term residents, and many are people who have simply moved into the neighborhood. One thing that we need to look at is tax -- freezing taxes. And this can be done by looking at it as it relates to income, as it relates to age, and as it relates to the time that you've lived in the neighborhood. These are some of the things that we will need to look at and provide some great options to implement some policy to decrease the tax burden on homeowners, especially the elderly and especially long-term residents of the community. >> Ms. Salazar? >> So my dad is currently 76 and he's still doing manual labor jobs. He works at the golf course off 51st just so that he can pay his rising housing costs, obviously including property taxes. This is something that is of great concern to me and I

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have been attending the anti-displacement task force. I can just tell you three things and we can talk more about these things. Something that I will support, community land trust, and it's the idea where you can buy -- you can own your property and not your land, and that way your taxes aren't the highest because of the land and that's one way of keeping property taxes under control. I would support a homestead exemption program enrollment. I have learned that a lot of people qualify, but they simply haven't applied. So that's such an easy program that the city could be doing. And a third thing that I would on -- I will tell you more another time. [Laughter]. >> Mr. Harding. >> Everywhere I go this is what I hear about, displacement, displacement, displacement. So I think first and foremost to have an honest conversation about property taxes, we must look at the fact that the state of Texas is not paying their fair share of public education. This has been the highest driver of cost because we are sending half a billion dollars back to the state of Texas. So let's continue to fight to change that at the state level. Here locally, state law permits us to raise taxes up to eight percent each year without an election. This year the council has mandated a maximum of six percent, which I think is good stewardship as we're trying to control taxes. You've heard about land trusts, you've heard about homestead preservation districts. I also think we need to look at private non-profit partnerships to help people pay for taxes. So I think we need an across the board solution, both government, private businesses as well as non-profits, to help people stay in their homes. [Bell ringing]. >> Mr. Ramos? >> I do also believe that taxes should be dealt

with at a higher level. Right now we are at eight percent. There was a vote for -- to lower the appraisal rate to

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six percent. I believe we should even get it lower than that. I will definitely advocate to try to get a four percent rate for appraisal rates at the lower level. I also believe that if we go back to preserving our neighborhoods and homes this will stop a lot of the new development of teardowns, rebuilds and new tax assessments on a quarter-million-dollar versus a half a-million-dollar home within that same community. Actually implement design standards. We can see taxes leveling off a little easier within the next couple of years. >> Ms. Avini. >> Hi. I think it's important for us to be aware that 33 other states in this nation have property taxes prorated based on income. So if I'm elected I will use my platform on city council to reach out and find out if we need to have a constitutional amendment in Texas in order to address this on a statewide level. I think it's also important for the city to be aware that real estate investors who are often multinational companies or out of state investors buy our -- buy up homes in east Austin, fix them up, flip them essentially and then cause a reassessment of their neighbors' homes who weren't fixed up. So this is really unjust and this is what's causing those reassessments. And I think it's very important that the city begin to address it. >> Ms. Harper-madison? >> The trouble with going last is that they said it already. [Laughter]. So some of the things that I would definitely focus on have to do with education. When people don't know what their options are, they certainly don't access them. So knowing that you are eligible for a homestead exemption and having somebody help you apply for

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it is essential. I have a couple of clients who sold their homes if for no other reason, there were foundation repairs that needed to be done and roof repairs that needed to be done, and the tax burden in addition to the cost of the repairs scared them. They didn't realize that there are home repair programs who would cover the cost of the repairs. So making certain that people have access to information I think is extraordinarily helpful. I would also definitely like to take a look at community land trust options. I think a lot of people don't realize that having the opportunity to sell your property, a part of your property to somebody in your family and keep it in your family, would make it more affordable. I would push for -- [bell ringing]. Thank you. >> We're going to go to public safety and the police in district 1. Community policing is just one service provided by the police. What can the police do better to serve the citizens of district 1? Are there areas or problems that need to be addressed by the police? Mr. Conway, we are starting with you. Sorry. >> Going first again? >> No, Mr. Spigner, I'm sorry. >> Could you rephrase the question one more time, restate the question. >> Community policing is just one service provided by the police. What can the police do to better serve the citizens of district 1? Are there areas or problems that need to be addressed? >> Absolutely, there are areas and problems that need to be addressed. First thing that I think that the city of Austin police department needs to do is they think they need to take some cultural -- some cultural training, cultural responsive theory training so that

they'll know that the people that they're dealing with, how to approach them and how to approach them in a respectful and responsible manner. I think that we've seen a lot of aggressive policing, and I think a lot of that policing has been based on race. I think the one thing they need to do is understand their constituents and the people that they are policing. They're here to protect and serve. So one thing that they need to understand is everyone black or everyone hispanic

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is not doing anything negative. They need to approach them as if this is true. Because we see a lot of aggressive policing and it seems like everything happens before they inquire about what's going on. I know -- I've known several times that I've gotten stopped and they didn't ask me for my license and my insurance. The first thing they asked me was do you have drugs, do you have weapons? >> Thank you. Ms. Salazar. >> Two weeks ago I joined an officer on a police ride along. We responded to most of our time. We actually responded to mental health calls. We responded to some domestic violence calls. And we were also on a the lookout for a stolen car. At the end of the day I was exhausted, but it was clear to me -- and I then did an ems ride along too and we responded to many mental health calls. So one area that as a councilmember I will advocate is having a better mental health response and that in my mind may be a collaborative team of maybe paramedics, mental health professionals and public officers. So that's one area. We only have one minute. >> Mr. Harding. >> When I came to Austin the concern I heard from everyone in Austin was when is the democratic party going to say something about black kids being shot by the police? So I drafted a resolution, I pushed for reforms, and I brought the decision makers to the community and handed the microphone to the community to ask questions directly. And I think we need that level of engagement where the police are accountable for R. To their constituencies and we can talk to them directly. Secondly, we need greater levels of accountability. When brionne king was thrown to the ground and they said that black people have violent tendencies, that

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officer should have been disciplined for that but because of the terms of the contract he couldn't be. So we need accountability and high pay so that we can continue to have or recruit best officers. And then lastly, we need to increase diversity of officers as well as we need to incentivize officers to live in the communities that they are in. So those are the things that I want to push for as well as Chris to the police monitor's office. >> Thank you. Mr. Ramos? >> I believe officers should be asked to come into our neighborhoods, actually interact with our communities on their day's off, get to know the people that they're policing. Studies have shown that the police force in New York ones one of the -- once one of the famous mayors actually enacted these programs, community outreach with police officers on the beat, crime dropped lower because people felt more comfortable to come to those officers. That's what the police are here for, that's what they're supposed to do. They're supposed to be our friends. So if they're in your community and you see their face everyday, they're -- you don't feel as threatened on both sides of the aisle. >> Ms. Avini. >> After knocking on doors throughout the district, I've repeatedly heard -- I've

been encouraged by people of all races to support the police and have them show up. So not showing up has been one issue that I have repeatedly heard from constituents in district 1. In talking to police and in hearing the struggles that they have -- in fact, I attended a justice coalition meeting and a policeman showed up. He said that we simply don't have the resources to address mental health crisis. So I think that Mariana's idea of bringing psychologists and perhaps social workers in the emergency response is a really good idea.

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>> Thank you. Ms. Harper-madison? >> I'd like to start by saying I think something we all have to acknowledge is that we need police, right? Something else I'd like to say is I think by and large the officers who represent the Austin police department do a great job and care about their job and care about the citizens of Austin. Now, can we do better? Absolutely. Oversight, accountability and transparency are all issues that we should address. We should give the monitor's office more power to investigate instances of I am propriety. I think we have to start once again with education. I think going to the training level, the academy level, the modules that represent non-violent interaction, that represent non-lethal interaction would be very important. I also think it's super important that we have a police contract that benefits both officers and the citizens of Austin. >> Thank you. Mr. Conway. >> Thank you. So I think if I understand the question what is what can the police do. First of all, I was involved with the police contract, the meet and confer contract from the very beginning. And what got me engaged is the fact that there was no citizen oversight and because I had been to prison I was not allowed to be part of that oversight process. And my argument was that we are the community that is most directly impacted by law enforcement so somebody from the community should be on that panel. Part 2, community safety should be more important, should it be more important than community policing? And we have to look at it through that lens. Thirdly as a tertiary point is as a product of law enforcement engagement, we have to look at treatment before arrest. We have to look at folks having access to mental health facilities before

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arrest, and we shouldn't be looking at our jails as mental health institutions. Right now our jails are housing our mental health patients. [Bell ringing]. >> Our next question will start with Ms. Salazar. And this is regarding code enforcement. According to particular website such as airbnb and home away, short-term rentals are all over our city. The large number of listed properties are not reflected in the small number of licensed properties. What is your assessment of how code enforcement is handling this and why? >> I would like to first start by saying that I recognize that short-term rentals are a source of income for a lot of people that have fixed income. So it's something that we are welcoming of. In terms of code enforcement, I think there are many ways that code enforcement could be better enforcers. For one they probably have limited capacity. I don't know that for a fact, but they could be using some other revenue that they themselves are getting from their taxes from the short-term rentals to increase the

capacity to be better code enforcers. I know there's a licensing process to do that and there's no reason why they couldn't be visiting. There's homeaway, airbnb, all of this is public so they have the information. It's probably a matter of organizing the team in a better way so that they can be better enforcers for the city. >> Mr. Harding? >> Yes. As it relates to short-term rentals, I'm in favor of getting rid of type 2. I do not believe we should be allowing large companies or investors to buy homes and essentially operate them as rentals, I'm in favor of getting rid of those and phasing them out. But as Mariana mentioned there are some people who

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use them as a way to pay for mortgages. So I think the rules we have need to be specific regarding who the individual is that owns the property, whether or not there's a homestead exemption on the property or not. Just to transition really quickly to renters, we are the only district that saw an increase in the percentage of renters. So district 1 has 53% renters, 47% owners. So we need to make sure we provide protections to renters so if there is a landlord that is routinely violating code that we can make sure that we give them the protections they need to get the code enforced and that they are protected and not retaliated against. >> Mr. Ramos. >> I think right now there's also an issue with the city of having a cap of who can actually apply for short-term rentals. And I think that we should, one, increase that so that people can do it in the legal sense. There are also a lot of people who do this because they just can't afford their homes or just can't afford their taxes. So I believe that we give those people a break in the sense of we make sure that if you're applying for a short-term rental that you live in the property and that that is your residence. That will tax investors, but at least the people of Austin can remain in their homes and still afford them. Thank you. >> Ms. Avini? >> I don't think that we should be restricting what property owners are allowed to do with their homes. I find that very problematic. I also lived in New York City for a number of years and I saw the ways in which people in apartments would rent out their apartments simply to help make rent. So I have a hard time with this idea of licensing and with being overly restrictive in terms of distributing those licenses.

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I do have a problem very much with investors buying up homes, as Vince Harding said, and not following the rules or mistreating their renters. >> As it pertains specifically to str's, I would say that I agree that we should get rid of type 2 str's. That's problematic for a lot of reasons. If a person doesn't live in the home they shouldn't be able to rent out parts of that home. And also that said, I would also agree that we shouldn't -- too much government is problematic and too many rules for what people do in their homes is problematic. I think people should be able to do whatever it is that they want in their homes if they're not causing harm to anybody else. So that to say, I think the thought -- the imagery of code enforcement cracking down on regular people just rent outing a room in their home, it sounds gross and undignified and I don't like it one bit. I think code enforcement should do what they do, which is to enforce code, where like Vince said renters are living in substandard properties. I think they have plenty of work to do

that doesn't include them enforcing rules about str. >> Mr. Conway? >> Yes, ma'am. Thank you. So I live on a street with two airbnbs. Nary of the homeowners live in those homes. Part 2 of that is the people that I know who are being regulated by code enforcement, they can't even afford to pay their taxes or their mortgage. So for me we have to look at it on the front end. It's an affordability issue. As folks can't afford to pay their taxes issue. It's not a code issue. If folks aren't in danger of losing their home to taxes, if folks aren't in danger of losing their home to high mortgages, then we don't have a code issue. But the problem with regulating folks is that the folks in cavalier park, the

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folks who can't afford to maintain their home, who can't afford to refurbish their home, they are being regulated out of their homes because they're being fined -- fines that they can't afford. So we've got to look at something else besides regulation as a way for us to determine how homeowners should be able to use their property to make money. [Bell ringing]. >> Mr. Spigner? >> Can you hear me? I think that as far as short-term rentals are concerned it's one thing that we have to realize here. Austin is a city of the future. When we're talking about air air bbnb and other things. This is offered worldwide and nationwide. This is a really, really up and coming thing. We're kind of millennial type of thing. I think others of us look at it as a negative thing, but I think that this is part of the attraction in Austin, Texas. We have -- we're a worldwide city, we have visitors from all over the world, all over the United States of America, so I think that it's something that we need to look at and regulate it a little more differently as opposed to making it more restrictive. This is something that people could come in and enjoy our city and this is part of them enjoying our city. So I think it's something that we need to look at, take another look at it and implement policy so that we can kind of restrict it to a certain amount -- a certain-- I guess you could say a certain -- [bell ringing]. Sorry about that. [Laughter]. >> All right. We're going to start with you, Mr. Harding. We're talking a little bit about public health. Health care and health disparities occur across many dimensions from race and ethnicity to socioeconomic status, gender, age, disability status. And in light of Austin's exploding population and rising income inequality, do you think the city should create and/or expand

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particular health services to meet these needs. And if so, how. >> Yes, I do. And so when I think about health, the first thing I think about is life expectancies. And it is sad that in Austin, Texas that someone who lives in 78724 has a life expectancy that's 15 years less than someone eating correctly, exercising well and also just have really good food options just period in our neighborhoods. >> Thank you. Ms. Avini? >> The other day I met a mother and her young Latina daughter and her daughter had an ear infection and she couldn't afford to take her daughter to the doctor to get something very simple, which was antibiotics. So this is the kind of

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situation' that we have on the east side. Meanwhile we have these really fancy hospitals being built on the east side. For example, in the Mueller center. And I'm concerned that the local community somehow doesn't have access, free access to health care that they very much need. We cannot have wealth creation in just a tiny portion of the east side without providing access to all people in east Austin. >> Thank you. Ms. Harper-madison? >> Yes. So something I'd like to propose, and this is not just about health, right? It's about all the issues that affect people who are generalized. My proposition is that we have what I like to call a community quarterback. A person who is able to go by zip code and take a regular community needs assessment to address preventive health care, to make certain that people are taking their medications as prescribed. A couple of my clients will -- they make their medications stretch. And you're not supposed to make your medications stretch. You're supposed to take it everyday, but you're also supposed to take it with food. So when you don't have access to healthy food, you don't have the ability to prepare your food, then what do you do? That's another thing that this community quarterback could help to alleviate to determine who needs more in-home care to ensure that they are getting what they need by way of access to medication, access to medical treatment and access to necessary screenings. >> Thank you. Mr. Conway? >> I am going to say what everybody else is scared to say, universal a health care for everyone in district 1. We created a pilot program called district care, which is based on a San Francisco program that has been successful for 10 years. It would only cost us \$45 million. For the last 100 years we have not had any hospitals on the east side. The Mueller hospital is not a hospital for adults. There are no urgent care hospitals on the east side. So what that means is that we're not looking at population health, we're not looking at health care overall. We want to use the ems as a

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home based health care system as opposed to a system that's putting out fires. We don't want to privatize any health care system. We believe that health care is a human right and everyone deserves that health care. District care will provide health care regardless of your income, regardless of immigration status and regardless of your housing status. And again, we already have the money for it. Central health is giving \$35 million a year to UT for the Dell medical school that has been earmarked for poor people's health. [Bell ringing]. We're already paying for it. >> Thank you. Mr. Spigner? >> I think access to health care is a very big thing in east Austin. I think that we need to have programs that educate people about health, about food, and about things -- and about wellness dealing with health. I think we need to have access to health care facilities. As you know we don't have any health care facilities on the east side. We many small doctors offices, but no health care facilities. We don't even have a cancer treatment facility in east Austin. And we know that we have a high rate of breast cancer and other types of cancer in the east Austin area. So this is something that we'll have to look at and we'll have to implement. Like you said, there's money that's been set aside for this, but we're not getting any of the money on this side of town. We have access to no health care facilities. So this is something that we'll have to look at and maybe we'll have to make it a public-private partnership so that we can solve

this problem and address these issues. Thank you. >> Thank you. Ms. Salazar? >> Thank you. So east Austin has been neglected for so many years until this day we all feel it. When I was pregnant myself, I had to travel 10 miles to go to -- to go to weekly visits. That is a horrible thing for someone who is pregnant, but imagine me times thousands of people that are in east Austin. Unfortunately we live in a medical desert.

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We talk about food deserts, but we also have a medical desert. And for me, just to keep it concrete, two priorities I would like to see, I would like to lobby central health so that we have better and more access to clinics in east Austin. There's no reason why having our population needs, we have so limited community care clinics and central health clinics. And the other thing that I want to see more is mobile health care integration, better navigation. We have M.A.P. Services. I did interpretation for a patient recently and they didn't even though know they could access M.A.P. >> Thank you, Ms. Salazar. This is going to be our last question before we go into closing remarks this evening. And Mr. Ramos, we'll start with you. What is your experience and background that makes you a good representative of this district? >> My experience primarily stems from the fact that I belong to a great association, the holy cross neighborhood, and right now we're actually in the middle of getting our preservation application for historic designation. A lot to say. Once we do that we'll have design standards implemented throughout the neighborhood and our community that combat the developers and allow us to move forward while developing still the old ways of our homes. I'm also a foreclosure consultant specialist. I've traveled to Chicago and other places helping people stay in their homes and advocating for foreclosure prevention. >> Ms. Avini? >> Hi. I was born and raised in east Austin.

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I was actually born at home in the home I currently live in. And I'm deeply concerned about inequities that I have seen growing up over time. These inequities have not reduced, they've gotten worse. I'm a recent graduate of Yale and oxford. I got full scholarships. I studied social policy. And directly addressed municipal governments and the way that we have structured our governments to prioritize profit over people. And I'm in a position I feel to very much address and restructure our city government so that we prioritize the needs of the people of east Austin. And at the very least acknowledge them and are held accountable for them. >> Ms. Harper-madison? >> I feel like I'm uniquely qualified to represent district 1 because I know district 1. I know district 1 as a person whose formative experience was spent in poverty. I believe it made me stronger, it made me resilient and it made me tenacious. I'm uniquely qualified to represent district 1 because I'm a small business owner. As you can imagine there are a myriad of elements you go through as a small business owner. I'm a mother. Have you ever had negotiations with a two-year-old? I am uniquely qualified because I'm a mother. I think we underestimate the revelence of being a mother and being able to think on your feet and anticipate people's needs and be compassionate and be patient and be able to manage a calendar. I am uniquely qualified because I'm a

community advocate. I have the altruistic heart and the practical mind of a person who would be uniquely qualified to represent district 1. Thank you. >> Mr. Conway? >> Yes, thank you. So I believe in experts, I believe in listening to the experts, and I've spent the last year listening to experts. And we believe as a criminal justice organizer that people who are closest to the problems are closest to the solutions.

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And so I believe my work as a criminal justice organizer passing ordinances like fair chance hiring, helping pass paid sick days, helping to end the juvenile curfew, helping to bring about the affordability bond, all of those issues are not only issues that I led on, but issues that I was deeply involved with. So my activity at the state Lege and working on both sides of the aisle to make sure that Austin -- aisle to make sure that Austin maintain a fair chance ordinance and that every city across Texas maintains that ordinance makes me uniquely qualified at the state Lege. I was also building that coalition at the city and making sure that we had fair chance hiring possible, as well as a freedom city resolutions. [Bell ringing]. >> Mr. Spigner? >> I think. I feel that I'm qualified. I have 18 years of governmental -- state governmental experience. I worked with the jurisprudence committee with Royce west as a policy analyst. I've worked with the department of state services as an emergency management preparedness quality assurance coordinator so I've worked all over the state of Texas in 254 counties. We reached out to every one of those. And I've worked in hurricane responses so I believe my emergency preparedness experience makes me unique. Also I worked with the office of the attorney general and we give out various grants to communities and we give out several grants in Austin. So I feel that I know the community, I know the state and I'm a long time resident of the community. I've been in this community almost all my life. I've mentored in this community, I've coached in this community. I've given to this community and I've also advocated for this community. I was one of the persons on the ground level for the 10-1. I remember when we were out advocating for that. So things that have happened in this community I've been a part of and I feel that I'm uniquely qualified because of that. [Bell ringing]. If if >> Ms. Salazar. >> Thank you. I am uniquely qualified to be a councilmember because I

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have served my entire adult life to public service. For the past 15 years I have worked alongside businesses, community leaders, residents. I have even lived as a community organizer, I lived among the community. So I have a unique perspective of both someone who has been an advocate and has been advocating for the community, but I have also been creating solutions. I have worked ending homelessness and that work has resulted in thousands of people moving from streets to housing. I have created home ownership. I have led communities to transform their own change. So I'm uniquely qualified to be able to navigate our complex government, our complex regulations, and innovate from within, creating real solutions. I'm also qualified because I'm a mother. [Laughter]. And an immigrant. But I don't have that much time. >> Stop. [Laughter]. >> Mr. Harding. >> I believe I am most qualified

because I have the most transferable skills. As an attorney I represented public entities, meaning I dealt with open records, open meetings, procurement, I negotiated contracts with software companies, I helped buy and sell real estate. As the chair of the Travis county democratic party, I helped raise over a million dollars. We passed the largest affordability and transportation bonds in Austin's history and we had the highest level of voter registration. I built coalitions across this city. So the key thing for a councilmember is to not only know your district, but can you get to six votes? That's the key goal as a councilmember. So I've built coalitions across the city, I have challenged the status quo, persuaded the status quo to do things we've never done before. I've also worked at the Texas legislature, the Houston city council. So I have been involved in politics and I have been focused on serving the community. I have been driven by my faith and believe politics has been the avenue I've been called to be in. So I would love to have your support. [Bell ringing].

[3:52:53 PM]

>> Thank you. Yeah. Now we're going to start our closing remarks. And we have done this. As you know you're seated in ballot order, so how we're going to start on the closing is we're going to just go the opposite of the way we started. We'll start with Mr. Ramos. You will each have a minute and then we'll go this direction. Mr. Ramos. >> I believe that we need to be proactive in our neighborhoods by implementing design standards, updating our classrooms and providing financial aid to our teachers so that they can empower our children. I also believe that public transportation is a very big issue that we need to tackle head on by implementing a new rail system. I believe that with the right leadership we can execute and get to these goals. Thank you. >> Mr. Harding. >> Thank you for being here this evening. A recent article came out entitled proven under pressure. I've been under pressure my entire life. As a three-year-old my mom had a heart attack and I was the only person at home. So I had on to call ems for them to be able to get there and take care of her. And thank god she's okay. A year and a half later I needed surgery myself. And before that I accepted life into my life. So at the age of five I had experienced a whole lot. So I have spent my entire life focused on serving people, whether it was in approximate college organizing people to help during hurricane relief, whether it was in law school, waking up students to go feed the homeless, or after law school getting involved in politics, volunteering my time and doing everything that I could to make this community a better place. So I would be honored to have your support and thank you so much for being here this evening. >> Thank you. Ms. Salazar. >> My name is Mariana Salazar and I'm running for Austin city council district 1. I'm running because I would like to see better public transportation in district

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1. Only four percent use public transit. I'm running because our schools are under resourced and I would like to see better schools. I would like to see the city be a better supporter of after school programs. I'm running because I would like to see us have better representation at city hall. All too often I go to city meetings and there's no childcare. I would like to see childcare in public meetings. I would like to see

interpretation so that Thursday meetings people can just show up and that speak other languages and be able to participate. I'm running because I believe it's time for us to work towards free pre-k in Austin. We have been leading in many areas. We can leafed in the pre-k area as well. As a working mother, an immigrant who all too often is treated differently, but wants to create a city that can welcome everyone, I'll be there. I'll make sure that we include -- we create an affordable inclusive and prosperous city for all. >> Thank you very much. Mr. Spigner. >> Thank you once again. Let me be clear that my platform is focused on solutions for district 1 and not differences. Whether your color, your across, your gender, sexual orientation or party affiliation, my platform will not pit one against the other. It's not black versus white, gay versus straight, you settled to understand that we need unity, Austin needs unity and not division. We welcome everyone. First of all, my commitment is to my neighborhood and to the citizens of district 1. To the citizens of district 1. And I would love to contribute to its growth and prosperity. I cannot do this without your support and I cannot do this without you. I look forward to gaining your support, standing with you to make Austin a better place for everyone. Thank you so much. I appreciate your time. >> Thank you. Mr. Conway. >> Yes, ma'am, thank you. We are the only candidate that has been endorsed. We've been endorsed by the working families party. We've been endorsed by the workers defense fund.

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We've also been endorsed by democratic socialists of America. All those groups are champions for working people. They're champions for poor people. They're champions for folks who have been on the outer margins of democracy. So as I said, I've been spending the last year listening to the experts, people who are experts in their conditions of losing their homes to property taxes, of having no access to health care, of having no access to the things that we claim that Austin has been built to provide folks. So I'm running because I believe people deserve a champion. I believe people deserve a leader. I believe people deserve the access to have the best quality of life possible. And I believe that it's my job to not only usher that in, but when I become city councilmember, you become city councilmember. And I think it's important to put one of us in office. >> Thank you very much. Ms. Harper-madison? >> Thank you. I really appreciate y'all's attention and patience this evening. I'm running for city council because I believe in this city and I believe that the citizens of Austin deserve integrity driven, passionate, pragmatic leadership. And I also don't believe that that has to mean that you have past political experience. Frankly, I think it's time for us to have regular citizens be a part of what happens with municipal government. I want to make sure to point out as a person who does not have past political experience, I also do not have any political debts. I made the commitment to run for city councilmember because I believe that this city can be better and together we can make it happen. I'm running on the platform that includes affordability, access, equity and transportation. I really appreciate you guys being here this evening. Thank you. >> Thank you. Ms. Avini. >> My name is mitrah ravine and I'm running for city council district 1. I do not believe that it is

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the appropriate model for city and states nationwide. I believe that we must oppose short-termism and trickle down economics because it's harming the people of district 1 and many people of color on the east side. This is not acceptable. We must challenge the control of our city council by the chamber of commerce and the multinational corporations that have undue influence on the chamber of commerce. In addition, I'm running on the platform of challenging growth in imagine Austin. We cannot have a population growth that is so rapid that we are not able to afford it and so we start charging higher and higher property taxes in order to pay for it. We also need to challenge environmental racism and environmental justice which has been a long practice in the city of Austin. We also need to challenge the affordability crisis and find out what is the true root cause of our problems here in Austin. [Bell ringing]. >> Thank you. Candidates, if you would stay up on the dais until we have a short closing. Let's give these good candidates a round of applause. [Applause]. Thank you. The league urges all registered voters to exercise their right and privilege to vote in this election. Early voting is Monday, October the 22nd through Friday, November the 2nd. Election day is on November the 6th. The Austin league of women voters is nonpartisan voter's guide will be available some time before early voting begins and can be found at that time in the public libraries in Travis and Williamson county and miscellaneous other places as well as being online at [www.lwvaustin.org](http://www.lwvaustin.org). We urge you to use vote411 when all the information from the voters guide is online. You can get your personal

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ballot there and see the candidates that you will be voting on. Thanks to the ethics review commission for setting up -- and the city for setting up this wonderful stage with the microphones that work. And all of the volunteers, the league volunteers, which you've seen around the room. We certainly appreciate their help too. And we appreciate your participation so give yourselves a big hand. [Applause]. Thank you. >> Welcome, welcome, to the city council district 3 candidate forum. Wow. It's almost election time. Welcome, again. This forum is sponsored by the city of Austin ethic review commission and moderated by the league of women voters of the Austin area. I'm Carol with the Austin area league of women voters. The Texas league was founded in 1919 and consists of both men and women members. We are a nonpartisan organization. The league does not support or oppose candidates or parties.

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We are an all-volunteer organization. I want to thank those volunteers that you see around. Thank you very much for volunteering your time today. Thank you. (Applause) >> We are pleased to have a Spanish translator for you this evening. We also, on the back table, there are 3 X 5 cards and ladies standing around that have cards and pens if you would like to submit a question, we'll try our best to get it in. We have been taking questions from the public. I do want to let you know that the forum is being televisedlive and is being recorded. And you can go to the [austintexas.gov/atxn](http://austintexas.gov/atxn) and see this recorded

for later. Now, this is -- I'm going to address the candidates. You are seated in ballot order starting at my left. The format will be as follows. You will have a one-minute opening and a two-minute closing statement. You will have one minute for each question. Our timekeepers will hold up the cards. Keep your eyes, please, on the timekeeper. You'll see a minute and then you'll get a 30-second warning to wrap up your thought and conclude in the second half of the minute. The red card is stop. According to the guidelines, this is for the audience. According to the guidelines of the league of women voters there must be no applause or demonstration of support or opposition from the visitors in this room during the forum. Candidates are asked to refrain from any personal attacks. I will intervene if there are personal attacks and help you get back on track, and you may you'll lose your time for that question. Mr. Jacobson, we will begin with your opening statement.

[4:04:59 PM]

>> First off, I have to say, thank you. This is the best 28th birthday present I could ask for. Thanks for this forum on my birthday. I'm running this race from a place of love, a deep connection to the city. In the '50s my grandfather was a founding member. He left a mark on the legacy of the city. I'm proud of my father's almost 40 years as a plumber building the buildings we know here. What troubles many is I have not seen a place for me here anymore, and I see something disappearing. It's linked to the lack of leadership we have to not move on the important issues of the day when it comes to development, affordability, equity, and transportation. One is missing in action and we need to move forward with open hearts. We need to listen to our neighbors and empower the voices all over the spectrum, from the east side to south Austin where my mother and grandfather grew up. Everyone needs an equitable voice at the table. >> Ms. Alamanza. >> Hello. I'm running to confront the status quo that held the city back for decades. I want to promote an accountable people's government to take on the housing crisis. I want to make sure that our public land is used for public, not for private profit interests. I want to make sure that the community is listened to and that they have a say in the codenext rewrite development plan. They were shut out. We also know that the incumbent voted against the ballot petition that was signed by over 31,000 voters. Of course we have to go to court and sue. It is now on the ballot. Also, we do not promote high

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density because high density will displace thousands of people and continue to keep Austin unaffordable. And to me, let's work together to reclaim, remain, and rebuild the city for all people. >> Thank you. >> Thank you. >> Mr. Renteria. >> My name is Sabino "Pio" Renteria. I'm honored as the first city councilmember for district 3. I want to thank the ethics review commission and the league of women's voters for hosting this forum, providing a wonderful opportunity for our community to get involved. I also want to thank my district 3 constituents for supporting me over the years as we fight for change at city hall. Our accomplishment has only been possible because of the overwhelming support from neighborhood leaders, small business owners and organizations who have worked with my office

on initiatives to improve the quality of life of all austinites. For those who are new to our city and our district, welcome to Austin. I look forward to working with you, too. A little bit about me. I'm a native austinite, a product of Austin public school. I served on ptas, city boards, and commissions most of my life. >> Thank you. Mr. Motwani. >> Thank you. I'd like to start by thanking the league of women voters for executing their mission to engage our citizens in our democratic process, born from a movement that's now more important than we might have imagined in our current day and age. I currently work at United Way as the chief information officer, where our mission is to fight poverty in Austin. And that is exactly where I would like to bring the conversation back.

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We often find the conversation around Austin focused around economic growth, but really the challenge is economic mobility, and particularly in our district. I intend to help solve for that problem set and bring the conversation back to sustainability, affordability, and relief for individuals, children, and families and seniors who are struggling and suffering. And I humbly request your vote. Thank you. >> Thank you. Ms. Cohen. >> Good evening, everyone. Thank you so much for having me. I'd like to quickly thank the league of women voters. Your diligence in ensuring the community is educated and informed and making sure they're registered to vote is very, very important. Thank you for what you do. Again, my name is Jessica Cohen. I'm the transgender candidate running for district 3. This is a big deal. When you vote for a transgender candidate you're ensuring a Progressive vote. I'm a normal, everyday person who got sick and tired of the hour drive to get to work. I'm sick and tired of our budget being majorly compromised of our infrastructure and not being changed. I'm tired of seeing things that should be happening that aren't. So I decided I would go out and make the changes myself. I'd appreciate it if you'd listen to what I have to say. >> Thank you. Mr. Valadez. >> I would like to thank the league of women voters for hosting this forum, as well as you for taking time out of your day to be here. My name is James Valadez, I'm running for Austin city council to bring neighborhood values back to district 3. I'm a native austinite, a graduate of our public school system, a former division one

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athlete and a proud university of Texas alumni. In the past I've tackled affordable housing issues on the city's community development commission. I've been a Travis county democratic party precinct chair. I've also been appointed to the aid task force focused on making our skills more nimble to better compete with charter schools, who we are losing kids to. Currently I sit on the city's board of adjustment where we hear and decide variance requests from the land development code, as well as interpretation cases brought forward by stakeholders. I also have the pleasure of serving on Travis central appraisal district's board of directors, where I am an appointee by the Travis county. Thank you. >> Thank you very much. We'll start the questions first with Ms. Almanza. The question is, do you see any relationship between our city's efforts to attract businesses that provide jobs and the rising property taxes for those of us that live here? And if so, what can the city council do to lessen the impact of rising property taxes?

If you do not see any connections, please explain. >> There's definitely a connection between what kind of businesses we are recruiting to Austin. If we are recruiting large businesses that only employ people with certain degrees and not looking at people who have just finished school, or who are dropouts, then of course we're not looking at an equity distribution of a job market. And we know that when we bring high-class paying workers that we're also seeing an increase of property taxes. But more or less we're seeing an increase in rentals of housing, an increase of housing for ownership. And so we have seen the impact not just on that, but the impact on transportation, the impact on our cultural assets, the impact

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on the bus system. Because we are now seeing that the routes have been eliminated and that people are having to walk further just to get to where they need to go. >> Thank you. Mr. Renteria. >> Yes. Thank you for that question inch .you know, we're a city that's been the most desirable place to live. We have created so many jobs that our unemployment is 3%, around that. And our biggest problem is that our reluctance to go out and build more housing, more density. You know, we're facing, in the year 2030, we're going to have to build over a hundred thousand apartments here in this city to keep up with our growth. You know, over the years, we have said that if we don't build it they won't come. And we learned over these years that it just doesn't work that way. We need to be more creative. We need to build more affordable units. And we need to work to make sure that our children are able to stay here and live here. >> Thank you. Mr. Motwani. >> Yes. I absolutely see that relationship. And typically when referring to the businesses that come in to Austin, we're typically referring to the large tech companies that are bringing high-paying jobs. So there's absolutely a relation there, because folks in high-paying jobs increases demand in the housing market, which is going to increase the costs in certain areas, and increase the tax rates. Excuse me, the tax burdens. Now, what I think needs to happen is that part of the incentive packages associated with bringing these types of businesses, specifically extremely large businesses that are bringing high-paying jobs, is a link directly to training for middle skills jobs. The problem here is that despite

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that we are at a 3% unemployment rate, we have 40,000 people underemployed because they don't have the skills to bridge from low wage to high wage jobs. That's what I would be working to do in our district. >> Thank you. Ms. Cohen. >> Absolutely agree. The type of businesses, these large corporations are wonderful for the city economy, but do not help maintain that flavor of Austin that the small businesses provide. While increase the housing cost, they're inadvertently causing all the people that make Austin Austin have to move out of Austin, the people who live here can't afford to live here long. We need some sort of incentive package from the city to help not just the small businesses, but to either subsidize or incentivize low-cost housing, not just affordable housing, more housing, low-cost housing so the people who work here can live here. >> Thank you. Mr. Valadez. >> Yes. I absolutely see a correlation between the two, and specifically I want to draw everyone's attention to the Oracle

development over off of lakeshore where Oracle was brought in and incentivized, but also acquired adjacent apartment complexes, which were working-class apartments. And I think there will probably be a strong correlation to the under-enrollment or lack of enrollment moving forward going into elementary and middle schools in the area as a result of the displacement of workforce housing and the moving in of six-figure salary employment. We need jobs that our working class can secure. We need better training to ensure that we can get them there. I also want to harp on the 80% mfi, the standard throughout the city when we're building new housing. We're calling that affordable, but the median income in our district is fall below that

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standard. It's not affordable to the folks that are here. Thank you. >> Mr. Jacobson. >> Speaking from the perspective of a restaurant manager, not a land developer or real estate agent, all I hear right now, false choices. Is there a correlation, yes. But do we have the opportunity through the council to control this growth and engage with it? Yes. Because I can tell you the restaurant that I work at, for three years there were people with all kinds of mixed immigration status, backgrounds, economic class. They been fit because we have tech workers patronizing our restaurant. We need to lean into the change. We need to recognize we have the power to do it and quit advocating that we're not going to do anything. We can tout figures all we want, but if we don't go head-on into the issues, control this as best we can, then we're going to end up with the predicament we're in. Growth does not have to equal displacement. That is a false choice. We have an opportunity and if we don't seize it we're going to suffer the consequences. Let's give voice to the folks that are facing these issues. >> Thank you. The next question will be for Mr. Renteria. What aging infrastructure, from bridges to storm drains that control flooding, do you see that should be addressed while you are in office? How will you address the issue given that these same issues may exist in other districts in the city? >> Could you repeat? I'm sorry. >> Yeah. What aging infrastructure, like bridges to storm drains and flooding, do you see that should be addressed while you're in office, and how will you address the issue given that the issue may be in other districts also? >> Yeah. We're addressing our transportation problem. We just passed the largest mobility bond election,

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\$720 million. We have built miles of sidewalks. We have done major improvement in intersections to make them safe. I know we have borrowed \$30 million in bailouts for the onion creek flooding victims that were there. You know. We have made a huge commitment on investing -- on securing our residents from flooding. You know. We have embraced the zero traffic death. That's one of the biggest concerns. I have lost three people that worked or helped -- had friends that got killed on Riverside. So I invested my quarter cent money on the Riverside corridor. >> Thank you. Mr. Motwani. >> Well, I'm not going to get into the traffic or the bridge in the park that's been collapsed for a while. What I will talk about when it comes to aging infrastructure that we don't typically think about as infrastructure is really the support safety net that we have in the city, our social service system. It has not kept up with the growth, the

economic growth that our city has experienced. In our district, 70% of the children under six years old are living in poverty -- 70%. We need to make sure that we have early childhood education systems that are well-linked with our public schools, that offer high-quality early childhood education. That's the best possible investment that we can make for the best outcomes, both economically and healthwise. Not only that, we need to have a coordinated social service delivery intake and referral across the city if we really want to see good outcomes. And those kinds of elements need to be linked up with our workforce system as well.

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>> Thank you. Ms. Cohen. >> Since you touched on sewers and storm runoff, I wanted to bring up onion creek because it's fresh in everybody's mind, the buyouts and what the city was trying to do to help the residents of that area who had lost their homes, displaced in an area that was supposedly non-floodable. We just wasted an enormous amount of money on the construction of the waller creek bridge, another area that I think is probably pretty important. Due to the fact that so much of our storm runoff gets to town lake through that tributary, we need to start focusing on smaller runoffs, larger storm drains, bigger bridges so they have enough room to make it down to town lake. We have to spend more money, which nobody wants to hear. But it's the only way we're going to ensure that these type of situations don't happen again. >> Thank you. Mr. Valadez. >> I want to make sure that we're utilizing our quarter cent fund and parkland dedication fees accordingly. Every time these large-scale multifamily projects are constructed there's a bit of funding in there that can be utilized to create safe paths to schools for our children, sidewalks, and pedestrian beacons. So making sure we're utilizing those fundings we have in place right now is the first call to action as a councilmember. We need to specifically look towards a wildfire relief plan where our city is a system of parkland and trails and systems. So we need to ensure that we have a plan in place to make sure that if a wildfire were to take place, not just our flooding and our issues such as that, but specifically what we do in case of emergency. So having master plans associated with any -- thank

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you. >> Thank you. Mr. Jacobson. >> I can tell you what we can do first is talk to residents that live off suburban drive that have flooding in their house from the an industrial development down off of Ben white and 35 that's been there for 25 years and they've been asking for help from the city council and nothing's been done. We can start there. But we can come back to the fact that in codenext we've talked about new developments having better, less impervious cover, better water reclamation processes so there's less runoff in the streams. We can make sure that the next time that we come to do land development -- and this didn't seem to be the most contentious issue -- that we can have the leadership that will make sure these smart, green, environmentally conscious decisions are incorporated. So let's start by talking to residents in district 3 and making sure their houses respect aren't flooding. >> Thank you. Ms. Almanza. >> In the people's plan, we recommend one of the

recommendation is looking at drainage review and an environmental review policy, because when we look at infrastructure, we can't ignore that east Austin has always been underserved. I mean, people of color were put here in east Austin according to the master plan in 1928. But the infrastructure did not follow. And we can see from the recent floodings that have happened from the 1980s to most recently the flooding where people actually lost their lives. So we have to look at the whole drainage issue and make sure the infrastructure is completed. We have to make sure that when we're now -- codenext would have been high density and more impervious coverage. What would be the impact on communities around or downstream? When we look at the point apartments that build a detention pond the size of a football field, during the rain we had the water overflowed. So we have to take into

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consideration climate change and how it's impacting the whole drainage system. Thank you. >> Thank you. The next question will begin with Mr. Motwani. And it is effective community policing may require more officers than in the city police department. And the current council is willing to hire in this year's budget. Will more officers or some other approach help address issues that you see currently existing between members of this district and the police department? Why or why not? >> I don't think it's easy to say binarily that more officers is going to be a solution. The notion of community policing could be something that could assist, especially when it comes to relationships with the residents. I think an initiative like this would require very, very serious outreach to residents across the district, because the district spans many different areas, all of which have distinct relationships with the police. Those of us who have read the mayor's task force report on institutional racism and systemic inequity understand that there are certain regions that are disproportionately affected by discrimination, not just in the policing environment, but also banking and finance, in the ability to just thrive and maintain assets, to own property, where we're allowed to live and work, etc. So I think that, you know, it's not appropriate for me to give a binary answer that more officers would be correct. Outreach would be necessary. Profound. >> Thank you. Ms. Cohen. >> This is kind of a tough question for me, because I understand our community is growing. And more often than not, I like most of the Austin police officers I deal with, especially downtown. However, from a personal experience, until you've been

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held on the side of the road and called "It" or "That," there is no way, no way I could bring myself to hiring more officers until we fix the problems with the ones we have. It's an incredibly personal issue for me. They have the money for officers. If they can afford drones for their vehicular homicide unit, they bought two new drones, \$10,000, there's got to be money for more officers that we can use towards the ones right now for education. >> Thank you. Mr. Valadez. >> I think specifically we need to be focusing on making sure that the offer count that we have is keeping pace with our population growth. So we need to hire officers as they are needed based on the increased population, make sure we're keeping our streets safe. Specifically I want to make sure that there's programs in place for our youth when they

get out of schools, and while their parents still aren't home from work. So between the hours where there is that un-supervision period, we need to have athletic and academic, artistic programs at their disposal that are productive. We need to make sure that APD knows we're going to give them the resources that they need to do their job successfully. But at the same time we need to foster community goodwill and make a concerted effort to hire officers from the neighborhoods in which they are being tasked with patrolling. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Jacobson. >> I think what my fellow candidates have raised here are all very pertinent points of consideration. But we need to really start by listening to the wants and needs of our desire. We need folks that are going to go out and knock on doors and

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get a good consensus of where the status is or what the climate is like with the relation with the police department. We need to ensure that our officers, who are working hard, get the resources they need. There's an increased amount of community engagement that we could have here to get a better representative idea of what increased resources we need. I think there's a dialogue that's going on that hasn't happened and we need better engagement with our brothers and sisters throughout the district for sure. >> Thank you. Ms. Almanza. >> Yes. Being a native of east Austin, I understand the long history that the people of color have had to endure with the police department. And I think that community policing has come a long way, but there's a lot more that needs to be done. I believe that all the police officers should take the undoing racism class, because we don't just have individual problems. We have a structured, systemic problem. And as long as the systemic problems continue that you treat people of color and low-income people different than you do a more affluent society, we will continue to have these problems. So I think that yes, we need to work more. We need to make sure that the police department reflects the communities that they serve. We need to make sure that they live in the communities they serve. And I've seen this in different countries. And how the police brutality has gone. And we need to make sure that if there are police that constantly offend, we need to make sure that they are no longer in the police department, because that's not who we want. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Renteria. >> Yes, I support community policing. In fact, we were one of the first neighborhoods that implemented community policing here in east Austin. And as people that live here in this community can testify, this is one of the safest neighborhoods in east Austin. And it was because that we were able to reach out and work with

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some 67 of the toughest kids in this neighborhood through community policing. We were able to work with them, get them through high school. Every one graduated except for one. The problem we're facing right now is more of a budget program. We know that we need to higher more police officers, you know. We just don't have the budget right now to hire that many. But we are going to -- there's 40 are graduating just here this next two weeks, so we are graduating more police officers. And if the budget would allow us, we would increase more and hire more police officers. >> The next question will start

with Ms. Cohen. What do you see is the most pressing transportation need in district 3, and how will you address it? >> The Riverside expansion was a good start for district 3, for the southern part of district 3. I think now we need to focus more on more of the east-west routes through the city, especially on Cesar Chavez and 7th street, places where we could really expand the roads over into the east side to allow more traffic without maybe as many lights, and giving maybe a more direct route towards 183 so it would be easier to get to the airport. >> Thank you. Mr. Valadez. >> As a city, we've had some success with traffic light timing. Specifically we've had this experience on Chavez through the central business district. So I would move to try and expand our pilot programs in the traffic light timing to meet the demand that is on the roads at any given time. As mentioned earlier, I think we need to make sure that we have connectivity with our sidewalks

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and our park systems so that bicyclists and walkers, and so forth have better connectivity through our trail system. When it comes to our bus lines and our rail systems, I think we need to have clean and prompt, and reliable service and ensure that it's affordable. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Jacobson. >> As someone who spends two hours going from Riverside to north Barnett road to get to work, we're in a dire situation for traffic. First we need to talk to our residents who have been disserved by the bus routes. We need to make sure the most vulnerable among us can get to work on time. Second, we need to say we deserve a 21st century transportation system. Project connect has good ideas. We need a rail line going from the airport to Riverside down to republic square like ten years ago. We need to think about how do we innovate on final mile solutions and getting the disabled, elderly, young children from their front doors to the bus door. We have the potential to harness the creative power in the city to do that, but where has been the conversation, who's been talking about that? We have an opportunity in two years possibly with the bond election. Do we want the same cohort of folks that failed on project connect to try to sell the bond election? I don't know. We've got a lot of opportunities and district 3 is at the forefront of needing some serious change. >> Thank you. Ms. Almanza. >> Yes. One of the things we can do is make sure that all the highways have the HOV, higher-occupancy lanes so the traffic can go. We need to look at more synchronizing the lights. But we need somebody on the capital metro board that will stand up for those people that are not choice riders. We need to make sure we eliminate bus fares, that senior citizens are riding free, just

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like we have bike racks we need to put baby stroller racks. We need to make sure there's cross-town connections, express. And we need to make sure that the bus service is 24 hours. We're way behind the time. People work late at night. They need to be able to go. I've seen the handicapped at city council, they have to leave by a certain time. They can't testify because the bus service doesn't serve them. Doing those different things on the transportation is some way that we can improve. We need to make sure that there's equity in the distribution of sidewalks. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Renteria. >> Yes. I

played a key role in getting the council to approve the mobility bond. You know, that's including the major improvements in corridors on Riverside, airport, and pleasant valley. We're investing millions of dollars in sidewalks, safe route to schools. You know, safer and more efficient intersections. You know, we also made major improvements on pleasant valley, elmont, south congress. We also approved a turn lane there in montopolis to the health and wellness center. We also improved crossing at Mary gold terrace. We put traffic in a desolate road. There was a traffic fatality. We funded signals at south Harris and El Paso. Traffic cut-in on west St. Elmo, and sidewalk near St. Elmo elementary. >> Thank you. Mr. Motwani. >> I like to keep Austin weird, but I think it's really weird that we're talking about traffic lights up here. When it comes to transportation, really, you know, when it comes to light timing and buses and routes, have the engineers sort

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that out. Make it work. The question is, as Ms. Almanza and Mr. Jacobson said, make it accessible. We need to allow our seniors to be able to access these routes, particularly in our district. What's disproportionately represented are single female households. These are single female households who have children. And imagine riding the bus across town, paying multiple fares, carrying children around, and doing that for hours trying to make it to medical appointments on time, to job interviews on time, trying to find childcare so you can even do these things. We need to just make our transportation accessible, human-centered, promote quality of life and make sure that we have comprehensive social service delivery to surround those elements. >> Thank you. Our next question starts with Mr. Valadez. What is the next step for any comprehensive overhaul of the city's land development code to address issues such as gentrification, affordability, and the uniqueness of our neighborhoods, and how do you plan to address this? >> That's a great question. We need to first figure out what we learned from the first process. We need to sit down and set priorities as a community for what we value as a city. And so we would end up building a pyramid off of those concepts, right. So at the bottom, which would be the priority, if we all decide as an community it's an environmental concern, we would end up having long discussions about flood mitigation and things of that nature. And then if we move to transportation, we would talk about parking requirements and so forth. But specifically the things that I want to see preserved in a subsequent land development code would be the neighborhood plans, which imagine Austin calls for to be included in any subsequent

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code write. I'm also concerned with compatibility, specific as it pertains to our corridors, which east Austin and south Austin have many. And it could adversely -- thank you. >> Mr. Jacobson. >> I think the first thing that we need to do is to give voice to the most marginalized communities among us and respect what our neighbors have to say about how we build things and where we build them. That is the most critical indictment of the past process. A lot of us can agree we need high-density corridors. It's insulting to hear folks go around and say we need a more intellectual conversation. That's not what we

need. We need to have leadership that has a more heartfelt conversation about people concerned about what their neighborhood is going to look like, what their houses are going to look like that they've lived in for 30 years. There's a lot of smart data and ideas on ads, setbacks, lot sizes and what have you. But at the heart of this issue and why it fell apart is because people didn't get a voice. We didn't involve people on the margins. We're throwing out the system and doing crazy things. We need leadership that listens to people, values their voice, and starts restoring equity to a city that is long overdue for readdressing imbalances. >> Thank you. Ms. Almanza. >> Could you repeat the question? >> Certainly. What is the next step for any comprehensive overall of the city's land development code to address issues such as gentrification, affordability, and the uniqueness of our neighborhoods, and how do you plan to address this? >> Thank you. I think one of the most important things is that we have got to vote for proposition J, because proposition J gives us a choice that we've never, ever had before on having a voice of comprehension plan. So any new land development comprehension plan we are going to have a voice, and that's never been given to us before.

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I think the other thing is we have to return back to the district plans. We spent 13 million divided the city into 52 planning districts. Let's return to that, because that is more participation at the neighborhood level. I think that we need to also correct the small neighborhood plans that do have problems right now and make sure they go. And we need to make sure that we get away from the high density in our communities, because high density we know does not equal affordability. We know that studios are running 1500 to 2,000. We know that homes in the most poorest communities are selling for \$360,000. >> Thank you. Mr. Renteria. >> Yes. I was the only district in district 3 that created the homestead and passed the homestead preservation district where we reclaimed 10% of the added value and reinvested into affordable housing. We also worked with -- I passed a resolution to help the displaced tenants relocation assistance program, which would help people being displaced from low-income apartments and mobile homes. You know, my whole plan is to provide mixed income, mixed housing like we did at Mueller. Over 25% of those people in Mueller are low-income people. I supported Rebecca Payne, senior housing. We know we need density. We provide 72 feet for the housing authority -- 60 feet at the housing authority so they can triple their size to help the 30% low-income people there. >> Thank you. Mr. Motwani. >> One thing I like about our mayor is that he can acknowledge a failure. He aptly did so with the codenext process, indicating that it was poisoned. The first important step is outreach and doing it comprehensively and correctly. There are ways to do it. In a minute I can't explain

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that. Secondly we need to evaluate really just development, but housing affordability through a people-first paradigm. At the end of the day it's a best practice economically. We all know it. To not spend more than 30% of income on housing. So if we work back from our median income in our district, which is in the 30s, we're looking at a thousand dollars a month. Do you think a family of four is going to

be able to spend \$12,000 on mortgage or rent and make it? At this point if we're talking about our district, code is not what's going to bring affordability. Policy is going to bring affordability. In addition to that what I'm also seeing and hearing is that for homeowners who are better off but still can't maintain that property tax burden, just the ability to subdivide their homes is expensive. >> Thank you. Ms. Cohen. >> The first thing I wish we could do is get our \$8 million back. Since that's not going to happen, we need to look at the way the current land code is written. It's in a euclidian format, which refers to the village of euclid, a court case from 1920, a hundred years old. Why are we still using these same type of zoning laws from a hundred years ago? We're supposed to be at the forefront of Progressive values and technology. Let's start acting like it. Transects, it's a newer style of zoning where you can use dense core areas inside of neighborhoods that allows the neighborhood to maintain its culture while still expanding small retail shops and affordable, lower-priced housing. I think that's where we should really focus, building up, not out, keeping it affordable. >> Thank you. The next question we'll start with Mr. Jacobson. And this may be the last question. We'll have to see if we have time for another one after that.

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What is your position on the call for a comprehensive city anti-de-placement program, and how, specifically, do you suggest encouraging city council to work with the community and the grassroots proposals that have come before the current council? >> May I have you repeat that? >> What is your position on the call for a comprehensive city anti-displacement program and how, specifically, do you suggest encouraging city council to work with the community and the grassroots proposals that have come before the current council? >> These are very important and pertinent issues that we need to address. But I'm a bit saddened that we've gotten to a place where we're looking towards outside groups and we're looking to grassroots organizations to tackle issues of displacement. I think there's a big place to wonder where has council been on these issues for four years, why have we had to involve the folks on the fringes to deal with this. We have a big toolkit to deal with these things. I think at the core of it is how we listen to people, hold space with people, listen to their perspectives. And in a vacuum where that's not happening I think we are seeing a mushrooming of these movements and this dissatisfaction with what's going on at council. I really think there's an opportunity to just go out, knock on doors, talk to people, get engaged and you can get a better pulse on what's going on. >> Thank you. Ms. Almanza. >> First I want to start by saying it was the adoption of the Cesar Chavez plan, which I was -- we fought against -- that opened the floodgates to gentrification. At that time we said if you blanket zone our communities

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with commercial service mixed use, you're going to make sure that people of color no longer live here in Austin and you're going to see that people will not qualify for housing relocation and federal loans because they are not zoned single family. Those are some of the issues that was brought on by the first

adoption of that plan. We're working with the anti-displacement task force. Really it is the people's plan that has the answer. It is talking about establishing a low-income housing trust fund run by grassroots people and administered by them. It's talking about using public land, because that's where the cost is, is land, to do building low-income and moderate housing. It's also about the right to stay and the right to return. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Renteria. >> Yes. I cosponsored the fair housing initiative, which will provide more mixed-income development, comprehensive real estate and market analysis that we need, non-description for voluntary programs like smart housing and density programs. Also, smaller houses in high-opportunity areas. You know, we're doing a public investment in affordable housing with the new housing bond that we just approved. And we're taking it to the voters, \$250 million. So I have a track record that already proves what I'm doing. And bringing in -- we have created thousands of affordable housing here since I've been on the council. >> Thank you. Mr. Motwani? >> Could you erepeat that? >> What is your position on the call for a comprehensive city anti-displacement program and how specifically do you suggest encouraging the council to work with the community and the grassroots proposals that have come before them? >> My position is yes, in as

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much as working with -- looking specifically at grassroots proposals, I'm not familiar with those proposals. I would then recommend that we very specifically and profoundly engage with those organizations as well as their stakeholders and learn more about the proposals and make those evaluations. To continue the discussion around housing and affordability that we were discussing before, property tax relief is also a pretty commonsense solution. Enabling folks to be able to stay in their homes, giving folks the recourse to be able to, if necessary, what we're hearing is subdividing is the only option. If necessary to subdivide one's home there needs to be relief. It can't be cost prohibitive to do that to stay in your area. Putting affordable housing in certain areas is important and a start. But it's far more important and far more ethically imperative to allow folks to be able to stay in the homes that they were raised and grew up in. >> Thank you. Ms. Cohen. >> I think an anti-displacement program would require having committees comprised of citizens from each district who can help mediate between the city council and those people who are suggesting these grassroots solutions. I've heard some really good ones, everything from, you know, suing the state to lower the Texas education recapture fund, to working with a privately owned apartment complexes, to provide incentives from the city so that they will lower the overall rent. I think the best solution might be a mix of both where we work both with city council from a grassroots perspective, but also using maybe either like I said, district-appointed citizens or even possibly city employees who are familiar with the district.

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>> Thank you. Mr. Valadez. >> When I hear this question, I specifically think about the people's plan, which was recently adopted by council, so I'm excited to see how that plays out moving forward. Specifically one of the things it calls for is a call to action to utilize city-owned property for the purposes

of preserving and protecting and fostering affordable housing throughout our city and our communities. Recently, a soccer stadium was approved in north Austin on a very high-opportunity area that was on a bus line, on a transit line, west of 35. And I find it incredibly disingenuous that out of this process where we had no rfp and developers from the community offering to purchase this lot for over \$20 million, we agreed to subsidize a soccer stadium and get 130 affordable housing units out of the deal and called that square. Thank you. >> Thank you. We will now have to go to the closing statements. They will be one minute. We hoped for two, but we have to -- they'll quit televising this at 7:00. So we'll start with Ms. Almanza. >> My name is Susana Almanza and I am the founding member and director of poder, environmental social justice organization that's been around for 25 years. I'm a native of east Austin, a longtime community organizer, educator, mother, and grandmother. I participated in the civil rights movement, taking up issues of police brutality, housing quality, equity within the housing and healthcare as a right and not a privilege. I overcame poverty, prejudice, and segregated school to take on some of the most powerful transnational corporations in the world. I will advocate to preserve and

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expand the supply of low-income and moderate housing, make sure that we control public land for public uses, preserve and provide funds for small business and cultural assets, and also work on a citywide livable wage of \$15, and adopt and implement the people's plan and also the recommendations made by the African-American, Asian, and Latino hispanic quality of life commissions. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Renteria. >> During my time on the council, we have built thousands of affordable housing, created a homestead preservation district, added millions into the housing trust fund. We raised the living wage at the city, invested in job training programs, provided funds for after-school programs, and we also stood up to trump and fought back against the racial profiling and family separation policy. I am proud of my record. But there is still much work to do. And I hope to earn your support so I can keep fighting for our community. Thank you. >> Mr. Motwani. >> My name is amit motwani. And I'm here to humbly request and earn your vote. Our district uniquely -- with respect to affordability? In away that not many other districts in Austin are. And affordability means something different to a whole lot of people in our district, to the majority of people in our district. It's not about I'm getting to work a few minutes later. It's about my home is food insecure. I need to be able to get my children to school. I don't have the skills I need to be able to obtain a job to keep up with these rising costs of living. I'm on a fixed income and I can't do that. I just want to stay in my home. These are the affordability issues that I am here to work on.

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And I will bring accessibility, access, representation and voice to our district. And I hope for your vote. People first. >> Thank you. Ms. Cohen. >> They say the hardest part about running for office is fundraising, but it's actually this. It's getting out in front of everyone and putting yourself out there, and trying to talk without sounding like an absolute fool. The change I want to bring may not always flow

perfectly from my mouth, but if you'll talk to me, especially on the street or at my office, or call me, I promise you that I actually know what I'm talking about. I've been an emt for 25 years. I have worked from east Althoff to downtown. I have seen every bit of the front lines of city that you can imagine, good to bad. I'm a problem-solver. I fix broken things. If I can save a life, I can help save the problems of this city. Thank you. >> Thank you. Mr. Valadez. >> I want to talk about the three attributes I believe will make me a great councilmember if elected this November. They happen to be tied to specific things I've been given throughout my life and I carry with me every day. The first was given to me by my mother, a silver dollar. It reminds me to look after every dollar and spend it wisely. A skill I would bring forward to the budget process and attempt to bring meaningful relief to residents and business owners. The second from my father, a slice from the oak he was given at the parks department. It reminds me in every dispute, the answer almost always rests in the middle, which we can apply to the codenext rewrite process. The last thing is my grandfather's dog tags that I wear around my neck from his service in World War II. Every time I feel them, I am reminded that being brave enough to do what you know to be right

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and standing up for what you believe in is the most important thing that you can do. >> Thank you. Mr. Jacobson. >> Hi. I'm Justin Jacobson. And I want you to know I'm in this race because Austin is interwoven with the fabric of my being. I buried my mother 10 1/2 years ago after two years of being homebound, a prescription drug addiction, cancer. I have a big heart and a lot of love and I know my brothers and sisters need a leader and a voice at council who's going to validate, respect, sit and be witness to their concerns. That's what we need. Right now we're not leaning in fully to the challenges facing our city when it comes to our traffic getting longer. My rent hasn't gone down, my commute isn't shorter. We need to address that. We need heart to do that, to listen to our neighbors, because they're leaving. Their houses are getting demolished while we sit and talk about who knows what. Give an opportunity to bring a fresh perspective. We need a new generation of progress in the city of Austin to go with the young candidate, the person sitting at the confluence of these pressures and perspectives to give you something that will really change your life. >> Let's give a round of applause to all of these candidates. Thank you very much. Thank you, thank you. [ Applause ] >> And that applause was also for you all for coming out. Thank you so much for coming out. And I just want to tell you that for all of you, there is more information on who you can vote for. There is a website called [vote411.org](http://vote411.org). If you will go to that website, it will tell you every elected office that you are eligible to vote for in November. The Austin league of women voters, we publish a voter's guide for this county. We also have it in the libraries. But it's going to be online. It is at [lwvaustin.org](http://lwvaustin.org) and you can see our guide there. Early voting begins on Monday,

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October 22nd. Tuesday November 6th is election day. You may vote at any polling place that has a sign that says vote here, or vote aqui. Texas law requires identification, and the website and our volunteers

can give you information regarding what is required. Again, thank you so much for participating in our democracy. Have a good evening. [ Applause ]