

City Council Work Session Transcript – 08/24/2021

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[10:52:34 AM]

>> Yes, thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Let's go ahead and convene the work session of the Austin city council today is August 24, 2021. This meeting is handled in an emergency fashion consistent with the emergency rules that at this point expire at the end of the month. Colleagues, we have on the work session agenda today only one pulled item, item 9 pulled by councilmember Poole. We have three briefings, one on arts, one on wildfire management and one on the storm. Councilmember Poole, for scheduling purposes, you pulled item number 9. You anticipated that would be lengthy or staff you needed for that? I know they have gone around and talked to the council on

[10:53:34 AM]

this item. >> Pool: Yeah, I don't think it would take too long. I would like a presentation. I think staff is cued up and ready to do that. This is a project our community has been waiting a long time on. I am pleased and proud to %-bring it and for this day to arrive. I would like to ask the staff to make that presentation. >> Mayor Adler: Ok. We'll go ahead and ask them to do that. Manager was there an order that staff is set up to give the presentations? >> Mayor, if it pleases the council, we would prefer to do the cultural arts briefing first. We have outside consultants. Then the pulled item and the briefing on wildfire preparedness after that and then concluding with the Wisconsin. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember Tovo. >> Tovo: Is there an executive session.

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>> Mayor Adler: No executive session just four briefings. >> Tovo: The winter storm is our task force members. Are they anticipating it will be later? Or will they be on hold until we take that up? In which case I suggest we take it up after cultural arts. >> They were anticipating it later in the afternoon. >> Tovo: I see. >> Mayor Adler: Let's begin. Colleagues I need to step off the dais from 1:00 to 1:30 and then again at 3:00. Let's see how much we can move through. Manager, if you want to start with the cultural arts item. >> Thank you. Last week councilmember Fuentes requested the occupancy task and guidelines. We have been working with mjr partners, the equity office and creative community to identify challenges and opportunities within the existing system including a look at how guidelines can be

[10:55:36 AM]

modified going forward. Eddd and mjr have utilized an equity lens in looking at the work and will continue to look at the options of hot funds, grow, and build our local cultural arts sector. Tiwill turn the presentation over Sylvia, and Laura cultural investment program manager from the economic development department to present an overview of the cultural arts funding process. Director holrav. You are on mute. >> Thank you, city manager. If you can bring up my presentation, please. >> I only have a presentation for d2 and b1. I'm looking to see if there is

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an update on that. One second. Thank you city hall av.

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Solnovia acting director of the department. I'm here with Megan wells cultural arts manager and Laura O. Cultural arts investment manager here to present with me today. Next slide, please. I want to let the council know we are leading with equity and the work that we are doing. The city's strategic direction 2023 states that to advance equitable outcomes the city must lead with a lens of racial equity and healing. Race is the primary predictor of outcomes and it is time to recognize, understand, and address racism at its various levels. Personnel, institutional, structural, systematic. Equity is the condition when every member of the community has a fair opportunity to live a long, healthy, meaningful life.

[10:58:38 AM]

Equity embedded into Austin's value systems means changing hearts and minds. Transforming local government from the inside out, eradicating disparities and ensuring all Austin community members share in the benefits of the community progress. Operationalizing equity means who has been at the table and for how long and at what level. Next slide, please. The need for racial equity centered shift in our cultural arts division funding program is clearly illustrated through our own program data. Data gathered from the past and current contract shows a clear disparity in the distribution of funds between demographic groups, even in fy21 with the creation of economic resiliency framework,

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black cultural contractors account for only 9% and others only 28%. White identified cultural contractors account for majority of the contracts awarded. It is this data that reveals how we have been exclusionary with time. We lead with grace, we understand the importance of intersectionality and how we address other historical marginalized communities such as lgbtq+ disability, et cetera, next slide, please. Let us take a closer look at the data of organizations who have received funding for 10 years or longer. And that's what we're defining as legacy. 10 years or longer. If an organization is led by an executive director who identifies as bipoc or a board

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with a make up of 51% or more members who identify as bipoc, we consider them bipoc-led. We have 144 legacy nonprofits receiving cultural arts funding. Of those, only 35 are bipoc led. While this is telling in the need to increase funding to legacy organizations who are bipoc led, we also have more work ahead of us to prioritize those bipoc organizations who have not received relatively large investment for quite some time. For example, there's a big difference in receiving \$12,000 a year for 10 years versus receiving more than \$100,000 for 30 years. In terms of the total dollars spent in the last six years, the total cultural arts investment to all legacy nonprofits is approximately

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\$105 million. Investment to only bipoc legacy nonprofits is about 23 million. So this is a telling story. I would now ask Megan wells to come forward and discuss more about the cultural funding review process. >> Thank you, hello, mayor, council. As most of you know, the cultural arts division has been working on re-imagining the hotel fax, in consultation with Margie Reese who is on the call and her team at mj partners and in collaboration with the community. Much has happened. It has presented unprecedented challenges and opportunities to tackle together. Our equity lens has helped us to see our work differently and offer new approaches to 88 a more equitable investment of city funds to build, stabilize

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and grow our local cultural sector into the future. The proposed programs are the result of two years of work summarized on this slide. Next slide. There were five stages of the review, you can see how we engaged others in the process. And how the feedback we received at each stage supported plan in the next phase. We remain in phase four today with the release of the draft guidelines and our presentations to the community, and we will continue to collect feedback through virtual office hours, a feedback survey that is available on our web page, one-on-one communications with staff. Feedback we gather will form the final revision that we plan to take back to the arts commission at the meeting in September. I want to reiterate that we're

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still in process. We are receiving community feedback, and it is delivered to us in various ways, both publicly and privately. Next slide. I want to go into more details of this engagement. From 2019 to 2020, there were 1,160 unduplicated hours of engagement to collect feedback from over 540 participants in 39 unique stakeholder listening sessions. These range from large community events to small groups to one-on-one listening sessions. Our process involved conversations with community organizations, advocacy, union, [audio skipping] Faith, funders, internal stakeholders like Austin public health, convention center staff, antiraffiti task force, Austin public library, equity office, parks and recreation department, neighboring

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partnering program, transportation department, office of police oversight, and others. It also included you as councilmembers, policy staffs, arts commissioners, more importantly, current cultural contractors and potential future cultural contractors. We understand equity plays a large part even in the ability to participate in an engagement process. So we made sure to allow community various pathways to connect with us, mjr partners, with the arts commission and even with us anonymously. We offered in-person gatherings when it was safe, comment cards, virtual convenings and feedback forms as well as open office hours with staff, offsite community conversations and even now the arts commission is hosting their own dialogues. Next slide. In the community conversations and engagement conducted in the early phases of this process, mjr partners

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synthesized several hours of feedback into several key observations. Many of them stood out to us, but perhaps the most challenging of those revolves around the need for collective acceptance that historic inequities exist in the city and our funding program and we must be intentional in strengthening culturally specific systems to build our. >> Casar: More specifically. Others in expanding capacity, growing the next generation of leaders, exploring options for accessible creative space and protecting neighborhoods' distinct, cultural and historic resources. Next slide, please. Our process was informed by -- thank you. Our process was informed greatly by the conversations

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we have had with the community and also supported by other local and national data, including the cultural arts division only equitable economic resiliency framework released last summer containing national disaggregated data on communities of color, historical data of the cultural funding program including how many contractors funded at what budget and award levels, demographics, award requests compared to awards. Funding matrix variables, other datasets and studies on the motorist efficiencies in the areas of insurance, payment processing, contract monitoring, compliance. Research and current conversations happening at the national level. Among arts funders including grant makers in the arts, Americans in the arts Bloomberg philanthropy and Wallis foundation focused on

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the grant making and more. Peer cities within Houston, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, San Antonio, around the U.S. Including San Diego, Sacramento, Charlotte, and Portland. And feedback to contractors, mjr partners and the interim information is on the feedback report and contract staff communicates not just this but many years. Dialogue dating back at least 15 years with the arts funding working groups and lessons from past programs and pilots approximately I will hand it off to Laura a. The program manager to discuss programs we're proposing. Next slide. >> Thanks, Megan. All right. So on October 7, 2020, mjr partners shared recommendations for a more equitable path forward in the

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cultural funding programs, the recommendations were based on the many community engagement listening sessions, workshops, town halls part of the cultural funding review Megan mentioned. These strategies have been the guiding force in every stage of the program and guideline design development process. The recommendations were grouped into three categories. First to invest in the creative sector, nurture, protect, the artistic express of the racially divorce communities. Second to build upon Austin's existing infrastructure, third, to operationalize a policy-based plan to redistribute cultural financial resources. The cultural arts division staff proposed a suite of programs in December of 2020 that

addressed the recommendations. Those were elevate, thrive and nexus. However, since that time, it became clear that the proposed hot budget would not support a

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follow roll route of all three programs at the same time. Due to budget constraints, staff made the decision to try to first roll out the programs that most directly impacted historically marginalized communities thrive and nexus. We're still considering the possibility of launching elevate at a later point next year. So what are the programs? The proposed nexus program would be 100 awards at a level of \$5,000 to individuals, organizations, and unincorporated groups that leverage investments that encourage neighborhood-based activities by specifically funding community-centered, collaborative projects. Additionally, nexus is a clear example of the implementation of the strategy to dismantle current programs and rebuild upon parts that worked well as nexus pulls on the many strengths much the former community initiatives program. So new and existing

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contractors could apply to nexus. And thrive is proposed to be approximately 25 to 45 awards at a level of 30,000 to \$80,000 to 501(c)(3) Organizations with a five-year history of cultural programming in Austin. By leading with racial equity the thrive program works to prioritize identifying and funding a cohort model program for culturally specific partners and contractors and this would be for organizational improvements. And it would intentionally leverage funds to develop art institutions of color and increase stability of existing bipoc-led organizations. Elevate as preliminarily envisioned is flexible project funding in support of organizations, individuals, businesses and unincorporated groups that produce culturally

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vibrant content that reach to build stronger connections between arts audiences and producers. We intend to explore the elements of elevate in the coming months. Nexus and thrive center the role of community relationships over monetary resources. This means that both programs will prioritize the involvement of community at various cross-sections in the planning process and in leadership over applicants' existing access to financial resources like cash matches which are no longer required. This will emphasize the importance of community voice and representation through nexus and thrive. Next slide, please. So here's the proposed timeline of when we hope to roll these programs out. Thrive, which is the program for nonprofit organizations could open in October with applications due in November. And then review panels would

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take place in December and activities could started in January. Nexus would open applications in January, and close in February. Activities could begin as early as March. And if funding was available, we could also consider launching elevate in the spring. Next slide, please. As a reminder, this process around our structurally inequitable funding system started before the pandemic. The pandemic has only magnified those inequities. We acknowledge the hard choices we have to make to better serve members of our historically marginalized cultural community. Something we heard from the community back when we started this process was that we couldn't and maybe we shouldn't fund 99% of all applicants. Additionally, we don't have \$12 million in hot funds to fund 600 individuals and organizations. The hot heyday is over for the

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moment and while it builds back, we have a unique chance to be brave and instill truly transformational change in our cultural funding system with equity as our guide. We recognize that there are stark choices to be made. So who do we prioritize? What is most impactful for communities of color? With our \$3 million, we could fund only existing contractors, at \$6,000 each. This is both an award that is not meaningful and perpetuates the systemically racist elements of the cultural funding system. Instead we could fund the most economically vulnerable at a meaningful amount to make a difference. Next slide, please we've realized that what the cultural program funding can offer this year is not optimal but there are several resources in the

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department to support creatives through economic recovery. And many organizations may have already received funding from some of these already or may offer opportunities in the future. And I think now I'll hand it back to synovia to discuss the fund summary and wrap up our presentation. >> Thank you, Laura. Next slide, please. As Laura mentioned, the hotel occupancy tax took a severe hit this year due to the pandemic. The proposal for fy22 as discussed during the budget process, the transfer in of \$6.6 million is an estimate and it's a very educated estimate based on activities, hotel occupancy rates and the funding. We are thankful that the city manager included a one-time transfer in from the budget stabilization

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fund of \$4.8 million. We are proposing again that we spend approximately \$3 million on our programs in fy22. Again, we know that we're dealing with a pandemic, we want to switch to a model of using actuals that will help us better prepare and fund future programs. And so next slide. In conclusion, just want to recap. We are using the available funds we think will be reasonable in fy22. We are leading with racial equity in fy22 and we are launching the two programs that best answer equity needs that were exacerbated by the pandemic. Elevate we will launch when funds are available.

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We are continuously revisiting the transfer that's coming in and we hope to come back with a midyear budget amendment that we could possibly use for elevate. Our investment is future looking. We will not use hot funds to -- we will use hot funds to invest in a stronger and more racially diverse and inclusive cultural ecosystem. Next we are moving again from estimates to actuals of hot funds. In fy23 it will be the first year using actuals received and this will mean less uncertainty in planning future programming. Next, the rules attached to the funding source are still hotel occupancy tax rules. They still apply. Our new programs will build upon and refine the best part of our current program design not starting from

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scratch. And finally, as Laura and Megan have mentioned, we cannot serve everyone with these programs. In the past we funded 99% of the application and this was unattainable as the demand increased every year and the amount of available dollars did not grow proportionately. Feedback from applicants and from staff voice a need for a more rigorous application process, requesting that we hold applicants to a higher standard and that we do better aligning the application process approval with the city's goals. The scaling back of the number of funded applicants was imminent even before the pandemic. We do realize that the ecosystem needs all of its members to sustain and it's the ultimate goal for us as a community to work towards achieving those goals. I want to thank mayor and

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council for this opportunity and this concludes our presentation. We are here to answer any questions from our team and we are pleased to be joined by our consultant Margie Reese of mjr partners, as well as Brian oaks our chief equity officer who has been involved with us from the beginning. Thank you for this opportunity. >> Mayor Adler: Questions, colleagues? Councilmember Fuentes. >> Fuentes: Thank you. And thank you, staff, for the great presentation. It was very thorough. I appreciate it. Colleagues, I requested this briefing today to examine the changes in the cultural arts funding. As you can see it has been in progress for a couple of years, actually before the pandemic hit our community. And the changes that are being proposed are significant and they

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certainly require a conversation within the community and I believe also within the dais as well. I think that this gives us time to consider these guidelines and to also respond to the feedback that we're hearing from our community. Concerns were raised to my office about how the community engagement was held and conducted throughout this process. And you know, I think the interim report does a really great job of outlining the substantial amount of hours that was done in consideration of that process, but what the interim report doesn't do is show what was the actual data from the process. And so we see a little bit of what the input summarizes the input, but doesn't detail what the actual input included or to the extent that it was voiced or the different levels of feedback that were raised. So the concerns coming from the community is that we are about to implement new guidelines that are not based on data that is

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transparent and that the public has been able to read and process and to provide feedback on. Another thing I wanted to flag is that to be clear, my concern is not with moving towards inequitable model. I think it is great and needed and appreciate the work that has been done and continues to do to move toward this. But the question I have is is this the appropriate time to be moving towards a model that will be leaving organizations that are dependent on this funding to a certain extent. Is it an appropriate time for us to be doing that? We made a commitment as a council with the resolution that we passed earlier this summer that called for the allocation of our arpa funds to get out as quickly as possible, acknowledging the need we have in our community. And so we have these arpa dollars allocated, yet we're

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also looking at the fact that we will have contractors who will not receive funding. As shared previously, over 600 contractor have received funding from the city of Austin to do the work that they're doing in our community and removing to a model based on actuals, and that means that some organizations would be left behind. And to me what is concerning is some organizations include legacy organizations that are led by communities of color. And so we really don't -- as we move to an equitable model we need to animal sure that we're not leaving behind individuals who have history in autopsy, that are part of the -- in Austin, that are part of the fabric that makes Austin, Austin. The first question I have for staff is has consideration -- to what extent has consideration been given to the fact that why do we need to move to this model at this point given the pandemic, given the needs in our community that have been voiced?

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You have all considered delaying this type of -- moving to this new formula to proceeding or the following fiscal year? >> Thank you, councilmember Fuentes. You are correct, council approved arpa funding for the arts community and the arts commission has formed a working group to determine the best use of those funds so it's not lost on us. In addition, some of the arts organizations were funded through the Austin non-profit relief grant, but as mentioned, it was inevitable that we needed to shift the model based on our fy19 experience. So we are still in the midst of hearing feedback. Nothing is finalized at this point, but it is a model that we feel is necessary at this point. And I'll turn it over to Megan to provide any additional feedback.

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>> Thank you. And councilmember Fuentes, you are correct that we are hearing that this is a hard time for earn. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge, however, that our commitment to equity was the guiding -- the guidepost by which we held ourselves accountable to start this process and it remains that way. And if we were not to move this forward when we had the soonest opportunity, I believe we would be not standing firm to our commitment to taking an equitable stance as a city when the opportunity presents itself. We've been conducting this process for two years now and having this conversation for much longer, we know that communities of color have typically not been funded at the levels of other organizations in our city and we feel that it is time to shift this model as soon as we have the opportunity. And we think that time is now.

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>> Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Colleagues, further questions? Councilmember tovo? Councilmember tovo. >> Tovo: Thanks, mayor, I do have some questions and I think councilmember kitchen had her hand up also. >> Mayor Adler: We'll come back to you later. Councilmember kitchen. >> Kitchen: Thank you. I really appreciate the work of staff. I know that you all have been dedicated to this for quite some time and really trying to resolve an issue that we've had, which is very, very important. I do think, though, that we really need to understand the impact as we transition and I'm not seeing this data -- at least not presented today. So perhaps you can point me to where it is in your report or you can send it to me. I need to understand the impact on our legacy organizations, many of them are led by women and are

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part of the historic fabric of our community. So we need a -- I don't think our plan is complete if we don't have a transition part of the plan. So I'd like to understand how you all have thought about transitioning. In other words, we're talking about a pretty substantial change here at a very bad time for the community and so I hear y'all's concern about moving on with this now, but I'm not -- what I'm not hearing is how can we do both? How can we move along this process but at the same time not leave behind our legacy arts organizations which are critical to our fabric of our community and are not -- are not organizations that in this particular industry

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it's a difficult field for people. So we're not talking about just letting go of support for groups that should be able to take care of themselves. This is not why we had the cultural arts fund in the first place. So I would like more data about two things. Who exactly are we impacting by how much. And what is your plan for addressing that during the transition. There was a slide that I thought was helpful that showed other sources of funding but it didn't give me any data about how much is in those other buckets and how those other buckets might be used to actually help transition some of our legacy organizations. Here's one I'm very familiar with that's been a woman-led organization for many years in our city, it's nationally recognized, is important to not just drop. So I need to understand

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that. Let me ask a question. I'm just very concerned about doing this at this time. I'm also concerned about moving from projected to actual, if those are the right terms for use the hot dollars again at this time. So very difficult time for the community. So let me ask you first, what is the transition plan or is there one? And do we know that -- have you all had an opportunity to analyze the impact on the legacy - the arts organizations that organizations that have been with us for a long time and are in need of these funds? >> Yes, councilmember kitchen. We have been looking at the data and we can provide more detail. Again, we are working with the arts commission's working group because we believe the arpa funds will play a significant role in transitioning. And so once we receive that

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information we can provide a memo to council on how we will transition those organizations. >> Kitchen: I'd like to understand that before you start the transition. In other words, for a transition to actually be affected, we have to see a timeline and the specifics about which organizations we're talking about and how that's going to be done. So is the timeline you have in mind allow for that? >> Yes. Our

timeline is flexible. Again, we want to hear from everyone. We want to work with the art commission. And yes, we would like to launch, but until we have a concrete plan that we can provide the arts commission as well as council, we are open to the date shifting if that's an appropriate term. >> In other words, the date shifting for this transition. One last question and then I

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have more questions, but I know others do too. So what is plant for the existing contracts? >> I just wanted to add a little bit more to council member's question. We have been transitioning to this new program. Since we've had bridge funding in place for all the cultural contractors for the past two years. So we typically have a two-year funding cycle since we've been in this review process we've been continuing funding for those contracts in place for those continued contractors, albeit at different levels because our funding has been impacted by the pandemic. If we were to go forward with another bridge year, it would be significantly smaller Edwards than what they currently receive in fy21 because our budget is significantly smaller. So if we were to look at that kind of extension to their contracts for another

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year, we would be looking at somewhere in the neighborhood if we applied all the funding we have to everyone in the current pool it would be roughly about 6,000-dollar awards to everyone in our current pool or it would be -- another way of looking at that if you looked at just the legacy organizations, that would be roughly about \$20,000 each. With no additional funding to anyone else. Which does not feel like a meaningful form of assistance in terms of our long-term commitment to our funding for groups that would get them to another stable place in the future. That's where we're relying on our arpa funds to come into the picture. We did have a significant amount of folks apply for those and receive those that are in our legacy group so they did receive that and will be receiving more because council has allocated more to that fund. But we are also looking at ways that we can sustain our

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community as a whole in the future through the different options that we have listed on the slide which we can give more information about. >> Kitchen: Okay, thank you. I'll pass this on to others. I just want to reiterate that I have the same concerns that councilmember Fuentes raised about the timing for this. I think it's important and I appreciate her efforts on this. And I think -- and I agree with her. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember pool. >> Pool: >> Thanks. I have a question about criteria that we're used to isolate, which groups would and would not receive funding other the new proposed rubric and you are looking through, as you described it an equity lens and we're looking at the leadership on essentially the

boards and structure of the different groups, looking to see what sort of diversity was represented on the boards. Did you also look at those

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same boards and the audiences and the reach in community that they had? >> Yes, that is part of the scoring rubric. We are leading with representation. However that is not -- that's not the single criteria that we're looking at. We're looking at how it is represented, the programming and what is served. So that is part of the rubric. >> So what is the relative weight that you give to the two criteria that the diversity of the boards and the leadership versus the diversity and reach of the audience criteria. >> Council member, I don't have that handy, however it is on our website so I can pull that up or give that to you. >> So I think that's really important because the messaging that I'm hearing out in community is that it is less important in the staff's rollout of the -- the staff's recommendation coming from the interim report are more focused on

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the board makeup as opposed to the communities served. And the long history of the cultural contracts and the economic development's department and the arts within this community has been the focus on the community reached and served and so I would like to urge that that be taken into larger account so that when we have a look at these numbers -- I certainly am not prepared to accept these recommendations today or to move forward on any of the actions that the staff have Teed up until I have -- actually, we don't have a presentation of the interim report and I understand that that was not a council designated study, it was a staff authored study or requested study, but the council did approve the funding for that study. So I think that there should be a -- more of a direct connection with the dais on what those findings are because we need to be very

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cognizant of these changes that are happening in our arts community. We know how they're struggling and it has really not abated much. So along with my request for information on the community's reach, I also like to dig in on the topic that my previous colleagues have mentioned and that's the lineup of which arpa funds are going to -- which organizations and at what level so we can see what the funding success is for those applicants. So that would be the second piece of information I would like to see. And then last, I would also note that when the staff recommended a few years ago and the focus for cultural contracts shifted away from smaller cohort of people receiving the funds to trying to give money to everybody who applied, that's one reason why you have so many applicants is because it was an open door,

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which is not a bad thing. We need to give a helping hand to fledgling groups. There's -- I have no quarrel with that at all. At some point there does need to be some assessment which was what I thought was the cultural arts -- one focus of the arts commission with the cultural arts contracts to work through how the different arts organizations are succeeding and prospering and expanding their reach so that the funding that we give through these contracts to the community groups is a reflection of their success and their draw in the community and their relative prospering. And I don't know if that's been lost so I would ask you to go back and give us a sense of how that has improve because just on the bottom line if we are giving

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awards to everybody then we are diluting both the amounts we give and also probably the focus, certainly in the upper reaches for longer terms arts groups that have been able to last for eight years or 20 years or 50 years. There's a very different calculus that should be brought to bear versus the ones that are right out of the box and fledgling and we should be giving them attention as well. I think there should be in clear delineations in the categories so that we actually can reach the legacy groups that we count on and depend to bring arts education and exposure to the broader community. So staff, that's three things I'm looking for there. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Councilmember tovo. >> Tovo: >> Thanks very much. I have quite a few questions. I'll try to narrow them, but as I understand we have a consultant on the phone, is

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that correct, to answer questions about the interim report because I do have some. I want to say that I agree with nearly all of the comments that my colleagues have made. The only point of exemption I think is the one about moving from about potentially moving from actuals. I am concerned about that and still am falling solidly on the staff's recommendation that we use actuals and revisit it in a few months. If that seems appropriate I just want to be really careful about not setting financial expectations that we may not meet. I really appreciate all of my colleagues, councilmember Fuentes and Kitch especially and pool and the comments you raised so far. And I want to underscore a couple of those points. One is I too am concerned about -- one, I'm concerned about much the same thing about impacting organizations that are already really reeling from this pandemic and I want to proceed only after we well

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understand what that impact is going to be. And I don't at this point understand what that impact is. And I wonder too if we could really focus on more of a transition plan as also came up in my colleagues' earlier comments. And maybe that transition relies on some of those other sources of funding, but right now just in looking at the information that we've received I don't see -- if I were an arts organization I wouldn't necessarily see that path in this transition time. So I think that requires some more focused work of figuring out what that looks like for those organizations. Let me start by asking a couple of questions that I'm not understanding at the moment. So there was some good information in the presentation that we just received about really striking data. And I think I'm not sure if this was in director holt-rabb's, your

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presentation or in Megan, your piece, but I believe in page three and four of the slide presentation there was some very specific percentages offered of funding in the past and I wanted to get the background information for that. So can you tell me where that exists. If I wanted to know what those organizations are and I can't -- I don't think the presentation is labeled, but let me see if I can get back to that page. If I wanted to see those organizations were that received the 37 million and were white led as I understand this designation, these would be organizations with an executive director or a majority of board members who are white? >> That's correct. >> That's correct. >> And so these designations -- these designations, just following up on councilmember pool's question, these would be organizations where the assessments that are showing on this page are not about

[11:41:35 AM]

programming or the artists featured at these institutions, but these are looking at leadership strictly. >> That's correct. >> So this does not factor in that point on the matrix that you were just dialoguing with councilmember pool about where some of these organizations may be listed as white, but may feature a majority of artists who are bipoc, but have not representation on their board of directors or among -- as an executive director. >> There is a place for us to receive information from applicants about the artists that they work with, however this is historical funding looking backwards. So that refinement will be featured in our new [indiscernible] To work a little differently. We do want to hear about the new artists that are brought on to do the programming. >> Okay. But that's not

[11:42:36 AM]

necessarily -- okay. I understand what you're saying. That would be prospective. As we look at historical inequities that information is not being factored into these two slides. >> Right. Not primarily to the data we showed although we do have that data. It's in various final reports that we typically look at every year. But I can also get the names of those organizations that went into our data. >> Tovo: That would be really helpful. I would like to understand -- that would again help us all understand what the impact is not just on those organizations, but some of the artists and performers who are working with those organizations. So if you can either point us to one of those existing reports or make that available to us I think that would be really helpful. >> We'll make that available. >> Tovo: There are some important elements in the interim report that I wanted to highlight. I think the focus on capacity building among organizations is really

[11:43:41 AM]

important. I think there were some other recommendations that haven't gotten a lot of focus in the email we're setting but are also important such as looking at the role of our arts commission in particular and thinking about ways that that can be supportive of these efforts and that too it sounds like from the report is being recommended for a transformation. And so I hope that we have an opportunity to talk about some of those recommendations. What I think I sense from this report is a recommendation -- an underlying recommendation that we as a city become less of a long time funder. And I don't believe it was explicitly stated in that way so I just want to check that what I'm reading as an underlying assumption is accurate. And so I wonder if the consultant or our staff could speak to that. >> Yes. Yes, that is a correct

[11:44:41 AM]

assumption. I will also have Margie Reese add any of her insights as our consultant. >> Thank you, council members and Megan. Yes, there is an underlying recommendation that I think is well worth conversation for the city as far back as we have provided funding in this funding for the arts. The combination of and in fact the founding documents that established the national foundation on the arts and humanities act in 1965 talks about the partnership between public and private and that it is primarily a function of private sector funding to support the arts in our country. Now, that said, cities have through the use of the same funding sources that Austin uses, hotel tax, have been able to identify designated sources of funds which as we

[11:45:46 AM]

move into this era of thinking about equity and inclusion, many of the cities -- larger cities like yours is seeing the ongoing consistent high level funding by government is turning out to be a detriment both to

the organizations themselves who have depended on and have -- on public funding and have not been as aggressive in seeking private sector funds to either meet the match or to continue to help with the growth. It has also had a detrimental effect on artists and organizations of color who have not historically been a part of that delivery process. And similar to the conversations that we're struggling with today, getting into that process is more and more difficult because of the historical funding that has been offered to a set of organizations over time. So transitioning away from that structure is very

[11:46:46 AM]

painful as we're going through now, and having to almost find a way to fund new contemporary artists, artists that represent different cultures and communities and lifestyles. It's difficult to find ways. So timing here is not on your side, I acknowledge that, but it's also important to think about if not now when and how do you begin to address those inequities. And so that is a recommendation that we stress taking a look at where you have organizations who literally said to us in the process and I take full responsibility for not including every single sentence of interviews that we heard. We have that data and we promised those in our conversations that their comments would be held without authorship.

[11:47:49 AM]

But what I can say to you is that there are individual artists and smaller organizations that are themselves legacy organizations that they too have been around for a number of years who we're seeing an out migration from the city of those artists because they cannot get into the system in a way that would provide them with the kind of resources as we said to not only help grow the richness of the cultural arts in your city, but to stabilize them and they're leaving the city. I think that's part of the recommendation for saying how do you say to the legacy organizations over time that there will be a need for them to diversify their funding sources so that the city can continue to reallocate and redistribute and continue to grow the cultural sector. >> Thank you for that. I'm not sure that I saw that as clearly articulated in

[11:48:50 AM]

some of the conversations around this. Thank you for really underscoring that point. What do you see as -- do you have a recommendation about what typical funding length would be? And so I guess as -- if we move forward with a program at some point that resets the expectations that there will be long time funding of particular organizations what is a reasonable period? Is it somebody moves from kind of the mini grant program to the -- I'm using that word intentionally because I like programs that sort of have names that are very transparent and I'm already struggling for nexus and thrive and elevate and how

those differ and I'm wondering how coming up with clearly different names might be better. But is the expectation that an organization might get one of the small grants, one of the mini grants and then

[11:49:51 AM]

move into the middle category and that it would be one of the first and maybe two years of -- I guess there are two year funding periods being recommended and then after a two year period with that medium level grant you're expected to rely on more diversified funding sources? I guess if I could just throw that question out there, what is a reasonable time frame or recommended time frame? >> Well, I think the time frame is certainly flexible. One of the other rubrics for making that determination is to fall back to the understanding that the city of Austin is awarding grants through a contractual relationship. With the organizations. And looking at the organization and looking at the city is requiring or contracting with those organizations to do.

[11:50:52 AM]

So in addition to providing the cultural service, the -- there is also consideration for the reach into community based on, as you've indicated as a priority, based on their equity goals and accomplishments in that direction. So I think there are a number of factors. I certainly don't think there's any city that I'm aware of that has a cutoff period, but does have a way every year, every two years of working with the organizations to say in these areas you were successful and in these areas you were not. So the contract, the amount of funding will shift more organically that way than just a timed cutoff. But I think those are exercises and conversations that certainly can be had with organizations that have been receiving city funding of upwards of 20 years. >> Tovo: Thank you for that. It is not going to be an

[11:51:55 AM]

easy conversation if we move in that direction. And it's a very different path. I think we are -- we know that these organizations are in need of that funding so some will likely not survive if that funding is not in place or will have to cut back their programming. So it just a different path. Do we use our funding to kind of state plan in a -- to sustain more organizations or do we use it to capacity build? There are just a lot of questions I think that your report has really highlighted: And I really appreciate the work. I do think we need more of a transition, but I really appreciate the elements that you've raised. One other assumption that I just want to make sure I'm understanding and I wondered if you could speak about it, is the fiscal sponsorship. So I really understand and

[11:52:58 AM]

appreciate a lot of the recommendations that seem to be about how do we make our programs more accessible to organizations that don't necessarily have big infrastructure to support grant writing? I think that's really critical and I'm excited to see that direction. However, I did have to ask myself the question, especially as it was talking about insurance and maybe making larger awards to smaller organizations to help them cover the cost of insurance, I wondered if that's the most -- if that example is the most efficient way of using our dollars? Would it be more efficient to have say a city insurance policy that organizations could tap into or to continue to use that fiscal sponsorship mode that allows smaller organizations to compete and to access some of those sources without providing them themselves, if we can do what your report suggests of making

[11:54:01 AM]

sure that we're really recruiting and supporting fiscal sponsors that are bipoc? So I wondered could you talk a little bit about the recommendation for fiscal sponsorship and I'm sensing in the report concerns about that kind of model and a suggestion to shift from it without fully understanding -- one, I want to check that that assumption is -- that I'm reading that underlying recommendation correctly and are there some benefits of fiscal sponsorship that we should think about before we make such a change? >> Right. There are definitely reasons to think about the fiscal sponsorship model and that recommendation comes after critical review of the structure of the fiscal sponsorship model in your city over a period of time. There are organizations that

[11:55:06 AM]

may not choose to be an independent organization. They're project based. They produced one or two events a year and so the fiscal sponsorship structure works for them taking away a lot of the burden of the responsibilities required by the city. On the other side of that recommendation, council member, is the limitations that particularly smaller organizations and organizations of color who are, quote, legacy organizations, they are capped in a category of receiving funding and capped in terms of their ability to grow to institution status. And so when you look at the roster of cultural institutions in Austin, there are latino-based, there are organizations of color, but they are limited in number. And so if we're going to

[11:56:07 AM]

move toward equity, we've got to remove that gap and that safety net structure that almost prevents those organizations from achieving institutional status. And there are just a couple of examples of what that institutional status means. It means ability to lead and grow their organizations independently. It

means having access to permanent and long-term facilities so that they're not nomadic trying to find a space to do their event every year and not able to secure an audience base. It also means their ability to attract public funding, growing to a point where they are not only successful in securing funding from the city, but also from the state and other federal agencies, national endowment for the arts being one of those. And on a parallel tract

[11:57:08 AM]

their ability to attract private sector dollars so they don't have name recognition in the philanthropic world, they don't have leadership organization. As long as they stay under that umbrella of being a sponsor. So that's one of the things you'll see in some of the recommendations that we talked about, you will see where we're talking about all boats rising here. So for those organizations that are willing, have an interest in growing, we're giving them a path almost by keeping them under the fiscal sponsorship umbrella. I think we need those kinds of structures to get launched. At some point the staff, the commission, the organizations themselves will have a conversation about what is it does it mean for us to grow so that the roster of legacy organizations in your city begins to look like, feel like the most diverse representation of institutions that you can support over time.

[11:58:10 AM]

>> Tovo: Thanks for that response. I think I need to better understand outside of the context of this meeting how the program -- it sounds like what you're suggesting is that the program itself made certain caps for organizations that were underneath another fiscal sponsorship. So I think I need to understand the interplay of that. That's a very interesting point I wasn't aware of, so thank you for that. I have a couple other questions but I'll defer because I've asked a lot and if I could be on the next cycle. Thank you, Ms. Reese, this is really interesting and important work and I especially appreciate your reference to the national foundation of the arts and humanities act, that very rarely we have that kind of conversation here in the chambers and I appreciate it as somebody who worked for the national humanities state council here, it's always exciting to talk about that work. >> Mayor Adler: This is a

[11:59:10 AM]

hard conversation and it's going to be one because we're talking about limited resources and need that exceeds the resources that we have. It's going to get even harder conversation to have because we're talking about reallocating funds in that situation. It's going to get even harder conversations to have because some organizations have really become dependent on the dollars that come from this in order to be able to do their work. And they've been working with a model that has been repeated and is now changing. So you're dealing with expectations. And then going to be an even harder conversation to deal

with because all of this is happening at a time when the funding that is available is less than what the funding was available a year ago. And all those things pile up to make this a really hard conversation and one where it's going to be hard to find a solution where

[12:00:13 PM]

everybody wins and everybody ends up with where it is that they would like to end up. My sense in this is this will have to come back to the council. Manager, I'm not sure at this point with as many questions being asked that there's a path that has this being implemented so you're going to need to bring it back to us. I think it's important as it comes back to us that we find a way to do that where the council is not picking vendors or winners and losers from the dais that we're dealing with this at a higher kind of policy kind of level or broader rule kind because if it devolves into people on the dais trying to protect organizations that they're particular fans of or constituents are fans of, it will get just near impossible. I want to just mention as an

[12:01:15 PM]

aside, I also am supportive of using actual dollars and moving away from a system that has us allocating funds we don't receive. Just like we expect people to promise performance to us in exchange for resources when we tell them we'll give them a certain amount. I believe we should deliver that. I believe we should hold on in transition to that program. We also fully support the direction that council has taken over the last four years and more, I think. To really make sure the funding that we're spending is in all things. We spend with an quit lens and opportunities and understand the past systems have not been fair. And there is no way to make them fair without creating disruption in system.

[12:02:16 PM]

And that is just way it will happen and we'll have to work our way through that. That said, I think the one advantage we have at this point is there is more funding outside of hot in terms of relief dollars than we would ordinarily have because of the situation that we're in. And I think we shouldn't have this conversation outside of the context of the larger funds available conversation. It is one conversation. And we really need to have those conversations together. Because they're going to impact where we are. I like moving the hot funding and the direction it is going. I think it needs to move in that direction. I think there might be other funding that is available that can help with the transition of those dollars and help in this period of time to make sure we don't lose really important organizations in this city. In fact, that they are able to be able to survive. As you work through this and

[12:03:18 PM]

you come back to the council, trying to juggle all of the competitive ends, know I support the direction that you are going in, I think you tried to take the hot funding dollars and move that program in ways it should be moved to. As you do that and you develop your program and as you take a look at other relief dollars that are available to us, have been designated, I think there is almost like 10 different funding sources available in different plays right now. That when you take a look at bipoc for support, bipoc support led organizations are real important. Executive director, you pointed out. The board pointed it out. Councilmember pool raised audience participation, which is a significant part of that as well. Also equity goals and accomplishments. There are organizations, that for years, have been providing

[12:04:18 PM]

and have committed to provide real opportunity and access in this city when others were not. Those organizations that had those programs and were investing in those programs and have a legacy of that involvement in our community or willingness to really prioritize that and push that should be organizations that should also be recognized under the equity lens as something that we want to support and acknowledge in the community. Then ultimately, given the weight of this, I think it is going to require some measure for staff to do some measure of individualized analysis for an opportunity for organizations to step forward and say we understand the goals, we understand the direction that you are having, our organization will fail and let us show you why it is that that is true. There has to be a place for them to go to make that hearing of their individual situation so we can make sure

[12:05:21 PM]

that when we make these decisions, we understand the consequences of the decisions that we're making. And that they're not unintended or unstated consequences that have escaped us. And finally, I think it is really important to note, as you have, that there is still a public involvement process that continues on this issue. These issues are going to the arts commission and music commission, they're weighing in on these numbers right now. There is still more opportunities to be able to weigh-in and the public should be doing that now. So that we make the best decisions we can make with the fullest amount of information that is available and I think it is going to be important to really publicize those opportunities for the community. So that they recognize they still have an opportunity to participate in the conversation and add data to information where they think it doesn't exist. Manager?

[12:06:22 PM]

>> Thank you, mayor. I know there might be some other comments from councilmembers, but I wanted to allow acm Gonzales to say a few words as well. >> Is it on? Thank you. Manager, Rodney Gonzales, assistant city manager. Mayor, thank you for the great summary. Councilmember Fuentes thank you for keying up the conversation. These are hard choices in front of us. I believe with us talking about them early, we can work collaboratively to get to a good solution for our community. You raise up a valid question. Is now the time to make the changes associated with the guidelines? When we started two years down this path, it was pre-pandemic and we didn't have the significant decreases we have today. So I applaud staff's effort to move in an equitable model which is in alignment with strategic projection 2023. The difficulty we have is that we have had significant decreases in the hotel

[12:07:22 PM]

occupancy taxes. What may look like an equity model has an appearance of not being fair because of the cost and decreases. I want to mention, one of the other choices we have is if we kept things status quo, meaning that if we didn't make any changes to the guidelines, we would see across the board decreases for all of our artists and arts organizations. And we haven't come forward with what that information looks like. We have done that in the past, where we made proportionate decreases. But what the staff is trying to relay is that keeping the model keeps the inequities in place. All it does is makes proportionate decreases across the board. From the staff perspective, what we want to do is present the best equitable model to also reflect the decreased revenues we see in front of us. With regard to the decreased revenues, we proposed to council to use actual instead of projected. That conversation, I know that there are councilmembers that

[12:08:23 PM]

have questions about that. Perhaps we tee up that conversation in an audit and finance committee discussion. So that way we can talk about the ramifications, if you will, of if we use projected versus actual. We are projecting that we will collect \$6.6 million in hotel taxes, but we are asking council in the proposed budget to only allocate 3.7. So there is a delta there. Right now, we don't have that comfort level in allocating that full 6.6, because we are in stage 5. We have the delta variant in front of us. We're seeing a number of events canceled which means our hotel taxes can be impacted yet again. And so it is very concerning for us from a financial perspective. Keeping up with the projected model versus an actual model. There are questions also raised about, you know, are we opening up the program too Bradley, to many artists and arts organizations. There again, that is another

[12:09:24 PM]

equity conversation. Because for too long, a lot of artists and arts organizations were shut out of the process in an inequitable manner. It is a worthy question of what is that right balance of opening up the process as well? So I just want to of course thank council for the conversation. It is a good conversation. We're taking all this feedback. We're taking all the council questions. It is obvious that we need to come forward with a lot more information in a transparent manner not just to council but the arts community watching as well. The other thing I leave you with your arts commission members also represent your views. To the extent you can have those conversations with your representative, please do so because our staff works directly with the arts commission members. So we encourage you of, course, to communicate with your arts commission members, express your views to them so those can also be passed on to us. You are absolutely right, mayor, these are hard choices in front of us. There are no easy answers.

[12:10:25 PM]

At the end of the day we have far less revenue than what we did pre-covid. That by itself means there will be financial cuts across the board. We hope, of course, we will get through the pandemic in such a way that eventually our revenues will increase to prepandemic levels but we have a long way to go. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember alter. >> Alter: Thank you, Rodney, I appreciate that summary of the challenge. We have a lot of tough questions before us. It is important. It is also really important to realize that this is a direct function of direction that was given by council to prioritize equity. We need to recognize the steps in the proposal before us is an attempt to operationalize that moving forward. There is no good time to recalibrate this from the perspective of organizations who will no longer get

[12:11:26 PM]

funding. This is a conversation we also have to recognize that has been going on for more than two years. I remember, you know, two years ago, we had this conversation and there was a lot of discussion about how you do the transition and warning was given back then that we were going to be making a transition, we're going to be doing that. Obviously, the covid situation complicates matters and raises questions about the right path. But I think it is really important that we recognize that what staff is putting before us comes from a lot of work. A lot of energy. A lot of reflection. A lot of thinking about council direction towards equity. I think it is important that we acknowledge that. I do have a question which might lead to a potential path for a transition, which is we are talking about the cultural arts fund, that we have to follow all the hot rules about how the funding is working.

[12:12:27 PM]

I don't believe we have to do that as much this year because we put in 4.8 million of budget stabilization reserve funds which do not have to be under the hot requirement. We also have flexibility to swap those out for arpa funds which are even more flexible, perhaps, at times. Which could open up a transition period that looks different that might be better able to meet the needs of our ecosystem at this time, in terms of equity and the health of the ecosystem as a whole. I ask the city manager, as you are thinking about the appropriate next steps and as we have the conversation that the mayor alluded to that includes the arpa funds and other things, that we really question whether our assumption that this has to happen under the cultural arts fund umbrella with all of the rules that come with that for this next step, is that really, for the 4.8 million, is that really the right way

[12:13:28 PM]

to confine that spending at this particular time? As I understand it, you know, the hot rules are pretty onerous. They require performances which may be challenging under covid conditions, et cetera. And we may be able to better help our organizations thrive if we take a different approach. I want to also applaud staff in the implementation of the nonprofit cultural arts grant, where they were able to prioritize equity and diversity in that process. Because there will be additional funds, we will be able to reach more of the legacy organizations who may not have been able to fall under that. And I look forward to the data. I think that councilmember kitchen or councilmember pool asked for where we can really see how that matches up with our cultural arts contractors. I believe we need to have the fuller conversation about all of the money and figure out where we need to make the

[12:14:28 PM]

investments now and not be wed to that hot fund approach in the short run. I also believe we need to make the transition. We have already been telling our organizations for two years, this is going to happen. We have to be careful also that we navigate this process as the mayor suggested, where council is not choosing particular organizations on the dais that we have a broader frame. This is something that we see in lots of different things. I also want to say that I appreciate moving to actuals. I think that is important. And I think it is also important that we don't perpetuate a system where organizations rely strictly on the city as a main funding source. And finally, Rodney, if you want to talk with my staff, we can talk about how would be appropriate to bring this before the audit and finance committee, if you want to continue the conversation there. Or if the dais wants to do it as a full council. I will let you figure that out. We can work out what that looks like for getting on the

[12:15:30 PM]

agenda. Thank you. >> Just really quick asked. When I -- >> Mayor Adler: Just a really quick aside. When I talked about funding I was not talking about just through the city. A lot of organizations got the shuttered venue funds. Probably \$200 million came into organizations in our city. So we need to be, you know, keeping track of that as well. Councilmember kitchen. >> Kitchen: I will be brief. I know we have gone a ways. I want to highlight additional questions they have, that perhaps you all can respond to or talk about offline. A couple of those. I would like to understand better both what our goal is and how we're going to measure success. And you can point me to that in a report or you can provide me information. But I want to know specifics from a data perspective.

[12:16:31 PM]

What is our goal? Our target? You know, we're talking about transitioning in several different ways. So I want to know how we're going to measure success and what is our goal? What is our goal for equity? What will tell us that we have succeeded. So if you can share that. I would also like to understand better how the criteria that we're wanting to move to for equity purposes takes into account longevity and sustainability in the criteria. And also how we take into account other populations that I believe are impacted by equity unless there is data that I am not aware of. Traditionally at least in other fields, women and people with disabilities and LGBTQ+ populations have been impacted. So I would like to understand

[12:17:34 PM]

how those three populations are accounted for in our effort to move towards equity. And if there is a reason not to consider those populations, because the field -- because they don't experience difficulties in this field, then I would like to see that data. So I think that would be important. I'm really concerned, particularly about women of color, for example. Who may be receiving -- may be experiencing barriers from several aspects. So I'd like to understand -- because my understanding right now is women are not factored in, in consideration. And if I am wrong about that, I would like to understand that. Is that the case, that women -- being a woman is not part of the factors that you are looking at from an equity standpoint at this point? >> No, women are factored in. It is just with an equity lens. So primarily women of color, women who have an intersectionality with other

[12:18:35 PM]

marginalized groups you mentioned, such as disabilities, those who identify as LGBTQ+. Those are absolutely factors into the intersectional equity lens. >> Kitchen: Ok. I would like to understand better how the data is used and factored in that way. In other words, what's the -- what's the measures and metrics, that sort of thing. I would also like to understand why women across the board are not

considered. So ... If we can have that conversation, I think that would be important. I think it is important to be driven by data. So that is why I am asking the question this way. Because I understand that in some fields women are not a minority. But in other fields they are. And there are historical barriers for women in some fields and not in others. I would like to understand what we are seeing in the arts community with regard to that. Let's see ... Audit and

[12:19:37 PM]

finance. Councilmember alter, I'm fine if this conversation happens there, I would want to know about it so I can participate and have some options to participate. And then finally, I think it is an interesting conversation to talk about the role of the city in terms of ongoing long-term funding for arts. I'm not certain -- I think that is a real policy question that we probably need to have more conversation about. The reason I'm asking that, I'm just raising that is because -- is because, you know, we -- when we think about the role -- I mean, the arts community is not necessarily one that we would affect -- expect to be totally self-sufficient from the private sector all the time. As a government entity, we

[12:20:39 PM]

subsidize some things all the time and we never expect them to be sustainable from the private sector. So I just want to think about that a little more from a policy perspective. I hear the reasons and thinking that people are raising. But I want us to be cautious about that I'm not sure we had a full conversation from a policy perspective about what the role of the city is in supporting arts organizations and artists. Or culture of all type. I want us to have more conversation about that. Because for me, it is not a given to think that all cultural entities should be totally self-sufficient eventually at some point and never accept any public dollars. So there is that. That is a longer conversation. And finally, working back to -- I'm not sure if I heard the answer for people with disabilities, how is that factored in to the criteria?

[12:21:40 PM]

>> That is one of the factors that we take into consideration. We recognize that they're also a historically marginalized group, it is in the rubric with the scoring criteria that intertwines with that. >> Is it intersectional as you said before? >> Yes. >> Kitchen: All right. I will need to understand those criteria a little bit better. We can talk about that offline. Thank you. >> Tovo: I have a couple of questions, again, since we have been focusing our conversation, to some extent on the interim report. I have questions on elements that I can make quick, I think. Um ... I am interested -- I want to note it for my colleagues and ask that we follow-up in the conversation that we will have about -- excuse me -- the historic preservation fund. I'm interested in getting more information about the data

[12:22:41 PM]

point cited on page 9. That the high number of application -- that within heritage tourism there is a high number of applications abandoned by applicants representing communities of color. I'm not sure I'm understanding what the heritage tourism is. Is that within the cultural arts funding or are you also referencing the historical preservation funding. >> Thank you, councilmember tovo we representing part of the historic preservation. As part of the analysis in the cultural arts process. We realized we have two other divisions that use hotel occupancy tax funds. So we needed to center all three around the same pillars. That is why you are seeing the information. Our consultant is not only working with the cultural arts division, but with historic preservation and music and entertainment. >> Tovo: So when I see references to heritage tourism throughout this, are those programs or applications for

[12:23:42 PM]

the historic preservation funding? >> Yes. >> Tovo: Ok. So I see most of the recommendations and most of our conversation here today has really dealt with the cultural arts funding rather than the historic preservation funding. I hope we can get more information about that generally, but you know, how are we -- how is the city proposing to make the applications for historic preservation funding more accessible as well? There was a lot of attention to, again, cultural arts and how to make that program more accessible and you know, really provide support to organizations that are applying for the first time, but it is not clear, especially given that data point how we're going to address that finding. Let's see. I had another question related to that as well. So on page 7, in the interim report, there is a point that you heard that attention was

[12:24:44 PM]

needed to build capacity for Austin's current and next generation of cultural leaders in the arts, music and heritage sectors. Again, I was wondering how is heritage sector being defined? >> Those are the constituents that the heritage tourism fund -- the historic preservation fund addresses. So the applicants within that particular sector of the community that work with historic assets of the city. >> Tovo: Ok. Thank you. That too is about the historic preservation fund applicants? >> Yes. >> Tovo: Ok. Thank you. And you know, just a note, I think it kind of speaks to what we're -- what several of us have mentioned here today. On page 18, there is a proposed strategy from our consultant that talks about developing incentives and goals to support long-term contractors to become less dependent on city funding and

[12:25:45 PM]

have resources and capacities to seek additional funding. So to me, that recommendation is really important. Main of us have mentioned that -- many of us have mentioned if that is the model we're going to, I think there is a lot of -- I -- given our limited resources and the fact that we -- you know, I think it may be appropriate to really set that expectation that the city funding is going to be there to help organizations really build that capacity. I agree this shift -- councilmember alter you raise a good point, it has been signalled this change is coming. I have to reflect back on how clearly we set that expectation with organizations that have received funding year after year after year that this was going to be, you know, potentially a very

[12:26:45 PM]

dramatic shift rather than a more gradual process of phasing in. It seems to me, the recommendation itself talks about how to set incentives and goals to help the long-term contractors transition away from the setting. I hope we can be thoughtful about how that happens. So again, I guess lastly to get back to heritage tourism and preservation fund, if we could manager, to circle around and talk about that funding possess, that we agreed to talk about last week, maybe we can talk specifically what the recommendations are as they relate to that particular program. And so often in recent months and especially with regard to this, I have been reminded of the create Austin plan, which has great recommendations and we seem to be hearing some of

[12:27:47 PM]

those recommendations, again and again in report and analysis. I want to remind us that create Austin plan and recommendations, mayor you served on a committee, maybe on the leadership community I was a community member on a committee. We had community organizations and community members involved. We are seeing recommendations that I heard first and learned about first in the create Austin project. I think we want to really mind some of those documents and some of those analyses that we have got, in some cases, some of the ideas have been sitting on the shelf and really are -- could move forward. >> Mayor Adler: Wonderful you should raise create Austin. That was simpler time back then. [Chuckling] Councilmember Fuentes >> Fuentes: Thank you, colleagues, I'll be brief.

[12:28:48 PM]

Thank you for the robust conversation. I was hoping to have a conversation about the guidelines. Councilmember tovo you raise an excellent point to the extent the community was aware of the changes to be made is questionable. The changes proposed before us will be rolled out in October.

We're talking about six weeks. I think we need to have more consideration for the transition plan, especially knows we have arpa funds available, especially in light of the communities we're hearing today. -- Comments we're hearing today. It is news to hear about the consideration of using arpa for the transition plan. That is news to the community as well. They probably want more information about what that looks like. Thanks again. I do for the consultant, Ms. Reese, if I can have a copy of the feedback, the input that was submitted as part of the community engagement process, I would really appreciate it. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Great. Colleagues, councilmember alter, councilmember pool.

[12:29:51 PM]

>> Alter: Thank you. I appreciate that we need to have a fuller conversation of this, but I do want to underscore there is a need for haste in getting money out to the arts community. And we need to be careful that trying to get everything perfect doesn't mean that we don't deliver funding out that is very much needed from arpa. Et cetera. I don't know exactly how we do that, other than to concentrate and focus attention. I recognize that situations are changing. But I think that is important to balance with whatever we're doing. And then finally, I wanted to ask if there is any way we can get some of the data on the shuttered venue or any of the other big arpa or cares act programs that happened that are supporting our venues where we might not have that information. It is relevant, so we know what we're targeting in terms of the groups that may have missed out on that funding or may be struggling even more.

[12:30:52 PM]

I think that would be super helpful if staff can help us get that fuller picture as we make these decisions. >> Mayor Adler: There is a website portal where they have listed all of the organizations in Austin that have received some of the shuttered venue spending. If you all could send that link out or post that link in the backup, I think that would be helpful information. >> And I'd just close by saying, the information that various councilmembers have asked for, do, please, staff being sure to send it to the entire dais. I know you will. With regard to moving with haste, I agree. I think we're talking -- there are two different funding situations here. One is the existing funding that we want to proceed with, that has already been determined. There should not be any slowdowns or hang ups with that. The dais has been clear on moving forward with the funds already approved. But as far as making sure that we have buy-in and

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understanding in the community with any proposed changes that we may approve, we need to take the time that is necessary for that, I believe. Please send us full information how much money from the different funds you looking at. In particular the point made earlier, that aarp is different from hot and

can be handled differently, I would extend or endorse that. You all are probably already thinking about that, maybe not. The other thing I would ask is did the disaster relief lift the narrow down of the hotel occupancy taxes. You don't have to answer that now. If you can look into that with the able legal staff, that would be great. Thanks. >> Mayor Adler: Ok. Colleagues, it is 12:30. We're going to take an hour recess for lunch. We'll be back at 1:30. At 1:30 let's do the report on the fire. Let's go to the storm.

[12:32:56 PM]

>> Mayor, can we -- the one pulled item when we come back, please. >> Mayor Adler: I'm sorry, what? >> May we please -- >> Mayor Adler: So when we come back, we'll do councilmember pool's issue that is coming up with week before council. Then the fire and then let's do the community report. They've been told that that would be the order that we would generally be using. I'll see you back here at 1:30. [Break]

[1:39:58 PM]

>> You're good to go, mayor pro tem. >> Harper-madison: Thank you very much. I appreciate it. Okay, folks, so the Austin city council is meeting today, August 24th, 2021. We took a small break for lunch. We're going to resume the meeting right now at 1:39 with a split between some folks at city hall in chambers and some of us joining virtually. And I believe the first item up for discussion is item number 9 on our agenda. It's the Ryan lane site. And I believe councilmember pool pulled this item. >> Right, thanks. And as staff is coming in I wanted to tee this up a little bit and make a couple of comment. Of course, it just got noisy outside so I'm moving to another location. So I pulled item 9 because I understand staff has the presentation, and I know we would all appreciate seeing that. And I wanted to let everybody know that I have a

[1:41:00 PM]

motion sheet that I prepared with the community to restate some key priorities for negotiations as they begin. Before we start I want to recognize a few folks for their work on the project. A whole lot of people, individuals and neighborhoods, put years into making this redevelopment possible. I would like to start with councilmember tovo and her work in the past council to develop a community vision for this parcel. Those conversations sparked the beginnings of consensus around what this project could mean for our neighborhoods. I want to thank the Ryan drive working group. Representatives on that working group were drawn from the crestview, brentwood, highland neighborhoods. They dedicated themselves to surveying residents, crafting what ultimately became the guiding document for this project, which is the Ryan drive working group report. And I commend that document to you all.

[1:42:06 PM]

I want to thank Jill, Sean in purchasing who successfully attracted proposals to attract the community and city priorities. That's a really big win for all of us. Thank you for your hard work on this. I know that for many of our staff some now retired like Lorraine Rizer, this is a capstone project and it was worth the wait. I'll put my motion sheet on the message board today so you all can see it. Really, really quick just some high points, I want to let you know what will be on there. The city manager will be directed to update the council on progress of the exclusive negotiating agreement that we approve for the Ryan drive redevelopment project at an upcoming council work session. Additionally the city should attempt to secure the following elements in an exclusive negotiating agreement and update the council on the progress of the negotiations. And one of those items is to

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continue to position the Ryan drive working group report as the expression of the surrounding community for the vision of the Ryan drive redevelopment. Strive towards option B in the affordable housing portion, which includes gaining more permanent supportive housing, particularly for families with children, to position the Ryan drive redevelopment as a model that will help achieve the city's goals for inclusive housing and makes real progress on our strategic housing blueprint targets. We want to ensure tenant protections as currently contained in the city's rental housing development assistance program. We want to allow for profit sharing for the city beyond a certain internal rate of return once costs are recovered so that any profits returned to the city will be used for a city and community priority like the creation of vouchers and services for individuals who may be homeless. We want to coordinate transit access design with the city and other project

[1:44:08 PM]

connect partners to leverage impending redesigns of the north Lamar airport intersection that will facilitate both the red and Orange rail lines, the brt and improved transit hub at crestview station. This is after all one of our transit oriented development parts of town. We wanted to continue to focus on a lease option rather than purchase for Ryan drive. Work towards a parks maintenance plan to establish the role of the city, the developer and non-profit partners to maintain the park amenities in a sustainable way. Strive to achieve Leed gold rating for four star green building standards as possible while achieving other community benefits, and commit to multiple city and community engagement events and collaborate with the Ryan drive working group on a variety of issues that pertain to the master development agreement, more

[1:45:09 PM]

family friendly housing, changing parking spaces with other uses, creative design options to improve access, work to make the studio and performance spaces for the creative community really flexible and affordable. Ensure parkland accessibility for residents and the surrounding communities. And engage the Ryan drive working group to assist with community engagement activities and guide the vision for the project. And as I list that really long list for you all that will be up on the message board, I want you to know that in just about every instance in talking with Ms. Wollett and other staff that it's a yes for all of these items that we're looking for that are either already included in the proposal and staff's intention or staff is working diligently in order to achieve that.

[1:46:10 PM]

So thank you for giving me that opportunity to kind of lay all this out. It's really an important time for district 7 and for all of Austin to bring this latest redevelopment to the dais for you all to look at. So thanks very much. And I'll turn this over now to staff. >> Cronk: Thank you, mayor and council. As councilmember pool mentioned, this in front of council for consideration is a the highest scoring proposal from 3423 holdings, and the process included as councilmember pool mentioned, significant community input to develop a solicitation to achieve various community benefits, including affordable housing, parkland, access to mass transit, affordable creative space and more. Joel Fagan, redevelopment project manager from the economic development department, will provide a brief overview of the department, including the key highlights of the 3423 holdings proposal. And with that I'll turn the presentation over to Ms. Fagan. Jill? >> Thank you so much, city

[1:47:11 PM]

manager and thank you so much, councilmember pool. I really appreciate the opportunity to be here today to address you all about this exciting project. Next slide, please. As we have been discussing, on this week's council agenda we are seeking authorization to move forward with an ex-exclusive it negotiation for this site with 3423 holdings. This will set the parameters for a master development that will fulfill the city's vision for redeveloping the Ryan drive site. Next slide, please. As councilmember pool touched on so many of the attributes of this site, outlined here in red before you the site is 5.5 acres directly across from the crestview station and very close to project connect Orange line. Agency currently owns this site and they are going to be moving to different

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facilities that will be built and a separate rfp process. And councilmember pool touched on many of the highlights as well, but I wanted to reiterate the support from community and how that has been a guiding principle for our rfp that was issued for redevelopment of this site. Our staff and consultant team took that community input and used it to help craft the rfp for this site that was issued in October 2020 with the responses received this March 2021 when we kicked off our staff evaluation process. Next slide, please. We also have already touched on the redevelopment policy goals that were included in this rfp related to affordable housing, parks and open space, community space and access improvements to the station. Two other rfp objectives for this site also included the minimum repayment back to Austin energy for its site acquisition. We also included in the rfp the opportunity for a proposer to consider a secondary site plan for the privately held adjoining

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parcel. However, as part of the rfp process the evaluation panel only scored the proposals based on what can be achieved solely on the city-owned land. Next slide, please. So our rfp as all of our rfps do lay out the scoring criteria for the proposals. Next slide. And for this rfp, two teams received top scores and were invited to submit best and final offers and conduct interviews with the evaluation panel. That was the 2432 holding team and the development company N the end the evaluation panel considered this to be the highest rated proposal to relate the community benefits to the city as outlined in the rfp. Next slide, please. The 3423 holdings proposal includes a total of 344 mixed income housing units. 325 of those are available.

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Of the 344 housing units, 200 of them are considered family friendly two and three-bedroom units. The proposal also available to achieve 3.2 acres of open space and parkland and over 16,000 square feet of community and commercial space, including a childcare center, restaurant space, art and studio space as well as a health care and wellness center. The proposal also provides for our transit plaza and bike and pedestrian improvements through the site. Next slide, please. As was mentioned, the proposal also included two different levels of affordability with varying levels of city assistance. Included in the baseline option in the proposal is a minimum of 168 rental units at or below 60% mfi and this could be achieved with no city subsidy requested to deliver those rental units. In addition, the proposal also includes at least 10 percent or 34 continuum of care units with the opportunity to double that amount of units with additional city funding and

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resources. 3423 holdings has proposed a ground lease structure, a long-term ground lease structure with long-term payments to the city. They have also identified numerous partnerships through several local organizations, including main spring schools for on-site childcare and people community clinic and integral health for health services. Next slide, please. Again to reiterate this item is going forward on this week's council agenda and we are requesting authorization to proceed forward with an exclusive negotiating with 2334 holdings. This project would also come forward to council for your approval and consideration. This concludes the slides that we have prepared for this item and we appreciate the opportunity to consider any additional questions or feedback that you have. Thank you so much.

[1:52:24 PM]

>> Pool: Did we lose the mayor pro tem? >> Mayor Adler: I'm back here now. >> Pool: Great. >> Harper-madison: My apologies. I thought the mayor was back. I stepped away for a moment. If he is not back -- >> Pool: We're good. >> Harper-madison: Okay. >> Mayor Adler: Mayor pro tem, thank you. Colleagues, any questions on this presentation? Councilmember pool. You've been working on this for a long time. Congratulations. Anything else on this before we go to the next briefing. >> Kitchen: Congratulations on this. It looks very exciting and I'm sure the neighbors are very pleased with moving forward on this. >> Mayor Adler: Mayor pro tem and then councilmember Casar. >> Harper-madison: I'm just going to echo that congratulatory sentiment I can appreciate the hours and hours and hours of staff and

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stakeholder time it probably took to plan this effort and I'm just always excited when we get to talk about building affordable transit oriented housing. So I know that councilmember pool and her team have been working on this for years and it's one of those opportunity where we really see the kind of effort put into this desirable outcome. This is a great package of community benefits, everything from housing space to commercial space and it's all going to be a major project connect nexus. The red line is already there, but soon it will be serviced by the Orange and blue light rail lines. I really appreciate that because of that there's significantly less parking here than our code typically mandates. I hope that we make bigger and better transit investments that we can retool our tod policies to require even less parking, physically and financially less space for cars means

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more space for people. And I love that that's a part of our conversation and reiterating the need for housing, housing, housing. So again, congratulations to everybody who was involved in making this happen and getting more people on our transit corridors that will help justify our transit investments and make Austin more equitable and more mobile, more affordable and more sustainable city. And that

makes me proud. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Councilmember Casar and then councilmember Kelly. You're muted. We'll come back. Councilmember Kelly. >> Kelly: Thank you. I just wanted to offer my congratulations to councilmember pool as well. It's often that when things come before council all of the hand work and behind the scenes efforts aren't really brought to light so thank you for highlighting this

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wonderful project that's going to happen in your district. I'm really excited about it also. >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember alter. >> Alter: Thank you. I wanted to also join in in congratulating councilmember pool and to thank you and your staff as well as the city staff who worked really hard on this project over many, many years. I really appreciate our ability to achieve the parkland and the affordable housing and the housing right on that transit corridor. I know it took a lot to figure out how to do it and we have had a series of projects that were coming to fruition finally over a long time, which I think are going to really address some needs in our community. I think this one really stands out, though, and flex the hard work that you've done in the package you were able to help get out of guiding the rfp process, etcetera. >> Mayor Adler: Anyone

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else? Councilmember Casar, did you end up getting volume? Councilmember Ellis. Can't hear you either. Are you muted? Paige, we can't hear you. Can't hear you. I don't know if you guys need to go out and come back in? >> Pool: I tell you what, what about a round of thumb's up. And if you have questions or there are things that have been missed, do please either put them up on the message board or bring them on Thursday so we will have this on the agenda, item 9 on Thursday. >> Mayor Adler: Sounds good, thank you. Councilmember tovo. >> Tovo: Thanks. I wanted to join the chorus

[1:57:27 PM]

of thanks to councilmember pool. It was a super long time ago that I first went out to this site with the then city manager and I think a few other city staff and it's so exciting to see the realization of what the community and what people like Heather way and others had long said could happen on this site. So thank you so much to you and your team for your leadership in really working with the community to bring this forward. And I want to say just echo one thing that councilmember alter said is it's really exciting to see these projects coming forward and this one to me is so embedded with the values that were in that initial resolution about having affordable housing on site, sustainable development, a real walkable, well integrated redevelopment of that tract. I know that's really due to the work that you put

in to working with our staff and with the community members to make sure that that was reflected in the rfp. And I continue to look

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forward to a conversation that our council can have about how to make sure that we have a process that makes sure that happens each and every one of these times that we have a city-owned tract. So thanks again, this is really, really exciting. >> With that then let's move on to the next item. Let's have the briefing on wildfire. >> Cronk:, thank you, mayor and council. This is the briefing on wildfire preparedness. And to introduce the topic, acm Arrellano is going to join us. >> Mayor, mayor and council -- [inaudible]. There we go. Thank you, city manager, mayor and council members. Good afternoon. Again my name is ray Arrellano, assistant city manager of the public safety departments. It wasn't too long ago that we found ourselves in the are grip of winter storm uri. As we were recovering from that event operations began to emerge how the 27 bastrop fires were precipitated by a

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cold weather event. I looked back to see if it had a name and what I found is it was called the groundhog day blizzard. So in brief briefings to council the Austin fire department had focused the efforts working department to department to increase fuels mitigation. Today the fire department will brief council on its approach and readiness to respond should a wildfire occur in our area, and with that let me hand it over to fire chief Joel baker. >> Mayor Adler: Welcome, chief. >> City manager Spencer cronk, honorable mayor Steve Adler, mayor pro tem harper-madison and all the council members that are here and those visiting via webex. I bring you greetings from the men and women of the Austin fire department. I'm so happy to be here in person to see everyone. As assistant chief makes his way to the podium, I want to take a moment to thank him and his team for the hard work they have done to put together this presentation and I want the council

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members to know, I want the citizens of Austin to know that the Austin fire department we stand ready to assist in any human calls or natural disaster. And as I take my seat I want to take a moment to thank our assistant customer ray Arrellano for his leadership and guidance in helping the Austin fire department not only prepare for this presentation, but the leadership his office bring in the day-to-day operation in supporting the Austin fire department. Thank you. Chief de la Reza. >> Good afternoon and thank you, chief baker. And assistant city manager ray Arrellano. They stole some of the introductions I was going to talk about why we are here today. I will start with introducing the team that we've

assembled that have been working on this presentation. It is led by myself in a very small part. I've been with the wildfire since I first started promoting up the ranks. We also have division chief

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Carey Stewart who leads the wildfire division. That is her main mandate in department and she does it very well. She's assisted and supported by captain Craig Phillips, and wildfire mitigation officer justice jose. This presentation, as ray said, is a little bit different than our historical presentations that we've done. We're not going to focus on just the fuels mitigation, but we're going to take an holistic approach to the wildfire risk that our community faces. We're going to approach it through a view of fire adapted community, a resilient landscape as well as an effective firefighting and quality wildfire response. We have seen especially any time you turn on the news and look at the west coast that wild land fires and wild land urban interface fires are large scale, rapidly escalating events.

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Any single fire department is not equal to meet this challenge alone. It takes a collaborative, well planned effort of the whole community to prepare before the event happens and it takes collaboration between the city, local, regional and sometimes even national assets to address it on the day of the actual emergency. That's one of the reasons why we as the Austin fire department are thankful that you as city leaders have allowed us and continue to support us deploying to help other fellow communities to build those relationships as we know that they, as they have in the past, will come support us in our time of need as well. With that I'll pass on to captain Craig Phillips and the rest of the team. >> Thanks, chief.

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Mayor and council, thank you for having us. Greatly appreciate it. I appreciate the opportunity to come and talk about what we do. As you may already know, the city of Austin has adopted the national cohesive wildfire management system. That's a lot of words. What it means is we boil down a very complicated subject into three areas. So those are restoring and maintaining resilient landscapes, building wildfire adapted communities. Communities that are prepared for the eventuality of a fire and safe and effective firefighting response. So that strategy has been placed into all of the guiding and controlling documents that we have, some of which you can see on this slide, and I believe either links have been provided to you or some with attachments as well. This is taking the approach down to the local level and explains in greater detail how we do what we do. The mission statement of the

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wildfire division is to create safer, resilient fire adapted communities through wildfire mitigation, preparedness and response. Next slide, please. Let's talk a little about how we get to there. We start everything with a risk assessment. AFD along with our partners in the region get together and talk about what the greatest risks are to our area, to our region, and we compare that to what we're seeing from our partners throughout the state and then we begin to focus those. So the wildfire division narrows the focus of some of those risks that are presented to us both geographically and association logically to figure out where we can best place our mitigation efforts. Next step down would be willing and building ready and defensible communities. Our goal is to assist neighborhoods and communities to be prepared for the eventuality of that fire. We want our citizens to be ready to protect themselves.

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Sometimes that involves an evacuation. And we also want for their homes and neighborhoods to be defensible. That puts the community and the neighborhood into a position and a condition that allows firefighters to work successfully. If an area is not defensible, then we may be just required by those conditions of a fire coming through to move on to an area that has a better probability of defense. That's just the realities of the situation. Leveraging the mitigation into operational average. So when we go out to community and we talk to neighbors about how to prepare their homes, how to prepare themselves and their families, those are mitigation efforts that we're leveraging into a safer, more effective firefighting environment. If folks are ready to move, ready to get out when they need to and if their homes are in a defensible position, we can actually concentrate on the firefighting. There's lots of reasons that we do mitigation in all of our wonderful urban group

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green spaces. It can be to lessen the impact of the fire coming through, it can be a restoration of an ecosystem. But it also can be to prepare that area for successful firefighting activities. This is one of the reasons that the code is so important because we need to remember while our homes are our castles, places of safety, they are also fuel in a urban space wildfire. So mitigating that fuel with smart construction puts the whole community into a better position to be able to survive and to be resilient throughout an event like this. Moving down to situational awareness. We at the wildfire division and the department, we watch the weather, moisture levels, we watch statewide activity. We collect a lot of activity and we use it in our decisions on a daily basis. It's imperative that our

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partners and community also maintain situational awareness just like they would for another weather event, tornadoes, floods, freezing weather, etcetera. The division moving down to planning and tree planning. We plan to train our members for success. We recently completed a class 24 members to become trainers for the iff response for interface program. That's one of its own kind training that now we are -- we have folks capable of training the rest of the department on how to respond wisely to an interface fire. It's a little bit of a different thought process because we're building thinking firefighters. We've got excellent firefighters. This is preparing them for a dike event that may not be what they're normally trained for. Next down is our priority

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driven response. This is important for everyone to understand. The fire service has the same incident priorities no matter where it is in the country. It always starts with life safety. Life safety is both of the responders and of our citizens and in a wui' fire, the firefighters are likely to be engaged in a tactical evaluation of the area that's threatened. When I've spoken to some of my contacts in California recently, they talk about how they're not go ahead and in firefighting at all. They're just going evacuations. That's changed over the last week, but that first few weeks was very scary. And it's important to understand that as our first priority we may be engaged in nothing but evacuations and not firefighting. And can evavacuate when we ask them to then we can concentrate on the firefighting. The next incident priority is always incident stabilization, containing the danger. Making eithers to keep the problem from getting worse. Third is property conservation. While it's in our top three

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priorities and while we train always to be aware of the economic impact of anyone's fire, whether it's big or small, we must address the first two priorities first. We cannot sacrifice those for the third. Can I go to the next slide, please? That brings us to the last bullet, which was realistic expectation of outcome and recovery. When the conditions in our area are right for a fire. There are likely to be multiple fires going on at the same time. Those fires will each require resources and those resources will be spread over a much larger area. Not likely to be like the kinds of things you see on TV, but as our area continues to grow into the wildfire interface our risk will increase, meaning that if we have an 100-acre area it may not be in a national

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forest, it may be in a neighborhood and again, -- well, enough said about that. That would not be good. So I want you to understand that AFD trains constantly to be ready every single day to respond to a single house fire or a single business fire. In an event like this, there will be multiple homes, there will be multiple businesses that have the potential to be engaged in the fire. It's not unusual for a fire like this to make an ember cast of a mile and a half. That's a long way from the front of the fire. I say all of that to say this: We rely on our partners. We cannot do this without them. They rely on us. They cannot do what they need to do without us, and just as firefighters cannot stand in the creek bed and hold out our hands and stop a flood, we will not be able to stop an event like this, but we can prepare our

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community to be better prepared for it. Resilience means being able to take a hit, survive and come back. I'm going to pass this on now to chief Stewart. Thank you for your time. >> Good afternoon. Next slide, please. We've had a lot of questions and conversations about evacuations recently and this gives us an opportunity to discuss and understand the evacuation plans that we already have and how we can collectively progress those plans as a city. In the upper left-hand corner of this slide, we have the Austin Travis county wui fire evacuation plan and we have the city of Austin evacuation annex to the emergency operations plan. Within these plans there are many agencies and their assignments outlined. We need to ensure that all of these agencies are aware of their roles in the event of a large scale event that

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would require evacuations. Coordinating these resources to participate in simulated drills would be a good next step to ensure that all agencies have an accurate understanding of their responsibilities. We mentioned simulations for this because evacuations are inherently dangerous. Live drills where we block off streets and try to practice an evacuation aren't recommended because of this risk. Our expectations for an evacuation should be tempered with how chaotic we expect them to be. Our traffic on a normal Tuesday, a blue sky day where we don't have a large event going on, is challenging and sometimes we can barely manage that on a blue sky day. So in an emergency with added traffic, with emotions, the danger of a fire, our normal chaos would only be compounded. Afterward's role is outlined -- AFD's role is outlined in these documents as well and we want to

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explain what we would be going a large scale wildfire event. We would not be able to hand on over a full scale evacuation plan in the event of an emergency. It would be situationally dependent and on scene for where and when any evacuation might happen. The wildfire division has the goal of making our

neighborhoods and our community aware of the challenges in their area and the options that they have during an emergency and how they can best align with the city evacuation plan that we have. As an example of this, in the paradise California fire several years ago they had an evacuation plan in which they performed live drills and they enacted this plan relatively early in that emergency. But the plan couldn't be followed because of the fire event and over 80 people died in that evacuation. So if we rely on a plan that we can't follow then we don't really have a plan. Primarily, AFD will be fighting fire and managing the fire scene on the day of

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a large scale wildfire event. We might engage in situations as a tactic for life safety that will always be our first incident priority, but we will be relying on our city partners to assist and their roles according to these plans would be crucial to implementation of an evacuation. Two of the documents you have received for this presentation are the after action report for this fire starter capcog wildfire simulation drill that was done in February of last year and a technical report for the Travis county fire evacuation simulation. Some of the lessons learned is we need a more coordinated response across the city, county and better coordination of our regional resources. So planning and simulations with all involved parties would be a good place for us to focus in addition to our community education efforts that we're currently doing. Next slide, please. So this is an 84 view of the

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response enhancement activities that we are currently working on. First of all, all AFD firefighters are trained to s130 and s190. S130 a wildland firefighter type two, a certification level as a wild land firefighter. 190 is an introduction to wild land fire behavior and all of our AFD firefighters receive this training as a cadet in their cadet academy. We are also initiating a wildfire battalion on October 1st of this year. Historically in the fire service, specifically the structure firefighting world it's been challenging to effectively train for leadership in a succession planning that can be needed to build depth in command positions. But the wild land firefighting world has done this very well. Built into operations and training in wildland firefighting is training in positions that will be continually developed for the future. So even if we can't fight

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fires of all types with boots on the ground level we want to build our command development that will be responsible for oversight, development and expansion of a large scale wildfire event. Because these incidents types are so very different from structure fires, focusing on that command element within the battalion to create smmos who can manage these fires will be beneficial to operations in the fire

department as a whole. As captain Phillips mentioned we cannot stop all of the events with which we're faced in operations, but we want the wildfire battalion to be trained on how to scale these events properly, how to organize them and how to request outside resources. This is also one of the benefits of the deployments that we've gone on. Many of our deployments have been to California and they've managed as you would hope large scale events very well. So being able to experience working at these events and observe and learn how it is done is incredibly valuable to our wildfire experts here

[2:17:45 PM]

in Austin. So those developments have given us experience on how they should operate. Next we have the responding to the interface training, captain Phillips reviewed this, but 24 Austin firefighters trained as trainers for this that will be delivered to the entire department throughout 2022. We plan to start that training in January and it will take us a little over 12 months to deliver that to the entire department. So this training will bring tactics to all of AFD operations that are specific to fighting wildland urban interface fires and then we come back to partnerships again. We rely on our partners in pard and awu for property on which to train and for events in which we can participate in training. Since these events require lots of land to simulate, we need an adequate place to train and to work with pard, our Austin water utility with prescribed burns on their properties, they have ability to observe fire behavior and work on a fire in an open space in a controlled event, which is

[2:18:46 PM]

invaluable when most of our fire trainings are available as structure fire training. I'll pass it over to justice jonse now. >> Next slide, please. Previous. >> Good afternoon. I'm chocolate excited to be here as share with you the good work that our community has been doing to prepare themselves and embrace the inevitability of wildfire when it returns to our community and landscapes. I wanted to talk a little bit today about our efforts for Austin to become a fire adapted community. A fire adapted community is a community that can experience wildfire without significant losses of property and life that has learned how to live in the area that we are in and to reduce the risk, understand the risk and reduce that risk appropriately. And I want to highlight a few elements of our approaches as the city of Austin become a fire-adapted community. It's important that we're recognized as a blueprint

[2:19:47 PM]

for our communities across the country who are wanting to rapidly adapt to fire environment. We're a part of the fire-adapted communities network, a network of communities bracing for wildfire and embracing wildfire adaptation. So as part of our ongoing efforts is the recognition that the Austin fire department cannot confront this threat alone. It takes collaboration, it takes partnership at all levels.

Some of the areas that I want to focus on today are key elements of what it means to become a fire-adapted community. And I'll start with what matters most, which is our communities here in Austin. You should be proud of them. They're working hard at a grassroots level to prepare themselves, their neighbors and their homes for the inevitability of wildfire. We lead the state consistently in the number of nationally recognized firewise communities. These are communities that have developed a plan for how they're going to address wildfire at the community level. We work to support these communities with technical

[2:20:47 PM]

expertise, understanding of their risk and resources so they can implement effective mitigation measures at the community level. These are neighbors that are out talking to other neighbors, helping each other adapt to wildfire. Our firewise communities also develop local level community wildfire protection plans, which is their action plan for confronting the let of wildfire. Those plans include things like fuels reduction. And when we say fuels reduction we mean typically one of two best practices. We're either reestablishing prescribed fire on the landscape, restoring our fire adapted ecosystems through this natural tool that we use from a resource management standpoint, or we're conducting strategic fuels mitigation in areas directly adjacent to communities to create a buffer from potential fire behavior at that intersection where we know is most important between the home and our wild land areas. This is referred to as our community protection zone. All the data and science that we have supports that this is the most effective

[2:21:48 PM]

area to conduct fuels mitigation to protect communities and to protect our wildland because we know prevention is key to avoiding significant wildfire occurrence. 90 plus percentage of the fires that occur in Texas are human caused, so we also have a strong prevention education campaign to educate residents how to be responsible with fire. Each one of us carries fire with us everywhere we go. When you start your car, when you turn on the burner in the morning, it's part of who we are as a human culture so how do we adapt to that and help people understand that fire is inextricable from who we are and we have to learn to live with that. We all know our climate is changing. The Austin fire department was an early adapting to confront the climate change from an early standpoint. We integrated with our office of sustainability and climate resiliency training and what we can say is the best practices that we're implementing from a fire adapted and fire resilient standpoint are the best practices for climate

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resiliency so we're embraced to confront that head on and we've incorporated that into our strategies. We've also, we're the first city and county to develop wildfire specific evacuation plan. Captain Phillips and chief Stewart hit on this. As a part of this planning process we identified all the limited ingress and egress communities across our jurisdiction, not just in Austin and Travis county, everywhere that fuel encroaches along the road that could be a potential dangerous situation for folks sitting in cars and equally as important we identified internal safety Zones that firefighters and residents can use as a last resort survival. If they're unable to leave these limited ingress and egress communities. One of the ways that we ensure that our community is aligned with our evacuation plans is using great programs like ready, set, go, developed by the international association of fire chiefs and modified here for local use in Austin. This is our frontline for individual and family preparedness and it outlines how community individuals can prepare themselves and how they can share this information with their community to ensure that as

[2:23:50 PM]

a whole they're able to evacuate safely and effectively and they don't waste time following those evacuation orders. One of the most significant strides that we've made moving forward towards the path of fire adapted in Austin is the adoption of our wildland urban interface code. We're the largest municipality in the money to have adopted this code and it's critical for ensuring that future development in Austin is climate resilient, is adapted to fire and can continue to build a buffer of ignition resistant homes between our vulnerable communities and our undeveloped areas. We also work to integrate wildfire preparedness down to the regulatory level through our land use planning and being actively engaged in that process as well as working with hoa's and community groups and updating their community covenants and deed restrictions to reflect wildfire safety and be compatible with that environment. We work to increase our local capacity as captain Phillips mentioned through

[2:24:51 PM]

coordinated exercises and response planning with our partner departments at the local, state and national levels. So we understand what our resource availability is and we slide those partnerships with cooperative fire agreements. That means we have a shared understanding of how we're going to help each other out when the next fire season events arise. Finally, the austin-travis county -- through the austin-travis county wildfire coalition has developed a city- developed a city- county wildfire protection plan. That outlines our local cohesive strategy of how we're going to adapt to fire moving forward. And I can say with great confidence that we've made great strides to implement that plan and are looking at our next update revision for the plan. So it's a good sign when you run out of things to do in the plan that you originally wrote to address wildfire. So all these tenets are key to us working towards becoming adapted and more resilient wildfire. As I mentioned, it's collaboration based. It's not something the fire department can confront on its own. Next slide, please.

[2:25:54 PM]

So what I would like to emphasize is we believe in transparency and we want to make sure that everybody understands just how critical the fight against wildfire is and all the resources that you need are at hand to both understand what we're doing as a city and city departments to prepare for wildfire and what residents can do to own and understand their role in that wildfire preparedness. Because the reality is 70% of our wild land urban interface boundary isn't owned or managed by the city, it's owned by private residents so it necessitates that private partnership of cross fence partnership with us, with the private residents, with the land managers to ensure that we leave no stone unturned in preparing Austin for the inevitable reality of wildfire. And that starts with leadership in the present time. The city of Austin leadership has been extremely resilient of our fire protection efforts. They've been leaders in wildfire resiliency and that support at the leadership level has trickled down all the way to our departmental

[2:26:54 PM]

strategic plan where the first time at the city and the department level we've integrated wildfire performance measures all the way down to our division strategic plan. We've also worked to have lateral integration of wildfire into our partners' planning. As I mentioned, we're reflected in almost all of the office of the sustainability, climate resiliency documents. We work hand in hand with our utilities to implement mitigation measures like shaded fuel breaks adjacent to our communities or along our power lines that we know potentially could be an ignition source. We work very closely with emergency management to ensure that our plans are integrated into our emergency operations plans and everybody is operating on the same playbook. And so all these key components come together to ensure that Austin stays on that path to become a fire adapted community. And from the fire department perspective, everything that we're doing in the community does create a safer environment for our firefighters and lends itself to their operational success. So we support all the efforts our community has done to prepare themselves and we support the

[2:27:55 PM]

leadership intent to continue these efforts. >> Next slide, please. >> So we would next like to review what we have from the horizon from the wildfire division. As previously mentioned we have been responding to the interface training for the entire department that will happen in 2022. We want to continue the wildfire preplans at the community and the community level. This will include our operations companies being more involved in the predevelopment for our different developments in the city. We plan to start with the wildfire battalion and expand out to the rest of the department from

there. This also includes continuation of the great work that justice has just mentioned from our fire adapted communities coordinators that they're already doing to expand our community cwpp's and our fire wise communities. As mentioned from the fire starter drill and the after action for the evacuation simulation, we want to improve our local and

[2:28:56 PM]

regional operational relationships and improve the coordination of our local and regional resources so that in the event that we need to expand an event, we can go step by step to our local, then regional resources and then to our state resources, but we have to go through all of those steps. We want to better use our resources to expand our capabilities. This is specific to our home ignition zone assessments that are currently being done by staff in the wildfire division and with the wildfire coalition. But we want our operations units to be more involved in these. That will create departmentth in the pool of available assessors and give our operations companies the opportunity to triage showers out in the community and preplan their territories with the lens of a wui fire event. Next slide, please. For community evacuations, we are exploring platforms to assist with planning and development of notifications to the public. We want these platforms to gather data in realtime and to help us in realtime aid

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an evacuation decisions. As just mentioned earlier we want to continue the work to increase the local cwpp's and our engaged communities

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issue to raise awareness the way you talk about wildfire is important. We are talking about steps AFD is taking, and some of them we just approved in the budget the funding for extending the rti training. The construction and design of the 360 station. The opening of the Travis country station both of which are in high wildfire risk area, in fact, all of the stations opening are in wildfire risk area the work we have done so far on the wui code and other things the new hub, etcetera. There is a lot we have been doing it's important to underscore that fighting wild fire, preventing wild fire mitigating wild fire is everyone's fight here in the city we can't just talk about

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AFD you have heard me over and over again talking about vegetation management that Austin energy is doing. Austin water and parr are also involved in fuel mitigation efforts. The work depends a lot on the builders in our community and the fire wise adapted community stuff has to do with efforts out in the community. It also falls ordinary us as councilmembers though because we have a role to play in making sure that people are prepared. I would like to invite anyone who would like to join myself commissioner Shieh Howard and council member Kelly we are doing a town hall tomorrow night with some of the folks that are here on wild fire you can go to bitly dash wild fire town hall. Information for constituents how they can get involved to be part of the solution. I would like to ask

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if the staff could--a couple of different questions I want to underscore that council has a very important role and opportunity to help extend the message of the fire department. Have been talking with them over the last couple of years how we extend that reach, we now have a fire wise alliance that is unique to Austin there are folks in those leadership positions who can help your neighborhood start those programs who are neighbors themselves along with our department so wanted to ask chief delareza or chief Stuart to speak a little bit about the ways council can be engaged to work with their neighborhoods and constituents on the fire wise fire adaptation and/or getting the message out and sharing the resources. We all have newsletters we have social media this has to be top of mind if we want to keep moving

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the needle. >> Thank you for that great insightful question the first step for council is understanding your relative risk as a councilmember. And we made that information available if you have any questions about the risk to your constituency, we can clear those up for you and help you quantify the number of homes and individuals that are at risk and your district that is the first step. Many of you have taken that leap and clearly understand that's an issue why we're here today the second step is include us in your discourse and dialogue town hall meetings let us help with the experts, we have to champion in those communities that can be mentors in communities across Austin and Travis county take advantage of the resources we have available risk assessment data our simulation and model what potential fire can be across the landscape and we can help

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you identify partner departments across the city that can show up from communities at risk and help implement their preferred actions for example, at Austin fire wise alliance, we have members from fire departments public works resource recovery to help alius date their role in wildfire preparedness which

is critical if we convince communities to be active to generate their landscape, that say challenge resource has shown up for our communityings in that regard so allow us to be a resource to get the right people to the table that can support city of Austin and staff in your community, we helped people to recognize wild fire and safety and they are willing and able to show up and support our communities. >> Thank you. Appreciate that. Part of what I wanted to you should score the role in council recognizing it's in

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these endeavors not just recognizing it's just af Z. We had a horrible experience with storm uri wild fire is a high risk high fire risk of the community we are one of the top five metropolitan areas at risk for wild fire we need to take this seriously so we don't have a repeat of that. The next question I want to ask you about evacuation plans and the next steps for that. We have plans there is still work to be done for translating that the community knows one of the problems with storm uri council didn't have a clarified role. So, can you speak to the evacuation plans particularly with respect to kind of clarifying what council's role is if it's not clarified then I would like you to think about how you can do that perhaps that can be part of our simulation with the emergency

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preparedness and also I would like to know a little bit more about the how we're handling those situations such as moron canyon one way in and one way out I have a few in my district it's not apparent to me those folks know ready what to do to evacuate. >> Sure I will take the first couple of steps there evacuations are such a complicated route it is impossible to script a specific point I think you had it right on the nose that we have to work to educate our population to be situationally aware as well as to know about the hazards and their territory, we have done the 2018 assessment where we identified those choke points in the different communities that study is

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available and we utilize that to start those educational efforts with our communities out there. We have a different fire. Each has a different area they respond to primarily and different choke poeupb points to reach out to the communities there. We have done for set up the template how to produce those maps where are areas of safe refuge and choke points, to be concerned of there and working to expand that throughout the entire city. I will pass it onto chief Stewart and the rest of the team for the other pieces. >> This may be a group effort for this one. Different iterations of this presentation had us do it it with hesum and together there's a lot of information jointly spread it is a group thing to do this with hesum part of the information we wanted council to have is supporting. Eoc and

[2:41:57 PM]

how to do that best. Empowering PIO's in an event like that and paying attention to the messaging through the commander through the EOC to the public making sure that message you are providing your constituents is consistent with what is coming out of the EOC and PIO making sure there is no novel information coming out from different constituent areas and getting the information out to the public. We are also going to need to find a good notification system for as many people as we can. That's a good example they had a messaging system like Warn Central Texas they were not able to get that message out the infrastructure went down or people were not subscribed to it. A consistent way as a community to develop getting that message out the best way we can to as many people as we can will be important and pushing that message how to stay informed as

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a community. >> We go to a lot of training about evacuations and large scale evacuations specifically to your question, there is before, during and after. There is before period the educational period each councilmember could be a great asset in helping pushing out the message I will use the term responsibility what I mean is knowing you are your best advocate every member of the public knows they can stay aware of current situation what steps they need to be prepared and to look for routes and alternate routes out of an area during an event is a very dynamic difficult situation that is why coordination through EOC is important and making sure I have part of several since incentives sometimes a message will be repeated over time and you may not see it until it is three

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days old making sure there is consistent messaging is very important. All the evacuation reports we talk to will say you need plan A, B, C and D you will probably going to use all of them. They will all come into effect after. We don't talk enough about recovery all the folks we get training from say evacuation is exceptionally emotional event for evacuees for those being evacuated it has an emotional physical economic impact onto a community even a small neighborhood it's still going to have all of those things those folks are going to want to know when can I access resources is when can I go home? Is it safe for me to go home? Things like that. You all are your best advocates for your own districts and making sure we're all on the same page as a city between all of the departments, and giving them

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that information in a timely fashion will help with that it will be a tough time for all of us I hope that is helpful. >> It is that underscores the amount of work that needs to be done. Make sure we have clarity how we can be most constructive where to get the information where the real is in an event of a wild fire. I will ask the city manager to push on this and think clearly about that. So, that we you know as a council we can support your efforts and work collaboratively to get that moving forward. I want to thank chief baker for making wild fire a strategic priority that has gone down to the division level I think that is very much called for the last question I had you know is really I wouldn't to make sure my

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colleagues know. Although we adopted the wild land urban interface code we cannot fully adopt it. There are still additional steps there are additional steps because part of the code was in the draft land development code so did not get adopted into the wui code we use there is information about egresses it's we found ways to enforce but still need to get into our code thanked is a whole host of potential adoptions with respect to vegetation management as well as with respect to existing structures we need to think carefully about I wanted to E could elaborate on where we stand for the future for council to vote on. Thank you for the time I will pass it on to the next person. >> Thank you councilmember alter. As we have said it's everyone's fight that is even

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more so than ever in the fire department, we have many different departments divisions within the department wild fire division is working on educating the wild fire branch of it across the way to address your question about codes and the next steps we work hand in hand with our prevention division to make sure we are pushing to make that as justice works on a daily basis with chief Tom book he is not with us today he can talk about the next steps on that. >> Yes ma'am. They relate to part of your previous question you mentioned lawn county specifically, we did identify limited ingress and egress communities part of the hard job we have is what captain Phillips communicated today is creating realistic exception of outcomes if you live in canyon currently you will face

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difficulties in a wild fire. Knowing when those conditions are. When an evacuation is potentially inevitable. Recognize you may not be able to leave your neighborhood in that event with standing a wild fire could be your last resort survival area that is a reality we recognize residents in Austin will confront. It's not a protection in many of these communities to that end with the adoption of wild and urban intervention code my science show us Ambers are the number one reason homes ignite during a wildfire

extend that out to a mile-and-a-half in our communities, we did this, we saw the pinnacle fire 2 or 3 blocks from the fire are fighting protection they fighting a wildfire this

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protection goes above and beyond the code there's an element of the code that is somewhat of a loophole it says if you will get out there and trim your bushes and mow your yard you will be maintaining your structure structure hardening creates the latest and long lasting benefit. We are not done. Looking to update the 2021 code and receptive to input on ways we can even further bolster our ability to regulate wild fire risk, we can say requirements for retrofit and vegetation management can be expensive not as expensive as at home. We are open to exploring those possibilities for protection I am excited we took the step to adopt this code and had the courage to step up and do so thank you for that first step, we are excited to be working with you as our

[2:50:12 PM]

efforts to regulate wild fire risk evolve. >> Mayor Adler: My colleague councilmember alter is constantly reminding us this is not a question of if but when. The amount of work still to be done is daunting to make sure we're in the best possible place to be able to do that. I do want to take just a second to thank my colleague, to thank the chief manager and everybody on the force that has done so much work. I remember these same conversations years ago, b.4. Hr-2021-110439 - 809 E. 9th St. - Offered for consent approval routon-alvarez-lopez house council district 1 years ago, when for many of us it was a new topic and then there was even more to do when you look at the accomplishment and success of the work that is done it is very laudable. Thank

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you. Councilmember alter thank you. Colleagues any further discussion on this? Council member Ellis? >> Thank you mayor I appreciate councilmember alter's work on this. She's been a great leader I look forward to watching your panel discussion and share that with my constituents so they can know from y'all are talking about as well. I do have a question just about general communications planning I know there is still some work to sort out to know exactly what kind of alert system are you going to use and where to sign up to get information. What can I help tell my constituents to follow right now. Is there a certain social media account is it the web page to know when that information becomes available, what it's going to look like. As we experienced in the winter storm once people start having power lines go out or electricity not working it becomes very difficult to get information to people. Do you have an interim plan until you

[2:52:13 PM]

get a more firm communications plan ultimately? >> That is a great question. It's something that is evolving as we speak, we had a pager audit that city leadership mandated that has us reviewing how we utilize paging and notification internally as well as externally. Right now, the primary notification goes through the homeland security hesm and emergency management they utilize Texas warn we always push for that. We understand that is a difficulty. So, we very much utilize the shotgun approach of going through the joint information center stood up for any large information and they hid all the different Twitter accounts from the city as well as using media briefings to go

[2:53:13 PM]

out to all the major media networks we have internally in the city of Austin, we use social media, we use traditional media, we try to hit all of them. We know while a consistent single point is the best, it is hard to guarantee that we have penetration into our entire community. So, we continue to utilize as much. I ask you to push Texas warn for right now until we have something we will utilize whatever is determined to be the best notification through that system. >> That is helpful. Thank you I strongly encourage people think about the departments they want to hear from in emergency situations so they got that double duty if you only have a second to check social media to see the newest update something will come through your feed follow the fire department follow ems, follow H scm follow

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the government Twitter those are the quickest ways to find that. I will remind people if they haven't signed up for the Texas warn system they need to consider doing that now. >> If F you do a simple search for warn Texas they will find the sign up page. >> Thank you. >> One more point. >> Kind of goes in line with the original question what can council do it often challenging to define what say neighborhood? It's easy for us to have out reach when with ve organized hoa's or poa's it doesn't have to look that way in the community if you can encourage the parts of the communities not irreparable officially organized to parts of the division we can have a link to those communities as well even if they are not officially organized it could be a street in the neighborhood we can get started with and that expands to having out reach and more contact with people in the city even if

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they're not organized please encourage your constituent to be in contact with us and learn about what the division does and what we can provide for them. And continue our efforts that way as well. >> We will certainly do that I have a couple of areas the neighborhood is two streets they keep in touch with each other so make sure you have access to them as well. >> >> Mayor Adler: Councilmember kitchen? Or council member tovo. >> >> Councilmember kitchen: Thank you for this work and thank you councilmember alter if continuing to champion these efforts it's very important work. I have a question about the cwpps the community wildfire protection plans where can I go to see some detail about plans put in place already for neighborhoods. >> Yes ma'am your best resource for all of the activities we have mentioned today are the Austin area wildfire hub and at

[2:56:21 PM]

the top of that web page it's got tabs for fire resilient landscape work and community wildfire preparedness work including percentage that have developed wildfire proareas that still need or have not been receptive to that planning process those local plans are reflective of our city county community wildfire protection plans boiled down to the key specific of the community. >> That is going to give me a link a map where I can actually see which plans are in place and a link to the plans themselves. >> Yes ma'am all of the nationally recognized five communities have a protection plan which is an added component beyond what the national program requires. >> Let me make sure I'm understanding those are the plans developed with the neighborhoods? >> Yes ma'am community wildfire protection plans it's part of

[2:57:23 PM]

those plans there is built into project planning for projects within the community hoa property a good example of this is Travis county they own 200 acres of open space they are also surrounded by parks and recreation department part of their community wild fire plan they identified, areas for the city to work and technical expertise for a project on their property these plans are overall fire efforts and lends sustainability to champions in each of these communities. >> Councilmember kitchen: Okay. Of the neighborhoods in the city that are the highest risk would you say you may have said this I missed it. Would you say all of them have plans in place. >> No. 50% of the high risk are covered by local cwpp the entire Austin Travis county. Has Cupp with mitigated recommendations this takes the

[2:58:23 PM]

communities values and their goals and integrating them into the planning process. >> It also takes it down to what is going on specifically in a particular neighborhood so 50 percent of the highest risk or high risk. >> >> Councilmember kitchen: Okay do you all have a plan so to speak. What is the

right word? Do you all have an approach to getting the rest of those areas to develop? Do you have a proactive approach to developing the rest of those areas and do you have them in priority order? >> We do have a plan for updating the rest of the areas, we are currently working existing wildfire communities and Cupp's and consistent template, we fled item operate for them to follow. And the template in the hub all the information that would need a local cwpp and risk wild land

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areas are will be operated an and the community implements their efforts, what they want to do. Educational out reach if they have property they can identify those projects we hope to have that up the early part of this year in the meantime, we are engaging with communities receptive to this plan it starts with one individual that cares as a community leader and expandings from there if you have champions send them to us into our fire other license and expedite that process. Keufp councilmemer kitchen do you have a priority for the remaining areas. >> Right now, we are working in high risk areas is receptivity in the communities to put in the work to develop that plan if that wasn't ready to do that, we work with other communities that are. If you

[3:00:25 PM]

have communities ready to jump into that process, we are ready to work with them in the system. >> Okay. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Council member tovo. >> Councilmember tovo: Yeah. Thank you. To our staff and executive team and councilmember alter for your focus on this really importantish aye. This leaves so well into our next presentation as were you talking about communication and the importance of having organized community networks where information can transmit that seems just very much in line with what we're finding through all of the analysis of the winter storm including the one the task force did for us. I wanted to highlight something that came up in the task force report that we're about to hear about. That was what you have all indicated to. The importance of preparation before an event. One of the things they highlighted some of the speakers that came to that

[3:01:26 PM]

task force taked about their lack of access to social media because of the power situation and the suggestion came from the report that as part of our emergency preparedness as a city the work we do with our community we encourage the purchase of transistor radios and consider distributing those I think this is in the report. Or maybe my next step thinking about what should happen. That in our work we're doing out in the community as a city, we might considering distributing transistor radios I wanted to throw that out there. It connects to Twitter and social immediate and Facebook are wonderful ways of getting out information but some old fashion means are important as we saw in the winter storm I

was strict by that recommendation the transistor radio and add that into the mix. >> If you follow the ready set go principles, that was

[3:02:30 PM]

developed and geared for wildfires but perpetuates to many types of emergencies they have recommended go kit and one of the items on there is a transistor radio for the very same reasons that is captured in the wildfire specific world but extrapolates to all types of emergencies. >> Thank you it's been a while since I looked at the ready set go. As we start to think about our the resilience work we are doing one message to the manager and all of the folks working on emergencies to collect that information to one so our emergency preparedness kits suggesting they get. And supporting through give aways and whatnot are kind of linked. Any way thank you for that additional information thanks for all of the work it's good to see the progress in this

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area. >> Mayor Adler: Anything else colleagues before we have the last presentation? Manager staff thank you so much. >> Thank you. >> Chief? >> Manager you want to layout the last one. >> Yeah the last topic presentation of the winter storm. You'ry. >> Thank you. [Inaudible] Z as we discussed here developments. The coordination of action report to determine how we as an organization in partnership with federal state local agencies non-profits in the community our profits to non-emergencies to assist in the development of the report projected to be complete in

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September. We heard the organization from the community in reaction to winter storm uri and through it's resolution 20210325-067 council directed the creation of winter storm review task force for the purpose of holding public listening sessions and provide council on the information gleaned from the community that report is completed today. Members of the task force by sereta Davis will lead a summary of their report. >> Thank you. >> My name is Serita Davis the chair of the winter review task force and the chair of Austin human rights commission appointed to that by mayor Adler and have served there since July of 2015 I'm first going to thank council member

[3:05:36 PM]

tovo and your push for the importance of this task force and the work we're doing and all other councilmembers that join their speaking sessions and reached out to us to offer support in what we were doing I will say it was quite a venture in terms of being a task force that took a lot of the brunt of community frustration fear and anger and gave them a place to express that I also want to give a special thanks to all of the task force members only three of us are still on due to wait times right now, we will be providing the presentation but task force members worked extremely hard in this effort and thanks to our liaison Patricia barnae she did a great job with hardly any notice sometimes getting our speaking sessions today making sure everything functioned properly and herding cats in addition to

[3:06:37 PM]

all of her other duties I will present this briefing today along with Rebecca Austin the chair for the commission for women and the vice chair of the task force and the chair of the college student commission Jeffrey clements today we did provide a final report as a back up do you mean if you would like to follow along each number in the presentation will have the page numbers what is in our larger report, we will be sharing feedback and recommendations, we received from speakers in listening sessions and thank you to citizens of Austin who made time to attend our listening sessions that were majority of the time we were not able to hold them ATS the most opportunity times for working individuals, we will begin with vice chair of our task force Rebecca Austin and we will start our briefing. >> All right. Good afternoon everyone thank you so much Serita I would like to start by acknowledging all of the

[3:07:37 PM]

members of the task force these are all volunteers they serve on our commissions so they already carry a heavy load supporting the city in its efforts and really stepped up and showed up for this task force the last several months I want to acknowledge by reading their name [inaudible] Jeffrey clements myself Manuel, Lisa, Ricardo Kathryn, and Jonathan franks you can see their affiliation the represents of quality of life joint inclusion committees and represent. Our city different neighborhoods different demographics and constituents and I will echo Patricia throughout this process let's go ahead to the next slide please when the task force was commissioned at the

[3:08:39 PM]

March resolution to convene listening sessions to support feedback from winter storm uri, we held our first kickoff meeting in April. That is an organizational operational meeting to organize the committee to elect chair and vice chair and to get underway at that time, we scheduled a series of five different listening sessions of over the next two months from April through June knowing we had to do this

virtually there wasn't in person option we tried to accommodate different times of day and different days of the week, we had challenges getting times and dates on the city calendar and being able to advertise those, we were as flexible as possible and having individual submit written testimony if not in person we read it in a meeting to make sure it was on record you can see also in the schedule here, we had debriefs after each of the listening sessions that is an opportunity for the task

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force to convene process what we heard at the last session fine tune our approach, we didn't have a guide book for this we were determining as we went the best way to hear from each citizen and how much time to a lot each person, we didn't want to be constraints of Roberts rules, we divided the number of speaks to give them the maximum time as possible. We followed with each of those debriefs you will see towards the end of the schedule in June, we wrapped up the public sessions and as well as several ad hoc working meetings of our findings and report that went to council at the end of June the city did an in terms of setting up a task force page a social media type of testimony putting the word out through social media communications forums you will

[3:10:40 PM]

see in the report the cover letter the firstify pages, there say lot of press coverage we got and a lot of media information to make sure we were going to share the word in total 27 speakers at the events 20 written testimonies entered five council member Casar thank you were able to participate in the meeting and providing testimony on you districts reports from different groups and members of the task forces from their networks to reach out to non-profits communities to make sure we were hearing from the broadest group possible. Next slide, please. So I will just note if you consider the five meetings each one lasting a couple of hours the last testimony reports all of that. There's a lot of information we took in. To make sure we could aggregate this information and present to you in a cohesive way and the findings and the reimburses for

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citizens they fell into the categories you see here as we go through the report and presentation, we have a read out on each of the different categories here we heard from citizens I will also note when you see recommendations those are recommendations we heard from the community. These are not necessarily things that were formed or endorsed by the task force members as much as community members showing up and experience recommending ways the city can do better in the future to help support it. Come from the community they have not been formally researched or vetted as a way to go. We are presenting this back to council as information you can use with other information sources to make the

best decisions on behalf of the city. I will also say while a lot of what we heard is critical Serita said there's a lot of pain and trauma people experienced through this event there also a lot of positive feedback about the way individuals rose to the

[3:12:42 PM]

challenge that os supported each other members of the city departments went above and beyond to do well beyond what their jobs were and humans looking out for other humans you will see throughout the report it's not just there may be critiques there is a lot of inspirational feedback as well how the city rose to this challenge and how with responded to that. The other thing you will see at the end of the report is a draft of the community resilience report that is effort going on collecting feedbacks, we attempted as much as they with their findings considerably more detail to break down to each of their components and refer to that con tent as well. Now, I would like to turn it over to task member clements for the findings and turn it over to chair Davis thanks. >> Thank you for that Austin.

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And thank you councilmembers to hear us present the report today. If you will move on to the next slide we will get started there. So, the first the reason we put communications first in the report is the overwhelming majority of we heard from citizens centered around how the city was communicating emergency services and messages to the public and so you know the first words of the actual report while social media was effective during communication social media with sporadic updates is problematic page five we included an example of those tweets problematic not communicating good information to the public that is one of the key criticisms, we continued to hear from the community is that there need today be a better and clearer communication system in

[3:14:43 PM]

addition to that there should have been a much larger swath of different resources used. So, we just heard about how potentially transistor radios would have been useful to have during this time when people could not charge their devices they did not have access to the internet towers going down things of the like so text messages were not the best options people charging their phones in their cars to get just enough juice and signal to get a message there is definitely a need to fill that Dirth of communication sources that being said as Rebecca mentioned at the time, we saw a lot of resilience throughout the entire tomorrow. One of the examples of that is many neighborhoods would have a phone tree where neighbors would check on other on 809 E. 9th St. - Offered for consent approval routon-alvarez-lopez house council district one you see a

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diagram of what that looks like. Another thing we heard that was really important I hope the council acts on is the need to translate more of the information into different languages since we obviously, have you know many different communities that speak many different languages with the task force we also try to translate our materials so people can come from those communities and actually provide their feedback by putting into different languages, we can also see here there are people with disabilities or others who need different opbgss in terms of what information can be communicated cothem. That's a brief of that we will move on to the next slide. From is a need to use as many forms of communications, we have during the maximum capacities crisis in the city a winter storm or

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we heard from that great presentation wild fires there is a greater need to collaborate and court nee with community members to that he can that communication more effective hitting all the possible challenges using as many early warning systems as possible. As we heard in the previous presentation better educating the public on emergency preparedness will make us more prepare as a community. We heard many community members mentioned that themselves make that recommendation we will move onto the next slide so another large bulk of the communication we got from citizens also had to do with the transparency of information. You know one major criticism was that we knew about the storm quite a while in advance before the storm hit ground there seemed to be a

[3:17:45 PM]

lack of preparedness in terms of the city getting people prepared for that. Establishing those lines of communication with community partners, to prepare people get resources together before the storm once in addition to that before the storm was hitting there is inadequate consistent communications when the power was out and how long it would be out for where people can get food and other resources how people can protect their infrastructure such as plumbing there's a lot of leaks there's a picture in the report of someone's apartment that got completely destroyed by infrastructure that had failed so there is definitely a need to address that be proactive about these things including with respect to the to

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disseminate the information quickly looking what that looks like greater centralization councilmember alter mentioned this earlier city council I'm not sure what their role in the storm was if it was clear in perhaps that needs to gain greater clarity additionally preparing for events in the future seeing these things are going to increase as we continue to deal with climate change and just the reality of you know the state we're in. So, we will move on to the next slide. Another important aspect of the feedback we got from the community was a great sense of a loss of community trust. This was something we heard throughout many of the testimonies this kind of parallels with that the lack of transparency in terms of the information people were getting oftentimes it could have been

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inconsistent with during some of the public hearings that were held during the storm. Many citizens were not able to ask questions or get their questions answered in terms of where they can get resources or where they can be going in terms of lodging and shelter here later on in the report for that matter, when ever there was a public hearing of different public officials sometimes you would see them in well lit rooms there is a picture in the report on page seven a quote from one of the community members, we spoke that I think definitely highlights this lack of trust in the community. So, one of the recommendations that we brought out of this is a greater need to coordinate with quality of life commissions we have the task force I brought together so many of our commissions so we could bring expertise to this issue but also our community organizations who are helpful in our schools, and faith

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communities all of the communities should be brought into the planning process as we're going into kind of these climate disasters. We will move on to the next slide. The second to last section I will cover is the failure of the break down of the electric Friday. We in the state of Texas there has been a decades long process for electrical grid for profit rather than sustainability that being said, we did hear recommendations from the community what the city can do with respect to that feedback there is also a need to improve the equity in terms of the you know our distribution of power in the city of Austin since there is some communities that lost power much longer than others and the reasons for that.

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Likely go back to equity in terms of the infrastructure. We also were reminded of the lack of conservation throughout the city, we recall when buildings downtown were lit up people were in their homes didn't have access to power or heat. The addition making and the call to shut down buildings is something the community members brought up something to address. Also planning to responding to these as they become more frequent until Texas as a whole improving electric grid is important it's

something our community members brought up gave us detailed plans on what they can look like are available in the report as well. The last section I will cover before we move onto the next slide is concerning water food and

[3:22:49 PM]

essential supplies. You know/enumerable pictures stories about the kinds of challenges that people were facing during this time you know, whether it was a lack of potable water or there the fact there is no organized. Distribution of resources until much later in the storm was something consistently brought up to us to the community members and organizations together. It was in the excerpt from the community resilience trust report there are a long list of organizations to help out would have Ben better to have a centralized response for khauser the lack of water because of frozen pipes because of sanitation across the city particularly in vulnerable communities whether that is high populations of elderly folk on college campuses people were pulling buckets of waters

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out of pools to take baths and flush their toilets things like that. Additionally the food and shelter is inadequate and unhealthy inappropriate for the communities we have here in Austin. The shelters we will talk more in the presentation another high point of the feedback we got from the community. And so, if we will move on to the next slide some of the recommendations are to establish emergency dispatch in the city and community partners going back to the previous presentation with the fire department it will take collaboration and having a well planned approach to be able to address these crisis when they occur and doo it quickly having those con tests more ready on hand and having clearly established roles will go a long way towards ensuring people don't have to go for

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watt where they most need it additionally something we got from the testimony that we got through the university and other people is access to cash if you will have to go out and get splice and food things like, that credit card machines are down. Do people have access to cash to be able to get these supplies. Additionally, they're maintaining emergency splice of food throughout the city in any different institutions we have. With different universities and businesses is a recommendation that the task force came away with finally we need to ensure the distribution is healthy environmentally sound and culturally competent. Not only do all communities feel they have what they need but included in the planning process I'm sure council will put together and continue to work with community partners to develop. With that, I will now turnover the presentation to Serita. >> Thank you Jeffrey. Next

[3:25:57 PM]

slide please. Lack of accountability and services, we heard a great deal from the community starting with things that are out of the hands of the city of course, how they were treated by various landlords property managers, or city officials if they own their home and were reaching out for help or attempting to. Difficulty getting through to 311 or 911. The inability for those operators to seem to function well in the type of crisis we had during winter storm uri being short with them. Hanging up on them and extremely long hold times it caused a frenzy and fear it made the situation worse and people warn as they were thinking once all emergency services are shut down our big takeaway was if it is emergency

[3:26:58 PM]

services shouldn't I be able to access it in an emergency? What is going on? They basic he felt helpless like they were left alone. Confusion. Regarding should they try to find someone with the city, county, state, federal I think some of that confusion based on the feedback we received was they felt like they had the impression where they could receive information city officials councilmembers, people with city manager's offer were pushing the blame on other officials or passing the buck. So, they didn't know who to turn to for help it became increasingly obvious they could not turn to anyone with the city for any substantive help. Positive feedback is some people were able to have response from the city of Austin. Certain individuals. Specific people who rose to the challenge some of the feedback we received and they did want

[3:27:59 PM]

to recognize them. They want the majority of others to be held accountable in some way and perhaps a big apology might help with that and really a show at this point, we are several months out from the storm in and out and individuals seem, we are taking feedback through June, July. And citizens still feel that the city hasn't really given them a response that shows that they believe they are responsible for some of the failures and things will be better in the future. In terms of the recommendations, a plan for emergency services to be able to function in a crisis and highly emergent situation. Not you know, being told their emergency services that can't function for example, they don't have the training to drive on ice or council district one

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hr-2021-110439 - 809 E. 9th St. - Offered for consent approval routon-alvarez-lopez house council district 1 vehicles. Clearly tkaoulted plan kphraoerly communicated to citizens we know where to find it. We heard a little bit about that in terms of the presentation at least fire people need toe know what to do or how to react if you were raised in other states that have certain natural disasters occur regularly like tornados etceterament you know what the plan is if something happens you are not stampibling to commune kaoet with people if your electrical grid fails in an emergency. The community resilience trust in their separate report they have a lot of detail regarding that. Next slide, please. Infrastructure break down and failures people do not understand why there is equipment to clear roads it wasn't used to make the roads more accessible. We know major over passes and freeways were

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shut down they couldn't escape the city it would give them a sense they can try to get to neighbors or other facilities for help or try to get to a store to get food and other supplies. Individual caretakers couldn't get to them. The time it took to clear the roads restore power we do live in Texas, we received a lot of feedback from homeowners in particular regarding whether or not their home where is built to code even the codes by the standards we are used to without anomalous storms occurring they would like the city to look into those areas. Emergency services equipment training procedures for severe weather was one of the biggest recommendations again it's a hard pill to swallow for the citizens of Austin that their emergency services could not

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help them. They did not know how to help them. No one was prepared to hear that. Coordinate transportation for vulnerable citizens have especially emergency service just for that of course, those individuals will need to identify to some department and make themselves known if is there any a storm that help is on the way they can come to get them I can tell you during my personal work with the storm resilience trust, we have a daughter that relies on a breathing machine she had a back up who was being drained she didn't know how her daughter who had a particular disability would be able to breathe. We had to find a community member a council district one hr-2021-110439 - 809 E. 9th St. - Offered for consent approval routon-alvarez-lopez house council district 1 to pick them up to get them to Dell children she did not understand why an emergency services vehicle could not come for her in that type of situation provide assistance for those that experience damage or up grates

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for protections to their homes there is confusion for homeowners in terms of what the city can afford them. Especially in regards to insurance plans being able to pay them they can pay for the cost of repairs

for their home because of lack of documentation by city code officials next slide, please. Access to shelter and lodging we all know we still have a very large segment of individuals without homes in our city who basically are invited to be here because of the city's policy and council's view of trying to help people in this situation. That being said they had to turn to community groups like survive to thrive to housing individuals in domestic

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violence emergency situations Austin mutual aid and others because there seemed to be no other way to get help in regards to finding housing hotels it's there are questions in the community about that. Hopefully at some point there will be a substantive response to that. Hotels we had reports of hotels that were price gouging and over charging in these situations citizens would like that to looked into and accountability for those hotels that were extremely price gouging and trying to take economic advantage of the situation. Warming centers at that first the first week of the storm, individuals were not prepared to go to a warming center and be told they had to leave at 8 or 9:00 P.M. That greatly defeated the purpose of them finding a way there especially individuals without homes to get warm then be turned out to the cold at night when it's the coldest periods of

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the day at that point concerns using shelters during a pandemic shelters available being inaccessible for individuals with disabilities or have other special needs and people were also reluctant to leave their pets I don't believe it's here, we did receive feedback regarding emergency services for animals and the need to keep a line going people can call in and receive help there as well. As far as recommendations a need more emergency plan that makes sure all means of help are accessible to all citizens and coordination between the city and other organizations in the city that are vulnerable and address the price gouging by hotels and other places that claim they could take in individuals who weren't at home

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without water or heat or had nowhere to live. Next slide please. I think you need to go back one. Thank you. Role of non-profits community organizations and groups. There are many community groups non-profits faith based groups who stepped up immediately and were planning before the worst part of the storm hit to provide food and water potable water for people to drink to coordinate effort to have different depots throughout the city for people if you could get to them. They feed you and later on were taking them door to door. These organizations at the time we were taking feedback had not received funding from the city to help with that or you know we would consider it. I would consider

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it repayment. So, you had individuals with some of these and some are, you know, very young but they were using personal credit card to provide aid to the rest of the citizens of Austin. In terms of recommendations the need to have organized dispatch center these non-profits and community groups had to form a makeshift dispatch with one another to coordinate efforts to duplicate so they can get things done no one with the city with regard to supplies food helping citizens in that manner is involved in that effort I was a big part of that effort other than joining calls once in a while in terms of actual action and the city being involved in that, there was not a lot going on I know councilmember harper-madison was able to help but citizens were definitely

[3:37:09 PM]

disillusioned not seeing their particular district council member there to help. Strengthen funding community organizations and non-profits one of the the big things came out of this is because of the ability of non-profits and faith based groups to help it seems like and that in conjunction with the city coming up with an emergency plan for the future it might be good to offer these community groups in terms of funding to grow to scale and make sure there is also a great relationship there during another catastrophe to work with faith based organizations and groups so it's not such a community effort. Next slide, please.. The need for mental health resources. Of course, we all know the city was operating

[3:38:09 PM]

in a pandemic when the storm hit this exacerbated the stressors and mental health anxiety issues people were suffering from dealing with school closures financial insecurity. Loss of jobs and other challenges we did hear a good amount of feedback from - citizens not only during the time of crisis now with help finding mental health resources from the city who felt they very much experienced trauma and are still trying to heal from that trauma during the storm they would like to know what resources as far as mental health the city could help them find. Establishing a plan to check on vulnerable and isolated residents during a catastrophe they would like that to increase in emergency situation I stated it before, we received feedback regards service animals apparently

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there is a line that 311 can connect to get help with animals service animals all of those lines were shut down for a long period during the storm. Next slide, please. The community resilience trust and recommendations there is an extensive report I believe the community resilience trust I don't know if they're supposed to supply to the mayor and to the city manager they wanted to provide to the community organizations an extract of the report you will see it there at the end of our report you can refer to the report for full recommendations and their full recommendations have a great deal about the specific community groups that helped with the efforts during the storm to provide food water shelter during the storm to individuals. I appreciate you

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listening, we have done our best to provide a voice for the citizens of Austin to relate to you how devastating this storm was to them. So, continues to be for many and the Har. Reality of it. The failure of the electrical grid and those lasting effects on the citizens of Austin. Councilmember stated earlier that you know low probability, low risk for certain storms like you're in February to occur. I don't believe we know that any more. We are living you know under global warming and things are changing I don't know that we know these things will be low probability any more something we do know we're at the mercy of the state elected officials and ERCOT for electrical grid whether it's extreme heat or extreme cold, we must have an emergency plan to be prepared back to the fire briefing they are working under a situation all emergency services of

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rescue and organized survival versus you know search and recovery thank you for your time, we are ready for any questions you may have mayor Adler Kha I want to begin by thank you all. This is a tremendous amount of work and the information you are able to chronicle and pull together is critical to the report of this incident and many different perspectives and it does not go unnoticed that you all drew the responsibility of the interface with large parts of this community that were angry and frustrated pwhu wants to be able to record the measure the work they have done report very

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complete. You hit so many different areas pulling together the significant takeaways in those areas. You also not only do you obviously, mention the things that did not go well and need improvement, but when you are working with a community light that you highlight the things that went well a community that was able to come together and provide a lot of other things that wouldn't have been provided had they not been there managed, we talked about this in lots of different settings that is the strength of the community and needs to be incorporated more formally the response we have as a city to

acknowledge in these kinds of disasters that is something that is going to have to happen if we approach it that way, I think we're going to bring in a lot more support and make it more

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effective, more efficient and do honor to the people doing that work. Colleagues comments or questions? Council member tovo? >> Councilmember tovo: I really wanted to add my huge thanks I know all of you are volunteers on other commissions as well. And you came together to serve on this one very quickly your work is much more abbreviated than our task forces are I had an opportunity to attend the one then I listen to several others, and look forward to. Caking up on some of the other hearings I found the comments from the community really powerful and very moving and very instructive and just I appreciate very much the way you provided a process and space for people to process as Serita what I think you said is

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really traumatic and painful for so many in the community the job you did is extraordinary and unusual in many ways we don't usually pull together a task force to serve in quite the role you did and as one of you rightly noted you didn't have a guide book I love the way you iterated and responded initially had the district based sessions then quickly pivoted and had a different meeting structure I really applaud and regard your work as a model for other task forces how we can pull together a group of kind of expert commissioners and give them a task that is unusual and let you develop a process that works with the community I found that to be valuable. The recommendations you forwarded to us from those community members in many ways are consistent with what we're seeing in other analysis you also highlighted very important

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points I don't think we would have gotten through any other process. I think that is just super valuable. I am really hopeful the work you did. And that the community members who participated in those meetings did in coming and sharing their truths will help us make sure we never--we face the next crisis in a much better prepared. Mayor you highlighted the work of the community how do we Marshall this community force? I really like the way those of you on the task force expressed it in this report it seems to me we really need to think about the operations emergency operations at the city how do we provide how does the city provide a structure we can bridge to those community organizations that are trusted voices that have resources the city doesn't necessarily have in terms of language capabilities and cultural competencies and relationships the city doesn't necessarily

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have. That is going to require reenvisioning how we handle emergency operations at our municipality the resilience hubs will benefit from the work you did and the recommendations you forwarded from those community members. I look forward to the conversation. I think we have a lot of work to do as a city figuring out how to make that work well. To build and to support to build on and support those community organizations that are doing this great work. You know the baseline I like the phrase you used in the prepare having a baseline preparedness. Our community generally needs a baseline preparedness as well as help from the city knowing what kinds of supplies to have on board but situating those supplies throughout the city whether those are food supplies or charging stations which is an idea I had not heard any

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where else I think that can exist separately from the resilience hub I appreciate that situation and the need for a clear plan we all know how to respond is super helpful. I really don't have any questions for you. I think the work you did just speaks for itself. I really appreciate all of you are taking on what would have been a hard task and taking it on with you know few guidelines and then again just adapting and changing the situation changes the process to meet the situation that was required I really would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge Patricia for the work she did in making sure that you had a structure and a process and a space. I just you know she is someone who does lots and lots of work for the city and all of it is important she took an additional task as

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well and handled it with grace and expertise I appreciate her efforts. >> >> Mayor Adler: Council member Fuentes. >> >> Councilmember Fuentes: Thank you (feedback) Sorry. My poepb was near the mic I also wanted to reiterate my gratitude for the task force the work you did creating a safe space for our community to share their feedback certainly, hearing the stories of trauma that our community went through that can also have a toll with it. I want to thank each member of the task force for taking the time to hear those stories and to absorb the trauma our community faced and experienced and to an extent still dealing with thank you. Today we had a briefing on wild fire preparedness now the impacts on the winter storm it's not lost on me today's topics on two

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severe events has had in our community and what that means recently the U N released ipcc reports detailed what we already know. We're in a climate crisis, we should expect more severe weather events and the human impacts and toll will increase as we have this community conversation as we create community resilience I'm proud to be part of a council that has championed and prioritized championed preparedness and preparing our community and investing in systems that are equitable. We know when any type of disaster strikes not everyone experiences it equally, we have to do more to ensure equitable response an preparedness one thing that came out of the wild fire and winter storm task force report is the need for us to improve

[3:50:25 PM]

our communication structures and systems I would love for us to have a conversation at some point we're hearing this on the wildfire preparedness and with the severe weather event and certainly with flooding, we start thinking about how can we streamline different needs and invest in a single emergency response system, we may do that perhaps there may be gaps in the system want today flag that for my colleagues and staff thank you so much for your time today and sharing this feedback and the recommendations provided it will be helpful and useful for our policy work moving forward. Thank you. >> Thank you. >> Thank you. At times like this I can't help but look around and express my gratitude

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the competence of the people I'm surrounded by my colleagues and folks like this volunteer task force that came together for no other reason to determine how best we as a city can respond when we move forward I would be remiss to say while I appreciate not say rather while I appreciate the acknowledgment of myself and my efforts by name it was certainly an etort there is nobody here that didn't fight long and hard and sleeplessly in the cold and didn't experience heart ache in the course of our infrastructure quite literally fail all around us failure is something half of our municipality if I'm being honest folks say this city you know it rolls right off your back and other times they say this city and you feel entirely

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to same this is one of the times when you say the city as a private citizens I was also disappointed in my city's response. This is me extending an official apologies on behalf of this body my colleagues included what we were not able to do as a municipal what we were not able to do to execute more effectively efficiently and expediently some of the things I'm hearing today for the first time I had experiences with my neighbors and my constituents so I do look forward to us taking this information this data and doing something good with it. I ambiguous like to make certain to say, I was not alone when it comes to

members of this body fighting morning noon and night there are folks on the dais looking virtually from their homes worked really hard long

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hours one way or another I want to remind our constituents just because you do not see us does not mean we are not fighting for you I don't want you to think a lack of visibility is a lack of presence. That is not the case to reiterate for the task force members, we can't thank you all enough for your contribution to processes like this. We can't do it without you. We can't get better without your contribution and frankly, your symphony thank you for your candor and participation and advocacy for the community. We appreciate you. >> Mayor Adler: Council member Ellis. >> Council member Ellis: Thank you mayor I will add to the appreciation to you today. One of the evenings you provided a warm and welcoming space for people to be able to tell you everything they were thinking and feeling and to get that out so, I know that was a lot of

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information to receive and it is so appreciated for you to have compiled a document we can now reference our own points I know as we discussed this as a council. Everybody has their own experience too and their own districts what worked and what you know abjectly failed the personal information of going through an event like this. I really just appreciate that it is so timely we are talking about this now as we talk about wildfires and floods as mentioned before I just want taking a difficult process to go through and really helping us as a body as a city be better prepared because things like this will be happening again, we need to have our own plans no matter what hits us thank you so much for your service on this it was very much noticed and appreciated.

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>> Mayor Adler: Colleagues anything else? Councilmember alter then council member Casar. >> Councilmember alter: Thank you I want to recognize council member tovo for bringing forward the resolution to create the task force in the first place. I think it was a really important step that our community needed as we tried to heal and move forward and prepare for the future I want to thank the community members I had the opportunity to join you for a meeting and appreciated the attention of which you approached the task as council member Ellis noted you made people feel they could share with you openly and honestly so we could get the best information thank you for that. I think that the you know to do justice to your work is going to depend on what the next steps are, how we take up the task for instance, a couple of my colleagues have highlighted of you know how do

[3:56:34 PM]

we build these relationships stronger with the non-profits moving forward. I look at it as a strength of our city we have so many different types of peoples and organizations and groups that stepped up. That is what needs to happen in a disaster it doesn't have to be Willy nilly in the moment. It can be structured and nurtured and the echo system can be cultivated over time if is there any a next time they are ready and there will be a next time what we're seeing is climate change and the systemic failures of our infrastructure and there will by next time whether we want it or not. The challenge is whether we will be ready for next time and whether we will be ready in time so my question is actually for the city manager had an opportunity the other day to speak with a consultant who is working on your after action report I think it's important you provide clarity on what are the next steps what you are doing

[3:57:37 PM]

they were clearly things happened on the city side that were not fair cut going down, we need to see improvement I want to invite you to speak to us and our commissioners about what the next steps are and if you can include in that how our various commissions will be engaged in those next steps in helping us to build that resilience for our community. >> Thank you councilmember. And really appreciate the opportunity to have this feedback from our community panel task force today. This does inform how we're looking comprehensively at the after action of reporting that is needed from the city regarding this historic and unprecedented storm that our community faced as mentioned at hcmariano and the work our consultant is doing to compile the formal action report which should be done by the end of September

[3:58:38 PM]

and a worksession with council to review that so we can talk through the recommendations and findings and most importantly what we're doing in response to that. We were not waiting for that report. Already many of our departments are actively responding to resilience efforts to ways we can improve the effectiveness and the ability to ensure that when this happens again, we are prepared. So, everyone from Austin energy to Austin water and our emergency operations department across the board they had been doing internal reviews, and we're happy to include some of that information in the report as well. But we are not waiting for that information to make I will follow up with you after this to see how the boards and commissions can play a role in this. We haven't gotten through exactly how that will play out but the logistics will be

[3:59:40 PM]

critical to move forward as well >> Thank you. Perhaps you can work out to the leadership of this work group since they're mostly representatives from the different commissions. They would be able to give some different input about how we can most effectively leverage the commissions at the next step. I want to point out something we discussed a little bit when we were talking about the resilience of resolution. In 2019 I put forward a resolution calling for a resolution -- acting as if we were under a climate emergency. Resilience things were called for in there, so I would just ask that you review that resolution and make sure that we are taking all of the steps that were called for in there. We don't current have somebody who's in charge of sustainability and, you know,

[4:00:40 PM]

we had council member pool's resolution on the chief resilience officer. We don't have those pieces. We need to act faster in relationship to climate change. It doesn't fit into the boxes of our departments but that's why we need at the highest city level to be taking those actions and putting in the resources and having the leadership to pull folks together so that we can address stuff. We talked earlier about wild fire and said it's everyone's problem. It is an issue that also crosses, you know, all the departments and working really hard in the last several years to make sure we understand it's not just AFD. There are things we have to do and that's true in a whole host -- there's so many of these issues that cross departments and it's peculiar

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to the climate change crisis. We have to be prepared. We have to be resilient and be prepared to mitigate and present and we have to be prepared to do this across all the challenges we face. It's not easy but if we have the intention and focus, I think we can make in-roads >> Mayor Adler: Council member Casar >> Casar: Thank you. I would like to thank the council members for their work and to validate what you have in your presentation. On every line I had flash backs to the storm that I had forgotten for lack of sleep and stress and I think everybody and so many of the staff felt the same way. I think it would be important, manager, for us to look at the slides and have in our response

[4:02:45 PM]

how we're going to do things better in each of those categories, in each of those categories I think that people did step in to do that work. And we should think about where it is our systems fell short but where it is that the community and businesses and nonprofits and every day people stepped in so we

can think about what the best response is in the future so it wouldn't feel as ad hoc. When you talk about people with disabilities one of my flash backs was capital metro employees at 9:30 at night helping carry people who used walkers into the northeast high school gym. It had gotten wet and slippery where they were walking and someone handing me a mop, not knowing what it was, saying you need to help. When you talk about the need for translation services, I just think of all the phone calls from people asking for

[4:03:45 PM]

information they were struggling to get and all the people that stepped in to fill the gap. When you talk about folks that were vulnerable having lack of access to essential supplies I think of the different council members who here, knowing there was a lack of water in my district -- making phone calls and getting water in my own district. I appreciate each of you who were doing that work. I just want to really validate what it is you have written here because as you say it out loud, it reminds me and I think every person on the dais here of what had to get done and we have to think about how to prepare and get it done more effectively next time. So, again, I just want to appreciate and validate what it is you brought forward today as we worked on getting more prepared for the next disaster

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>> Mayor Adler: Council member Renteria and then kitchen. >> Renteria: Thank you. I agree with what a lot of my colleagues have said and I want to thank the committee. You know, this is a failure that I just -- the city just really failed not taking it really serious when the report came out that there was a storm coming. You know, I lived here 71 years in Austin now. So I learned where my water main was at, how to cut the water off, drain my pipes and stock up with water and food. But there was no warning from the city at all about what was coming towards us. That was a big failure. We could have prevented a lot of the busted pipes.

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My biggest concern also is the apartments. You know, there were these pipes that were exposed. I don't know what they were made of but they were able to bust really easy. That itself affects a lot of people. The apartments were over 300 units. So that created a problem for us and definitely with the water -- the boys didn't know how to cut it off or turn it off. They had an emergency genera R to. They never checked it out -- never checked out. When they needed it in an emergency it wouldn't come on. Luckily the firefighter was the metro coordinating -- walked up

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and carried people down from the 15th, 16th story apartment there so we could take them to a safe location where it was warm and they could get food and water. You know, this is a -- really a failure that we need to take up in the committee here that came up with a lot of the solutions that we really need to take it serious. And thanks again. >> Mayor Adler: Thank you. Council member kitchen? >> Kitchen: I want to say thank you also to committee members and I appreciated that the -- the chance to participate in one of your hearings. I also want to say that I find the recommendations very practical and things that we can be following up on -- they align with things we have heard from other analyses and other

[4:07:49 PM]

sources and they're also very specific and practical that we can act on. One example I think that I will share with the senior commission -- I'm not certain if you all have that connection or not, but I think it would be important that they may need to reach out to you all. A resolution I passed back in the spring, I think it was, asked the senior commission to work with the staff to follow up on one of the interventions we tried during winter storm that really needs to be built upon and made more lasting and done in a better way, and that was the telephone outreach to seniors to try to identify folks at risk and in need of help. The senior commission is following up on what was done during that project, what might be institutioninstitutionalized for the

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future and made something lasting so in the future -- you know, in future emergencies we have a plan in place and a method in place to reach seniors and vulnerable populations in particular to identify their needs more quickly and be able to respond to them. So I noticed that one of your recommendations spoke to the need to have a process in place to reach out to those populations and I wanted to let you know that the senior commission is working on that and I will ask my office to make sure to connect them to you all as they proceed with their work. Thank you >> Mayor Adler: Council member pool? >> Pool: I think I may be the last one to speak, so I -- my colleagues directed

[4:09:52 PM]

specifically to the volunteers on the task force -- to thank you and to share my specific appreciation for all the heavy lifting you did to put together this compilation of information. I think there were many, many instances of individual heroism in our community that came together to help us get through, and

that's a strength of our community. And we all want to build on that, and I think you've provided us with a really strong platform with your report and recommendations to do that. And in light of the work that the city staff is also doing, I'm sure that the reports will dovetail. There's the added shine of being so direct with the community, and that was a

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really important element of the work that you've done. It's really instrumental, so thank you so much. And here's to continuing the work to make us better as a community. Thanks. >> Mayor Adler: Committee, do you have anything you want to say before we end the meeting >> Thank you, mayor. Thank you, mayor pro tem. Thank you to all of council. We serve on boards and commissions and we served on the task force because we believe in the city and in you. We know you'll implement a plan and this will never happen to us again and things will be better >> Mayor Adler: Thank you again and thank you for the work. Colleagues, I think that's everything that we needed to address today. Kathie, did you - - >> Tovo: Just briefly, I wanted to remind the manager the cover memo talks about archiving the public portal -- the stuff that came through the

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public portal, the testimony, the documents, the images, but I believe the original resolution also asked that as part of that archive that goes to the Austin history center that any materials become part of that archives so someone going back can also see those -- can really hear directly from members of the community who participated in the meetings as well as the members themselves >> Mayor Adler: Great. Thank you. And with that, colleagues, I think that is all of the business. Are you waving or raising your hand? Saying good-bye. Thank you. The time is 4:12. This meeting is adjourned. We'll see you all on Thursday.