

City Council Work Session Transcript – 12/12/2023

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[9:00:19 AM]

Session of the Allston city council. We are meeting at Allston city hall in the council chambers, which is 301 west second street in Austin, Texas. And we have a quorum of the Austin city council present. The intention is to recess this work session and that way council member pool, who is the chair of the Austin energy utility oversight committee, can call that meeting to order and we will have that committee of the whole meet first, and then we will reconvene the work session of the council when that committee's meeting is adjourned . So without objection, I will recess at 9:00. The council work session and it's recessed until the end of the oversight committee meeting.

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>> Thank you, councilmember. I'll call back to order the Austin city council for the work session of Tuesday, December 12th. It is 11:06 A.M. Members. The order will go in is we'll have the briefings and hear from staff on those briefings as one item has been pulled. And that's item number 55. We will then have a very brief discussion related to appointments to intergovernmental entities and committee council committees, and then we will go into an executive session. So manager, I'll turn to you for briefings.

>> Mayor the first item is the demographics presentation. I think Briseno is going to tee it up and then we'll ask the demographer to make that presentation.

>> Good morning, mayor and council. Veronica Briseno assistant city manager. Today we're going to bring to you a presentation on our

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presentation on our demographics. The Austin metro area has been the fastest growing region in the country for over a decade, and the city of Austin is a major driver of that growth. Growth in the last decade is part of a long history of sustained growth for the city and the region. The demographics team at the planning department have put together information that looks at a number of demographic and socioeconomic characteristics coinciding with recent periods of fast and large growth for the city within the national, state and regional context. They also outline demographic shifts across the city and the implications of these demographic demographic shifts can have on different policy areas, including affordability, transit, infrastructure and access to health care and education. Our hope is that these demographics, the demographics team, can continue to provide demographic analysis that may be helpful in grounding your discussions as you embark on future decision and policy making. And with that, I'll turn it over to our city demographer, Dr. Laila Valencia. >> Good morning, Laila Valencia,

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>> Good morning, Laila Valencia, city demographer at the planning department, mayor, mayor pro tem and council members, thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to share some of our team's work as assistant city manager, Briseno noted. We hope you'll find this information useful in your policy and decision making. We have a short time, so I'm going to go ahead and get started really quickly. I'll share with you the history of growth in our city. Information on one of the main drivers of growth, the Austin economy. I'll also share some demographic and socioeconomic characteristics and show how these have changed over time. And lastly, I'll discuss concurrencies that characterize some of the challenges that face our city today. The city of Austin has a history of growth and fast growth at that. Some of the fastest growth took place in the early years, but in more recent history, the period of fastest growth took place between 1930 and 1940. Since

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between 1930 and 1940. Since then, the Austin population has been doubling its population every 20 to 25 years in 1970, we're just over a quarter of a million people between 1990 and 2000, we surpassed that half million mark in. Incidentally, this period is also the period of growth where the city of Austin added the most people adding over 190,000 during that decade. Then 20 years later, the 2020 census enumerated the city at 961,855 people just shy of a million. The latest estimates from the census bureau show we are now at over 2000 974,000, inching our way closer to that million mark, the most recent population gains for Austin have been smaller and at a slower rate than in the past. But as we look ahead, Austin's history of growth is projected to continue with internal projections indicate Singh Austin's population will surpass 1.13

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population will surpass 1.13 million by 2030. Although recent population gains for Austin are smaller than what they have been in the past, our city continues to grow in the last decade, Austin had an annualized growth rate of just over 2% every year. More recent estimates show that growth rate at closer to about 1. However Austin's growth is nonetheless noteworthy because this is not the case for most large cities. Every city larger than Austin except for Houston, Phoenix and San Antonio lost population since the 2020 census. In fact, of the nearly 800 U.S. cities with populations, over 50,000, 53% have lost population since the 2020 census and as much growth as we are seeing in the city, the metro region is growing even faster among large metros is the Austin metro has been the fastest growing metro for the last 12 years, while

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for the last 12 years, while Austin grew at a rate of about 1.3% since the last census, the metro area grew even faster at 6% and added over 137,000 people in the last two years. Austin contributed about 30% of the total growth in the metro in the last decade. But in the last two years, Austin's share has dropped to about nine 9. Now. The driving force behind the metro's recent growth is growth in suburban cities. Central Texas cities topped the list of the nation's fastest growing cities for the second year in a row. Georgetown was ranked the fastest growing city in the country. Kyle and Leander were ranked third and fourth. Leander and Georgetown were also among cities that added the highest numeric growth in the country. Leander had the eighth greatest numeric increase in Georgetown, the 10th. So these cities are not only growing very rapidly now, they're also adding large numbers of population. The rapid

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numbers of population. The rapid growth of the region, especially in the suburban cities, paired with a slower rate of growth in Austin, has resulted in a declining share of the Austin population. Relative to the total population of the region. Here we see Austin's share dropping from 59% in 1980 to 42% currently popular growth and housing growth are strongly associated and we see a similar pattern of diminishing share in housing unit growth between Austin and the region, between 2010 and 2020. Austin added more housing units than ever before 90,000 175,000 to be exact. But during the same time, the metro area added over 240,000 units. However our share of the total metro area units has been declining from over 50% in 2010 to 47% in 2020. And this is in part because housing units are being added at a faster rate in

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being added at a faster rate in the metro area. While the Austin rate has also been declining, we see new units added at a slower rate in Austin compared to the metro and also compared to past decades. Here we see Austin housing unit growth shown in the dotted line has gone down from 28% between 2000 to 2010 and down to 25.5% last decade. During this time, the metro added units at a rate of 34. Oftentimes when assessing housing unit production, we compare the rate of growth of new housing units to the rate of growth of the population. Ann here we see in the last decade, the population grew at a rate of 21. When we compare these two rates, we may be led to believe that housing unit production is meeting population needs. Now, first, let's distinguish between ten housing units. This includes all units vacant and occupied and households. These are

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and households. These are households that or housing units that are occupied by actual residents. When we look at the rate of growth of households, we see that household formation grew at a rate of growth of 26.5. In other words, household formation is outpacing growth in housing units. If we think of housing units as the supply and household formation as the demand, then we can see the mismatch in production to household formation. The contracting rate of new units has not only impacted Austin's housing share of the overall metro, but it is also not keeping pace with household formation. So you may be wondering what is driving all of this growth to the city of Austin? Ann and oftentimes when demographers are trying to figure out what's driving growth, we look at what are called components of population change. A population can change from births, deaths and migrations. So you add up all the births you subtract all the

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the births you subtract all the deaths, and you get natural change. Or in the case of Austin, natural increase. And when you add up everybody that moves into an area, you subtract everyone that moves out of an area, you get your net migration. Ann and what we can see here is that there's different implications for the type of, well, we can't really see that in this chart. But what I want to say is that there's different implications for the type of growth that an area can experience. So when we experience change mostly from natural increase, there tend to be lagged effects. So a baby is typically added to an already existing household. That child won't be relying and pressuring demand for services for a few years or so. However, when most of the growth is coming from migration, the impact tends to be much more immediate. Migration tends to occur during peak working ages, so about 25 to 35 years of age. When a new migrant arrives in an area, they are immediately looking for a

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are immediately looking for a new place to live. They are going to be connecting to utility hookups. They are going to be adding a car onto the roadways or taking up another another seat on public transit. So the impact from migration is much more immediate and what you can see here in this chart is that the growth in our region has largely come from migration about three quarters of the growth in 2021 came from domestic migration in particular, which is migration from people in other from other states, but also people from other parts of Texas as. So now let's talk about why people move here. Right? So what's driving everyone to move here and migration tends to be highly economic, right? So when we are thinking of moving to an area where typically considering the economy in that area, an and what's driving growth to Austin

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what's driving growth to Austin is migration because people are looking for jobs and there are plenty of jobs there for the Austin metro area had the highest growth in jobs over the last ten years, growing by nearly 1,550. When new workers arrive, they join a young workforce migrants tend to be of peak working age as I mentioned earlier, about 24 to 35. And this in part helps to keep our city, our population, Ann relatively young. It is important to note here that the national workforce has been declining since 2000. So as there are fewer workers at the national level, this can start to impact the Austin labor force as well as the associated migration into the area. And when recent migrants move here for jobs and join the workforce, they're joining a highly educated workforce with 52% of adults with a ba and above the fourth highest educational attainment level among large metros. Data also indicates that

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metros. Data also indicates that workers who move to an area are typically arrive with higher educational attainment levels. So they are increasingly making that workforce more educated. The Austin, the Austin economy is also an evolving economy, although technology and information sectors have been driving the Austin economy for well over 40 years, the roots of these sectors lie in partnerships sought out by the education sector in the late 1960s. The sector has evolved from its research based origins in the light in the late 1960s to the tech incubator hub that attracted many startups in the 90s. In the 80s, it was Dell. And to become and to become home now to tech giants like Google, Facebook and apple. So the economy has diversified from education and government sectors , and then the tech sector has also continued to diversify and when we look at our economy today, we see continued signs of economic diversification with

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economic diversification with the emerging health sectors at Dell medical school and the future. MD Anderson cancer center, as well as expansion of manufacturing at places like Samsung and Tesla and the government and education sectors continue to play an important role in today's economy in Austin as they help to shield the Austin economy from downturns. Downturns including the most recent volatility in the tech sector. And of course, once people are here, they want to stay for the natural beauty and the cultural and social connections to this point, we've been discussing jobs at the metro level, but it's important to note that the city of Austin remains the epicenter of the region's economy of the nearly 1.2 million total jobs in the Austin metro area, two thirds are in the city limits. Oftentimes when we think of the population, we consider the population that lives here. However, with the large share of the region's jobs being in Austin, this race is our daytime

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Austin, this race is our daytime population. Closer to over 1.16 million with implications for transit and transportation planning program and service delivery, as well as infrastructure and regional planning. Here we see that over 427,000 employees in the dark green live are employed in Austin. But live outside of Austin and over 143,000 in the lightest green live in Austin. But work outside of the city. So these are likely folks that are working in outside school districts in places like Samsung and Tesla and other employers in the region. And then lastly, we see over 295,000 in the mid colored green that live and work in Austin. And when we look at more recent data, we see growth in those employed in Austin but that live outside of the city. We are also seeing more who live in Austin and are employed outside of the city. Again, showing that pool of employers

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showing that pool of employers in the region, but outside of the city and then fewer who live and work in Austin. So what has this growth meant to the people living in Austin? In the next few slides, I'll focus on a few milestones and compare some demographic and socioeconomic characteristics during these times. So we'll start with 1990 depicted here in the 1989 photo of the city skyline from zilker park. During this time, both jobs and population are below that half million mark. The popular option is mostly is majority white. Fang families make up about 55% of households and incomes are around 25,000 or in \$22 over 57,000 a year. We move forward to the year 2000 depicted here in a 2002 photo from a similar angle at zilker park. You'll recall this time period was when Austin added its

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period was when Austin added its graded numeric increase of over 190,000 people. And we can see those jumps in the population and jobs numbers. We also see increased diversity and we also see educational attainment rise to 40. The median incomes grow to over. 42,000 or 72,000 in \$22, and the share of family households dropped slightly. Now we jump to 2010, depicted from the same view from zilker park in our characteristics, we see continued growth but at a slower rate, both for jobs and population. Ann. Although educational attainment rises, wages stay relatively flat and even experience a loss in real dollars when adjusted for inflation and the poverty level rises to 18.4, this is the tail end of the great recession. We can see some of its impacts still in these figures as additionally the share of family

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additionally the share of family households continues to drop. But another notable occurrence takes place during this time. Although Austin is now a major city population of color, this also marks a time the share but also the number of African-Americans in Austin drops as and we now we as we near today, we look at the same skyline from zilker park. I'm sorry you can't see this image. I'm not sure why, but we see continued growth in population and jobs numbers exceeding a million with educational attainment jumps from 44% to 60. And incomes rise to over 88,000 in today's dollars, we see increases in the share of renters and decreases in the share of family households. Our poverty rates have dropped to 11% and our city continues to diversify. However this diversification obscures the decline of Latino and black children between 2010 and 2020.

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children between 2010 and 2020. Now I have two more pieces of information I want to share with you and the first is based on a few maps. And so here we're looking at population change with the greatest areas of growth shown in areas in darkest blue, the greatest population growth can be seen in areas bordering Travis county. When we zoom into the area of the city of Austin and shown in the inset on on your right, we can see that there are areas where the city has encouraged, denser growth. That also experience great population growth. When we look at areas with the greatest development. So this is the number of housing units in the areas in darkest blue are all areas that added 1000 units or more. We found that those areas with a lot of development were mostly in the perimeter, but those that were in the perimeter were also areas that experienced

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were also areas that experienced increased diversity. Those areas within closer to the city center that also experienced great levels of development were driven by growth in the white population. Ann and experienced declines in the population. The share of the populations of color. There are two exceptions. The university of Texas area as well as the area around the domain where areas that are closer to the city center but also experienced greater diversification and now I'm going to share with you a series of maps that looks at the geographic distribution of different communities in Austin. This here is the map of the Asian population in Austin. The map on the left shows the areas with the highest, highest shares of Asian population shown in the in the deepest green shades. And the map on the right shows areas of growth in yellow and areas of decline in blue. And you can see that the areas with the highest shares of Asian population can

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shares of Asian population can mostly be found in northwestern parts of the city, as well as northwestern parts of Travis county. When we look at the population change map, we can see that there has been some decline in the north central parts of the city with increased growth in the northeast, eastern parts, northwestern parts and then southwestern parts of the city. So mostly suburban areas, but also significant growth around the university of Texas. This is a similar set of maps for the African-American population here. We can see that there are lighter shades of green shown, showing fewer areas with higher shares of African-American population. But those areas that do have the highest shares of African-American populations can be found just east of 183. And along 183, but mostly also in northeastern parts of Travis county. When we look at the at the population change map, we can see many more areas in dark blue indicating population

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blue indicating population decline in African-American population specifically in those areas in the central east Austin area or historically black neighborhoods. And we see that much of the increase in the black population Ann during this time between 2010 and 2020 has taken place in the northeast eastern part of the city and the northeast part of Travis county as well as far south Austin. This is a similar set of maps for the hispanic population. You can see there's much more areas that have 50% and above shares of hispanic population because it is a larger population in the city. But also you can see that the hispanic population tends to be concentrated all along. Tollway 130, as well as areas around the Texas edge area and north central parts of Austin. When we look at population change, we see those areas of population decline again in those central, eastern or eastern parts of central Austin.

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eastern parts of central Austin. And we can see almost a farther eastward movement of that eastern crescent with much of the hispanic growth taking place in eastern parts of Travis county, wrapping around from the north around to southeast. And then this is the set of maps for the non-hispanic white population with darker shades of green indicating 50% or more shares of white population, mostly located in western parts of the city. But if you note along I-35 to the east, there are now a number of areas where the white population makes up 50% or more. When we look at the population change map, we see that there's a bit of a redistribution of the white population in Austin with some areas in northwest Austin and the Ann and the university area in decline, whereas those areas in the suburbs to the northeast,

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in the suburbs to the northeast, northwest, east, southeast and southwest growing, but also many areas in that central part of east Austin now having larger shares and numbers of white population in. So as now I'm going to share some information on the on the concurrencies that we see in in Austin as we've noted in a number of slides, Austin leads in a number of socio economic indicators. And here we show how Austin compares to other Texas metros in terms of educational attainment and although Austin leads in the share of adults with a high school degree and above, and especially in the share of adults with a bachelor's degree in over, when we disaggregate this data by race ethnicity, we continue to see much lower educational attainment rates for blacks and hispanics, indicating that Austin shares the same education knell challenges that

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education knell challenges that we see in many other communities now. Education is highly correlated with incomes, and here we display income growth since 1990 and the growth of over 89% in just the ten the last ten years. The numbers in blue are adjusted for inflation. And as incomes have risen, not everyone is in our communities are starting from the same place again. Here we show how Austin leads in household incomes when compared to other Texas metro. But when we disaggregate this data by race and ethnicity, we continue to see that same racial disparity with white incomes. 1.4 times higher than black household incomes and 1.3 times higher than hispanic household incomes. And of course, household incomes are highly related to a person's ability to purchase a home. Here we show you the trend line of growth in

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you the trend line of growth in home prices in Austin from 1990 to 2022. I think we're all really familiar with the skyrocketing trend of recent years, so I'm not going to spend too much time describing sort of

what's taking place here. But we also know that these increases in the home prices have also impacted increases in rental prices with an increase of about 39% in the last ten years in real dollars. And of course, here is the one last indicator that I'll share with you is one where Austin does not lead other Texas metros, and that's home ownership. Home ownership in Austin lags other Texas metros. And when we compare median home prices across the metros, we can see that price could be a significant barrier to entry for many. But especially for hispanics and African Americans who also have lower incomes as some gains in home ownership have been seen for all groups, with the exception of African

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with the exception of African Americans. Home ownership gaps have actually widened for black Americans. Now, I'll briefly recap Erp by acknowledging some of the gains that we have seen through population growth. Our metro remains the fastest growing region in the country. Austin continues to grow even while other U.S cities see population loss. As we are seeing growth among all of our communities, it yielding increase diversity. Austin is leading in many socioeconomic indicators and has strong job growth and low unemployment. However the data also offer opportunities for reflection. Austin remains geographic and racially segregated. There is a farther eastward movement of the eastern crescent with increasing shares and numbers of population of color farther in the fringes. Although we are more diverse today, Austin experienced a decline in the number of black and Latino children. And although Austin leads in many socioeconomic indicators,

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socioeconomic indicators, significant racial disparities remain. And I don't know about you, but a lot of times when I look at these data, I'm sometimes is left with a feeling of cognitive dissonance. S like we're a city of contradictions. Burns but really we're a city of concurrencies how how can we see such strong growth? But also talk about displacement because our city is growing, but we are also seeing a farther eastward movement of the eastern crescent, which indicates that many families of mostly of color are moving farther away from our city's resources. How can we talk about a housing shortage when our skyline is filled with construction cranes? And yes, we added more housing units than ever before, but the rate has decreased compared to decades past, and its share is shrinking in the region. Given the city's status as the principal city in the fastest growing region in the country, plus its long history of growth and sustained growth, it is important housing

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growth, it is important housing unit growth is able to continue to keep pace with population growth, but also with household formation. And similarly, how are we becoming more diverse, but also losing black

and brown children? We saw growth among all of our communities yielding increased diversity for our city. However the patterns of growth that we're seeing in Austin are truly unique across the nation. Populations of color and across the state, populations of color are led growth in population. In Austin, we are seeing a different trend and most markedly we are seeing that in declines again of Latino and black children. I hope you'll agree that considering these demographic shifts and concurrences that our city is facing can be helpful when drafting policies and decision making, and I hope that we recognize that policies that we put in place today can have long standing impacts on our city and future communities and recognize that this was a lot of

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that this was a lot of information all at once. But please know that our team is happy to come before you again on a more regular basis with more focused analysis. We're here to help. Thank you.

>> Thank you. Council members. Any questions? Councilmember harper-madison.

>> I'll reserve most of what I would say because it would be statements, not so much questions, but think this was a magnificent presentation. She'll kill me for doing so. But I talked to your sister yesterday and said, oh my gosh, your sister's going to present for us tomorrow. That aside, I, I my constituents, folks who live in d1, there's so much here that is , it's stark, right? But it's not a surprise, you know, I've been saying since the moment I decided that I was going to be the person who had the opportunity to be the steward for this area, that we need to be taking our eyeballs and pointing them east to 183. And really putting some specific and

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really putting some specific and concerted effort into pouring resources and mean guess this is to my colleagues will be asking for an inordinate amount of resources to be poured into parts of town where we're literally saying Lang I'm not the really smart person at the podium is saying that we need to do so. And I'm not even just talking about to create some sort of balance. The amount of inequity is so great that I don't know that we can find a balance, but we certainly are going to have to take the opportunity as now the 10th largest city in the nation to, to intervene somehow. And so I appreciate that you offered to do these presentations more often. I'd like to ask, as the chair of the housing committee and, you know, if I'm offered the opportunity, I'd love to continue to hold that role. And this is one of those things that we'd like to take into consideration. Ann I do have a question about it. How closely our city demographer like the

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our city demographer like the information that you gather, collect and present to us, how closely is that aligned to the work that they're doing over with our partners at the county? So for example, you know so much of what it is that I'm concerned about and what commissioner Travillion is concerned about in precinct one is identical. It's the same people and we overlap one another so frequently that it just makes sense for us to be lockstep with one another as we move forward. So I wonder if the demography folks over there and you are working, you know, just like he and I should be, you know, we should probably work a little bit closer together.

>> You know, there's a there's a lot of room for improvement in that relationship. Erp I know that when the census data were released, we talked about, you know, holding a joint meeting. We didn't really get to that point. But I know, you know, we I meet with a number of different county folks. And even just today, I was called from their auditor's office to respond to some population

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respond to some population figures. And so we are in communication. But we're not, you know, working, you know, in lockstep. And so that's definitely something that we could work to do a little bit better.

>> I appreciate you acknowledging that, and it's something that I'd love to be able to help facilitate. I know my colleague and I all have a similar concerns, you know, something that struck me as I was watching you present the information is just sort of the alarming graphics, especially the colors for my district and for the councilwoman's district that, you know, like her area, especially as we're approaching valle and some of those areas and me, you know, pushing out decker and right at the border of Maynard and pflugerville where all my folks are moving. And so I just would like very much moving forward to maybe get some advice from you about how best to position, policymakers and considerations to present both to my colleagues and, and to our constituents about how this kind of information is

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this kind of information is exactly where we take the opportunity to, to really implement the kind of policy that will help us to act more proactively. So thank you for the presentation. Really, really appreciate it. Like I said, a lot of it was not surprising, but it really is helpful to see it on the big screen and to have somebody with your expertise, you know, present us the information. Thank you, mayor.

>> To follow up on that question from councilmember harper-madison, one of the things that we've asked the staff or the staff to begin to work on, it's not the we have made investments. Investments have been made on a variety of areas to try to address this issue of affordability, economic development at the neighborhood level. The fact is, is that we probably need a more coordinated and concentrated approach. I think you had an item on during the budget process for us to study the northeast sector in terms of what needs to happen in those areas in terms of public

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those areas in terms of public investment, in terms of private investment, so that we can raise that standard of what exists in that community with respect to employment, educational attainment. Et cetera. We probably need to be thinking about something in the southeast area. That's another concentrated area. And so what I've asked the staff is to pull all those pieces together and try to understand and an approach of economic development with a small E, not not attracting employers here, but what specifically can we do at the at the individual level so we can make progress and consistent with and in coordination Ann with those neighborhoods. And so this is something that we've I've already asked the staff to do. And I know that as we look at this, the issues of these statistics is to do the analysis of what's happened. We made bets. And as a result of those bets in terms of economic development, certain things happen and we need to figure out what new bets we need to make to change, to change that dynamic. And that's what we're in the process of doing right now.

>> Thank you very much, manager. And if I may follow up on your follow up, something that I believe would be a prudent step to take is, you know, any and

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to take is, you know, any and everything we can do around community land trust and around I mean, I've said before, let's just put a moratorium on everything east of 183. I know that's not practical necessarily, but I also recognize especially as our demographer is making reference to, you know, demographic changes specifically. But you know, you've talked about affordability and economic development. You know, while it is still affordable, east of 183, what can we do to just press pause and make certain that more people do have that financial runway to enter the like you talked about that the decline in African Americans being able to purchase homes. What can we do to sort of get out in front of more people having the opportunity to be a part of that home ownership sector and say often home ownership is not for everybody. And that's not just me saying that, you know, by way of affordability. That's me saying, you know, for me anecdotally as a new homeowner, the first time

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a new homeowner, the first time our foundation cracked or when the roof, you know, busted up in a storm or you know, your ac going out or the plumbing busted up, if you don't have the financial runway as a new home owner, I mean, it doesn't matter if you get the ability to own a home, if it goes to foreclosure because you can't keep up with the home ownership. There's so much involved in becoming a homeowner that really there's no home ownership 101 necessarily. So I think, you know, I really appreciate that you're recognizing, you know, both of our districts as places where we need to put more

resources. I appreciate the investments that have gone in, but we have to triple time those investments. And also we really have to do something, anything we can legally. Obviously within the constraints that we have placed upon us to just slow things down so we don't find ourselves in a position where central-east Austin, which once was primarily black, which once was the historic African-American heritage or cultural heritage district, it's now primarily white. And our demographer just told us that in no uncertain terms. And so now that we know

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terms. And so now that we know that that's exactly what will happen if we don't do something to intervene, I'd love for us to and speak about it drastically, like a crisis, the same way we talk about our housing crisis. It's a crisis that we are a major metropol city, losing our black population. We have to intervene in a way that it is urgent and emergency a crisis and so that that's what I would be looking to you for in terms of leadership and really helping us to guide our movements, both the councilmember and something tells me we'll be working together collaboratively a lot to really get out in front and more preemptively help, you know, to just say protect and preserve. But in a lot of ways, that's exactly what I mean. Protecting and preserve some sense of affordability. And for us to have the opportunity for latinx, Latino communities and black communities to stay in Austin, I love my friends in pflugerville and Maner and Buda and niederwald and Kyle and San Marcos, but I'd like very much for black and brown folks to continue to live in the city of Austin. Thank you. Thank you,

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Austin. Thank you. Thank you, councilmember.

>> Councilmember Fuentes, thank you.

>> And just want to echo the sentiments from my colleague here, councilmember harper-madison, and expressing my support for the city to be aggressively land banking right now at this point to ensure that we have affordable housing options for everyone in our community. Thank you, Dr. Valencia, for your presentation today. I just sent you an email requesting a district two specific update, so I'm hoping we can coordinate that in January. Something that stood out to me in addition to the acknowledgment that our black and brown communities are being displaced further east in the area is that 49% of our workforce work in Austin but live outside the city and 34% of our workforce live and work in Austin and that to me was pretty striking to see those numbers as part of your presentation. Ann so just wanted to surface that.

>> Thank you. Councilmember mayor pro tem, thank you.

>> I really appreciate this presentation. It made me start thinking about some topics like families and access to childcare care, education, income by by

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care, education, income by census tract, whether that's going up or down. And then generally any jobs that people are filling. I'm curious about employment versus unemployment, but also what kind of job sectors are being represented by these moves? We talk a lot about, you know, folks who are teachers and nurses and first responders not being able to afford to stay in Austin. And so I'm very curious to see if the data matches. Does your tool set cover those topics? Is that something that we can go and dig in and look into ourselves is absolutely right.

>> Now we're actually updating our website to include the 2022 estimates that were just released by the census bureau earlier this month. And so in that you'll in that update, you'll will include median income, median household income by census track. So you'll be able to compare at the neighborhood level. And we also have a story map that we're going to be releasing. We've released it a series and we've released the first two focusing

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released the first two focusing on age trends, another one focusing on on housing units and households. And this next one will be focused on what kinds of households live in Austin. And so we'll we'll delve into households with with children, households with seniors, multi generational households, household with same sex couples. And so it'll have a lot of rich information. And we typically in those story maps, we include, you know, sort of city level information, relative to the metro, to other peer cities. And then we also dive into the neighborhood. And so you should be able to get, you know, a little bit of everything in that. So we should be releasing that right before February. If not in early February as well.

>> That's fantastic. I look forward to that information because I'm also curious about some of the conversations we're having around anti-displacement and or aging in place as we talk about our housing policies over, you know, the decades that this conversation has been going on and very curious to see what is real meaningful change and

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real meaningful change and making sure that like in district eight, people can age in place in a smaller home and trying to make sure that's more available to people. And I'm sure every district has certain nuances that folks are looking for. Thank you. Thank you.

>> Mayor pro tem, any other questions or comments? Yes. Thank you very much. Appreciate that. That'll take us to item B briefing on the Barton springs road bridge over Barton creek and let me call on good to make this presentation and we'll try to be concise and to the point.

>> Thank you, mayor and council, Robert good interim assistant city manager. I know that we've gone long today, so I'm going to do a brief, real brief introduction. This bridge has been on our radar for quite some time in fact, it's been the top five bridges of concern in looking at rehabilitation or replacement since 2000. Previous tour of duty came in 2008. This bridge was spotlighted to me at that time that it's something an

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that time that it's something an infrastructure piece we needed to look at over the years, we have maintained that and we've been trying to extend the life of that bridge since since again, since I came in oh eight. It's the risk profile during that time was such that we could extend the life of. But I'm going to tell you today something I don't usually do with mayor and council. I'm going to put a different hat on today. As a professional engineer, I'm concerned it's going to take a while to design and replace this bridge. And so we need to make some decisions and move on. So don't do that often, but I wanted to put my at on today 2018 and 2020, the community supported us in that and put design fund in bond program. So we have funding to do this design and we're unique today. We don't normally do this in a bond project, but in 2020, the council resolution said, come back to council to approve these options before you proceed with the design. That's what's on your agenda for Thursday. Eric Bailey is going to walk through the analysis that we've done on a preliminary preliminary engineering report.

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preliminary engineering report. We looked at several alternatives, including a minor touch rehabilitation, structural rehabilitation to complete replacement. He's going to walk through those today. Thank you.

>> Good morning. Good morning, everyone. I'm Eric Bailey, acting deputy director, capital delivery services. Mayor mayor pro tem council members, appreciate your time today. And again, I will try and move through this quickly as well. But there are some definitely key points that we want to touch on as we move forward. So first, a quick overview of the Barton springs bridge, originally constructed in 1926 as a two lane bridge and expand it in 1946. Obviously there are multiple users who enjoy this bridge on a daily basis, including a 20,000 vehicles per day. It's a key access point into zilker park and a contributing structure to the historic designation of zilker park. First thing I wanted to go over is sort of a general project schedule overview. This

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project schedule overview. This is for any project that we do as a capital improvement project. We do what's first called a preliminary engineering report. And what that consists of is staff oftentimes hiring a technical expert consulting a consultant to go through the different technical reports that are necessary in order to develop options for the project. And this is excuse me, this is for not only bridge projects, but for any project in general. We rely on their technical expertise to gather the information that's necessary to develop alternatives that we can then look at and eventually come forward with a recommendation for that alternative. As Robert mentioned earlier, right now we are at this council action in December of 2023. We generally don't go to this phase. The reason that we're here is because of the language that was included in the 2020 bond program. After we move forward with our authorization for design, we will go into that design phase, including permitting public meetings, boards and commissions and final design before we are then back

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design before we are then back before you for a recommended Ann for award for construction. So this is not we're starting construction tomorrow. This is an authorization to move forward with the recommended alternative to move that into design. So a quick overview of the current conditions. You can see some pictures up here on your screen. These are typical of what you can see from the surface. The upper left is what's called spalling concrete, where basically chunks of concrete are falling off from sort of the from the reinforcing steel. You can see the rebar in there on the right hand side. You see what's called delamination of a beam. That's where the concrete is flaking off. Both of these are due to structural loading conditions, repetitive cyclical loading of vehicles, particularly busses and trucks driving across the bridge. There's cracking evident in the deck, which is the driving surface. What happens there is then water is allowed to infiltrate into the roadway, which would cause additional damage and as well, anyone who's walked or biked across the bridge knows that the curbs are very high, very narrow, and the railings are very low. The bridge does not currently meet Ada standards, as this is a case

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Ada standards, as this is a case where it is grandfathered in and until we do major work on the bridge, then we would need to bring that up to standard. It's important to note that the transportation public works department issued a memo to mayor and council and posted signage about load restrictions on the eastbound traffic here that heavy vehicles must use the outer lanes as they move forward . It's also important to note that the bridge is not a public safety issue at this point. We are trending in that direction. We obviously want to take action before we get to the point where we have to post the bridge for reduced bus and heavy traffic loading across the entire bridge . So steps completed. This is again a high level. We've coordinated with various city departments, including transportation and public works. Who is the asset owner in this case? They own and maintain the bridge capital delivery services, which works on the capital delivery project, watershed protection parks and rec, Austin water. We have hired a aecom, which is a world renowned engineering firm that

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renowned engineering firm that does bridges all over the world. They were hired through a competitive process, competitive solicitation. And then we've also consulted with various regulatory agencies the us army corps of engineers, Texas department of transportation, Texas historic commission, as well as developing all the technical reports you see here. I won't get into those in specifics, but there's a lot of background work and a lot of options that have been in the works since, you know, the mid 2000 when this project first came about. In addition to all the technical reports, we also held a community meetings in April of this year. You can see from the input here community was relatively split in terms of the rehabilitate option versus replacement option at 30% each for reasons that I'll get into later. The no change option is not really an option that is a viable alternative for this project. So into our bridge analysis here, four options were developed from those technical memos for preliminary engineering reports. The do nothing option is always

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nothing option is always something that's considered. We also considered a light touch rehabilitation, a full rehabilitation rehab station and a bridge replacement under the bridge replacement. We considered a couple of different design alternatives there. Some structural analysis and mobility analysis that took place. We went through and evaluated the spalling concrete that you saw there, the deterioration of the steel and the interior structure. That means we took core samples of the bridge deck, analyzed those for chemical composition, to see if there was any deterioration of the interior steel, evaluating the cost benefit of the different options, ADA compliance and as well as pedestrian and bicycle access. So the findings of those basically in the report, the strong culture that we have in place as it's been restricted now, is safe for public use at this time. However there if no action is taken, there is the potential for the elimination of bus and heavy truck traffic on the bridge, which means no busses, no big trucks going across the Barton springs bridge

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across the Barton springs bridge because it will at that point present a safety issue. Our engineers and all of the technical reports that they went through also determined that the deterioration of the existing bridge has reached a stage that cannot be ignored and the level of repair that is required eliminates the possible Katy for a lighter touch rehabilitation option. The reason behind this is that we've found evidence of deterioration of the reinforcing steel inside the bridge deck. Therefore, any meaningful structural replacement would include replacing the deck altogether. This is a picture that shows when we went out for public comment and public input. This is the preferred align that you can see improved

pedestrian and bicycle circulation on either side of the bridge. Improve connections into zilker park, the number of traffic lanes are maintained as currently stands two in each direction and also improvements to the intersection on Morton on the east side of the bridge there. So we've talked about why we can't do the light touch. The

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we can't do the light touch. The next option that we looked at was a bridge rehabilitation option. What that would involve is removing the existing bridge deck from the structure, adding new arch piers that are on both the north and the south side and then replacing the bridge deck with the wider design that was shown in the previous slide. Now, if we do that less than half of the original structure will remain open. And the view of the arches that will remain will be obstructed by the additional arches to accommodate widening the deck. One important piece to note here is if we do this option, the expected useful life is about 50 years versus 75 plus years for a new bridge. The cost is about the same for a replacement versus this level of rehabilitation. So next, we go into the bridge replacement options. We studied three sub options under bridge replacement, a single span, a double span and a triple span. The single span is the most complicated and the most expensive. The double span is sort of in the middle and then the triple span, it has the same

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the triple span, it has the same level of useful life. It's the least structurally complex bridge. It's visually open along the creek and it is the easiest to construct among the various options that we've considered. It is important to note that all of these replacement options will require careful environmental and mitigation strategies to minimize those construction impacts. Now we will get to those strategies once we go through the permitting process and have a recommended design to move forward. This is a high level option evaluation summary of the four options that we considered. Again rehabilitation single span, double span and triple span options with estimated costs, useful life and pros and cons in here. So again, the recommended option from staff and the engineering, our engineering expert is that the replacement option is the most cost effective and efficient method to address the structural challenges the mobility needs. The environmental sensitive city, while recognizing the

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city, while recognizing the importance of this bridge and this corridor in the city. The triple span bridge is the least complex as the most visual openness from the creek has the best constructability and has the lowest cost. Which is why we're moving this forward. In terms of the staff recommendation, this is a rendering of the triple span option. You can see on the left hand side, the zilker eagle train, as well as

improved access under the bridge for the pedestrian hike and bike trail. And then finally, I want to talk to you quickly about next steps. It's important that we've begun the coordination process with all of the relevant jurisdictional regulatory agencies, including Texas historic commission, U.S army corps of engineers, city of Austin development services. So that includes watershed and Austin water and parks and all the various city agencies. Additionally as we move through the design process, we will go to boards and commissions as needed at a high level. You know, environmental commission,

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know, environmental commission, mobility parks. We've already spoken to mobility a couple times about this and included additional community outreach as we move forward as well. In terms of the impacts. So one important thing to note to the 2020 bond funded this project through design staff is currently looking at developing options to fund the construction when that that comes to be, which is about a two year design process. And with that I will open it up for questions.

>> Mayor pro tem.

>> Thank you, mayor. Have a couple of questions. One of which is going to be about ecological improvements. I know there's been a lot of conversation we're having with watershed protection and parks department trail conservancy, folks of that nature. And there's a lot of talk about Barton creek itself. And so how is this going to fit into some of the other ecologic improvements that are needed and can we possibly have this contract pay for some of those needed improvements?

>> Yeah, obviously construction is not funded yet, so that's a question there. But yes, as part of the design process and permitting process will be coordinating with all the various city departments as well as, you know, any other

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as, you know, any other stakeholders in terms of potential improvements that we'd like to see as we move forward with this project.

>> Thanks. And I do appreciate the slide that you put in there about the design phase and just understanding that even though there's renderings being showed right now, there may still be some tweaks along the way just to make sure know the visual esthetic of this bridge is something that's really important to people. And so I'm glad to hear that there's going to be some more community involvement and input along the way. I have another one about the part you mentioned, the east side of Morton. Is that all going to be in the same contract as well? Because I know there's been some attention paid to that over a number of years as well because of the embankment issues at that intersection. Can you talk a little bit about those needs?

>> Yes, the intersection of Morton all the way across to the Umlauf sculpture garden is included in the scope of this project and improving that intersection in supporting the hillside there. I will mention one thing, too, that I forgot to mention in the presentation is that we have been coordinating with the Texas historic commission on the

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historic commission on the section 106, which is basically how the bridge interacts with the park historic designation. They've given us a preliminary nod to say, yes, you know, we can support a replacement structure, what exactly that looks like as we move forward will be worked on during the design phase and work in coordination with the historic folks there.

>> Okay. Thank you for that information. And I'll just reiterate what I've said a few times before, but I really appreciate your words and just talking about the length of time that this has been a conversation with the engineers and trying to make sure that whatever path is chosen forward, that it is something that's going to provide the health and safety of the travelers, no matter which method they're using across there. I have grave concerns that there could be impacts to bus service if things get to a place where we can no longer have people taking the bus to the park. I know that's a conversation that has come up multiple times about the need for people to be able to have all those methods of access to get to Zilker park as opposed to just driving alone. And I'm worried that if we impact bus

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worried that if we impact bus access or shuttle access in the future that we could be going against what those those desires that people have voiced and that I agree with as well.

>> Thank you, Mayor Pro Tem Councilmember Kelly.

>> Thank you.

>> So from the presentation you talked about AECOM's involvement in the process. Could you explain about how they were tasked with both assessing the status of the bridge, but then also the construction of the bridge? Because I guess my concern is, did we talk to any historic bridge type people guess about this? Yeah I just think it's interesting that AECOM did both parts of that. And so I was wondering what that process overall looked like. A little more detail. Yep.

>> And so the, the professional services for the engineering side, this is AECOM engineering. This is not construction. This is their engineers. It's a full scope for the design phase of the project. And so the historic to speak specifically to

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to speak specifically to historic, we've had those coordination meetings with the Texas historic commission in terms of what some proposed ideas would be, what we can and what we can't do. And so has been the technical expert on their in terms of their team that they've developed to work on this bridge. They have specific, sub consultants who are experts in the historic coordination, working on historic structures and contributing structures such as this one to something like zilker park and like I said, we can't we can't move forward into the details of what exactly that means without having the go ahead to move forward in the design process. So ultimately we need to get a permit from the Texas historic commission to do anything on the bridge. That's a significant rehabilitation that's needed. And so that coordination takes place during the design phase, which we need to move into and which is why we're before you on Thursday. So before anything actually happened, the Texas historical association would have to approve the commission.

>> The commission?

>> Okay. Sorry about that.

>> The commission would review and would review and approve the plans and they would provide

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plans and they would provide comments mean my experience used to be in in California, don't hold that against me. But I worked on the California incline, which is a famous bridge that goes up a bluff in Santa Monica. And it was a the bridge itself was a, on the historic register. And what we did is we worked with the state historic preservation office there to replicate the look of the railings and the end condition. So from the from the pacific coast highway, it looked the same going up. You couldn't tell that we put an all brand new structure in there with improved pedestrian and bicycle lanes and things like that. That was badly needed because that was another bridge that was in danger of falling down. So there are things like that where we can determine what the critical contributing factors are from the bridge with the historic commission, and they can provide that input and ultimately they do review and approve the plans that would move forward into construction. Thank you.

>> Do we know how long traffic will be shut down during the construction?

>> No. Oh, we're going to maintain traffic the entire time during construction. The way we're going to do it, no matter which weather we go with the rehabilitation option or the replacement option, we will build the outside lanes first and shift traffic to those lanes

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and shift traffic to those lanes after they are completed. And then work on the inside lanes of the bridge. So there will not be any interruption to pedestrian, vehicular or bicycle traffic during construction. Okay.

>> And my office in particular is interested. We don't have to go into it now, but we're interested in the maintenance records on the bridge. If you could provide those to us, we'd be very thankful.

>> Yeah, and we can do that. We have folks from transportation public works here who I know have have all those records that are great.

>> Well, thank you very much.

>> Thank you. Councilmember, any other questions or comments? Councilmember harper-madison.

>> Thank you, mayor. Quick question. Just I'm curious to know how much of the \$102 million bond went to earlier it was made mention that some of the bond funding went specifically for design, but we weren't able to find anywhere. How much of that went for design?

>> Yeah. So the 2020 bond set aside \$102 million for what's called the large bucket. And so there are several projects that are in there right now. We've assigned \$10 million to the design of that 102. Like I said,

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design of that 102. Like I said, there are other projects that are moving forward through the process that are funded by that as well.

>> Thank you. Appreciate it.

>> Thank you, councilmember. With that. Thank you very much. Appreciate it. Thank you for the presentation and briefing. We'll now go to an item that was pulled, item number 55, which was pulled by councilmember Kelly. And I'll recognize councilmember Kelly on item number 55, as a matter of.

>> Thank you for that recognition.

>> Ann mayor, is staff available for questions? Okay, perfect. I've heard some concerns from the community, mostly related to how we're expanding the contract and allocating more money towards this. And so I was wondering if you could talk about about some of the successes that urban alchemy in particular has had and the work that they're doing with this funding.

>> Awesome. Thank you, councilmember, and thank you for the opportunity for us to elaborate on this contract. You know, we're really excited to have urban alchemy as our partner managing the arch and then soon to manage the arch annex. The former Salvation Army building. You know what we've

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building. You know what we've seen since urban alchemy has taken over. The management of this site is a huge transformation in that part of downtown. I'm sure many of us can remember the pre urban

alchemy days when you would drive through downtown near the arch and you would see people kind of hanging out with not too much to do or maybe things going on that we don't want people to do. And now you don't see that anymore. I mean, quite frankly, the feedback that we received from our downtown neighbors is that they're ecstatic about urban alchemy being there. They're also very communicative with us. Whenever there's things going on at the arch or in the facility or around the facility, they let our staff know so quickly and we're able to work together to resolve issues. We've had successful outcomes from the shelter clients who've been able to move on from the arch into permanent housing placements and ultimately on a trajectory to in their homelessness. And we can get you those specific numbers if you'd like. I don't have that in front of me today, but by and large, we're really excited to have urban alchemy as our vendor. We're also really excited about the opportunity to work with

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the opportunity to work with them on this campus in downtown and ensuring that it's a successful place for our clients and that we're being a great neighbor for our downtown community. Well I know that my staff and I have visited the arch since urban alchemy took over, and they seem to be doing a really great job.

>> And I hear good things about them from our downtown community as well. So thank you for the opportunity for to be able to come up and talk to us today. Thank you, mayor.

>> Thank you, councilmember. Councilmember Allison alter.

>> Thank you, Mr. A quick question in the rca, it looked like for the second year of the contract that there was a 20% match requirement. It can you explain how that will work and what will that will fund? It's not something we normally see. I welcome it. I just wanted to know more.

>> Sure.

>> One of the recommendations from the shelter assessment that we conducted was a recognition that we were paying 100% of the cost to operate our shelters, and that seemed out of alignment with what other cities do and

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with what other cities do and what some of the national best practices are. And so moving forward, we are asking and going to begin actually requiring our shelter operators to do some type of match when it comes to the funding, whether that's a raise that they're able to secure from philanthropic sources or an in-kind contribution that they'll make to operating the shelter. And so you'll start seeing those match requirement languages in our shelter contracts as we move forward.

>> Great. Thank you.

>> No problem.

>> Anything else? Members thank you very much. Mr. Gray. Thank you, sir. Appreciate the work you're doing. And members that will take us to a council discussion that'll be very brief, but it's related to appointments to intergovernmental entities and council committee memberships. As the council is all aware, we're coming up on the first of the year and that's when we make appointments to our city council committees. We also make appointments of members, the mayor and council to intergovernmental entities. My office has provided you all a copy of the various committees

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copy of the various committees and committee memberships, including the chairs and vice chairs, as they currently exist. We've also provided a list of intergovernmental entities and what we did with that was made suggestions based upon the appointments of the past. We don't unless somebody wants to talk about it today, which everybody's welcome to do that. Talk about what they might want to do. What I would suggest that everybody do is as best you can, please go to the message board, use the message board. That worked pretty well last year and then we will probably have a meeting at the first of the year at a work session like this where we will do like we did last year and kind of work through anything that needs to be worked out. Guess would be the way I'd say that. Councilmember Fuentes, thank you.

>> Thanks, mayor, for setting out this list of committee memberships. Colleagues do want

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memberships. Colleagues do want to flag am looking to reduce my committee membership workload for next year. So if anyone is interested in serving on the mobility committee, that would be a spot that I'd be willing to leave open the. I'm also chair of the community advancement network board. And next year I will be the will still serve on the executive committee as past chair. But would also be looking to see if another colleague wants to join the can board so that we can ensure a city of Austin presence.

>> Thank you. That's that's exactly the kind of thing we need to have happen. So and I would ask you repeat that on the message board and then everybody just reply to that. So that we get kind of a running discussion if you will. Thank you very much, councilmember Fuentes, mayor pro tem.

>> Thanks, mayor. I will add that I'm enjoying a lot of the committees that I get to serve on. There are two that I do work on that both involve air

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on that both involve air quality. There's one with cog that I really enjoy because there's a lot of conversations around monitoring long term and federal funding and air quality standards. But there's another one that I actually also love. I just feel like my workloads gotten a bit heavy and it's the clean air force and they do a lot of work with private companies who are trying to be better stewards of our air quality too. So it's a really interested niche of, you know, what our city staff knows about clean air quality and sustainability, and then how the private sector can step up. So I'm happy to keep serving, but if that is of any interest to any of my colleagues, I'd be happy to share what I know and see if that's appropriate for you.

>> Excellent. Thank you. Mayor pro tem, anything else on that item? Okay well, then, members, we will now go into a closed executive session. The city council will go into a closed session to take up three items per pursuant to section 55107. One of the government code. The city council will discuss legal issues related to E one dirty martin's et Al versus mayor Kirk

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martin's et Al versus mayor Kirk Watson et Al. Cause number one N 23 008105 in the four 55th judicial district of Travis county, Texas, item E equity action versus Jesus Garza et Al. Cause number one N. 2003 008687 in the 201st judicial district of Travis county and pursuant. To 551074 of the government code , we will discuss personnel issues Luz those are related to item number. 102, which relates to the approval of a potential resolution appointing Susanna Carbajal to the Austin convention enterprise board. Is there any objection to going into executive session on the items as they were announced? Hearing none. The council will now go into executive session for members of the public. What

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for members of the public. What we will do is at the end of the executive session, we have no other items on our agenda for this council work session. At the conclusion of the executive session, I will come back into an open session, come back into the chambers, into an open session, and adjourn the Austin city council's meeting. Austin city council meeting. We are now going into executive session. It is 12:15 P.M. Tuesday, December 12th. The Texas government code. We

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The Texas government code. We call us back to order at 128 on Tuesday, December 12th, without objection, the work session of the Austin city council of December 12th is adjourned at 128. Thanks everybody.