

City Council Work Session Transcript – 10/17/2023

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This is a-t-x-n the City of Austin's Government Access Channel city council chambers, which are located in Austin city hall at 301 west second street in Austin . We have a quorum of the city

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. We have a quorum of the city council present. Members my plan would be today, unless there's objection, would be to start with the items that council all has asked for. There to be discussion on in anticipation of next Thursday's council meeting. And I'll just go in numerical order. So we would take up item 27, item 28. Yes that's you. I saw him look over at each other and say, that's us. Yeah item 27. Item 28. Item 38. Item 40. Item 45. Item 76. And once those are completed, we would go to briefings, although it looks like we're going to be taking that up in items 27 and 28. So just everybody notice that that's on the agenda in that way . But since the item got pulled, we'll just take it up and deal with it and we won't have the briefing. We'll have the

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briefing. We'll have the briefing, but we won't have the briefing if that makes any sense to anybody. And with that, huh? And with that, I will call up items 27 and 28 and council. I'll call them up together. But obviously, if you have specific questions about one of the items you can do that. Y'all just kind of you guys are on. Yeah, yeah. You got five minutes? Yeah I'm just joking. >> Take a little longer. Wherever. Wherever you doing? >> 27 and 28. Yeah and do it from wherever you want to do it. Okay. >> Good

morning. I'm Tricia teeter, the director of the convention center. >> Okay. I think there's some confusion. So we're going to do the presentation which is posted . I think we're a little confused on our side. We're gonna start the presentation items 27 and 28, deal with the convention center and we have an item set for the convention center briefing.

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center briefing. >> But since we're since those items were pulled and I'm just trying to go in some sort of order here, we will take those up and don't I don't think the council particularly cares how you do the presentation. It just wants the presentation on. Can I ask you to do a favor? Would you go over and pull down that microphone when it when they're sitting at the table? Yeah. Thank you Robert. That's perfect. That's much better. Thank you. Come on. Sorry if I created confusion. It's all y'all's. Okay do you want. To >> Okay.

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>> Okay. >> So, good morning. My name is Katy zamesnik. I'm assistant director with the Austin convention center. I'm joined by Tricia Tatro, the director of the Austin convention center, and James snow, the director of capital delivery services. We're here today just to give a brief overview of the convention center redevelopment and expansion project talk about the history, talk about the financial model, and then talk about the construction manager at risk methodology, which is the procurement methodology for this project. So the idea of the convention center expansion has been contemplated for the better part of a decade, beginning in 2014. Ann when we kicked off our long range master plan and then the expansion is kind of wound its way through the city processes, resulting in several recommendations from several studies and two city council appointed task forces and commissions. Ultimately, this resulted in the city council first formally approving the expansion when they voted to

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expansion when they voted to raise the municipal hotel occupancy tax rate from 7 to 9% in support of the expansion. I did want to pause and mention in a process that is not part of this timeline, and that is the idea of a western expansion. So back in 2021, in November, the city council authorized the city manager to enter into exclusive negotiating agreements with the property owners to the west. This is what was sort of recommended through all of the different studies throughout the years. Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of all parties, we were unable to come to agreeable terms and mutually decided to part ways in April of 2021 or 22. At that time, the convention center took a look at all of the remaining options available to it for this redevelopment and expansion project and landed on

redevelopment and expansion within its own existing footprint that led us to June of 2021 when we received approval from the Austin city council to proceed with the construction

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proceed with the construction manager at risk methodology for the redevelopment and expansion project solely within the footprint of the existing center. So the project overview so the new convention center is going to be a larger, more efficient facility within a smaller footprint. Our goal is to deliver this project, a project that is an active community friendly event facility that enhances the culturally rich fabric of the Palme district that was recently approved by the Austin city council. The chart on the right hand side side shows the current rentable square footage of the convention center. What was called for in our master plan, and then what our proof of concept, which I'll talk about in just a second, shows that we are able to achieve within the footprint of the existing center. As you can see, we'll be nearly doubling the existing the rentable square footage of the convention center and all within a smaller footprint than currently. We take up on our own site. We had to we had our consultants, conventional wisdom and

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conventional wisdom and consulting. Take a look at the proof of concept to ensure that it would still be viable and worthwhile to pursue. The answer was a resounding yes. When we stabilize Ed about five years after reopening, we'll be contributing about \$285 million in additional economic impact to the local Austin economy. So our existing site I I'm sure many of you have been around in this area. We are a large barrier between the east and the west. There is no ground level public interaction in. It's very low density compared to the sites surrounding us. There is no green space. And then most importantly for the convention center there, it is severely inadequate fit for the event demand that we are currently experiencing right now. So with our potential future, which will certainly be borne out during the design process, we can get to these target sizes with a vertical approach, which we will be putting our exhibit halls and loading docks underground that

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loading docks underground that will help to alleviate the truck traffic on red river as well. And then we'll also allow us to open up second and third streets to multi-modal traffic and be able to just sort of start getting closer to integrating back the east and the west side. So we are not that barrier anymore. We do also have the possibility for a private development opportunity on the site. And then and finally, we anticipate that our design will allow us to integrate our redevelopment with all of the projects that are going on surrounding us, including project connect and the palm district. So our financial model, so

project construction and operations do remain fully funded through the convention center's allocation of hotel occupancy, tax. The 2% expansion hotel occupancy tax that I mentioned earlier. And then our convention center revenues. We have been planning for this project for the better part of a decade, and so have been kind of saving our money toward that effort as well. We worked really closely with our outside

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closely with our outside financial advisors as well as the city's finance team to develop all of these projections . And all of those folks will be continuing to assist us as we move forward through the project . And so just a reminder, before I turn it over to James, so this is how we got to this week. So on June 10th, as I mentioned, we council did approve the methodology and then they also passed in tandem with that a resolution that provided some additional direction to be included in the rfq for architect engineering. This was all included in the rfq and will be carried forward as we go through our design process phase. And with that, I'll turn it over to James. >> Good morning. My name is James snow. I'm the director of the capital delivery services department. I appreciate you briefing today on this subject, but when we looked at this complex project, when we looked at is we had to change what we normally did, the way city delivers projects. So we looked at is using an integrated

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at is using an integrated project delivery method. With that, there's two main things to that. One is you have the architectural firm, but two you use construction manager at risk. We're asked questions today specifically about construction manager at risk. What's the methodology, as you can see on the slide, it details out. But the most important thing is the owner selects contracts separately. Both the a and the R. Second, the cma is selected. Okay. >> Why don't you start with not using initials and acronyms? >> Thank you, sir. I appreciate that. So the so you have the architectural engineering contract and you have the construction manager at risk contract. Those two contracts are done together, but separate out. The next thing is for the construction manager at risk is selected provided services in the preliminary phase. The reason so is that we can utilize the benefit of having the constructor there to look at constructability up front and also help us control costs. Second is that it allows us to also do an accelerated construction start, and that is a key to this project. As we've seen before, the beneficial risk

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seen before, the beneficial risk benefits of this project, but also the opportunity to make sure that we have less of an impact either for cost overruns or for schedule. We looked at best practices to utilize, first of all, as I mentioned, the integrated capital delivery team, unlike other projects, what we do is we

created an owner sell. This owner sell consists of the departments up there, but specifically functions that are key. One is project delivery, two is project controls, three is procurement and financial controls. And finally is permitting. We also will be putting in place a new process that we've been developing, which is a project health assessment resolution and risk review meetings. These will happen on a monthly basis. Will allow us to do is look at the health of the project at that point in time. If there's issues that have been identified at that time, we can escalate those issues to make sure they're addressed immediately and unlike we've done in the past, sometimes is let them just carry on this. This team will allow us to address these issues together in a collaborative approach

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in a collaborative approach instead of just asking questions. The other thing that will allow us to do is that we will have extensive community engagement during this time because we know it's important as we move forward with this project. The two contracts that are on the council this week are one is the architectural and engineering contract. As you can see, the person that we've selected brings a lot of a lot of experience to the table. First of all, over 44 years, experience, but specifically over 24 community convention center projects that they've done in their time frame as some of them are listed here. The other thing is that they bring a large scale urban infrastructure experience, which is important for where this project is located. And the impacts of this project can have. The construction manager at risk is a joint venture between J.E. Dunn and turner. J.E. Dunn is significant because they've been doing projects with us under this current contract, so we feel very comfortable with this methodology with them. But as you can see, also, they bring vast years of experience over 25 convention centers that they've

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convention centers that they've built under turner's experience, and J.E. Dunn has done large excavation and utility relocation projects in Austin itself, which is important, but also other experiences together. They've done over 24 projects in the Austin urban core. I want to stress that because Austin is unique, as we all know, and we have environmental issues and also other issues that are around this site. So having an experienced partner that understands this, and I'll be up front with us, will help us address the issues and identify them during the design process. Here's the redevelopment project schedule as it stands. Obviously once we get both contractors in place, we'll be reviewing the schedule to make sure the sequencing makes sense. And we have the most cost effective and effective schedule. So right now we're at the October 2023. We're pretty much on schedule as far as the planning phase and we're ready to launch in with approval of these two contracts to move forward to design, to be able to make the contract expectation and the schedule expectation of delivering and reopening the convention center in the fourth quarter of 2028. What are the next steps? Well, two of them

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next steps? Well, two of them were highlighted today. First of all, the idea that we're meeting with you specifically for the architectural and engineering contract and also the construction manager at risk contract once we're done with that, we also have the same time what we looked at is the integrated project delivery. We realized what expertise we needed and in that we have contracted out to get that expertise specifically on a project. This size project controls, which project controls allows us to both manage costs and schedule and allow us as us as the owner to have better positive control and over the contract and over the project, as you can see, the other ones that are coming through through the rest of this year. >> And with that, we can take any questions as councilmember. All yours. >> Oh, thank you. Do you know what downtown businesses and. Well, first, let me start by thanking you for the presentation. I really appreciated that overview. Do

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appreciated that overview. Do you know what downtown businesses might be affected by the construction of the project. >> We definitely know that the downtown businesses surrounding the convention center will be impacted. There are some restaurants and then it is mostly hotels and so we are working. We will be working diligently with our communication firm that we bring on board as well as with the a and construction to make sure that we're doing plenty of community outreach around those businesses and additionally coming up with a communications plan, moving forward so that we're clear and transparent with those businesses. You know what to expect during our project act. And then, you know, to have that open dialog about how how our project project may impact it, you know, there operations and how can we work towards mitigation plans to create the least amount of impact possible during our construction? >> Have you had any conversations up to now that have been enlightened or that

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have been enlightened or that you've gained insight about? >> Sure. We've had conversations with pretty much the entire hotel community. So a majority I mean, a majority of what's directly around us are hotels. So we've had lots of open communication and dialog with the hotel community. They are prepared and ready for the project moving forward. We also sent out notifications when we released the solicitations to all of our neighbors in the downtown area to let them know and be aware that the project was coming. We'd have not received any feedback from them. Those letters that went out to date. Okay >> And then I know that you explained the economic impact of the convention center expansion to us. Could you explain how that was calculated? Sure so I don't have the report in front of me, but I'm happy to send it to your office and it kind of walks through the very complex calculations that our consultants, hbs consulting did. >> Could you provide a general high level overview of how an economic impact for a

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economic impact for a construction of this source would be calculated? >> Yep. So I just know people are going to ask me how did they get to that number and I just it would be great if I could just say press play. >> Yes. So it really takes a look at what the events that come into the convention center. So with the doubling of the expansion, we will be able to host larger events. And not only that will be able to layer them in with each other. And so with those events that come in, you know, you've got folks that are visiting the restaurants, they're going to the shops, they're staying in the hotels and bringing all of that sort of ancillary revenue into the city of Austin. And additionally, we do know that visitors that come into the city for a convention center or for a convention center event typically will extend their stay. And so that is also part of the calculation as well. So it just takes a look at the overall spending that they're bringing in to the economy. >> So that's based on historical data that you already have projecting into the future. Okay, perfect. I feel like I can explain it now. Thank you very much. And there's a there's a

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much. And there's a there's a very good chart. >> We have in that report that I'm more than happy to get that might help as kind of just a general overview that would be extremely helpful. >> Thank you for the offer. Thank you. Mayor >> Thank councilmember Kelly. Councilmember Fuentes, then councilmember pool. >> Thank you. Good morning, everyone. Thank you for the presentation. And I want to highlight for my colleagues that I did ask a series of questions that have been included in the q&a. And so I just want to surface these questions for the public, since with this presentation, we are effectively sharing out with austinites that our convention center is going to be closed between 2025 and 2029. So for those four years, what's top of mind for me is what will happen with the 300 plus city workers who currently are employed at the convention center and the palmer events parking garage and etcetera. So if you could touch on the plan for city employees. >> Sure. Thank you for the question. So we are working diligently with our corporate human resources team, but the plan currently is that the 300 employees within the Austin convention center will not lose their jobs. We will have a core team that will continue to

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team that will continue to operate the palmer events center, our marshaling yard, our three parking garages, and additionally, we've got our sales team and events team. We're working in collaboration with visit Austin to ensure that we're trying to rebook as many of our events as possible within those smaller hotels. Additionally, one avenue that we are planning to utilize that was very successful during

covid was reallocating our staff and our team to other city departments. Where there are staffing vacancies. And so what the plan is, is that we will work with those department directors, we will allocate which employees have, what skill sets, and then we will do our best to reallocate the convention center employees to other city departments being funded by the convention center during the period of closure. Additional we want very much to keep as many of our employees because of the training and the expertise that they have within convention center operations. We will want to take the opportunity to get

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to take the opportunity to get those employees back and ample time to start training them appropriate Leslie on a new facility. And how to run a new facility. So we plan to engage the other departments that spread our staff out through those departments that will help with the vacancies in other city departments and then continue to work with our within our own operations. >> Good deal. >> Manager do you have an idea of which departments would have staffing vacancies that would be prioritized? >> I mean, without knowing the specifics, my guess is that depending with respect to if there happen to be grounds maintenance, you've got the parks department in terms of services, in terms of the kind of food services there could be departments that could accept those. You've got the aviation department, you've got people that do that kind of thing. You've got. So there departments throughout the city that we can move them to. And that's the intent, is to make sure that no one loses their job. And then they're back back at the convention center once you cut the ribbon and we're ready to roll.

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roll. >> That's right. Good deal. Thank you for that. And last question here is in the backup. I noticed that you all plan to have a dedicated project team to manage communications with the public throughout that time. Can you please touch on that as well ? >> Yeah. So we're hoping in January, if not sooner, that we will have a contract before you for consideration and it will be for a communications firm that will assist us with the overall communications plan for the entire tower project that will include how we're going to update council on what those touch points will be, additionally, how we're going to engage the community for the community engagement aspects of it. And then additionally, how are we going to ensure that our communication plans are clear and consistent to not only the stakeholders, our own customers, but the businesses that we're going to impact the hotel community? And so we with the design firm, with the construction firm and with this communications plan, we feel it will be a very robust and thoughtful effort and we're happy to come back to the

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happy to come back to the council and share with that communications plan is once we get all of the parties on board and we're able to really get that locked up, but that would be the intent and the goal. >> Good deal. >> Thank you. And just also want to acknowledge capital service delivery department. I saw you all had a wonderful behind the scenes video of the good knight ranch fire station being constructed. And I thought that was an excellent way how to engage the public on a city service that is underway. So great job. >> Thank you. Councilmember Fuentes, councilmember pool, thanks. >> And I just wanted to take a minute to tie back the work that staff have been doing. Really dating to the questions that council member Kelly had asked, which was impacts on surrounding businesses. And one of the businesses is the city owned hotel and Austin convention enterprises. And just remind everybody of all the work that we've done over the last year plus with ace and that board to make sure that the bond holders who are involved in in

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who are involved in in supporting the hotel and the operations there would also continue, despite the fact that we're having some interruptions with the operations at the convention center and we did that work a year plus ago. And this year. So we may have kind of forgotten about it. But that also is affected and we are prepared for this eventuality with the work that we did previously. Thanks. >> Councilmember Allison alter. >> Good morning and thank you for the presentation. It has been a while since we've had a public presentation of the details, so I do have a couple questions, burns that are related, but not necessarily exactly on items 27 and 28. So first, I wanted to ask if in the in the q&a or in the backup, you can provide the financials that we're assuming for the convention center because these are two pieces of it. I want to understand if there are other expenses beyond these or if this

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expenses beyond these or if this is covering all of the construction costs there. And if you can explain now what the finances assume about phase three, which might be a private development and how that's fitting into the financial assumptions. >> Thank you for that question. We're happy to provide a more detailed response in writing. We are, because we are still in negotiations with these two firms. We have not even secured the approval. We are not publicizing exactly what all of the financial pieces of this are that just sort of helps keep the city in a better financial or a better negotiating position as we move through this process with these contracts. Certainly as we get these firms on board and all of that information is able to be public, we're more than happy to share it. With regard to the potential private development we do have a p3 adviser on board that we're working through. We do not contemplate that any revenue from that development is necessary for financing of this project.

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project. >> Okay. So none of the revenue from the phase three is necessary for the financing. So given that the convention center presumably he owns the property, he how does that play into city finances moving forward? Were we to eventually land on a p3 arrangement? >> Yeah. So the revenue would come back to the convention center. It would certainly go toward paying for the operations of the convention center. It could also potentially go toward paying off some of the debt so we could potentially pay it down earlier. But that's kind of all to be worked out as we move forward with kind of all of our negotiations related to that potential private development. >> Okay. I think there are a lot of questions that that raises for finances and some legal issues with regard to what can go beyond the convention center for general fund financing, etcetera. At this at this point in time, as we as we think about that. So we'll need to work through those questions and

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through those questions and perhaps thought and finance committee can be of assistance with that. But I think that does raise a series of questions. Burns I guess I do think that we in the public need to understand and sort of how many other buckets of costs beyond these two we're talking about in terms of the magnitude, even if you don't have the specific numbers, can you share more? I mean, because we're already over \$1 billion with what we're authorized here, and that's assuming that the Seema contract is actually for building out the convention center. So I don't know if you're prepared to provide that now or you want to provide that in writing. But I do think we need some general buckets of magnitude Ed and what other what other big expenses we're anticipating beyond this? >> Yeah, we're happy to get get you some more detailed information in writing. I think that will probably allow us to explain it rather than. Okay. >> And then one of the documents

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>> And then one of the documents indicated, I think it was a proof of concept document or something that indicated a multi phase approach. So can you explain why it's going to take four years or it's all going to be closed for four years when we're doing the phasing? >> Absolutely. So we took a look. We tried to preserve the ability to do a phased approach. And you did see that in the proof of concept. Ultimately, as we had conversations with our clients and we took a look at the financials and the impact it, you know, a phased approach would require about a seven year, 7 to 8 year construction window versus the, you know, the three and a half, four that we're talking about right now. Financially, it would have cost significantly more just because you would need to build some some retaining walls in between the two in between the two things as the as we're trying to operate the convention center on one side and then also build the exhibit halls underground. The way that the phasing worked as well. We would be without a kitchen, which is pretty critical for convention center

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critical for convention center operations. And so and our clients don't really want to bring their attendees to a construction site as they're going through. So we ultimately, as a team, in conjunction with our consultants and kind of talking with the city staff, the experts came to the conclusion that a one phase approach was just going to be the right way to go about this, to just rip the band-aid off and get it done. >> Okay. And for yours still feels like a long time, given that we can expedite permits and we don't need to do any zoning changes and other things, can you give us a little bit more idea of why we have a four year time frame? >> So we are we're trying to be really conservative with that. I think our actual kind of internal construction is about 40 months, but we've built a lot of contingency. We don't know what we don't know. You know, we're talking about digging a 65 foot hole in the ground. We don't know what's underneath

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don't know what's underneath that. And it's downtown Austin. And I'm sure that we're going to find some fun surprises that we didn't realize. And so just wanting to really have level set expectations with the community as we move forward, if we can deliver this project sooner, we absolutely will. It would be our goal is to get this done as as quick as possible. But do it correctly. Obviously, no cutting corners because we want to be back in operation just as quickly as as I think the community would like us to be as well. Thank you. >> And in our June of 21 resolution that was governing these next steps, we talked about requiring sustainable building practices. Can you speak to what the contract or the or the architectural and engineering contracts are assuming about those practices for the building? >> So what we're doing is by having the two together, we'll be able to discuss that. The firm or the architectural firm will be focused on that. Working

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will be focused on that. Working with the theme or the Mario will look at how to integrate that in their. That's the purpose of the reason why we're going. I mean, I can give you the list. Wright Riley, who is our person over that can talk specifically as details as you want. >> You can step up to the microphone to. >> Good morning. >> So I'm actually Riley Triggs. I'm a project management supervisor in the architectural project management division of capital delivery services and I'm also the head of our sustainability program and cds. So for this project, it actually the architect engineer that we have selected has a really good track record with sustainability and bringing sustainability ideas to their convention center projects, the ones that they did in New York and Seattle and Vancouver all reached Leed platinum or above. So in fact, Vancouver, I believe, reached double platinum, which is, you

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double platinum, which is, you know, beyond the highest rating you can get for or for a Leed building. >> So they're going to bring a whole bunch of ideas to us on that. We've also developed a sustainability chapter for our design criteria manual, which aligns, you know, lines out what we want to see from the city in these particular areas. So between our dcm kind of giving them a guidance guiding tool and the ideas that they're bringing sustainable city will be at the forefront of whatever we produce at the end. >> Thank you. I'm really glad to hear that. Another piece of that resolution was kind of spaces for the community and art, and that was also in the proof of concept. What is I'm just not sure exactly how it changes from that proof of concept to what's moving forward. I was glad to see in that the art and the community spaces. Can you speak to that? >> That's correct. Nothing has changed from the proof of concept, but that is still very much a priority for this project

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much a priority for this project and it's written within this design criteria manual that we're that we've been working on during this planning phase and plan to turn over to the design firm when we get everything going. So we very much are holding space for not only community space within the facility, possibly space for the arts and or music, but additionally that outdoor green space that we've talked about. So those are those are three very strong elements that we have included. And we would very much like to have within this existing or this new convention center. So they are high priorities for us and we will continue to update you as we start the design process. Additionally I'll piggyback off of what Riley said. The convention industry actually sustainability is very, very important to them and it's a high priority for our customers as well. So that will be a very strong theme and area of focus for us as we start this design process. >> Great. And the another priority in that resolution was opening up second and third

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opening up second and third street. That is, are those only pedestrian and bike or will there be car traffic on those as well? >> That's yet to be determined. I think that we'll need to do a traffic study and analysis and we'll need to engage our community and determine and transport nation to envision whether or not it's multimodal with cars or if it's just going to be pedestrian and bike ways. So that's something that we will explore during the design phase and make sure that we're listening to the community and, and you all in the stakeholders to, to determine what might be the best fit for those two streets. But the intention is to open them and then, you know figure out what might be perfect for both of those streets. >> Thank you. And I'll look forward to that financial information before Thursday. Thank you. Okay >> Thank you. Councilman councilmember alter, thank you very much. >> I just wanted to highlight for everybody we've been in talks with the convention center

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talks with the convention center just to make sure that after we approve today, that and the manager and I have had this conversation as well, that this isn't the last time we hear from them on a project of this size. You know, we're going to go through design just so that we can make sure that we have additional touch points and feedback as this process goes through so that we're well informed. And so we're going to try to work on some direction. And I think we're pretty close on some language just so that we can get some updates occasionally to know how this is progressing. Were you worried we weren't going to know? >> No, I was worried. >> We're going to know. I just know sometimes projects like this, especially as we go through design, we can get to the design and then all of a sudden there can be a, oh, you know, we didn't. There decisions are made that that there are impacts that feels like maybe input should have been given to get us there. So it's just a the manager and I talked about a good way to ensure that doesn't happen. >> Councilmember I hear you. I, I think part of the process is the time scale that we've talked

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the time scale that we've talked about. And so I don't know that we you can give us direction, but we didn't intend that the next time we talk about this is that the ribbon cutting? Well, that's not that's not our intent. Absolutely. And we've built big projects before. Not as big as this one. But I remember at the at Austin Bergstrom, when we built that, we kept the council informed in terms of where we were headed. We didn't need a resolution to tell us how to do that. We know how to do that and we and then if you hear something, because there'll be people who will be as the in the catholic term, they'll be doubting Thomases about what we're doing. And then we will be happy to entertain what those issues might be so that we may bring them to a quick resolution. But the point here is to make sure that that time frame is met so that we can get on about the business of having conventions here in Austin. But so anyway, that's so we intend to follow the models for large projects that we've done in the past, and that's that's all. >> And just by way of history, just when you want to speak. Yeah, just by way of history, what's what's interesting, at least for me, I may be the only one interested in this, but the

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one interested in this, but the convention center hotel that we've spoken of, the Hilton that's owned by the city and the convention center, were getting ready to tear it down. There was a point in time when we did both of those at the same time. And the reason we ended up having to do them both at the same time is because in 1997, 98 time frame, everyone, everyone was saying we needed to double the size of the convention center. It was a small convention center and the response was, well, let's build, let's

double the size of the convention center. And everybody said, whoa, whoa, whoa, you can't double the size of the convention center unless you have a convention center hotel. And interestingly enough, Austin did not have a convention center hotel. So when you think about Austin downtown today and all of the convention center hotels, it did not have one. So it was said, let's build a convention center hotel. And the response was, whoa, whoa, you can't do that unless you double the size

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that unless you double the size of the convention center. Okay, how about we do them both at the same time? And that's what happened at. And so it's interesting now to see what the prediction lines were. And they all turned out to be true, that it would bring more convention business and interestingly enough, it we were told it would bring more hotels and of course, it's done that, including more convention center hotels. But it was a big old project and we stayed up to date the council was able to stay up to date and on a routine basis. So and I know that staff will want to do that with us. Council member vela mayor, there was a the cut podcast covers that bond vote and discusses the different Burt packaging. >> Anyway, the fascinating discussion to listen to it from today's perspective. You know, looking back at 25 years or so, I think the growth machine that

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I think the growth machine that that cut podcast, the multi series excellent that talks about the history of a lot of Austin politics just the convention center then second and third street are going to connect the convention center itself will be underneath those streets. In other words even though there's going to be a grid pattern on top, underneath is just going to be one huge kind of convention center area. Is that is that what y'all are imagining? >> That is correct. Our exhibit halls and our loading docks will be completely underground. And second and third streets will go above those. And then the vertically stacked convention center. That's how we're able to get to a larger facility on a smaller footprint. >> And the are the buildings that will be constructed sited on top, the public private partnership that we're envisioning. We are those CKCK contingent. In other words, are those going to move at the same

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those going to move at the same time as the convention center construction or would that be potentially subsequent to the final construction of the convention center? >> So we're endeavoring to do this as as much as possible in tandem. We've been working with our p3 advisors. We'll be coming to council here shortly with some one on ones to start to discuss with you what this p3 opportunities or this private development opportunity could look like. The idea would be to put out a solicitation and to get there to get that developer as well on board, just as quickly as possible because what they're going

to build above us impacts what we're putting in below. So the idea would be that we're working in tandem through the design process as to coordinate where those synergies and what those efforts are. And then as soon as the convention center project gets built their exhibit halls and gets to that first level of flat ground that the p3 or the private opportunity could begin in tandem. So I envision there may

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tandem. So I envision there may be some overlap, but the idea would be to open a convention center with this private development as close together as possible so that we're not opening a convention center next to a construction site for a period of additional time. So that's the goal. That's what we're endeavoring to do. >> Okay. And so in other words, the private projects above the convention center would be open at roughly the same kind of time period of 2028, or it's I would expect that it would probably open slightly after slightly after being. >> Yeah, I think that we'll that we'll be opening after that that it'll be after and are the public private partnerships would those and again I know we're very early on in this but would those be revenue generating for the city. >> Yes and again I know we're very early on but that would be not convention center dedicated

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not convention center dedicated funds, but those would ultimately be just general fund revenue for the city. >> It would come to the convention center. >> And but it would it be restricted then to like the same way that kind of our taxes or would it be kind of in other words, could we transfer it from the convention center fund, similar to, I guess I think about the Hilton that we have. I think that I don't not sure what the time frame is, but I remember it will at some point the bonds will be paid off and that revenue will be available for the general use of the city, which again, I think goes back to the wisdom of building that hotel. You know, 20, 30 years ago. That it will soon be kicking us, you know, some amount of revenue per year. Is that the goal with the public private partnerships. >> I probably want to ask our legal team to weigh in about the restrictions on the funding. You know, the goal with the with the potential private development.

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potential private development. >> That's something that was very clearly requested by the community and the city council. So we're endeavoring to kind of, you know, work within that constraint. But I don't know that we necessarily had a lofty goal about the revenue or kind of anything related to that. >> Yeah. >> And regardless, they'll be paying property taxes. So yeah. >> And councilmember, why don't we we'll get drill down to additional detail and we'll get back to the council in terms of what that means and what. >> Thank you and appreciate that. >> Council members anything else on items 2728 or the

briefing that was under B one? Great. Thank you. All good discussion. Thank you for being here and thanks for what you're doing and we'll see you Thursday. Members that will take us to item number 38. And I'll call on council member Fuentes. >> Thank you, colleagues. This item establishes a medical reserve corps for our city and

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reserve corps for our city and county, so I'm super excited to see our here locally rejoin the national network to have dedicated volunteers, medical volunteers tirz ready to assist in times of disaster and emergencies, and especially as we know from this pandemic, we know the need to have this dedicated resource. So I wanted to invite staff to come down to ask a couple of questions. And as they make their way to the podium, one part of the reason why I ran for office was really because of the health disparities that we have in our city. So for us tonight to live east of 35, we know that our life expectancy is at least ten years less than austinites, who live west of 35. Your zip code really determines your life outcome in this city. And so having this available, this medical reserve corps initiated, I believe is one way to ensure that when we experience disasters and when we're in

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disasters and when we're in emergency situations, that our most vulnerable, our communities of color are not disproportionately impacted. So, director Sturup, thank you for joining us. Can you give us a little bit about the history of this medical reserve corps? I know it was in place at one point where reestablishing it now and give us some context as to why was this not in place amid the pandemic? Why was this not a strategy that we employed or did we take a different approach? Good morning. >> Adrian Sturup Austin public health. I'll start off and then I will pass it to my colleague, chief epidemiologist and assistant director, Janet Pichette. From my understanding in previous years the city has been part of the medical reserve corps and then after subsequent funding cuts at the federal level, the award amounts did not meet the city's threshold. So we were not able to apply. This is the first year that the award amounts have increased to the amount that meet the city's threshold and so staff submitted an application and we were subsequently awarded miss

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subsequently awarded miss Pichette. Did I miss anything? >> I will say, you know, again, as the director Sturup mentioned, we did have an actual dedicated planner back, I'm going to say 2003, four timeframe. And following hurricanes Katrina, Rita, gustav and Ike. And when the federal funding for department of homeland security, federal funds really substantially decreased that that took out one of our planners that we had that managed this particular program and then the awards from the agency

for response to ask grant if those funds and awards decreased as well. So again, this is a first time we've been able to reapply. There's also been emphasis from lessons learned at the state level because the funding is passing

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because the funding is passing through the state and then being disbursed to local entities. And so they really pushed for us to apply for it to kind of address some of the lessons learned during covid as far as having medical and clinical staff that could assist in any type of disaster response that that we may encounter. So one of the successes that was highlighted in the winter storm after action report was the utilization and the leveraging of our community health workers that we have here at the city and in the community as a way to ensure that we were properly and appropriately communicating with our public, our community as to resources that are available amid the disaster. >> Can you speak to how community health workers would be integrated into the medical reserve corps? >> So actually, they would be a little bit separate. The medical reserve corps is just the establishment of a registry of medical volunteers that could be public health volunteers. They could be community volunteers

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could be community volunteers that want to support medical response efforts. But we will be working very closely with our community health worker program and initiative to make sure that, you know, we're leveraging all our opportunities to respond to the community as a whole. >> Okay. >> Thank you. And lastly, I would just ask to be, you know, I guess kept up to date in the loop on any resources that are needed to continue to this medical reserve corps. I understand that the federal level funding was cut, but I certainly wouldn't want that to be a reason why we don't have this coordinated and on deck so that when we experience our next disaster, we have this dedicated team of volunteers ready to go. >> And I think we're pretty creative at the health department as far as finding funding. We do have our public health infrastructure grant, which did support the funding of an emergency plans

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funding of an emergency plans officer to kind of help oversee that process and so we'll be using that and using some of our other emergency plan planning positions to kind of support that and carry it through, especially since it is a state that's very interested in making sure that we have that that registry of volunteers. It is part of our public health emergency preparedness grant, a grant deliverable. So we'll continue to try to maintain that effort through all those efforts. Yes, thank you, councilmember Kelly. >> Thank you. And thank you for being here today. Thank you. Councilmember Fuentes, for pulling this item, the supporting documentation. And from what we've spoke about already suggests that the

community can volunteer. Can you speak to that process so that community members can understand how they can get involved? >> So, I mean, they can always reach out to us at the health department and our preparedness area. If they have interest. You know, I know we're doing a lot

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know, I know we're doing a lot of work with the resiliency efforts that are currently undergoing right now. And so that's another avenue to reach out to us. But I think some of the original the initial funding for this will be to kind of establish what that process will be and how to begin to recruit volunteers and recruit other people who may be interested in supporting the effort. >> So I know that there's a lot of people in my community who very much like to volunteer. And I'm sure that other council members experienced the same. If you could send our offices that information when you get it so we could put it out to our community members, I think that would be very helpful. >> Yeah, we would be happy to do that. >> Thank you very much. >> Well, the questions or comments, thank you all very much. Thank you. Councilmember Fuentes, that will take us to item number 40, transportation and public works. I'll recognize councilmember Velasquez. >> Yes. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Colleagues, I pulled this item just to daylight. A lot of folks had questions around the investor moment. It is a

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investor moment. It is a significant investment. Other options available. And just to better understand the thought process behind some of it, and I want to thank director Mendoza for meeting with us yesterday and giving us a brief update on it. >> Mayor interim assistant city manager Robert good. If I can just set the stage, thank you for that, councilmember. We've as you know, we've developed some opportunities to cap 35 across downtown, and this is one of the first ones you'll look at this would be a 300 foot stitch. That's on your agenda for Thursday. We have met with council offices and we've had some questions. And so what I want to thank Richard Mendoza, director of transportation public works. He's going to come up here in a minute and show you he has developed an alternative. That may be something that council should consider. The way we think this would work, depending on your direction today, if the alternative is as seems to be better to you, what we would do is pull the agenda item for Thursday and bring back a different rfa with that with that alternative. And so

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that alternative. And so Richard's going to lay out the three alternatives for you today and then we'll seek direction from you. If we do. >> Great. Mr. Mendoza. Thank you. >> Mr. Good. Good morning, mayor and council. Richard Mendoza interim director of transportation and public works department. I've got like four quick slides. I'm going to run through and then I'll take any whatever questions that you

have. So on this first slide, what we have depicted are three basic alternatives. And so just a recap item 40, you know, seeks authorization to enter into an advanced funding agreement with the Texas department of transportation. >> Please go to the next slide. There you go. >> There you go to construct a 300 foot wide stitch or a deck structure for at the woodland avenue crossing at I-35. So Texas has been working with city staff and have identified the woodland avenue crossing as a potential el cap and stitch location. And in accordance with council comments on the draft

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council comments on the draft environmental impact statement they received earlier this year to explore covering as much of the lowered I-35 cap project as possible. Next slide, please. So so the three illustrations this is the first. So the text, I-35 capital project will eliminate the existing woodland avenue vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian crossing at 35. They do recognize size, however, the need to restore the bike ped crossing and have proposed as a base project at no cost to the city. This conceptual 75 foot wide crossing and as shown on the slide, we have commented on this proposed and we've also received community impact that we've expressed concerns with this concept, particularly the misalignment of the network and the tunnel tunnels are not inherently to provide a safe feeling for bike and pedestrian users. Next slide. And so what city staff and texdot have

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city staff and texdot have worked together on and what's before you for your consideration? On Thursday is this concept. It was developed by city staff and txdot. It provides an enhanced crossing and public space deck structure at I-35 and it provides an aligned, directly aligned bike and ped crossing, as well as at 300 foot urban space. So the city's cost share for this concept and alternative is around \$14.2 million. But it does not include any surface amenities. It also includes a tunnel which community and staff have expressed concern with, and that's primarily just to provide a third point of ingress and egress. If there's an emergency situation on that deck. Next slide. So this is a modified Eid alternative and it's a recent development with conversations between myself, my staff and txdot leadership. This modified alternative is basically it shrinks the 300 foot deck

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shrinks the 300 foot deck structure to around 75ft. It maintains the direct alignment sought for the bike ped crossing and the bike ped network adjacent of this woodland crossing is on the comprehensive bike and ped plans and txdot would construct this concept at their cost. However, the city may be responsible for up to \$2 million of costs for a design. It shouldn't cost that much. And if there's any residual monies after that, they could be potentially applied to amenities and improvements on top

shade structures, drinking fountains of that sort of thing. Think of it like a the purnells pedestrian bridge crossing of ladybird lake. So told you it'd be quick. Those are my four slides and welcome. Any questions? >> So members, we obviously can't vote on anything, but we can have a discussion. So that staff gets a feel as Mr. Good indicated staff gets a feel for where the council might be for

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where the council might be for determination about what we do on Thursday. I think what what he was suggesting and recommending and if I say this wrong, don't hesitate to jump up, but if what's posted for Thursday is not the sense of that that staff gets from the council as we have this discussion, then what would happen is they would pull the item on Thursday and bring us back something that's more in line with what they hear is the discussion of this work session. So with that, I'll go back to councilmember Velasquez and then I'll go to the mayor pro tem. >> Thank you, director. And just to just to clarify the investment. For the 230 extra feet, would be \$15 million or not to exceed \$15 million. >> That's correct. There are substantial structural elements that would be our responsibility to pay for and that and that's still required. >> That would still have the

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>> That would still have the tunnel in it, though, correct? Yes, it would. Okay and then the modified alternative that you and I spoke about, it's up to \$2 million. But is in direct alignment with with the with the route with the biking route. >> It is it also is grade separated so there's no pedestrian bikes having to cross actual vehicular traffic say on the access roads. >> Thank you. Yes sir. Mayor pro tem, thank you for the recognition, mayor. >> My initial concern with this, I know we've been able to speak about this offline and I appreciate your time. My initial concern was using money from the 2020 active mobility bond, mostly because there's already a bicycle connection across the highway here underneath the highway. And so we started asking, you know, are there other pots of money available for this? Similarly to the way that we had just approved the Cesar Chavez to fourth street application grant for federal match. So we started talking about, is this the right place to go to find the local match and the dollars that we have available to us? And then we

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available to us? And then we started kind of talking about the schematic itself and understanding the our future 35 planning process that's going on. So we started kind of pulling at the thread as well and seeing does it need to be 300ft or are there other options ? What is the community that's going to use this asking to see here? And so we've been able to talk through some of those questions. I appreciate the thoughtfulness of going back and trying to see what's that right schematic and what's the right local

match if we need to provide funding for this. So I appreciate councilmember Velasquez pulling this and look forward to future conversations. >> Thank you. Councilmember councilmember Kelly, thank you. >> And thank you, colleagues for pulling the item. And thank you, director Mendoza, for being here. Do you have an idea of how much staff, time or cost has been invested in this project to date? That's probably a pretty big question. Ann how much staff time or or cost has been associated with this to date? >> I don't have an exact number of the staff cost, but we've been working on this with them more intensively over this past

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more intensively over this past summer, given texts schedule. They're actually going to final design now, and this is the initial phase. If I had to guess , probably upwards of a couple hundred hours of staff time. >> And by changing the project in any way, will that how will that impact the project itself? >> It will not impact the schedule. It will be reduced construction costs. There will be some redesign costs associated, though. Okay. >> That's helpful. Thank you. Yes, ma'am. Councilmember Bella, thank you. >> Director Mendoza. Appreciate the information and I appreciate the redesign. Honestly, it looks I think we get the benefits while saving a little bit of money and just a handful of questions. And this is we're having a similar discussion about the stitch at 51st street with with my constituents. And Windsor park and the ridgetop areas there and are there other

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areas there and are there other examples of stitches that that other cities have used used. And again I think about like, you know, Dallas and the klyde Warren parkway and then the southern gateway, the park that they're building, those are a little bit bigger. Those are, I think about I think the klyde Warren is about a quarter of a mile long and I think the one there by the zoo is similar kind of in scope. But are there other examples of kind of like stitches that that in other cities that that have been activated, you know, something that kind of visualize something to kind of draw from like the one that comes to my mind real readily. >> And it's really akin to like a land bridge. It's a little more than an enhanced crossing, but it's a little bit wider. And there's a few examples around the country. The one I'm most familiar with is the hardberger bridge land bridge in San Antonio. It's over the wurzbach parkway. It's similar in dimensions. I don't think it's

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dimensions. I don't think it's quite 300. It might be 300ft, but and that's the one connecting Brackenridge park, right? It's hardberger park. It's the north section, I believe, with the south section in San Antonio. So it's got bike paths, walking paths. It's got a natural area. It was really built to do in a

different setting, in an urban setting. It was built to provide a safe crossing for wildlife in that area. But right off the top of my head, that's the only one that comes to mind. >> That's a that's a good example. That's a good example, actually. And I think that's been very popular in San Antonio , a very different context. This is a very urban setting. And like you're saying that that's a but but appreciate that that and just, you know, a quick comment on the because I said this very same discussion is happening on on 51st street. There's a proposed about a 1.25 acre stitch patch that is proposed

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stitch patch that is proposed for the north side of 51st street at a cost of about. \$11 million or so from the from the textile renderings and I've been really trying to engage my constituents on that with regard to, you know, is this something we want? Is this something that will be a community benefit? What do folks think about it? And there's a real mix of, you know, of opinions about that. I will say that, you know, one of the just looking at kind of the opportunity cost in terms of the, you know, if we're going to pay for these obviously those are funds that that are coming from other sources. And that other projects that are going to be delayed. But you know, my sense is what the folks in district four and in that area really want is high quality interconnectivity between east and west. You know, there's very difficult for someone in Windsor

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difficult for someone in Windsor park to get over across the highway to the north loop area or to Hyde park or, you know, in the area. And that seems to be the number one request just from the folks that I'm hearing from. Not so much necessarily like a kind of a small kind of park above the or a public space above the highway, but more a really high quality, you know, connection. And I think the staff redesign on the on the woodland avenue, I think that that, you know, basically, you know, gets us there. So anyway appreciate the redesign appreciate the potential savings that that will be, you know that that we're finding. And I look forward to discussing kind of the similar concept on the on the 55th street crossing down the road. >> Yes, sir. Thank you. >> Councilmember councilmember pool. And I apologize. I skipped over you. No worries. >> It gave me a little extra

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>> It gave me a little extra time to gather my thoughts even more completely. And I just wanted to say that I agree with my colleagues who are talking in support of the re the narrowing down of the crossing at woodland . It's more aligned. We get rid of the tunnel which can be kind of scary. And the cost savings are also really important in particular as we look at the project as a whole and cost savings here may help us be able to afford for something elsewhere and we may find similar kind of change and

adjustments in district four at that crossing. I agree that the direct crossing, particularly north, is really important to shorten that crossing. I followed there's a video out there that shows how you go from east to west out around the airport interchange and it adds like I don't know how much

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like I don't know how much additional distance, but it seemed like about ten miles by the time that video was done to get from east to west or west to east. And anything we can do to make that simpler and more elegant, I would support and I really like saving the money from our revenues to direct them elsewhere for other projects that are of really of high importance for our community. So I would be supportive of us pulling postponing this on Thursday and coming back with an updated proposal from staff at a future time. >> Thank you, councilmember. Councilmember Fuentes. Thank you . >> Thank you, colleagues, for the conversation on this topic. Certainly in my meeting with director Mendoza, I learned that the community was pretty evenly split on prioritizing this as an extended connection. And while I support what my colleagues here are sharing in their support of having it narrowed down to save costs for other projects, what I

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costs for other projects, what I hope doesn't get lost is the need to invest in south Austin and areas south of the river. You know, we've been putting a lot of attention in our downtown area, rightfully so. But what would I hate is that we lose focus, that a lot of the growth that is happening is in Austin is happening south. And I really would want us to be thoughtful in how we think about what other projects we decide to fund and that we're equitable in that distribution of projects. I support the modified alternative. I know it was you know, pretty split with the community and wanting it, but I just don't want us to lose focus on the importance of where we allocate resources with this project. >> Councilmember Kelly thank you and thank you, councilmember Fuentes for bringing that up. >> We both have districts that are pretty far away from the center of the center of the city. And so I'm curious to know how these projects are prioritized so that we could bring further clarity to our constituents. >> So right now, we have a potential of up to 30 acres of covering of I 35 that

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covering of I 35 that prioritized action is still in process. The community engagement is still in process. And certainly how we're going to pay for it is still in process. So that that will become clear as we get through the process of funding strategies and remaining public engagement. Looking at recent input from the community and from council in terms of what is really important in that asset, is it more urban space? Is it connectivity all that will come to bear as we arrive at the final portfolio of captain stitch

opportunities? Thank you. Anyone else is councilmember vela and in response to councilmember pool, I have spoken to text to tucker Ferguson various times and you know, thankfully the northern section, we have a little more time. >> That's going to be the second phase of it. And they've

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phase of it. And they've committed to continuing to work on that. In particular, that airport crossing where the train crosses also. And there's a lot it's going to be a complex interaction of a lot of things going on. But you know, they've they've committed to turning that into a, you know, a better bicycle pedestrian crossing. I will just throw one more thing that I've also discussed with with texdot is a crossing there at essentially where where the Mueller trail Philomena street kind of dead ends there right at the highway. And there's a trail that goes right up to the highway. It would provide a really good point of east west connectivity if we could get something there. You know, in addition to a 55th street crossing, then an airport crossing, if we could have another, you know, potentially a pedestrian and bicycle crossing at that point, I think that would be a very positive for connectivity and I'll tell you, I mean, I know that, again, there's still some changes going

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there's still some changes going on, but that entire intersection there of airport kind of 46 and I-30 five is going to look substantial different. So I think there are opportunities to, you know, to create especially for the folks living in Mueller. You know, we want to get them over on bikes and walking over to Hyde park and all the beautiful amenities that we have in that neighborhood, too. So anyway, we look forward to continuing to work with texdot and transportation public works on, on these opportunities. >> Councilmember qadri great. >> Thank you. Mayor you know, I'm in support of the better aligned crossing that city staff has ordered today, but all in all, I'm still concerned about the one off nature. We are making these decisions about caps and stitches for this highway. This this process is a surefire way to erode away community benefits and ensure we only get a 22 lane highway. I know texdot is ready to go. When they certified their project in August, but two months is not enough time for us to find real funding for these caps. I think we need a real negotiation process between this Dyess and

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process between this Dyess and texdot to build a realistic timeline, an agreement on cost share, and I really want to I know my staff myself, I know a lot of folks on this dais who have worked on this really want to make sure that we get this done and get this done right and collaborate where we can and just try to bring as many people in as possible. So I appreciate all the work that's been done. I appreciate the presentation here. But there were just some of my thoughts and concerns. >> Thank you,

councilmember. Anyone else on this item? Thank you, Mr. Mendoza. Thank you, Mr. Good. I think you probably have guidance going forward that'll take us to item number 45. And I'll recognize the mayor pro tem. >> Thank you, mayor. I went ahead and proactively pulled this just so I could lay it out for my colleagues at our last mobility committee meeting, we adopted this resolution to send to the full council and it lies mostly in the conversation around air quality greenhouse gas emissions and other sorts of emission reduction planning that

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emission reduction planning that are happening. So campo recently kicked off a process to do. Some don't want to get the name wrong. Regional mobile emission reduction plan and this is focused specifically on how people get around town. There's also an Austin msa climate plan. So for a lot of folks, it's no secret that we're dealing with climate change. Paige we are seeing too close together, too many serious, serious incidents that are affecting our community, whether it's ice and snow, whether it could be wildfire risk, whether it's flooding that we know has impacted our community and so the conversation around our commutes and our climate is something that a lot of us have been working on for many, many years. So this resolution brings attention to the fact that we have these emission reduction plans that are just now kicking off. And I wanted to make sure that we had an opportunity to ensure this project is being mindful of the outcomes of those types of strategies and those collaborations that are happening regionally. So I just wanted to pull it since it came

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wanted to pull it since it came out of a committee and daylight where the conversation came from . So I hope council can support an initiative that is meant to make sure that we are protecting our climate. The EPA is currently looking at lowering its national ambient air quality standards to make sure that people have clean and healthier breathing air. So I wanted to make sure that this project is in line with those efforts and appreciate the support of the mobility committee that has proposed this. >> Thank you, mayor and member members. As you know, the way we typically do it will take up a consent agenda. Items from committee or non consent items automatically. So what I anticipate we will do on Thursday and I'll lay it out in the way I typically do on a message board sometime tomorrow, but I'll also announce it on the dais. But typically the way we will, what we anticipate we're going to do, unless something weird happens between now and then, that I'm not anticipating, is that typically we have a the

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is that typically we have a the Austin housing finance corporation at 1030. We don't have any items from Austin housing finance corporation. So what I anticipate will happen is we will take up the consent items, consent speakers. If someone wants to speak on item 45, they can speak at the time the consent speakers, which is what I always try to do. But then we will go to the non consent items immediately after. And so that means if somebody wants to speak on this at the time it's brought up, it will be brought up when I typically would be recognizing Lang ask items. So just so that people are paying attention to this and want to know what time we might bring something up, anything else on this item. I'm mayor pro tem. Thank you members that will take us to item number 76. That was essentially pulled by the committee that's been working on on looking at a firm, a national search firm to help with the

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search firm to help with the national search of the city manager. And if with permission of the council, I'll kind of lay out and the permission of that group, by the way, that group is the mayor pro tem. It is councilmember Fuentes, councilmember pool and councilmember vela along with me. And I'll just kind of walk through some of what we've done. We're pleased to make a recommendation to the full council of mosaic public partners as it will be on the agenda for our Thursday. But let me just bear with me and I'll mention just a few things so that before we do do that, we wanted to give the opportunity to talk about it in advance. We worked with our financial services department and procurement and I see Yolanda Miller is out there and she was a help to us throughout this process. Yes, the rfq for a search firm, again, a national search firm to help us pick to do a national search for a city

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do a national search for a city manager was issued on July 17th, just so that you will know the committee signed off on the rfq before it went out. It was it was looked at that closed on August 14th. We received 12 responses as the way we did. This is the committee members each reviewed and evaluated independently of each other. The responses that we had received and we in three big areas or three general pillars is the company's qualifications as the search firm's qualifications, including their experience and their capacity or it's experience and capacity. Second was key person knell who it was that they were saying would be the people that we would be working with and would be doing the search for us. The qualifications of those people and the experience of those people. And the third was customer references as once that

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customer references as once that was done and that information and we that information was completed by each of us, we then came together as a group and we went through this as a group. And

as you might expect, in a vigorous, good discussion and good fashion, you would be pleased with that. Then it was narrowed by by the committee to a we scored it down to four firms. We then worked with miss Miller and we coordinated so that we would have interviews with each of those four firms. It worked out well that we were able to interview three of those firms in person here in Austin and visit with them and all but one. We were able to do that in person. One there was some difficulty not it was just it was just timing, you know, trying to we were trying to do

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trying to we were trying to do things in a time frame, but we were able to interview that firm virtually. And we were that worked out fine. One of the things that we did so that you'll know zo is we submitted to each of the four questions is that we ask them to build into their presentation to us in hopes that that way everybody would answer roughly the same questions. And I'll just share with you what it was. And also gave them time to do other things. They wanted to do as part of their dog and pony show to us. But but we wanted to make sure we covered certain things. For example, what specific experiences do you have helping select city managers? What qualities do you bring to this search? Discuss the size of the cities. What difficulties do you see for Austin in selecting the next manager for Austin is unique in its desire for community involvement and transparency. Last manager search will impact this search because of the efforts made to

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because of the efforts made to conceal the identity of candidates. Share your views. How we can best achieve an open process and get high quality candidates. What is your current outline for community engagement ? What is your current outline for recruitment of people and how do you assure we will have a diverse pool of candidates? What are your firm's greatest strengths and what do you see as potential weaknesses to fulfilling this search? Those were the kinds of things we said. We want all of them to build into their presentation. And I will tell you, in my view, you can ask the other members, but I think I'm speaking for everybody. Two of them did a really good job of that and two of them didn't so much. As we, of course, interviewed them. We also ask additional questions and at the end of at the end of that process, two firms stood out and both of them were national firms. As we ask and received references on those, we

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received references on those, we did reference checks on the two of them. We sent another question to both of them and received really detailed replies from them, both related to how they would initiate the process for people. And then we had a significant discussion and that led us to recommending Moses

public partners, a couple of things that the principles of mosaic have significant experience S including significant experience in the city of Austin and doing searches for different positions in the city of Austin and the principles have committed that they will lead Eid this search. In other words, we're going to get the people we actually talk to and the top people and they have committed that this will be their primary effort. They will not be taken on another big city search like this. This will be their priority. They've also

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their priority. They've also indicated that they want to make sure that each council member gets to know them. They will meet with each of you if they're selected Ed, they will meet with each of you individually only to get your point of view, get your characteristics that you're looking for and one of the other interesting and one of the winning points, I think, for this was they're willing to make access to data a very important part of this for each member. They have a search software platform that provides a client portal that doesn't appear that others do this, which would give us a 360 degree view of all of the elements. And in other words, they want to be a high part of a partnership and transparent. Nc the group that's making the recommendation to the full council is impressed with their commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. That was something that from the very beginning was important and it was important to them because

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was important to them because their very initial responses focused on that, that deep commitment. We were impressed with their commitment to transparency and impressed with their commitment to involving the community and success that they had shown in the past, including in Austin, I might add , with community involvement, that the cost is in your back up the contractor fees are estimated to be at \$75,000, working with purchasing, we are estimating that there would be an additional \$75,000 for expenses as and for when we get down to the point where we're bringing people in to be met with that potential city managers, the cost of that. So this would be for a total expenditure authorization not to exceed \$150,000. And again, that that includes the contractors

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that includes the contractors related expenses and costs associated with candidate travel stakeholder engagements that we would have and public engagements related to this effort. The one other thing that I will mention and then I'll be quiet, but I wanted to give you all the details of this, is, is that the council's position? And I think in each individual member of the council has been appropriate in suggesting that this is a big, big, big decision on behalf of the city. One of the biggest decisions that we

will take on as a group and as a council and so we want to make sure we take the appropriate amount of time and we don't limit ourselves. I know that it is one of those things that gets mentioned in pretty much every story about searching for a manager. When will we have the manager? And people want that in some sort of definitive determination. We've given ourselves plenty of time to take into account other items such as whether this process takes

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whether this process takes a while. We end up in a budget time and what that would do to budget. But I will tell the council on behalf of all of us that are making this recommendation that the key milestone loans that they have put out as potential that this firm puts out. And by the way, it was consistent with the other major firms we talked to would be that it would be about 12 to 17 weeks to get to the point of perhaps making an offer. And then the way they look at it is another 30 to 60 days for somebody to give notice and to do transition. So a total of around 16 to 21 weeks is the way they calculate it. I would only overlay on that out two things. One is, is we've got we've got we're going to have to if we

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we're going to have to if we vote on Thursday to go forward with this, then we're still going to have to negotiate with them and get it all finalized so that that may not happen overnight. And we've got Thanksgiving, the holidays and a new year. So that may add some time. And in other words, I really want to stress and that's the second point I want to make that we're not tying ourselves down, but it is important for us to have these sorts of timeframes in our head and be able to move forward. And so I wanted to lay that out as well. And with that, I am happy to and I think the members that are making this recommendation with you or anyone of us are happy to answer questions that you might have. Councilmember Allison Alter, thank you. >> I appreciate the work of the committee on this. This is one of our most important decisions moving forward. I wanted to make a couple suggestions as we go

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a couple suggestions as we go through this process that I think would be helpful. We as a full council have not had conversations directly with the city manager on a quarterly basis as we've done in the past. I think those are opportunities for us to sharpen our ideas collectively about what we want in a new city manager, as well as an opportunity to check in with our city manager. And I would suggest that that we begin doing that and have a few of those even potentially before the December break. So that we can have some of those conversations as we've each obviously had conversations with the city manager amongst ourselves about what we want. But for those of us who are not on the committee, we

have not necessarily had a collective opportunity to be talking about what we want moving forward. There is an ability to do that in executive session, working with our current city manager, and I think that would be a very

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think that would be a very important step for us to be taking both for this search and just as a good practice, good practice and good habit moving forward in terms of that accountability structure and system. The other thing that I wanted to ask is particularly with mosaic, if you can share they've worked closely with the city on various recruitments. I understand, but can you share some of the names of the folks that they have recruited in the past? >> Sure. Be happy to let me turn this on. Be happy to do that. So in they broke it down into two groups and I won't go through all the detail. And by the way, this is for a five year period they gave they were asked to give us information for the past five years. And if you look at city of similar size, they have worked in the city of San Jose for a housing director that's currently ongoing, that's about 931,000 people. They have worked

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931,000 people. They have worked with the king county and Seattle , which is 2.3 million on an ombudsman, an folks of that nature. And I could go through a couple of others. But the bottom line is they're a national firm. Second, with regard to city management. And I'll start with just the city of Austin. Since 2018, been they have they were involved in in 2018. Deputy city manager, the assistant city manager for health and environment and culture is what this indicates. The assistant city manager for economic development, city assistant, city manager for safety for mobility Katy. So they've had a number of involvements and what's not on this list is the chief Wright. And they they were involved in the last chief of police search that led to the hiring of chief Chacon. And for some reason I didn't have that on my list here. They've also

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on my list here. They've also been in Texas, been involved with a deputy city manager search in Burleson, assistant city manager in Denton, city, manager of Addison in deputy city manager, a different deputy city manager of Burleson city manager in Lewisville. So they've got a number of job experiences in the state of Texas related to city management. >> Thank you. I appreciate that overview. So reflecting back on our prior search for Mr. Cronk, I think one of the gaps we had is we as a council did not have enough time with the candidates. When we got to a certain point in time. So as you're negotiating the final setup, I think it's really important to figure out mechanisms so that we have more time. It may need

to be in subgroups. So that it's efficient, but but we do have to have enough time to be able to evaluate this person and devote

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evaluate this person and devote that time to that end. I would also recommend potentially considering carving out some dates for us to hold as a council in January or even in late December. You know, to the extent they're possible, it'll be much easier now than it will be as we get closer to do that. And I know that many of us would rather block off a day and cancel a meeting than than be scrambling at the last minute to be involved. And then can you also speak to the engagement processes that they outlined with the community? You know, when we did the prior search, we had community committee that was assisting and was involved in the interviews. There was very elaborate process as we can debate whether that was good or bad. But I would like to have a better sense of what they explained that they were envisioning would be ideal with respect to the engagement

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respect to the engagement process, given what they know about Austin, I would answer that question in three ways. >> One is, as a complete recognition that they know we need to have, and it was emphasized to them that they need to have a very robust process. That leads to the second thing, which is they want to visit with the members of the council about one of the things we're hiring them to do is we're hiring them to develop that robust process. They want to visit with the individual members of council so that they get a feel for what how they will be judged by the members of the council on making sure that they're providing that sort of thing. And then the third thing I will say is that I think they'll probably look to the partly we look to what they did with the community engagement process for the chief process, which when the feedback that

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which when the feedback that we've had is that that process was a robust process that had generally very good feedback back. But we can anybody can second guess council member I was there for that process. >> I would beg to differ, but well, I'm not surprised by that. >> So but the that that's why they want to visit with individual members before they but the bottom line is they are a national search firm that knows how to do these processes. They know the city that they're being invited to and being hired by. If we hire them. And the committee felt comfortable that they will be deferential to making sure we get what it is that we want in that process. Thank you. Councilmember vela. >> I just want to thank the mayor and my fellow committee

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mayor and my fellow committee members for a robust process that was a lot to review. And we had some really good applicants and had some tough decisions to make. But I was very impressed with mosaic. They're very knowledgeable about the city as an organization and they displayed an understanding of Austin as a community and that this is a very process oriented community that wants time to digest and vet out. That was immediately apparent as soon as they sat down, and that was an important factor in the decision. And also they understand the open records and open meetings, laws in Texas because they've done a lot of recruitments here. And so they're not going to be, I think, playing around and we're not going to be playing around with any kind of like, you know, trickery or whatever. This is going to be a straight up process. They understand that

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process. They understand that they were very upfront about that. And so I'm excited about finally getting this going and you know, hopefully we'll have a permanent city manager in the time frame that the mayor laid out, mayor pro tem, thank you. >> You yeah, this is a really interesting process because I hadn't been through a major city manager type of search procurement. Thank you so much for your guidance through all this. There was a very set process in all five of us had to be together in the room at the same time, having the same conversations. So there was there was no situation where someone only got part of the story or didn't hear one of the interviews. We all sat there together in real time and talked through some of the aspects that we all felt would be really important in this search. And one of them was absolutely transparency and community involvement and understanding. Long what what a big role this is and what a great city this is and how many passionate people there are that we want to make

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there are that we want to make sure that we're of service to. I also found them to be very straight to the point they understood how the city of Austin works. They they obviously understand a lot about what our constituents expect to see in such a high profile search. And so I wish them luck as we move forward through this process. Should council approve this on Thursday? But it was a very interesting young group to be able to work with and sort through some of the issues that we know this city is facing and how we think we can move forward in with a good recruitment firm. >> Councilmember Fuentes councilmember pool you want to add anything as members? >> Okay. I just wrap it up by saying it was interesting to have reflected back to us. I think from a national firms perspective of our city and the story that we tell

and our reputation and they were clear on certain aspects of what occurred a few years ago. I was there and held the line on the importance of accountability and

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importance of accountability and transparency. And we all work completely aligned. Those of us in the sub quorum with that regard. Actually on on all aspects of it, including the engagement of the community and the importance of public involvement. So I'm really pleased with the recommendation for mosaic. I hope you all will have will take the opportunity to meet with them individually as we intend to have happen and provide your thoughts directly to them before they get to launching the actual invitation to apply. Okay, great. >> Thank you. And I think the it's the recommendations. What, when, when we're visiting with them and putting together the final contract and all of that the time of the time that the council gets with candidates I think is a very important part of that. And we'll make sure we build that in. And that's part of the reason I'm glad you bring that up because it highlights

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that up because it highlights that while there's time frame goals we need, we want to make sure we take the time and get things the way we want. So that's and the holding dates I think is also when we visit with them and we figure out more specificity about where they think they'll be. I think that's a good suggestion because everybody's calendars are so, so crazy and we'll try to bring that back at some appropriate point. Any other discussion on item number 76? Mayor members? That concludes all of the items that are on the agenda for this city council work session. Good work session. A lot done. So thank you all. And without objection, we will adjourn the Austin city council work session at 10:36 A.M. On October 17th. Thank you all.