

Austin City Council Work Session Transcript – 5/3/2022

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[9:05:05 AM]

>> Alter: Good morning and welcome to the boards and commissions room. We're back. It's nice to be in this intimate setting this morning. I'm mayor pro tem Alison alter and it's Tuesday, May 3rd, 2022. It's 9:05 as we convene this work session of the Austin city council. I'm joined here in boards and commissions room by council members kitchen, Fuentes, Ellis, Kelly. And on virtual dais we have council member vela, harper-madison and tovo. And welcome to you who are in this room for the first time for the meetings. Strange as that sounds. As I posted on the message board last night we're going to take up items in the following order. We had one pulled item, so we're going to pull up item 34 related to parental leave and then any other items that folks want to chime in on. Then we will move to the presentation and discussion

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for zilker park vision plan. If preferred we can take up item d1, discussion related to increasing housing capacity on the transit corridors. This can also happen on Thursday if we like under item 67. Just reminding folks that this was a placeholder if folks were ready to share anything on that. It's not a requirement that we have that conversation today. Then we will move into executive session and we'll take two of the executive session items up. E1, data foundry versus the city of Austin. E2, aj Louis construction versus city of Austin. We will do items e3 and 4 on Thursday. In executive session will be virtual because more than one colleague needs to be virtual today. >> Tovo: Mayor pro tem, can I ask a question about the executive sessions that you just described? >> Alter: You certainly can. >> Tovo: It was my understanding we were taking

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up the health south conversation today. Is that what you said has been shifted to Thursday? >> Alter: Yes. >> Tovo: Can I ask why? >> Alter: Ann Morgan will speak to that. >> Councilmember tovo, the mayor asked us to do it on Thursday when he's available. >> Tovo: I see. Okay, thank you. As much as

possible it would be great to get that information out ahead of time. Just as we all budget time and preparations for Tuesdays versus Thursday, it would be super to have that conversation at least on the message board. There's never enough time, as you know, and I was prepped for that today. >> Alter: Thank you, councilmember tovo. I think if you want to maybe try and correspond with the city manager or with Ann Morgan, we can see if

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there's any other options. Okay. Are there any other questions before we move on to pulled items? So council member Fuentes, I believe you pulled item 34, which relates to study for parental leave, proud to be a co-sponsor of that. I would invite you to speak to that. >> >> Colleagues, just before the pandemic the city council directed the city manager to conduct an assessment of the city of Austin's employment policies and identify areas in which the city of Austin could approve to become a more family friendly employer. That assessment was conducted and the report was delivered to council on February 21st, 2020. And I'd ask if staff can include this memo in the backup with this item so we have it handy, that would be

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helpful. But but as part of that assessment and report, the city of Austin engaged a consultant and they conducted 23 town hall meetings both with employees, managers and outside stakeholders, resulting in 401 options for city of Austin to consider in making our city a more family friendly place. Something to note that we also found out that Austin was ranked 66th out of 10017 as the most family friendly city in Texas. We were behind cedar park, which was ranked 13th. Round Rock, which was ranked 25th. Pflugerville 29th. And Hutto. So Austin was behind all of those cities coming in at 66 out of 117. As I mentioned earlier this assessment was conducted and the report highlights 25 of the top recommendations that came from city of Austin employees. Of those 25, expanding paid

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parental leave was talked about twice both as a pending category and flexible hour cognitive. So it made it pretty abundantly clear that our employees want an expansion of paid tarrant tall leave. As it stands today it's at six weeks paid. So the policy proposal we have before us, and I would like director hays to speak to, is about taking a look at what would it cost, if any, what would be the impact of us moving to eight to 10 to ultimately 12 weeks of paid tarrant Al leave. Many cities are ahead of Austin at this point. In fact, city of Austin just a few weeks ago expanded to 12 weeks paid leave with the distinction of offering this for employees at the six-month mark. Our policy it for employees at the one year mark. Travis county, our peers at Travis county, just up the street, are also considering paid leave expansion. They would be setting a policy for the first time and I believe they are talking about doing eight

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weeks of paid leave, which would be higher than the city. So for me certainly I want Austin to be first and to rank high a family friendly list and I know I share the sentiment with many of our colleagues. Director says, I know you prepared a couple of slides for us speaking to what a paid leave expansion would look like. >> Thank you very much, council member. Honestly, you went through three of the slides already so that makes the five slides easier. I can quickly review the information as I Steve in the resolution. What I would first bring to your attention is the point relative to the difference with your ifc with the six months versus one year. I know the resolution allows us 90 days to go and review. I want to be very honest about what I can achieve in 90 days. Our bandwidth is pretty thin in human resources with multiple market studies and all the activities we have. I do want to be very transparent about what we

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can accomplish in that 90 day period. The current paid parental leave program does allow participants to qualify for family medical leave, which means they have to be here for one year and they get 12 weeks of protected leave for that. And of course childbirth, adoption, all of the things that are part of our plan, do qualify any employee for a fmla qualified event. I do have some concerns with transitioning to a six-month plan. I can do some additional research there. Some of the differences between us and the cities that, particularly, Houston, is that we are a municipal civil service. We've got property lights that make it a little difficulty, which they don't have. And so for me I do have a concern with someone to come to the city and come literally off of probation and get the ability to have eight weeks of paid leave from the city. We do support the 12 week plan because every employee

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would have to qualify for fmla. In addition to receiving this eight weeks of leave, all of those employees would also have 12 weeks of protection and the full scope of opportunity to do it. So that is something that I would like to look at and to bring back some information to you. I will share with you as it relates to usage for the leave, in 2021 -- let me go back a little bit. In 2019 we had -- >> [Inaudible]. >> I was told not to do the slides, but to talk through it for the interest of time. I have these available and can show them if you would like. In 2019 we had 263 people use the paid parental leave non-sworn. In 2020 we went to 231, which was a decline. And for I guess for pandemic purposes, we went up to the highest number we've ever had in 287 people to utilize

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the parental leave in 2021. Council member Fuentes, what we can accomplish in the 90-day period is to do analysis on the 287, what their salaries were to determine what that full cost was to the city. And then we can use that as a calculation to determine what the cost would be for the eight week period. That is a manual process to go and do that. We had a total of 56,770 hours within the 287 people. And so I do have the capacity to do some calculations on cost for that. You did speak already to the family

friendly initiative from 2019. We believe and the city manager also supports the fact that post pandemic it would probably be a very good idea to do that analysis again. We typically wouldn't do that quickly but how the world has changed between 2019 and 2021, we will hire a consultant as we did last time to come in and provide

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the analysis to provide you but that cannot be done in a 90 day period, but certainly the full family friendly report we provided you in February we can try to do that Ben again. There is support in our city for paid parental leave. The usage is small, but the support is large. I think from an hr perspective, if we're looking at family friendly initiatives and we really want to make an impact to increase our sales, and I do want to add that while we are 66, we were also one of the first largest cities. And so it's easy to create a family friendly appeal when you have such a smaller population of people. 14,000 people, we're really excited to just be on the list at that level. But we certainly be committed to trying to do more so we can come back to you with that. In 90 days I can give you an investment of going from the potential of one year to six weeks, which we are not in support of, but we can certainly provide some details for you to make that decision. We can do some cost analysis relative to what that would look like to go from the six

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to eight weeks. And then we can commit within the next six to nine months to hire the consultant to come back to do the full family friendly initiative to bring to you some updated information about what our employees seek as it relates to family friendly benefits. >> Alter: Council member Fuentes. >> Fuentes: Thank you. What would it look like for the spans at six-month mark in particular, but if it was for employees at the one month mark, with the fmla, what kind of impact would that have to go from six-week a full 12 week expansion for employees at the one year mark. >> I think from looking at the 2020 report employees would be advocates for increasing the opportunity. I think in talking to the city manager he would like to take an opportunity to look at the full analysis of

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what that impact would be. I think for me the only concern I would bring to you outside the six months is the concerns that I know we will hear from our sworn personnel who just -- in the last month six weeks. The cost analysis of the course is quite different and you're not requesting us to do that analysis on the sworn side. But I have to be honest in saying my concern in any of this space is recognizing that if we go up to eight weeks for non-sworn there would be a great deal of discussion for the concerns of that impact not only from a morale perspective, but overall to an equity perspective to what that would do to the sworn staff. So that would be the only other concern. And I would really yield to the city manager or to Deven or to our acm to have some conversations relative to potential concerns with making this decision in the space for non-sworn and not at least having some discussions as to what that would do to sworn. >> Thank you, director hays. I really appreciate the

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conversation and knowing that we continue to look at all opportunities and possibilities for supporting our employees. And we've been through a lot in the last couple of years. So I really appreciate the fact that we want to look again at how the world has changed in that time and how we might provide different types of benefits as a result. One thing that was great that we were able to achieve in the last few weeks was providing the six weeks of paid parental leave for our sworn employees as well. So I want to look at it through that lens. If we're going to offer something for some employees it's important to offer it for all our employees. So as we continue with this discussion and analysis, that will be something that even if it's not part of this resolution that I want to have staff work on not just looking at it for the civilian employees, but also for our sworn employees as well. >> Fuentes: Thank you. And certainly I support eight weeks for all sworn. Given your comments, are you

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recommending that we should change our cost study to include sworn personnel so that we also have those dollars in consideration? >> I am happy to do that. I just want to remind you that 90 days that would be a bit of a challenge. We just finished the assessment for sworn for the six weeks. So we can certainly take those calculations and just try to see we can add two weeks if I'm allowed to do some simplistic processes like that. Certainly I can do that in 90 days. I just want to be sensitive to the staff that are already quite involved in other projects and making sure that I balance that in terms of what we can accomplish. >> Yeah, thank you. I don't think -- actually, I think my caption says specifically for non-sworn. So I don't think we can do that with this resolution, but certainly we'll take a look at bringing something forward that ensures that we're covering our sworn as well. >> Alter: Council member Fuentes, I think you might be able to either provide

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direction or I'm sure there's a way that we can figure it out so that we don't need to do an additional resolution just to do what she just said she could do. I imagine there's a way forward. >> Mayor pro tem, if I may, that's something I'm interested in as well so I would want to include that type of analysis. >> Alter: Great, thank you. Councilmember kitchen. >> Kitchen: Yes, I brought the original resolution related to the-- our public safety personnel and I was going to say I think you're right. They don't even need direction to do that. I think that would be done. I think it makes sense. I think it's important to look at them if at the same time because we very recently did the expansion for the public safety personnel and I think it would be important to do that too. And director says, I think

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it would be fine to do a shortened version. I forget what you've called it exactly, but an estimate. So I think that would be fine. >> Council member Fuentes, if I could, there were two other components to your be it resolved that I wanted to be clear that we looked at. The long-term family friendly piece I think will address your concerns of recruitment and retention I think as part of the family friendly initiative. We can also have some survey components to get an understanding of what employees feel like are the things that would want them to stay so that I can do that piece of your piece. The remaining components of the resolution I think could be covered with the analysis of the family friendly. So I think the immediate one that I would do within that 90 day period would be the cost analysis in coordination with the finance office and get that information back to you.

[9:22:22 AM]

>> Alter: Thank you. Are there any other questions or comment on 34? Thank you, council member Fuentes, for bringing this forward and pushing for the debate of what else we can do to make Austin family friendly. I want to acknowledge that I think councilmember tovo had initiated that work originally and I know that several of us are excited to partner in making those changes. Are there any other items on the agenda that folks want to discuss or mention today? Anyone online? Councilmember kitchen. >> Kitchen: I just wanted to give my colleagues a head's up that I'll be bringing some direction related to the item that relates to the atp board. I apologize I'm not remembering the exact number on that. I expect to post that

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direction hopefully later today. The direction is just to ask our city manager to look into some additional thoughts that have been raised about the structure of the atp board and whether or not it makes sense to expand it somewhat. This is not instead of passing that item. I think we want to move forward with that item. It's just direction to look into some things in the future. I'll get that posted on the message board so everyone can see it, but I wanted to give you all a head's up. >> And that's number 33. >> That's number 33, yes. And I did have -- I will have a question he on that in terms of lines 28 to 30. I don't know if somebody who was on -- the mayor's not here so I wasn't going to ask those now, but, you

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know, our appointee has to be a city councilmember, I believe, according to that, and we all have to live within Austin. There's no opportunity for residency requirements so that struck me as odd. And I did want to discuss whether a joint appointee should be outside the area of service because -- >> Do you mean adding a joint appointee? >> Alter: It says or jointly for a joint appointee. So we have the three board members and I don't know if you're on this resolution or not. >> Kitchen: Yes, I am. >> Alter: I was just curious how we were thinking about that. I understand there's a desire for capmetro to be able to potentially appoint their chair so there's that issue, but I was concerned

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about a council member cannot live outside or they can't be a council member and then I wasn't sure about the joint appointee, whether that was a wise approach or not. >> Kitchen: I think those are good questions to raise. What you have -- what's posted is the same item that the capmetro board passed. I think those are -- the questions you're raising are things that we should discuss. I would defer to when the mayor is here to discuss those unless councilmember Renteria wants to say anything. So yeah, I think those are good questions to talk about. >> Alter: Thank you. And city manager, do you think we can put the bylaws in the backup for that item so that we can refer to those more easily. And if there is somebody on your staff who can help me think that through a little bit. Again, I'm not making it

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possible for capmetro to do that, but it does make sense for council and I'm not sure whether we want to do that for joint appointee because then there's a potential for good -- with a five member board you could have nearly half of the board not even be living in the area and I'm not sure that was the intention. >> That's one of the reasons for the direction to look into expanding the board. To look into means talking to appropriate stakeholders to determine whether a seven-member board or a nine-member board makes more sense. A five-member board is pretty small for a project that's this large. And particularly and we go into implementation. So that's what my direction relates to. I don't think it's something that we should on solve right now. I think it requires more conversation. But the direction is just to -- a direction to the city manager to look into

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that aspect. That's different than the question you're raising and the question you're rising is something in item 33 so I think it makes sense to talk about that. >> Alter: Okay. So I will try and get with someone with the city manager's office to clarify that before Thursday. And I appreciate you bringing that because I had the same question about whether we should be talking about the size of the board. Councilmember Renteria. >> Renteria: And one of the reasons why we also are looking into expanding it is at the end of the year we're going to face a situation where the mayor is going to no longer be on the board. And until we get another appointee or another mayor to take his place, we're not going to have a voice on the board and that's our biggest concern is not having someone on the board. If we have punish person sick for maybe six weeks we won't have a person on the

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board from the city of Austin. That's a big concern that we're facing and that's why we're looking into expanding the board. >> Alter: Thank you, councilmember Renteria. I actually think it's a good idea to consider. I appreciate you bringing that direction on that. >> Kitchen: Councilmember Renteria and I have been working on that direction. We'll bring it. >> Alter: Great, thank you. And that's direction, it's not changing it. >> It's direction because it requires some more conversation at this point, but it's direction. >> Alter: Okay, great. Thank you. Councilmember tovo. >> Tovo: I'll take a look to see if this is

encompassed in your direction as well. I think on this board, thank you, I think this is really an important addition and also my apologies for making noise in the middle of your thing. There's some transitions to being back here and one of the things is that thing falls forward as it does not do in the chambers. I think it's a good practice on these kinds of boards to

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provide an opportunity for a proxy. We did that with the sobering center and so we have an ability on the sobering center for each individual meeting for me to give my vote to another council member. And I think that was a really good provision. A long while ago I was the proxy for the psychiatric stakeholders committee and the person for whom I was proxy never showed so I was the only attendee from the council but we didn't have an official proxy so I couldn't vote. Again, as we look forward at the different intergovernmental bodies where our vote is really significant, I think it's important not to just make the kind of provisions you are, but to also have provisions for being able to fill in for that council member. I think on C.A.N. We fixed it as well by allowing for city staff to fill in as proxies for council, but again that took a measure. So in these on owe we've patched it together for C.A.N. We did a better provision for sorrying center, but

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it's not become something for all our committees. I think it's a change we want to work toward for all of them. >> Kitchen: So I think that the direction encompasses that concept. I think for campo we have an alternate and we've actually started -- we need to do more of that, but we've started actually internally when we talk about campo items including the alternates. >> Tovo: On maybe the manager or the clerk, could identify some of the other boards where we don't have those provisions, like capcog. There are so many of them. I don't know if we could make that kind of change for Austin police retirement board and some of the other ones. I think that would be a really good measure. >> Alter: Thank you. I think that concludes our discussion for item 31. Are there any other items that folks want to bring to anyone's attention at this

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point? So we will now move to the presentation related to the zilker park vision plan. City manager? >> Thank you, good morning, mayor pro tem and council members. Today we have an update from our parks and recreation department staff on the zilker metropolitan park vision plan and the community engagement process that has been underway for many months now. We still have a ways to go but we are excited to provide this update to you today. Leading this presentation is contingent director Leeann in a cackucoca. >> I am the assistant director for -- >> I am the assistant director with the parks and recreation department and thank you for giving us the opportunity today to provide a status update on the zilker park vision plan.

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I would like to provide just a brief context. And remind everyone that zilker is a beloved park, but we do have ongoing challenges. And due to these ongoing challenges back in 2018, council through a resolution established the zilker park working group and also directed the department to identify the funding to proceed with the vision plan. The Culver plan working group met for more than a -- the zilker park working group group met for a plan and worked on the scope of a plan. And in 2020 following a successful rfp, council gave us the authorization to proceed with execution of the concept with the consultant. So this plan a community

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driven planning process and the goal is to come up with a visionary framework that will guide the restoration and the development within the park for years to come. And this is actually the first comprehensive planning effort for zilker that encompasses the entire 350 acres and all the facilities and amenities within the park. Eventually after council approves the vision park there would be a roadmap for the development and the phased approach and the strategies that we would need to do to proceed with zilker. So I would like to introduce the presenters for today, which is Greg Montez, a planner -- a program manager and planner with the parks and recreation department. He's leading the planning

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process for the department and also Claire Hemphill, who is the managing principal for design workshop and he's the lead for our consultants. So Greg and Claire please proceed. >> Good morning, council members. Thank you for having us here today. As Leeann in a mentioned, my name is Claire hemp I will. I work with design workshop. We're located here in Austin, but throughout the country. And I am also a proud resident of southwest Austin. I serve as a planning commission, but I am not here representing the planning commission today. Let's go to the next slide. Many of us know zilker as a place to get relief from Austin's sweltering Summers in the cool water or on the trails in the 350 acres or enjoy an afternoon with friends on the great lawn or attend an attend that draws thousands of visitors annually but zilker also has

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its challenges. As the population of Austin grows and remains a popular destination for visitors, zilker is experiencing growing pains relating to increased use. Over 2 million people a year are coming to the park and visiting the pool, the events, the facilities. With the increase in visitors there's a shortage of places for people to park as that is currently mode most people are using to get to the park. The environment is also suffering, including degraded banks along the creek and erosion at points of storm water runoff. Some of the facilities within the park like the nature and science center, the Macbeth recreation center, and the zilker botanical gardens, need upgrades and have access issues, making it difficult for school groups to visit and navigate between the various things to do within the park without having to get into a vehicle. Next slide. This will be the first comprehensive plan done for the park since

the land was donated in 1817 by Andrew zilker. The site analysis and needs report was completed in 2021

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with much of the environmental analysis provided by our ecology consultant who completed the natural resource inventory in partnership with the Barton springs conservancy and the city of Austin. This report provided a baseline from which to start engagement and planning and includes documentation of on the ground conditions as well as benchmarking from other parks or parks in other communities. Next slide. During the design process we utilized the feedback we're getting from the engagement towards the design. This slide showed a snapshot of those who are providing design input and direction from the broader community to the city departments. Next slide. So as part of our community engagement, this is a pivotal part of our process and the direction that we're getting from both our technical advisory group members, our stakeholder meetings, the surveys, the

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community input that we've had, is truly guiding the direction of the plan. So we started off our project with a community engagement plan that outlined a vision for how we will engage the community, which includes a transparent, inclusive and well documented community engagement process, which engages the city, but also seeks and considers the input of interested persons and parties with direct involvement in the park and/or parties that are impacted by the park. So the 10 goals for engagement are those listed here from educating the community about the park and allowing for comment to developing community connections with Marge alized communities in Austin to creating community support for the vision plan. Next slide. In addition to pop-ups and supplemental outreach, multiple languages have been accommodated throughout the meetings, surveys, in-person pop-ups and additional outreach in the form of community ambassadors have been utilized. Next slide.

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We began the process about a year ago in February of 2021. Since then we have hosted four community meetings, several pop-up series and dozens of small group discussions. Our fifth and final meeting with a community will occur in the fall followed by boards and commissions review in early 2023. There has been a total of five surveys during the planning process, including one done as a baseline before the design team was fully under contract. Almost 5500 people have participated and nearly 8,000 comments received. You can see the schedule of surveys, the opening and closing dates here. There will be a sixth survey following our final community meeting in the fall. As part of this effort, city staff has performed intercept surveys at various parks, including but not only in zilker. Next slide. To get the word out and let people know about the plan, the engagement, surveys and other things that we've done

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throughout the community engagement, the team has been on the radio and local news outlets and local publications. The city's social media accounts have been utilized to share updates, meeting details and emailed notices go out to community members via mailing lists and signs and banners are utilized throughout the city and the city's parks. Next slide. Guiding principles are fundamental guidelines driving the project. They are big statements meant to describe the big picture. They also help us make decisions when two competing ideas are presented. When this happens referencing the guiding principles will help us to determine the right direction to go. Next slide. So I'll quickly walk you through the three concepts. You may have seen these, but there's a lot of detail here and I encourage you if you're interested in going to the website there is a lot of information there to dig into.

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So I don't have -- I don't have my usual mouse, but at the big pathway at the top of the plan is mopac and the Barton springs road is the road that's kind of connecting east-west. You can see the pool in blue kind of towards the bottom of the site. So this is zilker. This is 350 acres, back in February we presented three concepts. This concept we called stitch because we're stitching the park back together. Barton springs road today serves as a major divider. So the land bridge is located centrally within the park connecting both the north and south sides. A parking garage is integrated with the land bridge structure underground thus hiding it from most views. A welcome plaza and entrance point into the park would emanate from this area, relieving parking and congestion pressure from the pool and springs areas. Next slide.

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This view shows what it would look like from the top of the land bridge looking towards downtown. You can see a new playground at the left as the bridge slopes down towards the great lawn. Next slide. The next concept is called edges. And we -- the big idea here was to have people enter at the edges of the park if they're coming by vehicle. And we -- this is in an effort to reduce vehicular congestion from within the park. So with this concept there are several parking garages at the edges of the park in the current landfill area over south of Barton springs road and mopac across from the rollingwood entrance. And then there's another parking garage off of more tan. These are illustrated with a green roof as we see these being designed for a park much like you see in Brackenridge park in San Antonio. At each garage or arrival

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point is a gateway into the park. So by the butler landfill garage this allows for easier access to the nature and science center and botanical gardens and the butler hike and bike trail. By the garage near mopac and Barton springs road, there is an active recreation field complex. And by the garage off of ac more tan is an off leash playground to the edges of the lawnment here's a view of the proposed -- one of the proposed new locations for the zilker hillside theater. You can glimpse the downtown skyline in

the back. The seating is a gently sloped lawn and meadow and woodland would be planted to restore the landfill area. Next slide. The third concept we titled regenerate. And the idea here is to repurpose the facilities within zilker park. So at first glance it doesn't look like much has changed with the plans. This one has the lightest touch of the three designs. The centralized activity in this scheme is that a

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repurposed caretakers cot tack and kwanzaa hut and Barton springs area. And so repurposing of this area into a welcome city would better organize the activities that are already happening in that area today, including with the soon to be running zilker eagle. Along lady bird lake there is a boardwalk and relocated rowing center which could potentially be a stop on a water taxi route along lady bird lake. Next slide. This is a view from Barton springs from a new pedestrian and bike bridge that connects to the welcome center and caretakers cottage area across from the existing sunken gardens area on the south. So we would be improving the banks here with terraced steps and purposeful entry points into the water that would help the banks revegetate, help protect those edges and provide safer and accessible ways for people to get to this part of the water.

[9:44:59 AM]

Next slide. So that was a lot, 17 slides to capture over a year-long process on zilker, and we're happy to answer any questions you might have. >> Alter: Thank you very much. Colleagues? Council member Ellis. >> Ellis: Not so much questions, because we've been able to sit down and talk about this recently. But I think there's some really cool opportunities in here. I think there's some really creative ideas. I know y'all have been listening to the public for a very long time about this. And so I know, from my perspective, I certainly am supportive of something that includes better multi-modal access. I know the bike access is definitely a sticking point in this particular area. And I also just want to be mindful of, you know, not one type of access that's going to work perfectly for every single person who wants to visit the park. So I always think about, you know, even though I'd love to have more cap metro service in this area so people have the bus option to get into the park,

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that's not going to work for people who want to bring dogs, have picnic baskets and kids and things like that they're trying to bring into that park. So, I think that's what's really important to me. I also love the idea of maybe being able to expand upon the eagle in the future and to have something that can be more of a circulator like we've seen in places like Portland. You can go into the park once, and then be able to circulate through it to all the different areas that people want to visit within the park. So, I'm glad you still have more opportunities for public input. I don't know how I feel about parking garages, just because I know this place is so beautiful because of all the green space and all the natural space within it. But I certainly look forward to future stakeholder engagement, like with the hillside theater and the folks with nature and science center and the botanical garden, making sure that those places

are accessible to people as well. Because I know we love their programming and want to make sure it's easy for people to get there. And above and beyond, want to

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make sure that this park maintains accessibility and being inviting for everybody who wants to visit the parks. I know some of the feedback has been that some folks don't feel like this park is for them, if they can't walk there or bike there easily. And I want to make sure that it's welcoming and open for everybody. So thanks for all the work. >> Thank you. >> Council member kitchen and then tovo. >>

Kitchen: Thank you for all the work, and thank you, council member Ellis. I agree with all of those comments. So, I have a few questions, and then a thought or two. So, one of the things that I'm really concerned about is transportation. Obviously, it's not an easy thing at all to solve. I know you guys have been working with cap metro, for example, and with atd. I would like a more in-depth briefing of the approach to

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solving the transportation issues. And city manager, I think that that would be a good briefing to have with cap metro and with atd to come and talk with us. We can think about the timing. You know, might be closer -- might be a couple months. But I think we need to -- I think we need to dive into that challenge. You know, I am uneasy about parking garages. It's not planning for the future, it's going in the wrong direction. I also want to understand how transportation to the park is coordinated with all the things that are happening around it. You know, the bus rapid transit is going down Lamar, which is very close. We thought about and talked about a shuttle from that into the park.

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There's also the dac and the challenges the dac has around parking. There's the atb building on the corner of Toomey, but it's right in that area, too. We also recently last year approved the schlotzkey's pud. I know you guys have been working very hard on it, but that level of detail is something that we need to have a conversation about. How are we going to manage transportation to the park, and within the park, and how are we going to do that in a way that really looks to the future and provides for some options that are not totally car-centered. So, city manager, I'd like to have that level of detail. I don't know when this is slated to come back. But, you know, when is y'all's next community meeting? It's in September?

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Yeah, right before that. I think it would be helpful right before that. Because that would be good for the public to hear that kind of conversation and for us also to hear the specifics on that. I've heard quite a bit of concern about how we're handling that. So, that's one thing. The second is just a question that I

have, and this was another question that was raised to me. And that was about them. If you could help us understand from the community survey part how it's looking in terms of the demographics. How representative is our public input that we're receiving of the city as a whole. Do you have some numbers you can share with us? Geographic, demographic? Numbers for the people for the sources of our input.

>> So, we do have data that is

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specifically posted on our project website that has the breakdown of the demographics of each of the surveys. And predominantly, it has leaned towards the white population. But that, I should point out, is survey data from five surveys. I should stress that our community engagement and our outreach efforts have not centered just on surveys. It also has included a number of outreach efforts that include pop-ups. We've had three series of pop-ups. Those meetings have been in each district. And multiple times, we orchestrated the location at our parks and rec facilities, but we knew people were going to be visiting. But also, we attended events that were happening in the community that were not organized by parks and recs. So, if we knew of events that

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were occurring that were privately organized, we showed up, coordinated, and met with people there in those environments. On a smaller scale, we also held small focus groups with specific groups that included groups of -- people of color in neighborhoods that we knew we were not getting a lot of representation from. So those would be, like, districts 1 through 4. So we centered on trying to reach out to groups that operated in those districts in an effort to capture some of their input. Those are still going on. In fact, we just had one yesterday at lunchtime. So that is not something that we have just stopped and, you know, put the brakes on. That's ongoing. Because we realize that that's going to take more effort. But I should stress that the survey data is very, very important to us, but so is the other information that we're collecting at small groups, and also at pop-ups.

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So we also rely on our city departments, the technical advisory group, there's been a big stakeholder group as well. So there are multiple avenues of engagement and input coming in that we're looking at.

>> Pool: Thank you. I really appreciate that, the breadth of that community engagement. What do the numbers show us now, in terms of -- I'm sure you're keeping track of the number of people that you've reached. What are the demographics showing us about those numbers? >> Specifically for small groups and pop-ups? >> Pool: Your total -- however you're measuring your community input, what are your measures for community input show us? >> At pop-ups, at the first round, we never kept how many people we talked to. Those were pop-ups that we were at events that people came up to us. I'll give you an example. More recently, we were at the kite festival. When we had our table out there and tent, you know, a lot of people came up to us. I don't remember the exact number. I don't have that data in front

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of me. But we had many events that were like that. We were at blues on the green as well and other private events that we were at. So, we could tally up what we can find in that data. We probably can also get you some of the information that relates to the small groups, but those are obviously meant to be small discussions, so they're not going to have great numbers. So, I mean, we can try to find that data. >> Pool: Okay, so the data that you posted on the website, the survey data, that doesn't account for all the other outreach efforts. >> The other outreach efforts are there. We show exactly where we were at, and the date. The small group that I mentioned earlier are all there. They're recorded. So, you know, you could even watch them. But all the pop-ups that we've had, we've had three series, they're all there listed. >> Pool: I'm trying to get down to the demographics. I'm looking for a number. So can you help me out? I'm trying to understand, are we

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-- when you look at the percentage of folks that you are hearing from, how does that compare to the demographics of the city? I know it's challenging. I'm just trying to understand where we're going. This is a question that was asked of me from the community, and I'm just wanting to understand where we're at. Is it a challenge or not. It sounds to me like there's a number of things you're doing, you know, to address -- you know, to reach out. And that's a good thing. I'm just trying to get some numbers so I can understand. >> I'll let Claire answer this one as well, but I'll chime in. I think that it's important to know that, in any of our planning processes, it's difficult, and we have to work extra hard to reach out to communities of color. And there's a variety of reasons why we have to do that. And that's why we've made the effort to go out to those communities, so that we can be

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present and appear that, you know, we're coming to that community. Or that council district, or that zip code. I think if you look historically at our outreach and engagement, we have to adjust and evolve during the process, but we may have come up a game plan at the early end, we have to adjust because as the planning process continues, we realize, oh, we're going to have to change things up so that we can hit the districts that I mentioned earlier, 1 through 4, and pay more attention in that area. So that's what we've done. But I think that because predominantly, the population in Austin is why we tend to see a lot more participation on our surveys and our plans processes. That's something that we don't control, but we make efforts to address, if we notice in the planning process, that we are

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not getting enough participation from people of color. Now, that's not for the -- that's not saying that we're not trying, and we're not changing things to make it better and to reach out to those groups. But I will say that in one of our last surveys, which was survey three, the participation from people of color increased, and that was because we were out doing intercept surveys in the park and elsewhere. And

we saw a spike in that. So it was more representative of the demographics of Austin. I'll also let Claire and Leanna chime in. >> I would just want to add that we understand that it is difficult to make this -- everybody who wants to provide input, and that's why we are trying to meet them where they are. We also understand that there is

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a percentage of the population that they may not want to fill out a survey. So that's why we're operating the small groups. We do have some numbers. I don't know if Claire has them in front of her, but we will be more than happy to provide those separately, if you want. >> Pool: Okay, that would be great. Thank you. >> So we actually had a presentation focused on engagement with the parks board last week, so that's why I had this available. But there's a slide that we compiled all of the surveys that we've done so far, both online and in the zoom meetings. And so if we're looking at, let's just take race, we compare the demographics of Austin. If we start with black or African-American, 8% of Austin's population is black or African-American. And our survey responses throughout the various surveys,

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1 through 5, vary from 1% to 11%. So if we look at the white demographic, 42% of Austin, our survey responses are from 52% to 75%. Latino or hispanic, the demographics of Austin are 33%, our survey responses range from 10% to 18%. So we are low with that demographic. Asian or asian-american, 5% of Austin. Our survey responses range from 3% to 6%. And then we have others. Did you want me to keep going? >> Pool: Yes. >> Okay. American Indian or Alaska native, 1% of Austin. And we have hit about 1% with the range there. Biracial, multi-racial, or not listed, 2% of Austin.

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And our survey responses range from 0 to 4%. And then we have some others, like other or prefer not to answer. So they're a little all over the place on some of those answers. >> Pool: Thank you. Appreciate that. My questions weren't intended to be a criticism. It was more just acknowledging that this is one of the things that is always challenging for us, and wanted to really understand where we're at with it. So that helps me understand. Thank you very much. >> Council member tovo, I think you were next. >> Tovo: Thank you. Two quick questions. One is -- I know you addressed the renovations that were contemplated for the caretakers cottage, I think. I thought that had been renovated relatively recently. >> You may be thinking of the Sheffield center, which is the bathhouse for the pool maybe. And they're building a new

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maintenance facility where what the -- the hut had housed all of the maintenance equipment, that's being moved within zilker park to a new location. But the caretakers cottage, it does function as office

space for the rangers and some others from pard. But it also is serving as -- by its location, kind of intuitive, kind of hey, here's where I go, because I've never been to zilker park. So the rangers that are there are fielding a lot of questions and some other things that happened out of that very small footprint. >> Tovo: So I'm sorry, I'm not understanding. Is it going to be -- are there plans to renovate it again? Or is what you're saying -- I'm mixed up what you had described in the presentation. >> Yeah, I'm not certain when, if any renovations have been done on the caretakers cottage. I was describing how it's used today. But for the plan that we show in

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the regenerate concept, it would be expanding upon the use of the caretakers cottage and the hut, which is right next to it and is a historic structure. That currently is -- the use of it today, which has been maintenance, is moving to another part of the park, leaving this area open for another use. So that's why we showed it as being potentially a welcome center. >> Tovo: We had done a ribbon cutting a few years ago, so I know that there had been work, and we went and celebrated it, and the reason I'm asking is that I'm keenly interested in the possibility of our renovating the bomb shelter that's there on site, because I think that would be just remarkably historically useful. And so to me that is a very good use of our historic hotel occupancy tax dollars within the historic preservation funding, and I'd love to see that project

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happen sooner. I don't know that the zilker plan is the right place to do it, because it could have a short - - it could happen sooner. I wanted to ask the four of you here whether there are any plans. >> I'm not aware of such plans, but I would like also to add that we are in the process of renovating the zilker clubhouse. And with that, for that, we are using hotel occupancy tax. >> Tovo: Wonderful. >> So we are trying to get as many opportunities as we can to make sure that the historic buildings within zilker and throughout the city, that contributed tourism, get the attention that they deserve. >> Tovo: Yeah, I think that's wonderful. I think that is just one of the really -- the things that I'm excited that our council has done, and I hope it continues to be a priority to use those --

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you know, to use that funding for city facilities that need it in addition to balancing it with private and our community buildings. But to the extent that we have city projects lined up, and I think we have a lot of them. I hope that we can continue to prioritize that. But anyway, if we could follow up on the bomb shelter, I'm real interested in that. I don't know that there are very many intact bomb shelters around in Austin and I think that would be a very interesting -- an interesting historical asset to preserve and be able to have the public see. Following up on council member kitchen's discussion about transportation, council member kitchen, I can't remember, I think you and I were involved in these conversations, but prior to and then right after you took office, there were conversations going on about having a circulator

that went up and down Barton springs that would really connect these assets, because at their furthest east, we have the long center and the palmer event

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center. Then we have Zach Scott, botanical gardens. If we had a circulator back and forth, that would really tie together the cultural arts district that has developed in that area. I'm not sure where we are at on that plan. When you were talking about transportation, that really reminded me that we had a great plan for transportation in that area that would hugely enhance tourism. And that, to me, if we're looking for funding for it, that and the downtown circulator that we've long talked about is also an allowable use within our hotel occupancy taxes, not in historic preservation, but just within that general bucket of historic occupancy taxes from which we, you know, designate money to visit Austin to, the convention center, from that general pool, we can designate money for circulators that serve toward us, and I think we should for that purpose, as well as for a downtown circulator. >> Pool: Yes, I think that's been an idea on the table for quite some time.

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I don't know that we've made any steps toward it at this point. It is something that we did raise to be part of the conversation on the zilker vision plan. So, the -- consider the zilker vision plan

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>> Tovo: Happy to help support you if you want to bring forward a resolution to see if that can happen, and especially within that funding source. >> Pool: Okay, thank you, I will do that. Have y'all considered the circulator concept, that particular concept in y'all's planning at this point? >> Yes, definitely. It's part of the look outside the zilker boundaries is very important with the investments that the city is making in project connect. We've heard about the dillo idea connecting with downtown and all of these other destination points. So it's certainly one of the solutions that will be coming forth out of this plan. And we're hoping to have some early successes with seeing something like that come to fruition after the plan is adopted, if not sooner. >> Alter: Thank you, does anyone

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else have questions? Council member Fuentes. >> Fuentes: Not a question, but a comment. I really appreciate the level of engagement and your efforts around engagement. I know we had pard at our community meeting in dip springs and certainly we're attempting to get more people from southeast participating. You know, just based on the numbers, we'd love to see our demographics more diverse, as far as participation. I appreciate y'all's effort. Really, my comment is to city manager, that really appreciated this vision plan process that we had for zilker park, and I would love to see that for all of our

vision plans. Let's treat every part of our visioning as if it was a zilker park vision plan. So just wanted to comment on that. >> Alter: Thank

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-- pieces of this, and be impacted in very particular ways, how you are -- what the next steps are in that process working with them. >> I'll start. Those groups that are doing work and creating programs and making zilker one of the top destinations have been part of our stakeholder groups in meetings that we have had from the on set. We've been fortunate enough to have several on site tours by Austin nature and science center within the Sheffield center, the botanical gardens, and each of those facilities' managers has

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been very forthcoming with being quick to answer questions that we have as a planning team, if we need to go out on site to test out part of the design to see what we're putting on the paper, they've been really great and helpful in having us come out. And beyond that, I understand there's zilker collective, is a group of those aforementioned stakeholders coming together, it's a lot of meetings, it's a lot of listening sessions, but also talking through challenges that they see with the designs and that feedback is extremely helpful as we take those three concepts that we went over today, and start putting them together into one plan. >> Alter: Thank you. I think it's really important that those voices are part of this conversation because they really know zilker and they know how it's working and how it's

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not, and they have spent time thinking in community about, you know, what that looks like, and the success of the plan in some ways may depend on fundraising and their engagement. So I just want to encourage you to continue to bring forth those voices and listen to those groups and hear their suggestions and understand what their challenges are, so that this plan can really succeed. So, thank you. Council member Ellis. >> Ellis: Thank you, mayor pro tem. I'm supportive of the circulator idea. I think that's a creative way to get people around the park, which I had seen in Portland when I was able to see how their circulator works. I also love the idea of a downtown circulator. I think congress would be a perfect place. You know, where people want to go, what they want to see. I think that could be a helpful way to activate our vision

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plans. You do a lot of work figuring out what's going to go on in a new park, parkland. I think circulators could be a great way to bring revenue into that park space and to allow people to go and see all the beautiful angles of parks before the actual programming gets to be built. So I'm really intrigued in that

conversation as a revenue generator for park improvements, no matter where it is. Oh, and I did have one last question. We had a conversation a couple weeks back about some of the concession contracts, and I just wanted to flag -- I think we had asked by the end of the month to have a better conversation about what happens beyond the one-month extension for the rowing dock particular concession. And so, I know it's not time to get an update on that. But I just wanted to flag it and see if there were any updates or if I could expect to hear what those conversations look like for what the rfp process is going to be for this transition of what the ultimate plan says

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and how we're going to make these contract extensions feed into when is the next rfp coming out and how long it will be for. >> I would just say that our contracts team is working on that and they will be providing an update. >> Alter: Thank you. Council member kitchen, is your light just still on, or did you have a -- >> Oh, I'm sorry. >> Alter: Anyone else have any comments or questions? Seeing none -- sorry, I've got to get used to this room. Seeing none, thank you all for your tremendous work. This is a real opportunity for our city. It's amazing that they haven't -- that we haven't done this before, and that we have what we have. I can only think what we will have at the end of this process as we implement it, and eventually, we will need to go into a bond cycle to be in funding, you know, the different phases, and I'm excited -- you know, at the appropriate time for these conversation, we've been doing a lot of really

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interesting planning in some of our major metropolitan parks and there's some real opportunities as we approach the next bond cycle to make these kinds of investments, and we will be able to do that with the benefit of a solid plan moving forward. So thank you for all your work on that. Thank you to all the community members who have participated and helped us. If you could just conclude by, you know, somebody else -- somebody who's watching this wants to get involved and engaged, what are the upcoming opportunities and where would they find information? >> Sure. So, I'll spell out our website. There's all kinds of information from the site analysis and needs assessment report to any of our presentations, including this one from today. That is www.austintexas.gov/zilkervision. And you can also -- if you have

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comments, questions, anything, email zilkervision@austintexas.gov. There's a pretty rapid response rate on that. As for upcoming meetings, we haven't had -- we don't have a firm date on our community meeting number five, but that will happen sometime likely around September. >> Alter: Okay, thank you. >> Thank you so much. >> Alter: So, colleagues, we have an option today of discussing increasing housing capacity on transit corridors. We also have an opportunity to do that on Thursday. I think this was really an opportunity, if one has something that they specifically want to present, and we may be needing to do an executive session on Thursday. I don't know if folks have stuff they want to present

today, or want to take that up Thursday or on the 17th. Council member kitchen. >> Kitchen: I would like to talk in executive session on Thursday

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about several issues related to this. I had been thinking in terms of -- that the council would be using the 17th and the 19th to talk about ideas. That was my understanding that the goal was. Rather than before that. So, if someone is thinking otherwise, I sure would like to know it. >> Alter: Yeah, and that was absolutely the goal. I think we put this on the agenda so that we would have the opportunity if there was a need for expecting that that conversation would really happen more, more on the 17th. Any other thoughts or comments at this point? Okay. Great. Then we are going to now go into closed session to take up two items. The city council will discuss legal issues related to -- did

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you need me? >> I apologize. Just because the morning went faster than we thought. When you read the script, if you don't mind, if we could start the executive sessions at 11:00, that would get our -- we have outside counsel for both the items. We just need to get everybody -- >> Alter: I'm sure that we will all be happy to have an extra 40 minutes. The city council will take up two items. The city council will discuss legal issues related to e1, data foundry incorporated V. City of Austin cause number d-1-gn-17-000937 in Travis county, Texas. And e2, sj Louis construction, LLC, V. City of Austin, d-1-gn-18-00121 in the 459th judicial district for Travis county, Texas. Items e3 and e4 will be taken up

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on Thursday, may 5th during the regular city council meeting. Is there any objection to going to executive session on the items announced? Hearing none, the council will now go into executive session. We will convene virtually in executive session at 11:00 A.M. Please try and be prompt, so that we can move through and give everyone their afternoon. Yes, we're going to convene at 11:00. That's when we have counsel set to join us. We have outside counsel that's set to join us at 11:00. So please be prompt at 11:00, and then we'll be able to move more quickly, and after executive session, I will simply come out and close us out at the end of that time, which will hopefully be early in the afternoon. Thank you.

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>> Alter: We have conclude our discussion of legal issues related to e1 and e2. We are out of closed session. In closed session, we discussed the legal issues related to e1 and e2. Items e3 and e4 will be discussed on Thursday, may 5th, 2022. It is now 1:10, and I adjourn this work session.