

# Austin Energy Utility Oversight Committee (AEUOC) meeting Transcript – 4/30/2024

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[9:01:57 AM]

That's good. Great without objection, I will now recess the work session and call to order the eoc meeting at 9:02 A.M. And I will shift out my pages. Mayor pro

[9:03:01 AM]

shift out my pages. Mayor pro tem, council member Ellis and Fuentes are online now. I see okay, so we have council member Ellis and council member Fuentes with us virtually. Thank you. All right. I've called to order the eoc meeting at 9:02 A.M, and it looks like we have a quorum for this meeting. And let's see what we have here. City clerk, do we have public communications ? It looks like we have seven people signed up. 7 or 8 signed up to speak. One remote and seven in person. Is that correct ? Yes. We have. That's correct. All right. Clerk, would you like

[9:04:02 AM]

All right. Clerk, would you like to, to handle that, please?

>> The first remote speaker is Randy Smith.

>> Randy, can you unmute on your end, please? Can you guys hear me?

>> I can we can hear you.

>> Okay, great. Thanks very much for this opportunity to speak. My name is Randy Smith and my family and I are homeowners in district three. So thanks to council member Velasquez for being our

representative, I'd like to speak about the resource plan and express some concerns about the direction that Austin energy has been headed lately, you know, Austin has a great opportunity to play an important role in addressing climate change for city's Progressive values. Solar and wind are abundant in here in Texas, and I'm excited to. Austin can show leadership on the world stage by proceeding to be a carbon neutral city. This isn't something that's just my opinion. The people of Austin has voted and passed resolutions multiple times over the years, giving exactly this direction to

[9:05:03 AM]

giving exactly this direction to the city and to Austin energy. But I'm having concerns that Austin energy is not following these mandates in good faith lately. You know, I was very discouraged with the recommendation for building a hydrogen power plant that would burn natural burn dirty natural gas for the foreseeable future. Clearly nonstarter. I feel like it should never have been suggested. There's also, in my opinion, an attitude of nonchalance expressed by them about their lack of progress divesting from coal plant, those are just two examples of several that have concerned me. But I want to talk about the present day, in today's timeline, we see another delay by the Austin energy leadership. There's been plenty of delays in the past. I believe what we need is a community based resource plan update carried out as soon as possible to address problems like climate change, energy bill costs, and air pollution, the PUC, the electric utility commission, has made recommendations for a resource plan, which I really liked. I strongly support them. I think they're great. And Austin energy needs to follow the timeline already agreed to by the PUC at the last meeting to finish their

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the last meeting to finish their draft by September so that you, the city council, has enough time to understand and read this plan before voting on it. There's a lot of community engagement in this delay. That's a great goal, but first of all, there's been plenty of community engagement, both recently and of course, in the past with the resolutions that I mentioned, I feel like the city of Austin has been clear about what they want and be this. This kind of delay should not take five months. Instead, I would suggest maybe have these meetings in may and June. Then Austin energy and the edc can reach an agreement on an update to the plan by September. That would be a better timeline. So the additional five months of delay feels like it could be a slow walking tactic. It's just increasing my worry that the Austin energy leadership is not able to proceed in their role as good faith actors, and city council has a lot of leverage, so my three requests would be one. The edc resource plan recommendation should be the foundation of any recommendations going forward. Two please, no more unnecessary delay into this process. Let's get the update to September by September. As previously agreed. And three, you know, I would seriously consider making changes to the leadership of Austin energy. They've lost a lot of my trust in as many of

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lot of my trust in as many of the people of Austin as well. So again, thank you so much for giving me this opportunity to speak.

>> All right. We'll move to in-person speakers. The first person is Al Braden.

>> And if you could call 2 or 3 names so that folks can come toward the front and be ready to hop up to the microphone after each speaker. Mister Braden, welcome. And who do we have next?

>> The next up would be Kiba White and Camille Cook.

>> Miss Kiba White here. Okay, great. And Miss, Camille Cook. Very good. Okay. Mr. Braden, you have three minutes.

>> Good morning. Chairwoman Pool, council members and Austin energy staff and a shout out to council member Chito Vela for stepping up as vice chair. Thank you. I'm Al Braden, the district seven voter as a member of the working group, say with certainty that our work is not finished and is ever more urgent. Austin has a proud

[9:08:03 AM]

urgent. Austin has a proud history on green energy and climate issues, punctuated by periodic attempts by Austin energy to build a new gas plant. The last was in 2015, leading to large solar see gas, no demonstrations, and this old T shirt council resolved to never build another fossil fuel plant or nuclear plant this year. We were surprised by yet another gas plant proposal, first branded as green hydrogen, and now apparently rebranded as flex fuel. A fossil fuel plant is a fossil fuel plant. No matter what the working group recommends a mix of battery applications and chemistry to solve our important load zone requirements. While the dispute between batteries versus gas plant is very significant, I must say it's the only major area of dispute in the generation plan. We agree on the critical need for more local resources. Solar and batteries, more utility scale renewable energy and batteries, improved transmission and distribution

[9:09:05 AM]

transmission and distribution infrastructure to lessen congestion costs and price separation use of Biden era funds to speed electrification in low income weatherization and energy efficiency. New building codes using heat pumps to eliminate strip heaters and air conditioning in air conditioners and water heaters. Most importantly, we agree on ending the use of fossil fuel in all our electric generation by or before for 2035. So I ask you, council members, let's get to work. But please also consider a much longer plan. This plan only goes to 20, 35, 11 years in an industry where purchasing key items like high voltage

transformers could take six years and transmission projects a decade. This plan looks only at immediate needs. We need a strategic vision for Austin's energy, one that looks at important long term needs and transmission topography, generation capacity, citywide electrification, distributed resources, code changes,

[9:10:07 AM]

resources, code changes, electric transportation, and even load growth generation in length. Projects Austin water had the courage to look 100 years out, providing important direction on code changes. Purple plumbing, water reuse, aquifer storage, and a whole host of serious topics that make water availability for the future of Austin even possible. I ask you, as council members, to form a new task force for a long term thinking about Austin's energy needs to help guide our ongoing ten year operational plans 25, 50 or 100 years forward. Thank. Driving in the fog without it. Thank you very much.

>> Next speaker is kayba white. Good morning, miss white. Thanks for being here. You have three minutes.

>> Thank you. Good morning chair pool and council members. My name is Caleb white. I'm speaking on behalf of public citizen's Texas office and I'm going to echo a lot of the

[9:11:08 AM]

going to echo a lot of the comments that you just heard from all brydan. We are looking to all of you for leadership to move the timeline of this plan forward so that we can actually get to an end point and allow Austin energy to move forward with the important work of implementing the plan of course, they're constantly working on programs and projects to implement the existing plan, but you all identified in 2022 that there is a need for an update to that vision because of changing circumstances. That truth still remains. And also remaining is the urgency of the climate crisis. And I know that you all know that I see you making the statements and standing for climate action. And this here with this resource plan, is one of the most important ways that the city can really put that, that ethos and that vision, that desire into practice. We need to update this plan. We should not

[9:12:08 AM]

update this plan. We should not kick it down the road until possibly 2026, because we don't know how many sessions or special sessions or whatever else we're going to want to avoid. There is an opportunity in front of us right now. A lot of work has been done. You all have had a lot of conversations. There's no need to stop and then have to really totally restart again. And the PUC passed a resolution last month indicating that we want to have recommendations come before us by our September meeting. If not

before, and that would give you all then the fall to be able to take this up and give it its due consideration. So that's really my ask for you today, is to send a clear signal to Austin energy that you do want to vote on this plan, that you do want to adopt a resource plan that is updated to reflect our current reality. The urgency of the climate crisis, our air pollution problems here locally and to set this public engagement in a way

[9:13:09 AM]

this public engagement in a way that will allow for that to happen. It's April now. We absolutely can do this work to get to the PUC with a full plan in September, and then to y'all later in September, and have the rest of the time for your deliberation. The other thing that I just want to flag is that it's really unclear what this process is in terms of the additional engagement. I think that most, if not all of us at the PUC assumed that the PUC, and hopefully the MMC would also be included in those meetings, and then when I looked back, I was like, well, it didn't actually say that. So hopefully that is the case. But I would ask if you could get some formal clarification, you know, on the structure of those meetings, will they be open to the public? Will they be posted as eu-uk meetings so that we can participate? Thank you, miss white. Thank you very much.

>> Mr. Cook. And then who do we have next on deck is Norma Cortez. >> Rustam guliyev, Becky Halpin

[9:14:09 AM]

>> Rustam guliyev, Becky Halpin and Richard Halpin. Thank you, Mr. Cook.

>> You have three minutes. Welcome.

>> Thank you. Good morning, chair pool and council. My name is Camille cook and I'm also here to speak about the proposed timeline for the resource generation plan. This update to the resource generation plan has already dragged on for over half a year. This was supposed to be done and in your hands months ago. Instead, we're barreling into may and about to start this entire process over a process that if the new proposed timeline from Austin energy is approved, will outlast some of you. All right, now, I'll send energy with the help of their newly hired facilitator is estimating that this that this update will now take six or more months, six or more months to conduct three meetings, six months for three meetings, you know, that's absurd, but it doesn't have to proceed like this. There is a wealth of information that has already been gathered which can help speed up this updated process. The PUC working group has already crafted a community informed recommendation that fights climate change, cleans up our local air and works to keep electric bills affordable. The

[9:15:11 AM]

electric bills affordable. The working group's recommendations alone should be able to speed up the proposed timeline. Speeding up this timeline is important because we need action on climate change as soon as possible. The summer begins sooner and sooner. Every year, and people are already getting worried about how our grid will hold up. We need these recommendations as soon as possible because it will take time to properly address our grid issues such as load zone, price separation. Ann. Your leadership on this issue will ensure that the problems that are driving bill increases are not delayed. I urge you to direct Austin energy to deliver a final recommendation Ann no later than the week before the September meeting. This should give enough time for the PUC to look over it and hand it to y'all. So y'all can finally see this update through. Thank you.

>> Thank you, Mr. Cook, miss Cortez, you are next. You have three minutes. And thank you for being here today. Thank you.

>> I'm a little nervous, so you'll have to bear with me. Okay there. I'm a little short, so, my name is Norma Cortez. I'm in city council district two. I

[9:16:14 AM]

in city council district two. I live in the kingdom neighborhood, I talk regularly to Vanessa Fuentes about a lot of these issues, and today I'm here to speak about the resource plan update and raise some community concerns from my neighborhood about the process already being significantly delayed. And now another delay appears in the timeline to be presented by Austin energy leadership today, a community based resource plan update carried out as soon as possible is essential. Next step for the city to take in the fight against climate change to stop electric bills from skyrocketing even more, and to clean up our local polluted, air. Air like ozone. There's some primary issues that I'd like to raise, and one first is to make sure that the PUC, the electric utility commission, wg recommendations for a resource

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recommendations for a resource plan update are the foundation of any recommendations going forward. The most important goal is to have no more fossil fuel power plants by 2035. The wg recommended plan has always has already has the most aggressive approach currently possible for addressing the fayette coal plant. And we all know what a problem the fayette coal plant has been fo their community. We need Austin energy to follow the timeline already agreed to at the ucs last meeting to finish the update draft by September. In order to make sure that you, city council, have enough time to actually understand the plan before voting on it, please continue directing Austin energy to finish their draft update and send it to council by September. It. That is critical. Delay means allowing problems that are driving bill increases to continue. And I don't know about y'all, but I know my neighbors have all experienced high

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have all experienced high utility bills and are having. Difficulty managing rent, food expense, and utility bills. So anything that you can do to speed that process along would be helpful. We want to make sure that community engagement workshops are open to the public. Community groups are consulted for the content and schedule of these, but the engagement process should not take five months. Again, further delays allow current problems to just continue because a lot of the community has already spoken and there is an urgent need to update the plan. We are concerned that Austin energy has chosen to delay the update with five additional months of community engagement that community leaders and organizations did not ask.

>> Thank you, miss Cortez, for being here, now we have the helplines. Becky, you are first. You have three minutes and

[9:19:22 AM]

You have three minutes and welcome. It's good to see you.

>> Thank you. I'm Becky Halpin. I'm here today representing the social action ministry of our church, first unitarian and district nine. I am also here to ask you to direct Austin energy to move forward in a timely manner with updating the resource plan so you can consider it, pass it before the end of the year. The planet is heating up. People's bills are going up, and our stinky coal plant is puffing out. Pollution and hot, hot house gases like there's no tomorrow, which there may not be if we don't get a handle on the climate crisis, we need to get moving on a new resource plan to address these things. If we don't pass a resource plan by the end of the year, it may be 2026 before the new plan is considered again, as I understand it, no one wants to consider these things while the legislature is in session. I think there are many things we do not wish to consider while the legislature is in session. Please ask Austin energy to hold

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Please ask Austin energy to hold its meetings with the resource planning working group during may and June, so the PUC can get a final plan to you in September. It would be very wonderful if these meetings were open to the public. The current schedule will likely not allow for council vote before the end of the year, but a vote by year's end is what we need to move forward. Delays mean. Problems that drive up bills like price separation may not be addressed comprehensively for years. It means planning for renewable generation and storage may languish when they could be moving forward. If you would pass a new resource plan this year, thank you so much for letting us all beat the same horse.

>> That poor old horse. Thanks for being here. Hello, Mr. Halpin. Halpin good to see you. You have three minutes as well.

>> Thank you. Well, it's good to see all of you and old friends

[9:21:24 AM]

see all of you and old friends up here on the on the dais. You know, I've been working as a community member for 30 years with Austin energy. And the first project we got going was the green builder program, which, as you all know, became a national model program for Austin. And one of the reasons that happened so effectively was because the city council at the time was very enthusiastic about the idea of this new green building effort. Well, here we are today. And the motto is, driven by the community or something to that effect for Austin energy. Yet the resource planning process this year was anything but, as far as I can tell, this is the first year we have ever been declined as a community to work with the staff at Austin energy on planning. That's not community driven, and I think we could have gotten a lot farther with these fantastic folks at the electric utility commission that you appoint who on their own, spent their own

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on their own, spent their own time coming up with a fantastic plan for our community to save us money and to save our planet. And I hope that you'll show the same kind of leadership and enthusiasm that has marked Austin city councils as, national leaders in doing common sense, smart things to save our planet and to save our community. Seriously. And I and I have worked with many of you for a long time, and this is one of those times where your direction to Austin energy to get this project back to you by September is a simple thing that can be done through your leadership. So, madam chair, without, any horses in this race at all except the people's horse, I hope that you will lead as your as the chair would to, have your committee produce a request to council to require Austin energy to get this done

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Austin energy to get this done by September. Thank you so much.

>> Thank you, Mr. Halpin. I appreciate you being here. Thank you. All right, there was one speaker who did not come, I guess Mr, gulyev, I think is rostam gulyev here. All right. Great. We will move on to approval of minutes. Do I have a motion to approve the minutes? January 30th, 2024. Thank you. Council member harper-madison and a second from council member vela. Are there any changes or corrections to the minutes, no objections to the passage of the minutes are adopted. Thank you. We now have briefings. Mr. Khan, our general manager with the general manager's report operational



update. Awards and recognition. And I hope you will also speak to the lightning and rainstorm that we had. >> I plan to do that. Great.

[9:24:25 AM]

>> I plan to do that. Great. Thank you.

>> Good morning, chair Powell. Vice chair. Vela. Committee members, good to be back here. I think it's been since January. And we're here. We have some updates for you. So the first thing I want to talk about is summer readiness, I want to start by sharing what's happening across the state and how we can help locally with regard to summer heat and energy usage. Just last week, ERCOT announced that they predict massive growth in energy needs over the next several years, both because of a continued population growth and as well as new industrial demands from cryptocurrency and data centers. And I think when I was here in January, I talked to you about the growth between 2020 and 2023. In ERCOT, and that went from 72,000mw to 85,000. So Pablo Vargas, who's the CEO of ERCOT last week, said, we need to look at longer term planning. We need to come up with a new plan because it looks like with

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plan because it looks like with all this cryptocurrency data centers from 2020, it was 72,000. By 2030, they predict we're going to hit about 152,000mw. That's more than double astounding, a lot of planning they're going to have to take care of. So once again, the state grid is going to be need to be ready for record breaking heat and power usage this summer, which means locally, we need to be ready to help with grid reliability to as you're here today. Austin Energy has been working hard to make our distribution system. The poles and wires are directly serve customers more resilient and Alain Veselka will be talking about that later on today. You may have also noticed Austin Energy's get ready stay ready campaign, which you see up there over the last year we've had billboards go around town. We have ads running in local news and get ready, stay ready messaging on our website and

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messaging on our website and social media outlets. This campaign has been highly successful in increasing customer awareness for outage preparation, and we encourage customers to sign up to get outages on their texts. I mentioned all of this to remind you that last summer, ERCOT issued calls for conservation multiple times, which means the state was getting dangerously close to needing more power than the grid could offer. When ERCOT issues these calls for conservation, we encourage our customers to conserve their energy use to help prevent statewide grid outages. If electricity demands surpasses supply, that's when ERCOT can mandate controlled outages, and none of us want that. So as we

head into the summer, we were here to help you and your constituents prepare and be ready to respond. We're also working closely with ageism and other city departments for monthly pop up events across the city, to help prepare our community for the many challenges we might face. So I'd like to share some good news

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like to share some good news just for a minute here, recently, the Sierra club recognized Austin energy as the highest scoring electric provider in the state on its Texas clean energy scorecard. Let me say that again, the Sierra club has recognized Austin energy as the highest scoring electric provider in the state on its Texas clean energy scorecard. This recognition acknowledges Austin energy's leadership in clean energy and demand side investments, and the strides we've made as a community. The next thing I want to talk about is our communications team. For all of their hard work, to earn recognition as the number one website out of 93 utilities, that's pretty darn good for our home page and outage information. You know, as a result, Amara, which I don't really want to get into today, we've doubled or tripled the capacity of our outage map to handle problems, and it worked great over the weekend, I think as you see, as summer begins, we

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as you see, as summer begins, we are well prepared to keep our customers informed. And probably the best news that y'all have read about in the paper is that Austin energy won a piece of the \$250 million solar for all federal grant from the EPA. We applied for this grant as part of a Texas coalition with other entities like the city of Houston and others, and we plan to use this funding to expand access to rooftop and community solar, helping lower customer bills by more than 20% and specific low income communities. We plan to create good, good green jobs via locally trained workforce. We can reduce carbon pollution by expanding green energy usage in the Austin area, and foster community resilience through battery backup systems, especially benefiting mvr medically vulnerable citizens, let me talk a little bit about the storm that we had over the weekend, if that's okay, so this this the Sunday morning storm hit Austin hard. This is hot off

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hit Austin hard. This is hot off the press. And outages began shortly after 8:00 in the morning. High winds, lightning and heavy rainfall in a short time period caused a lot of damage. Whole trees and large limbs down wire, broken poles and damaged transformers, one thing you're probably wondering about. You know, our big thing is our vegetative management program, which we're spending a lot of money on and making a lot of good progress on. But when a tree falls, that that, you know, vegetative

management doesn't help much with that because the tree falls much further than we would have trimmed. So that's just something that might be on people's minds. So at the peak of the storm, there were 19,200 people that were affected. That happened about 11:00 in the morning, Austin energy crews responded immediately and affected customers, fell below 5000 by noon. At one point, there were 94 active outages. And the thing that makes it difficult with these outages, when there's so many of them, a lot of times you'll see 5 or 6 outages and maybe 4 or 5000

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outages and maybe 4 or 5000 people are affected, but when you have all these individual outages, one z and two zs, it's just a lot more labor intensive to go around and handle each one of those individually. And each one of those face, you know, it can be dangerous and complex to handle each one of those individually. At one point, like I said, there were 94 active outages. All in all, we restored over 31,500 interrupted customers in a 24 hour period. Crews worked overnight through Monday to get the last customers restored, we contacted customers we expect to would not be restored until Monday. We did that Sunday afternoon. Customers were appreciative of that information. 42 customers on the nvr medically vulnerable registry were affected by the outages. All were restored on Sunday, with all but one customer out for less than 24 minutes. Us and energy posted social updates on social media and via the alert ribbon, and coordinated with media from

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coordinated with media from several outlets. Customers signed up for alerts received. Texas texts and the outage map performed as expected, and I'll be glad to answer any questions. We do have Linda rife and Lisa martin here. They'll be talking about the process we plan to follow, with the generation resource plan. I know you probably have some questions on this, but I can tell you this our goal is to be back by the ec by September and to have you all vote on something by December. Okay. I'll be glad to answer any questions, yes. Council member. Alter. Allison. Alter.

>> Thank you.

>> I have two questions, first, I want to thank staff for the updates that we received, during the heavy winds and the storm aftermath on Sunday. As you just noted, and as it was mentioned in those updates, Bartz, we had, you know, whole trees falling over here, and so I was wondering, where is E and examining trees during regular trimming to determine if there's

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trimming to determine if there's a need to remove trees weakened from Yuri and Mara, followed by a very hot summer, because it seems like this may be an ongoing issue, and we may need to update our protocols for vegetation management to at least be inspecting the trees, oftentimes those will not necessarily be Ayo's responsibility. But if we are out there with arborists and whatnot and we are experiencing this on a regular basis, it seems like we might need to be doing some additional examination of nearby trees by our lines. Is that something that we're doing? How are we? How are we thinking about this problem and what can be done?

>> I agree that is a concern. I think a few months ago we had a rainstorm that had more outages and we may have thought would happen, and I think that was a hangover from our also where some trees were going down when you wouldn't expect that to

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you wouldn't expect that to happen. So I agree, the tree canopy has issues and I will talk to our people that work on the vegetative management and the arborist and see what we need to do about that.

>> Thank you. I mean, I think we have a general sense that at this point, our tree canopy is very stressed and it's not operating as it we normally expect it to. And obviously, if our, if our, if our vegetation management plans don't involve, you know, whole trees, which that makes sense. But if, if we're going to experience that over and over again, we may need to have some, some processes internally and maybe some messaging that helps people to check their own trees, so that we can avoid as many of these instances as possible. So I appreciate the follow up on that, my second question has to do with the issues that, el brydan raised about the long range plan and this is something that when Mr. Riley was interim general manager, we spoke about and, you know, the idea that I

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and, you know, the idea that I had floated was we have a water forward for Austin water, you know, what is our long range planning for Austin energy? And maybe 100 years isn't the appropriate, length for an electric utility. But right now, we only have the generation plan. Or at least that that council is looking at. And it was my understanding that that work was underway, but that there would that would be coming to us after the gen plan was resolved. And, can you provide a status of, of those discussions and, and where they are and how we're thinking about that long range planning and what we, as council might expect?

>> Well, so I'm not going to talk about the process that they'll be talking about. But, you know, when we talk about building dispatchable generation, which is what we've been talking about, I know the carbon freeze for 2035, but that's a 50 year plan when you're talking about building generation out there or solar or

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generation out there or solar or wind. And when you look at our our transmission plans, those are 40, 50 year plans. So try not to get focused on carbon free by 2035, because what we're proposing goes out 40 and 50 years.

>> Okay.

>> This may be a conversation. We need to continue outside of here. But, you know, we have generation, we have transmission, we have distribution Ann. We may have lots of individual plans, but if we're going to you know, one of the things that came up in the discussions that at the PUC over the generation plan is that some of our reliability problems have to do with transmission and distribution, not with generation. And so you can't just solve them with the one, the one piece, and, you know, we don't we don't get to bless the transmission plan or make, any sort of policy guidance for it or, you know, I'm not sure that just a bunch of smaller plans on

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just a bunch of smaller plans on the different or they're not small because some of them are hundreds of pages, but but you know, that that without that sort of more coherent, if we are really going to land where we need to do to land to solve all of these problems, because it's not just generation that's going to get us there. And so I think that's a conversation we need to continue to have. We probably, in the short run, need to get the generation plan done. And I'm glad to hear you're saying that it will be to the eoc by September, but I do think that we, need to think about what that longer range planning looks like and how how the community is engaged in that and where, where that is, and I'd love to have some conversations about how we how we get there. So, so one of the things that we that was in your 2020 resolution that you passed asked us to come up with a transmission plan.

>> And in July that was presented to us. And of course, that has to mesh with what we're doing with any generation going forward. So we absolutely plan

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forward. So we absolutely plan to work those two together. The transmission plan, the generation plan and the resilience, reliability, it all has to go together. But we'll be glad to sit your office and talk to you about it.

>> Thank you.

>> Yes. Council member Ryan alter, thank you very much, I just want to echo, your your staff's reaching out to us, very proactively. This weekend. I was one of the lucky customers without power for a little

while, my kids got to play with their flashlights, so it wasn't all bad. But I really appreciate , y'all reaching out, you know, proactively and routinely. You know, I got multiple emails about what was going on. And unfortunately, just because of the location of the storm, district five did have quite a bit of impact. But, you know, y'all did your job, and people got back in business. So I really just want to thank you

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really just want to thank you for that. I wanted to ask you, as it relates to the solar for all grant, is that, component or is that a piece that is related to the, standard offer that y'all are working on? Do those two things work together or is the standard offer issue program completely separate from the solar for all grant I would guess it's separate, but maybe.

>> Coming up, just go under and go under. Solve the problem. Okay. Hello?

>> I'm Tim Harvey, I'm the customer. Customer renewable solutions manager at Austin energy, the two are separate. So solar for all, targets low income and looks to deploy solar and storage at low income. Disadvantaged communities on

[9:39:41 AM]

Disadvantaged communities on residential homes and multifamily. The standard offer is a way, to help to facilitate more, potentially community solar portfolio, so it's a little bit different. The two have different sources of money, so we have to track the solar for all independently. But it's a strategy for procurement to build that portfolio. Okay.

>> And where are we on the standard offer when do we think that's going to be ready.

>> Yeah. So we've had several, stakeholder engagement meetings, we're looking to make sure that we're pricing it correctly so that we're not, you know, putting out a price that's too low, that doesn't that doesn't meet the market, or one that's too high that may cause a flood of, of participation, which would be a, a probably a good problem. I think what's likely to happen is, you know, our upper threshold is probably hopefully, in line with the

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hopefully, in line with the lower threshold of the market, if, if we're lucky, it could be that our upper threshold doesn't make the market happen yet. So but we'll we'll price that, according to our avoided cost and try to make that happen.

>> And I'm sorry if I, if you said it were expecting a certain month this year or what?

>> We're targeting October, October this year. Okay okay.

>> Very good. Well, that's all I have on that. Thank you very much.

>> Thank you.

>> All right, Mr. Connor, it looks like there are no more questions. We can move on to item number three, which is the staff briefing on distribution resilience. Program overview. And this is Elaine Veselka, our vice president for electric system engineering and technical services. Good morning. Good morning. Good morning.

>> So I'm Elaine Veselka, vice president of electric system engineering and technical services. And today I want to

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services. And today I want to give you an overview of our distribution resilience program. Next slide. So as the term's reliable and resilience are sometimes used interchangeably, I wanted to start off by providing definitions for each, both in the traditional dictionary sense as well as the electric utility application reliability speaks to consistent, consistent performance and performance as intended. Resiliency is how things how well things react to or recover from nonstandard events with regard to our distribution system at a high level, we build, maintain, and operate the system to provide stable and consistent service. This is reliability. Resilience takes reliability one step further. It includes system automation, hardening of our infrastructure and the application of technology to create a self-healing system. Next slide. So when we speak to Austin energy's distribution

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Austin energy's distribution resilience program, it's a total of our reliability efforts plus additional resilience efforts. We strive not to only improve reliability, but to minimize impacts from events that could cause frequent or long duration outages. And I'll be diving into each of these specific in the coming slides. Next slide. I also wanted to give a brief overview and explanation of Austin and Austin energy's distribution system. The power comes in from the generation sources, sources at a high voltage level, and travels across the transmission lines to substations where the voltage is stepped down to a level that powers our homes and businesses. The power then goes out across our distribution system, and that's everything to the right of the blue arrows on the slide. And our Austin energy distribution system consists of over 12,000 miles of distribution line, 5000 miles of that is overhead, and 7000 miles of that is actually underground.

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of that is actually underground. We have over 88,000 transformers and over 160,000 poles. Next slide. With regard to reliability of our distribution system compared to the Texas industry average, Austin energy is about twice as reliable in terms of the average number of durations per customer per year, which is on the left, and the average length of interruptions when it does happen, which is the information on the right. However, we know our customers don't compare us to the Texas average. They feel what they experience in their lives. So we pay attention to the specific trend lines for these indices. The trend lines at the bottom over the last three years begin to tick in the wrong direction up. And with these and these industry metrics don't include major event days, such as the major ice storms in the last few years. We know customers very much feel the impacts of those events, and we know that extreme

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events, and we know that extreme weather events seem to be coming more frequent and more normal. As you can see, the trend line on the very far right, we have started moving the needle down, which is a good thing. We want to continue that progress with our reliability and resiliency efforts. Next slide. To promote reliability we complete general infrastructure maintenance on a regular basis, which includes resolution of identified issues such as a broken cross arm or replacing underperforming equipment. And we operate the system as designed and built and ensure adherence to utility design and construction standards, such as maintaining proper clearances. We complete ongoing engineering studies and as you are aware, we are moving vegetation management work to the utility standards seven year cycle. We also utilize manual reconfiguration of the system when necessary, to safely complete maintenance work without having to interrupt power to our customers. Next

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power to our customers. Next slide. Now we'll look at resilience. Some of our core resilience work is completed on circuits. So you can think of circuits as a main line for the distribution Ann power delivery. They're the primary lines coming out of a substation. Individual circuits can vary in length from, you know, very small to over 20 miles long. And we have 437 circuits. One of our major distribution resilience efforts is the circuit hardening program. It is a total end to end rehabilitation of an entire circuit. And you may have previously previously heard this referred to as underperforming feeders and top wildfire circuits work. The circuit hardening program involves multiple groups and divisions in Austin energy, and it's a highly coordinated effort. So starting in box one, the work begins with a review of any existing projects and maintenance tickets , then a complete visual

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, then a complete visual inspection of the entire circuit , which is box two, boxes three, four, and five can occur concurrently. And they include engineering studies to identify potential infrastructure enhancements. Vegetation management work is completed as necessary, and we also do a pole review. Groups then begin the field work, taking into consideration moratoriums during oak Wilke or bird habitat seasons. And the final step is ensuring our internal systems are updated to reflect the completed work. Next slide. Where is the circuit hardening program covers the entire circuit. We recognize the need to respond to smaller scale issues or areas where frequent outages or repeat momentary outages occur. For this tactical approach, identified areas or prioritize considering parameters such as a critical loads in the area, open maintenance tickets, and a high number of repeat outages. The

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number of repeat outages. The identified areas then go through engineering studies to redesign the area up to. Current specifications, and identify equipment that could potentially help and address area specific concerns. The necessary work is then scheduled and solutions are implemented. Next slide Austin energy's distribution resilience program also looks at additional opportunities to add technology, automation and infrastructure to the system to help it bounce back from unexpected events. Examples include the addition of intelligent programable devices, such as reclosers that allow a temporary fault on a circuit to quickly clear, preventing sustained outages. Another example is the addition of covered conductor to prevent issues and implementation. Ann using technology such as our panel II, which is the cameras that help us scan our service territory for potential fires.

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territory for potential fires. Distribution resiliency also includes pole reinforcement, replacement, ongoing reviews of new design methodologies, and new materials benchmarking with other utilities on resiliency and partnering across the utility and with our customers on resilience efforts. Next slide. And finally, some additional opportunities. Our undergrounding feasibility and overhead hardening studies are underway, with final reports expected at the end of calendar year 2024. The results will help to inform our next steps on undergrounding options and overhead hardening improvements. We're also actively pursuing a grid resilience and innovation partnership grant, known as a grip grant from the doe to increase circuit rehabilitation and automation. Our application is pending with more details on that coming soon, and we continue to explore additional funding opportunities as they arise to increase reliability and resiliency. That is the end of my presentation.

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of my presentation.

>> Thank you so much, Elaine, good presentation. I have a question for you on this slide. That is the resilience, the distribution resilience. Is that the same as, could you talk about distribution sectionalization and then talk about that with regard to for example after during uri. Because this was a grid and an ERCOT generation problem, we weren't able to rotate our outages, which made it difficult for us to respond as nimbly as Austin Energy and the council. Obviously we would have preferred. Could you talk about distribution, sectionalization and the rotation of outages?

>> Sure, distribution. Sectionalization refers to installing a recloser kind of upstream of maybe a critical load, kind of dividing the circuit into smaller portions where activities that can then take place. And you don't have to impact the whole circuit. And

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to impact the whole circuit. And I did mention that, after winter storm Uri in 2021, there were there was some work done, as part of the after action report on, segmenting circuits, the challenge in Austin is it's a very dense environment with a lot of critical load and critical infrastructure. And so, you know, to the to it's not something that, if that we would get a big bang for our buck, continuing to focus past the ones that have already been done. But it is part of our ongoing efforts. So as you know, the arrow that showed the circuit hardening program, and as we're doing that and going through the, the tactical, improvements that need to be made, that's part of what we look at. Is there an opportunity to install more reclosers or do something differently to allow the circuit to be operated differently, impacting less customers?

>> Thank you for that. Any questions for me, miss Elaine? Yes. Council member Ryan Alter, I have a question about, reconstructing and where it fits

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reconstructing and where it fits in.

>> I know it's more of a transmission than a distribution question, but, how does that play into our our reliability and resiliency goals and question? And what kind of plans do we have around reconstructing either for the distribution or transmission side, on the transmission side, we have done some reconstructing efforts with using composite core, it increases longevity. And you know, there's a little bit of a cost, but you, you get the, the benefit on the other side. So that's now part of what we're doing. We're also looking at it as part of the distribution system. Is there something that can be done differently using different equipment, that's kind of a little bit, long, longer process, we have to put that through our utility standards department. It has to be looked at. We're looking at what other utilities are doing to make any overhead, line more resilient, more reliable. Okay. Does that help?

>> It does. And I heard, I was listening to something about

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listening to something about reconnecting, and they were talking about even just the tower configuration can be different because the lines you might have lighter lines that don't have the same amount of sag or, or whatnot. I was just curious if that is something that we see as an opportunity to help with some of our issues here locally, or if that's kind of not going to help us in this question.

>> I think looking at how everything is designed and what equipment can be used, that's all part of our resiliency process and part of that engineering and coordination studies. You know, again, it's how can it be designed built and new and different equipment used , to promote reliability. Okay.

>> Thank you very much, vice chair, thank you, for those of us who aren't engineers, could could you, define a reconstructing or explain what reconstructing is, you know, with regard to, like I mentioned on the transmission line, reconnecting is, is basically using different different cable,

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using different different cable, different line, you know, it could be covered. Conductor which is, which is covered with a, more robust material that maybe will prevent, impacts from things touching the lines, such as balloons. It could be on the transmission side using something that's composite core. And I am not an engineer, unfortunately. So, I'm using composite core, which, increases the, how long it lasts and how how well it conducts electricity. So, you know, again, kind of as, as resiliency develops for the electric utility industry because everyone is being impacted by these weather events, I think we're seeing more and more opportunities for equipment and maybe install things differently .

>> And with regard to the underground feasibility and overhead hardening study, what's the scope of that? What do we expect to not not the actual, you know, results themselves, but kind of what's the report

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but kind of what's the report going to, to look like more or less, there, council resolution contained a variety of, components to be looked at.

>> Wright everything from customer rate impacts to environmental concerns to prioritization. So, we the vendor has all that information and is looking at everything, you know, ultimately I think it will come out, they'll, they'll be doing some site studies across our service territory. Brie, and we're hoping it will

just arm us all with more information on the cost on on customer impact, there there will be some areas because of terrain, rock, other things. You know, where it's not possible. So what other options are possible in those areas? Hopefully copious amounts of information that we can then use to make some decisions.

>> And, and my, my sense would be because I believe that one of the requests was to see what would it look like if we went underground and system wide. Yeah, right. And are we also

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Yeah, right. And are we also going to get kind of subcategories of that. And again, thinking I'm thinking of project connect and the light rail. Again I know right at this point it's only going up to 38th. But you know, the long term plan would be to get it up to or I should say the medium term plan would be to get it up to a crestview, you know, and we have those the distribution, I'm sorry, the transmission lines starting at, you know, a 51st and going up to crestview. I was wondering as part of the scope of the study that in particular, just again, given the potential development of project connect, given the kind of right of way constraints, it would be very helpful to get an idea of what that segment in particular, what it would cost to, you know, bury that segment of transmission lines in particular, again, in anticipation of a future extension of project connect, I would just kind of offer that as a suggestion to the to the vendor.

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vendor.

>> Okay. And yes, we will ultimately hope to, based on different areas of the service territory, attain the cost to underground. The study is, is for distribution, and we can discuss further the transmission, got it. And, and I'm sorry, this kind of gets back to the original. The outage a question and but, the majority and the vast majority of those were limbs and trees that were fallen onto the lines. And not, got it. I just wasn't sure. I know there was a lot of lightning, and I don't know how much the lightning, you know, or those kinds of things, but it looks like, it was absolutely a trees and limbs going down and getting tangled up in the lines. That was the major problem, appreciate that and appreciate all the, the discussion earlier. You know, and again, I think we're in a little bit of a catch 22 because, you know, we've done a great job of protecting our tree canopy, which has grown tremendously, and is now, you

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tremendously, and is now, you know, very tall and, and gives great shade, but, can, can cause us a lot of headaches and problems during severe thunderstorms, so, but obviously our tree canopy is extremely important to us, and we're going to have to figure out how to how to make all that work.

>> But thank you, vice chair.

>> Thank you, and thank you, miss. Appreciate it. Our next item is a staff briefing and process update on the resource generation climate protection plan. And this is Lisa martin, our deputy general manager and chief operating officer, and also Linda riif, who is president of reef line. Welcome to you both, miss martin.

>> Good morning. Thank you for having me, vice chair Vila, I do want to say that lots of limbs, but there was also a concentrated amount of lightning during the storm that impacted a significant amount.

>> High winds as well.

>> Thank you. It would be really interesting to get a breakdown, you know, just a sense of, again, just for our

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again, just for our understanding of how much of it is driven by, limbs and how much of it is driven by lightning. Absolutely.

>> As our team continues to study, to scrub the data, we'll come up with some summaries like that.

>> Thank you very much. Appreciate it. And again, I just got to say thank you also for the updates. That is very, very helpful. And it's great information that and Amy Everhart in particular, thank you for the just keeping us in the loop. That's a very, very helpful.

>> All right. Thanks. Moving on to resource gen plan. Good morning. Chair pool vice chair Vella and committee members. Thank you for having me this morning. I'm Lisa martin, deputy general manager, chief operating officer, next slide please. So today I'm going to speak briefly and then I'm going to share the floor with Linda riif. You're likely familiar with riefelin's work in the community on important and high profile projects such as transit, education and health care. We're happy to welcome her to the world of energy, before that, I'm going to provide an update on where we are with the resource gen plan, we're talking about some process improvements that we heard from you and the community as we move forward, also talk about some third party

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also talk about some third party experts that we're going to involve, and I presented several of these slides to the electric utility commission in March, and Linda presented several of hers in April. Next slide please. So taking a step back in March, we acknowledged that we needed to pause the process. We had underway and address questions about our proposed path forward based on the way we were going, our initial recommendations versus the electric utility working groups. We were on a path to separate proposals, and we recognized that we needed to pursue further stakeholder collaboration and gather

more information on energy technologies that can support our growing customer base and the changing energy market. We certainly know one thing the community of Austin cares about sustainability, reliability, and affordability, and it's our collective job to make sure that we find the right balance of those things. And so that required us to accept the hard truth of taking a pause and resetting, to, to address some of those concerns. Next slide please. So as we reset, we're thinking about time frame. There

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thinking about time frame. There have been several, including many of you in this room who have recommended that we build the plan to 2035 instead of just doing a 2030 update. So under our new process, which, as Bob mentioned, we anticipate bringing to you a recommended plan before the end of the calendar year means we're going to have an adopted plan much closer to 2025 than we originally thought. And so we agree that it makes sense to build a to dispatch the full resources to build a 2035 plan, as opposed to doing just a 2030 update. So it's a more rigorous process. It involves more people, and it will take a little bit more time and we agree that this approach will align with our carbon free to 2035 goal. In looking at that full ten year horizon, we know we need to engage in a more robust and collaborative process to ensure that the conversation addresses the needs of the Austin community and is rooted in our shared values. And so, with a desire for a collaborative effort, we hired riefli as a third party facilitator to work through the challenging conversations and engage all voices in the

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engage all voices in the community. And Linda will be up here momentarily. Next slide please. So as we move forward, we're focused on data gathering and research to ensure we have the most up to date information in our modeling and assumptions. We're focused on stakeholder engagement to ensure that we have a robust and collaborative process that addresses the needs of the community, and we're focused on outside expertise to ensure we have well-rounded viewpoints. Next slide please. That third party expertise is going to come in three main forms Linda and her team at riefli will facilitate the stakeholder engagement. Doctor Michael weber and the weber energy group will provide industry expertise and research and we're also seeking to bring in a third party modeling and analytics firm to supplement Austin energy's work. Next slide please. We got several questions about the cost input assumptions. We used in modeling. And so part of our data gathering involves request for proposals. Earlier this month, Austin energy released an

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month, Austin energy released an rfp for renewable and carbon free generation technologies. We included wind, solar and batteries, which is typical, but we also included other carbon free technologies like geothermal and fuel cells. We want to make sure that these newer, or perhaps less common technologies can will give us information and keep a pulse on when they become competitive. As you know, we recently conducted a battery storage rfp, and we plan to revisit or perhaps issue a new battery storage rfp for technology comparison as well. And then to round out the data, we plan to issue an rfp for information about flexible fuel generation. This suite of rfps will not only give us an additional data set to refine our planning efforts, but it will give us the opportunity to seek approval. Your approval to some viable renewable projects in the near term. Next slide please. All right. I'm about to give the floor to Linda riif, who is the founder and president of reef line with more than 25 years of experience, she is a

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years of experience, she is a seasoned specialist in the areas of public involvement and community affairs. And I know she is no stranger to you. She has received mediation training through UT law school's center for public policy, dispute resolution and informed consent training through the institute for participatory management and planning, and I will give the floor to Linda.

>> Welcome, miss reef. We're really glad to see you and to have your assistance in this project. Thank you, miss martin.

>> Thank you. Chair Powell and vice chair Avila and council members for letting me be here today. And if you can, go to the next slide, my job is facilitation, so it's to serve as a neutral party to create a common understanding of Austin energy's mission to safely deliver clean, affordable and reliable energy and excellent customer service. I got that off the website. So that is your mission. But unless you know where you're going, any road will get you there. So making sure we understand the problem we want to solve and we have a clear understanding and definition of that, will be important to this process. Ensure that Austin energy hears from diverse voices whose values

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from diverse voices whose values are reflected in the mission of reliability, sustainable and affordability. Diversity in voices I've learned over my decades of experience, especially in Austin, loud voices sometimes can overpower other, other groups. They're the ones that have more time. They aren't working two jobs or all of those kinds of things. So having diversity is important. And, as you've probably heard, if you're not at the table, you're often on the menu. So we want to make sure that we have a diverse voice. We want to create a common understanding of energy options and technologies. What you just heard from Lisa is, that we need to look at a lot of different alternatives and truly understand what those alternatives are. My job is to develop an informed consent process, and that might be a strange word for some people because they say we need to get consensus, but informed consent comes

out of the health care region. When you go in for surgery, you have a paper that says, here's what the surgery is for, here's what the procedures

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for, here's what the procedures are, here's all the benefits. Here's all the risks, here's what's going on. Do you want to move forward? And so a process is very transparent. It is about information. It is about answering whatever questions come up and make sure it works. So these these meetings can't be in the dark. Informed consent is absolutely the opposite of planning in a dark room and announcing and defending to whatever it is about a collaborative process and hearing everything and answering all the questions. Hence, that's why I'm hoping for a little more time, maybe we can hit September. That's my goal. But, it's more important that we answer all the questions we have the right data, and we look at the alternatives that really need to move you forward in a responsible and responsive way. That does clean energy and addresses climate change and affordability and reliability in that process. Next slide, so what my job is, is to develop a series of stakeholder workshops or charrettes. I started out with three in my head, not

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with three in my head, not knowing anything about energy that might move to four. We're still trying to figure out how weber and these other groups come in, the process here again, isn't announce and defend to the electric utility commission or the Austin energy oversight committee. It is to keep you informed as we go along and keep checking in. So one of the first meetings that you'll be had is we've kind of got a list of organizations, that will be represented from each of the missions. What's clean, what's affordable, we ask? We brainstormed those ideas with the electric utility commission. And, you know, besides the Sierra club and public citizen, we also heard that, the working group should have at least one representative. We shouldn't have elected officials because that kind of pulls us off in any generation. We should have students involved. And maybe the aarp. So it's a way to look at this diverse group. And we'll, of course, keep you involved in the process. So I want you to be able to vote by the end of the year. That's what I've been set

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year. That's what I've been set aside to do. I'll work my hardest at either getting you the answers by September, or keeping you so informed that the , decisions are easy when we get to that vote. And with that, I'll turn it back over to Lisa.

>> Thanks, miss riif.



>> Let's see if there's. Well, you want to finish your presentation, then we can take any questions. If anybody has any for miss riif. Sounds like miss plan.

>> One last slide. So as we wrap up, I just want to leave you with a sense of timeline and process. Throughout the year, we're going to have ongoing communications with you, with the electric utility commission and with the city manager's office. We're going to provide status updates at future eoc meetings, and we'll meet with you periodically to keep you informed. Rieflin's going to conduct workshops and charrettes starting, they're preparing now and the first ones in June, and then our expert research and rfps are going to run in parallel. So those we expect those two efforts are going to augment each other, during the plan development, just as Linda just expressed, figuring out how the research fits into the charrettes and whatnot. We are working towards providing

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working towards providing options and getting feedback from PUC in the fall and bringing this to council for consideration at the end of the calendar year. So we're committed to this effort. We're committed to this community and to this timeline. And I just want to thank you. The members of the electric utility commission, as well, the working group and just everyone who's had a part in this process thus far. So thank you. And we'll take any questions you have.

>> I wanted to note that, Michael weber, who is, let's see . I'm looking here. He's a professor of mechanical engineering at UT Austin. Is that right? And then he is also the chief technical officer of a clean tech venture fund. And he serves on the advisory board for scientific American and is the author of power trip the story of energy. I've been and I think I have his book. I've been following his writing for some time now, probably the last few years when I took the role as chair of this really important. But frankly, technically challenging committee. The work

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challenging committee. The work we do here is, is, really specific, and I appreciate his expertise, and I hope that we have an opportunity, Mr. Khan and miss martin, to hear from him directly. And if there is an opportunity to, to provide his vitae to my colleagues here. So that they have a sense of his background and then potentially set up some meeting opportunities that would be really great. As we dig in with miss Wright riif as the facilitator and move really not just deliberately but expeditiously toward trying to get to a place where we can vote. I personally would really like us to be in a posture to vote on this plan before the end of December, considering the large amount of work that we've put into it and the fact that after December I won't be on the dais and so I won't be able to vote on it, and I really would

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vote on it, and I really would appreciate the ability to have to have that input, let me ask a question and then, let's see. Okay we know that affordability is an important pillar of Austin energy's mission, but it's not always in alignment with the sustainability pillar. As the plan moves forward, can Austin energy bring us options? Do you plan to bring us options that clearly show the effect on the ratepayers bills, because as as you have pointed out and we acknowledge and have also stated we will be making we will be hoping to balance both affordability and reliability and predictability resilience. We know that being sustainable is a little more expensive, and we want you to let us decide. As we weigh both of these important goals.

>> Yeah, yeah, it's a really good question because the balance is very important. >> And we do know that some of

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>> And we do know that some of the options are a little bit more expensive, but they still may have better benefits. So we definitely take the modeling in such a way that it provides the cost impacts, it won't necessarily give you the exact dollar amount that will increase on a bill. Some of it goes through base rate, some of it goes through psa. And it really depends on the economics of the ERCOT market at times, but what we do have is comparative cost numbers for our decision making purposes. And certainly we're always working within the bounds of the definition of councils definition of affordability, and so I think that we, cost is a very important factor. And we have to make sure that we look at cost under a number of different scenarios, you can't just look at what the cost is under normal conditions. We have to make sure that, Wright these also will work through extreme weather and various things like that. So you have to stress test, you have to stress test. Absolutely so yes, there will be

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Absolutely so yes, there will be cost components as we model, and as we bring in a third party firm to model as well.

>> Yes. All right, questions? Yes. Council member Ryan Alter, thank you very much.

>> First, I just want to build off of her comments about Michael Weber, he was actually my thermodynamics professor 15 years ago, so he is fantastic. I'm so excited that he's going to be involved. And, we now have on the PUC, professor Rhodes, who is another really knowledgeable individual, on these issues at UT. So I think that will be invaluable in helping us, get through this. I want to first talk a little bit about the timeline and just understand, you know, we say our target and our goal and we hope and, but as the chair mentioned, you know, we have a lot of technical expertise, up here that will not be here in January. And so I just I can't reiterate enough that I think it's really important that we get this to us by December,

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get this to us by December, which really means we probably need to plan for it to be here by November, because there might be some wiggle at the end and to that extent, to achieve that, you know, looking at, the timeline here, just making sure and I know Linda's going to do this to, to start engaging with the community as fast as possible. Just, so we can get there. I did want to ask, as it relates to the timelines for the rfp element, what are what's the horizon of those? When do we expect them? The responses to be in? Yeah.

>> So the first rfp is on the street now, and you can find it on Austin energy's website. Let me just confirm the dates I have written down here, we issued it April 19th and anticipate that responses are due June 7th. Okay

>> So great. And so as we build this model, I, I want to also just make sure that, you know, one of the issues I feel like we

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one of the issues I feel like we ran into last time was making sure that the underlying data and the underlying assumptions are shared with whether it's through, you know, the working groups or, definitely the PUC, but just so that there is that public trust and understanding of how we arrived at whatever our recommendation is, and not just saying, you know, this is what we think and like Linda said the other day, trust us, we're the government, right? People don't always respond well to that. So I think you plan to do that. I just want to kind of highlight that, and then lastly, you know, we talk about cost and, making sure that this is as affordable as possible for the ratepayer. You know, I think it is very timely. We look at, the agenda this week, item number 19 is \$60 million for five years of turbine maintenance for our gas plants. Right. That's very expensive when compared to

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expensive when compared to other, you know, whether it's solar or wind in terms of maintenance, and so I think we cost is not just what it costs to build something, but what it costs for it to operate effectively for decades. And this week is just a coincidental reminder of what that cost is. So I really appreciate the work that you all are going to do here. I think it's going to be really helpful to have that, 35 horizon. And, and I look forward to, to seeing what you bring back. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

>> Council member. Any other questions? Yes. Councilmember Allison alter, thank you.

>> And I appreciate, the notion of informed consent. And I just think we really need to acknowledge that through the process with the working group. You know, there was not a lot of information that was shared. There were repeated requests for cost assumptions, for environmental impacts, for lots of things where the working group had to make assumptions and kind of, put together their

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and kind of, put together their best guess given what they had, and there are particular risks, scenarios and issues that Austin energy is balancing that, you know, we have to have on the table that, you know, we need to be able to maneuver through such and such a scenario, and there needs to be clarity on lots of pieces. So when you talk about making investments in, you know, decker and sand hill and potential turbines, what are you actually talking about and when would this be? When if you went that scenario, would you actually initiate using that? And what are the ultimate environmental impacts? You know, over time of going particular scenarios. And how does that impact affordability? Those have to be crystal clear and transparent, and we shouldn't have to be guessing on what it is that Austin energy has in mind. We initiated this process in December of 22. We agreed to

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in December of 22. We agreed to wait until after the transmission study and session, in now we are in spring of 24, and we're being asked again to wait until, December of 24. And the issues that prompted us in December of 22 are just more problematic. They haven't gone away, and there's a lot of time that has been lost on all of these pieces. And so, everyone is going to have to bring their a game. I appreciate that there are some other voices that still need to be at the table, but there was also a lot of work that was done. There are areas that we totally agree on, and if we agree on them and you can do your rfp and get those things going, let's not wait until December if you know everyone's in agreement on some particular aspect and we're ready and able to act, we should do that, I want to sort of underscore what

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want to sort of underscore what my colleagues have said, that this needs to be to us in November, December 11th or 12th is our last meeting of the year. It's not like you got until the end of December, and, you know, for some of us, we're not going to be able to add another, another meeting in there and take on an issue like this. And so it really needs to get to us sooner, and we need to have a lot of transparency and to that end, I have shared several more questions with Austin energy. I shared them, frankly, months ago. When the gen plan came back, and they're going to try and get me some of those answers. But some of the pieces there, I think are important to highlight. I don't expect answers now. They've already promised me that they will get me answers. But you know, when we're looking at these

scenarios, we need to be able to assess the health and the environmental impacts. You can have something that is cost effective, but it could have an

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effective, but it could have an enormous amount of environmental or health impacts. We are likely to be in non-attainment and everything that we do. You know, if we put a gas, additional gas in our load zone, that has an impact on, you know, when we reach non-attainment and there are a whole bunch of other, you know, costs that come to that, maybe not for us in energy, but for our transportation, systems and what we need, what we need, to do, we have yet to see, you know what is an entirely you know, what is Austin energy's best guess at, like a clean energy portfolio and what that would look like. We have a lot of people in our community who are saying, no more, no new gas plants. Well okay. If we did no new gas plants, what is the best we think, you know, we could do? And is that a feasible, reasonable way to go forward? Or are there certain situations when you need it. But then what are the costs involved? As council member Ryan alter mentioned, not just the initial

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mentioned, not just the initial cost, but over time, if those maintenance costs, etc. Are there, and then, you know, there are we're going to have to discuss what our risk tolerance is, particularly on the reliability and the affordability aspects, I don't know. There are no easy there are no easy answers, here there are tough things. And I think, being very clear as, as Linda mentioned, on what our goals are and what we are trying to balance, but I'm not sure in the conversations that I've been in that there has been enough, trans agency and openness with the folks who are trying very, diligently and with good intentions to work with us in Austin energy have a track record of doing it in the past. I don't think there's been the transparency, to really say, okay, these are the risks. We as the utility, see, and that whatever solution we come up with, it has to resolve all of these pieces. And so we can have

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these pieces. And so we can have those discussions and we've got to get very real about that, we've talked a little bit about the gas plant today. We haven't talked about fayette and retiring fayette, and that also has to be, you know, part of the discussion and whether that can be done by September or December, I don't know, but I think, you know, the, the goals need to be there and progress needs to be, made towards that. I'm not going to repeat the rest of the questions I have. I think they get very technical and require they require, some other information, but I appreciate you bringing on some other folks. I've had many occasions to speak with doctor weber already myself, and I think he brings not only

the academic experience, but he also served on the PUC, during prior rate cases, etc. Thank you. Thank you , thank you.

>> I think, those are all of the questions. Yes. And council vice

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questions. Yes. And council vice chair vela to close.

>> Thank you. Chair. Quick, dot. Yes, I know battery supply has been in obviously in the mix with the resource generation and a couple of days ago we saw, I believe, the record amount of battery, electricity coming on to the grid. It was, again, something that, you know, a relatively kind of unique and or new feature of, the grid. Any I don't know, additional kind of thoughts or where where is the grid and where is Austin energy in terms of, of the battery storage and potential, use?

>> Yeah.

>> Can I ask Michael anger to come up and speak about now?

>> I would be very curious just that your thoughts too on I think it was the 29th or anyway, very recently we set a record for a battery storage power on the grid. Now, just wondering if you had any kind of thoughts or comments on that. Sure, yes.

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comments on that. Sure, yes.

>> Hi. Mike Langer, vice president, market operations and resource planning, that was a situation where we are in the ERCOT market. You are seeing power plants get ready for the summer. And so we have a lot of power plants and outage. A lot of the thermal plants are in outage. Getting ready for those big loads we had about 40,000mw in total in outage. We had very, very high loads. And as the sun goes down, if the wind does not show up, then the market is very, very tight, which is what occurred on that day. You're speaking about. And batteries have really come in to kind of solve those shorter term needs. So we definitely see value for batteries helping with the solar ramp down, especially when wind resources are not there.

>> So that was what happened that day is that there were a lot of plants out for maintenance, and as the solar power declined, as the sun begins to set, the batteries kicked in to get us through that kind of threshold, that that's what, where we're coming. Are you anticipating? I mean, is that going to be a kind of recurring feature of, of ERCOT at this point?

>> I think in the near term, yes. As we continue to add more and more solar resources in

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and more solar resources in ERCOT, the solar ramp down gets steeper and steeper for, thermal assets only have so fast that they can ramp up. So like 0 to 60 in a car can only go so fast. Sure. Batteries can ramp up faster. So they're able to in certain situations, set the price and raise the overall price. Within ERCOT.

>> All right, I appreciate that. I didn't I wasn't quite understanding what triggered that that real strong battery event. That's very helpful. Appreciate it.

>> Thank you. Thank you.

>> Thank you so much Seth.

>> Thank you.

>> Okay, colleagues. That brings us to our, identify items to discuss at future meetings. Items. So if you have anything, please do, send it in and, I'm not sure you have something you want to identify right now. That being the case, then I will call this meeting, complete at. Let's see. What time is it? Nine, 1026 1026. We are adjourned for the Austin energy utility oversight committee. Thank you, staff, for

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committee. Thank you, staff, for your good work. And to members of the community who were here today to provide good input. Thank you so much. All right.