

Housing and Planning (HPC) Regular meeting Transcript – 2/28/2023

Title: ATXN-1 (24hr)

Channel: 1 - ATXN-1

Recorded On: 2/28/2023 6:00:00 AM

Original Air Date: 2/28/2023

Transcript Generated by SnapStream

=====

Please note that the following transcript is for reference purposes and does not constitute the official record of actions taken during the meeting. For the official record of actions of the meeting, please refer to the Approved Minutes.

[2:05:00 PM]

Wow. So I will call to order the housing and planning committee. We are meeting. It's, Tuesday, February 28th at 205 pm we have, myself. Vice chair council member Ellis councilman qadri counselor Velasquez here in person and our chair council member harbor medicine is joining us remotely. Ah sorry you are having to not be with us today, but I know you want to be here so leading off. We are just going to first approved the minutes. I think so. Any motion to approve the minutes council member of qadri motions a second second. No, our council of Alaska seconds any, any opposition. Approved

[2:06:02 PM]

unanimously. All right. Now we will go on. Well, actually, I want to just make sure before I get things going on. Chair harper-madison, or you wanna add any words here at the top before we launch right in or shall we just dive in here? This is this is all you you're the captain. Okay well, we're gonna see if we regret that or not. Okay item number two or I'm sorry. I'm number three of the briefing. We're going yes. Oh, okay, there we go. So we have one. Just one speaker. All right. Well then we will open public comment, public discussion and invite our first speaker up to discuss. We'll join you. Not here. All right. Well, if that person shows up,

[2:07:04 PM]

we will be sure to open it back up, and I will note that council member of L. A has now joined us for the record. Alright so let's launch right into our briefing, and I believe we have direct true love here to give

us a briefing. Good afternoon, everyone. Rosie true love, director of the housing and planning department. We're really excited to be here today . I'm going to see if this is this gonna work? Awesome we're excited to be here today to give you guys a much more detailed overview of our department and what we gave it. Council orientation. You're going to see a lot of slides. I'm not going to go through all of them in as much detail as we would probably love to only because there's a lot and I want to give you the breadth of the work that we do, giving you more information today, then you probably are expecting so that you and your teams can go back and digest and to help kind of really set the stage for the work that the housing and planning department

[2:08:04 PM]

is doing. We're going to go over have a brief overview of our mission or structure, our budget. We'll talk about the strategic housing blueprint. We'll talk about our current work and priorities and have plenty of time for discussion and questions and answers. So the mission of the housing and planning department is to partner with the community to shape a more equitable aspen, Austin and to prevent the displacement of people and services using planning disciplines in affordable housing resources. Our goals are to create people centered plans and policies to support pedestrian oriented places that promote transit jobs and affordable housing opportunities to facilitate long range planning to promote the creation of walkable mixed Houston income , mixed income communities to collaborate with community members to honor and learn from Austin's distinct culture, physical and cultural qualities to help sustain a multi ethnic city to prevent displacement of renters by providing tenant stabilization service services to address housing challenges in

[2:09:05 PM]

Austin by creating and preserving affordable housing units, especially in high opportunity and gentrifying areas. Transform community engagement processes to yield more inclusive, equitable and effective outcomes for people of color, income persons and renters and to identify and address systemic municipal racial bias and discrimination in housing and planning by focusing programs, plans and projects to benefit historically excluded communities. I go through all of that, so that you have an understanding that when we brought the housing and planning department together two years ago, 2.5 years ago now we very specifically engaged around these goals to help further the mission of the department. Just so you have an understanding of how we're organized. We have a group that is zoning and urban design. That's more of are currently in planning. Our inclusive planning is more of our long term planning or comprehensive planning. We have a group that focuses on displacement prevention, very robust finance and administration group. Because our as well go through on the next slide, you'll see our funding is complex in its nature

[2:10:05 PM]

, and then we have our program delivery in real estate services , and I have folks from thank every one of those groups. Should we decide to go into a lot of depth about the work that's happening in any of these divisions. When you look at our 2023 funding sources, you'll see that we have a budget of a little more than \$100 million and only not not even 19 million of that. Not even 19% is funded with the general fund. We have extensive project connect funding. We have other cpp funds are hud grants or at about \$11 million. That's our federal entitlement funds home. Cdbg reflected in those dollar amounts. Csgn Haapala. We just got our entitlement allocations for the coming year and you're going to see level funding with that little bit of shifting around between the buckets but generally speaking level funding for this year in our sip and has entrusted housing trust fund. We have 15 million that does not include what you will see come

[2:11:07 PM]

to you as a budget amendment in April to help allocate the first tranche of the 2022 general obligation bonds for affordable housing the tears you see, there is the homestead preservation district a, which is solidly central east Austin. It's been collecting funds and now that it's got a nice, robust amount, will be looking to deploy those with eligible projects in the coming year. In 2017. We brought forward and council adopted the city's first ever strategic housing plan. It's just that's the Austin strategic housing blueprint. This was pretty revolutionary at the time, and I think it's still revolutionary. When I talked to folks across the country, not many, not many cities or communities have a strategic housing plan. The goals here are to disperse affordable housing to all 10 districts to create 60,000 units of affordable housing from 0 to 80% median family income. We

[2:12:09 PM]

want to count and track all new and existing housing we want to develop along. Imagine Austin centers in corridors in near high opportunity areas. We want to preserve 10,000 affordable units and to create permanent supportive housing and continuum continuum of care housing units for people experiencing homelessness. Again these are 10 year goals. Your I mean, it's 2023. Now we're five years into it. You can. You can tell even some of the language in there is a little bit dated because it talks about Austin centers and corridors. We don't talk about project connecting the strategic housing plan. So it might be time for us to be thinking about what we can do to update that into refresh the information that's in there, but we do keep track of where we're at. And this is progress to date. As of our most recent scorecard, and you'll see that's effective 2018 to 2021. You'll note that when you see the. The results that we have, it's a challenge. We knew that. That the goals were were high and our ability to be able

[2:13:11 PM]

to meet them was going to be ambitious when we passed the strategic housing plan in 2017, if we were going to try to meet that need right then, and there that was an \$11 billion need in 2017 adjusting for inflation. It would be much more than that by now. So we recognize that the funding that we're able to provide is just a fraction of the funding or the housing units that are needed to be able to meet the goals that the council established. When I go a little bit into the work of our different divisions, first, starting with our more current land planning group, so our zoning and annexation group this is the group that is headed up now in the interim. By joy harden Jerry rust. Evan retired at the end of last year. We have approximately 200 cases that are filed per year. And those cases are processed through with our zoning staff. That is really only seven positions. We have the zoning officer division manager that's over zoning and annexation. And five zoning case

[2:14:11 PM]

managers. And right now we have five vacancies. And that's through normal attrition. That's a 20 year group that was working together and in the last six months or so have decided to shift on and do other things, either through retirement or different challenges here at the city of Austin, so we are working very collaboratively with our friends and neighbors across the city to rebuild that division and that team we're working with. We have staff that we're borrowing from development services were retaining the assistance of tenured staff to help train new people were looking at, working with our institutions of higher learning that are here local to see if we can build a pipeline of staff that will want to start as part time help and continue on. Hopefully when they graduate but we're very much in the process of rebuilding right now, and I know that's a great concern to folks in the community because they're worried that cases will take longer to come through, and I just want to assure folks that we are doing absolutely everything we possibly can to

[2:15:13 PM]

keep up with the demand. We are working to analyze and improve our processes and our goals really are to ensure consistency and increased transparency. Can I pause you there for a minute? Anybody? If you have questions along the way, I rather than wait till the end. Just dive right in, this is one of the biggest concerns I have when it comes to our department. You know if we if we lose our last zoning officer. I don't even know what the answer is that point of how we then I don't want to know. So are we looking not going anywhere? I see her standing over there better not, but it are we looking at out, you know, maybe trying to hire a third party for an interim period of time. Just paying more. What so we've you know? Yes and yes. I'm not sure that that going through a process to bring in an outside consultant to process our zoning cases

[2:16:14 PM]

would be as effective in time. Efficiency I don't think it would be as quick to deliver the results as we would want it to, because we would have to go through a competitive, you know, competitive solicitation process, and that does not happen quickly at the city of Austin or really any public procurement agency. We are. Looking to get creative with staffing or borrowing. Folks were consulting with retirees. If everyone left, I would still have a whole slate of retirees that I would go and beg and cry and hopefully get some help on, but it's it is a point of vulnerability. It is absolutely a point of vulnerability and one of the things that I will be baking into my request for the budget for next year is to get additional staffing because part of part of the issue with this group is the work is hard. It's time intensive. It's very public . It's it can be confrontational . At times, it is a hard job to

[2:17:14 PM]

do. I want to commend joy who's here? Smile and wave joy because she has stepped up into the role of our interim zoning officer and is just doing an absolutely amazing job to keep everything going in the direction we needed to go. But we are hiring actively every day. Anybody knows anyone who wants to be his own in case manager please reach out to me because I want to talk to them. If I thought we could just bring in a consultant and fix things really fast, I would jump on that. But I don't know. I don't know that that would get us what we need. Okay? Well and I don't know. To what degree pay versus not, you know, going to talk about that? Okay and you know if we need to take the pay from one of these positions and poured over the other four, I four is better than one. It's not as good as five. I don't know that I can do that with municipal civil service well, but I appreciate the sentiment there. We have actually been engaging with our human resources department. Did you a compensation study on the planner? Job family? Because it

[2:18:16 PM]

is one that I've seen have a tremendous amount of turnover. In the last 1 to 2 years throughout the pandemic, and we're we're seeing folks leave not mostly to for opportunities that are going to give them more money, either. Internal promotions you know, jumping from a planner to a planner senior and you know, kind of doing that across the city. But we're also seeing a lot of folks leave for the private sector and we can't compete. And we know that but we are trying to do what we can there. We should be. We should be rolling out. The the compensation study results here in the next month and that will help. I don't know if it will help enough, but we do try to be competitive with our benefits, and we do try to be competitive with our you know, with how we with how we operate as a department, no, I think councilor qadri have a yeah, appreciating what? Both chair

[2:19:16 PM]

alter? Yeah I mean, I was gonna also echo. Please don't leave joy. Not allowed to leave too much, district nine also needs joy as a as a commissioner, but I guess yeah, and you might answer this. You know, later in the presentation, you know, related to staffing. Obviously you mentioned how hard the work is, how mentally grueling and exhausting it is. We talked a little bit about pay, but, my question was going to be. What are the factors that see folks leave? So, a lot of it is a lot of it is pay to be able to go and do work. In other other positions. It's we don't have an automatic step plan within the job, the planners some some job families within the city of Austin have this. It's something that again that we're looking at it used to exist before municipal civil service, but it's not in existence right now. And so what that would mean is you come in as a plane or two,

[2:20:18 PM]

maybe a year or so out of college or right out of college right out of graduate school. Once you've been here for a couple of years, and you would automatically bump to a plane or three and then a planner, senior and you would be able to do that for a couple of bumps until you get to more of a point of principle level, which is the supervisory level, and obviously we can't just automatically bump people into supervisor role because then we would be really lopsided so that's one of the things that we're looking at. Honestly, a lot is the pace. And the. The magnitude of the caseload, which is why I'm looking to request additional fte S in the next budget so that we can, we've had some vacancies that have been, it's been harder to fill to be able to get people to come in and accept that pace of work at that level of pay. So we're trying to find ways to balance that within what we have the ability to control does that help? That helps? Thank you. Councilor rails. I was gonna ask

[2:21:21 PM]

you to touch briefly on timeline. Let's say you find one of these magical people who knows? You know what our zoning process is like, and is ready to come work for the city. What is the expected timeline? If someone today said, I'm excited about this? I think this is a position I want to feel. How long would it take to get them on board and up and running and then boarded up and running. So if folks are willing to come in, if I find someone who is amazing and magical in a special unicorn, I can bring them in tomorrow. As a temporary employee, they're not going to have the same full time benefits that you know are permanent status employees would have, but I'm able to bring folks in immediately and we've done that we've brought. We found some special unicorns out there that have wanted to come and we brought them in as temporaries. Then it's a training process, and I would say a couple of weeks as they're working. You know, Osama, to get up to speed and to be really operating independently if we were going through a competitive process for a full time position, we have planner positions

[2:22:23 PM]

within the department at all levels plan or to plan or three planner, senior planner principle. That are almost advertised it we probably have one advertised at any point in time, like one of each of those classifications across all of the divisions, and so what we have the ability to do is if we're hiring for if we're interviewing for maybe a planner senior in in the inclusive planning group, and we say you know what? They're great, but they're but they're experience, maybe more. Makes them more suited, maybe to zoning work. We're able to use that to bring that person on from that candidate pool because it's a similar titled position. So we're you know? Spending a lot of time talking and sharing applicants so that we can make sure that we're getting the most bang for our buck as we're advertising positions. But it's . I would have to. I would be lying if I was trying to give you a guess, but I would say it's probably a couple of months from when we advertise the position before we're able to have someone start probably at least three months if we were

[2:23:23 PM]

going really fast to get through advertisement. You know, have the job open for two or three weeks. Have it close to the interviews, you know, go through all of that the processes allow them time to give notice. And then join our our workforce, full time and the temporary option you said. That is kind of like when we have seasonal or temporary employees, and they don't qualify for some of the health care benefits or dental or some of those other things that people need. Our goal is never to keep someone in a temporary status. If they're working out, I would encourage anyone of our temporary and I've done this. To go ahead and apply for those full time positions. But one of the strategies that were employing is we've got a couple of students that we've hired from the community regional planning program at the university of Texas that are graduating in may. They can't work full time yet, but they want to start now and so we're able to bring them in and help get them on board and trained and then potentially, when we get closer to the graduation will be able to do an

[2:24:24 PM]

advertisement and transition them should they choose to apply and all of the fun that goes with that. Into full time positions and the last question because I know there's more to the presentation is where would people go? If they want to say I want to serve in this position? You can always go to Austin, Texas jobs, but you can also feel free to email me and that's rosy R O S E dot true love tr U E L O V E at Austin, Texas dot gov. And I'm more than happy to pass any applications that I get onto the right folks within the department. Because it's really important that we work to fill positions all across the city of Boston. Okay, I'll leave it there for now. Keep going. Okay, so. Away from staffing and onto the work we do have.

This is the group that does all of those fun pods that we do those planned unit developments. Brodie oaks, is slated to come back to council on March 23rd. We have to pods that are in the process

[2:25:25 PM]

right now and some shape form or fashion. We did the development assessment or the project assessment back in November on one, that's they were calling the Firestone pod, and that's it . 3 11 to 3 15 south congress, and then we have one that you all heard at the meeting on the work session on the 21st. That's for 200, east Riverside. Again those development assessments are required parts of code. They have to have to do the development assessment to the city council so that they are able to actually file their put applications. So we know that those are coming our way. And then we have multiple pod amendments that are in the work or in the works right now. This is the group that also works on annexations. We had 10 annexation cases that were approved in 2022. We also work on other jurisdictional matters like tj releases and muds and, given that the time of the biennium we're at lots of legislative analysis comes out of this group, too. We also have within our current group historic preservation office

[2:26:25 PM]

here. We're encouraging preservation of Austin's historic buildings, structures and sites and districts promoting awareness of cultural and architectural heritage. We have 600 plus historic landmarks , eight locally designated historic districts and 18 national register historic districts. We have our historic review process. We review all proposed demolition and relocation of all buildings that are over 45 years old. And any proposed modifications, historic landmarks and historic districts . We had 10 cases in fiscal year 22 1 case so far and fiscal year 23. That's the broken spoke. We're also working on our equity based historic preservation plan , which is intended to replace Austin's 1981 historic preservation plan with an inclusive, community oriented process and outcome. The draft plan created by the community working group proposes improved and new policies, programs and tools, and we plan to release this in 2023 for public review and comment. So it is. Coming through the process. The last

[2:27:28 PM]

group in our current land planning or currently and use. Branch of the family trees, urban design here we shape the cities, physical form to create people centered places that are functional, attractive, comfortable and safe. Some of the services that we provide design based recommendations for plans, regulations and guidelines. The great streets program, the downtown density bonus program. Some transit oriented development and code amendments get processed through our urban design team. Moving on to inclusive planning. Some of you are going to hear a whole lot about the first item on this

list on Thursday. Hopefully you will come and attend our joint mobility committee and housing and planning committee special called meeting. This is our group that does more of our are deeper level. Small area district based planning efforts and so I've given you some information about the five ones that we have that are going on right now that are active one

[2:28:31 PM]

being our project connect equitable transit oriented development planning policy plan . Our palm district planning initiative are south central waterfront planning initiative. The north east Austin district planning initiative and then district level planning as a concept. I've given you a lot more information in the slides and I won't necessarily go through all of this, but I wanted to share this with you and with the public, so folks do have questions. They are able to understand where they can go to find out information. The project connect chito planning was created by resolution in 2010. I'm sorry, 2021. We are bringing this back to the joint. Mobility committee, housing and planning committee on Thursday with hopefully action by council at their March 9th meeting. The pond district planning initiative kicked off in may of 2021. Deep in the middle of covid was most of the work, but we're really proud of the work that's come out of that. You'll

[2:29:31 PM]

see that this is actually going to come back to you right now, at the request of planning in conjunction with work that's happening at planning commission later on in spring of 2023 want to say in April may upon district. April planning commission made a council and so folks want more information about that. You can look at the I would recommend you check out the speak up Austin .org palm district Paige the south central waterfront planning this this vision plan was adopted in 2016. We're now at the point where we're working on the regulating plan. And it's something that's been caught up. In various iterations through various iterations of the land development could rewrite. We are working on this as a stand alone. Item and should be bringing it back to you in June ish of this year, based on the last conversation we had with council, which was last fall.

[2:30:31 PM]

The north east Austin district plan was created by resolution. In 2020. This is one that we're all very excited about. It will allow us to the plan will create and maintain great neighborhoods , promote economic development and stable jobs. Improved connectivity retain current residents and businesses foster high quality public spaces be fiscally responsible and based on market conditions and be centered in equity. This plan will kick off spring summer of 2023. We've gone through at least one solicitation effort to ooh! Bring in a consultant to help us with that and we were unsuccessful. So we're revisiting

how we're going to achieve this, but with the potential adoption of the E T O D policy plan in March that will help feed into that the transit space that is or the transit oriented space. That's part of the north east Austin district plan. And it's an exciting body of work. Then the last one that I'll talk about for this particular group is really this concept of district planning in and of itself. This was initiated by council member

[2:31:33 PM]

kitchen we did have staff that were added to our budget for fiscal year 23. In a half capacity, so we're able to hire in the latter half of the fiscal year, so those positions are vacant right now, but this is asking us to establish a district level planning process as set forth by the imagine Austin comprehensive plan to better define how Austin should accommodate new residents, jobs and mixed use developments, open space and transportation infrastructure. We're working to develop the criteria. And to start to build up this program into higher on staff, and all of that is, coming your way with an update later on in the spring. I wanted to mention some of our land development code amendments that are happening right now. We have 18 in total right now that we're working on not an all encompassing list, obviously, because there's not 18 on here, but we're working on amendments related to accessory dwelling unit amendments. The missing middle site planned additional

[2:32:33 PM]

tenant protections. North Burnett gateway regulation plan updates, creative space and live music, venue up amendments, environmental and water quality changes, compatibility regulations analysis in direction regarding offsetting reductions to development capacity. Or affordability. These guys are very time consuming and we value. The ability to look at how we can do these in in a way that's going to be effective for you guys and effective for us. And so we hope to have a lot more conversation about that. And in the not distant future, but right now we're working our way through. You know the stack of folders that are already on our desk that have been asked of us by your predecessors or. In some cases, the council members themselves on that point. Because. Hopefully it's my plan to make that stack grow a little larger. I know I'm aware how can

[2:33:36 PM]

we make this work better because it is taking a long time, and I know that's a frustration for many of us, but also to your blank. We you have been overloaded and it's not it's a lot of work to be done, and so used and you said you're gonna touch on how we might address this challenge, do you? Is it just needing more people? Is it? What we need. We need to take a moment and think about and I've already asked my staff to start these conversations. But we need to take a moment and think about how it makes

sense to approach this, we've gone through code. Next we've gone through. The next iteration of that, we need to figure out if we need to do a third iteration of it and try to do something comprehensive, if we want to do something that's strategic and targeted. Do we want to do so that that really

[2:34:36 PM]

hones in on five or six key issues that we think will help? We need to get a good understanding from the council about what your priorities are so that we can then have a good conversation about that. So I'm working with my team and hope to present to the city manager, which I haven't had a conversation with him about this yet, but I hope to present to the city manager some ideas about how we can kind of get this back up. In a bigger way than just once a to Z code amendments so that we're able to think about it in a way that I don't want to use the term comprehensive because I'm not sure that's the right thing. But we need to. We need to just stick our head up and look around a little bit to see how we can find a path that's going to make sense to process all of this body of work. Not only what we have, but also what we know that you guys are all really excited to work on and we are, too. We just want to do it in a way that's going to be smart. And so that's what we're trying to. Put some thought into, could you should you say of 18

[2:35:37 PM]

here? Could you share a list of what? Those 18 our with our offices just so we can have an and I don't know if you're able to prioritize the or put them in an order of relative done this first or or if you have expected timelines on any of them, just give us a little more context that you can so that we can know . And maybe there's something on here that we would want to roll into something else we're doing or maybe it's you know, to your point. We might need to help you prioritize some of those things so and we're so absolutely we can do that. And absolutely we want to. I think we all collectively between staff and council want to work on things that make sense and are going to give us that are going to be effective for our community. And so we're looking forward to having those conversations will certainly tee it up with the list that we have that's ongoing. And you know, it might be something that we talked about it. Maybe a future housing and planning committee so we can

[2:36:37 PM]

start to kind of get our arms around it. If I could do a pitch for that real how is staffing and vacancies for the folks that are doing this particular work? It is. We are not fully staffed , but I feel like I've signed a lot of offer letters in the last week. Do you have a sense, Erica for how many vacancies you have? Or anything that you would say on that percentage percentage wise. Yeah. But this is I mean, you say 50, or she did say 50. I thought people we don't have. Yeah. I mean, I could tell you. I mean, I could go through

my work chart and say, well, this one went to dst and this one went to this company and this one went to this company, and this one went to this department. It's not I mean, it's alarming when you say it that way. But you're also keeping in mind. Five of those

[2:37:40 PM]

are new positions that we that we are only getting to the time period right now where we're allowed to fill them. I mean, there's a significant there's been a significant shift in this workforce. And I think I will tell you. I saw the same thing happened when I took over housing 56 now, 6.5 years ago. And we've built the most amazing team, the people that were hiring right now, since we've seen this, you know, since we're hiring just some absolutely stellar stellar talent in this area, but it does take time and we do here every time we make a job offer, we're scrambling to get them to the highest zone that we can and to get them as much as we possibly can, and we're working hard on it. But it's I mean, it's not as maybe public as some of the other areas that are that have high levels of vacancy. But it is impactful to us got one last question. I see the chair has her, has her hand up as well? Is

[2:38:40 PM]

there any discussion about outside of municipal civil service rules? Are there any incentives or bonuses because I can only imagine the amazing people working in housing and planning right now are probably very tired and probably doing more than their fair share of all of that is true responsibilities originally were intended and it's funny. You bring that up because we were just talking about that as a leadership team on Monday, so we are looking at what we can do. There's but it's not. I mean, it's we want to. We want we value the people that we have so much, and even the ones that we're seeing that are going on to do other things. We still value them because they're contributing to the space that we're all in. But we're yes and yes. I appreciate that, and I know that last year we did a lot with recruitment and retention. It sounds like this coming budget cycle. The conversation may have to start there as well. Just to retain the folks that we know are working hard for the community. Yeah, absolutely. I know it would be appreciated by the workforce. Chair harbor medicine. Thank you. I

[2:39:40 PM]

appreciate it so Brodie. I was just wondering one if I'm telling folks, you know, you said you gave a picture earlier. You said if you're interested in doing, you know, zoning, then come on down and give us a check . What qualifications are you looking for in those people? I don't have a job description in front of me. Generally speaking , we're looking in your head. What? What are their strengths? So we're looking for folks that I think by and large, all of the planner positions are going to require an advanced degree we're really looking for folks was the it was the zoning officers that you were making reference

to you didn't say planning. You said you said they're all the same titles. I see. That's why we're when we have a job open for a planner senior in you know, working in and our comprehensive planning team and someone may apply that doesn't have potentially those skills, but they do have other skills we look to shift those between the job, the job pools, but typically, we're looking for

[2:40:40 PM]

folks that have strong communication skills, strong writing skills. Strong data, depending on what group they're working on. Analytic skills. Anything else? Andrea Erica. Interesting community engagement. Okay? That's generally what we're looking for folks that are really invested in wanting to communicate and work with the public about the jobs and the efforts that we have in front of us. I appreciate that. And so I take that a step further and say, and actually, I'm gonna ask you a question. You said I'd like to pitch that for future meeting. I don't know if anybody caught that or the clerk put that on the record. What was it? You were pitching that you wanted to just talking about the code amendments that we have. In the hopper and, and, you know, approaches to code amendments. Thank you. I appreciate that. And so the thing that I was gonna say that threaded towards the qualifications question would be something along the lines of sounds to me like we

[2:41:41 PM]

need to be very quickly producing a housing staff workforce. In which case I would like to put that on the list is something that we discussed moving forward and I hope that we can lean on you as department to really sort of help us. Figure out which skills translate, so that's something that I think a lot of industries are doing right now. I mean, we're not the only ones with 50% staffing shortages and really critical offices and departments . It's nationwide. Its international. Everybody has staffing shortages. And so I think now is the time as opposed to, you know, really sort of focusing on the staffing shortage. That's really reverse engineer that thing and figure out how do we feel that? Even if it's not tomorrow. You know, we don't want to find ourselves in this position when we really aren't doing 18 ldc revisions at a time when we're really blowing and going, I'd like for us to be prepared, so that's something I want us to be talking about. And then the other question I had for you, had to do with, the advanced degree question. I am finding that a lot of folks are

[2:42:42 PM]

making some adjustments around their expectations there. And so I just wonder, you know, there are so many people who have the experience they've been working in the housing and planning and zoning industry ecosystem for decades, but don't necessarily have an advanced degree. Would experience be could experience be considered in lieu of that advanced degree. Is there a way around the advanced

degree? I think it's an unnecessary barrier, so I'm certainly happy to look at that. I don't have any of the job descriptions in front of me and I don't remember if we have substitution clauses and I would want to go back and talk to the hr folks. I do want to clarify when I say advanced degree I mean, a college degree. I'm not talking about a master's or anything beyond you mean just yeah, I know, but I wanted to clarify just in case I wasn't clear. Yes. Thank you know some of our positions do allow for those substitution, council member. I'm not sure if these do and I would be way beyond my skis if I started a pining on,

[2:43:42 PM]

what we should have in our in our job descriptions without consulting with my hr experts. Of course. Yeah I was just putting it on the record. I think it's certainly something that we should very quickly, visit my dad. Thank you. Okay, I'm gonna keep going. As I try not to break the clicker here. So displacement prevention, some of our key investment priorities for 2023 include our displacement prevention navigators, where we're looking to connect vulnerable residents to services are tenant relocation services where we're talking about things like a relocation assistance for eligible households facing development induced displacement. Our community initiated solutions. That's 14 different contracts to community partners to provide assistance to households at risk of displacement along project connects stations and lines. Services address a variety of needs for tenants, homeowners and other opportunities for economic mobility. This is

[2:44:43 PM]

funded with the 300 million anti displacement funding associated with project connect, representation matters program providing legal representations for households facing eviction. We know that folks that have legal representation in the circumstances have much better outcomes than those that do not . And then our I belong in Austin program, which is a companion project. Our representation matters program for households facing eviction to include negotiated settlements, emergency rental assistance, moving and or storage. Anyone that wants more information about this should follow the link. If you're online and looking at this in the backup or go to the city of Boston in search for resources for renters, and that will get you the details about those programs there. Are just basement prevention navigators program. This is this is a new program and application program. Applications will be opening in 2023 were serving selected neighborhoods in D one and D. Two. During this pilot phase where we're going to recruit and pay community members who want to take practical steps to prevent displacement, they'll

[2:45:44 PM]

help to inform community residents about resources that can help them stay in their homes, service connectors and guides and ambassadors for the city. And partner resources and programs that promote housing stability. Our tenant relocation services program provides notification to residents of multi family and mobile home park developments that are slated for closure due to redevelopment. There are timelines associated with it. 120 days for multi family units 270 days for mobile home residents looking to be able to provide financial relocation assistance. And the benefits include needs assessment, housing, locator assistance, moving and storage, rent and deposit payment assistance and other services or needs. Community initiated solutions program comes against stemming from the 300 million. Project connect anti displacement funding, providing financial resources to households facing current displacement pressures within a one mile radius of project connect lines or stations, providing renter and tenant stabilization services

[2:46:44 PM]

explaining and preserving homeownership opportunities and providing other services that build economic mobility. We are really excited about this services will be available spring 2023. We brought the contracts to council last year. We've been negotiating those contracts and getting them ready for execution. And so that program will be launching in earnest. Oops oops! I went too fast we have put together for everyone's benefit. A nice, robust series mapping displacement. This is taking information basing it on, the maps and the work done in the uprooted study, encourage folks to poke around in here and learn more about what we have and what you what you can tell from these maps were happy to go into any of these topics and more detail at a future meeting. If that helps, but it's a great tool for folks to better understand the population that we have. With respect to our project. Connect funding. We have \$23 million of

[2:47:44 PM]

the first initial investment of 65 million. We set aside 23 million for land acquisition right now. We have work to acquire multi family properties to extend or preserve their affordability periods. It includes eight million to provide loans to eligible five oh one C three nonprofit organizations, for affordable housing, development. And right now we've achieved 162 units of naturally occurring affordable housing. We had 20,000,021 million set aside for real estate development. And this is going to these are funds that are deployed through our Rhoda and oda programs, which I'll talk a little bit more about in a minute, but rental housing development and ownership housing development assistance. We have five developments resulting in 380 units below 50% medium family income and 23 ownership units, but low 80% medium family income. And then the \$20 million for that community initiated solutions, which we talked about on the previous slide. So for

[2:48:46 PM]

our project connect anti displacement investments the budget allocations for the next three years. You'll see the next three year trenches about 75 million or setting aside. Tentatively slating 43 million for land acquisition 14 million for affordable housing development and 14 million for more immediate interventions with some operational expense in there of four million and then to talk about our programs in real estate. Are 2022 general obligation bonds, 350 million and for investment areas, you just the same investment areas that we had. Associated with the \$250 million bond initiative from 2018. Rental, housing, development assistance ownership . Housing development assistance are go repair program, which is a home repair program and our acquisition and development program, which allows Austin housing finance corporation to acquire property and to develop it in usually in partnership with an affordable housing developer. Funds to be spent

[2:49:47 PM]

over six years. We should be bringing currently are spending plan and staffing request to council on April 20th and our first round of awards will come on may 4th we have more information about all of our programs. This may not be new to you, but I think there's something that I'd like to highlight about these programs just to continue to remind, our rental housing development assistance program is a quarterly is on a quarterly review cycle. This is how we deploy between this and ownership. Housing development assistance is how we deploy all of our substantive funds for housing development. So whether it's geo bonds. If we were going to deploy those tizr funds that we've been collecting that come through these programs and so we encourage folks to get to know them. We're happy to talk to any people that are interested in developing affordable housing so that they can get a better understanding of our application process and what the requirements are that we have. We're gonna we envision consistent annual encumbrances. As we had with the 2018 bond

[2:50:47 PM]

program. We are seeing increased development costs. We are seeing a limited increase in complementary funding sources. Which means that our dollars may not go as far and we saw that with the 2018 bond as well. Are loans are getting bigger. Ah and we do expect our funds will be spent within three years of encumbrance. For rental housing for our ownership programs again . A quarterly review cycle. Some of our primary users. Excuse me. Users of these funds are habitat for humanity and our smaller developers like our community development corporations and our photos. There's a longer development timeline for a single family. And so we recognize that and we you know, we adjust our expectations accordingly. I wanted to share some information about our pipeline because it's a quick question. Of course on those two programs. Both Rhoda and oda do we have specific targets for we

[2:51:50 PM]

want to create. 3000 rental units and 2000 ownership units or how have we planned forward in terms of what we want to accomplish with those dollars? I wanna I wanna let Mandy or Jamie answer that because they can talk more eloquently about. I mean, I would say we want to have as many as we can, but they probably have better words than as many as we can. So Mandy or Jamie, do you want to speak to that? All I wanted Mandy Demeo, deputy director regarding the Roda and oda funds, we are guided by our appropriations or budgetary appropriations from the 2018 bonds. So the annual the overall allocation out of the 250,000,096 million was dedicated to Roda, whereas 28 million was dedicated to oda, representing roughly three plus almost four times. The amount of investment into rental housing.

[2:52:51 PM]

We know that our biggest biggest need as a community as dictated by the strategic housing blueprint is deeply affordable rental housing that's not to discount the importance of ownership opportunities. But rental housing is really where our biggest need across the community is right and that that's exactly kind of where I was going is how do we look at this in terms of our blueprint and fit it in because to your point more more is generally better. Except for we know how expensive a 30% unit is compared to an 80% unit. And so if we had a plan of we want to really attack that 30 50% M five versus volume just just I'm curious if we had thought through it in that way. Don't you talk about that, Tony? Yes. Hi, Jamie may housing and community development officer yes, 30% units are more expensive, and

[2:53:52 PM]

that's generally because of the operation of those units. Similarly permanent, supportive housing units are very expensive because they come with very little operating costs are operating fees on the back end. What we have communicated to our developer partners who borrow the funds is we target \$50,000 per 50% unit as our subsidy. So we're looking to keep that right at about \$50,000, however, with increased development costs, we recognize that that subsidy is going to increase. And again for 30% units that's closer to \$80,000 for psh, that's closer to \$100,000 per unit. On the other end of the site of the spectrum, the ownership side when we have 80% ownership units because of the way those are structured because of the financing around them are subsidy actually has to be a little higher, closer to 80 or even \$100,000 for an ownership unit, which is again why we tend

[2:54:52 PM]

to prioritize the rental side because we do get more bang for our buck. But that's those calculations are very back of the envelope. We know that on \$350 million even if we dedicated all of it to 50% units through the R H D a program we wouldn't hit that number and I can't do math in my head right now. We can't. We can't hit that number because there are other expenses that are going to come up coming into play. Have you done any analysis on cost effectiveness of let's say you had it's project that's about to open that has you know, 100 80% units and we said we want to buy 50 of those units down to 50% or 2 30% the cost to do that versus the call in at a price per unit versus going in. You know what you're saying? 50,000 per 50. Have you all looked at at the cost benefit or the odd does

[2:55:52 PM]

various options and in the past. We have done some rent buy downs . We've focused primarily on construction financing in the last with the last bond package. Essentially because we have more control. At that point, we can dedicate the funds earlier and help the developer find alternative funding sources, whether it's a federal home loan bank, or multi family direct loan program. When the development is already fixed. We have less room to navigate, although if the if the deal makes sense, it's definitely something that we would consider. Okay? When? What is your general sense of the cost is it is one cheaper than the other. If someone has something that they fully invested in and built and we come in at the very end and buy it down versus building by down is generally a lot more expensive, more expensive, okay, because they the if we come in early enough, then we're able to influence the proforma and, extend that out over 15 30 40 years right.

[2:56:53 PM]

Longer runway gives the developer a lot more room to be flexible in terms of their funding sources and their affordability levels. Got it. Thank you. And I would also say as we're talking about things like coc units, we're not we're not gonna we're not the lead agency on homelessness with the city of Austin, but we do partner with Diana gray and the homeless strategy office and we work to even even going so far as to providing some of the operating subsidy that are that are more permanent, supportive housing. Coc developments need through the form of our local housing voucher. And if you recall at the last council meeting, we had a couple of those contracts that were coming through, and that's a fairly new program that we started two or three years ago, to start setting aside some of our housing trust fund allocation every year to help ensure that we can incentivize and get operational. More of those, coc based, permanent, supportive housing. Properties. I'm getting

[2:57:55 PM]

to the end. We talked about land acquisition in the 2020 and 2018 bond. We front loaded on \$100 million that we had set aside for land acquisition to acquire property. These are all opportunity based decisions. We will develop every one of these pieces of property through a solicitation process. Right now. Our capacity is to issue 3 to 4 solicitations a year. We were approximately 60 acres of vacant land purchased, challenges, of course, with land prices in borrowing costs, in our 2018 bond, we kind of set buckets. For all of our different programs with the 2022 bond. We have taken those buckets away to allow us to be more flexible. In cases if there's opportunities that arise, that makes sense that we would want to spend on land acquisition versus other programs that we have. So we're trying to build in some flexibility that we would have valued with the 2018 bond. For

[2:58:57 PM]

those real estate transactions. Austin housing finance corporation has 11 properties right now that are fully operational, as partnerships, and this is where we go in, with a affordable housing developer as a partner in the deal to achieve certain financial aspects that allow it to be, you know, more sustainable in the long run and more affordable Arbors at creek side. Recent activities include refinancing Arbors at creek side with a new partner refinancing retreat at north bluff with a new partner. Kalina is one of our newest partnerships. It's fully leased. It's a beautiful property. And then we have one partnership under construction and at the sparrow at redland, the opening of that is in March. April was close. It's gonna be an amazing project and we love to use it as the example of all of the good things coming together for all of our different programs where we can leverage things to really achieve. Deeply, deeply affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness. We

[2:59:58 PM]

have two transactions that are closing this spring. One is libertad Austin at Gardner. That's Austin housing finance corporation owned property that we did a solicitation on two years ago. Two years ago. And then so called 1 21, where we are the 100% owner of that we have four properties that are under development right now and in preconstruction. Oh, this is a sparrow at rockland. Isn't it beautiful? It can be magical 171 units 100% affordable 101 dedicated to the continuum of care. It's going to open an April 2023. This took a lot of this is again a lot of our programs, including partnerships with the housing authority for vouchers. Coming into play? And one beautiful facility. We have a community land trust. This is our portfolio of homes that we often housing finance corporation maintains ownership of the dirt, and we sell the improvements to an affordable income restricted homebuyer. We have 15 occupied community land trust homes. We have 29 homes

[3:00:58 PM]

that are in the pipeline substantially acquired from a bulk purchase of homes from the housing authority a couple of years ago. And we're working on rehabbing those and getting them out on the market. We use our preference policy. As we're selling these and we should have our first home closing this spring, under the preference policy in our community interest. Our lottery opens March 1st. Which is tomorrow. Our home repair programs. We have a number of home repair programs where we contract with nonprofit organizations, various funding sources. Geo bonds, federal funds. We've used local funds to work. We're constantly exploring recommendations to increase our productivity with these, but this is where we go into income restricted homeowners. Homes and we repair them. We fixed the roof. We stabilize the foundation, and we make them so that were, you know, primarily, it's a it's a housing preservation program to ensure that our housing stock does not deteriorate and really,

[3:02:00 PM]

it allows folks to stay in their homes and not be forced to sell them and have them still be decent, safe and sanitary. Stakeholder engagement. Back in 2022. There is a resolution directing us to conduct a stakeholder process to explore potential enhancements to our housing programs in additional community benefits required of our housing. Projects are affordable housing projects that are funded by the city. We do this every couple of years, but this was a request by counsel to be a little bit more focused and concentrated into review things such as childcare facilities, underground facilities, utilities prioritizing continuum of care units and in our ability and capacity to serve manufactured homes. We are. Going to be looking to since it's going to be more robust than we typically do. We're going to bring in some outside help. To help with to assist us with the with the engagement process, but we anticipate that happening in the summer of this year. Keep people I'm going to

[3:03:01 PM]

introduce them because I think most of these folks are here in the room. Hi I'm Rosie. I'm the director Mandy Demeo is our deputy director Andrea bates is our interim assistant director. Joy harden is our interim zoning officer, never to Jackman. Smile and wave. Nefertiti is our community displacement prevention officer Erica leak is our development officer over planning, Jamie may is our housing and community development officer. Overall things housing program E. And Layla is not here. But she's our city demographer. And this is, these are the folks that are working to lead the department and to implement all of the programs that we talked about today and all of the things that I'm sure we will have that get cooked up by all of us collectively in the future. And that is it. I do have one final question for you. Ah and I need to make sure that I yes. So there is a competitive grants for land use planning that I

[3:04:01 PM]

think we have talked about any of our staff talked about and I wanted to see if that's something you have looked into, or what I'm not gonna lie. I know that that was sent to me, and I asked my team about it, and I don't know that I can answer that. Other than to turn around and say, Andrea Erica, do you remember if we're doing anything on that? Look at the details can not. Perfect perfect . Well, I didn't know if it would fit into our conversation about being able to get people or help with our amendments that are piling up or other projects just we're looking at all the creative things. I believe you. Thank you. And I know that, councilor harper-madison had a question. I saw her. Councilor harper-madison chair harbor medicine. Thank you for sharing. I'll keep it short. I'm looking at the time were at three or four. Just as a time check, so I

[3:05:02 PM]

managed just real quick. So what is the difference? Between a manufactured home and an rv. And is it does it have something to do with one being able to drive off and whatnot? Fundamentally it's. It's the ability for it to live if it's permanently anchored. To the ground, then I think that is what we're able to provide service to if it is not permanently anchored to the ground, and it has the ability to in theory. Get up and drive away then that is not something that we can provide service do based on our conversations with law and the bond covenants and all of the things that come with that. Got it. And then so you said out of the 29 total 15 or occupied, but you just said we're hopefully about to have one owner. So 15 of those are occupied but rentals. No they're all they're all occupied by owners were just hoping to with our preference policy. We did our first lottery and so we're hoping to have the first of that new process, closed and owning

[3:06:03 PM]

their home. This spring. The last question as you said, the lottery opens tomorrow. How do people know about that? How did the word get out about the lottery opening to Mandy for the other 14 homes. She's looking it up. I'm not okay. And I can I can go ahead and pass until okay, Mandy? Hey man, Austin community land trust is the name of our land trust and it's a C L T dash homes. .Org and you can go online. A C L T slash homes, dash homes. That's rooms .org. So I guess the question I was asking, though we can pass that now. But with the lottery opening tomorrow, I'm just wondering how people who already know how did they find out? So we have been doing over the last year, a significant amount of outreach and personalized outreach, really focusing on communities that we would

[3:07:04 PM]

prioritize through our preference policy. So those are , communities that have experienced high levels of gentrification and displacement. We have been doing a lot of as I mentioned personalized outreach ,

and we do anticipate that some of the folks who applied under a previous lottery could carry their applications forward. In addition, we do anticipate that will have new applications and that application portal should be open. I think for a month okay. Thank you. I appreciate it. So I know I covered a lot. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity. We get really excited when we have the ability to showcase the work that's being done. And in a more comprehensive way, so thank you for indulging us. Thank you for that presentation. I'm sure we'll be seeing more of each other. Alright I if we don't have anything else on item three. I would like to bring up

[3:08:04 PM]

items two and four together as they're very much related item two is discussion, possible action on setting committee calendar and possible agenda items for 2023 item. Four identify items to discuss at a future meeting. It's my understanding that this committee has historically met quarterly, and mostly received briefings from staff. I have been in discussion with the chair harper-madison and believe that she would like to see this committee meet more often, and I'm in full agreement with that , so that we can really tackle a lot of the challenges we have on this issue when it comes to housing. Those who are unhappy housed are Ards subsidizing mixed income communities, incentivized affordable housing , you know, just we have a lot of challenges ahead of us a lot of work to do in this space. I think that's why so many of us

[3:09:05 PM]

wanted to be on this committee to begin with. And so I don't know if the chair would like to speak more to this. I see. She has her hand up, so I'll turn it over to you. Thank you. I appreciate that by sharing. I just I wanted to really just put some emphasis on the fact that you know to your point. We have so much to do. I'm really recommending that we meet at a tempo that will allow us to really dig into this housing continuum. And you know, so you name some of the things like subsidizing. I want to get as granular as possible. Once we really figure out what our mutual high level items are being so when we talk about supporting our own house. I want to get more granular and talk about creative ideas like plug in homes, which we can get for \$14,000 and put together in four hours, you know, and so then we're just talking about the land that we put it on. What does that mean? What initiatives can we launch from there? Really subsidizing, deeply affordable. I want to talk about to Rosie's point about land banking and community land trust. What does

[3:10:05 PM]

that mean? You know what private dollars can help there really? As much as we're able to, you know, I want us to be leveraging public land and city assets in our contracts. You know, I want to incentivize

affordable and accessible housing through code changes, you know, like, you know, you were making the point of. I want to add more we need to have way more than 18. But we also need to be talking about you know, changes to our permitting process and solutions that we all agree on like parking reform and Ecuador equitable compatibility changes, but you know, I wanted to not Mr affected. We just talked about 50% staffing shortage, so that's something I definitely like to add to this conversation is what does it look like? What what can we as a body do given how important those departments that have these substantial shortages are to the work that we ultimately want to do? And then maybe even be able to speak to it substantively when our constituents are asking us questions. So people are gonna ask my certificate of occupancy

[3:11:06 PM]

. But this, you know, they're gonna ask. What did these shortages mean? And I think we should have some some good answers to give them so maybe this body can also serve as a resource. While we're sort of waiting through how to how to solve for our I was staffing challenges and, you know, just really wanted to make sure that we ensure our processes are generating real abundant and real, naturally occurring affordable housing. So talking about those creative solutions like you know, coop's and group homes and homes for all ages. Frankly I want to make certain you know, when we're talking about student housing that we don't talk about our senior, we are not rather talking about our senior population. At the exact same time, so yes, to your point . I really would love for us to just meet as frequently as folks are comfortable with. I think the work ahead of us this next four years is going to be so deeply entrenched in this housing work that the more that we're able to do here, the more

[3:12:07 PM]

our successors and their successors will be able to do moving forward, so I really am. Appreciate you sharing the meeting and look forward to finish it up. That's about all I had. Thank you. Thank you. Councilor qadri. Yeah I want to echo what chair Harvard medicine, investor ultra have said. You know, the three of us right now in the diocese, we ran on the urgency of the crisis of affordability in the city and going off of what chair Harper medicine said. You know our tempo needs to match the crisis at hand. There needs to be a sense of urgency because whether it's our own house folks or it's you know, general folks in the population in Austin. You know, they don't have the luxury of time. So I'm all for, you know, meeting more frequently than we have on the books right now. That's great. Well, councilor Velasquez. I told myself that the U L a panel I would let you would stop letting y'all talk before me because y'all take exactly what I was going to say. And zod did. I mean, we did run

[3:13:07 PM]

all run on that urgency, and I think that's what's expected of us. And I think, picking up the , the temple. I don't think I have no objection to that at all. Can you rephrase what you were? Sorry I stepped away for a minute. No problem. We were just talking about our future schedule. And historically we've met quarterly. Looking at meeting more frequently to kind of dive deeper into some of these issues so that we can really start tackling as the chair mentioned at any more granular level talking about some of these challenges. And coming up with solutions, so I would totally be supportive of that. You know, these conversations have been happening for a long time. But I know especially with this new dais. People are very eager to get to work and to make meaningful change in the community, so I think more meetings would be warranted and we will still have more things to cover than we possibly have time for that right, Jill. I would add that staff supports that. I mean, we're we feel the sense of urgency as all of you do, and

[3:14:09 PM]

that's why you saw in 2018. We had a \$250 million housing bond that technically had an eight year spend plan that we spent in four. We want to get as much done as absolutely quickly as we can and as smart away as we can possibly do, and we appreciate the support that that the previous council and the committee and the folks here today are expressing for us. I think our staffing situation is important. I do want to just make sure I was clear because I don't want to be unclear. We don't have a 50% vacancy rate for the department. That is not what we have. We have. That's that's one division that has, the planning team has a substantial vacancy rate. I think we're right. I haven't looked at the numbers in the last week, but last time I looked, we were right in line with where the city of Austin is as a whole entity, so I didn't want folks to take that away and have a sense of panic in their heart because that's it's we have vacancies. Yes but were I would be in a different state if we were at that many vacancies, but we look forward

[3:15:09 PM]

to continuing to work with you all. And the support that we can extend the council as we as we move forward. That's great. Well I know I'll be working with the chair to talk about some of these issues and scheduling. It's our future meetings. I think you have one. Do you want one? Okay okay. But if there's nothing else I just I encourage you all to also reach out to chair Harvard Madison with any ideas of items you want to discuss, and we will have those discussions in full so and if with that if there's no other business to come before the committee, ah, and there are no objections will be adjourned at 3 15. Thank you very much.