

Public Health Committee (PHC) Meeting Transcript – 06/14/2022

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Hi everyone. >> Good morning. My name is Vanessa Fuentes. I'm proud to serve as chair of our public health committee. It is 1003, and I'm proud to call this meeting to order, as we have with us today, vice chair Velasquez council member vela and council member Ryan alter joining us. I know that the mayor and councilmember Kelly will not be able to attend today's meeting, but we I know that their staff is in the audience and monitoring today's conversation. Do we have any one signed up for public comment? Okay all right. Next up is approval of the minutes. Can I have a motion to approve our previous meeting minutes? Councilmember Velez, seconded by vice chair Velasquez. Any objections to approving the meeting minutes? Okay. Wonderful. That passes

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unanimously. All right. Next up on our agenda is a presentation of the Texas environmental health association, Ann Thomas Edmondson meritous award to Marcel Elizondo. Wonderful and so I'd like to welcome president of the Texas environmental health association, Casey Roman, to present the Shea Thomas Edmondson emeritus award. Good morning. Thank you, madam chair. >> Board members. My name is Casey Roman. I am the current president of the Texas environmental health association . We boast over 1000 members and we encompass all things environmental health. We work with the state legislators. We provide the continuing education for this. And it is my honor to be here today. There are not many things that I will drive a seven hour road trip to do. This is one of them. So this award is only given to one person in the entire state of Texas. Each of our chapters is north, south, west, central Texas, gulf coast

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. They're only allowed to nominate one person for a basically a lifetime of service. And out of those finalists, our award committee selects one person in the state to receive this award, and that is the Thomas E Edmondson Ann meritorious service award. This year it was given to a member of our central Texas chapter right here. He has been a member of Austin public health. Actually for the entire career of 20 years. He has also been a member of tr for the past 20 years and he has served us greatly in all different levels. He has been a vice president, a president past president. He has worked with with department of state health services and coordinated with Texas A&M. He even received the national certificate of merit from our national organization, the national environmental health. He has been a guest presenter all over the state. And as I was reading his resume, I will say the one thing that impressed me the most is he has

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degrees from both Texas A&M and from UT. So he is both an aggie and a longhorn, quite an accomplishment for y'all, for the Texas, for sorry, for Austin public health. He's been an environmental health officer, environmental health supervisor, public health program manager, state standard Eid training officer and he is currently your division chief of environmental health services division. That is why he was selected to receive the Thomas E Edmondson meritorious service award and I am proud to present it to Marcel Elizondo of Austin public health . Thank you so much. >> Thank you very much. >> Thank you so much for the opportunity to share this honor with you. >> Congratulations, Marcel, would you like to say a few words. >> First of all, thank you. It's an honor to come and present it

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public health committee today. But I wanted to reiterate some of what president Roman said, and it's been a privilege and honor to serve the citizens of Austin for the past 20 years. And I wanted to use this opportunity to bring awareness to Austin public health, specifically environmental health, to what we do on a on a daily basis is protect the food supply for Austin and Travis county for swimming pool safety or vector mosquito programs, develop men for brand new restaurants and brand new pools. So we want to continue that work and continue to bring awareness to everything that we do on a daily basis for the citizens and residents of Austin. Thank you very much. Wonderful. >> Congratulations. Felicidades, it's so wonderful to start our meeting today with celebration and recognition of your hard work. And thank you for all that you do with Austin public health and for the city of Austin. Okay, colleagues, now we're going to go on to a briefing on the point in time count from the ending community homelessness coalition, echo. And we'll pool

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invite Mr. Mollica to the podium . Yeah good morning, chair. >> Council members. We're excited to be here today to provide this briefing. We're fortunate to have such a robust sort of evaluation of our point in time count. We're excited to show you the data, to answer any questions you might have and to make sure that we leave today with a good understanding of what the point in time count is and how it relates to the rest of our data sources that we have access to here. Luz within Austin, Travis county today. With me is our director of research and evaluation, Ann Akram al-turk and our manager of research and evaluation, Clare Burris. And they're going to give the presentation and we'll be available for questions afterwards. Do you mind if we pull up another chair to this and present from here? Is that all right. >> And as you get settled, colleagues, I know many of us have participated in the point

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in time count and it's a very unique and insightful way to participate. And I want to thank all the volunteers. I know it takes hundreds of volunteers throughout our city to help fulfill and perform the count. So it's an incredible effort. >> Yeah, I wanted to make sure before I left the podium that I thanked all the council members involved because we did. We have great council turnout. We have awesome turnout from our county commissioners. Many of our state representatives, of course, our mayor, and we're very fortunate for that kind of support and great volunteers throughout the central Texas. So thank you for that reminder. All right, great . >> I'm not sure if this is the. There you go. >> All right. Good morning, everyone. Thank you, Matt, for the introduction. And thank you to the public health committee

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members for being here. So just a brief overview of what aacom and I will be discussing today and stating your name. Yes, my name is Claire Burris and I'm a research and evaluation manager with echo. Brief outline of what we will be presenting today is on the screen. First, we will be starting with our point in time count estimates as the actual numbers, as the data that that has been long awaited. Then we will go into a discussion of the geography of unsheltered homelessness and how things have changed since the most recent count that we conducted prior to this year's in 2020. Then we will speak a little bit about what some of the subpopulations are, are some demographic and key population Ann groups within our homeless community and we will wrap up with a discussion

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of how we're responding to the homelessness crisis as a homelessness response system in Austin, Travis county. So to start us off here, our 2023 point in time count revealed 2374 total people experiencing homelessness using the point in time count methodology. 1266 of those individuals were identified sleeping unsheltered or in places not meant for human habitation. So this includes on the street in encampments in cars under our roadways. Et cetera. And 1108 of those individuals were identified as sleeping in our shelter system. So the point in time count in 2023 took place on in the early morning hours of January 28th in the entirety of the geographic region of Travis county. And

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Austin. It is important to note, before we move into the next slide that we did not conduct a unsheltered point in time counts in 2021 or in 2022 due to covid 19 Ann, but Wright that this year we did have a tremendous participation from our Austin community to get out there and really do our best as a community effort to count as many folks as we possibly could. And we had over 700 volunteers participate. Burt and we're very grateful to the Austin community for that. So here you will see again that a couple years are missing from this graphic that is because we did not conduct a point in time count in 2021 or 2022 due to covid 19. But looking back Mok in the point count point in time count data that we do have since 2017, you will see that generally there is

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a slight increase over time and that in 2020 we really had an exceptional year with a disproportionate Doggett proportion of folks counted unshare sheltered as opposed to sheltered and overall a large number of folks counted in 2020. But we show this to show more of a general trend over time as opposed to just comparing to 2020, because this larger time frame really shows a clearer story of what's going on in our community. A really important finding from this year's count is that the geographic distribution of where unsheltered folks are located has spread out from the city center since 2020. So here with this heat map, you can see that although there is still a constant tration of folks Wright around the Austin downtown core,

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that there is a larger spread Eid of folks also identified in north Austin, southwest Austin in there's just a higher concentration of folks farther from the city core here we have mapped out the 2023 count by city council district and have also shown in the table to the right how things have changed between 2022, 2023 with the percent change Paige of the proportion of individuals counted in the unsheltered population by city council district. So you'll see that the highest concentration of folks is have been

located in district nine, both in 2020 and 2023. As we all know, district nine encompasses a good amount of central Austin and so that's consistent with the heat map on the prior slide. But I think it

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is really important to note how geography distribution has affected the proportion of folks in on each city council district and how that change really looks at the at the district level. So you'll see here, for example, pool city council, district five had a had the largest percent increase of folks identified. Between 2020 and 2023. We're going to go a little bit into where some of these areas are that people have moved into and hopefully reveal a little bit more of why that could be the case. But this shows some pretty clear insights. Is that just looking at the proportion within each district doesn't tell the full story of how things are changing in a dynamic way in the community. We so one of the things that we looked into in

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our analysis this year is the geographic distribution of folks that are located in city owned city of Austin owned parks nature preserves and greenbelts using city of Austin public data on the geographic regions that are covered Eid and in 2020, about. 5.2% of unsheltered individuals were counted in these regions. And in 2023 that number increase just to 13.6. So we're seeing that although the number of individuals that we counted in the 2023 point in time count is slightly smaller than in the 2020 count, a larger concentrate of the individuals counted are are sleeping unsheltered in on park lands and areas owned by the city of Austin. Ann so just really to break down that difference as a

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proportion of all unsheltered homelessness about three times as many people were living specifically in the city of Austin owned greenbelts and nature preserves and parks. In 2023 versus 2020. So some of the key takeaways here when it comes to this mapping analysis is that in 2023, we had a smaller proportion of people counted in the central parts of Austin, Ann city council districts, three and nine saw the largest percent decrease in the number of people counted at and city council districts one, five and six saw the largest percent increase in the number of people counted. Also so important to note yet again here that a larger proportion of unsheltered folks were living in secluded areas like city owned greenbelts and nature preserves. In 2023 versus

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2020. Just a note here to the side. In 2020, there are about 34% of people counted in those central Pichette sections. Versus 27% in 2023. So still a concentration Ann of folks in the city. Core but not to the same extent that it once was. So honing in here, not just on geographic differences, but more broadly looking at subpopulations and demographics . Bartz there are a few key differences to note in how things have changed from 2020 to 2023. So zo for age, a smaller percentage of people in this year's count were under the age of 25. Relative. To 2020, a smaller percentage of people were under the age of 18. In

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2023 versus 2020. And a smaller percentage of people counted were considered unofficial Eid youth in 2023. So we're seeing a decrease in homelessness within our youth populations as a higher percentage of males were counted in 2023 versus 2020. We have always seen a slightly disproportion Janet representation of men and boys in our population experiencing homelessness and that seems to be slightly exacerbated in this year's count. As for race and ethnicity, there is a disproportionate number of members of the black community that are experiencing homelessness in Austin and Travis county. However, it seems that the percentage that that group comprises has decreased slightly from 2020 to 2023. We are seeing in turn a larger

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percentage of hispanic and latinx people counted in our population experiencing homelessness. Bartz since 2020 and a larger proportion of Asians and native Americans that proportion has doubled from 2020 to 2023, although it still comprised a very small minority of the overall population. We're also seeing a slightly smaller percentage of veterans counted in 2023 relative to 2020, but hovering around approximately 10% of the overall population. Ann counted. >> Thank you, Claire, and thank you. Council members for having us today to present on Pichette data. My name is Akram al-turk. I'm the director of research and evaluation at echo. I'm going to present a couple more things about the point in time count and then shift a little bit to some other data that we have that we wanted to show you all

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another question that volunteers asked during the unsheltered count is whether this was someone's first time experiencing homelessness. So as you can see here from this chart, about 42% of people on that night said that this was their first time experiencing homelessness. This volunteer was also asked people whether they where they first experienced homelessness. So as you can see here, almost three

out of four people, or about 75% of those who were unsheltered in Austin first experienced unsheltered homelessness in Austin, another 1 in 6 16% first experienced their homelessness in Texas. But outside of Austin and then the remaining first experienced homelessness outside of Texas and chair, chair. I want to oh, could I ask a question right quick? >> Yeah, sure. We hear kind of, I think, anecdotal Italy that like, you know, Waco sends all

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their you know that this kind of like that that Texas in general and that other cities will kind of ship their homeless folks to us with a bus ticket and like you know what I mean 50 bucks or something like that. This would tend to suggest otherwise or any kind of other kind of thoughts on on that. I mean, my sense would be that it's we have a native homeless. Problem is that what the data shows? Yes I think that's exactly what the data shows. >> I think it would dispel some of those myths that we hear often. And one of the other things, as you can see from this slide, is that that number has actually gone up. The number of people who first experienced homelessness in Austin in 2020, in the in the unsheltered count, it was 63% of folks were said that they were first first experienced homelessness in Austin, Ann, in 2023. That number increased to 75, almost. So that's a almost an 11 percentage point increase. Luz

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in the last three years. So is there any data or information that would suggest otherwise? >> I would suggest again, setting aside the kind of anecdotes and the kind of stories that you hear that people are intentionally, you know, being sent to Austin or that, you know, for whatever reason kind of come to Austin, that there's some kind of like a magnet effect or anything like that? >> Not that I know of. And in fact, our administrative data shows something very similar to what the Pitt data shows. We ask on the coordinated assessment, which is our centralized prioritization tool, where people experience their first homelessness or first experience of homelessness or sorry, we ask, we ask a different question on the coordinated assessment. We ask people where they last were permanently housed and a majority of folks say that they were housed last in Austin. And so that's another piece of data that would confirm what we're seeing here with the point in time count. >> And that question is part of the coordinated assessment when we all take them and put them on

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the list and stuff. >> Correct? Wright on the by name list. All right. >> Thank you very much. Appreciate that. Yeah, no problem. >> Council member, the other thing the other takeaway here is that in 2020, about 40% of those who were unsheltered and 39% were homeless for the first time in 2023, that number increased to 42. So again, an I think the key takeaways from this slide is that the number of

people who are experiencing homelessness for the first time has gone up and the number of people who experienced their first Burt experience of homelessness in Austin has also gone up. So now that we've presented Eid data from the point in time count, you know, we want to shift a little bit to present data supplementary and alternative data sources that we think complement and help us better understand the scope of homelessness in the full. This

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is a condensed slide deck, but in the full slide deck that we presented a couple of weeks ago, that's on our website, we do talk about the limitations of the point in time count and we're happy to address those in the q&a. But because there are limitations to the point in time, count the unsheltered count, we think it's important to present some of this alternative data. And so we do have supplementary data from the Travis county sheriff's office. And here one of the main takeaways here or the main piece of information that we have is that on that night, there were 700 individuals, about 700 individuals in Travis county jail, likely to be experiencing homelessness. These folks would not have been counted in the point in time. Count the these 700 individuals accounted for 31% of the total population in the jail that night. And from speaking to the sheriff's office, this is the highest percentage that they've seen in the last 10 or 15 years. Of the

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699 individuals, 67% were people of color, 86% were males, and 50% were between the ages of 17 and 36. So here, I think the one takeaway from these data are that people experiencing homelessness in jail are more likely to be male than the general population experiencing homelessness. And they're more likely to be younger than the general population experiencing homelessness. So again, because of the limitations of the point count we have for the last two years been measuring the prevalence of homelessness, using administrative data. And we've been updating that data on a monthly basis. We count people who take the coordinated assessment Burt, which is our local housing prioritization tool, who report living unsheltered and who have had any interaction in the homelessness response system in the previous six months for us, this estimate better reflects

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the true scope of homelessness in Austin, Travis county. And because we have much more detailed information in our administrative data, we're able to address people's needs in a much more targeted way. So if you're interested in seeing what our dashboard estimates show and learn more about the differences, which I know you all have discussed, here are some links that might be helpful. Now we're going to shift a little bit to showing some data that helps us understand and how the many service

providers in the homelessness response system are addressing homelessness in our community. Two important, important pieces of information allow us to do that are how many people exit homelessness to permanent housing and what is the capacity in our system to house people? So we'll start with the former and in this figure, what you'll see is that you'll see the number of people who by year who exit and move into permanent housing, who exit homelessness, into permanent

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housing. So one main takeaway from this is that there's been a general upward trend of the that we're seeing here of the number of people who are exiting homelessness to permanent housing. So I'll focus on 2022, 788 people in 2022 required minimal housing assistance to move into permanent housing. This means that they would provide services or stayed in a shelter and were then able to move into permanent housing on their own and then those represented by the Orange or purple bars were able to were provided more intensive permanent housing support by the system. So so, one thing to note here is that more people moved into permanent supportive housing than those 241 folks in the Orange bar than in any other year that we've that we've been tracking this move ins into rapid rehousing did go down in 2022. But we anticipate with new rapid rehousing resources coming

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online at the end of 2022 and 2023, that that number should go back up. We also often get asked about our capacity, you know, to house people. How many units do we have in the system to house people. And this figure shows that capacity. Again, the general trend is that the system's capacity, which reflects new resources in the community, has increased in recent years. This is notable with our this is most notable with our capacity to house people in permanent supportive housing, which is a as you know, is a critical intervention that supports those with the most acute needs in the community and those who have been chronically homeless as and one of the I'll point this out. So the Orange bar here is our permanent supportive housing capacity. As you can see, it has gone up considerably in the last few years. And that is a is a positive trend. One thing to

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note here is that our rapid rehousing capacity number, which is shown in purple, has gone down. But as per our hud requirements, the reason for that is that this shows us the number of people who were actually housed Eid in rapid rehousing in the night of the pit count. In reality, the system's capacity to house people in rapid, rapid rehousing is more than double what is shown here. And so because the number of rapid rehousing projects are relatively new, people housed in rapid rehousing should go up throughout throughout this coming year. So to summarize the key takeaways about our system in our

our efforts to address homelessness is that more people exited in 2022 than in any other year, especially in permanent supportive housing. The system's capacity to house people in has increased 60, almost since 2019

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and 14% in the last year. The system's emergency shelter capacity has increased 28% since 2019 and 20% in the last year. So wrapping up, we just want to discuss one more piece of data that makes us more optimistic that our capacity to house those most in need will increase in the coming years as a result of more resources in the community, especially ones dedicated to capital projects. We anticipate more site based psa coming online in the next three years in contrast to tenant based, site based psa as the name flies, our units dedicated to psa units, housing and wraparound services at one site, providing people exiting homelessness with community and with ready access to the services that they need. We anticipate more than 1000 of these units will be available by the end of by the end of 2025 and approximately a quarter to a

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third of those will hopefully be ready by the end of this year. So again, as we mentioned earlier, we really want to thank all the more than 700 volunteers who helped make the unsheltered count possible. Knell as you all know, this is a massive undertaking and collecting pit data could not be possible. It would not be possible without all of the volunteers who came out not just to count, but to make care kits, lead teams, section teams, and then and actually count people. And I think that's it. And we will. Thank you. Yeah. Thank you. >> Colleagues questions. Who would like to kick us off? >> Well, thank you for letting me join you today and thank you all for all the data and it's when I talk to people whether it's a district five or throughout the city, you know, I, I tell them homelessness is the hardest challenge that we face. >> This so many facets of this

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challenge and the unique needs of every individual who's out there. There's no one solution. And that's what makes this so difficult. Of course, housing is a big piece of it, but even as you saw and, you know, looking at your data, you know, about 8% of people we put in housing Singh do end up back on the streets. So it's there is no panacea for I wanted to pick up a little bit where councilmember Zavala left off and it's on the regionality of our homeless population, Ann and, you know, I was looking at Williamson county's point in time count and their number for a county that's half the size of Travis county, they counted 96 people and that's 4% of what our count is. And so I am trying to figure out , you know, I have trouble believing that there. That only

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four you know, that such a small fraction of the homeless population we have here is not in part due to, you know, someone, let's say in Round Rock or even Georgetown who you service provider. Well, a lack of service providers in those communities. They do say, hey, if you want to get the services, the city of Austin is probably your best bet. And so while when we ask somebody where they first experienced homelessness, they say Austin but really that could mean any of the surrounding Austin area and the only reason I bring that up is to figure out how we better coordinate it with our surrounding communities, whether it's cities like cedar park, like Round Rock, Georgetown, Ann, bastrop. But also our surrounding county counties. And I know we've had conversations about that. So is there anything we can do to help those coordinate efforts?

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Because if we are able to identify and serve individuals where they are, I think will be more successful. Yeah no, sorry. >> Thank you. Councilmember for that question. I think like many issues, homelessness is definitely best solved at a regional level. I mean, we're definitely seeing, you know, in most large Paige communities across the country that have large populations of people experiencing homelessness, whether that be on the west coast or even in larger Texas cities. Certainly when the region when the area around the very urban core of, you know, of Austin starts to become unaffordable, you start to see your unsheltered population rise and in communities. And so certainly similar to transportation, I imagine Ann food insecurity, these are best solved on a regional level. I think we've had we've certainly

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worked with our partners in Williamson county on initiatives currently. Rainey echoes role as a as an organization. Ann is to serve Austin and Travis county. I will say we have had conversations about what it would mean to expand the size of our geographic scope. So the what's called our continuum of care to include other areas of central Texas and those conversations, I think are ongoing and support will be needed if there is a decision made to move in that direction. Because I think there's a bit of a resource scarcity in those areas as well or a lack of a commitment to providing the type of resources necessary to solve homelessness in those communities. And so as those conversations progress and as we move, hopefully towards a more regional approach, we'll certainly be be calling on on council, council members to help reach out and bridge both

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communication, build relationship snipes help to identify areas is where there can be more and better coordination with those surrounding counties changing gears a little bit, looking at the that regional shift that obviously you mentioned district five, 135% increase. >> I think if you talk to a lot of district five residents, they would agree and say that's exactly what we've seen. Do you have any anecdotal knell data? Otherwise, just why you think that that area has, you know, if you look at your your little heat map, it's pretty centered around, you know, Ben white, where eastgate manchaca area. Any, any guess or, or just

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thought of why that is. >> I mean anecdotally I mean, I can say just, you know, we're seeing higher rates of criminalization in our central core downtown area. And I think folks are leaving that area. Those areas you certainly saw a little bit of that up in district four as well. And you know, the 183 sort of area there, and I think we've dealt with that where we're hearing anecdotally from neighborhood associations and other community partners that they're seeing folks in more neighborhood parts of the city than than before. Shaw and I think that the data is clearly demonstrating that that we have and anecdotally, I think just in talking to community members, we're hearing the same thing. >> It raises the question in my mind of the most effective way.

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To help serve those who are unhoused is a is a wide geographic dispersion better or concentrations better so we can focus resources? How do we think about how we can most effectively? I mean, obviously, the most effective thing is to not have the population at all, have them in housing. But as we try to get there, how what do we want that map to look like? Yeah, I mean, I think to your to your first point, we don't want there to be any data points on that map. >> And so as we work towards that as a community, I think we know that that concentrate of people experiencing homelessness are is traumatic for folks to be in and around a large concentration of folks experiencing homelessness. And so that has played out, I think, across the country in a lot of different ways. And so I think delivering services, whether it be housing services, emergency

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services such as emergency shelter or outreach to folks is best done in in the places that they're at and not ask them to move to other places to get that resource. And so to the best we can deliver the resources that folks are asking us for in in the sites that they're at is the most effective and sort of

trauma informed way to approach to approach getting people that the help that they need. >> And to that point, you know, district five has a provider sunrise who does navigate Ann services day center services. Are those services being offered really anywhere else in the city? Do you know? >> Yeah. So we definitely have those services offered in different parts of the city. Sunrise great partner really has done a wonderful job of providing access to the homelessness response system from their site. And so that's a really key aspect, is that

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they're not just providing emergency services at at sunrise , they're also providing access to these housing resources that are coming online by doing coordinated assessments. They're connecting folks to benefit S there and they're doing a lot of great work from that perspective. Thus I think they see a lot of folks coming to them for those services because Luz, they're able to connect folks to the system. We definitely have people doing that great work in other parts of the city. The Austin street outreach collaborative, which was formed about a year ago with a very generous grant from the saint David's foundation, has outreach and engagement happening in many different parts of the community, including much of the eastern crescent area, parts of north northeast Austin, Ann, and centrally downtown through partners like urban alchemy and we can now. And so those services are offered in other places as well. Of course we have city funded programs through integral care like the

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host, the host team and the path team. Also doing, you know, doing that work and providing those types of services. There Shaw I would say that the one thing that's unique Mok very unique about sunrise is that it's a site specific service. And so, yes, that, that, you know, the other services tend to be more mobile. Yeah. And that's, that's something that I know I've, we've talked a bit about members of on the dais and Eid. >> I think as we approach this budget and as we approach the larger conversation, we need to find more spaces throughout the city that are site specific where individuals can come. And it's a real chicken and egg problem because on the one hand I can completely understand communities who say, you know, if you locate this here, it's going to be a strain on our community. On the other hand,

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until we have many of them, that can be the case. But if you have 300 people at a site every day because we have one of them, or if we have ten of them and it's 25 or 30 people, that's a very manageable traffic that that really doesn't have an impact on on, you know, the broader community. But those that are serving has a huge impact. And so how we can find areas dispersed through the city I think is one of our greatest challenges and shortcomings and something that I'm going to be pushing for. And I just see a

huge, huge need. So that's not really a question, but it's just a well, I think, councilmember, what I'd like to say, too, that I appreciate that that perspective of and certainly the advocacy that that will take here on the dais and with your colleagues. >> I think one of the things that's critical, important. To

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the system as a whole is to ensure that folks don't have to continue to show up at that site in order to get housed. And so I think that the more housing we can bring online, the more the more options we can provide folks for permanent housing options will ensure that those sites can stay at 25 or 30 folks, because I can tell you that long ago, that's how sunrise started. That was not the volume of folks showing up for the services there. And so if we can manage to create a system where folks have geographic options as to where they can go for services to get housed, and then we have housing and the throughput there, then they're only there. They're only showing up temporarily and we can keep the numbers of folks that need to access those types of services down in those areas . >> That's all I have for now. But thank you very much. >> Thank you. Councilmember vela . Just actually, just start off

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with a quick comment. >> I participated in the in the point in time count for the first time this year. And it was a very eye opening experience. Definitely the most and longest personal interactions that I've had with with folks experiencing homelessness and again, like just about anything, it changes your perception Ann of people. And I look forward to it again. But again, it was a very eye opening, very revealing time. You know, with, and I just wanted to get y'all's perspective on, on this kind of you I guess tension or trade off that that we're we're looking at right now the balance between funding emergency shelter and funding permanent supportive housing. That's always kind of

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been a struggle, you know, which one is the priority? Where do we invest our limited dollars. Over the last year and a half or so that I've been on council, I give you my point of view, and then I'd like to hear y'all's. My sense is that the last time that people spend fully on sheltered, you know, living in the creek or in, you know, under the bridge or something like that, that just seems to be very bad for people. And I feel like you see people really kind of descend, you know, both from a mental and physical standpoint, whereas emergency shelter for its, you know, limitations seems to stabilize those folks. And Eid kind of let them kind of catch their breath and open the door to, you know, services case management, those kinds of things like that. And so, again,

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I don't want to but my sense is that emergency shelter is important in kind of building and pulling people that first step of pulling people out of a homelessness and kind of preparing them to a certain extent for permanently supportive housing from a situation where they may have been, you know, just zero expectations, you know, very, very, you know, zero rules. You know, it's kind of a good transition period. How do you all see it? You know, again, thinking about the opening of the marshaling yard, thinking about, you know, those kinds of steps like that and the amount of money that we're going to have to put into it. How do you all see that that balance? Yeah. So we've been living this tension right along with you, all council members. >> I appreciate the question. Councilmember vela. So clearly in our community, we there is a need for both more emergency shelter and for permanent supportive housing. And both interventions, the need for

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emergency shelter is exacerbated and highlighted by the by the ordinances. We have criminalizing homelessness in our community and so when we have people who are facing you know, we saw you saw the data about the Travis county jail folks, almost 700 people. That's a failure to on our system that we had 700 folks in the Travis county jail the night of the point in time count that came in, reported experiencing homelessness. So for those 700 folks, if you had asked them, would would it be better to go to an emergency shelter or to a jail? And they had a choice about that. I'm certain that they would they would choose the emergency shelter option. What I'll say is in communities across the country that have not invested in permanent supportive housing to the scale that they need to people see very long stays in emergency shelter. And ultimately you see folks getting frustrated with emergency shelter and going back to the street emergency shelter, especially congregate. Emergency shelter is not the solution for

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that. Many people desire to end their homelessness, as we know that both anecdotally and through the data, some of the data that wasn't presented today showed that on the Pichette count night that our emergency shelters had a 70% utilization rate. So so you had 30% open beds in the emergency shelter system at the height of some pretty aggressive criminalization happening. And quite frankly, if those of you who are out there on that night know it was raining and cold and so if that's the case and looking at scaling up more congregate emergency shelter, there really needs to be an important investigation and sort of audit around what types of shelter we're providing to folks and what, you know, how we're meeting the needs of people and are they going to want to stay there? And is there is it delivering the type of service or are they getting housing from going into that shelter? Are

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they being moved through the shelter and into more permanent housing options is key. I want to say this, too, and make really clear that we have one of the lowest rates of permanent supportive housing resource of any community of our size in the country. It's not even close, and we need to build out permanent supportive housing capacity. It needs to be a priority. And that's a hard thing to do in a very hyper political environment such as this, because it takes time. This year you saw the slide. We're going to we're going to have ribbon cuttings on close to 500, 400 plus units of permanent supportive housing that didn't happen this year. That's been years and years in the making. Leadership like the homeless strategy office. Certainly, Diana, has been critical, critical role in continuing the charge on building permanent supportive housing in that community. In this community. And without that investment and without that leadership, our

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emergency shelter system will not function well. And so we need to continue that investment. And so when we ask, like where should the money go? Should it go here or there? Or it really needs to go to fund the entire the continuum of services for people experiencing homelessness. That includes emergency shelter. But it's not exclusive to that. And that includes a permanent housing option because the folks that we house permanent in our community will not come back at at rates that are high to our shelter system or to our streets. And that's the end goal, the lasting solution to ending homelessness in our community. Everything else is just, you know, squeezing air in a balloon back and forth or moving folks around or moving them into shelter. They're coming back to the street. We need more permanent supportive housing so it can not be an either or scenario. And we need to see greater investments in permanent supportive housing . >> I just wanted to add a little bit to follow up on Matt's

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point. I think we certainly need a little bit of both or we need both emergency shelter and permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing. I think that the thing that one of the things that Matt pointed out is thinking about long term impact and the long term outcomes and the research shows across the country, but also here locally, that the outcomes for folks who are in permanent supportive housing, who are in who have rapid rehousing resources as well, is better in the long run than if they just stay in emergency shelter now. So I think that if we pair emergency shelter with rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing, that is, I think that's a good approach. But again, I just especially given that we have a high number of people here in Austin, Travis county, experiencing

chronic homelessness, we have a the rate of chronicity here in our in our community is higher than it is in many other communities. And because of that, I think we need services and interventions that

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provide wraparound services, which is what permanent supportive housing provides. And so I think that's another reason that we really need to increase our capacity for psh. I appreciate that and I know this predated my time on council, but I know there was a debate about kind of a legal campsite that the city would open and run, possibly multiple. >> And I remember the Diana gray discussing that trade off where it's really expensive and difficult to get something like that set up. And maybe we want to focus more on the permanent supportive housing. And I can say I completely understand that. I will say just as someone who's out in the community all the time talking to people, talking to constituents who, you know, they they want people off the streets. You know, I mean, just in a very like from from multiple perspectives, you know,

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both from a hostile perspective and from a very caring perspective. You know, there's multiple people that I talk to that are, you know, bleeding heart liberals as bleeding heart liberals can get. And it just breaks our heart to see, you know, people in these conditions every day. And it just throws off their kind of, you know, their mental and kind of, you know, spiritual place, you know, and that seeing people struggling like that all the time is very difficult for a lot of members of our community. But I do appreciate the, the balance and the trade offs that you all are talking about. A couple of other just follow ups on the, the, the coordinated assessment is essentially what the echo maintains or kind of a could you talk a little bit about that? I've heard people talk about it. I'm never, you know, 100% kind of heard it, explained exactly what it is you know, how it came about, those kinds of things like that. Sure. So the

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coordinated assessment is the intake tool that is used to prioritize folks experiencing homelessness for permanent housing opportunities as they open in our community. >> So the coordinated assessment is one element of what we call the coordinated entry system. So when someone is experiencing homelessness in the community, we as a homelessness response system make our best attempt to get them to the front door of our system for housing. And that front door is coordinated entry. So when somebody goes through the coordinated entry process, they will be screened for our, you know, whether diversion might be an option for them. Diversion is a basically a way for us to reconnect someone to housing using much lower level of resources. Usually this is only a sustained pool option if

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the person is not long term chronically homeless, but maybe has been experiencing homelessness for a very short period of time. So we do that screening and then if the person is unable or ineligible really for diversion, then we go through our coordinated assessment process. There's also a housing choice component to our coordinated entry system where we speak with people about what types of programs they might be interested in and what might be a good fit for them based on lots of components of eligibility and what their history and identity and experience is. So our coordinated assessment here locally is something that we have spent a lot of time and energy on developing. There are a lot of tools out there that can be used as an intake tool, but we have chosen to locally develop a tool that is specific

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to the needs and experiences of people here in our community experiencing homelessness. So it's a prioritization tool in general. Knell higher prioritization score results in a quicker connection to permanent housing resources as they open. But I think to tie it back to some of other topics, we've been discussing an expansion Ann of those permanent housing resources is allows us to keep up with the rate of people in flowing to homelessness. And right now, now we're at a point where our system, with the capacity that we have even though we have been making tremendous strides to increase the capacity so that people can be connected to those resources more quickly, we can't keep up with the inflow right now. Emergency shelter, although it may very well improve health

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outcomes and stability for folks is not going to decrease homelessness. And so I think that's really, really key in the conversation. For us to consider about how we can get people connected to permanent housing more quickly. >> So from, from echo's perspective, then we are still net adding numbers to our overall homelessness count. In other words, we've got more people new to the system than are, you know, exiting the system. >> Yeah, I think that's, that's correct. Yeah. And I think one thing to mention about the coordinated assessment councilmember it's a great question is it's a scarcity tool that we're using that hud requires us to use. I mean, we don't we would love to get to a point where we don't have to do coordinated assessments with anyone because really what that says is we have too many people for too fewer resource. So we're

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going to prioritize which folks are the sickest out on the street to try to get them housed before they die. >> And about about how many folks. And let me actually back up just a second. So would most people experiencing homelessness on the street right now be in the coordinated entry system? >> So that's a really good question. I think I'm going to let Akram or Claire take that. But but I think one thing that our data is showing us is that we have similar to what happens with the point in time count when you have more data collectors, you start to get more data. And what we're seeing in our in our administrative data that's on our dashboards is the number of people experiencing homelessness is increasing month over month. So we do monthly counts of unsheltered homelessness, but that has some to do with closing the delta between known and unknown homelessness because we have more data collectors out there doing coordinated assessments, you're more effectively counting them. Basically, that's not the only impact. I'll say that there's certainly, as you saw from the data that Akram presented, we

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have more people experiencing first time homelessness at a higher rate too. So I don't know Akram or Claire, if you have anything to add and as you all add to, I just want to flag, this would probably be our last question because we do need to move on to the next briefing. >> Thank you. Yeah >> My first thought, which Matt essentially said is we don't know what we don't know about people who are not in our coordinated entry system and are not engaging with services in our community. Our best estimate for the need of folks who are in our coordinated entry system and are still awaiting permanent housing placement is our dashboard estimate for the number of people experiencing homelessness. >> Final thoughts? Yeah I mean, I would like to just quickly say thank you, chair, for that opportunity. >> You know, as we sit here and we talk about something that I think has become really political in nature here in Austin, Travis county, and quite frankly, across the country, I want to make it really clear that from a political standpoint

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that no matter what political party you identify with over the last 15 to 20 years, we've failed to do much make much progress on ending homelessness in our community. We've had failed policies on the federal level going back multiple administrations throughout time . We've seen state governments take this up in ways that are not helpful or impactful. And we've seen this. You know, city governments really step in local city governments to support the homelessness response system in ways that that's never been the case before. And I want to commend this city and certainly this council and previous councils who have stepped in to make investments in this area that are going to be critical to the long term success of ending homelessness in Austin. Travis county. Now that's the piece of this in council member Bella mentioned it. This is a long game right now. This is this is something that we're going to work on and have to make investments that we're not going to see right away. But there's things that we can do to manage

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public spaces better, to help with the community members that are concerned about Wright, the folks that they're seeing on the street, because everybody's concerned about that. So I do want to make sure that we're that we're keeping our you know, we're doing the best to keep our eye on the long game while addressing the public space issues. And lastly, I want to make something really clear. You know, we've been working here since the beginning. And of the creation of the homeless strategy office here. And we had an initial homeless strategy officer who didn't last very long in that position. We've had Diana and her role for a period of time, and she's built out a team, and that team has worked working extremely well and hard with our community members, not just our service providers, not just echo, but with people experiencing homelessness in our community. The work that Diane has done and her team has been exemplary. She's been a wonderful partner and someone that I think where we wouldn't be where we are right now in this community without her leadership and the dedication that she's shown year over year,

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night after night, having difficult conversations, showing up in spaces where she's not the most popular person in the room. I know we all know what that's like. And standing her ground on on on delivering what she thinks and what we all know is best for this community in her role. So I want to just make sure that we say as a partner echo been really fortunate to have the homeless strategy office in the role that they're playing and we really appreciate the support that council's provided her. So thank you. Thank you. And on that note, let's invite miss Diana gray to the podium for her briefing. >> Thank you again, echo, for being here. I do have questions for you by reserve them to keep today's meeting flow going. But if you all can or Amelia, if my team will follow up with you all offline for my questions. But miss Diana gray, thank you. >> And I was already going to give a big thanks to echo and talk about how smart they were even before they gave kudos. But

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thank you so much for that. I really you know, we sometimes get asked about the data and we always point to echo as the holder of this really important data, administrative data source that that they have increasingly used and really thoughtful and nuanced ways to try to go deeper. So that we understand what's happening in this population. So I will understanding that we have a little bit of a time limitation go fairly quickly today. Shea and we just have a few topics to cover. I wanted to give a quick update on the heal initiative of talk about the ongoing shelter assessment, which I think will address many of the questions that you have rightly raised today. Touch on the process for the marshaling yard and

temporary use as a as a sheltering facility. The restoration of downtown shelter, bed capacity and related to all of those, some of the reallocation of arpa funds that is allowing some of those items

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to move forward. Yesterday morning we initiated the heal initiative intervention in our 13th encampment on the violet crown trail along the Gaines creek greenbelt. So that work is ongoing. We had enumerated, I will tell you, 85 individuals in that encampment, so it's quite large. We and so we will be relocating people through this week and have a report early next week about the number of people that accept transfer into shelter. One of the ways that we're able to do that is that, as you may recall, we have doubled or are doubling occupancy in our bridge shelters. The first one is north bridge, which the city operates. So we're going from 65 to about 130 beds so that we can accommodate this encampment and future individuals. The prior to this relocation have over the course of the heal initiative,

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moved about 486 people from high priority encampments into to bridge shelters. And I want to pause and talk about what we mean by high priority encampments. It's not acceptable for people to be living unsheltered under any conditions . But in order to think about how we use our city resources to address this issue thoughtfully and based on data and really understanding how we use our resources, most effectively, the team has developed a tool where we assess health and safety risks in these encampments that range from the health and safety of the people in the encampment to the impacts on resources, infrastructure and neighbors who may be nearby. So we have thus far permanently rehoused 186 individuals. As one of the things that I want to point out is that every time we have been briefing council, one of the

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things that we're noting is that the time from entry into shelter to moving into permanent housing has been creeping up and that is reflective of because we are using rapid rehousing, which is tenant based meaning people have rental assistance, they have a case manager, but they have to find a unit. Our challenge in finding units in the community has increased. It's always been tough, but that's something that we will be working on with echo as a primary partner to really ensure that we can get access to more of those scattered site units and also is an area in which site based housing. So a brick and mortar housing development is really important because those units are dedicated to the population. Ann so we're not having to negotiate with landlords in quite the same way. As we've noted before. Shaw when offered transfer into bridge shelter, the rate of

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acceptance of people is about 85. So most folks will come into shelter. I do think that one thing we want to signal is that we acknowledge that there is some tension between the relative security, safety, privacy of having one's own room and serving more people by doubling occupancy. We may see some shift in the rates of acceptance, but we have made a determined nation that on balance, the need to get people into shelter calls for us to take this approach for the time being. So last year, as we or council approved the emergency shelters, which brought urban alchemy on to operate the arch and Austin area. Urban league in to operate south bridge council asked us to do an assessment of our shelter system and so that assessment is initially really looking at our year round system

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with additional planning to come for weather based shelter or cold weather shelter, potential Leslie, heat shelter and then with the ifc, that passed last week, we will also be giving some special attention to the question of geographic dispersion Ann and giving council some outline of what we anticipate costs could look like were expansion of shelter beds in our future. Collectively and so our staff has been working on this since Janet sherry. We have spent significant amounts of time doing engagement with stakeholders, orders from people experiencing homelessness to service providers that are actually providing shelter themselves, other service providers and other community stakeholders. We are now at a stage where we have a number of preliminary recommends options that are being refined and staff is are now sharing those with a

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wide variety of stakeholders to get additional feedback and expect it to advance recommendation burns and observations to council by the end of the month. I do want to note that when we're looking at a community shelter system, the city does not own or control the entire system. We own a significant number of the facilities where shelter beds are found, but not all of them. And we are not the only funder, nor should we be. And so we've been asked to make recommendations, set a vision and priorities. But in order to achieve or execute on all of those recommendations, that will not and should not be only a city, a city effort. The timing, I think, is important because we have been asked to do this before. We're solicit the emergency contracts for the arch and south bridge. And so as we bring these recommendations forward to council in Ann in by

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the end of the month and in July, we would then be positioned to go ahead and issue those rfps. As I should note also that one of the requests that council made was that as part of our recommendations, we give specific ideas about how we might improve our contracting process and the scope, the requirements. Et cetera. In our shelter contracts to improve the functioning of the system. Since we are one of the largest funders, if not the largest funder. So while the final recommendations are forthcoming, we wanted to share some emerging themes with you and those fall into three categories. One is, and I think will not be surprised that we certainly see a need to increase the capacity of our shelter system. The second is that as a system, we really need to look at efficiencies and coordination. How are we working across individual pool shelters and in referral pathways? Et cetera. To

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make sure that we're using those resources most effectively and then specifically, what do we want to see in our across the system in individual shelters to make sure that the quality of service delivery and effectiveness is as high as it can be? We certainly have a gap in general population shelter beds. So single adults experiencing homelessness being the largest, most the largest population Ann and the population that on a per capita basis probably has the smallest or the least access to shelter beds. However however, we also know that when continue to hear that we need to pay special attention to special particular populations, women Eid people who identify as women, people with medical needs, lgbtq population and that particularly in the in the face of a scenario in which we don't have shelter beds for everyone, we probably will be looking at some prioritization for particularly vulnerable populations. And then

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the question of geographic diversity, that's been brought up here this evening or this morning excuse me. It feels like a long day already, guys. From the system perspective, we really right now have a scenario in which most shelters maintain individual wait lists. And so people who are seeking shelter or if, say, our community health paramedics find someone in the community who really needs to be inside and they're kind of faced with going to a particular shelter operator and asking for access or to be put on a waiting list. And we really want to, you know, explore ways that we can do a better job of that, that will both make sure that people get in who most need it. And you know, our hope is that we really maximize the bed utilization Ann in existing shelters. We need to have diversion and rapid exit services at at all entry points. So one of the things that you saw in echo's slides was that number of people who access

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access permanent housing with what is called their minimal housing resources. So you spent a little bit of time in shelter . Maybe you had some help with deposit money. You know, utility. Et cetera. Those people who can be rehoused quickly. We really need to lean into that space because, you know, I think councilmember vela, you spoke to the longer someone is shelter unsheltered and frankly homeless at all, the barriers accrue to Wright. You know, their health deteriorates, their situation deteriorates. So we're really looking at with our partners, how do we make sure that there are some flexible funding accessible to our shelter provider hours so that once when someone presents or comes in, if we can get them out quickly, we do it. And then I think I want to just talk about out for operations. We continue to need to be low barrier shelter, you know, really we the restrictions that we have in shelter are

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related to the safety of occupants and staff. But we make it as easy for people to come in as possible. An example of that is pets. You know, there are a lot of people who won't come into shelter if they have to be separate from their pet, from their pets or even from their partners. In cases where we have couple days, we may need to accommodate for that. Finally, you know, one of the areas that we've seen a real impact of the labor market tightening is in our shelter system. They have traditionally been very, you know, low wage entry level jobs. I do want to acknowledge that many of our shelter providers have responded. They've had to the market by raising that that compensation level. But the combination Ann of adequate compensation and training for staff that are in, you know, difficult environment Bartz is really important to drive down turnover, which in turn impacts

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the experience of folks in shelter. Shaw so speaking to the ratio of shelter beds to our, our, our population overall, when our staff looked at our total shelter portfolio Pio and compared it to using the point in time count numbers, we are on the low end of the number of beds, shelter beds compared to our overall shelter. Homeless population excuse me. To Matt's point, we are also on the low end of permanent housing compared to our shelter, our homeless population. So I think it it points out sort of a relatively poorly resourced system in both cases. So while we are working on these the recommendations and the plans for longer term shelter, we do have two temporary facilities that either have come before council already or are expected

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to come before council in the coming weeks. The marshaling yard, which is, you know, is an Austin convention center facility that was completed late last year, has been proposed as a temporary shelter facility. We released an rfp may 12th, have received proposals under that rfp evaluation should be complete this week and expect to have a recommendation Ann mid next week for an award right now is expected to be on the July 20th age for the ask of those of the offerors was to shelter up to 300 individuals. So 24 hour shelters so folks are not asked to leave during the day and to detail what the service array looks like. Everything from basic services such as meals, hygiene facilities, et cetera. To case management and supportive services is how they will advance safety and security

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on site and I think importantly also because of the location of this transport station, to ensure that individuals Ralls don't have to go on foot to the closest the closest bus stop necessarily, but that we would have some sort of a shuttle that helped folks get to transportation Ann lines and potentially to frequent destination Luz for the guests that are served there. The anticipated term is for one year. We did immediately after the announcement hold a series of virtual community meetings. Based on those meetings, hsd has posted an faq, a frequently asked question on the speak up page, and that is based on more than 100 questions that were submitted during those sessions or beyond. That's certainly not the end of the community engagement on this front. But want you to know that that is there as a resource for you to the degree that you have

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questions from your constituents on the project, the next temporary project is the restoration of the downtown shelter capacity in the former Salvation Army site last Thursday, council approved a one year lease with the salvation Army for the facility, as well as an amendment to a contract, an existing contract with urban alchemy that will allow them to operate their is on the same block. So in terms of convenience and sort of economy of scale, I think very positive. And staff is negotiating that contract amendment with urban alchemy. Now so I don't have final population burns for you, but I will tell you that I'm comfortable saying we expect there will be set aside beds for women. There which has been something we've heard in the community since we lost beds upon the closure of the Salvation Army facility. We are

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looking at 150 beds and there are some repairs that need done to the building before we're operational. Pool but looking to do that, you know, we hope by the end of July and we'll continue to update council on the on the timeline for occupancy. Finally we have utilized for both of these projects American rescue

plan act dollars. And this is comes from our first really significant reallocation Ann within the investment plan for arpa, which is summarized here. So we did move funds from a number of investment areas for a total increase in the shelter resource of \$15.2 million. Again, this these totals are only for the state and local fiscal relief funds. There is another \$10.6 million in arpa

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which will be separately dedicated. It has other program guidelines and then wanted to give council a sense of where we are in terms of the commitment for all of these funds based on the approval of the downtown shelter restoration Ann and the outstanding rfp for the marshaling yards. If all of those are approved and moved forward. And when we look at monies that have been spent that are encumbered in contracts now that are in fiscal year 24, authorize those contracts or direct staffing and program and expense that is anticipated. We have some sort of commitment for 87% of the funds is what is left the 3.6 million really falls into, I believe, five categories. We have a little bit some resources to cover, some carrying costs of the hotels that are being converted to

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permanent supportive housing until they open. But it's modest. That's under \$1 million. Excuse me, have a little bit of money left for Shaw shelter, about 750,000, \$1 million left for a second phase of capacity building with community organizations. A million for landlord engagement, which I spoke to earlier. The need to get more landlords offering units. And then finally, \$300,000 for communications is to improve our communications overall around around the homelessness issue with that, I will stop and happy to take any questions you have. Thank you, colleagues. >> Vice chair Velasquez. Thank you so much for being here with us. >> Also. Thank you. Because I've been working pretty closely with your staff to set up meetings for the for the marshaling yard and we've had a really good experience working with with you all. And reaching out to the community about their concerns. I did have a few follow up questions to that end, though.

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What security measures are being considered for the shelter for shelter residents to ensure gender safety. Will there be any sort of dividers between shelter residents for male and female, trans or gender nonconforming community members? Yeah. So so we have asked our offerors to give us their sort of plans around safety and security. >> We, I would anticipate that there will be separation by gender, whether you know precisely what that will look like. We'll need to see what comes in from our proposers. But at present, do not anticipate that there would be completely mixed population. Got you. And with that is part of the rfp that the shelter staff will be adequately trained for mental health and

mental health needs and trauma services? >> Yes, sir. >> In fact. So we require that there be training for de-escalation, mental health, first aid, trauma informed service is and do ask those

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folks to lay out for us how they plan to achieve that for their staff. >> I know that there's a proposed shuttle service. Is that correct? And will that be used solely to transport people to and from the nearest bus stops and will or will there be like direct transportation to resources and appointments? Yeah I would expect it would be a little more broad than just to just to transportation points. >> But that again, is one of the things that we've asked folks to lay out for us. And I'll also point out that, you know, when we have a recommended Eid vendor, then we do have an opportunity to go back and talk to them about points of their for their proposal that we might like to revise or improve in some way. >> Awesome. How are we how are we going to be prioritizing which encampments will provide referrals to the marshaling yard ? >> So I think that, you know, one of the I think the viewpoints that has been expressed by council and

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leadership broadly is if we're going to have enforcement, we need to have someplace for people to go. When they ask, where can I go? That's legal. And so we'll be working closely , certainly with our homeless encampment management team, to understand what's happening in terms of enforcement and hope to keep you know, some portion of beds available for that. I also think that that won't be the only referral pathway. And so we've asked offers to describe how they see referral pathways, but it will be in negotiation with the homeless strategy division and we anticipate having an active bed management group that that looks at that ongoing not just we don't just set it and forget it. And I think in particular between these two facilities, we want to make sure that we are thinking about enhanced access for people who are medically fragile, who for one reason or another are

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experiencing greater vulnerability in an unsheltered situation. Thank you. >> And outside of the of the ones that you mentioned, are there any other plans or is there anything else in the works right now to expand or create more emergency shelters in other parts of the city? Yeah, we absolutely rasooli I think, received clear direction from the manager to be looking at our prospects and so are talking to lots of community organizations who may have an interest, may have a facility. >> Et cetera. You know, obviously something like that needs to be we need to solidify those options before we bring them to council. But are in the process of working through feasibility of potential projects. At the same time, we really think about what the resourcing would need to look like to advance those. >> Thank you. What

was the criteria considered for this for picking specifically this location, for the marshaling yard, for the marshaling yard? >> You know, I think we have as a city have really viewed these

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two projects as a crisis response and so in terms of looking at city controlled property, in the case of the marshaling yard that had adequate space that had adequate facilities that we could bring the hygiene, the hygiene resources, et cetera. Into it really rose to the top very quickly in terms of it being viable to do this quickly. It also is not a space that was being used for public facing services at present, so we weren't going to be competing with other services directly to the public. Perfect >> And thank you again. And like I said, it has been it has been a joy working with your team. I appreciate you all working very closely with my office on this. >> Thank you, sir. I'll make sure and communicate that. Thank you, colleagues. >> I the marshaling yard seems to me again, thinking back to the conversation about setting up the legal camping sites, the expense involved, where, you

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know, the fencing and the restrooms and you know what I mean. You're going to, you know, in other words, if you're starting from scratch, it's a it's a substantial investment. Just to get it to the point where the marshaling yard already having everything ready to go and you really just need to activate it where it has the space. Obviously, there's still a lot of, you know, beds and whatnot that has to be purchased, but it just seems to me to be an opportunity, a low cost, relatively speaking. Obviously, you know, I think \$9 million. So is a budget. Obviously, it's not like nothing, but you just having that facility there convention center is going to be presumably, you know shutting down to be a rebuild it. So I don't think, again, we've got an empty city facility. You know, we need to activate it. There's costs involved. But I mean, again, it seems to me to be a relatively kind of self-explanatory and logical kind of investment in resources. Salvation Army as well. I mean, again, you've got an empty building there. It has

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been used as shelter. It's right next to the arch. Again just given the situation. Hard to see why we wouldn't kind of jump in and use it as an emergency shelter. So I appreciate that. Your office and the city manager's office jumping on those opportunities. You know, and, you know, showing kind of that that that bias to action. It's a it's greatly appreciated. Quick question. Rapid rehousing, you know, and again I kind of think I know what that means, but I it jumps out because of \$45 million of the original arpa investment actually we ended up spending about 42 on rapid rehousing. What exactly is rapid rehousing? What does it mean? What does it involve of excellent question. >> And I do think that sometimes we talk about permanent supportive housing as shorthand for any long term housing, and

that is a much more specific intervention, rapid rehousing is time limited typically around a year on average, but up to two years could be anywhere from 2

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to 3 months to two years. Rental assistance and case management. It is in contrast to permanent supportive housing, pretty much always in scattered site units. You got to go find a unit. Right now we as the city have incentivized our affordable housing developers to set aside a few units in their affordable housing projects, sites that accept direct referrals for that . But they're not, you know, it's really they don't have additional subsidy in those units for that purpose. And so this is really intended for people who need some support, who have some barriers to overcome, but who we don't necessarily anticipate are going to need robust services for, you know, in for an indeterminate time period. And if they can, say access affordable housing some other way, don't necessarily need the depth of affordability we might see in permanent supportive housing. As a reminder, permanent supportive housing is intended for people who have experienced chronic homelessness and who are living

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with a disability who. So, you know, really we understand that. But for that robust service and rental subsidy are very likely going to have a difficult time maintaining stability. >> Yeah, I appreciate that. And I remember going out to community first and talking to, you know, Allen graham out there and where he made that mention of like most of these people are not going to be like working and finding jobs. You know, they're they're ill. They're, you know, older or they're it's just, you know, they are where they are. And we have to deal with them, you know, as they are. Yes. Potential for part time employment. But, you know, the idea that they're going to be, you know, in a year, they're going to be perfectly self sufficient members of society that can move out. You know, so, again, the permanency of the supportive housing, I appreciate that. And I completely see how that's so these are folks that are kind of more recently homeless for rapid rehousing, not necessarily chronically homeless. >> Often, you know, I will say that the lack of resource in our community has resulted in a scenario where sometimes people

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who could have been served with a lighter touch resource have been waiting for. So long Wright that they now have reached chronicity and have more complex needs. But yes, in general and I also you mentioned that of the 45 million within the arpa plan for rapid rehousing, the arpa investment plan did have some capital for permanent supportive housing. We did not use it for services because we know it's a one time resource. Wright so we can't really ramp up and then drop off our portfolio of permanent supportive housing. With rapid rehousing. We have to be thoughtful about how we do it, but we can

have a temporary program expansion and then, you know, come back down to baseline or somewhere near it just by attrition. So that's why it jumps out here, because it's good one time use money as opposed to psa. >> You're going to have to have that. We need to know that we can sustain it, maintain. Okay. Got it. Thank you very much. >> Yes. Councilmember alter, I

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want to pick up right where he left off on rapid and Eid are all our housing vouchers. >> Is that would we consider that through the rapid bucket or is that. >> No. And when we say sort of our housing vouchers, the communities, housing voucher come from a diversity of sources, does it come directly through to hud, to our service providers through the continuum of care funding program, which echo helps coordinate or they come through our housing authority's hakka has really stepped up in the last couple of years and helped provide some of those long term vouchers. And then the city has a very modest pool of project based vouchers. There are there's other rental assistance that we don't usually think of as a voucher because it's time limited and so normally when we talk about a voucher, which is as long as you still qualify for from an income perspective, you can keep the voucher for most of that is in

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permanent supportive housing. We do sometimes have pools of vouchers where our say we've got folks in rapid rehousing and they've stable ized very significantly. They probably don't need the robust case management anymore, but may need the affordability of a voucher or longer term. Hakka works with us to connect those folks to a voucher so as they roll off the caseload of a rapid rehousing program, they have that stability. >> So for the and I don't know what the exact number is, I've heard 500 600, but tenant based vouchers that are we have individuals within the continuum who have this voucher but just can't find a place that will accept it. Are those hud vouchers or Jesus? >> So I'm going to guess we have echo folks here. So I think when we talk about that, we're probably talking might be a little more specific to say they have some form of rental assistance. Maybe it's a long term voucher, maybe it's not. But our data folks might back here, might be able to give us

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some insight, follow up with them later. >> But essentially, where I'm going with this and trying to think as you look at the shelter capacity question and the dollar question, that is, if we have, let's say, 500 people with a voucher in our shelters and we can spend a little extra to make that voucher worth the market in Austin, we now have created 500 shelter beds just by moving them from shelter to housing. And we didn't have to build any facility at all. And so the efficiency there versus building a whole new site I to the degree you're able to do any of that kind of analysis within the cost structure, Shaw, I'd just

be interested to know what kind of dollars we're talking about. If it's hundreds of thousands, millions, just what that looks like. Excellent. >> Yeah. Let's talk. That's it. Thank you, miss gray.

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>> One of the questions, or I guess this information that came to light from the point in time briefing was that during the Pichette count, I think the number that was given was 70% of our emergency emergency shelter beds were were being utilized on that night. So if we know that we currently have existing capacity, 30% within our emergency shelter system, we are now standing up the marshaling yard to increase our emergency shelter system even more. I just want to take a moment to pause and think through that. You know, what additional strategies are we going to employ to ensure Shaw that our unhoused community utilize the shelter beds? >> Wright so that you know when we spoke a little bit about the coordinated referral pathway and bed management I think is a big piece of this and we'll certainly catch up with our colleagues at echo. I think we want to look across. We want to look at each shelter. You know,

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is there a differentiation by type of shelter? You know, I will say, one of the things we know at our bridge shelter is that one impact of moving entire encampments into shelter at the same time is that you have to hold some beds open for a little while because you may be moving 40 people in over the course of a week. And so there's a trade off there between utilization rates, Wright and what we think is very valuable in terms of resolving encampments. But I do think having Singh ensuring that we as a system have some visibility into where the vacancies are are, you know, in all of our shelters at any given time will really help us ensure that there are folks have access to those beds when they need them. >> So some of the concerns I've been hearing from the community is, you know, we're making this large investment in the marshaling yard and allocating 9 million to increase our emergency shelter capacity. You know, the concern is, are we doing this at the expense of

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investing in the longer term solutions like permanent supportive housing, increasing our rapid rehousing even further. Can you share your thoughts on on that and how are we are we even as we open the marshaling yard, are we like how are we scaling up our long term strategies or and or once this is only a one year interim solution. So what happens a year from now when we're posed with the question of closing the marshaling yard? At that point, what happens? Yeah, absolutely. >> And you know, certainly it is true that we can only spend, you know, each dollar in one place. And so the slide that showed the reallocation of funds within the arpa investment plan, it's true. You know, we have had to move money

around. But I will say it is the majority of that is not from permanent housing per se. Most of our arpa investment remains in rapid rehousing. I

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think that it will absolutely be necessary for us to do a couple of things really? Sure. More than a couple. One is if we're building this portfolio of potential future shelter beds that that will be something that, you know, leadership council and the rest of the community can consider as to whether we have options for expanding those beds that we are looking at how we're utilizing these temporary facilities thoughtfully and plan fully demobilizing them. We don't want we're not you know, I do not intend for us to be in the sort of place we were with salvation Army where we were surprise Eid. And so you know, in that in Sargent, you begin to ramp down a bit in the last couple of months. So you probably stop taking new folks in with the level of permanent housing resource we have in our community right now. I feel much more comfortable pool that, okay, we've got, you know, potentially up to 300 people

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Wright at marshaling art as an example. But if we know we've got a permanent supportive housing project opening, if we know that we've got the majority of those folks are are enrolled in rapid rehousing and actively looking. For their their permanent apartment. Et cetera. That we're really thoughtful about it, will I mean, it will be a challenge. Paige we're going to have to be really smart about it. But I think that we can. Plan for prepare for a smooth transition. It will require us identifying the resources for where those people transition to certainly. And can we sow to share back with the community. >> We're opening up marshaling yard. But what additional steps are we taking, taking in a concrete way to scale up the permanent supportive housing? >> Certainly so of the 1000 units or so that are still in the pipeline and we're happy to provide that report to council, you know, in detail about where

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those projects are. The city has substantial investment in many of those deals. From a capital standpoint, point in or service dollars. Et cetera, which is being complemented by resources from private sources and the state and other jurisdictional sources. So we continue to actively work that pipeline with our partners and are happy to provide or provide more information. And I'll also say, you know, note that we are as we speak, expanding capacity at the bridge shelters to begin to build out that longer term capacity. And Eid has have you been engaged Eid with the Austin Travis county homelessness response system? >> Yes. >> So we I sit on the leadership council, as does our equity officer and our staff and

other city staff participate in really all of the committees and most of the work groups of the leadership council. While these

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particular we didn't go and do specific community engagement prior to announcement on these particular projects, it's there has been extensive engagement on the shelter assessment generally and we are in contact with them. Roig Qureshi almost daily and will, I will say be providing responses directly to some of the, the concerns that have been raised by the leadership council about the temporary facility is good deal. >> And almost the last question, the 8% that remained and thank you for providing an update on the on the arpa spending framework. And given the really Ann to support the opening of the marshaling yard that remaining 8, what are you thinking envisioning that those dollars could be utilized for Wright so those are the five categories that I mentioned. >> We've got carrying costs for , you know, for a couple of the hotel conversions where we have some repairs or cost to do

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before we turn it over fully to the nonprofit operator. There is about \$750,000 that currently we do have set aside to seed additional shelter projects. We have capacity building for our community nonprofit butts. You guys may recall that we have been working with the innovation office to really help some of our smaller nonprofits that have been dedicated in this space. But a smaller, much more likely to be working with substantial volunteer staff. Et-cetera also much more likely to be bipoc led organizations to help them build the capacity to get to the point where they can access, assess and utilize city funds. So we had in our plan had two phases of that were in phase one. Now we have \$1 million for phase two. We have \$1 million for landlord engage to get access to more units. And then just about \$300,000 for community burns purposes. >> Okay. So the remaining 8% has been.

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>> Yeah, we have plans certainly . Yes. Okay >> All righty. Colleagues, any final questions? Yes, just one more Shaw in your experience in your opinion, do we get better outcomes when people who are chronically homeless Luz go through bridge shelter or emergency shelter before Shaw entering into permanent supportive housing? >> Or is it fine to just have them go off the streets into permanent supportive housing? >> You know, I think that people can absolutely be successful going straight into housing. So long as they have adequate support in that housing and they usually do in what I will say is our success and the time it takes to get people from the street into that housing. Sometimes as shelter is useful because the case manager that's working with them knows where to find them. Wright you know,

they, you know, they're less likely to experience other trauma or health health issues during that period in which they're applying. And we're preparing to get them into

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housing. So I don't think it is a necessary stop in terms of they don't need to sort of get housing ready, but from a system flow perspective, we have seen that it can be helpful. You know, for moving people into that permanent housing. >> That's kind of a gap filling measure between, you know, kind of a stable place for folks to be kind of it's almost a staging area, right, to get ready and get them in. >> Probably a good way to put it. >> Thank you. That was my only my last question. Thank you. >> Thank you so much, as always. >> Thank you. >> All righty. Colleagues any further discussion, any thoughts on a future agenda? Items for the committee to consider? Nope. All right. >> Seeing no further business, it is 1147, and I will adjourn this meeting. >>