

# Public Health Committee (PHC) meeting Transcript – 4/12/2023

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[10:01:57 AM]

Ready to get started. Good morning, everyone. Vanessa went this proud to serve as chair of our public health committee, and it is 10:02 A.M. On Wednesday, April 12th and I'm proud to call this committee meeting. To order we are in the council chambers and I am joined by our vice chair of Alaska's and mayor Watson I and also council member chito vela. And then we also received notification that are other committee member council member Mackenzie Kelly is not able to make this meeting. I'm looking forward to today's conversations and updates as you can see on our agenda. This is a lighter agenda. We only have two updates. One will be a briefing from Richard Mikhail, with the Austin resource recovery on the winter storm debris cleanup and then a briefing from Diana gray

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or homelessness strategy officer. And. Then there at the end of the meeting will have time to brainstorm and discuss any ideas or suggestions for a future meeting topics I want to thank our public health staff wanted to Jackson and director Sturup for all of your work and making this committee a seamless process to manage and to lead. So now I'm going to see if we have any speakers signed up to testify. There are no speakers signed up today. All right, thank you. The next item on the agenda is approval of our previous meeting minutes for item one. Can I get a motion? Thank you, vice chair of Alaska's seconded by chito vela any objection to approval of our meeting minutes. Seeing none of the meeting minutes for March. 8th 2023 as presented passes unanimously. Next up, we'll move to our next item. Richard Mchale , interim director of Austin resource recovery on the recent winter storm, debris cleanup

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before meeting before moving to item two. I want to invite director Sturup who oversees awesome public health to share briefly a few words on the impact of the storm debris cleanup and how it relates to public health outcomes for our community. Good morning, madam chair. Mayor committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to address you this morning. Adrian Sturup, Boston public health. As this committee is well aware of public health is about the science of protecting and improving. The health of people and their communities or more simply population help. We're often most known for being out there to combat infectious disease or communicable disease, foodborne illnesses, but also environmental hazards. These can be chemical, biological, and as we'll talk about today, physical winter storm are ahead many devastating effects on our community, and I think the chair for reminding us of the public

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health impacts of that storm not only due to the extreme weather but to the extreme amount of debris that was caused by the storm, and I am so thankful for our partners at a are. They are honorary public health professionals in doing this work and making sure that our city was cleaned up. This is important because of the leaning trees and hanging limbs, posing the threat to, delays in getting people's power back on. We saw that there was a lot of debris in the roadways and egress is keeping and that could potentially keep public safety professionals from accessing people in need. The debris and our water ways, reduced water flow velocity and threatens future for flooding and low water crossing areas. And this, contributes to mosquito breeding. We're almost on that season. That is something that public health is often in the field about. And then the damaging, two structures and power lines,

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threatening safety to residents and children on their way to school. And what and then? Lastly, the thing we don't think about when we think about public health. All of the debris cover. That makes nice little homes for rodents and snakes and other predatory animals that pose a threat to our public safety and public health. And so again, I will turn it over to Mr Mchale to talk about the valiant efforts that they have undertaken to make sure that our community stay safe. Director thank you. Thank you, director Sturup, and I appreciate your words on making that connection between storm debris cleanup in public health also want to welcome our colleague counter Mariah unaltered for joining us for today's public health committee meeting. Thank you. Good morning. Chair mayor committee members. I'm my name is Richard Mchale on the acting director for Austin resource recovery, and I'd like to thank you for this opportunity to tell you a little bit about our efforts with the recovery response from our department before we get into the main side. I do. This was a partnership

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between our department and other entities. I like to thank our fleet department or watershed public works. Pard, these are all departments that helped us with the collection kept our trucks on the road and we're very grateful for that, as well as some of our other partners, which and prior councils as well because prior councils or effective in getting us new contracts, which played a key role in this recovery our experience has been long, with disasters, unfortunately, the intensity and frequency of disasters has increased over the years. The silver lining to that is we've got a lot of training. We have a lot of experience. We run into situations that we have never run into before. Every storm is unique, so we try to learn from those events. A R R has been involved in. Obviously prior events in this community. We've had numerous floods. Memorial day floods, Halloween floods. We've also participated

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in other communities recovery efforts. We sent crews to Houston to help out with Rita, hurricane Rita and hurricane Harvey. And it's at these type of events where we really pick up a lot of the information that we are able to apply when we come back to this community, so I think you'll see the dividends of that previous experience. Resulted in in some, astounding efforts during this event. So. What I will do is we'll start off with what a timeline. I think most of us were around at this time and kind of have a general idea of the timeline. We were very proactive in getting notification to our debris contractors when we did, her winter storm, Yuri, we learned a lot of lessons from that, particularly as it involved are contracts for debris monitoring and debris collection. We felt that we would be better served with a more robust debris

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contractor. Contract so instead of the one contractor that we had at that time, we actually moved to have three contractors , for this event, our concern was we did not necessarily know the extent of the damage. We knew central Texas was going to get hit, but we didn't know how far south whether this would go to San Antonio and north to Waco. So one of our concerns early on was that we were going to be competing with other entities to get our resources here, so we were very quick to make those phone calls to February 1st. We basically put them on standby status. If you will. We kind of put our kind of reserved our spot if you will before others called but this was this concern was not an issue in this case because the damage was relatively localized majority of it was this used. Excuse me. The Austin area north of San Antonio was the extent to the south and farther north Williamson county and to the

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south of the Waco areas and not of large areas were concerned. The other issue that helped us out was while we had contracts in place. Most of the other entities did not have contracts in place. So there was no no issue of having to compete against them because they had to start the process from the beginning. So and that sense we were fortunate. We did have to suspend services early on during the storm or regular collection services. The ice on the roads required us to shut down operations early, on one day, and then we had delayed operations starting later, so there was an impact to our regular operations as well. But part of the reason we did this was to get the contractor in place. This slide here, I think really shows the massive amount of damage that we had to deal with. This compares our efforts with other events. Other floods that we have dealt with. Prior

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to this advent winter storm. Yuri was our biggest event as far as tonnage. This event also was a little bit different. We kind of flipped the switch on how we handle events prior to this event. Basically city staff would handle the bulk of material and we would have contractors supplement our workforce to help us out. In this situation. That was not an option we can do maintaining regular operations we can do about 100 tons per day if we suspend our bulk, ah, and brush operations and strictly pick up debris. You can see what that the tonnage there. We would have taken us about 4.5 years working every day. To do that, just by ourselves, so this event is where we really flipped the scenario where we really have the contractors doing the bulk of the work, and we relied more on trying to maintain our regular curbside services, which was a challenge as well. We still had high amounts of debris being put in the curbside organics containers and folks had a lot of bags out. So we did

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experience delays there as well. But not as much. As as, if we had handled the storm collection by ourselves. The. One of the things we did experience to you saw that large amount of volume . I did have an opportunity to speak with the director and the city of San Antonio director Newman with their solid waste management department. He relayed to me that they were experiencing material coming from the Austin area to their facilities in San Antonio as well and I think that speaks to the amount of resources that this event took up. There were not enough contractors in this area to move the material, from those that did not have city services, so those private companies those areas that were that are are did not serve as had to get services, so a lot of crews ended up coming up from other cities. So San Antonio those folks would come up. They'd work. They used local

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facilities to dispose of what they collected. But that last load of the day they would end up taking back to San Antonio and dump it first thing in the morning before they headed back up tossed and so very widespread damage. San Antonio didn't have near the damage we did. Most of their damage was north of the city and northern Bexar county. So they did see a little bit of cedar coming in from that, but not to the extent that we saw. So this slide here shows what we were doing. As far as tonnage we collected per day. You can see there around the February 25th. We hit our peak of over around 6000 tons per day, which is a credible number as far as recovery response. We have three notations on there. This is the circle C, old main or in bomb road. These were debris management sites that we went ahead and worked with our contractors to stand up. Each contractor had a section of the city that they were responsible for roughly an area the south there was roughly south of the

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Ben White. The central area was basically Ben White, the 20 to 22 area and then north of 20 to 22 is the final zone, so prior to these sites being operated, these hollers had to collect material and then haul that material straight to Hornsby Bend to the biosolids facility there where that material would be mixed with the biosolids to create villa dirt. That's a lot of windshield time and we really need these folks on the on the routes. So we worked with them too. And our parks department to establish sites at circle see old Maynard and bomb road. These are all three part properties. So these sites were used as temporary debris sites. Material will be brought there. The contractors within reduce that material through chippers and then haul that chipped material to Hornsby Bend where there then stockpile to eventually be used for dillo dirt. So it helped us get the material off the ground a lot quicker. Then we

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typically would have had we hold straight to Hornsby, Ben. As far as communications. We were very proactive about getting the messaging out. We utilize multiple methods to do that social media press releases. I know I did several news conferences in media interviews. We have a recollect service. Which is an app for our customers that can opt in to get notifications about any delays in service or any messaging that we want to get out. I think we have, I want to say about 40,000 folks that have signed up for that, so they were able to get those messages. We did some updates to our web page. We were mentioned in the media, not necessarily interviews that we gave but others that mentioned our department and our services and then our communications to staff. Hmm. One of the issues that we heard about was the map that we created. This was the first time they are are had ever

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used a map to describe our progress as far as, cleanup goes, this was a map that was created in house by a. Our staff is not something that we went out and purchased. Are folks worked tirelessly to get a system set up to be able to convey the information to the public. You know, it was far from perfect, but I think it's a good tool. Having been a geography, major? I and this tells you how old I am. Actually, my concentration was cartography in school, so. Yeah so the mapping? Actually I was very interested in that and I really pushed to get that out. Staff. We debated internally whether it was ready. I want to get the probation now, so I hold myself accountable for any flaws in that. I think the map is a great tool, but with any tool, whether it be cartography or G, I S you know what matters is the

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information that goes into it. So the tool works. We just need to do a better job of getting that information. Correct and one of the problems that we saw is what we did is we relied on the contractors to let us know when they had completed second to the city, and they would relay that information to us on a daily basis. We would make those changes in the map. Soon after making those changes that we had a first pass complete in an area. That's when phone calls started coming in and said no, you haven't finished your first pass. I still have material out, so we had to go back and do some, deeper dives into those and kind of see what the issues were. Maybe we came up with a range of issues of why these problems were coming up, and I just want to mention a few of them here. So what we had asked contractors to do is to where if there was any stops that they couldn't get to go ahead and tag those let customers know and give us a notification so that we were aware and in certain cases, we would go out and handle those. So situations where they would skip stop included. If the stop us that

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what we would call an improper set out, so we have guidelines that a R R that we ask our customers to follow. During this event. We relaxed them. We asked folks to follow the guidelines. But due to the severity of the event, we felt that we could relax those and we would pick them up. But there were certain circumstances weren't improper setup could not be collected. There was issues where debris was put on top of, of fire hydrants. Those are situations where we tag and we would ask the customer to fix that set out before we can go back and collect there were situations in some of the cul de sacs that the area was too small to get into with the large hauler trucks so they would skip those and call another person on their team, to get those, but that wouldn't necessarily happen that day. So that could happen the next day or sometimes, days later, so many folks thought, well, that material is being missed. I've been missed. We're also going to look at some of the language that we use when we talk about

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first passes our director, director snipes made mention that folks had changed our terminology of first pass. From a from a verb to announce, so everyone wanted their past. So even if we had gone down their street on the first pass, and they didn't have their stuff out in time, they wanted us to come back the next day so they could get their first past collected so we had to remind them that we would be back. But because of the volume and in order to operate as efficiently as we could, we couldn't go back right then. But we would be back and which we have. Some of the set outs were put under trees where our crane trucks couldn't get to them. So those again was an instance where we had to have other crews go in there or have the customers move those materials. Some customers had some debris to the house or fences, and that material was mixed in that so those are loads at the contractor could not take as well because the facility that accepted that material only

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accepted organic waste and not, non traceable debris. So those are some issues we had. We also saw typical issues that we see during regular operations where we will go and we'll be collecting and then we will break off to go dump that material somewhere else. And then we'll go back to the route when the driver may go back to a different part of the route, not necessarily next house that was in line so that was confusing for customers where they see a truck working on the street coming all the way up to their house and then leaving and not coming back. So these are little things that we work to address. And then these are things that, that was that we learned from during this event. You know, this was obviously a very major event in the not only the volume that we hear about the size of the area that we had to work in Austin's about 320 square miles , so that was a lot of ground to cover so just this week. We've started our third pass that

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started. I believe Monday with some crews getting back into town Monday. They excuse me yesterday they actually started collecting material again. Our debris monitor has estimated around a little over 1000 stops still left and we've talked with our contractors and we are confident that we could have that finished up within the next 10 days, so moving very quickly on that. We'd like to move beyond this and get back to regular. Once that third pass is done, we will release our contractors and any future material that comes out that may still be in trees or folks may not have got to the curb they would have to call into 311 for us to collect and we will do that through June will be collecting materials still. Some of the areas of improvement, and I just want to talk about mentioned cold sex a little bit. But gated communities also presented unique issue for us so for Freeman reimbursement profit

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purposes. We had our three debris contractors on board. We also hired a debris monitor, so the debris monitors job is to basically have a person at with every crew documenting everything. They do. How many times that bucket touches the ground pictures of the site? Any information. That they feel is pertinent that FEMA would need their collecting that information so they helped us to do that. When we got to two gated communities, there was an issue because those are private roads in there and that present a little bit of, an issue. In us being able to get FEMA reimbursement, so if we wanted to get female reimbursements we had to follow some other strategies for those areas. We had to do a pre assessment of the area. Take a look. Do some documentation. We need to make sure we had rights of releases. From those homeowner groups in order to get on those properties because that would be one of the

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requirements at FEMA would want to see that we had permission to go on to those areas so that took a little bit of time we did. Work towards that we still have some more work to do at that. There are some areas where , the rights of entry did not come in a timely manner. But we went ahead and collect those anyway, and those will just be cost the city of Austin absorbed during this storm, as those may not be reimbursable that FEMA decides. Against that. So we're working on those. We see that this is the first time we've ever had a thema type event that impacted gated communities. A lot of our events have been more localized as far as flooding, but we've never really had something in a gated community like this. So this was something new, and that's why I say all these events are unique, and we learn something from each one. And this is something that we learned for this one, and this won't be a problem in the future. 311 I'd like to

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apologize to my friends at 311. We they had a lot of calls coming in, somewhere in the neighborhood between phone calls and online, around 43,000 service requests. Some of those were duplicates, so we remove those out, so it's about 38,000 overall. So an enormous amount of calls. We asked our residents to call to let us know if there if they had damage in there is we pretty much knew the areas, but we wanted to get a better sense of the quantity of the damage. How many you know what are we looking at? As far as the total impact, so ah folks did call in was good information that we got. At the end of the day, three council districts produced nearly half of the debris and those were council districts, 10 8 and six ah, the bottom three as far as the

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member service orders, generated word councils to three and nine ah, now we know that there's some areas of the city. That perhaps been upper underrepresented in the past. It may not have access to get that information to the sea that they had issues, so we sent out staff into those areas to kind of serve as their ombudsman and look at those areas and report back, so we had a good understanding of those areas as well. So we use that information to, kind of determine our workload. As far as closing the service orders we've closed about 8000. So far we've been doing this. We will have to send a supervisor out just to verify the site has been collected as enclosed out. So it's a lot of work, so we're gonna be talking with 311 staff to see if there is perhaps a simpler way to do closed outs in the past. We used to do kind of a blanket close out on service orders. Ah my understand that could present some issues. In this case where

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I guess if they're materials still out, it would lead to an escalation, so we're going to see what the best way to close the service orders out because it's taking a lot of staff time to have to close those out individually. Give Mr Mckell this is really good information, but I just want to highlight probably have about five. 10 minutes left on the presentation . Sorry, okay. Sure. Timeframe. I'm sorry. Again to how we prioritized. One of the things were very intentional about was making sure that every district started at the same time, or at least very close the same time so each district there was about . Maybe they all started that in that first week. Some started a few days later than others only because they were different contractors and our contractors. To bring staff in a lot of the staff had been working, cleaning up still from hurricane iron. Excuse me, Ian and, in Florida. So those crews were brought over to help out with the collection. We also you know, looked at the service order numbers and saw

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the volume out on the west part of the city. And the issues that that created now this picture here kind of shows you some of the curb lines that are just totally covered with brush. This created some traffic issues in once situation that stop sign had been covered up the debris so that you couldn't see the stop sign. So we as a matter of public safety and public health, we went ahead and put more resources toward these areas to get those material off the street to avoid any type of accidents or additional fire damage. And this is a picture of our circle. See debris site and you can see that gentleman there and the Orange shirt and it's just the scale of it. I've heard people call it mount circle. See? So, but it is now gone or in the process of restoring all the debris management site to the prior condition, or in some cases, even a little bit better. So that work is ongoing. And with that, I will take any questions. Thank you. Thank you, Mr Mchale. And I just want to

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share my gratitude to Austin resource recovery. I think this department was an exam shining example of how to respond in a disaster. And I appreciate that you laid out the thinking of switching the order of operation to getting the contractors out to help on the front end with the debris. Pick up so that we can maintain regular operations and into that kind of thinking that I think really has put us in a in a very good place. Love that we have started our third pass. And certainly I think today's update is really relevant to many of the constituent cases that we're getting, and I also appreciate that you recognize that for I mean, I feel like I'm constantly in a 311 educational campaign in my district. I'm sharing with my community like hey, report everything on 311. As we can't solely rely on where the reports are coming in, because we know that there is a disparity on service requests, especially for east side communities. Colleagues questions yes, mayor.

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I just want to reinforce what the chairwoman just said about a shining example of how to respond, and I got the opportunity for a short period of time to go out with you and director snipes and actually witnessed aspects of this and it was very impressive. And I also appreciate the how do we learn more and apply that as part of your presentation source? Thanks on overall thanks on the whole approach, so thank you. But I do appreciate that, but spoil alert our next storm. We will have issues, but they won't be the same issues and we will learn from those stuff. We're always preparing for the next one. Right? So there's no question that's true. But but the idea that it was so proactive I think is what's meaningful here. So thank you. Thank you. Yes. And I just again echoed my colleague's comments and just wanted to mention that the, the map was

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very helpful in my communications with constituents would refer them to the map, and it would be updated and they would kind of have an idea. Oh there is gonna be a second pass that they could at least see that it was. It was very reassuring. Very helpful. It helped keep you know, people patient and you with the knowledge that there is help coming down the road. So again. I just want to say thank you, and that just makes it so much easier from our perspective, you know, being able to direct a constituent to a resource that will serve as a guide soon as everyone have to just call us and be like, when's it gonna come when they're gonna come when they're gonna come? You know, there's just like there's a map. So again. Thank you very much for that. Thank you, for those words, and our next iteration will be much more robust. Any other questions or comments. All right. Thank you. Thank you. Great, great presentation. Okay colleagues were now moving on to our next item, which is a briefing and discussion of issues related to homelessness is item number

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three. So if we can have Diana gray. Joining us for our for our regular update. Good morning chair. Fuentes committee members. Diana gray, homeless strategy officer with an awesome public health. So, excited to share with you this morning. A few updates, around homelessness if we can move to the next slide , so we'll be talking. I think probably top of committee members mind is status of the Salvation Army closure, so we will be giving an update on that as well as some ongoing work around assessment of our shelter system. Speaking to the armpit investment plan and where we are on spending and commitments of the \$106.7 million of arba committed to homelessness would like to speak briefly to some work that we're doing in organizational capacity building within the homeless response

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system and then give a preview of upcoming items for the committee. And its consideration is it talks about future agendas? As of February, 17th, which was the day that the Salvation Army announced that it would be closing the downtown shelter. There were 97 clients there as you likely recall the initial date for closure was March 15th. We asked, and a Salvation Army agreed to extend for another month such that the anticipated closure date is April 15th. I do have numbers updated as of this morning. Today there are three clients left at the downtown shelter. We expect those three individuals to be relocated to the north bridge shelter over the course of today and tomorrow. So that we will not have anyone remaining there and be able to close on the 15th without having

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to exit anyone to the streets. If we can go to the next slide, please. So as of the faith, which was when we produced this presentation. This is a breakdown of the location of individuals that had exited shelter. There were some folks who left shelter without a known location or two known unsheltered homelessness. I will tell you that with the updated numbers, we are now at 17 individuals and roughly 17. Of those folks. That doesn't necessarily mean that those folks are unsheltered. They may have gone to housing to friends or family or to other locations , but just to give a sense of how we intend to and hope to accommodate those individuals. We have a by name lifts. So we know who those folks are from our homeless management information system, and for at least 30 days, we will retain an

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invitation to shelter for those individuals. We will issue of, what we call a below from. But the justice world to be on the lookout to our outreach teams such that they can contact us and we will facilitate a

placement during that time period. So as you see here, a combination of some exits to permanent housing, other transfers to two other shelter facilities, some friends and family relocation or folks who did have resources to self fund hotel. Stay while they stabilized and found additional housing. Next slide. So this work happens in the context of a broader assessment of our community shelter system that was directed by council in August of last year. You may recall as we were going through the process of approving emergency contracts for the arch

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and the south bridge shelter counsel requested that we undertake broad assessment of our community shelter system. We are first looking at year round general general homeless shelter system and then we will have some additional follow on planning looking at inclement weather shelters. Recommendations will focus on the overall bed capacity that we likely need potential improvements to service quality , and specifically, we've been asked to look at ways that we might look at our city contracts to improve performance and information flow about the current and ongoing operations of shelters. So rather than a detailed shelter plan, the direction was to create a vision in the priorities for how we move forward and expanding and improving our shelter system with individual projects to be to be identified as we move forward importantly, we were

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asked to complete this assessment before we re solicited the emergency contracts at the arch and southbridge shelter. Those contracts are currently scheduled to end at the end of the fiscal year and so there is a time crunch here, and we're looking to bring our initial recommendations to council next month, with some finalized and refined recommendations likely in the following month. We are looking at whether the solicitation process that would then follow can be completed by the end of September and may consider the possibility of extending the current contracts for a limited time to ensure a smooth transition to the new contracts and potentially new operators. So right now we are in the stakeholder engagement and research process. It will move to the next slide and wanted to speak a bit to our community. Engagement work on this front, which was a piece of

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what counsel asked us specifically to do. I want to acknowledge our community engagement staff specifically, Charles loosen who's with us today? Really looking at a multi level community engagement process, and really with a focus on people who are actually experiencing homelessness and have used are using or have used these services in the past, and so are early engagement has really focused on conversations with people who are currently experiencing homelessness and are using shelter or have in

the in the past. Have done a number of focus groups, as well as significant numbers of one on one interviews. Some of that is continuing, but it is substantially completed this time. Our next phase, which is currently underway, is engaging with our service provider partners about their operations. Improvements that they would like to see as well as the ways

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that the city can improve its support of our service providers . And then finally, we'll be moving into a phase that invites broader service providers in the community who may not have a contractual relationship with the city as well as advocates, so we're in the process of scheduling that now. So we have a commitment to update council quarterly on the progress of finding home 80 X, fundraising as well as our commitment and expenditure of the American rescue plan act funds. We included that as part of our last update, but I did want to give some additional information today that looks at where we are on the almost \$107 million of arpa funding. We have spent a relatively modest amount of funds thus far, and that is because the vast majority of contracting that occurred those contracts were executed around

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the beginning of the fiscal year and so projects have been ramping up. And just beginning to submit those draws on the contracts. We expect to see this increased rapidly. Over the coming months. And then we do have a additional encumbrances or authorized renewal's of those contracts that value 64.6 million. As of just a couple of weeks ago, our balance was 31.3 million. I do want to note that that includes 11.4 million of home arpaio monies that have specific limitations on their potential expenditures. And that we have just received, at least verbal approval from hud to spend. I'm not positive whether we have received formal approval to go ahead and commit those funds, but we have been in something of a awaiting pattern on a holding pattern. Excuse me on those funds, so an additional 20 million to commit those are

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in the investment plan, so we do have planned investments there, but they are not yet committed in approved contracts. So I think that this is going to be important. We have committed to counsel that we would, periodically come with any potential reallocation or recommended reallocations of funding within the overall investment plan. And now as we move into sort of a more mature evolution of the efforts would expect that that may come. In the next 2 to 3 months. Next slide. Finally I want to give an update on a capacity building initiative, which really is an important part of our all our overall efforts under finding home 80 X and within the arpaio investment as we have resource our system significantly

more robustly with rp funds and through some increased city general fund. We know that it's been a struggle for our existing

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portfolio of, if you will legacy providers to expand as rapidly as needed. Additionally with our focus on equity in service delivery, we recognize that some of our bipac led organizations have not traditionally been able to access city funding because of some of the significant infrastructure requirements, administrative and financial requirements and so wanted to use a portion of this these dollars to really work with some of those organizations who are have been providing services in the community, often substantially volunteer driven but without formal support from the city. So we have initiated a process a small grants program, and accelerator program where we have engaged with 21 awardees. Have thus far worked with them to complete needs assessments, and are now moving into a period of an accelerator process which

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kicks off in about two weeks as well as the ability for these organizations to submit direct requests for I believe up to \$35,000 of direct support for very concrete capacity building needs whether that be developing their financial tracking systems. Participating in the homeless management information system or contracting with development staff to help them diversify their funding their funding portfolio. And so again , the accelerator starts in a couple of weeks runs for about 10 weeks and look forward to showcasing the work of those organizations. At the combination of the accelerator. In terms of issues that are on the horizon, and we expect to bring before the committee. We have closed and rfp for targeted homeless prevention of \$2.5

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million. The evaluation of those those proposals is nearing completion, and so would anticipate that next committee meeting, we would have the proposed awardees. Ah for the committee. Finally as I mentioned or next, as I mentioned next month, we hope to have at least our preliminary assessment and recommendations around our overall shelter planning effort. Again, will be bringing forward proposed reallocation of some of the remaining rp funds and have additionally had some questions and interest around the progress of our housing development pipeline. So look forward to updating the committee. On those brick and mortar units that are expected to come online within both the coming months in the next couple of years. And finally here, we do have a resolution related to ensuring that our providers in the homeless service space have

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access to education and training around identifying and responding to human trafficking. We are working with partners now to develop the response to that resolution and provide some modest funding to carry it out and look forward to updating the council that the committee soon with that I will close and I'm happy to take questions. Thank you super informative. I appreciate the presentation and one of the initial questions I have that's great is, you know I often share with our community that this is the year that that 68 million tranche of allocated or committed dollars will actually see into fruition? Because we have not. You know up until this point we've only spent I think, he said seven million and or 10 million. So can you just take a moment to kind of elaborate? You know, now that we know that 64 million have been allocated and are in

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the process and that's going to affect permanent supportive housing system. Capacity building shelter. What does that look like? What can our community see in terms of progress in and building out a more robust? Homelessness response ecosystem. What does that look like? For our community? Absolutely. So the bulk of that 64 million really corresponds to rapid re housing , so that is rental supports in case management for people getting back into housing. We in looking across those contracts that has capacity to re house approximately 1000 people. Now we have significant challenges in the market of locating units. To place all of those folks while we do have significant numbers of brick and mortar units coming online, we also depend on the open rental market , and so we'll be working with providers to really aggressively tried to access units so but but really substantially more orders of magnitude. Resources to

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rehouse folks. We also have investments across a variety of other interventions. And so as an example, we have provided some of the operating funds for the expansion and creation of micro shelters at Esperanza community that are currently under construction. I believe they are a little south of 100 units out there now operational but with a goal of 200, so that is additional shelter capacity. We have funded employment services, additional behavioral health services and additional access to, benefits enrollment, which is so critical for our neighbors who are living with disabilities. Finally this relates to the arpa funding alone. You may recall that we elected to not use rp funding for long term services and supportive housing that we know really must be maintained and the city in the past couple of budget cycles has increased general funds to, to support

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permanent supportive housing. So I want to be clear that we have right now. A pipeline of just under 1300 units expected to come online. We hope by the end of 2024. Some of those may move into early 2025. But there are an additional I think this year we're looking at 400 to 450 units. That will come on online and really will serve. Some of those folks who have been homeless for the longest and have very substantial needs, that will be served by wraparound case management, behavioral health services, etcetera. Thank you. So that's so that's kind of the big takeaway. Here is we have a pipeline of 1300 units that we hope will come online by the end of next year. And is that, in addition to the 1000 that we're hoping to re house with this trench, for the most part, there will be a little bit of overlap

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because we're making some of those units available for people with tenant based vouchers. Who are you know who might be in a rapid re housing program and are looking for a unit because there's such a shortage? So you know, my guess is that the over overlap is 2 to 300. But we're probably talking about 2000 placements overall. And with the rapid re housing of the of the 1000 is that timeframe also by the end of 2024, or is that a right now? Yes that's correct. And so right now there are contracts extend through the end of 2024. So we do anticipate those placements happening by that time. Okay. Thank you. Colleagues. Any questions? Council rubella. A couple of questions mentioned the arch and the south bridge contracts. I remember that was in please correct me if I'm wrong, but front steps was managing both of those properties. And then one art urban alchemy is managing arch and, often area urban

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league is managing southbridge. Early reports indications. How are things going with those contracts? They're going very well. And so I think that many of you may have seen and heard, I think really positive reports about operations at the arch and the conditions surrounding the arch. So we're really pleased. We have increased capacity there to the full 130 that the facility will allow. And I think have heard really positive reports about a change in the in the tenor and the space there, and, in fact, as part of our assessment also have been doing surveys at specific facilities. So we get that feedback. Early reports are quite positive from both facilities. You know, these are tough. But sites to run, but both of our contractors are working really hard and I think have made substantial improvements to both sides. That's great. I have not. I was supposed to go see southbridge, and I think that was when the freeze of winter storm the most recent winter storm hit, and I

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was not able to visit but I need to reschedule that. I've been to the arch twice. Ah I think they're doing a good job. Urban alchemy seems to really. Have the right I think you know, tone and tenor is probably you know, a little TLC goes a long way, and they definitely have that. And related somewhat related to that. I know that there was a plan to shift the north bridge shelter from, a bridge shelter to permanent supportive housing. Where are we on that, and related to that. I believe that we had allocated some money to purchase another hotel to replace the north bridge shelter. Could you have any information update on kind of where that process is sure. So let me speak first to the allocation of funds for acquisition. We there weren't was not a specific allocation of funds for acquisition. During the budget

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process. Last year, we did fund a portion of the operate ongoing operations of that shelter because we have been operating with one time cares. Act funding, and with a signal that the intent was that 21 way or another, maintain that capacity in the shelter, whether that is through acquiring a new shelter or potentially looking at the possibility of maintaining north bridge as is, however, at that time the thinking was that we would use certificates of obligation in the last legislative session. The tax code was changed such that purchase of emergency shelter is no longer an allowable use of certificates of obligation. Staff is currently assessing what our options are both for acquisition financing of any new shelter facility, not just a replacement for north bridge but also potential routes for

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keeping north bridge operating as as a bridge shelter, acknowledging that we need to be cognizant of what our original financing of the property was. And ensuring that we take a route that is allowable. In that, in that context, what was the original financing because I know it was not intended to be a bridge shelter. Initially that's right, so the initial source of financing was general obligation bonds for affordable housing, but the property was purchased in in late 2020. We were already leasing the property for utilization as a protective lodge as part of the covid response. And so when we demobilize the property as a pro lodge, we were in the early stages of the hell initiative and really needed the additional bridge shelter capacity to meet the goals of the hell initiative while we still anticipated

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conversion to permanent, supportive housing, we knew that it would be a while before the that those plans and financing were in place, so elected to pivot and open as a bridge shell. Her at that time. Okay so for the time being north bridge remains a bridge shelter with kind of exploration of other possibilities

for, you future changes that's correct and council can expect an update in memo form soon on that front. Okay, great. And just to for my clarity to so then we have not actually budgeted money for the purchase of another hotel. That is correct. Thank you very much. I will say council member that home arba. That isn't allowable use, and that is something that we have looked at, but there's no specific allocation there. Got it. Thank you very much. Other questions. Yes, come from Walter. I have a couple

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questions and I forgive me. I'd step away for a quick calls. A few said any of this. Sorry, everybody, where are are what's our current shelter? Capacity, give or take. I don't need 1000 beds. And do you have a general sense of where that puts us? In terms of other cities, the balance of housing shelter. I know you are obviously working on the formal assessment. But where are we in that ratio as it compares to others that heavy light significantly lower than than the average when we look at our peer cities, and some of that is, you know, historical production. Some of those cities have shelter beds that go on utilized, so we want to be sensitive to right sizing the system and not overproducing, but we are absolutely cognizant of the fact that we have a frank shortage. Right now, and so are looking at what the again what the best functioning system would be in terms of the balance

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of shelter beds and permanent housing. And I am sure you get asked all the time. I do as well. What's Houston doing? That? We're not doing that. You know? Why are they doing such a great job? Comparatively, and I my limited understanding is that they are potentially have more of that capacity. And so they're able to get people, served in that transition space to then eventually get to housing. Is that a rough? Approximation or, you know, they have a lot greater shelter capacity that we don't have. That they're utilizing the primary and actually had the opportunity to work with Houston and in Houston in the sort of 2011 and 2012 when they began a very substantial surge and redesign of their system, really their primary tool that made a difference was an increase in permanent, supportive housing capacity. That was the leading element of their system redesign

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. I will say they do have more shelter capacity. It is also almost exclusively privately funded. So and that is a trend we see in other communities. That shelter is typically primarily supported by the private sector with some municipal investment and county investment, but that's something we'll be looking at, and sharing with council. You know, our community is a bit different in terms of our philanthropic environment. And so we're sensitive to that. But you know, we have a lot of confidence and how important this is to our community and want to at least layout for both council and the community at

large, how we compare to other cities. And as you think about the need for permanent supportive housing, shelter beds. I know some of the conversation has been ultimately wanted to get more people into housing and supportive housing. But if that if the runway is pretty long to get there we don't want to over, invest in

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shelter and then have everybody. So what's what is that balance look like, are we because you say, well, we're under sheltered. Do we need to have kind of a short term. Almost a surge, but more targeting investment in that area so that we can right size it and not you know, wait three plus years to start seeing the results that we want to see. First of all I do think we're going to start seeing the results. We want to see this year, right as as chair, Fuentes noted, we've got money now in the community and contracts with our service providers, both for rapid re housing, and we expect to see at least 400 units of permanent supportive housing role online this year. But, you know, I don't want to give numbers today because we're doing that very specific assessment right now. I think I can say with with wholehearted confidence that one of the record Munday shines we're going to come out with is we need more shelter beds,

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temporary surge in that capacity. Could be one of the approaches, but I think we want to be thoughtful about what we communicate to you and to the community about where we think the overall capacity should land and my last question is about vouchers. You know, there's this number 506 100, but a substantial number of vouchers out there that we just don't have we have the voucher ready to go, but not willing participant. Two or whole, we'll start with the lieutenant landlord will take it. Have there been. Are we allowed to use our big dollars for essentially sweetening the voucher thing? Okay in fact, we have already approved for eco, who is the typical holder of some of those incentives half a million dollars and do have some additional funds that were working with them to program. What we're finding is that while our traditional incentives are

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still important, so potentially double deposits, a risk mitigation find things like that. We're going to have to find some more creative ways to get access to those units. So we're in, you know, ongoing conversations with them about how we might design ah, some of the incentives and I'll just say , I think this is going to be an all hands on deck effort. We will need the participation of the community and our leadership as well to really build the portfolio of units that are available to our neighbors who are exiting homelessness. Thank you very much. Any other questions. The 1000 bed shelter capacity. Is that

including permanent supportive housing, no, sir. Emergency shelter. Only arch southbridge, North Korea or any other big units that I'm Salvation Army's women and children shelter the wrath. Gaber center. And then there, you know, safe is in there, as

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well as some smaller shelters like casa Marianela and life works has a shelter for youth in there. Is that considered yes. Now the current capacity there, of course, is not where they are headed. We are, I think you know, as I said, we are south of 100 100 units there. Expect that to go to 200 in the relatively near future and just a real quick comment on over building ah. North bridge, for example. I mean, that's in my death correct. Ah! We could. Build apartments there, you know, down the road, assuming that we get a handle on it. I mean, buying a hotel. It's a run. It's an old rundown hotel it's going to have you know is nearing the end of its useful life. That's city property that we could ultimately used for other purposes. So I mean, the idea of kind of, you know, purchasing these kind of hotels and potentially small apartment complexes, using them as bridge shelter as temporary shelter. We still have them we can transform to hockey and we can do other

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things with them. So I'm not horribly afraid of over investing in in temporary shelter with the idea that we could someday converted into affordable housing, correct one of the things I think we look at when we look at our various opportunities for whether it's new construction or adaptive reuse is with the flexibility of the facility for future for future use or for redevelopment overall into affordable housing. Sage. Thank you. Great question and good point. Any other questions. All right. Thank you. Thank you. Alright colleagues. This brings us to our last item to discuss future agenda items also want to welcome counter member qadri to our committee meeting. Quite a flag that next month is mental health awareness month and so for our public health committee meeting in may, we will have a packed agenda. We will feature Travis county representatives to talk about the mental health diversion

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center, which I can't qadri has an agenda item on on it onto tomorrow's council meeting, and , and then we'll also talk about an initiative that I'm super excited to launch with the community advancement network. About around mental health. First aid training, so will be a focus conversation on mental health and what we can do to build capacity around mental health awareness and in Austin. Any other. Topics for agenda consideration. Okay alright. If there's no further business, it is 11:04 A.M. And I joined this meeting.

