Public Health Committee (PHC) Meeting Transcript – 11/4/2026

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[10:03:46 AM]

good morning everyone. I call to order this meeting of the Austin city council public health committee meeting. This time is 10 A.M. Excuse me. 10:03 A.M. On Wednesday, November 4th, 2026. And we are in city council chambers here in Austin, Texas. I want to welcome everyone to our November committee meeting. It is a beautiful day in Texas, if I may say so myself. Yes, we have a full agenda today. We will start with public communications. Then we'll move on to approving the meeting minutes from October 7th committee meeting, as well as other previous meeting minutes that have been corrected, or review the public health committee meeting calendar for 2027. Then we will consider recommendation on making appointments to making an appointment to the central health board of managers. We are colleagues. We are supposed to go to executive session to discuss the appointment if needed. From there, we'll be taking up committee discussion and possible action on social strategies, social services strategy work that has been ongoing. And finally, we'll have an update on the homelessness encampment management initiative. Any questions on today's agenda?

[10:05:04 AM]

Good deal. Okay, clerk. We will now welcome speakers from the community.

[10:05:08 AM]

>> Okay. Yes, ma'am. We have Eli Cortez. August Lozano and romance France, please.

[10:05:32 AM]

>> You may understand that when y'all throw our stuff away, that we suffer. Yeah, I'm talking about over 17.5. And they get us every week up here at this library these last past three days. And they they put away all my stuff, my hygiene, my shoes. They don't even give us time to even get our stuff. They just come and they just throw it away.

[10:05:57 AM]

>> How much time do they give you?

[10:05:59 AM]

>> No time. They just come with their trucks and they. And they just gather all our things and toss them in the trash can. APD this morning for the last three days, they didn't hit down here at this library and then threw our stuff away. So I don't have nothing. And then not only that, we understand that we can't we can't sleep in front of your building. We we get that. But we going to the woods and y'all coming in the woods messing with us. Yeah. Y'all kicking us off out the woods. Where are we supposed to go? It's a shame that they could tell us where we can't be, but they can't tell us where we can be. Because, who put this where we can not be. Where can we go? I just took this quit assessment. I'm a 20. Yeah, I've been homeless five years.

[10:06:56 AM]

>> It's not right.

[10:06:57 AM]

>> You have enough money to hire dps troopers, but you don't have enough money to hire us. For me. A wheelchair that's been homeless waiting for me. I want to see all of us go home.

[10:07:15 AM]

>> Good morning. My name is Eli Cortez, and I'm an organizer at vocal Texas. That video was taken on June 11th of this year, about a month after zo and the city began daily encampment sweeps on our folks. Since then, every single day, Austin police department and Austin resource recovery have gone into the community and thrown people's stuff out, thrown their medications out, thrown their documents out every single day. Our city has spent $1,000 on enforcement of the camping ban, and has failed to provide an adequate shelter, expansion and housing plan for the people who are being impacted by these sweeps. And every single day we are on the ground hearing these stories, trying to bring these people who are being directly impacted, who are experiencing this every day to this council. And we've seen in action we can't afford to wait any more. Y'all have been telling us that you want to work with us on homeless encampment management policy, and by the time we get something done, the city will keep clear sites and any changes that we can make won't even be like, helpful anymore because that will eliminate any, any sort of progress that we can make on this plan.

[10:08:29 AM]

Yesterday, Texas showed out, and I hope that y'all can act with the same confidence and bravery to make some policy changes that are meaningful for the people that are experiencing this every day. Please.

[10:08:45 AM]

>> Good morning everyone. My name is Elizabeth Lozano. My friends know me as August. I'm a member of vocal Texas, and I'm here to share my living experience as having been through five camp sweeps just this year. I'm sorry I'm a little nervous. Each sweep has essentially stripped me of my vital survival gear and supplies, my food, time spent in requisition, and my already fragile sense of well-being and safety. In may, I was hospitalized for ten days. Upon my discharge, I returned to my camp to find that I had nothing. Even my friends and neighbors that are a vital part of my survival, being out there alone, they were gone. In the months since that happened so that I could be safer since I'm alone now. I started sleeping in well-lit, highly trafficked areas like 24 hour stores.

[10:09:48 AM]

Three times since then, I've woken to strangers just crawling on top of me, doing what they like publicly in front of people, walking by on the sidewalk. Prior to 2026, I lived for almost four years in the same set of woods down in slaughter. I never had anything like that happen to me. And maybe that kind of made me have a false sense of security and safety, because we were like a family out there. I don't understand

exactly why the city and the state feel the need to pick on people that are already going through so much. Like some of us, it took everything for us to not give up completely and just die. So the little bit of things that we get, most of us know that we only have the things that we need to survive the night because we're in survival mode every single day. Every single day. And no, they don't give us a time to get our things. Some of them might, when they feel like it and they're not cleaning our camps, they're going in there and destroying our possessions, whatever they are, except the ones that they deem valuable. And they load those up on their trucks and take those somewhere to sell, maybe. And then they drive over our products with a bobcat and rake a little bit of dirt over it and charge you guys a couple thousand dollars. That's what they're doing. I know I've seen it personally multiple times, not just at my camp cleanups.

[10:11:31 AM]

I've been helping my friends get their personal items. There's other ways that that money can be spent. There really is. You guys are wasting a lot of money doing a hell of a lot of nothing. Thank you.

[10:11:52 AM]

>> Zo. I have one more. Romans. France. Romans, France. Maybe France. Romans.

[10:12:06 AM]

>> Anyone? Okay. Have all speakers been called?

[10:12:10 AM]

>> Yes, ma'am.

[10:12:11 AM]

>> Thank you. Thank you so much for the testimony today. We'll now move on to approval of the previous meeting minutes for item number one. Can I get a motion? Motion by vice chair duchen. Seconded by me. This is for the October 7th, 2026 meeting minutes as presented. Any objection? Seeing

none. Thank you. Councilmember Ryan alter is joining us virtually. Okay. Seeing no objection to that approval stands. That item stands approved for item number two. We have additional previous meeting minutes that have corrections that also need to be. Can I get a motion vice chair duchen motions to approve the second set of meeting minutes, and the correct date for that one is February 7th, 2024 and November 6th, 2024. I will second that motion. Any objection with approving those meeting minutes? Very good. Those stand approved. Next, colleagues, is item number three, which is the meeting the proposed meeting dates for this committee in 2027. I want to thank our committee staff, Joshua Ezekiel, for his hard work and dedication and helping us out throughout the year and putting this proposed meeting minutes, meeting calendar dates together. Can I get a motion? Vice chair duchen makes a motion to approve the meeting calendar for 2027, seconded by councilmember. Alter any discussion? Okay. Seeing none. Any objection? No objection. Then those calendar for 2027 public health committee meeting stands approved. Next, we will move on to item number four.

[10:13:53 AM]

This is discussion and possible action on the appointment to the central health board of managers colleagues, doctor Manuel martin term on the central health board of manager expires at the end of December. Doctor martin currently serves as the secretary for the board and he is seeking reappointment. We all have received his application and CV via email. Any questions to doctor martin and his application. We may take those up in executive session, but currently I'm not aware of a need for us to go into an executive session. So with that, I would like to make a motion to move forward with the recommendation to full council to reappoint doctor Manuel martin to the central health board of managers. May I get a second? Seconded by councilmember. Alter any discussion. Okay. Any objection to making that recommendation to the full council? All right. Seeing none, that recommendation for reappointment moves forward to the full council for consideration. All right. That moves us to our first briefing for today. This is a briefing on social services strategy that will include an overview on solicitation, pay for performance grants versus contracts, and stakeholder engagement. I'd like to welcome with us today, assistant city manager Stephanie hayden-howard, as well as Kerri Laine, director of office of budget and organizational excellence and Daniel colada, also with the office of budget and organizational excellence, to provide an update. And thank you. We also have our procurement director joining us.

[10:15:40 AM]

I appreciate you being here as well. Thank you all so much.

[10:15:54 AM]

>> Thank you, chair, members of the committee. I'm Kerri Lang, director of budget and organizational excellence. Today, we're here to provide an update on the social service reset with more detail on community engagement agreement structures and solicitations. As you mentioned, I'm here with assistant city manager Stephanie hayden-howard and chief procurement officer James Scarborough, who will cover these topics. We'll cover five areas background, stakeholder engagement, agreement structures, solicitations, and the timeline, as well as next steps beginning with background, the social services reset is based on direction from four council resolutions. The first calls for a rubric to evaluate social services, funding decisions and evaluation of funding sources, and engagement with the community and with vendors. The second calls for an evaluation of social service agreements going into fiscal year 27 to assess whether any changes or reductions will be needed. The third calls for an evaluation and reset of the issue areas, partnerships, agreement structures, funding and reporting to be implemented beginning fiscal year 28. And then finally, there's a call for contract level geographic analysis of service outcomes and participants to the greatest extent feasible. All of these resolutions build on each other. The rubric lets us evaluate needs and priorities.

[10:17:30 AM]

The agreement evaluation showed us where our current agreements stand. The reset combines the two with additional work on partnerships, resources, and strategy so we can work so we can adjust toward our best investments for the community in the coming year and beyond. And then there's the geographic analysis, which adds a view of where services are delivered and who they reach. Resolution 056 asks for a rubric so that service prioritization and funding decisions are made against a common set of criteria. The rubric has five dimensions that describe and help prioritize the issue areas. Community needs carries the most weight. It looks at how common and how severe a need is, and where the equity equity gaps are. Using sources such as the community health assessment, the American community survey, and homelessness data need trajectory and strategic city strategic role asks whether a need is growing and how a service fits the city's strategic priorities and its role as a funder or provider.

[10:18:39 AM]

Investment efficiency looks at service and provider track records and the outside funding. They add. City council and community direction. We, excuse me, reflects how council boards and commissions, community feedback and other city direction has prioritized the issue area. The social service strategic reset is organized through working groups led by the city manager's office and the departments that fund social services. There are four working groups. One covers the issue areas, including level of need, the city's role and the services portfolio. A second covers contract and grant structure, performance measures and reporting. The third is stakeholder engagement and the fourth is governance and partnerships. Each has a lead and a co-lead at the director or assistant director level, along with program staff and relevant stakeholders. The working group will finish their work by the end of December.

[10:19:38 AM]

Their results will inform leadership direction on the service portfolios, funding levels, partnerships and the agreement modifications and solicitations that come ahead of fiscal year 28. That helps ensure the recommendations are based on evidence, current need, partnerships and best practices. Today's presentation presentation goes deeper on the work of the stakeholder engagement group and the contract and grant structure group, including solicitations. I'll now turn it over to acm hayden-howard for the next section.

[10:20:13 AM]

>> Thank you. Carrie. One of the areas that we really want to pay a lot of attention to is our stakeholder engagement process. According to our first resolution 56 that was passed, it really wanted us to make sure that we were conducting regular community engagement and public feedback. And so during this time, the stakeholder group is working with the Austin communications and engagement group to co-design a survey and identified the ability to do some outreach. In addition to that, we want to make sure that we are prioritizing the feedback that we have received and make sure that we're not at a situation where we're collecting information that we can't use. We are going to look back at some existing feedback that we have received. One of the things I would like to point out is, is that we have worked with our staff. So at the heart of engagement, we have listened to our staff, we have collected some feedback from them. We had a survey that was completed, and so we were able to listen to their feedback. We want to thank our staff for providing that feedback because it is very instrumental in this process, and it was very comprehensive.

[10:21:48 AM]

During the recent budget process, we received input from our vendors, and we are also working with one voice, central Texas. And so we have reoccurring meetings with them monthly to provide updates and then also receive feedback. Upcoming. We're going to have two surveys that we are going to put out in the month of November. The first survey will be for existing and potential vendors. We're wanting to have all of our current and former or even organizations that may be interested in having a contract with the city to provide us feedback on various topics. The other survey is going to be for community needs and service priorities. And so we're wanting individuals with lived experience. We want advocates, frontline service providers and other stakeholders to be able to really give us more information that we would be able to use during our meeting with one voice. One of the things we asked them is if they would assist us with getting the word out and sharing these surveys, and so they agreed to assist us with that. So our goal is, is to really publicize these surveys, have them out there for

significant amount of time, but ensure that we're able to bring the feedback in and use that for our recommendations that we will have in January.

[10:23:29 AM]

At this time, I will transition over to James Scarborough.

[10:23:37 AM]

>> Thank you, ACA hayden-howard, and thank you and good morning, council members. My name is James Scarborough. I'm with Austin financial services. I am your chief procurement officer. The city uses two types of agreement forms for social services, including contracts and city issued grants. Contracts are used for social services that the city must provide. Contractor is providing work that the city is either legally responsible for, either by ordinance or municipal code, or. It is a common and critical part of their their mission and operations. Examples would include city owned facilities or assets such as city owned shelters, providing legally mandated services such as court interpretation, also providing essential services to side defined by city human resources policy, such as storm debris collection. City also uses grants for social services the city chooses to provide. Examples include distributing food to individuals who are food insecure and providing outreach to individuals experiencing homelessness. Both types include accountability and reporting structures that ensure transparency, performance, value, and service to residents. Most of our current agreements are cost reimbursable in form, meaning the vendors are reimbursed for allowable costs that they incurred. As a part of this research reset, we are looking at options for enhancing the performance measurement of these agreements. One option is through the use of performance incentives, which are additional payments for exceeding targets on predetermined metrics. Austin public health and homeless strategy and offer an operations office piloted such an approach in 2022 with their rapid rehousing programs and expended 368,000 to the awarded contractors as bonus payments for exceeding the performance measures in those contracts. A second option is performance based extensions or renewals, where renewing an agreement depends on the vendor meeting performance targets. This means confirming a vendor is meeting their targets before committing additional funds with a corrective action period and enhanced notices built into the agreement. A third option is a deliverables based agreement where the city pays per item delivered, such as a payment for each meal provided instead of reimbursing on the cost of the services, such as expenses of operating a food bank during agreed upon hours, each option has its trade offs. Incentives work best for similar types of services, where the same or similar metrics are tracked across. Programs as they are were in rapid rehousing, there may be a possible for a subset of services, but not for an

[10:26:38 AM]

entire portfolio. Without without more time, they also require additional funding, and they can have unintended consequences, such as favoring clients who are easier to serve. Moving on to solicitations, and how we compete for these types of contracts. Thus, these types of agreements excuse me, a solicitation is a competitive process the city uses to select social service provider. There are three general types that we use. A request for application or. Rfa is used to acquire social services from a nonprofit to address community needs, and it results in a grant agreement. We also use a request for grant application or rfp. This is a similar type of solicitation but is less formal process, and it's used for grants of a smaller value. Last, we use a request for proposals or an rfp. This is used to acquire goods and services, typically resulting in a contract where a clearly defined scope of work is not available and the award is based on best value against criteria announced in the solicitation. In general, the city grants for social services are competed through rfas and rfas. City contracts are procured through rfps and the city's standard purchasing process. Here's how a solicitation works. A team is created to design and approve it. Solicitations are developed using community priorities, local data needs and strategic goals, and are announced for a set period of time to allow for broad community participation.

[10:28:23 AM]

Once the applications are received, staff first check that each is complete and responsive. Evaluation evaluators then score the applicants against the criteria published in the solicitation, and staff make a funding recommendation. Recommendations are posted publicly and all applicants are notified. Agreements above the city manager's authority go to council for authorization. Applicants who are not recommended can request a debriefing, and there is a formal protest process available as well. The city has used three approaches to purchasing social services. The first is a whole portfolio solicitation, which seeks proposals from many or all of the services. At one time. The city last did so in 2014, covering the entire life continuum tied to self-sufficiency goals. About 30 million was requested. We received 65 applications and 27 were recommended for funding, with 13.8 million in awards.

[10:29:33 AM]

The advantage is doing one solicitation and then when you're done, you will not have to recompete until the next broad solicitation is needed. The challenge is that it is resource resource intensive, and it was in effect for issue areas solicited at once, with comparable scopes of work to Wright 39 evaluation evaluators to find. It was also an only opportunity for nonprofits to apply. The second approach is an issue area solicitation, which seeks proposals for services, programs or interventions addressing a common issue or population population need, such as child and youth or basic needs. Departments began doing these around 2022, starting with the youth. This approach focuses on solicitation and balances the workload for city staff, nonprofits and evaluators, but it requires re-issuing solicitations on a more regular basis. The third approach is service solicitation specific, which seeks proposals for discrete services. Typically, when council provides new funding, such as substance misuse or domestic violence shelters. With that, I'll now turn it back to Carrie for her discussions regarding solicitations.

[10:30:58 AM]

>> Thanks, James. Now I'll cover the timeline and next steps as we restructure. Excuse me. As we restructure agreements, staff will bring policy questions to the committee for review. These include the share of programs and budget and of an organization's budget that city funding makes up allowable cost and direct and administrative rates and performance structures, including renewals, delivery based payments and pay for performance. These fall within the policy areas. We will present to the city, to this committee, the economic opportunity committee and the audit finance committee, and then the full council through January and February of 2027. This timeline we've talked about this timeline over the last several meetings. Of course, we began in September of 26. It runs through October of 2027. From now through January, we'll continue the group work to define the issue areas, services and partner strategies, as well as agreement structures and funding level. Beginning in January of 2027, contract and grant solicitations will be developed and issued. While we're doing that, we'll begin working on the fiscal year 28 proposed budget and adoption process that will run alongside this work. The goal is to have the new agreements to begin in, to be approved and begin for fiscal year 28. When we look at some of the next steps we're working, we're continuing work to complete the. Again, the issue area definitions, the gap and services analysis, and the determination and partnerships, funding and agreement structures. We will continue to confirm structure and governance changes for the portfolio, and we will continue keeping engagement with our vendors, staff, community and leadership. We will also prepare for the procurement processes in early 2027.

[10:33:02 AM]

Solicitations will take place during the fiscal year, during this current fiscal year, so that every agreement is in place by the start of fiscal year 28. With that, we're happy to answer any questions that you all may have.

[10:33:14 AM]

>> Thank you. This is really good information. I a very timely. So I appreciate all the hard work in bringing this forward. I guess my question is for you, officer Scarborough, on the solicitation types. I mean, knowing that there's an rfa and rfp for the type of agreement, how do you how does staff decide expectations for those different types of agreement structures? And like, what is can you just walk us through the process of deciding, okay, for this particular service, we were going to do an rfa versus an rfp.

[10:33:49 AM]

>> Council member. If the intended agreements are going to be grants, and we're being very intentional about that. Whereas in the past we referred to these as social service contracts. Many of them were grants. Some of them were actually contracts. We're going forward. We're going to be much more intentional so that when we are intending to award grants, we will either use an rfa or an rfp. A the solicitation processes are largely similar, but they will have slightly different contents because the rfp, which is for contracts, are subject to state procurement regulations and they have to have certain contents. They are subject to city procurement policy, and the procedure is just more technical, more rigorous and more detailed. Rfas are, are, are more straightforward. They're, they they can cover a broader variety of, of, of services.

[10:34:47 AM]

They can cover issue areas that would be much more broadly defined than what we could do in a solicitation for specific goods and services. So we would be able to establish which solicitation method we're going to use based on the target agreement type that we were seeking to establish. So if it's grants, it's largely going to be rfas. The rfp is just a less formal, shorter, more simplified version of the rfa. It's used for smaller dollar grant awards, typically covering a shorter period of time as well.

[10:35:24 AM]

>> Okay. But I guess who is it? The director of public health that decides this is the type of agreement that we need. Okay. And acm hayden-howard, any thoughts that you'd like to share on that process of how the city goes about determining, you know, how, how to set each agreement?

[10:35:46 AM]

>> Well, when we kind of look at it from a historical perspective, we have typically, you know, whenever we're working with the nonprofits, for the most part, we have used a request for application. The request for application has really afforded us a little bit more flexibility than the than the rest request for proposal does. And so just to be more granular in that process, when agencies submit their proposal about how they're going to provide the service with the request for proposal, what we found is, is that whatever they submitted during that process has to go into the agreement and turn into the work statement. Very, I mean, line for line, for example, right? Whereas with the request for application, when we're doing the negotiations, as we're looking at it, based upon the feedback from the evaluation team, the evaluation team would provide the feedback and that's how we score them. But then they

also say, you know, as the contract manager is really kind of thinking about how this service would actually happen, then it allows some flexibility and there can be some changes to what they submitted. Not big changes, but simple changes that would make it where it where the rubber meets the road, how things actually happen.

[10:37:20 AM]

>> Okay, gotcha. That makes sense. And so knowing that, and I really appreciate the slide that you have the different options of solicitation and purchasing available. And as you all think through what the reset looks like for our city attorney, I guess, is there a scenario in which the city moves forward with all three options? You know, I mean, I guess you can't do the whole one would have to be one option, but could you do a blend of issue area solicitation and service solicitation? I guess that's what we do now, right? It's both.

[10:37:52 AM]

>> Yeah, that's what we do right now. We do the issue areas and we started that in, in 2022. We started with youth services and then just kind of made our way through. But we, we've typically done that process that way because once, you know, it's youth services and we think about a previous presentation that we had, and we talked about the amount of funding in those buckets, then the public clearly knows that for youth services and I'm making up the number, we only have $8 million for youth services. And so it gives you a cap for that, for that bucket. Now, what we are going to be talking to you all about in December is, is issue areas kind of getting into the definition of those, but then also talking about how much are in those buckets and if and if based upon the data that we're going to provide to you, if you all are wanting to make that change. So those are things that are we will be having those in upcoming conversations.

[10:38:59 AM]

>> Very good. And for the policy areas that you've outlined as far as next steps, you know, what does that look like for council? Will you all be providing kind of a base recommendation of what a policy should look like for the contracts as it relates to indirect administrative rates or okay, so you all at least will have a recommendation.

[10:39:22 AM]

>> Okay. Yes, we will.

[10:39:23 AM]

>> That'll come in December. Or is that for next year.

[10:39:26 AM]

>> In January? Okay.

[10:39:28 AM]

>> Very good colleagues. Yes. Vice chair.

[10:39:32 AM]

>> Thank you, chair, and thank you for this briefing. It's really helpful. I had a couple of questions, and some of them are picking back off the chair's questions. One is help me understand my we've talked about the next step being the needs assessment and that we're going to have additional information to, I think, inform a lot of this process going into early next year or spring of next year. Is that correct? Can you help me understand how the needs assessment process works in relation to the contract process and timeline you've laid out here?

[10:40:05 AM]

>> Yes, sir. So there are a number of needs assessments that have already been completed. We have the child and the community health have the food plan. And so what we're really doing is pulling all of those existing assessments together into one report and analyzing the full need based on those existing reports that have been done. We are not completing a brand new needs assessment because these these various reports have been completed in recent months and years, and they're still applicable to us moving forward.

[10:40:40 AM]

>> And then I'll add just a little bit more what we are anticipating to do in the month of December is, is we're going to issue that report to council in December, and that is basically going to lay out all of the information that we have combined. As Kerri stated. In addition to that, we're going to overlay that with our issue areas and really be able to kind of walk through what we're seeing as far as like trends with those issue areas as well. Kind of taking a look back over the last, you know, few years of, of what we're seeing in city of Austin and Travis county.

[10:41:25 AM]

>> And so is the expectation that that's going to be a presentation or briefing to the full council in December about that process.

[10:41:33 AM]

>> That will happen. We're going to give more. We're going to release the report in December, but we're going to give more information in January when we kind of roll out to just say, you know, this is what the needs assessment has shown us, and it will be included within our recommendations.

[10:41:52 AM]

>> Got it. Okay. Thank you for helping clarify that. You all touched on a survey. You did, I think, with staff. Can you elaborate on the kind of information you've learned from that survey, or what some details about what that survey was actually investigating?

[10:42:06 AM]

>> One of the things that, you know, we decided is because we know that it's one thing for us to have the conversations being meetings and doing all of the things that we're doing. We wanted to make sure that we were hearing from staff on all things contracts, you know, from from a to Z, and basically being able to receive their feedback about how things are working for them, what kind of best practices that they see, any kind of recommendations that they feel like they would want us to be able to change? And so we issued a survey. And then from the survey, we put together staff, put together a, a document that

just kind of captured all of that. And so based upon that feedback, once we started to look at how we were going to put together our different groups that the city manager is supporting, those groups are based upon some of the feedback that we received from staff. In addition to the feedback, as we're looking at putting things together continuously during this process that will culminate in January, that feedback will also go into those recommendations as well. So during this time, we will have a loop back back to staff just to make sure you know that we're keeping them informed, that we're talking to them a little bit more about kind of what they submitted to make sure everything kind of comes in together.

[10:43:45 AM]

>> So it sounds like we're going to be able to see some of those recommendations from staff as we get the report next month or the discussion in January.

[10:43:54 AM]

>> Absolutely.

[10:43:54 AM]

>> Okay. I want to switch over quickly to the performance and agreements. I want to make sure I understood. It sounds like the primary example where this was used was with the rapid rehousing, which I'm assuming was in part sourced by arpa dollars back then. Is that correct?

[10:44:11 AM]

>> I'm going to ask David gray to come up and just kind of get into that a little bit more for us. Thank you.

[10:44:22 AM]

>> Morning. Council member David gray, director, Austin homeless strategies and operations. So pay for performance contract that was discussed today was from back in 2021. It was a rapid rehousing agreement. The city of Austin did it in partnership with a group called social finance. At the time, zo

didn't exist, so it was actually our colleagues at Austin public health that took the lead on the agreement. Essentially, the way it worked is all of our contracts have performance standards within the contracts, but if the providers hit certain performance benchmarks, then there was a financial incentive that they could receive up to 5% of the contract value. And that additional financial incentive was there to really push the providers to innovate, find solutions to people's needs, and ultimately help people exit the rapid rehousing program successfully. What we found was that of the bonus payments that were made, three quarters of those went to pay for additional staff capacity.

[10:45:27 AM]

That's additional case management to help those clients along their journey. So that was a one time thing that we did just as a somewhat of a demonstration project, but it's really it was really informative agreement. And of course, it's helping us think through our social service process. Now.

[10:45:46 AM]

>> I'm just curious, based on that experience, it sounds like somewhat of a one off process, although I understand we've done maybe some other small pilots since then. Was successful in terms of the pay for success model and providing the additional incentives for providers to hit those marks, but we have not done that since as a department, mostly because we've first have had to establish our department and look at other tweaks and modifications to our contract performance and monitoring processes. But this is something that we had been discussing as a department. But now that we're part of this more broader social service review process, we put our department work on pause to feed into the citywide process, and we think that's probably a better use of our staff time anyway, since the citywide process is going to look more comprehensively across several departments, not just hsf.

[10:46:41 AM]

>> And per my question a moment ago, was it the arpa dollars that made that this sort of pilot possible?

[10:46:47 AM]

>> This wasn't arpa contract? Yes.

[10:46:49 AM]

>> Okay. So just based on that, as part of the challenge for implementing this kind of program, just resource constraint, we no longer have those dollars.

[10:47:01 AM]

>> Well, we no longer have the arpa dollars. I think the beauty of this social service process is it allows us to look at our local general fund dollars and how those are awarded, how our contracts are structured. And so I think part of our analysis, determining whether or not we can do the same thing with local dollars that we did with the federal dollars. And so we look forward to returning to council once that analysis and review is done.

[10:47:28 AM]

>> Okay. And we should know that in the next two months, then it sounds like you'll have some recommendations for us. Yes. Based on this pilot. Okay. That's all I've got for now. Thank you very much. Thank you sir.

[10:47:38 AM]

>> Thank you. And just one last question on my end. If officer Scarborough, if you could just touch on you mentioned this in your presentation, but just the process in which these contracts go through rigorous oversight and accountability and compliance.

[10:47:52 AM]

>> Sure.

[10:47:54 AM]

>> So all of our contracts, as David mentioned, have performance measures in them historically. However, when those performance measures were established, they were established somewhat differently from contract to contract or department to department or social service contracts as a as a category. And the rest of our contracts performed by central procurement. What we are attempting to do in the reset is to standardize those performance measures so that when we report back and are accountable for the the actions taken under the contract, there's consistency across the agreements and that that will be able to more quickly report on the effectiveness of the agreements and that they were extended or that they did not meet performance expectations and they were not extended. So so that's really what we're focusing on, is making the performance deliverables more objective, more consistent and standardized.

[10:48:56 AM]

>> Very good. Thank you all so much for the presentation.

[10:48:59 AM]

>> Thank you. Can I ask a quick question?

[10:49:01 AM]

>> Yes, please. Councilmember.

[10:49:03 AM]

>> I just wanted to understand, you talked about a survey of. For the needs side of the equation, and you also talked about how some of the studies we've done, the the chore, as it were, we're going to help inform. But I wanted to just understand kind of both the qualitative and the quantitative metrics that y'all are going to have in determining what the needs are for us to address. Does that make sense?

[10:49:38 AM]

>> When we look at the report that we're going to put together, as you know, we have our issue areas that we have. And so within the issue areas and within the report, we're going to look at what kind of trends that we're seeing in Austin and Travis county. So for example, you know, if we're looking at basic needs and we're looking at how the inflation and the cost of food has really, really caused the and I'm just making this all up just for this conversation. And we look at how the food bank has really had to set up several types of food distribution sites and how busy that they are with their work. And so the thought may be, and we're thinking about the food plan that's been approved by this body and looking at some of the measures that they have there. Then basically, our recommendation is we're looking at it to say, you know, we have in the basic needs category because we're going to talk about issue areas in December and how much is in the buckets.

[10:51:00 AM]

And looking at that holistically to say, we're talking about that at this meeting, but now we've issued the needs assessment and it kind of gets into what we're seeing as trends. And so that will get you the quantitative and qualitative information within that report. And as director Lang mentioned, there are several, you know, plans that are out there and reports that are out there. And so we've done a we've looked at all of those, and we've we've kind of brought all of those in and kind of overlaid them as we're looking at and tie them to our issue areas, but then just trends in general. So hopefully that answers your question.

[10:51:46 AM]

>> I think. So. All right. And then on the pay for performance side of things, does do anybody are you familiar with do an actual like a pay for performance where it's not just supplemental, but it's actually like some of the kind of base or contract award is dependent on performance.

[10:52:10 AM]

>> Council member we would probably use that in a contract form of agreement environment where we could establish what the incentive fee amount was through the price competition, establishing an incentive fee outside of the price competition, which we would typically do in a request for applications. We probably would not tie that to the base amount that was authorized for the grant, but rather through a negotiated amount that was based on a percentage of the of the applicants budget.

[10:52:49 AM]

>> Help me understand why that is, because I think to the layperson, and I'll admit to myself as well in that category, if if we're saying we're hiring you to do X, whether it's, you know, provide a certain service to a certain number of people or whatnot, why? You know, why would there, you know, if they said, we can serve 100 people and they only serve 80, and we hired them to do 100, why is that not something that we would try to contract for in terms of how they are paid? And I think it's a little bit on a pay for deliverable the way you talked about it. But I know if we weren't using that approach, it just seems like if you're hired to do X but you fall short, why are you getting the full benefit of the contract?

[10:53:52 AM]

>> Well, it would it would be for the, the benefit of the of the grant authorization, which would be based on the, the nonprofit's budget, the amount of the contract. If it was a contract, we would stipulate the types of services that we needed to perform. And then we would ask for the units of pricing provided by the offers through a price competition component in the in the solicitation, which would include prices that included elements of the contractor's cost, including profit. That profit would allow them to on months where the service levels were less than anticipated to cover their cost, until those months where the services met the expectation or exceeded the expectation. In the case of of social services, there's no there's no guarantee that a certain number of clients will come through the door or that will receive the services. So to ensure that the the service, the applicant is available to provide the services, we cover their cost absent any inclusion of profit. And so that's that's kind of why when we establish these incentive fees, if we do so in a contract environment, we will include the amount of the incentive fee in the price competition so that the the amount is going to be reasonable. And based on the competitiveness of the of the of the offers, we would do it differently in a request for applications. When the form of the agreement was a grant and the the amount of the of the grant award would be based on on the budget of the applicant.

[10:55:34 AM]

And then the amount of the incentive fee would be based on likely some proportion or percentage of the budget.

[10:55:42 AM]

>> Okay. I think I kind of understand, but if I follow ups, I'll I'll catch you another time.

[10:55:49 AM]

>> Yes, sir.

[10:55:50 AM]

>> Council member, maybe I can help a little bit. So if you think about when the city is a grantee, when we receive a grant, usually the grants that we receive are reimbursable grants. And so it is although we provide a program or a service that we include in our grant application, we are reimbursed based on our cost. And that's very similar to how we've been setting up these grants to social services that we we talk about, and the vendors show us the services that they plan on providing. But the grant agreement is based on their budget and their cost, and we reimburse them as such, very similar to a grant that we may receive from the state or the federal government, where it is a budgetary grant for reimbursement. Does that help a little bit more?

[10:56:40 AM]

>> I think so, and I guess I'm beyond that, trying to just decide how do you protect against someone who, you know, let's say you had two applicants. One says, I can do 100 people, but they're really stretching. But a second applicant says, I can do 80 people. And we think, you know, applicant B is probably going to hit 100%, but applicant a might only hit 50% or 60%, right? It's now applicant a said they could do more, but where does the actual performance measure in there. So that we're getting, you know, the best final outcome.

[10:57:25 AM]

>> I think one of the things to keep in mind is, is that at that level, when the team is evaluating each individual application, they're they're looking at several things. One, they're trying to determine, can this realistically be done? Can they provide services to 100 people? And they look at each individual application by a matrix that they go through from cost effectiveness, etc. And so you're able to award the application based upon what was presented to you. And that will be the one because typically it's like 100 point scale, for example. And so the one that we feel like that they'd be able to do it accurately, you know, is cost effective. You know, they, they have, you know, everything in the program laid out to be able to do it. And so that's kind of done during the solicitation, during that evaluation process. Now, one of the things I want to flag for you is, is that for the policy areas that we talked about is that when we start to look at performance structures, we are going to want to be able to talk about, you know, are we going to pay people for a deliverable? Because that's an agreement that we currently have. And so

they may have to do, you know, certain types of things in their pay paid by what they actually give us, or are we going to kind of look at a, a pay for performance type recommendation? And so those are things that we're going to be kind of starting to pose those questions to you all and having those conversations with you. But in January, we will make those recommendations. And if you know, you all are really kind of feeling like that, you know, performance should have a, you know, a higher weight. Now, the thing that I would just caution is, is that we still have our processes in place where if an agency doesn't perform those, we have a corrective action in place and system. And then we also, you know, try to ask them if there were some variables of why they were not able to perform. So some external forces that they had nothing to do with that didn't allow them to be successful. And so maybe to see enough people that they thought were going to come to their event, you know, where people are not gathering as much because of the external forces that are happening. They didn't get that many people that showed up for the event, for

[11:00:24 AM]

example. So we we still will have that in place to be able to do that. But that will be kind of all of what we will be talking to you all about in January when we start to make those recommendations

[11:00:39 AM]

>> For the performance structure itself. Does that make sense? Council member?

[11:00:44 AM]

>> Yeah. All right. Well, I appreciate that. That's y'all answered my question.

[11:00:49 AM]

>> Okay. Thank you so much.

[11:00:50 AM]

>> Very good. Thank you all. Thank you for the presentation today. Next, we'll move to item number six. This is an update on our homelessness encampment management initiative. I'd like to welcome David gray, director of the Austin homeless strategies and operations office. Welcome.

[11:01:12 AM]

>> Good morning, council member. Thank you for the opportunity to present an update on the homeless encampment management work on behalf of our department. I'm joined today by Patricia Barrera. Patricia is our division manager for our public space management team. And then we have a few other city staff in the audience who are here in case there's any questions from you all that Patricia and I are not able to answer. Before we get into the public space management and outreach update, we do want to provide a brief update on behalf of our friends at the Austin community court require regarding storage expansion. And so, as you may recall, the Austin community court was allocated $500,000 in this fiscal year's budget to expand storage options for people experiencing homelessness. To date, the community court has met with a number of community partners, including the Austin homeless advisory council, violet keep safe program staff, Texas harm reduction alliance, local Texas, as well as our office to discuss how we can best coordinate to ensure that people have storage needs, especially individuals who are encountered through our homeless encampment management efforts. Some of the feedback that the community court has received is that folks want the storage to be accessible, secure and something sustainable. And so community court is currently considering two options. One would be partnering with nonprofit community partners to have storage locations throughout the city that people can access.

[11:02:52 AM]

The other might be looking at established storage providers, so organizations or companies that already do storage, and again, make those options available for folks across the city. Community court is now exploring a process to fund the nonprofit partners, and then that work remains in progress as it relates to our street and community outreach division. Just as a reminder, our street and community outreach division is separate from our public space management division. This team is really focused on reducing morbidity and premature mortality, identifying pathways to safe housing for folks, and improving our overall response to unsheltered homelessness. And they provide a large menu of services to people who they encounter everything from assessing needs and distributing basic need supplies to coordinating service referrals, and ultimately trying to help clients increase their stability. Our community outreach group continues to do their partnership work as part of our encampment management process. We still have our ongoing weekly coordination calls, but since our last update, we've also started hosting the biweekly housing be on the lookout engagement calls.

[11:04:10 AM]

And so this is done in collaboration with echo, where we receive a list of folks who are homeless, but there is a housing opportunity available for them. And so we host these calls with other outreach partners to see if anybody knows where these individuals might be so we can connect them with the housing opportunity that is waiting for them. We are also now hosting our weekly case conferencing calls. Again, the purpose of this is to facilitate a collaborative review of our clients with complex needs, and we want to make sure that we are establishing real continuity of care with our systems partners. Some of the folks on the weekly case conferencing calls might also be folks that are touched through the no wrong door program. When that happens, we do notify the no wrong door team. Otherwise, we attempt to coordinate with our partners through these weekly case conferencing calls for the benefits of those clients. Our outreach continues to coordinate their work citywide.

[11:05:10 AM]

Our goal with community outreach is to build our staffing to a point where we will have three teams, two staff assigned to each, and they will be geographically divided across the city. So one outreach team focusing north, one central and one south. Our updates since our last quarterly update is that we are in the process now of hiring and training all of our full time staff. We currently have four full time staff and one temporary employee. We are in an interview process right now to fill the remaining vacant positions on this team. For public space management division. This is the division that Patricia oversees. The. The goal of our public space management division is to work with multiple city departments and external partners to coordinate the encampment closure response. We do an assessment of encampments on public property. But when the encampment is on private property, we work through the Austin code enforcement department to contact those private property owners, develop a plan to address the encampment on their property, try to get outreach to those individuals, and then ultimately clear and clean the property. The ultimate goal of public space management is to clear encampments from public spaces and restore those public spaces back to their original purpose. If the encampment has active campers on site, then the public space management division will reach out to our street and community outreach team to start providing outreach and service connections to those individuals. Once the outreach has completed their process.

[11:06:55 AM]

Typically, our outreach folks are doing at least three visits to a site before we we proceed, but once they finish their process, then the public space management team will post the 72 hour notice and then proceed with clearing out the encampment. If the encampment is in a keep clear area, then we will provide a 24 hour notice or make sure people know that this is a keep clear site. The only time that we don't go through this whole process is during disasters. For example, we had a rainstorm earlier this week which did cause some waters to rise in our creeks. In instances like that, we do want to make sure

that we are getting people out of harm's way. And so if we know that rain is coming or inclement weather is coming, then in the in the interest of the client, we might move more expediently to get them out of the encampment and get them into a place that's safer for them. The homeless encampment management process is the process that we launched in may of this year. The process exists to address encampment cleanup response across the city, but to try to do so in a consistent and coordinated process. That way, the public, including our unhoused residents, know what to expect.

[11:08:12 AM]

We implemented this process to comply with prop B, as well as Texas law. These laws are still in existence today, and so we do still need to follow them. But again, we want to make sure that we're following these laws in a way that offer compassion. First, before we proceed with cleanup and closure. It's a six step process where we begin with identifying the site and doing an assessment based on the assessment. Sites are prioritized for outreach. If there's individuals on the property. Once outreach is complete, we then provide the 72 or 24 hour notice before the site is abated. And when it comes to how we prioritize locations, there's a variety of factors that we look at. At the top of the list is whether or not the site is a former heal site, or is there a life safety ris, or is there another need for our site to be elevated? We also look at the health indicators of the people who are on the property, whether or not there's a presence of kids, seniors, pregnant women, how close the site is to sensitive locations like schools, parks and playgrounds, whether there's any environmental impacts or hazards. This could include a fire risk, flood risk.

[11:09:26 AM]

We do look at the number of people who are on the encampment, and then whether or not there's any illicit or behavioral activity. And based off of these indicators, Patricia's team will then make a determination as to whether a particular site needs to be elevated for more rapid outreach, cleanup, and closure. We have made some operational changes to the encampment management process since the last time we briefed you. The first is that our him, our homeless encampment management team, number four, which is the team that patrols roadways. Austin resource recovery has replaced the transportation and public works staff that were doing that cleanup. It does not operationally affect the pace or the cadence of cleanups. It's just a little bit of a switch in the resource allocation in terms of the back end operational support. Initially, Austin emergency management was supporting our data collection. Unfortunately, the system that we were using just wasn't the right fit for this program. And so we begun collecting that data internally, which is, okay, we're capable to do that. We also, in the process of increasing our staffing. And so we're in the process of hiring and training three full time staff to strengthen our operational posture. We currently have temporary staff who are funded through the American rescue plan act. Those temporary positions will go away in mid-december, and so we're moving in earnest to hire and train full time staff to replace the temporary positions that we will be losing. We've also updated the keep clear map since the last time we provided this update. And so you

can visit our website, Austin, texas.gov, or scan the qr code on the screen. Now for the updated encampment management map. And it is an interactive map. So if you pull it up on your computer or on your phone, you can click the various areas that you see shaded here to get an understanding of where the keep clear area is throughout the city. And this is a map that we update on a weekly basis. And so, and we'll continue to keep this map updated as we move forward in terms of our outcomes for the last reporting period, which spans from June 8th through the end of September. So during that quarter, our homeless encampment management teams visited approximately over 2300 sites, including 653 distinct locations across those site visits. There were 732 tonnes of debris that was collected and removed from those encampments. That's the equivalent to nearly 1.5 million pounds of debris. We successfully connected 136 unique individuals to shelter, with an additional 84

[11:12:28 AM]

individuals connected to supportive services for an acceptance rate of 45%. In total, there were 493 individuals who we made contact with during these visits, the Austin police department reported. 50 unique individuals received a citation during this reporting period. Those citations were for failure to to thank you for public camping. So those are individuals who are given an opportunity to leave, decided not to. And so therefore, they were cited for the public camping violation. And then there were five unique individuals who were arrested. Those were folks who were arrested due to an outstanding legal matter. And so that was an unfortunate outcome, but something that our police department is required to do if somebody has a warrant out for their arrest or if there is a request to detain somebody, we received nearly 3000 encampment cleanup service requests via Austin 311 during this reporting period. Some of those requests were duplicative. You know, there could be a day where multiple neighbors in a community will call into three, one, one about the same encampment. And so we have a staff member on team that information duplicates it and then gets the information out to the street crews. And as far as repeat activity goes, 24% of the encampment sites have remained clear of any return activity since our first visit.

[11:14:04 AM]

To abate and close the site, we will provide our next quarterly update in the, which will capture data for the first quarter of fiscal year 2027. And so that update will come in the early part of next calendar year. We also just want to give you a quick, comprehensive look since the program's inception on may 11th. So this is may 11th through the end of last month, there were 2800 sites that were or site visits conducted, 780 distinct sites, just over a million tons. I'm sorry, just over a thousand tons of debris removed, which is just over 2 million pounds of debris. 171 individuals were connected to shelter, with 93 individuals connected to services, again for 45% acceptance rate of shelter services. Out of the 581 individuals who we contacted, 55 individuals received a citation from APD with those same five unique individuals who were arrested. Since the inception of the program, we received over 3700 encampment service requests through the 311 system. Our response time is about four days to respond.

[11:15:19 AM]

Our response goal is seven days, so we are coming in below our goal in terms of our ability to get out and put eyes on the encampment. And then 24% of all the sites that we visited during this program have remained clear of any return activity since the date of abatement and closure. When it comes to the cost of the program for the reporting period that began on June 8th, our total cost were $2.2 million. The average cost per site visit during this reporting period was $963.71, which represents a nearly 40% decrease from our prior reporting period, where our per site visit cost was just north of $1,500. The greatest portion of all of our cost remains our fixed cost, meaning staff salaries and contractors that are already employed by the city, already employed by departments to do work on behalf of the city. And so these are not costs that we can shift to things like supportive services, nor would there be a cost savings necessarily, if we stop doing these programs, because these city staff and these contractors would still be employed by these departments, they were already employed by these departments.

[11:16:45 AM]

And so that's why we look at this as, you know, fixed cost to the to the city. I do, though, want to end with an update on the supportive service piece. Again, it's really important to us as a department that we're not just closing encampments, but we're also creating more spaces for people to go. We heard the public speaker loud and clear that more people need real spaces to go, real spaces that treat them with dignity and respect, and provide access to housing and job training and case management in a safe environment. And so since the last time we provided an update, our friends at the Esperanza community have opened the 100 additional tiny home shelter beds out at the Esperanza community. The sorry shelter beds. Thank you. So they opened 100 additional shelter beds out at the Esperanza community. The city of Austin contributed money towards the opening of those shelters, I think to the tune of $1 million for the capital cost. And now we have an ongoing operating contract with the Esperanza community and the other ones foundation for those beds. We are also strengthening our cross-system coordination. As you may recall, last month we did the briefing on the no wrong door initiative, in which we're working with our community partners to better coordinate wraparound services, particularly for individuals who are caught in these cycles of mental health, homelessness and our criminal justice systems. And I know that we received some council direction on ways to enhance that program.

[11:18:21 AM]

And, you know, that staff is doing that work now, and we appreciate that council and community feedback. And then lastly, in partnership with Travis county echo and a whole host of nonprofits, we are expanding our permanent supportive housing stock here in Austin and throughout Travis county. Since

the last update, Seabrook square two has opened in east Austin. That's a 60 unit permanent supportive housing community operated by integral care and Karen point. Cameron has also opened. That is a 100 unit permanent supportive housing community that which is operated by caritas. And what's not mentioned on the slide here, because it's not in city limits, but it is in Travis county, is foundation communities also recently celebrated the opening of Burlington studios, which is just outside of city limits, kind of in that little city limit gap between council member Fuentes's district and the airport. So they're just kind of right in the middle of that donut hole. But but they are a vital part of our homeless response system. It is an additional opportunity for us to get people off the streets. And so I just want to thank our friends at Travis county who really led on the capital investment to get that community open. And so, again, I'd like to end on this slide because we recognize as a department that, you know, while we are legally called to do the encampment cleanup and closure work, it is also a priority for us to make sure that everybody has a safe place to call home and the resources that they need to thrive. That is our vision statement. We are always going to pursue that mission. And so this is just an example of how we're trying to work both ends of the spectrum when it comes to supporting people experiencing homelessness and our greater Austin community. But with that, madam chair, I tried to get through those slides efficiently in the interest of time, but Patricia and I are happy to answer any questions from the committee. And again, we have other city staff here who we may call up if need be, depending on the question.

[11:20:28 AM]

Thank you, madam chair.

[11:20:29 AM]

>> Thank you. Thank you for the update, colleagues. Vice chair duchen.

[11:20:32 AM]

>> Thank you, chair, thank you for this update and the briefing. I imagine that the chair has some similar questions. So I want to start with trying to reconcile some of the feedback we got from speakers this morning relative to, I know you opened with storage solutions. One of the concerns was the just the delays that we have or the length of time it's taking to implement solutions to address some of those issues. How long do you think it sounds like, you know, we're we're looking at two competing solutions. How long would actually take to deploy those resources that we've approved to actually try and address? Assuming my assumption is that that's going to help address one of those key concerns, which is that people don't have a safe place to store their belongings.

[11:21:17 AM]

>> So we're going to call up our colleague from Austin community court to provide an update on their timeline for getting those storage solutions online. So, Laura.

[11:21:27 AM]

>> Good morning. I'm Laura Martinez with Austin community court. We're currently working on developing a solicitation that would enable nonprofit partners around the community to have geographically dispersed, geographically dispersed storage services. We're still in that development, but we're working very proactively. We're hoping that within the first quarter of calendar year 27, we would have the services up and running.

[11:21:55 AM]

>> And these would be like, I mean, I don't know what the right analogy is. Like Amazon lockers that are located in key places around the city so that people have, don't have to go particularly far to go acquire storage solution.

[11:22:07 AM]

>> It's still under development, but we would likely purchase either bins or lockers and may give flexibility to what would fit best with each different service provider, and not necessarily having standalone unattended, but having them located where folks would be engaging in other services already. So it also may eliminate some barriers to service access.

[11:22:26 AM]

>> And what sort of facilities would those be at.

[11:22:29 AM]

>> Some of that will depend on what happens with the solicitation, but we'll be. And again, that's under development. But it's it's going to be focused on nonprofits that are already working with the same population that would be needing the storage services. So it could be any, any services that folks engage with potentially.

[11:22:46 AM]

>> Okay. Thank you for those updates. Director gray, do you think that's going to address the majority of the concerns that people have raised about being stripped of their food and medication, and other and other essentials?

[11:23:00 AM]

>> We do think it's a major step in the right direction. We've been in some of the meetings with the community court, and what we hear from folks is that while they're grateful for the storage options that are available now, a lot of the city storage options are concentrated in or near downtown. And so having storage options that are geographically dispersed, maybe closer to where somebody is, will help them overcome that transportation barrier. And again, storage options that are just large enough for people to have their birth certificate, have their medication, maybe place an electronic or something of personal significance. I think that that will be really helpful too, because typically those are the concerns that people are elevating when they talk about things that might get lost in in an encampment cleanup. So we do think it's a major step in the right direction. It's also informed directly from what we're hearing from people with lived experience and our community partners. So we're really supportive of the direction that community court is going.

[11:24:02 AM]

>> Okay, I appreciate those updates. I look forward to what we can come up with by quarter one early next year. I want to switch gears and talk about just the overall compliance factor. I don't know if this is a calculation you all have run. And first of all, let me say I appreciate whatever work you've done to bring down the per site visit costs. And I don't know if you can speak to that briefly about what that since as you mentioned, also a lot of it's fixed costs. So how are you able to bring down the cost per visit?

[11:24:31 AM]

>> I think one thing that we anticipated was going to happen, and we're seeing play out is the amount of cleanup activity that it takes at any given site visit has gone down. So when we first started, we had a few sites that were just major cleanup operations. I mean, I think for some of the sites, it took us close to two weeks to do the cleanups. Now we're kind of at a point where we're much more efficient with each visit, and the intensity of each cleanup is significantly less. And so that's really helped us bring those per visit costs down.

[11:25:04 AM]

>> Well, just as a broader question. My assumption this whole time has been a lot of the a lot of the. Rationale behind the haam program is the compliance with, as you mentioned, local and state law. Is there a is there a is there a number or a calculation you all have arrived at or collaborated with legal to try and arrive at to figure out what is the cost relative to implementing haam versus just, you know, having a potential suit for noncompliance or what those other consequences look like for noncompliance relative to the cost that we're currently paying for the program right now.

[11:25:50 AM]

>> Just to make sure I understand the question. So a cost comparison between how much it costs us to do the cleanup versus legal liability of not following.

[11:25:58 AM]

>> Any other risk factors or any other. Yes.

[11:26:01 AM]

>> Yeah. No, we haven't done that level of analysis. That's something that we most certainly can can look into. I think in general, we recognize that the laws exist and that there's an expectation that we follow them. And so we do want to demonstrate to the public that we are complying, you know, with the voter approved proposition in the state law. But again, do it in a way in which we still lead with our values of giving those who want services the opportunity, a meaningful opportunity to actually receive those services and not just going in and, you know, sweeping people's stuff up.

[11:26:34 AM]

>> Okay. And I appreciate that. And I'd be curious to know if you can do some kind of analysis or work with legal on that. I want to speak to the, the thing you just brought up, which is connecting with services. When I look at the numbers, I don't know what to make sense of it because I don't know how many people what's not included there is the number of individuals who are actually encountering at the camps. And so I don't know whether serving, you know, and connecting 80 people with services is a lot or is not a lot, because I don't know the overall amount of people that are being encountered at the camps. I don't also know to the extent that people are distrustful of the city or unwilling to take help, or there's certain barriers that we're running into that are disconnecting people from services or from shelter. Can you speak at all? What's happening there? Are we fill in the missing blanks for me?

[11:27:23 AM]

>> Sure. I don't know if we can pull back up the presentation and jump to slide 17, because what we want to make sure we provided was not just the actual number of people who are coming into shelter or services, but also the percentage of the people that we're encountering through our street and community outreach team. And so the, the 136 individuals who came into shelter and the 84 individuals, additional individuals who engage with supportive services represent 45%. So nearly half of all the individuals that our street and community outreach workers are encountering. Now, there's kind of two things to note about that particular bullet point. One is, is that there's always the risk that we are not encountering everybody who's at a specific encampment, if they're gone all three times that we visit, or if they hide when when we show up, right, then we're not able to make that contact. The other part of this, though, is sometimes somebody might say no on the first visit and the second visit, but then accept the service. On the third visit. We track each of those contacts.

[11:28:34 AM]

And so it's three contacts, but it's two no's followed by a yes. And so because that's the way the data gets collected, which is not a perfect way of collecting it, I get it, but because it's the way that data is collected, it actually could be the case that the 45% might also be a flaw. I think when we typically think about this work people, we went in with a lot of people assuming that most folks, an overwhelming majority of folks would say no because they perceive shelter as unsafe, or they wouldn't want to talk to a city worker, or they just didn't want to have help. I think what we're demonstrating with this data is that the hypothesis that the overwhelming majority of people don't want help, that that hypothesis is not true. Most of the folks who are at least half of the folks who are engaging with want some form of assistance. There are also folks in that 55% of contacts that did not take the city service, that we were

able to connect to a service through another service provider. So somebody else came and was eventually able to get them connected. That's also not not reflective here.

[11:29:47 AM]

>> So can that be included?

[11:29:49 AM]

>> We we have to find a way to do it. So I think one of the next iterations of this work that we're doing internally is looking at our data collection. We have two staff, one on each team that does all the data analysis. And it is a very time consuming process for them. And so adding on an additional thing to those staff is, is really challenging. But we are looking at some ways to enhance our data collection, make it a little bit easier for those staff members. So don't have to kind of do as many manual tabulations and then make sure that we're, you know, reporting the data a little bit more accurately every time we come.

[11:30:31 AM]

>> I think it would be helpful. Certainly for me, I don't want to speak for the rest of my colleagues, but I just struggle to make sense of whether we're making great strides here or we're not actually impacting a lot of people in the way that we need to. I have no way of really understanding, because I don't see the number of individuals that you actually encounter out there, and I'm not sure I'm understanding, again, to the point you just made people that are refusing perhaps help 1 or 2 visits, but accepting help a third visit through a, through a third party or outside provider, which is not being reflected here either. I want to obviously add undue burden to the data collection, but we do need to understand the relative success or progress that you all are making on this, especially when it comes to can we connect people to services? Can we connect people to to shelter opportunities, whether they're housing or shelter?

[11:31:19 AM]

>> Absolutely, absolutely. And councilmember, I would if you would love to, I'd love to have you come out with our street outreach team too, just so you could see the work that they do. I spent a day with them about a week or two ago, and I'm just always impressed by how people, most of the people they encounter, like flock to them for help, right. And help that they might just be a water bottle help that

they might be, hey, I'm ready to go into shelter. But I think inviting you to come actually see the work on the ground might be really beneficial. So just know that that invitation and that's open to know.

[11:31:55 AM]

>> Let's follow up and get that in the books.

[11:31:58 AM]

>> Yes, sir.

[11:31:58 AM]

>> Last question is how do you see I know you touched on it, but how is no wrong door specifically interacting with the hem the hem approach, right. Are you do you already have a list as you're interacting with the individuals, do you already know who the high utilizers are? How does and how are you connecting with them when you're out there?

[11:32:17 AM]

>> So we, we do have so staff that are assigned to the no wrong door team. And so we have some of our frontline staff and our mid-level managers assigned to the ongoing case conferencing conversations, where the team is talking about specific individuals and their needs and how they navigate the system. And then my deputy director and I are assigned to a leadership committee where we meet weekly to talk about the program overall. And so we're very much integrated no wrong door program. We have the names of the individuals who are enrolled. And so as we come across individuals on the street, if we know that that person is enrolled in no wrong door, then we know exactly who to call to get them help. If we if we're unsure, then we also know who to reach out to, to check to see if somebody is part of the no wrong door. And that extends throughout our department. So even with our shelter operations, just as an example, if. An ems paramedic makes contact with the no wrong door client on the street and that person wants to get into shelter, our shelter staff are integrated into no wrong door, and they'll work swiftly to make a bed available for that client to help them stabilize.

[11:33:37 AM]

So, so all of our programs, as much as we can, have that touch point with no wrong door to make sure that we're maximizing the value of both of the programs.

[11:33:47 AM]

>> Okay. Thank you for clarifying. I'll follow up on the side visit some other stuff. Thank you, chair.

[11:33:54 AM]

>> And is councilmember alter still on the line? Okay. I just wanted to pick up on a thread from some of the testimony we heard today from public comment around notifications. Can you talk about improvements that have been made to the notification process, if any?

[11:34:09 AM]

>> Yes, ma'am. So we tried to do this a couple of different ways. And Patricia might be able to color in some things that I might not even know about, but one is that we enhance the keep clear map from a static map to a dynamic map, so anybody can see where the sites are and know whether or not they're within a Kiki area or not. We are also doing more of the postings. And so back in the day when we first started, the team might post a couple of signs in an area just to try to let people know like, hey, this is a keep clear area or, hey, this is an area that we're going to move to have to clean and clear. We've now given staff permission to plaster as much as they they can, just to make sure that we're maximizing the opportunity to find out. Now, there are some locations where we visit on a daily basis. An example of that is a terrazzo branch library and that I-35, Cesar Chavez area.

[11:35:11 AM]

And we're there daily because there's such a high volume of traffic in that area that it's really important that we are staying on top of it every day. Otherwise, it can very quickly get to a point where it's going to be an enhanced cleanup because of the volume of, of, of items out in that area. We did have signs posted in that area. I think some of those signs maybe got removed. And so we need to go back and reevaluate and make sure that we do have the signs still posted for the keep clear. Patricia, am I missing anything you want to add anything around the notifications?

[11:35:52 AM]

>> For the. Whenever there's life and safety, there may be times that we're not posting, but we are going in person to say, hey, it's raining, we need you out of the creek. We don't want you to drown. And, and also with the roadways, we are not posting, but it is areas that they could get hurt or killed.

[11:36:11 AM]

>> So how what's the percentage of life and safety assessments?

[11:36:16 AM]

>> So it's like all the creeks and all the roadways, essentially, wherever you can get, either you can drown in the creek or you can get hit by a car. And so we do provide some notice. We go in person and say, hey, this is going to get cleared very quickly because we have.

[11:36:32 AM]

>> But is that notice like you're, you know, it's about to rain and you're giving folks three hours to, to head out.

[11:36:39 AM]

>> Usually it's a day before 24. Usually sell them like tomorrow. This is what's going to happen.

[11:36:46 AM]

>> And how many of those like of the. Encampment clear outs that you've been doing, like how many of those would qualify or would be categorized under life and safety?

[11:37:02 AM]

>> I would not know off top of my head. I would have to get that for you.

[11:37:06 AM]

>> Yeah, that's a data point that we'll have to circle back with you on. I think maybe another way of thinking through it is on any given day, we have our five encampment management teams that are out doing encampment cleanups and closures. So so the actual staff from Austin resource recovery, our watershed that's going out and doing that work of those five teams, one is that watershed crew that Patricia is talking about. And so we'll send our staff out the day before to give people notice. But that watershed crew will follow up the day after. And then one of those five teams is the roadway crew that was formerly staffed by dpw, now staffed by Austin resource recovery. But they're going along all the high traffic roadways and corridors. So the frontage roads, Ben white boulevard, you know, like those kind of roadways where because of the imminent risk of traffic safety, it's, you know, important that that we're not creating the conditions where people camp in those roadways.

[11:38:07 AM]

And just to maybe add one more data point to that, I think there was an audit that was recently done looking at traffic fatalities in our communities. It was a city audit where tpw was the client. And one of the outcomes of that audit was that one in every three fatal or significant auto pedestrian injury crashes involve somebody experiencing homelessness. And so one of our commitments back to ptp in pursuit of that vision zero goal is to do our best to try to keep those high injury roadways clear of camping and, you know, and camping. And that's for the life safety risk that's been documented by the city auditor.

[11:38:48 AM]

>> As part of the process. You know, you mentioned that, you know, for folks who refuse shelter services or supportive services, housing or services, you know, which is about half that at times they are refusing because it's the city making that connection. Have we considered, you know, peer navigators or working hand in hand with community members to maybe perhaps that's a better messenger source to do that connection?

[11:39:14 AM]

>> Yes, ma'am. And so and we do that. So through the street and community outreach team, they do these weekly coordination calls with other outreach partners. What we'll share the locations of clean up sites or things that are on our list for cleanup. And if another partner is already there, then we'll let them do their task and their activity. If our outreach team are going out and they feel like people really aren't engaging much, we might relay that information back out to the partners to see if somebody else might have a relationship. Sometimes, you know a person who doesn't want to talk to us might already have a case manager with integral care, or they might be willing to talk to the team from my sister's keeper. And so when we can, we will make those connections, or at least ask the partners to go out and to do that work, and then those and then wait for those partners to report back. It doesn't happen that way all the time. And sometimes it's the capacity of our partners and what they are able to accommodate and not able to accommodate. And we currently don't have any grant agreements or contracts anymore to do street outreach. And so we we also can't force those partners through a contract to, to do that work on our behalf. So we are a little bit beholden to their staffing and their availability. But I do want to give those partners a lot of credit because most of the time when we call, they are they're willing to work alongside us to help get people connected to a resource, whether that's a temporary hotel stay, a shelter stay or, or a housing opportunity.

[11:40:54 AM]

>> And is, I mean, basic, do you have anecdotal data or just is it more effective when a partner is making that connection? Do we know that at least.

[11:41:04 AM]

>> I think it depends. I think it's more so about having the right person making that connection. And so when you look at our street and community outreach team and, you know, one of our department strategic plan priorities is to hire people with lived experience in our department. And that does a number of things internally. Those staff challenge us when we have policies or practices that are out of line, and they're able to share their perspective as somebody with lived experience. And that really helps kind of gut check us in the work that we do. But those staff are also often our frontline staff. And so as they're going through encampments, because they have that lived experience, or maybe they have criminal justice history or something else, they're able to make a genuine connection with folks in a way that I might not be able to, or another city employee might not be able to. And so for us, it's been really important to be intentional about who we hire to do that work. We don't require our outreach staff to go into encampments with city branded clothing. We have that available to them if they'd like it, but sometimes they choose not to wear it. We do not require our staff to go into encampments in our city vehicles. A lot of times they are, but sometimes they might choose not to. And we do that intentionally because we know for some people that city seal is a barrier. So but the flip side of that, councilmember,

is that for sometimes some people don't believe our staff are city employees until they see the logo or they until they see the truck. So we try to give our staff the flexibility to make the right decision on the ground. But having the right people on the ground, whether it's a city employee or not, that really is the secret sauce.

[11:42:55 AM]

And building that first point of connection that ultimately allows us to get somebody onto a path of recovery. Right?

[11:43:04 AM]

>> And I think, I think it's so important to have the partner outreach as part of it. And so to the extent as we approach next budget cycle, we really need to look at how do we put more funding towards that effort of street outreach?

[11:43:16 AM]

>> Yes, ma'am.

[11:43:18 AM]

>> Okay. Any other questions? Thank you so much. Thank you. All right. Well, vice chairs, just you and I at this point. So the next question is future items, which at our December committee meeting, we are scheduled to receive a briefing from echo on the state of homelessness response system and the point in time count. We'll also receive an update and discuss the sobering center operations and management. A lot of changes are happening with sobering center, so it'll be good for us to have an update. Vice chair, any other committee meeting topics for us to consider?

[11:43:57 AM]

>> Not that come to mind right now, but I will follow up if I think of any. Thank you.

[11:44:02 AM]

>> Okay. Well, thank you, everyone for your participation and contribution today. As a reminder, our next committee meeting will be December 2nd, 2026 at 1 P.M. Note that is a different time for us. And vice chair, we'll have audit committee in the morning and then public health in the afternoon.

[11:44:18 AM]

>> I can't wait.

[11:44:19 AM]

>> I know it'll be a long committee day, so seeing no further business, I will adjourn this meeting at 11:44 A.M. Thank you.