

Audit and Finance Committee Meeting Transcript – 09/26/2019

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[9:36:56 AM]

>> Alter: Good morning. I'm Alison alter and I'm chair of the audit and finance committee. It is 9:36 A.M. I would like to call this meeting to order. I'm joined by mayor Adler and councilmember Flannigan and councilmember pool has just arrived. Councilmember tovo is off the dais today due to a scheduled medical procedure. We wish her all the best in a speedy recovery and she looks forward to returning next week. I would like to start with item 1 which is approve the minutes of the last meeting. Do I have a motion to approve the minutes? Councilmember Flannigan motions. Do I have a second? Councilmember pool seconds. All those in favor? Unanimous. Thank you. Is there anyone here to speak? I don't see anyone signed up, so that is item 2.

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We'll move on then to item number 3, the traffic safety design audit. >> This audit was managed by Andrea kegan and the lead was Kate Murdoch and she will be making the presentation. It's listed as the traffic safety design audit and if you see the report it was called design and education. It wasn't significant enough to change the agenda, but I just wanted to note that. >> Alter: Thank you. >> Good morning. Good morning, committee members. Our objective for this audit is the city promoting safety by designing intersections and educating the public about traffic safety. According to the Austin strategic mobility plan, on average more than 70 people lose their lives on Austin streets and another 450

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suffer life-altering injuries each year. In 2016 Austin adopted vision zero with a goal of zero traffic deaths and injuries by 2025. Since then, the city and the Austin transportation department have done a lot to promote traffic safety including the passage of two bonds which provided funding for intersection improvements and the development of two traffic safety plans. This audit looks at design and education efforts the city has made to address traffic safety. Our first finding is about the Austin transportation department's efforts to do and improve dangerous intersections. Atd has improved nine intersections since 2015 and is working on another eight. Preliminary data for four of these improved intersections suggests there's significantly fewer crashes at three of them, however, it is still too early to know the long-term success. Despite reducing overall

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crashes, it appeared few fatal and serious injury crashes had occurred prior to these improvements. This makes it unclear if these improvements will help the city reach its zero vision goal. Austin has approximately 21,000 intersections with resources to improve only three to four intersections per year, selecting the right intersections is important. We reviewed atd proposed methodology for future projects. This methodology selected 150 intersections based on the overall number of crashes occurring at each intersection. Atd planned to prioritize this list by looking at other fact task force such as severity and types of crashes later in the process. By not considering crash severity up front, the department may overlook some dangerous intersections. We found five intersections with relatively high number of fatal and serious injury crashes that were not identified through atd's process. Atd is currently revising this methodology. Our second finding is about

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data and documentation issues we identified. Some information used by atd to identify dangerous locations had missing or inaccurate data. For example, 10% of crashes in the Texas department of transportation's data base are missing location coordinates. This means atd has not been able to map a majority of these crashes when determining dangerous locations in the city. In addition, we found 7% of sampled crashes had location coordinates that did not appear to match the officer's description of where the crash had occurred. We also noted some instances where an officer's description of the crash was different from what was recorded in other sections of the crash report. In one example the officer wrote that a driver ran a red light because they were distracted, but driver distraction was not listed as a contributing factor in the report. In this case atd would only see the driver was distracted by reviewing the individual crash report. With more than 10,000 crashes on Austin roads each year, this would be time consuming. Our third finding is about

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improving education efforts. Atd and its partners use a wide variety of methods to educate road users including social media, printed materials, and outreach at public events. However, atd lacked education campaigns to address specific dangerous behaviors that are most frequently cited for causing fatal and serious injury crashes in Austin. While recent traffic safety plans have noted the need to address dangerous behaviors through education, these plans do not include specific strategies or details for how and when to implement these efforts. We reviewed vision zero plans in peer cities and found some of education strategies that might be helpful in Austin. We also have an additional observation about whether the city would make traffic safety goals. While the city has engaged in numerous initiatives and programs to promote traffic safety, it has limited ability to control some of the conditions that contribute to fatal and serious injury crashes. First the city has limited control over some key roads such as interstate 35.

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Second, state laws make it difficult to reduce speed limits and the state recently prohibited the use of red light cameras. Some populations are more at risk such as people experiencing homelessness. While a goal of zero traffic deaths and serious injuries is an appropriate vision for the city of Austin, it is unlikely the city will eliminate these crashes by 2025. We made four recommendations to address these findings and the department agreed with them. This concludes our presentation. We welcome your questions. Thank you. >> Alter: I'd like to hear from the department first and then we can ask our questions if that's okay. >> Thank you, madame chair and fellow committee members. I'm Robert Spillar, director of transportation for Austin transportation department. I'm joined by Lewis, our new

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traffic safety officer, vision zero officer, and also my acting assistant director and lead traffic engineer Eric Baller to answer your questions. Vision zero is a tricky concept because obviously it's a vision, and obviously the cards are dealt against us in a lot of ways, whether we have lack of control over major roadways that contribute, I-35 was mentioned, it contributed to just about a quarter of serious injuries and fatalities this year so that's certainly another roadway that we don't have direct access around. Certainly we have state laws that are a challenge. Certainly we have people that like to drive fast because of the long distances here in the state of Texas. But you know those are not reasons not to try and I think you all pointed that out. You know, when we started atd before we even had a vision zero, the discussion around fatal crashes and so

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forth, there was really an attitude of, well, there's not much we can do because it's speed, it's alcohol, it's personal behavior. Since then we've changed that and largely due to advocates that want us to to pursue a vision zero because that's the right thing to do. I don't know what other goal you would accept other than zero when we're talking about family members and our friends and community members. As the auditor pointed out, that's the appropriate goal to get to. And that we need to do everything possible to get there. We have started, you know, with vision zero and even before then working with our fellow sister departments, Austin police department, and thank you to the council for helping on these issues. We started with the data we had and we continuously try to improve that data, but when you start with data, there's holes in it and as you learn better how to do it, we improve it. I think there is professional debate about what is a dangerous

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intersection, you know, and I think one of the points that the auditor pointed out is that, you know, of our fatalities that are occurring many times just one and they can be very serious, by the way, at remote intersections so is that a dangerous intersection, or is an intersection where we may or may not have had a fatality but serious injuries, high incidents rise to the top where we find clusters of incidents that we know contribute potentially to dangerous or fatalities or serious injuries that we can actually address. My point there is there is a bit of an art there. I wish I could tell you there was an engineering cookbook we could go to and say this is how you identify a dangerous intersection. One of the things we're excited about is Austin was one of the first large cities in the state of Texas to adopt a vision zero. I think San Antonio beat us by a month, not because they were necessarily ahead of us, just we couldn't get to you all fast enough to get a vision zero policy put in

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place. Since then all the major cities in Texas have told us. The state of Texas has adopted a similar process. We're actually now sitting on their statewide traffic safety committee as one of the only cities participating in that, helping them to look at their own policies to how we can do better. In fact, I'm happy to tell you this is really sort of an official we're working directly with the txdot Austin new engineer for this district and we're probably going to test a new product on I-35 where we know we have lots of pedestrians running across I-35 to dissuade pedestrians from getting across at a relatively inexpensive level. I congratulate Louis for that because he and his staff reached out and found something txdot had never seen before. So we're making differences and that's really what I want to leave you with. We're being looked to by the rest of the country, our experts on vision zero are being asked to come to national conferences and tell how in a sun belt city

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where vmt is growing dramatically, population is growing by 160 a day, that where we're able to hold the number of fatalities constant. And I know that's not our goal, but it's a huge achievement within that sort of program that is -- as our trips and our travelers are increasing, that we've been able to retreat from the 2015 peak and get down to a number that has steadily decreased. Now, I guess this should be a pillar alert, we're -- spoiler alert, we have a spike coming this year. We're already at levels that suggest that we're going to be above our average that we've been able to get to. So we're tightening up our efforts. We are redoubling our efforts to get there. I'll turn it over to Louis the present our feedback and the rest of the context. This is an audit over our design process and our education process. There's more to vision zero

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we want to make sure you take into context so we can better answer your questions. >> Thank you for the opportunity to respond and I also want to thank the audit team for their hard work. They've done a lot of good work to understand and communicate with us throughout the process. We are focused on continuous improvement, specially related to this program, it's an important part of our organization. We recognize the areas that were identified and we agree with all of those. We do want to provide a little more broad context because there is some missing context we think to the fact this was a narrowly scoped audit to design an education. Appreciate the opportunity to talk with you about that. Director spillar has already talked any death is unacceptable, it's a core tenet of core number. We are always going to stick with zero and I think it's an aspirational but appropriate goal moving forward. Audit also did not touch on

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some other programs that contribute to transportation safety. Transportation department we've got a signals group that looks at retiming when there are crashes, the signs and marking group that's continuously refreshing our crosswalks and other pedestrian related infrastructure. Active transportation group putting in dozens of miles over the last few years of protecting buffered bike lanes. We've got a variety of programs that all contribute and I think that's where we get to that mind set about what transportation zero is, it's broader than that. There also is another core tenet about the shared responsibility. It means the system designers, system operators, but also policy makers, individual users of the roadways all center a part in playing towards this overall goal of vision zero. It's a city issue that we're taking on as a program, but it's a communitywide challenge and we're going to need everybody to play their part in order to achieve this goal.

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The last piece really we'll get into more, but it's going to take significant systemic changes and leadership. I'll show you other examples from leading cities and it's going to take us to achieve this goal some really big decisions about how we want our operations and roadways to function in order to achieve this goal. So consistent leadership is going to be important. We appreciate all the leadership this council has done approving policies and making sure we're on the right track. It's going to take shifting of mind set to get there. Overall context, this sort of idea about transportation started decades ago in the Netherlands. We talked about stop the Kinder rules, stop the child murders. They were losing over 400 children a year to traffic accidents and didn't think that was appropriate. Over the period of decades they've been able to achieve what we're trying to get to, going from 114 traffic deaths in 1970 down to 11 in

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recent years. That's going to take a period of time that we should expect that we're also going to need to face over time. When you talk about systemic changes, it takes time. The leading countries have seen 50, 60% reductions. A key point there is nobody at zero, even though that is the appropriate goal. We are trying to understand what it's going to take to get there and some of the common factors are about speeds. All of these locations have maximum urban speeds between 18 and 30 miles per hour. The maximum blood alcohol content when we talk about impairment is .02 and .05 where we have .08 as our standard here. Consistent strong education enforcement and alternative transit options all play into a safer roadway network. Understanding where we stand and the context that we operate in within the state of Texas, that's the top line, state of Texas has not seen a reduction from that same period of time as other places have and it points to the fact we have different

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systemic issues and what we operate under. A lot of people point to new York City. They've seen significant reductions in fatalities. I want to point out some of the common factors. They've addressed speeds, they've got slow Zones in key corridors, they reduced just like Portland and other locations, they reduced prima facie speeds down to 25. Consistently enforced behaviors, speeding, distracted drivers, failure to yield, these are the same other locations see and they have a commitment from their police department to enforce those behaviors and that's been rising over that same period of time those deaths have reduced. They also have automated enforcement. It has seen significant reduction in key school zone areas, 60, 70%. We are ham strung by that state law. Consistent leadership, this is times square where they changed the whole outlook

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and functioning of that particular location. They removed lanes of traffic, they did not allow vehicle traffic to come through one of the most highly recognized locations in our nation. And they got pushback from business owners, pushback from other people involved saying it's never going to work, you are going to affect mobility and that's not what they've seen. They've seen increase in sales in those locations. It's going to take consistent leadership to say just because a few folks might be complaining about what we're doing to achieve safety goals, we have to stick with those and make hard decisions over time. Again, we appreciate the work the auditors did. They got really into the details and we agree with a lot of the recommendations they put out there. We're looking forward to the discussion with you today. >> Alter: Thank you. Before we jump into broader questions, I wanted to ask to clarify two factual elements. So we've had a spike this

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year. Where are we as of now as of September in the number of fatalities for this year? >> The latest data that we have, the official APD stats as of 9-16, we're at 61 traffic fatalities versus 51. About a 20% increase from that point last year to this year. >> And you councilmember, if I can say something, often when you are in the midst of a spike, you know, we've recognized we have a spike, we don't yet have enough information really to necessarily pinpoint what the cause is. I mean, that's the unfortunate thing. Sometimes we have to gather all the data and look backwards. Every fatality is analyzed individually and many of them have similar issues, speeding and distraction tends to be the highest. But as I said, you know, it's disturbing to me that a quarter of our fatalities are occurring on I-35 where speeds are very high and/or

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pedestrians are intruding into a place where we cannot provide safety for them. >> Alter: Is that number percentage on I-35 different this year or is it -- tracking back? >> The APD calls in to to APD about pedestrians being on the highway or access roads, they've seen an increase of 10 or 12% in calls saying there is somebody on the roadway. We understand it is an increase. We don't know the exact numbers of people crossing every day, but the studies we've seen from tti and others say it's at least one a day. So I can't tell you exactly if that change is happening relating to the fatalities, but there's probably an increased presence this year as opposed to last year. >> And the other thing I would say is we don't know what is the underlying cause. You know, I think it might be easy to point to one thing or the other, but we know there's portion of I-35 where this spike is occurring where significant bridges have been taken out of use. The saint John's bridge was

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taken -- was removed, which left a huge gap for some period of time while they are reconstructing that interchange. It's hard to pinpoint exactly why in all cases. We would love to be able to do that until after the fact. We're working on it. To figure out why. >> Alter: Okay. I might come back later to whether it's really I-35 is the issue. I wanted to get the other factual question, so the auditor, your office identified five intersections that you think given the severity of the crashes should have been investigated. Can you provide us with those five intersections? >> Sure, and I would like to say up front that we were reviewing a methodology that created a list that has not been acted on. It is something that is continually evolving as their data gets better, as their process gets better. It wasn't that they, you know, nothing was acted upon yet. So I just wanted to clarify

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that. The five intersections that we identified were interstate 35 and sixth street, 290 at cone I go, 290 at Harris branch and 183 at lakeline mall. >> Alter: Thank you. Colleagues, questions? Mayor? >> Mayor Adler: First I want to say there's a lot of really positive news in this -- in this audit that I'm pleased to see. We wanted to get to zero and I think we have to maintain that goal. I don't know how you can set a goal anywhere else. And quite frankly, we continue to push for that. I don't think it's unattainable. I think as technology changes and education changes and practice changes, I still hope that we get there. I recognize it's not going to be something that happens immediately, but I am real comfortable with that being our goal.

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I'm encouraged that even while the city has increased in population and number of vehicle miles, increased substantially as we have over 100 people added every day to the region, that the rate has stayed the same. And I think that that's encouraging. I think that the -- I recognize that one of the things that the audit points out is that it's hard to be predictive of where it is there's going to be severe crashes and fatalities. We have so few relative to the number of intersections that we have that many of the intersections where we've had one we've only had one. At the same time, we know where more crashes occur without regard to severity and that there's a balance between trying to figure out where the next fatal or severe crash is going to be and handling the incidents

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of crashes that we see and that balance between frequency and severity, how do you -- how do you deal with that? What's the best practice for dealing with that? >> That's exactly the research we're doing this summer with university of Texas, so they've got a center for transportation research. We've also included a policy professor from the lbj school and somebody else from a different school in the engineering school to understand and identify the different approaches that are out there. We know there are kind of historical traditional approaches where you take the number of fatal and serious injury crashes, map it out, say where have they happened in the past. However, there are other factors. Is the volume something that's going to be addressed. There's one fatal crash in 1082 or typical volume coming through, is that more or less dangerous than an intersection that's got a lot more volume and a fatal crash happened. You've got to find that right balance. It is an art more than a

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science. There are different methodologies so we're looking in the next couple of months we'll be able to say what our methodology is moving forward and find that balance between historical crash area and the systemic risk factors related to speed, high crash intersections and where the potential is for those sorts of crashes to occur in the future and find the right balance. >> Mayor Adler: That's good. It's important to be able to articulate whatever standard you are us why go. So if we aren't getting the results we'll know where to look at to be able to change. While the director toured the transportation department might be things that should be directed towards APD in terms of the some of the reporting issues. I know an audit like this just goes to atd for the follow-up and the staff response, but I wonder if this kind of audit there ought to be the opportunity for APD to reply and be

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brought into the conversation so they can be part of it, respond to the request and take a look at. So if you are looking at this in the future, we're not only checking back with transportation department, but we're also checking back with the police department on a primary level. It might be something to take a look at. Is that something that's already happening? >> So specific to this audit, we really did focus on transportation. We know they have established relationships with APD and txdot related to data. And so we really zeroed in on transportation as kind of our responding. But we have past audits, one specifically related to kind of transportation strategies that included APD within that and actually had some comments about this data. Actually there's been some evolution, we're happy to say, since that audit in terms of the data we're using and we also had a prior audit looking at enforcement where our recommendations were really directed both to APD as well as to the municipal court. >> Mayor Adler: It looked like some of the things in this audit related to how accidents were reported by

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APD. So there is a reporting issue associated with that. And almost seemed like atd was being asked to almost be held responsible for some of the actual reporting that comes out of APD. And I know that their sister agencies and teams in working together, but it might be something at a primary level in terms of checking it, it goes directly to them too in an audit like this that I know was designed to go to atd. But in the work you are doing raised these other issues. You might consider adding them in kind of a responsive reporting and reacting to the audit kind of way. >> Sure. >> Alter: Mayor, I just wanted to add to that, I was plan to go ask them when we made the motion to approve, APD send us a memo on how they are going to cooperate with respect to the data moving forward because I have the same concern and I think that asking them to respond, I don't think we have to hold up the audit,

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per se, but a formal response to the council I think would be -- >> And madame chair, may I add one thing. We have a very strong partnership with Austin police department. One of the things that I guess I would point out is when we started this process, we started with the data they provided, and as we found that we needed more things or more rigger in different pieces, they've been there to hear that. We've been talking about can we put gps technology in to better lock the location of where the incident occurs to where the data associates that with and working through the logistics. It's a good partnership, but as you start to use data and find there's a weakness, you can't go back historically and correct it, you have to correct it and move forward. So we will -- yes. >> I think that's a really good idea. Last point, going back to the question of what should be our goal and how does that happen, you know, it's

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only been fairly recently we adopted our -- explicitly adopted our zero goal. It hasn't been that long and I think that some things -- some of the important things that have to happen happen over time. A lot of it is change behaviors, it's distracted driving issues, a lot is speed governed by state law that we're working at the state legislature to be able to change. Part of it is increased enforcement based on the audit earlier and I know we've added more police officers and over the next four years are planning on adding more officers as we move forward. Most if not all of the pedestrian fatalities involve people that have been experiencing homelessness in the city. I think the audit indicated. So to the degree that we're successful as a city in getting to zero homelessness in our city, we found better, safer places for people to be, I think that also is going to impact those numbers.

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As we improve transit in the city, we have more people using that. We have Ford coming in with new technology on autonomous vehicles so now we can have cars being driven by people that -- being driven with drivers that don't fall asleep and that always follow the traffic laws. I think that's going to be helpful. So I just think that it's real important for us to maintain that goal, and I do think that over time it is achievable and we have to be pointed in that direction. >> Alter: Any other colleagues with questions? Go ahead. Nurse councilmember pool. -- Councilmember pool. >> Pool: Thanks for the additional audit as we continue to work through Austin transportation department and so forth, the lower vehicle speeds throughout the city and giving priority to lowering the speeds in the interiors of neighborhoods continues to be an item that I am actively pursuing.

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Can you remind me what the legislature -- was there legislation this year or was it that the city passed a change to our ordinances that allowed us to drop speeds by five miles per hour throughout the city? >> Mayor Adler: Why don't you go ahead. >> Thank you. >> So the state legislature had a couple of bills I think that were going to try to address the prime Facey speed. The speed people should be traveling is what that comes down to. Right now it's at 30 miles per hour. The bill would have proposed to make that 25. The bill did not pass. However, we've taken a second look and we're working with our law department currently to see under current state law what are options available. We know there are two approaches, engineering traffic studies to do it on specific street segments. We can -- council by ordinance can declare a speed limit to be unreasonable or unsafe. We're looking at what combination of those different options that are

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available to us could we try to apply to something that might be systemwide on level one streets or government core to get to speeds we think makes sense for the safety purpose we're trying to achieve. >> Pool: That's really good and that's an issue I've been chasing for the last four and a half years, so thank you for that. I think the more people we have walking or on alternative mobility-type devices the more important it will be to slow vehicles down. So thank you for that. I think also key is making sure that the sidewalk system is permeated through our entire community and that they are all completed and connected and in good repair. That also will do a lot to helping us reduce fatalities. I would like to once again urge that our staff consult with schools on driver's education curriculum, do something with - I realize that the classes aren't taught in the public schools like they were when I was a

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kid, but leaving it to parents to teach their children how to drive, which sometimes is the only option if you can't afford to pay for the classes in the private sector means that you are simply transferring whatever you think is a good habit or way of driving along to your children, and that may not actually be the best way to do it. So I would really like to see us work more diligently as far as driver's education. I was getting calls, particularly in the northern part of my district, just this week with school buses coming back on to the streets. I mean, they've been back for a couple weeks now, but -- and drivers passing stopped school buses. And we all know you are not supposed to do that, and yet people are doing it. So -- and I think there was a press -- there was some press coverage of that both in aid and pflugerville ISD

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schools in the area and where the complaints from the parents were coming from. So I think that education is key, but even so since we are seeing drivers again passing stopped school buses even though they shouldn't be, what sort of education campaign -- don't we usually, doesn't is city roll out something this time of year to remind drivers not to pass stopped school buses? >> So, you know, with education, and that was one of the comments the's areas we should look into, what we try to do is partner with other partners in the area. The school districts not only educate about don't pass the buses, but they also now have cameras. >> Pool: Well, at least aid does. I don't know in pflugerville does. >> But many school districts are going to that. It's unfortunate we have to do that, but it is a good way to try to stop repeat behavior. We will look into ways to

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better educate. You know, clearly public announcements. We started doing social media campaigns with some pretty hard-hitting videos. There's a good one right now about speeding and making bad choices about running red lights or running amber lights or whatever device. >> Pool: No matter what device you are on. >> Exactly. We've got a good YouTube video out now that's getting a lot of praise. That's one thing we've been working towards is getting more blunt in our education, if you will, explaining you have a choice. If you speed, it's your life, you have a choice and it's somebody else's life as well so make a good choice. Because as was said earlier, we really need this buy-in from the community as well, you know. When you look at the other major ways people are unfortunately dying unexpectedly in this community, whether it be murder or fire or whatever,

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those are all dwarfed by fatal traffic incidents. And so we've got to make that unacceptable to die in a traffic incident just like it's unacceptable to die in a fire and just like it's unacceptable to die in a murder, we've got to get the general public to go that's unacceptable and they have a part in controlling that. >>

Pool: That's good. Could you send us the link to the YouTube psa? >> Yes. And please feel free to send it out. >> Pool: And also, is there maybe -- are there maybe some opportunities to work with the different chambers of commerce? >> Yes. >> Pool: And, like, the various business groups to get their assistance? >> We are looking for all partners. A full team approach. >> Pool: The other two things I wanted to mention was the role that the police department is playing in this. We know that anecdotal, at least, that where there's an incident, oftentimes the marking of the location is based on the most -- the

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proximate intersection, not precisely like the hundred block that it's in. And there's also the geo location, difficulty if you are on the flyover of something, but it happens on an access road it's hard to pinpoint that. But it brings us back to the fact that we are relying on the data to inform our decisions and it's that old saw that says, you know, bad input in, bad outcome comes out. So the data really does need to be accurate and maybe there are new strategies that we can use maybe, Mr. -- >> One thing we're doing now is at the police academy when the academy is going through data collection, we actually now are inserting information of, you know, engineers are also using this information, traffic analyses is also using this information in building that awareness that, you know, there's other people using

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this information to achieve the end things. And I think that's going to pay off in a big way is as people know what the data is being used for, they are going to take more care in making sure that we have enough information. >> Pool: Good. >> To make good decisions. So again, Austin police department has -- and chief Manley has been a great partner in this. I don't want anyone to leave here without knowing that. >> Pool: Right. >> But it still takes time to improve the process. >> A couple more specific examples, the geo location piece is a challenge. About 10% were seeing over the course of nine years, closer to 13% that did not have an X Y field as we access from txdot. One is what's happening and collected at the scene and APD has been great having conversations about devices on the scene and whether they could add that geo location capture there. The other is the algorithm

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that txdot uses that don't have that exact xy. We've developed a data base that we're -- we've already started, I think we've gone down from 13 to 3 to 4% of records that don't have an xy field and we're going to verify the ones with fatal or serious injuries. We've got a process moving forward any analysis especially related to 2018, we're going to have the best available data and it's been verified at least to the ones more important for analysis. >> Pool: That's good to hear. The last piece on the data is the

impact on traffic surrounding where the incident occurred. So I think it might be helpful for us to have a fuller appreciation of a crash if we know that either traffic was allowed to proceed, if it was rerouted or if it was stopped and how long was it stopped. Because that then affects the entire transportation system. And I think that that would also be a really useful piece of data to round out

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the pictures that we're drawing for each of these circumstances. >> Yes, and there's actually a safety-related issue with that. Many cities or many states you see, hey, if it's a minor crash, get it on of the right-of-way or the roadway. There's a reason. The longer you are in the roadway, the more you are at risk for somebody else hitting you. And so, again, our state does that is the law. If it's a minor crash, remove it. That could be where we start working with drivers education courses. How many of us had parents that say if you get a fender bender, don't move the car. Well, that's the wrong thing. We need to get off the roadway. >> Pool: All of it is related. Thank you. >> Alter: I'm going to make a couple comments quickly and maybe ask a question. So first of all, we have location with 311. So this technology exist. This should be straightforward. If nothing else they can take a picture, submit it to 311 and you will have your data there. I think that should be

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surmountable. I wanted to ask if you could make sure as we go through this experiment of taking the red light cameras off we're being clear about our data about whether we have increased crashes in those areas. The state has made it so we don't have that tool in our toolbox for vision zero, and I think we will need to be documenting the changes that occur following that change. I wanted to point out that on the website for vision zero, it's very out of date and for the community that is trying to look at this or is concerned about the fatalities, the map is from 2015. I wanted to ask you to make sure you update that. And while I agree that the goal should be zero in that there are many things that we do as a city that impact and feed into this question of fatalities, this audit is still raising questions about whether we are spending the money that we have dedicated to vision

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zero in the most effective way. And it is highlighted this issue between the number of crashes and the severity and suggested that we need to be weighting the severity more. And while it seems like you are taking that seriously in your response, I don't want us to lose sight of the fact that the audit is still raising questions about that and that we need to be mindful if we are going to go to the voters and ask them to invest in vision zero that there are still questions about whether we're spending this in the most effective way possible. You focus in on intersections. There were a number of other things that have

been mentioned today that we could be looking at. Can you speak really, really briefly to why you focus on intersections? I'm going to ask you to be really brief. >> Intersections are where cars -- I'm going to be

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straightforward, are crossing each other's paths and so that's -- those are conflicts and so that's where the most conflicts occur. We're not ignoring the fact there are incidents along the links or between the intersections, but the intersections by far are where we have the greatest conflicts. Four-way intersection can have as many as 36 conflict points and that's why we look at that. >> The evolution of the data, our access and availability of data will give us a much better chance to address the really high risk locations. That systemic analysis will identify where engineering treatments can improve the outcomes and not just look at individual fatal crash that's might have been related to a DUI or dwi or some other factor more behavioral upstream. We're going to do our best job to find that right balance of understanding the historical crash pattern, systemic risk factors and which can be addressed by engineering treatments. >> Alter: On page 12 of the audit in the management

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response it talks about the need to increase enforcement efforts, which is kind of out of atd's hands and I don't see any management response to talk about how we are increasing enforcement efforts. Can you speak to that and then we're going to wrap it up. >> Yes, councilmember. You know, one, we work very closely with APD and now have a steering committee where they are key participants, as is the county and city prosecution are now part of that as well so that we can coordinate and make sure that the regulations and policies we help you pass are ones they can enforce. But we also directly fund additional traffic and safety enforcement efforts. This year we are funding the entire no refusal nights and weekends program out of transportation dollars because it is directly related to vision zero, and so we will continue to look for those opportunities. The don't block the box and keeping the intersections open is directly funded as

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is speed control where we have specific issues that we know we need to address with enforcement. So we will continue to look at how we can expand that, councilmember. >> Alter: Thank you. I will entertain a motion to accept the audit with T request to APD to provide the information on how they will help improve the data collection. Councilmember pool so moves. Seconded by mayor Adler. All those in favor? Aye. Thank you very much for your work on this. We'll now move to the item number 4, the fiscal year 2020 proposed draft audit plan. If the clerk could taking if there's any speakers at any point. >> So

this -- you should have a copy of the audit plan in front of you. This is a fairly quick presentation, similar to the one I gave last time which is basically that I think you all know, but for the

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public we are required to present an annual audit plan with basically proposed audits for the coming fiscal year. And the council audit and finance committee has responsibility of reviewing that plan and making a recommendation to full council. My expectation is that at least tentatively we're looking at October 17 for the full council so I'm asking you today for recommendation. There are -- thank you. Just in terms of -- so on the plan itself, there's a back page that has our carryover projects, some that are already completed, but not yet presented to the committee just from a committee capacity, meeting capacity issue. And then there are other carryover projects that we expect to finish in the coming months. In addition to those, we have some new projects. I've mentioned this I think individually to you guys, but we expect redistricting efforts which kind of for our office start in 2020, I think for the city as a whole they are culminating in 2021, but we have

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responsibilities related to initiating when we public lies an application process for the members of the citizen review panel and citizen redistricting commission. Lots of words there. But basically we expect to be a big piece of our work this year. In addition to that, we proposed a cost savings initiative or revenue enhancement basically looking at ways we can increase revenue knowing with tax caps as well as the conversation last year about what is the city doing to look at efficiency, we'll be, working hand in hand with the city manager because that's an area of attention for him as well. Some other audit on the plan, I won't go through each of them, but we're proposing the audits here as well as here. The last thing on this, we have two things at the bottom one is required. One is our registration requirement. We're doing that now for the current fiscal year but proposing to do again in 2020 and our ongoing follow-up. We talked about this in committee, but we have been

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ramping up efforts to follow up on more of the recommendations we issued previously. Because if we don't, then we never know that change occurred, so we spend a lot of time doing audit, but we need to do the follow-up effort. So these are the topics we're proposing and we're happy to answer questions, take comments or get a recommendation from you guys. >> Alter: Councilmember pool, you move to accept -- to refer it to council? >> Pool: Yeah. With the recommendation [inaudible] >> Alter: With recommendation for approval. Mayor Adler? >> Mayor Adler: Do you have an idea what you are looking at for the cost savings one? Do you have a feel? >> Some of the idea of that project was create a little bit

of flexibility because I think new things come up all the time. We had some things that came up in our discussions specific to this related to cost savings. So looking specifically at some things we talked about from the expenditure or kind

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of calling it outflows, money going out, we were talking about looking at stipends, some of the various kind of expenditures that happen by department and category so that was an area we talked about reviewing and trying to identify maybe anomalies or trends. Contract you'll expenditures was another area, so our use of consultants kind of broadly. A topic we talked about a lot with council offices is the kind of concept of obsolete technology, are we using the most cost effective technology. And flipping to the revenue side, some of the things that pop up there that are just a large percent of our revenues or could be, bad debt expense, we have the fees, fines, charges, et cetera, for city services. That's a pretty big kind of huge topic. Also in conversations at the last audit and finance committee we talked about

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property tax exemptions, how those are being applied. Are they -- like the homestead exemption, is that being applied per the city ordinance, per the city rules. And then also sales tax is always an area where there's an allocation from the state and that's something we can look at to verify we're getting all the revenue we should be. The last piece of that that we want to pick up on and coordinate more closely with city manager is just efficiencies. Like I said before on obsolete technology, but are there emerge being technologies we could be leveraging. Are there -- is there overlap or duplication of services, and that's something that we haven't really developed methodology for but we want to start looking at within this initiative. That was a lot of things. >> Mayor Adler: People can think about those. Last, and we have a recurrent conversation, these audits are done because a need is expressed, we have the lobby registration compliance, number 11, which by city

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code happens regularly. Is that still a good use of our time or should that happen as needed as it's identified that there's -- we're falling out of balance or is that something we should continue as we are doing? >> From my perspective, we've only done it once and I think we identified some information there that could be useful, kind of in [inaudible] Those processes. We're doing it again right now. As we complete that work we may come back and say we think this might be better every two years or some other interval. Right now I think a lot of the work that we're doing is really just verifying that the selector and the law he want -- city clerk and law department. Right now today I don't have a specific we should keep doing this or not but I expect at the conclusion of the work to say here's another way to do this. >>

Mayor Adler: It could be you come back and say do it every six months. As you do this analysis, if you would make part of that a recommendation to council in which you think the

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ongoing frequency should be would be helpful. >> Sure. >> Alter: Councilmember pool. >> Pool: Isn't it set by charter how often you are supposed to do that? >> It's in city code. It's in the -- you guys would have the ability to adjust that. I would say here's what we are getting out of it and put it out for consideration how frequently it needs to happen. >> Pool: I think in our conversations and presentations to this body it has gone very smoothly and frankly quickly, so it doesn't seem to have a big impact on your staff time. Is that correct? >> It is a -- I think the last time we did it it required more staff time. It won't require as much going forward. >> Pool: I wouldn't want to scale back, mayor, any of the transparency, but if you are thinking about doing it twice a year instead of once, I would be interested in looking at that. I think the community really wants to know about the effect of money on governance and that's one of the ways we know what's

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happening. >> Mayor Adler: I wasn't suggesting any intended or preferred frequency. I just noted it was a conversation we had before and we set the frequency before we knew how long it would take or easy it would be to do. I just wanted to make as part of that just for the auditor to comment and say -- >> Pool: Sure, and you mentioned you might want to do it more frequently and mentioned six months. Maybe that's right, maybe we look at doing it more frequently. I think it's something that our community looks for and cares about. And I think we all do, the accountability and transparency. >> Alter: I have a motion on the table but I don't have a second. Mayor Adler seconds the motion. All in favor of referring the audit report to council? It's unanimous. We will now move to item number 5, an annual pension update on the city's three retirement systems. Austin firefighters relief, Austin police retirement

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fund and the city of Austin employees retirement system. There are clearly serious issues that we need to address within our pension system. That have come out in a recent report. I always want to flag in either October or November they will be coming back to us for a deeper dive to share initial plans and how we can address that particular situation. I have already asked for particular information and data to be part of that conversation about comparative to other cities in terms of the history of

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how we've made these adjustments over time and some of the legal aspects of that. Feel free to add those kinds of things, but the expectation today is that we're not going to be solving that challenge today. We will be receiving this report, you can, of course, ask your questions. We need to definitely be moving into executive session by 11:00 and we have one more report. So thank you. >> Good morning. Belinda weaver, interim CD treasurer. To start off I just wanted to provide a to provide a update or quick informational session on the city's pension plans in general. So the city of Austin has three employee based pension plans that is the city of Austin's employee retirement system and the Austin police retirement system, finally the Austin firefighters relief and retirement fund.

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These are contributory to define pension plans, governed by state law and has minute numb contributions. Each is seen over by a board of trustees and these are elected officials, management employees, employees and retiree. And I do want to point out that there is councilmember and financial staff is that on each of these boards for employees. It is councilmember pool and deputy cfo Ed van eenoo. For police it's councilmember tovo, deputy city manager and cfo align hart as well as myself and for statute the mayor is the chair of the board and the city treasurer is on that board as well. The next slide . Is the pension eligibility for pension funds. It is all full-time city of Austin employees. There are two groups associated with employees

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funds and they have different retirement eligibility requirements as well as different benefit provisions and depending on the hire date of the employee will determine which group they fall into. For police it's all commissioned law enforcement officers that are employed by the Austin police department and cadets upon enrollment in the Austin police department and for fire it's all commissioned firefighters who have six months of service with the Austin fire department. This next slide just details the contribution rates for the three plans, and I do also have listed on there the city contributions as far as a dollar amount is concerned. These number are from the 2018 city of Austin comprehensive report. So they're all of September 30th, 2018. And city contributions for employees is a little over

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114 million for fiscal year 2019. Police is almost 40 million and fire almost 20 million. The next is plan details. Employees is by far the largest plan with almost '18 thousand 500 participants. Police have a

little over 2800 and fire is the smallest of the plans with 1,800. This slide just details the retirement eligibility of the three plans. As I stated before, employees has two groups and the retirement eligibility for the two groups are different. There are vesting periods for all three of the plans. Employees has a five-year vesting period and police and fire have a 10-year vesting period. So this next slide shows certain key actuarial assumptions. And actuarial assumptions are used to drive amounts that actuarials determine

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what the plan will need to pay future benefits. The first row is the inflation rate and this is just general underlying annual inflation. And what makes this rate so important is it's a component of many other actuarial assumptions. The actuarial growth rate pays by pension funds and it's determined by actual historical experience as well as projected future growth. This rate is used in determining the contributions needed to amortize the unfunded actuarial approved liability. And the investment return assumption is comprised of the inflation rate and the real return rate. And this is used to discount future expected benefit payments in order to determine the liabilities of the plan. What you will see from this table is the police assumptions are the lowest of the three plans. This is due to a recent experience study that was conducted by the police this past year. And from that experience study the board adopted a

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reduced inflation rate, a reduce the payroll growth rate and a reduced investment return rate. So the investment return rate prior to these actuarial assumptions was 7.7% and that was lowered to 7 and a quarter. The payroll growth was four percent lowered to three percent. And the inflation rate was three percent and lowered to two and a half percent. I do also want to state that the new assumptions that were adopted by police are also in line with the recommendations that were made as part of the city's actuarial audit of the pension plans that was brought to the audit and finance committee back in April. >> I wanted to adhere a comparison from a Texas pension review board report. Aphasait was a 2019. >> Garza: To retirement systems in Texas. Just for comparison on investment rate, 73% of Texas retirement systems

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assumed between two and a half and three percent. So we were well within the range of the rest of the Texas retirement systems. On payroll growth, 62% were between three percent and three and a half. And on investment rates, 77% were between seven percent and 7.75%. So that's a little comparison. So we seem to be in line with others. There has been a trend over the last few years. There's a new state law, I think it came in either 2015 or 2016 that requires the experience studies. So as the pension

systems across the state are getting those done, we're seeing a trend of lowering of some of these assumptions, especially with the investment rate and inflation rate. So just wanted to add that. >> Pool: I know we have to go through this early fast. The other thing effecting that too is the legislate legislature is looking at

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lowering the number of years for the actuarial soundness, which is really going to squeeze any pension, no matter this H one you have, because there's only so much you can do, so much influence we have. There's only so much we can affect with regard to actuarial soundness because we can't control the markets. And when we lower the investment return we're looking for, it shoots the date years beyond what -- I think they've lord it from 30 down to 25 and it's really causing a lot of friction. >> 40 down to 25. >> Alter: Did you want to ask? >> Flannigan: Yes. I'm curious how the tax caps may have changed the payroll growth assumptions? >> They didn't affect it. It's based on the number of hires, the payroll rate, they haven't affected it

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yet. The experience study is historical. >> Flannigan: That's my concern is the experience study is historical under eight percent caps. How are we -- this may be a question you answer later, but how are we looking at a more uncertain budget future in terms of these assumptions? >> Alter: That's a good question. Ms. Weaver, would you like to continue? >> So this next slide details actuarial calculations again from the most recent actuarial funds. As councilmember pool was stating, the amortization periods is one of the data sets that we'll go over. There are a lot of numbers on these table and we won't be going through all of them. We'll provide a brief explanation of certain calculations that are being presented. The first is the unfunded accrued liability. This is essentially the difference between the pension plan's liabilities less the assets. So it's essentially subtracting the actuarial accrued liability from the

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accuse Taylor liability of investments. And this is learning the amount of benefits accrued in which no funding has been set aside. And when there is an unfunded liability, which is the case for all of our pension funds. And pension funds in general. An actuary determines the number of years or the amortization period it will take to fund that unfunded liability. The state pension review board, as comal was referencing, they -- as councilmember pool was referencing, they do have a 30 year requirement and currently got moved down to 25 years they want between like a 10 and 25 year amortization period. As you can see we have two funds that exceed that requirement. Employees is at 32 years and

police is at indefinite. And what that means as far as an indefinite amortization is that there is no set period that will fund you want funded liability of this plan. The funded ratio is the last table on this.

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It is a ratio of assets to liabilities and that is a mathematical calculation where the actuarial value of investment is the actual accrued liability and this indicates how much they have to pay the accrued benefits of the plan. This next slide is just a graphical representation that tickets the funded ratios for the three pension funds over the last 12 years. And evaluating the funded ratio over time may indicate the progress that a pension fund is making in setting aside assets to fund current and future liabilities. A rising ratio over time may indicate that the assets are accumulating to make future payments, whereas a declining funded ratio may indicate that a plan may not be setting aside enough assets to make future funds approved to date. As you can see from this chart, fire has the highest

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funded ratio. They're currently at 88%. Followed by employees, which is a little less than 70%. And police is right under 60%. I did also want to note that a new law was passed during the last legislative session that does require that all pension funds in Texas have a funding policy that details a plan for achieving 100% funded ratio. And employees I believe already have that funding policy in place and fire and police are underway with their funding policy. This next slide details the investment returns for all three pension funds. The top row is the 2018 returns and then listed below that are the three year, five-year and 10 year returns and those are weighted average returns for the funds. There are two takeaways from this table and first is although it's prudent to monitor portfolios on a short-term basis, we shouldn't lose sight of the

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fact that pension funds are long-term investments. And the second takeaway is portfolios do go through cycles, doing well at times and lagging their peers at others. And this final slide is something that I think we're all familiar with, the fiscal year 2020 budget that was just adopted. There was a pension plan initiative included in the budget. The city manager included in his budget message to council that he was going to work closely with our partners at the police and employees retirement systems to develop long-term strategies for ensuring their financial health and funding was included in the budget and was approved by council for consulting services to assist with this initiative. And this concludes my presentation. A condensed version. If you have any questions I would be happy to answer those at this time. >> Alter: Thank you very much. As I mentioned at the beginning of this we have serious work to do to be

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sure we shore up our pensions. Today's audit and finance committee is to receive this report as we are required to do. And that we will be returning in October or November for a deeper dive. Mayor, did you have a question or is your light just on? >> Mayor Adler: Oh, I'm sorry. >> Alter: Thank you very much. We look forward to more information and diving in to more depth on this. Thank you. I am going to quickly take up -- do we have to take any action on that or did we just have to hear it? Thank you. And I am going to very quickly take up item 9, which is identified items to be discussed at future meetings, beyond what we just said. And the health and wildfire audits that are coming. Does anyone want to add anything at this point to that? Okay. Then I'm going to move back to item 6 energy, which is a special report on criminal justice information security compliance, and our plan is

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to hear from the auditor's office on this reported in public and then we will be taking up items 7 and 8 in executive session. And item 7 will be our discussion of this report. >> So this is actually -- as we were doing in audit related to public safety dispatch, that audit is coming at the November or December meeting, so not here yet, but during the course of that audit we came across information that we are required by standards to report to our governing body, which is you guys. So Andrew Keegan was the manager of the public safety dispatch audit and will present a very short presentation on this. >> Sure. Good morning. Corrie mentioned why we did this report so I'm going to jump right into background. The FBI maintains criminal justice information such as fingerprints for criminal records. Many city departments like

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APD use this information as part of their operations, other departments like building services, their staff have access to the information because they access buildings where the information is stored. Because of the sensitive nature of this information, the FBI created a security policy which outlines protections for this information, including things like training for staff, criminal background checks, data encryption, physical security standards, and the city is required to follow those. Bit and Texas department of public safety both ensure -- the FBI and the Texas department of public safety ensure that the city follows those requirements through regular audits. What we found was in previous audits, dps had noted issues. There were audits in 2013, 2016 and the most recent one in February 2019. Which noted some it compliance issues. The February 2019 audit, one of the issues noted was APD lacked an agreement with building services to ensure that building services staff

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accessing sites were adequately . Protecting the information or the information was adequately protected. We noted was that APD had known about this issue since at least 2017, yet it was still identified in the 2019 audit by dps. Our work, some of the work that corrie mentioned, also identified other potential compliance issues that the dps auditors may not have noted, particularly related to training and criminal background checks at certain sites. This is important because continued violation of the security policy could result in the city losing access to this information, which would be a significant disruption to many city departments. Because it was a special report, we did not issue any recommendations, but we did include some suggestions that APD could take to further strengthen their compliance efforts. That concludes this presentation. I'm happy to answer questions. >> Alter: Does anyone have any questions they want to ask in this forum? Okay.

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Auditor, unless there's something else I'm missing, the committee will now go into closed session to take up two items pursuant to sections 551.076 and 551.089 of the government code, the committee will discuss security audit matters related to item 7, a security audit related to information security management in the city, pursuant to section 551.0889 of the government code the committee did discuss matters concerning information security related to item 8, the state of confidential network security in the city. Is there any objection to going into executive session on the items announced? Hearing none, the committee will now go into executive session. And I just want to add that after we're done with executive session we will not be reconvening other than for me to adjourn the meeting back in this room.

[12:10:25 PM]

>> Alter: We are out of closed session. In closed session We took up and discussed security matters related to item 7 and matters related to security information, item 8. It is now 12:10 and we will adjourn the audit and finance committee meeting.