

ANNUAL STRATEGY MEETING, DAY 2 - TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2025

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina convened for an Annual Strategy Session on Tuesday, January 28, 2025, at 9:07 a.m. at The Restoration Asheville, 68 Patton Avenue, Asheville, North Carolina with Mayor Vi Lyles presiding. Council members present were Danté Anderson, Tariq Bokhari, Tiawana Brown, Ed Driggs, Malcolm Graham, Renee Johnson, Lawana Mayfield, James Mitchell, and Victoria Watlington.

ABSENT: Councilmember Dimple Ajmera

ABSENT UNTIL NOTED: Councilmember Marjorie Molina

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ITEM NO. 1: WELCOME

DeAlva Arnold, Facilitator said if you could all find your seats and conclude your conversations, please, thank you. Good morning. I want to thank and welcome you to the second day of our Annual Strategy Retreat. I'd like to thank and welcome our distinguished guests and staff who've joined us here in person today. Thank you for being here. Also, thank you to Council members who really did some hard work yesterday. You put in some great conversation on the table, we came to some awakenings, so [inaudible] that will help us move forward as a high-performing Council. There's more work to do there. We'll look for continuing those conversations at the appropriate time, and we'll also look for an opportunity to [inaudible] the Mayor or Marcus if they have any opening comments.

Mayor Lyles said I want to say thank you to all of you for your presence and being present. That's makes a lot of difference when we're talking together and getting things out, and so I'm excited about the next steps that we're taking, particularly about the mobility discussion and capital improvement discussion, because these are the things that will make sure that our City continues to be one of those that's sought after, and being able to grow quickly, and to manage all the things that we do. When we started out on this journey of mobility, it was all about the idea of how do we make sure that the people that live in our City have a way to get to work, a way to have a home, and the ability to move around to do that in a way that they would choose. So, we've got a big challenge to make that happen. It will continue to be one of the things that I believe that this Council will stand up and make possible. So, thanks very much for what we're going to do today around mobility. I want to say especially thanks to the team who Marcus has put together. I don't know how you follow [inaudible], but we managed to get everybody here today. You have the ability to ask any question, to carry forth any idea, and we ought to make sure that we take full advantage of the talent in this room. So, let's make it happen.

Ms. Arnold said thank you, Mayor. We will follow the agenda's outline today, unless otherwise noted, and at this time I'd like to welcome Ed McKinney and our guest panelists to the front at this time, thank you. Let's give them a round of applause, thank you.

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ITEM NO. 2: WORKING SESSION: MOBILITY

Ed McKinney, Strategic Mobility said good morning. Again, Ed McKinney with the City Manager's Office. I'm glad to be here and excited to start our day to talk about mobility. There are a couple things I want to accomplish and hopefully get out of this discussion this morning. I want to be able to convince you that we have a plan, that we're excited about that plan. We've been demonstrating how to deliver on that plan, and I'll show you some examples later as we get into the discussion. We've got a team at the City and the staff that have been working on this for the past six to eight months, who are really

excited now about delivering on this plan. So, I want to show you, and sort of celebrate the work that we're doing. I believe 2025 is going to be a pretty big year for mobility in a region for the City. So, this is a great opportunity to demonstrate our ability to deliver on this infrastructure, to set the stage for how that will support the policies that you have beyond just mobility, and we'll talk about that throughout the day. So, very excited.

What I want to do, though, is we have a great opportunity to hear from another city that's done some very similar things that we're about to do this year. I'll introduce him in just a moment. The intention here is to be a peer-to-peer discussion to kick this off. So, elected official to elected official, you'll see Mick has got some great experience in dealing with a big vision and a big conversation with the committee about how to fund that vision. So, we'll start with that one. Let me introduce him. So, Mick has served as Mayor of Oklahoma City from 2005 to 2018, leading a major redevelopment plan in the urban core, securing an NBA (National Basketball Association) franchise for the city, creating an entertainment district that attracts millions of visitors every year and generating over his term well over 80,000 new jobs. This success and that work led to a Newsweek Magazine in 2012, naming him as one of the five most innovative Mayors in the United States, and it led him to author the book, *The Next American City*, documenting Oklahoma City's stories about civic engagement, inventive public policies, smart urban design, and really as a guide for cities throughout the country. At a national level, he has served as President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and Chairman of the Economic Affairs Committee. Very interesting fact, and maybe this will come up in his remarks, before he became Mayor, he spent 20 years in local television, and as news anchor, specifically covering city hall. So, I think he's probably got some very interesting sort of stories to tell. Maybe some of those he can share tonight, maybe some of those are for later, but it brings a really interesting perspective from how a community views the work that we're about to do. As you will see, Mick is a strong proponent of urban initiative, just like ours, transit, economic diversification, urban development, and civic design. His crusade against obesity became the cornerstone of a whole new vision for Oklahoma City. That vision included a bold idea to rebuild the city around the pedestrian, re-examine the city's culture and infrastructure to reshape transportation and roads and overall quality-of-life, very similar to what we're trying to do here. To implement that vision, he led a public campaign to extend an existing one cent sales tax over seven years to implement and fund, and almost \$800 million quality-of-life infrastructure program that included a new downtown streetcar system, sidewalks and road investment throughout the city, a new Convention Center, and a new 70-acre downtown urban park. He is currently serving as Urban Land Institute's Fellow for Urban Development. ULIs (Urban Land Institute) mission is to shape the future of built environment for transformative impact on communities worldwide, and this fellowship was created to advise and collaborate with ULI and its members on issues related to urban development, revitalization, and it is part of their [inaudible] infrastructure initiative, which identifies and promotes infrastructure solutions, creating new global and strategic partnerships, providing technical assistance, building capacity at the local level, and investigating innovative and effective strategies for real estate, infrastructure, and land use development.

I would like to thank, in particular, our local ULI Chapter, Theresa Burnett, who's our Executive Director at ULI locally, for facilitating in bringing Mick here today. Theresa and ULI have been a great and longstanding partner with us in the city, providing national expertise, technical assistance, as we envision the growth of Charlotte. I just want to mention a few things, that has included bringing leaders and experts from around the country to advise us on a range of issues locally, specifically into some really key ones for our policies, specifically most recently, helping to envision the Albemarle Road Cultural Trail within our Corridors of Opportunity, extending and really exploring our transportation demand management techniques, as we were looking to include that in part of our development recommendations, and most recently looking at resilience innovation districts as the policy tool to implement our Strategic Energy Action Plan. So, again, thank you to ULI for the partnership, and thank you, Mick, for being here today, and I'm going to turn it over to Mick to engage you in a conversation about the future of what we're doing, and then some stories about what you've achieved in Oklahoma City. So, thank you.

Mick Cornett, former Oklahoma City Mayor said thanks, Ed. Thank you very much. Alright, pop quiz, how many of you have ever been to Oklahoma City? Okay, how many of you have not, and have no idea who I am? Okay, most of the room. So, we will start with a history lesson. You've heard the saying that Rome was not built in a day. We were. I mean, quite literally on a spring day in 1889, federal government held what they called a Land Run. Now the Land Run, best I can figure, is when you line up thousands of desperate people, and you fire off a gun, and they roar across the countryside, and they put a stake in the ground, and wherever they put that stake is their new home, and the population of Oklahoma City went from zero to 10,000 in one day, and our planning department is still paying for that. You can imagine the calamity at the Land's Claim Office at the end of that first day, multiple parcels of land all having the same claimant, it was mess. They kind of worked on it, and they struggled through it, and at the end of that first week they got together, and they elected a Mayor, and then they shot him. It's not that funny, but I appreciate the feedback, it lets me see what type of audience I've got going here.

Oklahoma City made some economic development mistakes very early on, in that they traditionally tied their economy to the price of a commodity. So, early on, it was the price the cotton, later the price of wheat, ultimately the price of oil and natural gas, but when you tie your economy to a commodity, your economy goes up and down with the price of that commodity. So, in Oklahoma and Oklahoma City's history, what you see are a series of boom-and-bust times. In the 1970s, the price of oil zoomed up to \$40 a barrel. It was some of the best of times. People in Oklahoma spent money like it would never end, and of course, we know the good times in the oil and gas industry did end. In the early 1980s, the price of oil began to crash, and our banks and many of the oil and gas energy loans all of a sudden were upside down. We had a particular shopping center bank, didn't seem all that important of a bank, but it had a number of energy and oil and gas loans. When it closed, the federal government came in, the FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation), and closed that bank, because they were under water. It started a domino effect, and by the end of the 1980s, 200 banks had failed in the state of Oklahoma. I'm sure the cynic in you is thinking, Oklahoma had 200 banks. We did, but we had 200 fewer by the end of the 1980s. So, Oklahoma City's economy was at rock bottom. Can you imagine the level of services being offered by the City of Oklahoma City, when your tax base starts reducing itself in 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, and how in the world are you providing services by the end of the 1980s, when you've had this decade long of a collapse of your leading industry, the oil and gas industry, your banking system is in shambles, and you're commercial real estate is at rock bottom. So, every deal was upside down. You can imagine the number of young people that left. Really, an entire generation of promising people, people my age largely. People that had advanced degrees left, not because they necessarily wanted to, but because they didn't have jobs offered that measured up to their level of educational attainment.

So, by the end of the 1980s, it's a pretty depressing place, and that's when the citizens elected a business-minded Mayor named Ron Norick. Now, Ron Norick came to office promising jobs, that was his campaign thread. Of course, that sounded really good to the voters of Oklahoma City, so they raised their hand and put Ron Norick into office. Ron's father had also been Mayor, but it would be wrong to assume they were some sort of political dynasty. They were businesspeople. They just were CEOs (Chief Executive Officer) who volunteered their time to be the Mayor on Tuesday mornings, and whatever other time they had to offer, because it was a weak mayoral system with a very strong City Manager in place, and the Mayor was a little more than a figure head and an economic development cheerleader for civic projects at that particular time of our city's history.

Well, Ron Norick said he'd gotten to office promising jobs, and so he looked around the country trying to deliver on that promise, and low and behold, came the economic development opportunity of the decade. United Airlines was shopping for an opportunity at some location around the country to build a new maintenance facility, and this was the granddaddy of all economic development opportunities. It was going to be 5,000 to 10,000 high-paying, blue-collar jobs, and a billion dollars, and this is 1990 money, a billion dollars of annual economic impact to whatever community could land this

opportunity. So, Ron Norick makes it his target and starts working on it, spends over a year working on it. Now, economic development processes and procedures and incentive packages weren't all that well developed back then. So, Ron had to be creative. So, he started visiting with United Airlines, and he found out very quickly that United didn't really consider Oklahoma City as one of the places they would consider. So, Ron came up with an idea. He decided, what if we went to the citizens and got them to pass a sales tax, and we spent that money building the facility for United? All United would have to do really is bring in the jobs. We would hand them the keys to the facility that they're seeking to build somewhere. United said, "Well, that's a tremendous idea, Mr. Mayor, but your citizens are never going to vote for that." Well, United underestimated the desperation of Oklahoma City. That election passed 62 percent, and suddenly United Airlines is looking straight in the eye at Oklahoma City, and this incredible incentive package that's being laid on the table for them to come to Oklahoma City. So, they start whittling down the finalist for the opportunity to land this facility, it comes down to a final three, and they call a press conference in the City of Chicago. The Board of Directors is there, the CEO's there, all the finalists are there, and in Oklahoma City it had been very high profile.

Today, a lot of economic development ventures are behind the scenes, and you don't really know they're going on in the general public, but because of that sales tax election, this was obviously headline news. This press conference was going to lead the 10:00 p.m. news regardless, and it was being carried live back in Oklahoma City. The CEO of United got in front of the microphone, stood in front of the small audience of media and other personnel from all over the country, and said, "We're going to build this facility in Indianapolis," and it was about that quiet back in Oklahoma City, because we had our hopes up. I mean we just knew we were finally going to get some momentum, and finally get some jobs going back in Oklahoma City, and Mayor Norick was really dumbfounded. He couldn't believe, after spending more of a year of his time, really all of his political capital, getting this election passed, inferring to the citizens that if they did this, there would just be really no way that United could turn us down, and yet they had. So, Mayor Norick pushed United for an answer, "What went wrong? What did we do wrong?" United, as you can imagine, didn't really want to talk about it. They had their own criteria, and they looked at it, and they said, "Mayor Norick, you didn't do anything wrong. You were always on time. You always provided all the information we asked for. That sales tax election was fantastic. You just finished second. There's no hard feelings," and Mayor Norick said, "Well, that's not enough. We've got to learn from this. What did we do wrong," and United came clean, and they said, "Well, Mayor Norick, unbeknownst to you and the people in Oklahoma City, we sent in some mid-level executives and their spouses, and had them spend a weekend in downtown Oklahoma City. When they came back, they filed the report, and we read it, and at the end of that review, we just decided that we couldn't put the facility in Oklahoma City, because we couldn't force our employees to have to live there." Wow was that the kick in the teeth that the Mayor needed to hear.

The Mayor did a second proactive thing. He went to Indianapolis. Now, he did not move there, although, at this stage of his political career, I'm sure it crossed his mind. He said he got off the plane and he rented a car and he drove downtown, and he couldn't believe what he saw. What he saw was department stores and shopping and retail and there were water features, and there were sports arenas, all of these activities that were going on in downtown Indianapolis. There were condo towers. People lived in downtown Indianapolis. The only people that lived in downtown Oklahoma City, at this venture, were in jail. If you had choices, you didn't live in downtown Oklahoma City. Oklahoma City was down to very few restaurants, it had no retail to speak of, there was one hotel in downtown Oklahoma City at this point, and it was struggling to stay open. Mayor Norick took this experience, came back to Oklahoma City and said, "Okay, I've got it. We were trying to incentivize people to come to our city to create jobs. What we have to do is invest in ourselves." Mayor Norick noted that the citizens of Oklahoma City were willing to vote for something. They were willing to tax themselves for something to make their city better. Could Mayor Norick come out with a sales pitch that would allow them to invest in Oklahoma City, as opposed to invest in United Airlines? So, he started working with the business leaders and his City Council, and they started coming up with

some elements of what we now call MAPS, Metropolitan Area Projects. With the City Council committee kind of helping to design and choose what projects they would put, they put some typical economic development features in there, like some improvements to our Convention Center, some improvements to our Performing Arts Center. There was a transportation link, some rubber-wheeled trolleys. There were some improvements at the fairgrounds.

Mayor Norick even had the audacity to believe that we could put water in the river. Now, I drove past one of your rivers here, and it seems your river came complete with water, Oklahoma City's did not. We had this extremely dry, huge ditch in downtown Oklahoma City, and the grownups called it the river. I can remember growing up in Oklahoma City and looking at my geography books in middle school and looking at the rivers of the world. I'm thinking man, that doesn't look anything like our river. The City of Oklahoma City had a line item in its budget to mow the river twice a year. Mayor Norick's idea was to build some low-water dams and impound water, and the water wouldn't flow anywhere, but at least there'd be water in the river, and who knew what development might take place along its edges. When they started polling the MAPS projects, they had all these wonderful ideas about going into this abandoned warehouse district and trying to create an entertainment district. They had seen the canal in San Antonio and thought what if we built a canal through this boarded up warehouse district, maybe people would visit. These were farfetched ideas, but boy did people want to put water in the river, putting water in the river sounded really cool.

So, Mayor Norick started a campaign, they started polling it and the polling was awful. The problem was, not everybody liked all the projects, and Mayor Norick was forcing them to vote on this entire package with one vote. So, you had to either vote up or down, you either got it all, or you didn't get any. As Mayor Norick recalls, it wasn't so much that people didn't think that all of these projects were worth a penny, but you've got remember this was after 10 years of declining sales tax revenue and tax revenue, and the citizens just had a lot of questions and doubt that the city could pull this off. I mean the city was barely able to pick up the trash. They were barely able to put police officers on the street, and now they're going to build sports arenas and build canals through this abandoned warehouse district, and they're going to put water in the river, are you kidding me?

So, Mayor Norick could see that the polling was going down, and as the election day neared, he threw out kind of one very common-sense Hail Mary. He went to the media and went to the voters and said, "Look, even if nobody ever comes to visit because of MAPS, and even if nobody ever comes and creates a job, because of MAPS the worst-case scenario is, we're going to have a better city for us. Wouldn't you like to have your kid and your grandkid have a better place to live, and maybe have a better chance of keeping them to raise their families?" Well, with that kind of common-sense sales pitch, MAPS passed with 52 percent of the vote. It's interesting today that you can't find anyone who will admit they voted against it, because ultimately it changed everything, but it got off to a rocky start. It certainly didn't change everything very quickly. The funding of MAPS was that we would pay no debt, so we would not bond it out. We would only spend the money as we collected it. So, it took a long time for the money to be collected and for the consultants and the engineers to start to be hired. Mayor Norick had made some estimations that didn't prove correct. For instance, the sales tax was not coming in at the numbers he had expected, and the budget for the projects was being exceeded, and so they were behind schedule. If you've got an initiative, three things that you can't have happen are, you can't have it cost more than you thought, you can't have revenue that's less than you thought, and it can't be behind schedule, but Mayor Norick had all three of those a year and a half after the MAPS election, when Oklahoma City experiences the worst act of domestic terrorism in United States history.

So, a bomb goes off downtown, and 168 people are murdered at 9:00 a.m. on a Wednesday morning. I think it's pertinent at this point to kind of take a snapshot of Oklahoma City and where it is. This was a generation of people who had been through the economic collapse of the 1980s. They had been promised hope with United Airlines and seen that dashed. They'd been promised hope with MAPS, and here we were a

year and a half later, and I think if the citizens could've voted again, they would've voted it back out. Now, resting on their collective shoulders is the emotional burden of this extremely large mass murder. It's very interesting to see, and you can only see it with hindsight, but to look back and to see what happened in Oklahoma City, it's almost as if the citizens of Oklahoma City reached down and grab hands and pulled each other up, and they dared the world to pull them apart. The unity that was created from those combined experiences created a bond that to some extent still exists in Oklahoma City today.

Well, the MAPS projects do start to open up, next Mayor comes in, sees that downtown is starting to feel better and look a little better, but he doesn't see anybody moving back downtown. As it would happen, an Assistant City Manager comes up to the Mayor one day, when he sees that the Mayor's expectations of downtown housing are not taking place, and the now famous conversation goes something like this. He said, "Mayor, you can pave these streets with gold, but if we don't do something about the school system, people aren't moving back to the inner city." It was true. The inner-city school system, the largest school district in the state, had been unable to pass its bond issues, and the deferred maintenance had piled up and up. Someone did the math and determined that, even if they passed every bond issue from here on, they're never going to catch up with the deferred maintenance, they're too far behind. The buildings were falling apart. The education going on inside the classrooms was not what it should've been, but what was apparent to the people of Oklahoma City, as you drove by the 75 different buildings in 75 different neighborhoods, that these buildings were in really, really bad shape. So, the Mayor came up with an idea of MAPS for Kids, and MAPS for Kids would be a seven-year initiative for a penny on the dollar sales tax, and combined with a bond issue, the district was supposed to pass that night, would come up with \$700 million that would be applied to the capital needs of the inner-city district. State law had to be changed, because state law would not allow a municipality to spend money on schools. Schools were funded in a different manner. So, state law was changed, and the City of Oklahoma City was able to really gift over \$500 million of its sales tax base to the school district and then hand over the keys to 75 buildings that had been refurbished or built anew. An entire new round of capital improvements, a new round of buses, a new round of technology, an opportunity for the city to move forward, because we could see that no matter how much emphasis we put on downtown, that if we're really trying to create density, so that so many other things could be done efficiently. If we're really trying to create density, we're going to have to repopulate the inner city, and people are not going to move back to the inner city, at least families aren't, as long as the school buildings are falling apart downtown. In one instance, when we went back to fix a school, we took down a row of lockers in one of our grade schools, and the wall fell down. That's how bad the school system's buildings were that we were educating our kids in.

Alright, fast forward a few years, 2004, in kind of this rare act of lack of judgement, the citizens elect me. So, I come to office in the wake of these two tremendous predecessors, who had really to a certain extent done a lot of the heavy lifting. I mean they had started to rebuild the core of the city. The school district was now under construction, and I was to oversee the construction of all 75 of these projects. As we started to look, the citizens of Oklahoma City started to feel a little better, but local investment still wasn't bringing [inaudible]. The memory of the 1980s was still too recent, and although downtown was starting to look better, and the school district was starting to be exposed, we still had a lot of fundamental problems. One of them was the image of the city. When I traveled and would speak, trying to raise positive attention about Oklahoma City, I noticed that when I walked in the room and explained who I was and what I was doing there around the country, when I said Oklahoma City, the people thought of the bombing. It was still too fresh on their minds, and it's almost as if our brand had been wounded by tragedy. That bombing kind of almost sounded like a sports name, Oklahoma City bombing. You could not say Oklahoma City without having these horrific images in your mind, because it was such a high-profile event on the timeline. So, that's when I started going to New York to visit with the NBA and the NHL (National Hockey League) about the wisdom of getting a franchise into Oklahoma City,

and that's a whole other speech. We also started looking at, well, what can we do for MAPS three?

Now, when you start talking about initiatives, I want to make an extremely important point here, not one that you're facing immediately, but one in general or any city that's thinking about an initiative I think has to consider. When Mayor Norick was trying to pass MAPS, the city was desperate. They were desperate for economic development, and they were desperate for a better downtown. So, Mayor Norick had to come up with an idea that would provide a solution for this desperation, but he didn't have to convince people that there was a problem. When Mayor Humphreys, the next mayor, came in and started talking about the schools, he had to come up with a solution to this problem of the capital needs of the inner-city district, but he didn't have to convince the voters that there was a problem. He just had to convince them that there was a solution for it.

Well, by the time I came along, and we were starting to talk about MAPS three, the city wasn't desperate anymore. The NBA team had arrived. Downtown was starting to look better. The school buildings were open. Our economy was starting to improve, and here I was with some sort of pitch about good to great. I have since run into a lot of elected officials, and they'll come up to me, because I have this connection with passing initiatives, they come up to me and they want to tell me about their initiative, and you'd be surprised how many times they come up and talk to me about an initiative they're trying to pass, and it sounds a little inside baseball. So, I say, "Well, does the general citizens know this is a problem?" They say, "No, they don't even know it's a problem," and I'm thinking to myself, I don't know if you're going to be able to convince them that you're going to solve this, and they don't even know it's a problem. I don't know if they're going to tax themselves to fix a problem that they don't know exists. So, I think that's always extremely important in an initiative, that the people you're asking to tax themselves, the voters, that they understand the need for whatever it is that you're offering them. That's a very fundamental communication between elected official and voter.

Well, when we started looking at MAPS three, we knew we needed a new Convention Center. We wanted to build a big Expo Center down at the fairgrounds, because we host a lot of horse shows and it's a tremendous part of our economy, and so we needed a better facility down there. We knew we wanted a downtown suburban park. We had relocated Interstate 40, which I think you know something about. We had relocated Interstate 40 as it went through downtown a few blocks to the south, and it opened up an area that was prime for redevelopment downtown, and we thought this might be a way to fund a world-class park to go downtown. Mayor Norick's vision on the river had created extremely positive consequences. The private sector philanthropists started building boathouses and we had, along the way, constructed the finest venue in the world for the sports of canoe, kayak and rowing. So, in a now, well remembered 2008 inner city visit, [inaudible] 2028 Los Angeles is hosting the summer games, but Oklahoma City is hosting canoe/kayak for the Olympics. We're also hosting softball. So, Los Angeles is hosting every event, except two, and those two are going to be held in Oklahoma City.

When we started looking at MAPS three, and we put this package of projects together, we also put in some quality of life and pedestrian friendly. I had spent years communicating the fact that Oklahoma City's problem with health and obesity was largely determined by the fact that we had become such a car-centric community. In fact, if you were a car, there could've been no better quality of life for you than Oklahoma City. I mean we have this incredible grid of roads, there's almost no traffic congestion anywhere in the metro area, fast food restaurants flourish because land is cheap. Remember we gave it away in 1889, and it wasn't much different in 2009, when we were putting this together, and so that business model worked, and we had an extreme problem with obesity. One of the recollections that I had was that I realized how the built environment was reflecting the poor health of our community. We had built a complete community around cars. It was as if we had challenged our civil engineers, that their sole job was to see how fast you can get a car from here to here. Meanwhile, downtown, we had built all these amenities to attract people, but once the individual

arrived downtown, we had created an extremely unfriendly environment for them to move around. Here's what I mean. We had five-lane, one-way streets everywhere downtown, and you would walk up and you would hit the walk/don't walk button. After seemingly waiting quite a while, it would say walk, and you would take a step off the curb and then another step, and all of a sudden it would start flashing don't walk, and you still have 4½ lanes to go. So, you start to lose confidence in the system, and you start walking faster, and then you start to jog, and then you would leap to the curb just as the cars started roaring behind you. That's how we made the pedestrian feel in downtown Oklahoma City, and the cars, of course, couldn't believe that they were inconvenienced by a pedestrian. They would roar behind you. So, we took all of our one-way streets, made them two-way, completely redesigned our downtown grid, put in on-street parking, completely landscaped them, and basically dug up our streets 10 foot to find out what was down there, and to relocate all of the utilities and the necessary objects that go under streets, and to give an entirely new street grid downtown, and that completed the downtown transformation some 30 years later.

Fast forward again. I mentioned in 1990, really up until 1997, we had one downtown hotel, and today we have 29. When I travel, I ask the question, so I'm going to ask this audience too. How many of you when you were in high school, or at some point in your past, you've read the Grapes of Wrath? How many of you? Okay. See, every time I ask that question, I'm amazed at how many hands go up, because I thought that was something we did in Oklahoma to ensure that our children felt bad about themselves. So, the story of the Grapes of Wrath is a story about an extremely poor Oklahoma family in the 1930s. They're going through the dust bowl, and they have given up on Oklahoma. There are no jobs, there's no crops, people are starving throughout the state, and they're putting everything they have on a truck, and they're getting on Route 66, and they're heading to California. When you examine it, what are they going to California for? Well, they're going to California for hope. They're going because they believe there'll be opportunities, there'll be jobs, and they're going for their kids and their grandkids. They're going because they want the next generation to have opportunities that they didn't have in Oklahoma. Now, when I look at the demographic statistics, it appears that the grandchildren are coming back. We have in-migration from California. We have in-migration from Texas, and those are two places that we had out-migration for decades.

In office, I fronted a number of campaigns. So, I ran for re-election and Mayor. I ran four times and I ran for City Council, and then I fronted initiatives and bond issues, and the school district would pass a bond issue and I would front that for them. Overall, there were 10 elections in which I was kind of the face of the election. Out in front of the public trying to get people to vote for whatever I was pitching on that particular day, either me or another candidate, or some initiative. I noticed after a few of these elections that there was a pattern developing. As I'm giving it my best pitch in these far-off suburban neighborhood meetings, I could look in the back of the room and, no matter how much I smiled and no matter how much energy I exhibited, there's some person in the back of the room, and they are scowling back at me. I came to learn, after a few of these encounters, that I could make some assumptions about this person. Number one, they don't like taxes. Two, they don't like downtown, and three, they don't like me, but when I'd lost the intellectual argument, when I'd given them every bullet point, I had, I would close with this, I would say, "Well, all I can tell you is that we're creating a city where your kid and your grandkid are going to choose to live." Oh, they hated that argument, because they knew it was true. If they had been around in the 1980s, they saw how many young people left, promising people, and it affected nearly every household, and if it didn't affect their household, it affected their nephew or niece or cousin. Everyone knew somebody that left in that timeframe, and they were doing remarkable things now, but they weren't doing it in Oklahoma City. They might be doing it in Charlotte or New York or Dallas or Tokyo, but that generation left, and now there's this sense that young people that grew up in Oklahoma City, there's a high chance that they might want to come back after they go off to college, and there's certainly demographic information that shows that people in north Texas and the Dallas area, a lot of them are moving to Oklahoma City. Why are they moving? Why are they coming? Well, it's the same thing really that Mayor Norick learned throughout his experience with

United Airlines. They're coming for a quality of life that Oklahoma City now offers. They're coming for the same types of things that a lot of what I'll call mid-sized cities, like Charlotte, Oklahoma City, Little Rock, Omaha, it's the theme of my book, "The Next American City." The millennials and the generation after them, it's the quality of life that they really choose based on affordability. Can they afford to live here? Is there affordable housing? Can I have a job and raise a family here on my salary? Can I do that?

They also don't want traffic congestion. They want a better transportation system. They want public transit. I joke that they never want to ride public transit, but they want there to be public transit. You're not going to have that if you don't have a strong core. The quality of life in the suburbs is directly related to the intensity of the core. If you don't have a strong core, you can't be a suburb of nothing, and the quality of life in the entire region suffers. The last item that that generation is looking for is fresh water and clean air, and you can't necessarily find that everywhere on the east and west coast anymore. So, cities your size are positioned perfectly to reach out to these highly educated 20 somethings, this technologically savvy, entrepreneurial generation, and attract them for the quality of life that you offer, and if you can attract that generation, they'll bring the economy with them. They'll create jobs on their own, but you have to have a city where they want to live. I think Oklahoma City's experience is example A of how far a city can come when it concentrates on creating a quality of life instead of trying to incentive others to come to their city and create jobs, and that's our story. Thanks so much. Thanks. Ed, do we have some time for Q&A? Okay. No one ever wants to ask the first question. Yes, what's on your mind.

Councilmember Driggs said really appreciate the narrative, and a lot of it relates to our experience, some of it doesn't. When you went out to promote the referendums, what kind of marketing was done? Was there private sector funding for advertising? How did you inform people and motivate them?

Mr. Cornett said well, that's a great question. His question is how do you pass something? You have to have a marketing campaign. What we've done in Oklahoma City, and it's similar in almost all communities that are passing these, is we work with the business community. In our city, that means working with the Chamber of Commerce. There are other different types of organizations around the country, but you're right. I mean, the elected officials can't put money into a campaign. We can use our bully pulpit, we can get out and talk about it, but in our case, the private sector raised the money to put forth a political campaign to pass it. In MAPS three, we had a funded opponent, so it was not easy to pass, and this is 15 years ago. The Chamber of Commerce and its members had to come up with close to \$3 million ultimately, to make sure that that initiative passed.

Even though the money is being raised for the private sector, there are certain things that I think the elected officials have a responsibility to. One of them is just positive energy about the city, and it's not about the initiative, just in general, about things that you're working on. Because, if you're asking a voter to go to the polls and vote yes, I just think it's in everyone's best interest if there's positive energy and there's a confidence in the people that are running the city, both the staff and the elected officials, and that things are moving in the right direction. I don't think it does a city any good to be pointing fingers and blaming problems on each other. If the leadership, I'm not just talking about the public leadership, I'm talking about public and private, doesn't really matter. If the citizens of the community feel like they're having to be the referees for the leadership to decide who's right, who's wrong. Why are they blaming them? Who's at fault? Why did that happen? If that sort of disharmony and negativity exists, it's harder and harder to pass these types of elections. You need a positive energy, and people need to realize that there's obviously a time to be honest with your constituents about the problems you're facing, but you also need to be honest at what you're doing to work on them, and so there's an answer to the questions, because you've never fixed every neighborhood's problems, it's just an impossible task, there's at least an answer to the question of what you're doing about it to try and address it. I think that answer to the question is really important.

Councilmember Anderson said first of all, thank you for the presentation, it's very informative. I have two questions for you. One is, you talked about your referendums in terms of MAPS one, two and three, and it's an interesting concept, because I wonder would a Oklahoma City resident think that MAPS four is right around the corner, and that there's a rhythm to how these things will come about, and they will be involved in paying for the growth. So, I'd like to hear your insight on that.

Mr. Cornett said yes, sure, because it reminds me, I didn't really complete the story. My successor passed MAPS four. He was my former Chief of Staff. My former Chief of Staff is now the Mayor of Oklahoma City, and he passed MAPS four a couple of years into his time in office. MAPS four was much more about the social needs of the city that his predecessors had helped create. So, there were capital needs for a lot of nonprofits for like domestic violence or mental health, and there's also money to kind of help subsidize the operations for these types of endeavors. So, taking on the social needs was part of it. Now, MAPS four also included some economic development [inaudible] some things, and technology and things like that, but largely it was based on the social needs of the community, and not the economic development needs, but really that comes back to creating a better quality of life for the community, when you're addressing the social needs. So, it really all fits in the larger theme, but it took some convincing, because it wasn't traditional, it wasn't what the original MAPS one, two and three had been about. It was different, but it passed I think with over 70 percent of the vote. Yes, his approval rating is really high.

Ms. Anderson said okay, excellent. The second question I have is somewhat tangential, but you mentioned you were able to acquire the NBA franchise. I personally spent some time in northwest Arkansas, so I've been an OKC (Oklahoma City) game, and I remember that your franchise had some of the best attendance in the entire league. There was a lot of vitality around that. Did it help and form the passing of any of your MAPS programs and form the need for mobility in the downtown area? I'm just wondering how having a professional franchise helped sell the notion of, we need to invest in ourselves?

Mr. Cornett said I think having professional sports and supporting those professional sports is mandatory for creating a city where people want to live. There's a number of people that, even if they're not sports fans and even if they don't want to go to a game, they want to be culturally relevant. So, when you're attracting these highly-educated young people, that I keep referring to, they want to live in a city that has professional sports. They want to be part of the ESPN conversation, the ESPN generation, and it helps if your team wins, which our team, fortunately and with some luck involved, did through the years, and is doing again this year. When I brought the team in, it was to help address the image problem and the brand of Oklahoma City. What it's done since then I think combines the civic pride, and maybe to directly answer your question, it validates those other things we did. People pretty easily understand that we wouldn't have that team if we hadn't done MAPS and we hadn't done MAPS for Kids. We wouldn't have had a chance to do an NBA team. They weren't looking at us. They didn't have a team for us prior to those initiatives, and as you mentioned, we have outstanding attendance. It's the only game in town. You may remember that handful of years when your basketball team was the only professional sports team in town. I can still remember the energy-crazed enthusiasm of those first few years of your franchise. In Oklahoma City that still exists. Now, since then you've gotten in the National Football League, which is at the top of the pyramid. It's hard to imagine Oklahoma City could ever do that. We don't have the corporate base. We don't have the number of Corporate 500 teams, citizens you would need to support an NFL (National Football League) franchise. We're very much focused on supporting the NBA franchise we have, and being one of those communities like Portland, Salt Lake, Sacramento. They have one franchise, it's in the NBA, and we're perfectly satisfied being a part of that list of peer cities, because to a certain extent, and this is very superficial, you are who your sports teams play. For 100 years, Oklahoma City was playing Little Rock and Amarillo and Tulsa and Fort Worth and Des Moines. I mean those are fine cities, but today our team plays Chicago and New York and Los Angeles and Charlotte. I mean, it's a completely different list of peer cities, and there's this superficial level of equality that you get when you have a

professional sports franchise, that no amount of money can buy. So, it's been extremely important to us, and a lot of it is hard to quantify.

Councilmember Brown said good morning. Thank you so much for coming and being here with us today. I greatly appreciated your informative presentation that you did, but I want to ask a question for constituents that may not be on board with this. You answered some of it, but it's tough, when people think that their needs are not being met, they're not being cared for, and they may be left out. Marginalized communities. Communities that really can't see the upside of this. So, for me, because I know the city has to grow and it has to move forward, how do we collectively come together to share that, this would benefit you too. It's very difficult and it's very challenging. While it sounds very great for the business community, and people that are thriving, and companies that are moving to Charlotte, and we're growing and we're going to continue to grow, but I have to remember the population that's not in this room, and may not even hear this presentation, but I also have to go out and reach them and let them know that we care about you too collectively as we're moving forward. I need some language, and I need to be able to share with, not just my district, but other districts that may come to me and ask me those questions. So, the information that you provided is amazing. You've done some great things, but we have many teams compared to Oklahoma City, our soccer team, our football team, our baseball team, our NBA team, so just help me with that please.

Mr. Cornett said yes, so there are parts of your city that acknowledge, yes, the city's doing great, but what about us? Why have we been left behind in this economic improvement? That's why I fall back on what is important to everybody, and that is their kids and their grandkids, and because in your specific instance, this is about transportation, almost everybody has a need for transportation. My City Manager one time was talking to me, and he gave me a line that I've used before, and that is, you can't fix all your problems in one day. There's always a list of problems, and this is one that we're going to address right now, but you don't ever allow people to think you're not acknowledging their situation. There were a number of years where we had the lowest unemployment in the country, and I always, in my State of the City speech, spoke to the people that were out of work, because it doesn't do any good to hear the Mayor talk about and brag about a low unemployment number if you're unemployed, and they need to hear the fact that you're trying to create jobs for everybody in the economy. That's why you have so much economic development work going on in your city, trying to create jobs. Jobs and transportation are universal, regardless of your economic stature. So, I would think it's a matter of reminding people that this is affecting them and their children and their opportunities, and that you do understand their situation and it's real and you're not disavowing the way they feel. Voting no is not going to solve their problem either, and voting yes has an opportunity to create a better environment for the next generation.

Ms. Brown said thank you so much for that. For tangible low-hanging fruit, let's talk about that. What you said is great in that moment, but if I'm homeless, if my rent is skyrocketing and I can't pay it, and some of my family members are laying on the sidewalk. They don't need a bus. So, what do we do? You may not have the answer to that, but maybe some of my colleagues are listening to me address you with the concerns that are coming from me, my heart and know what I experience every day as I'm moving about the city. Neighborhoods that don't seem to be thriving or don't look like they're thriving. Collectively, what can we do? Yes, transportation, we need it, but we also need to make sure that when we get the transportation, the transportation is able to go and get the folks that's always been using it, and that it's upward for them as well, but I do appreciate your feedback, and I can take it, it's positive, and I can move forward with it, but that's something for me and my colleagues, I guess, and speak to the Mayor and the City Manager, and Mr. Driggs who leads the Transportation and is highly educated when it comes to this. These are tough questions that people may not want to ask, but I just have to ask those questions.

Mr. Cornette said yes, there's not a City Council in America that's not working on homelessness right now. I think the push and pull and the conversations that I hear are

a lot about, it's expensive to manage homelessness, and we wish we had more money to prevent homelessness on the front side, and that continual discussion on how much attention do we spend on trying to prevent homelessness, and how much do we spend on trying to deal with the homelessness we already have, is what every City Council and elected officials are trying to deal with. So, I feel for you.

Ms. Brown said well, I thank you so much. I know that it is a global issue, not just in the City of Charlotte. I go some other places, and I say, wow, we think we've got a concern, but then when you move into some of the larger cities, Atlanta. I go downtown, and I'm like, wow, it doesn't look like that, or in different neighborhoods it doesn't look that way. Again, I always think there's more that we can do, and we just have to push a little harder to let people know that we care.

Mr. Cornett said right, it's breaks my heart.

Councilmember Watlington said my comments are actually very much in line with Councilmember Brown. I know that we talk about, and we spend our energy on the things that we think are going to recruit high earners, but to Councilmember Brown's point, what about the people who we are taxing to get that, and we talk about their kids and their grandkids, except your kids are going to a four-year institution, and they're going to become doctors, lawyers, or engineers, where are they going to live? So, I'm curious as to how you all think about recruiting along the economic mobility ladder, and how you think about how you incentivize, so that you've got different segments of the population within your city, because just as much as you want people who can afford to pay for tickets to go these sporting events, you also need members of the community that are willing to work there and keep up the facilities, for example. So, I'm curious as to, beyond the things that are trying to get the top earners into the city, we all want those things, we want that segment of the population, but we want a balanced city, and all kinds of people want to come and live in these cities. So, I'm curious as to how you're building out that complete recruitment strategy? What are you doing to incentivize small business owners? What are you doing to help folks go to trade school, or those kinds of things? I'm curious of how you think about it beyond the top of the pyramid.

Mr. Cornett said right. Well, I know you have people working on those things. I would say that you'll notice when I start talking about the fundamentals, they're really not based on level of education or income. It's affordability, which is defined by the person that's there. No one likes to sit in traffic. So, it's investments in public transit, and it's investment in quality roads, and an investment in the inner city to create density, so you don't have to have as much money spent on urban sprawl and those roads. Then, it's fresh water and clean air, which is pretty much universal to everybody. I mean those are the things that I think are fundamental to everyone in your community and need to be at the top of your priority list. So, I mean you're not wrong.

Ms. Watlington said yes, I would agree with you there, and you're not either, I recognize where you're coming from. I think for my colleagues, we've got to understand and realize, though, that the more attractive we make something the more we impact affordability, so the two go hand in hand. I just think that we've got to be a little bit more intentional and demonstrative about how we attack those things. If we can go to the community and ask for a tax incentive to bring this big investment, we also should be considering how that impacts, and how we can buoy folks in the city that are going to be negatively impacted, even as the folks in the center are going up. So, just something to think about.

Mr. Cornett said okay.

Marcus Jones, City Manager said could I be your part-time City Manager for a moment? So, I really thought the world of Jim Couch who worked with you. So, what I would offer is it's not just the mobility plan, \$25 billion over 30 years, and it's not just [inaudible] in isolation. It's what we're doing around housing, the \$100 million bond, and anti-displacement. So, if we start to decouple that, it's not a great story, but if you put it

together, and then let's start to think about, of that \$25 billion, I think Ed, \$5.7 billion is coming directly to the City of Charlotte. So, what we have are all of these projects that are going to be constructed. So, it will be one of the biggest workforce development initiatives that we've ever done. So, it's looking at it that way and not just a mobility plan.

Mr. Cornett said I understand, it's well thought out.

Mayor Lyles said I wanted to respond to Councilmember Brown and Ms. Watlington. Thank you so much. I do think that when we're talking about how we're going to do things and all of this work that we're going to do, we have to figure out what really is missing, and I'll give you a specific example. We had the MTC (Metropolitan Transit Commission) meeting the other day, Brent is somewhere in here, and the question was about shelters. So, you look at our bus system now, and you have a pole and a curb. So, when we're talking about what we're going to do next, shouldn't that shelter be sheltering people, and making sure that we're on time for what we're trying to do? All of this has been said. It gives us the best opportunity to lift ourselves up, and to not only lift ourselves up as a city, but to actually contribute to the opportunity for the next generation. So, small things make a difference, because have asked for bus shelters in so many years, and I think it's time for us to begin to take this money and illustrate that we're actively going to do this, and we ought to go ahead and commit to it, and it ought to be the plan and the plan ought to stick, unless we have to have some kind of change, like if South Carolina starts chasing us or something like that. We need to make sure that we are addressing everyone's needs, and I even say that to the school system. I think the program that I'm most proud that the Manager implemented, was when we began to hire people right out of high school, that they have the ability to work for the city organization. I mean, that changes lives, and so that's what we're about. We were actually talking about how to lift things up. You had all of these ideas around what to do, but I think we have to take ours to another level, because of where we are and where we live. I mean, you're still in the south. I mean Oklahoma's not south, I don't think, but when you live in the south, if have to really deal with what's going on, and how much of our history we have to change.

Mr. Cornett said well put.

Ms. Brown said so, the Mayor, she's very smart, comes with a wealth of knowledge and you can't take that from her, but I go back to some of my colleagues saying, if you don't feel safe in the city then you're not safe. If people don't feel like we care about them, then they feel like we don't care about them. So, that is a great initiative for high school students coming and working for the City of Charlotte. I was there. I support that. There's a nonprofit organization, I won't say it on camera who they are. They took 100 people off the streets in 90 days. If a nonprofit organization does that and provides housing for people, imagine what we can do. So, this strategic meeting that we are in, it's for us to move the city forward collectively for everybody. So, I have to go back to elevating, and let's not lose focus on mobility, housing, jobs, and all of that. As we attain and we move forward, remember the folks that feel like we're not moving them forward. That's what we've got to do. You don't want to walk out of your house, and you don't want to feel like there's going to be a gunshot coming your way, or you're going to be robbed or mugged. People that don't have the opportunity to be in the room, I'm going to be in the room for them, and I want them to know that I care, I heard them, I listen to them, and I was going to raise the question as the opportunity presented itself.

Mayor Lyles said and I'm never going to disagree with Councilmember Brown. You do a good job.

Mr. Driggs said I just wanted to say further to your comments, the vigor and vitality of the economy of a city is what creates its ability to look after the people who are less fortunate. If you look at some cities that have gone into decline, they have underprivileged populations as well, and their ability to do anything about that is very limited. So, I think we need to recognize this goes hand in hand. You have to feed the machine that gives you the resources to attend to the needs of the people who are less fortunate. So, I really appreciate your description of creating that vitality in the

community, that then in turn improves life for everybody. There's no danger that this Council is going to disregard the plight of the underprivileged population.

I had one quick question for you. Your MAPS referendums, did they sunset? Were they consecutive? So, you renewed the one cent sales tax for a new program, and then those programs were funded currently from the proceeds without the debt incurrence, because ours is different. We're looking at a sales tax that would be perpetual, and that would sustain debt. I think Pennies for Progress in South Carolina sounds more like what you've done. Not to make any comparisons, just for my colleagues here, though, that's an important difference, because we're talking about basically forever on the one cent, and we're talking about a 30-year horizon in terms of the plan, as opposed to, what were the duration of the MAPS plans?

Mr. Cornett said five and a half years, seven year and nine months, and 10 years.

Mr. Driggs said right, so that was a more finite, shorter term, visible kind of outlook, and what we're doing here involves some projects that aren't going to be completed for 30 years. Thank you.

Councilmember Graham said thank you for the presentation. I'll also wanted to concur with my colleagues, Councilwoman Brown and Driggs. The investment in the Panthers, for me, was not really about NFL football, it was about tourists and hospitality, and the folks who work in that industry, many of whom are waiters and waitresses and bus boys, and those who actually do the day-to-day work of the City, frontline workers. That was an investment in them. So, I think Mr. Driggs is right in that it's not either/or, we have to have a strong economy to support all the other initiatives, and Ms. Brown is certainly right, where I think we have to be really intentional about focusing, calling out, and outlining what we are currently doing, because we're doing a lot. I think we do a lot in abstracts, but if we put it on one paper or we have a dedicated type of meeting, Mr. Manager, where we can really articulate in a very visible way what we're doing, how we're doing it, who we are doing it in partnership with, whether it's various nonprofit organizations or really our sister government, Mecklenburg County, who really have the tools and resources really to make a more immediate impact on a wide variety of these issues than we can, notwithstanding that we have a responsibility too. I think at some point in time, and I think I heard in your presentation, that you guys also had a form where you had social responsibility that you kind of talked about some of those things, so that the unintended consequences, if someone's watching from afar, who are saying they're doing this transit tax, they're invested in the football stadium, Malcolm keeps talking about this tennis stuff. It's not about the tennis, it's about being peer cities with Paris or London or Melbourne, and the tourist dollars that come with that that support those frontline workers that are doing that. So, Mr. Manager, I don't know when, how, to what extent, we do that. I think Councilmember Brown makes a good point, that we need to carve some time and space, where we really, really kind of talk about those issues, because we are actually doing a lot, but it's fragmented, and I think people can't see the cumulative impact of the decisions and the partnerships and the relationships that we're having.

Mr. Cornett said thank ya'll very much.

Mr. McKinney said so, Mick will be here throughout the day, so certainly lots of opportunities to continue the conversation. This has been great, because certainly we got very quickly to the heart of today, and I don't need to repeat back to you what you just were talking about. Our mobility plan really is fundamental to the strategy about economic mobility, affordability for housing and access to jobs. So, that's really what this day is about. What I want to do, quickly, because I don't want to stifle the good conversation we just had. I'm going to try to run through really quickly, give you an update on where we are with our plan and our work, and then hopefully we get back to the conversation, and can tie this aspiration and transformation theme, that Mayor Cornett just gave us, to the kinds of projects and aspirations we have.

So, strategic investment areas. We've been talking about those for the last couple of years. I want to give you a quick update on what we've done over the last six to eight months, and then talk about what that means for our larger plan. We've talked about this before. So, in the last couple of years, we've been building sort of a case for our plan. The first document was really around what our needs are, and we talked a lot about that a couple years ago. Last year at your retreat, we talked about what would be our approach? We have an extensive sort of catalog of our needs. The question was how do we approach it? Our approach was strategic investment areas, as we have been building that strategy over the last year. As a reminder, we did sort of a data-driven analysis. We went to the places throughout our City where we could target the kinds of needs we have around congestion, around access and safety, around connection to our transit system, and what that gave us was sort of a heat map of places where we needed to go. So, the idea was to be a place-based focus, tie our needs to our policy, and then begin to build kind of our infrastructure strategy around how to meet those needs. The question was where do we begin? So, we were very fortunate for you in your last year's budget to have given us the ability to test the strategy with a \$55 million bond program for strategic investment areas. So, we took that challenge very seriously. We took it with a sense of urgency, because we wanted to be able to come back to you at this retreat and show you what that strategy looks like, demonstrate what we can do with that kind of investment, and then show you what that could potentially be in terms of sort of scaling that to the larger strategy we have long term.

So, the question was where? We picked two areas, and there's sort of a danger in that. There's, why not in my area? Why not in this other area? We did it very carefully. We were wanting to demonstrate sort of a spectrum of conditions. We sort of screened out initially all the areas that recently are underway with larger capital investment projects, so we wanted to go to places where some of our investment hasn't been recently, and then we wanted to do sort of a testing of spectrums of certain conditions. Harrisburg/Arrowood were sort of two polar opposites from a job standpoint. If you screen out our major activity centers, Uptown, SouthPark, even University City, surprisingly enough the strategic area of Arrowood becomes really the top of jobs locations, and again the types of jobs there are different. There's industrial, commercial, but it actually was on the spectrum one of our highest concentrations of jobs in those strategic areas. Harrisburg is exactly the opposite.

So, what we were trying to do is find and test our strategy in two sort of extreme conditions. We also looked at the Better Bus system and tried to connect this to the future of our transit. Harrisburg is sort of dead center in one of the opportunities for a micro transit zone. I'll talk a little bit more about that, the opportunity to take a place that isn't naturally easy to serve for transit, and the CATS (Charlotte Area Transit System) vision about how that can be served through micro transit. On the Arrowood side, it's one of the bus priority corridors in that Better Bus vision. So, we tried to find, again, two locations that had a range of conditions on a broad spectrum to test the strategy and how it might apply throughout the City. How do we begin? So, I want to talk about the process, and the process and the internal structure and teamwork of this is really critical. How we do this work is probably as important as what it is. So, we began to put together a team to think about how we deliver projects in a completely different way with this new strategy. Focus was important. So, the whole strategic area idea of really going to places and locations, gave us a focus that we knew very quickly where to go and what the project opportunities might be. It's a one-team idea. This is not a new thing. Certainly, Corridors of Opportunity is one of our best examples of that, but we took that to the idea as extreme as we possibly could, from procurement to the construction inspector on the tail end. We wanted to understand what the life of a project is on both ends, so that we could uncover all the ways that we can deliver projects faster, better, and more tailored to the conditions of our community. Urgency was one of the top ones, and I sort of told the team we've been entrusted with this money. We want to prove to Council and the community what we can do with it. We've got to get projects done quickly. We have to have a strategy to do that in a rapid pace. I'm going to show you some great success that we've had with that already. So, for us, that's a part of our accountability and trust. Time is money. If we scale this to billions of dollars, we've got

to prove to the community that we can actually invest quickly and do it in a way that's efficient and cost effective. There's an idea here that the team came up with, and it's an important aspect of this too. They call it the center pendulum, and the idea was, the perfect project isn't always the best project, and what we were trying to do with our team was find that right compromise, work within the system of our individual interests, department interests, but quickly define the right center of that pendulum to get to a project that we can actually build still achieving our goals and our priorities.

This is what the team looks like. So, this is just an example of the beginnings of the work. Sort of listed all the departments on there. It essentially touches every department. There's probably dozens of folks that have been involved in this work over the last several months. Again, I want to emphasize, on that screen you see procurement folks, folks that have never been out in the field before, but they're entrusted with helping us scope and deliver these projects out in the community. You've got CBI (Charlotte Business INclusion) at the table, so having them understand the nature of the project, so that we can begin the discussion about what's the right way to deliver them? How do we begin to connect businesses to the kind of investment we're going to make? It's important for them to see the conception of these projects from day one. Then, again, the example I'll put is around the construction inspector. So, at the end of the day, they're the ones responsible at the tail end of this to make sure that we can actually build that project. So, they're dealing with the site conditions, with the contractors, will all the challenges of construction, and their insight into this process is critical for us to find projects that we can do effectively and quickly. This is them working out in the field. Again, they're out there, they're thinking, they're designing, they're working in real time, they're doing this before the projects are completely conceived. So, they're understanding the conditions. They're knowing what we want to try to solve for, but we need to understand the utilities, we need to understand the stormwater, we need to understand the real estate conditions to effectively design projects, again, that we can deliver quickly and effectively.

Councilmember Molina arrived at 10:27 a.m.

Here's an example of a small project in a quick lens. So, that team was out there in August 2024. As you can see, they're walking the corridor. This is Harrisburg. December 2024, we were building that sidewalk. The concept of that was a quick win. We actually got our Street Maintenance Division folks to actually build it, so we could do that very quickly with the funds available, and in January 2025, there it is. I think the Mayor mentioned, it's 350 linear feet of sidewalk. There's a sign over there you'll see signed by many of the team members completed, very excited. Question is why is 350 linear feet of sidewalk so important? So, the Mayor mentioned it before. It's about small wins, small projects to build to bigger things. As you can see, there's a bus stop there. So, Harrisburg Road is one of our express corridors. It's in the Better Bus system. It will be a corridor that will have more service, but three months ago you couldn't walk to it. There wasn't a sidewalk to it. So, very simple idea, relatively quick to do, and designed in a way that builds small things to bigger investment. That's really the core of what our strategy is about in strategic investment areas.

You've got a couple handouts. So, one of them you got is this sort of foldout for the Harrisburg Road corridor. That's a snapshot of what's in the middle of that. So, you can look at that in more detail, but what that shows is that small project within the context of many other projects. So, that's the strategy that we're deploying, and we would deploy throughout these strategic investment areas. Small projects to big projects. I think last year I used the word that probably was incorrect. We talked about bundling, the idea of like bundling projects, but this is actually the opposite. We're unbundling a big project. So, at the end of the day, we're going to invest all through that corridor in a series of small projects. It'll have big impact, but we've unbundled the big projects, so that we can do things quicker, and that's again the strategy that we'll deploy throughout the City, and all of these strategic areas will all be different. As you'll see, the context of this was about basic things, sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, we've got some new traffic signals, investment around the bus system, very simple things, but collectively a big impact.

You've got this in your book. It's a quick snapshot. So, I want to highlight a couple of things. Again, it may sound insignificant. At the end of the day when we build all this, it's about 2.2 additional miles of sidewalk. It seems relatively small. These are gaps along that corridor, but all those neighborhoods that are around on that map collectively have about 57 miles of sidewalk, disconnected because of the way Harrisburg Road corridor didn't essentially provide that infrastructure. So, with two miles of sidewalk, we're now connecting a system that already exists of 57 miles. So, that's the kind of impact we can have on the quality of life of neighborhoods. You can now cross that street. There's the Harrisburg Road Sports Complex Park that you literally can't get to, because you can't cross it in a safe manner. We'll have miles of streetlighting, that's another basic thing, In a corridor like this, the lack of streetlighting is a safety issue. It's a pedestrian comfort issue. It's a transit issue. So, again, one of those small projects done in the sequence of kind of delivery in a quick way, streetlighting. So, just to give you an example of all the pieces that go into that, you can look the handout there to kind of give a sense of all the detail of what that looks like and an example of how that'll apply over time throughout these other strategic areas.

Quick snapshot of where we are on the \$55 million. It's the notion here, and these colors are tiered projects, and this gets back to the idea that there was triage of looking at short term, midterm, and long term, so Tier one, Tier two, Tier three, you see the colors there. The point to be made is quick. We're very quickly finding projects that we can do, and we do them like the Harrisburg Road sidewalk. Tier two are sort of midterm, Tier three are longer term. What we have done thus far is essentially program 60 percent of that \$55 million already, just literally in a matter of months, with that team working very intensively. So, those projects are underway. They're in process. We're very quickly filling up the rest of that funding to identify and have already uncovered those projects. We just need the design and to sort of think about them in a more specific way. So, again, that bond passed in November 2024. We built that sidewalk in January 2025. We were actually building it before we had the money, quite frankly. Debbie Smith with C-DOT (Department of Transportation) gave us, and sort of loaned us in advance, the team to build that sidewalk. That's the sense of urgency that this team has taken, and the way we would employ that sort of strategy when we get additional funding to do this work. So, the idea is we're ready to go, we're working quickly. This is both in Arrowood and Harrisburg. Don't have all the details, lots to share with you, but we really wanted to emphasize the success of the work we've done in Harrisburg.

Mr. Jones said Ed, do you mind if I just do one quick thing? So, that was the test, and I know you're in a groove, but trust me on this. So, we just passed the bond. Somebody in this room talks about peas and steak, Malcolm Graham. So, call the \$55 million the peas. At some point, he's going to talk about \$5.7 billion, the steak. What we have to do is show you as an organization that we can do this. What Ed has put together and the team, it's never occurred before in the City of Charlotte. On the front end, having procurement, CBI around the table, much like Team of Teams, much like corridors. So, when the sales tax is passed, we are already proving to you that we can deliver, so there's never a concept that there will be a bunch of, I guess designs on a shelf and nothing happening. So, that's why it's so important to talk about, we've now established a team that can deliver.

Mr. McKinney said I promise I didn't put this slide in after Councilmember Mitchell made the point yesterday that we need to celebrate success. So, the Manager wasn't certainly going to let me add any more slides. I mean, this is an example of the excitement that the team has. We did an internal ribbon cutting just a couple weeks ago. There's the sidewalk, the sign of completion. We had a lot of fun. Everybody's got a sweatshirt. We'll sell these in the lobby afterwards, so anybody who wants a sweatshirt, but the point there is we've got a team that's really excited about this approach. We've got one of the best staff teams in the country with a desire to do this kind of work. We just need the vision, we need the support of Council, and we need funding to make it happen. So, we're ready to go, and there's just a tremendous amount of momentum that's already been built with just a small amount of resource that you've provided to us over the last year.

So, as the Manager just mentioned, let's talk about the big picture, about how we would scale this in the long term. I told you at the beginning what I want to get to, and sort of convince you, is we have a plan. This has been sort of a trilogy over the last three years. We gave you and sort of described the needs. We talked last year about this approach that I just showed in the demonstration. You've got at your tables what I'm calling the plan. So, now we've put that back together, we've looked at it at sort of the long term, the 30-year horizon. We've made the assumption, the sort of aspirational assumption, that we're going to get this additional funding, and we want to show to you how we would scale this approach and what we would do with those dollars. Again, this is just a snapshot, you've got this detail in your book, you see the boards around the table. You can look at this district by district. We've got the details behind all of those dots. All of those dots represent essentially the Harrisburg. So, the kinds of strategy, the types of projects, the sort of collection of small things that lead to a bigger plan, all of those things are represented in the dots. We've got lots of work to do, but there's a tremendous amount of effort, and you'll see it your book, that the team has already done. They've looked at every strategic area. We haven't gone into the detail that we've done in Harrisburg, but we do have a gameplan now that we're ready to go and have that team start looking at each of the areas quickly to identify the next set of projects. I wanted to give you a snapshot of what that kind of looks like district by district, City wide. Again, all of those dots represent the kinds of projects and the kinds of strategy that I've demonstrated, and we've shown you that book for Harrisburg. I've got some stats there that we can talk about later, but just wanted to give you a sense of the scale and the work that we've done in preparation. So, we're definitely ready to go, and there's lots of background and detail that we can share with you and the community as we move forward.

So, let's talk about \$5.7 billion. I want to put it in context to another part of this funding strategy, that in some ways hasn't gotten as much airtime as some of the other pieces of it. So, I put it side by side. I put the \$5.7 billion, that's Charlotte's 40 percent, again, of that strategy in the funding strategy that's out there today, because that's the City's 40 percent, that's over 30 years. That's a 30-year horizon. I put next to it the same 30-year horizon for the bus system. That's the 20 percent. The point I want to make is these things are completely interrelated, and they're completely critically interrelated for the City of Charlotte, because a significant amount of that bus investment is literally in the City of Charlotte. So, that connection between the bus system and our investment in roads is one and the same. That operation of buses just lives and works and survives on our infrastructure of roads. So, what we do, the kind of investment we make, supports and strengthens the investment that we'll make in the bus system, and it touches just a level and breadth of our community that bad investment can't do in any other way.

A couple of stats. We've done this and talked a little bit before about it. I think it's really important to think about the impact of what the Better Bus system will do. A hundred square miles, that's new service that doesn't exist today, particularly around micro transit. So, go back to Harrisburg. There's an express route there today, but it's a low-density suburban condition. The Better Bus plan identifies a micro transit zone for that area. So, with the infrastructure that we're going to build, walkable, connected, safe. Micro transit will support that from a mobility standpoint. So, again, these things are interrelated and have major impact. That Better Bus will be 50 percent increase on service. I think the Mayor mentioned this, over 2,000 improvements to bus stops, to mobility hubs, shelters, benches, all the basic infrastructure that makes and connects our infrastructure to the dignity of our riders. So, we have a responsibility to build the kind of infrastructure that connects to that investment.

Last thing I want to say, 15 for 60. What that is, is 15 minutes service for 60 percent of the existing bus rider. That's the impact. Fifteen-minute service on the top 15 routes. That service is equivalent to what we have on Blue Line today. So, think about the impact that that has across our City. Frequency in the bus system is freedom. So, the ability to have that access through the breadth of our City connected to the kinds of infrastructure that we're going build through this \$5.7 billion, is transformational. It's

impactful. For us it's a way to achieve our mobility goals partnered with the transit investment.

So, let me just walk through now what we would propose and sort of put to you to think about how we might attack and sort of subdivide that \$5.7 billion into the strategy building from what I've just described. So, I'm going to walk you through the sort of buckets of investment that we could make with this \$5.7 billion. It starts with and aligns with our transit plan. It's going to be focused in places like our strategic investments. It's going to be built with ambition. There's big projects. So, I'll talk a little bit about how that relates to the work that we've been doing in these strategic areas. It's going to be about partnerships. We've got a great track record around that. We need to leverage our public investment with private investment deployed with new innovation and new ways, and ultimately the foundation of it is many of the things that we're doing today around programs and investment throughout our City.

I'm going to run through this quick. So, strategic areas, I've already talked about it. If you scale what I've just described, just order of magnitude, that's a little over a billion dollars over 30 years. That would be doing all the work on the dots that you see in your book and on the map. Big news, what we call the big projects. These are driven from the work we're doing in the strategic areas. So, what's going to happen, and I've talked about the Tier one, two and three. There's Tier four and Tier five, really, really big projects. So, those are being uncovered as part of the strategic area process, and that's part of our strategies. You can see that's a big dollar amount, that's \$3 billion, that's hundred-million-dollar projects. A great example I continue to use because it's sort of relevant in certain parts of Charlotte, that's widening and building Ardrey Kell as a good example of a place that has a congestion issue, certainly a walkability issue. That's building a road like Ardrey Kell to meet the needs we have from a traffic standpoint, but also mobility, walkability, safety, transit. That's the kind of scale of projects. We have those across the City, intersection improvements, new streets, big projects tied to our strategic investment areas.

Partnerships. Don't need to talk a lot about this, because we have a great track record on that. We want to make sure that we've provided space for that, the examples you already know, Ballantyne, River District, The Pearl, those have been great examples of our public dollars in transportation and infrastructure leverage for private development. That's part of this strategy. We've allocated it and thought through how that might be part of this \$5.7 billion program.

Innovation. So, a lot we know. A lot we don't know. We're doing some things, and we've already done some partnerships. We've got a great foundation in our infrastructure today with our fiberoptic network connecting all of our signals. We're partnering already with private providers to look at ways that we can collect data at those intersections. Have that in form how we operate those signals and operate our system. Make it more safe. Make it more efficient. There's a horizon there that we can't define, but over 30 years, we need to be able to take advantage of it, and that's part of this program, making sure that we've got the resources to be leaders in that across the country.

Finally, programs. So, these are all the things we're already doing, but the notion here is we need to elevate those. We need to do more of that. So, we will continue to do all the programs we do, sidewalk, Vision Zero, congestion management, all of those things that we currently do that you currently prioritize, spread across the City. So, that makes sure that we're continuing to fill the gaps, the ones that potentially are outside of our strategic areas, having an impact across the City with the same amount of funding.

Next steps. Let me just talk about where we are going, and what the next year looks like relative to this opportunity for funding. We're continuing the work on the Arrowood and Harrisburg pilots, so we were working to program the rest of that \$55 million. The team is committed to building, or getting every project under construction, in the next three years. So, we want to show that within a very short time, we can spend money in a very effective way. We're continuing to work around the rest of the strategic areas. Your books have the beginnings of that, but we're going to dive, and continue to define those

projects quickly, so that we're ready to go. Community engagement will definitely be a part of that. We're working now, and we will be out in Arrowood and Harrisburg later this year. We will scale a program and a process to continue to engage the community as this investment scales up, that's going to be critical. Part of that, again, is about transparency and accountability. We want to build upon our current capital investment dashboard, so we want to be able to show in real time the investment that we're making. When it's occurring. Where it is on budget. Where it is on schedule. The accountability, I think Mayor Cornett talked about that. It's really important that if we go to the scale of funding, our engagement and accountability with the community is going to be critical to the success today, but over the long term of the next 30 years.

We have a plan. So, I don't want to leave this room today without making sure that we understand we have a plan. It's a plan that adaptable. It's a plan that will be shaped by you and by future Councils, but we're ready to go. We've got a team that's very excited. We believe we've demonstrated success of what this could look like and scale it. I want to do one last shout out to the team and thank, again, dozens of people that have been involved in this work. I'm going to highlight two folks who've been leading this from General Services and C-DOT, Ashley Landis and Mackenzie Nowacki. They are two kind of our most energetic and bright engineers within the City. General Services, on the implementation side, C-DOT on the design and planning side. They're the ones that have made this happen and got these projects built. They have a team that has supported that that they've led and build the excitement. The point is, none of this is successful and we can't be successful without the right team, without the right energy and support. I think we've got that. We're ready to go, and we're excited to continue the conversation. So, I'll stop there. Hopefully we have an opportunity to kind of engage in more conversation.

The last thing I'll say, leading into the rest of the day. We talked about this already a little bit this morning, but \$5.7 billion isn't just asphalt, concrete, infrastructure. You already know this, and this will be part of the conversation later today. It's really an economic development tool. It's a workforce tool. It's a jobs tool. It's a small minority business tool. We really want to spend the rest of the day talking about the connection to this to all of your other priorities, and hopefully we'll have a really engaging conversation about that throughout the day. So, thanks for the time, and would love to have more conversation this morning before we go into lunch.

DeAlva Arnold, Facilitator said thank you. Ed, that was so amazing and inspiring. We want to thank Mr. Cornett for your storytelling. You're a master storyteller. Thank you for being here, and we'll open the floor for questions now. We have some time for discussion.

Councilmember Mayfield said Mr. McKinney and team, thank you all for the work. This is extremely exciting. I'm going to say, for my district rep in District Two, I am really happy to see that we have specific investments off of Mount Holly-Huntersville, Bellhaven, and Brookshire that is coming up. I want to ask a question, because you're probably already thinking about it, but I just want to get a little more clarity. When we're looking at the Better Bus, as well as the potential of these new autonomous vehicles, the Manager and I had a conversation earlier this year regarding our airport, and one of the challenges that we're having with our employees at the airport, and those that are using public transportation, and how long it can take. Say if you're coming from the East Side, trying to get to the airport, and really Steele Creek, which by vehicle you're 15 minutes away, that's still an hour plus commute. So, I would like to know while we're looking at a pilot that includes Harrisburg, are we having any conversations regarding a pilot to get our current residents to and from one of our largest employers, and that is our Charlotte Douglas International Airport?

Mr. McKinney said we have looked, and again, one of the strategic areas is in that part of Charlotte, that's probably one of our next. We're touching all of the strategic areas. We're working very closely with CATS on the work that will come very quickly potentially with the Better Bus system. So, it's a great question. To me, what I would describe is, that's sort of a front and center opportunity through all of this work, as we're looking

forward to connecting the infrastructure that we're building to transit. So, great examples of that throughout the City, not just at the airport. Think about Westing House, think about Steele Creek, think about University City. All different but all have the same connection and mobility issues, so that is front and center. We believe one great example, micro transit, will be a part of that, but more to come and some of the specifics as we move forward.

Ms. Mayfield said so, Mr. Manager, as our direct report, I think it would be helpful if we do hear the actual plan. While we have great success and we're continuing to grow, we know that that is a definite need and that could create an immediate positive impact for our residents and our neighbors, as well as our partners, all of the small businesses, that are run within the airport that have a challenge to make sure that they have full coverage, since we will soon be a 24-hour airport.

Mr. Jones said so, if I may, and I think Mr. McKinney's holding some of his cards close to the vest. We've also talked about, in that same scenario, are there ways that we can engage with employers to try to help with economic upward mobility, in terms of not buying passes, but is there an opportunity that is not just about transportation, but it's also something that helps these employees have opportunities for upward mobility too? So, it's not just the routes, but how do we engage? For instance, the City, for all of our employees, you have an all-access pass. So, something that typically costs \$1,400 a year, I think is \$32 a year. So, things like that I think are what we've talked about also.

Ms. Mayfield said so, Mr. Manager, thank you for that. Having a pass is great. If it's taking me four hours of my day, two, 2½ hours to leave my home to get to work, another 2½ to get back. If I get off at 7:00 p.m., 8:00 p.m. in the evening, 9:00 p.m., and I'm having to figure this out much later in the evening, here's that great opportunity on the front end for us to show our residents, our taxpayers, when we are making investments in workforce and training, we're also making the investment to get you from point A to point B. You also know I've asked for us to really look at the impact of, you're not climbing on a bus without paying. That individual, the driver, that meter, is there as soon as you step up those two to three steps. We have heard. I have seen. I'm quite sure my colleagues have seen, individuals utilize light rail in a very different way, mainly not paying, and ways that we can streamline that process, using modern technology, using AI (Artificial Intelligence), so that our most vulnerable are not the ones who continuously are hit the hardest, and making sure that we have true equity and access for those who use light rail, because it's a convenience versus our residents that use a bus for necessity.

Ms. Anderson said Ed, thank you for the presentation. I heard your overarching theme that this is indeed a plan. So, the evolution of what we've seen over the last several years, to what you have here, is really insightful and in particular for District One, when I'm looking at these strategic initiatives. It really touches all aspects of District One, from Derita to the Sugar Creek Corridor to Matheson, NoDa. It really has a wide, wide reach, and so I greatly appreciate that. A couple things. One is, I just want to underscore the importance of the mobility plan and your approach that you're taking with having this team of teams. So, having CBI, having procurement there day one, gives them a longer runway to understand how they can bring minority and women-owned businesses into this, and have a real procurement strategy that can further have an economic impact on the City and the region. Also, it allows us, from what I'm understanding, for us to think big but also think at a macro level, but also think at a micro level. So, the large projects, but then the ability to unbundle and be laser focused on a particular micro issue is a level of nimbleness that I'm hearing this year, as opposed to years past, and so I appreciate that approach.

I have two more points. The first point is when you did the breakdown of the \$5.7 billion, there was about \$300 million that was allocated to innovation. I know, even with our trip to Germany, and what we've seen from when we did our mobility tour, I want to make sure that we're always having at the top of our mind how we can innovate and ideate, so just as a percentage of the base, it's a small percentage to invest in innovation. I'd actually like to see that be increased. So, just keep that in mind, as you are continuing

to get added dimension to the plan here, I want us to always embrace that innovation lens.

My last point is, when you were talking about, and then the Manager brought this up too, you're really sort of demonstrating to us that you can execute on a team of teams approach with this \$55 million that we funded you with, and you've programmed a little over \$30 million of that out. So, just as a promo for District One, I'm looking in your book here, and if you have some opportunity to program the balance of that other \$20 million out. I'm seeing projects, the Norris Avenue streetlighting project, the Derita and Gibbons pedestrian crossing, and the Graham Street-Statesville Mobility Hub, would be wonderful projects I think to demonstrate to the balance of Council that you can execute utilizing the \$20 million. Thank you.

Mr. McKinney said let me make a quick point about two things you said. You're right about this. So, this is a first take. It's not necessarily set in stone. Really, this is an example of how we might organize it, but it will ultimately be your, and future Council decisions, about where those priorities are. The innovation one was sort of a quick thought about what that might look like today, but to your point, lots of things we don't know, lots of opportunities to scale that differently. The other thing I'll say real quickly about your point about needing to be in other places and promoting. I want to go back to the strategy. When we did this demonstration, we did pick the two, I described why for the focus. In your books is work that was going on concurrently. So, now we have a really clear picture of the rest of them. We're now able to quickly go into all of those to find the Tier one projects. So, we're not going to like finish one of those and then move on to the next. We're going to very quickly screen out Tier one's across all of those, so that we can very rapidly be working throughout the City with the idea that we want to find quick projects, the Tier one projects, continue to move forward and work throughout. So, I want to just make clear that the way we want to scale the strategy is not one by one, year by year. It's going to be ultimately a City-wide approach, really with the kind of urgency around project delivery.

Ms. Brown said I think pretty much Councilmember Mayfield went over the areas that I wanted to, but I did want to just point out from a standpoint of the airport and getting people from a micro transit perspective, coming from the airport to any part of the City, because that is the number one economic driver, and so I heard you touch on it a little bit. Is there anything specific that we would need to share with our constituents when we are out in the community and we're speaking with them, about how we can sell this to them as far as their moving more efficiently and effectively throughout the City if they were to give up riding CATS versus going into the mobility plan that we're trying to move forward, which I loved your presentation, and thank you so much to you and your staff, and that's why everybody has their lane. This clearly isn't mine, and I'm not mad about that. You all did an amazing job, but I want to make sure that, from a standpoint of trying to go out in the community and tell people that, you take CATS every day, you may walk just a couple of blocks, what is going to be the benefit collectively for everybody? Once again, you notice my conversation is always going to be about how we can move it forward for the entire community and the entire City.

Mr. McKinney said yes, I'm glad you brought it up. We're ready to do that. I mentioned, we're now working through thinking what a broader community engagement strategy is. A couple things I'll say about that. The approach that is in your books is designed to be tailored to this place. So, as Mayor Cornett talked about, and you sort of mentioned, the conversations in different parts of the City are really different conversations. The book that we put together allows us to have that context specific conversation. So, we're ready to work with you and others to think about, what's the right conversation in different parts of the City? I do want to make a plug to the transit work that's happening now. Maybe that's what Brent's coming up to talk about a little bit. The community engagement around the transit plan that's happening, we have the ability to start working with CATS and talk about the relationship between this kind of investment, what micro transit and some of the benefits of the transit plan will look like area by area, because there's different opportunities around micro transit depending upon which part

of the city you're in. So, again, we're ready to have those kinds of conversations specific to different parts of the City.

Ms. Brown said okay. So, for you, before even Mr. Cagle comes up, thank you so much. The way you put the package together is great. We strategically spent a lot of time on it, but for me, the simplest part of it for people just listening in trying to understand. The numbers sound good, the money sounds good, the economic piece sounds good, but when you break it down from a standpoint of someone that needs just to get to work, a working person, that uses public transportation, I want them to understand that they're not left out, and that there's going to be a piece in there that elevates them as well. So, I appreciate your response, and I appreciate that he's going to come up with CATS as well. We know that something needs to be done, so I'm all ears.

Brent Cagle, Interim CATS CEO said yes. So, using the airport area as an example, because it is an example. You can find other examples, University Research Park and University City, other examples of what Better Bus or areas that Better Bus will help to better serve. Using the airport as an example, when you think about the jobs at the airport, a lot of us think about the terminal and all of the jobs in the terminal, and it's true, there are a lot of jobs there, but there are also many, many jobs on the back side of the airport in the cargo area where folks are trying to get to work, and they're working on that back side of the airport, they're servicing airplanes, they're providing cargo services. That is a very difficult area for public transit for CATS today to serve, because of low density in that area and just the different challenges. That is a micro transit zone, though. So, that will immediately improve people's ability to get into that area of the airport, to their jobs, from their jobs to their homes. When you also think about the other side of the airport, the front side, the terminal and connectivity, when Ed talked about 15 for 60. Sixty percent of our riders, that accounts for the top 15 routes. So, the top 15 routes that CATS has today accounts for 60 percent of ridership. All of those routes will be taken to 15 minute or better service. The Sprinter to the airport, West Boulevard, Tryon, all of this, Central Avenue, Beatties Ford, those are the bread and butter of Better Bus. That's where our ridership is really high, and we want to provide better opportunities and enhancements for the folks who are using those routes, which is the majority of riders, to have more convenience, more frequency, better options to get to work. So, it's sort of a both/and when it comes to the airport, but that's true all over the City when we talk about Better Bus and how micro transit and improved frequencies have a huge impact for our riders all across the region.

Ms. Brown said well, I certainly do appreciate you. Thank you so much.

Mr. Driggs said so, Ed, you and I go back quite a ways. I remember when you were trying to explain to the Council what at Place Type was. I just want to say, I've always appreciated the integrity and the thoroughness of your work. You're just an amazing resource for the City, appreciate you. We've heard a bewildering array of numbers, and I just want to, for my colleagues, very simply repeat, a one cent sales tax is a county-wide tax. It's expected to generate \$350 million in round numbers county-wide in the first year, increasing over time as the sales volume goes up. The legislation that we have proposed to Raleigh includes a provision that 40 percent of the proceeds would be used for rail projects, 20 percent for bus projects, and 40 percent for road projects. The bus and rail projects would be overseen by a new authority. So, that's 60 percent in total of the money, and basically the administration of those monies would go to the new authority, which is also proposed in legislation, has a governance structure, that's a county-wide thing. The 40 percent for roads is going to be allocated to municipalities, like us and Matthews and the towns and so on for our use. This plan basically relates to the 40 percent. So, this is how Charlotte would use its share of the 40 percent for roads, just so we break that down. The total proceeds are expected to support \$20 billion of debt issuance, which is why you hear that number as the total amount of projects, which in addition to \$5 billion from the feds, means that we have a scope of \$25 billion over 30 years, that context is important to remember. The 60 percent money is going to be planned separately from this through a process of the MTC. This work is ongoing now. I think Brent may talk about it, but the goal, for that just to sort of create more context, is that we have a plan this summer sometime, and that that plan for the 60 percent, along

with this, will support our marketing effort to the public, to show everybody this is what you're going to get. So, I just realized from my own experience that we keep hearing about this and that and this and that, and sometimes it's hard to remember just that ladder of sources and uses of funds.

Ed, what I wanted to say to you was, this work happens in the context of housing, workforce, public safety, because it's all one huge system, and I think from these conversations, you can hear that. People are concerned about the predicament of people who can't get to work, or housing. So, to what extent is it possible to take all of this planning and then overlay the things that we're doing in the housing arena, what's going on with public safety? If you talk about lighting, for example, spending money on lighting, that's a safety concern. So, how do you do all that? I mean this is complicated enough, but we want to be wholistic, and where does that fit into your scheme?

Mr. McKinney said a couple things I'll say. You're leading to our end-of-day conversation. So, we do have some time that we want to talk with you about exactly what you said. There's a tremendous amount of opportunity to layer all of your priorities. So, more to come. We have lots of work to do. We've got the best team in the country to do that. We've got some great work that's happening. We've already begun to do that as you saw from the teams. Housing was part of that. Every department has been part of the work, but definitely more to come, there's a lot of complicated layers to that, but that definitely is the next conversation. Hopefully, we'll have a great discussion about that. We've got all the directors here this afternoon to engage in how all these things connect, but you're absolutely right.

Mr. Driggs said appreciate you and your team. Thanks Ed.

Ms. Arnold said thank you, Councilmember Driggs, for that important context and framing for the dollars. I think that's an important piece of the puzzle.

Councilmember Johnson said thank you, Ed, for the wonderful presentation. Thank you for the 8½ pages of improvements in District Four, the proposed improvements, so thank you. Where can the public find this information, so they understand how it applies to them?

Mr. McKinney said there's a couple things, great question. There should be a QR code in both documents, certainly the one in the Harrisburg, that takes you to a website. So, we've got an online mapping tool that takes you to all of the projects that are in here, so you can dive into every single one in a little bit more detail. We've got more to do to kind of build that, but we've begun to build that platform to get to what I just talked about earlier, where we are going to be engaging in those two specific areas. We're going to be engaging City wide, using that tool as a way to sort of describe the detail and give people more access. It's sort of a companion to this document, but absolutely, we're working on that now and it'll be a big part of our engagement plan.

Ms. Johnson said so, for the City Manager, if we want to make sure we get that information in front of the public. We've learned from experience we have these large initiatives and then it takes a while for the public to really be engaged. So, I think that we want to make sure that we're getting this information out in front of the public, so they understand how it's going to apply to them. Then, I want to piggyback off what Councilmember Mayfield and Brown talked about, and actually Dr. Watlington also. I think the City does a phenomenal job of planning for 2040 and 2050 and the strategic planning that we do, but we have residents that are hurting now. So, we're developing strategic mobility plans, but we're bringing up employees at the airport who aren't able to get to work. For Council members, we have to connect the dots. We hear from the unions and hear from residents that are making less than \$15 an hour and struggling. So, how do we answer that call immediately? The one cent sales tax is going to be great, potentially, but how can we make changes as a Council right now to address those issues? It would seem like this is low-hanging fruit to reroute some buses or have Express buses, and I'll say the same thing about the University area, we have the light rail, and we have the Research Park, which is a huge job driver. So, if there were just

an Express bus, that would transport people from all across the City to the train, and then just have a bus to get to the Research Park. I understand autonomous vehicles and micro transit, and those are grand ideas, but Express buses seem like a more practical solution, especially if the airport's moving to a 24-hour employer. There's issues that we need to address now. So, I would say, Mr. Manager, and possibly Council, our priorities today are workforce development and mobility. So, if we make that a priority to answer the call for current residents and people that are hurting today, I think that's how you address, Councilmember Brown, when you talk about the vulnerable populations and how do we talk to voters and what do we say, we say that we're managing issues now, and not just leading for our grandchildren and the residents who are going to be moving to Charlotte. Thank you.

Mr. Jones said so, one thing I'd like to suggest, much like SAFE (Safety and Accountability For Everyone) Charlotte, where we have that in each of the Council committees, maybe the mobility plan and how it impacts that particular, I guess, purpose for the committee, maybe is something to talk about, so that it's not just about transportation. It's more about some of the items that are coming up today, so just food for thought.

Ms. Johnson said but I mean, if we look at expanding the Express buses to these areas, these areas that really need it and could have the greatest impact, I think we could take a look at making that a priority.

Councilmember Bokhari said good morning. I'll start with just a real quick question. Do you have an aggregate cost for every one of the proposed potential projects that are in this book?

Mr. McKinney said good question. Not yet. What we've done in this diagram is the beginnings of that. What we've been able to prove with the \$55 million is to test the scale of those other dots. So, I think we have a pretty good sense now that we've tested it, that the scale of investment, like we just described on Harrisburg Road, applies to many of the dots that are on those maps. So, we have a good sense of what the scale of the strategic investment area projects will look like, essentially, the Tier one, two and three. The sort of big news here is to anticipate the big projects that will come out of that. That essentially represents 30, \$100 million projects. So, we haven't identified all those projects, we haven't designed the scope of them, but we have a decent sense of the number of those kinds of big projects that are in that book, and the idea that we can tie the right amount of design and planning to get to clarity about the scale, timing and cost of each of those projects. We know what they are, we have a good sense of the scale of the kinds of projects that those would cost, and now it's just a matter of getting into a little bit more design and planning.

Mr. Bokhari said alright, thank you for that. I've got just one comment, and I'll start by saying, it is impressive how far you and the team have come. I mean, think about various retreats of the past and different meetings of presentations. I've had a lot of frustrations as we've talked about, and things in the past, but I do want to recognize, you guys have come a long way in putting this all together. So, that's one kind of thumbs up to you and the team there that I definitely want to recognize. I will also say that, from my perspective, we've progressed also a great deal on the broader journey here between Norfolk Southern and between town negotiations, from my perspective, from a lot of the leadership of the General Assembly's perspective, making sure we had a cap on light rail, we had a focus that had to go into roads. So, I think all that is, again, additional thumbs up, tailwinds to what has been a long and difficult journey. I think my biggest problem, still at this point, and you guys are still kind of falling into this trap, and I understand why you're doing it, but it's clear the punchline wants to be, out of this conversation, we have a plan. I think in fairness, we do not have a plan. What we have is the kind of gathering of what all the old plan items were put into one spot, this directional. If we had a full plan, one key component we would see here is, okay, these are all the projects, these are the costs, these are the timelines. As I look at SouthPark, for example, like SouthPark Loop, you get real specific in something you're familiar with. We've been working on that for a long time, we have that well scoped, Carnegie

Boulevard, RetroFIT, all of these kinds of upgrades and intersection improvements. There is, in my mind, little to no scenario that, if all these were scoped, which is where you'd be at a plan level, they're all going to be able to get done for that amount of money.

So, I think we've made a lot of progress pulling all of the backlog of projects together, but I don't think that that warrants us saying, we have a roads of the future plan yet. Again, I'm not expecting that yet. We are all eyes wide open that that needs to happen. I just don't want us to fall into the trap to say, look at these pages and all these books, we've got a plan, box checked, move on to the next step, because to me the next steps are the hard parts. Not only is it figuring out all these backlog items. To me, what I was hoping for in a plan was, what's the future going to look like. While you have a section four for innovation, there's 69 words there, and that is the entirety of it in the entire book. Now, I know you guys have put a lot of thought into it, I'm not trying to ding you for that, but like these are the bets on the future we're making. This is a 30-year plan. I mean, 20 years ago, looking in the past, the iPhone didn't exist, let alone Uber and Lyft. So, I don't see things kind of deeply contemplated and structured out in the forward look of this plan. I like the topics, autonomous mobility, traffic management, mobility innovation districts. Those are all great starts, but it can't be, okay, we checked the box, we put something in there, now here's all the backward-looking projects we've pulled together. I will wager that when that happens, any one of these major things, we're like, okay, we're going all in, we're going to make a bet. It isn't going to cost \$300 million or five percent of our chunk of it. We might try to make our biggest bet. Thirty years from now, can you even fathom how people will be moving around? How everything will be changed. This innovation and bets on our roads and what's happening in the future of technology and disruption, is all as complex as the 15 years of planning that have gone into the light rail portion of all this. So, I have that problem of, let's make a unified bet. Again, Ed said it, this is only our portion. Then, it was negotiated with the other towns, their portions where they're looking backward at their backlogs. What are we going to do to make this 40 percent requirement on roads something we're all proud of and is great, not something we had to take and swallow the pill, and therefore, we just have to spend that money and do it?

So, I really feel strongly that, despite all of those things, there's still a possibility for us all to get on the same page and move forward, but it's not calling it a plan yet, and recognizing that that work needs to still be done, it's putting serious focus on it, so that when it takes time, of course it will, we'll ultimately have that plan to be able to show people. Leading to my final point, and the issue I've had the entire time, which is, if we don't have a plan yet, and that's okay and acceptable based on the factors of where we are, the governance model is everything, everything, and putting a cobbled-together negotiated list of people on a governance body that will make all of these decisions tactically when it's out of our hands and it's out of the voter's hands potentially, it's so critical that those be the right people representing the right long-term visions, because a macro level, we're not going to get these big innovations and bets to make. Even if we miss that at a micro level, we're going to have challenges deciding a whole lot of things in relation to, what backward-looking projects we can and can't do. So, I want to deeply applaud you for the journey the team and you have gone on in this entire path. You've made a lot of progress. Let's just not fall into the traditional Charlotte trap of marketing our way through the final headwinds that we have to experience. Let's be transparent, let's call it what it is, and solve it from there.

Ms. Arnold said thank you, Council members for your insightful questions and contributions. Thank you, Ed, for your leadership on this. We are at an amazing place. Just even in the last three years since I've been here, I see all the great work that you've done and with the team, so kudos to you for that, and we look forward to continued answered and continued development of the plan and framework and strategy. We'll break for lunch now and come back promptly at 11:45 a.m. Thank you.

The meeting was recessed at 11:23 a.m. and reconvened at 11:55 a.m.

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ITEM NO. 3: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Arnold said I hope everyone is enjoying their lunch. We're excited for this discussion today. As you can see, we have a team of experts assembled, and at this time I am going to send it over to our wonderful Danielle Frazier to lead the discussion. Thank you, Danielle.

Danielle Frazier, Workforce Development said well, thank you, DeAlva, and good afternoon I'll say to Mayor, Council, Manager, and all that is here. Again, I'm Danielle Frazier with the City of Charlotte Office of Workforce Development, and glad to be here to talk about one of my favorite topics, of course, and that's workforce development. Council, as you know, we have been working on a workforce development plan over the year, and I'm looking forward to sharing that draft update with you over the next couple of months, starting with jobs and ED (Economic Development) Committee next week. Although we've been working on a plan, I'm really excited about the things that we were able to accomplish last year, Council, with your commitment and your investment in workforce development, and I hope that you were able to see those things in your booklet, and there's more to come, of course.

So, part of today's workforce development discussion is to allow us to have some more engagement with you, Council, around helping us to finalize our draft plan, as well as getting us to start thinking about what our implementation looks like. So, today, I have with you a host of amazing workforce development leaders from across this country, as well as from one of our own employers in the City of Charlotte. So, we've got some leaders representing Austin, Boston, Philadelphia, Phoenix, and Atrium Health, and so excited for you all to hear from them today. Before we jump into the panel, I do want to share a couple of things. Most of the folks on this panel I do know very well. We sit on the Workforce Development Council of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and so we meet on a regular basis several times a year to talk about workforce development challenges, issues, and we share best practices. So, while there's healthy competition on this panel, we care about a couple main things, and that's making sure that our communities are empowered, our talent have the skills to get great jobs and helping our businesses to find great talent. So, I am thankful to be a part of their group, and while we share those best practices and we share about challenges and issues, we also advocate at the national level for workforce development policies. So, I have to thank Mayor and Council again for all of your advocacy, especially around the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which was up for reauthorization last year. It's still up for reauthorization, and we thank you for your support, making sure that funds continue to flow to our local communities to support both our talent and our businesses.

One last thing I'm going to share, and then I promise you we're going to get to the panel. So, I'm going to pick on one person here, because when we were doing our pre-panel prep, I don't know if you are Sesame Street kids, I am one. It was that episode where we were on a virtual call, so it was the Hollywood Squares, but it was the, "Which one of these things or people don't belong?" So, one of our panelists said, "You know what, I'm not like you all, I'm different." We said, "Well, you are, because you're representing industry." One of the things I want to drive home, and you're going to hear from our experts, is that successful workforce development programs are important when you have employer leaders at the table driving the efforts, partnering with the workforce development ecosystem to help us support how we're developing our talent and connecting them to the great jobs. So, thank you, Cynthia, for recognizing that, but you are the most important person on this panel as representing industry.

Alright, so with that said, we're going to jump right into our questions, because I want to maximize our time. So, if we could just go straight down the line and start with, if you could take two to three minutes to introduce yourself, as well as talk a little bit about your organization, and what are some of the, at a high level, because you only have three minutes, [inaudible] 03:04:44.

Lasetta Hogan, Executive Director and Workforce Administrator, City of Phoenix said it's a pleasure to be here with you. My name is Lasetta Hogan, and I get the

pleasure of serving as the Phoenix Business and Workforce Development Board's Executive Director. I also work for the City of Phoenix, and I'm a Deputy Economic Developer there with the City of Phoenix. So, I'm just really excited to be here. I think some of you actually came out to visit us and visit our Mayor, not that long ago. I heard a lot about it, and I heard it was a really great visit, so thank you for coming to visit us.

So, Phoenix, as some of you may or may not know, is the 5th largest city in the United States. So, in Phoenix, we have approximately 1.6 million residents in Phoenix alone, and it's on average about 200 people that move to Phoenix every single day. The weather is a huge [inaudible] when it comes to square miles and geographic location. Maricopa County is the county that we are in, and the population in Maricopa County is about 4.5 million. So, you can see, there's a lot of people that have come to Phoenix, that have come to Maricopa County, and so we're not short on people being there at all. There's a huge diverse population in Arizona wholistically, but specifically in Maricopa County. Then, over time, as we've seen this continual growth, I've lived in Phoenix for 15 years, and I can actually look around and say, I remember when this was here and that was there, and having been a native from near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, that's crazy to me, because Pennsylvania, it's an old state. So, Arizona is the youngest state out of all of the 50 states. So, what we're seeing now with all of the high growth that has happened in economic development, it's really great to have all of our employer partners there, we're struggling with a skills gap, and you'll probably hear that as a common theme as my colleagues continue to speak today, but a skills gap simply because of all of the emerging industries that are happening in our local area, and there's a strong need for diversification in workforce.

Yael Lawson, Chief Operating Officer, Workforce Solutions Capital Area, Austin, Texas said good afternoon. I'm Yael Lawson. I am the Chief Operations Officer with Workforce Solutions Capital Area, which is in Austin, Texas. Thank you for having me here today to share a little bit about our community and our workforce challenges. Workforce Boards in Texas are set up a little bit differently than in other states. We are a private nonprofit. We also oversee more than workforce programs. We are, what I like to affectionately call, Cradle to Career. So, we offer the Subsidized Childcare program, which is huge, as well as youth services, adult services and then employer services. The reason that I bring this up is because our state realized that all of these services, including childcare, really are part of economic development, because if people don't have the support services needed to go to work, they can't, for training or work.

Austin, when I moved there 20 plus years ago, I just remember everybody saying, well, it's a college town, which is it, but I think what we're struggling with is we are a little big city. We're a little city that is becoming big, but we still want to be a little city somehow, but we've had major employers come in, Tesla, Samsung. We have two now Samsung plants, Indeed, Apple, and so we really are needing to look at our infrastructure and how we're able to meet these employer needs. So, obviously with this growth, as Lasetta said, came the need for a skilled workforce. We want to grow our own. We don't want these companies bringing in people from the outside. The biggest needs are those middle-skill jobs, which are jobs with more than a high school diploma and less than a college degree, and so that's really our sweet spot that's credential. We also know that those industries, our target industries of healthcare, IT (Information Technology), manufacturing, skilled trades, which now we call mobility and infrastructure, which I'll go over in a little bit, those have great career pathways. So, we can get somebody into those middle-skill jobs and then move them along into other jobs with the right training and supports.

So, as Lasetta said, the biggest challenge for us are those workers, getting the workers trained, and we also want to ensure that everybody in Austin has the same opportunities for economic prosperity across the region. Our priority is what we call our Hire Local Plan, Grow Our Own or GOO, is what I like to call it, and we believe that the way to help everyone with economic prosperity is through training, and we have four strategies. The first is awareness. Teaching people what these occupations are. The second is training, helping people get into that training and/or Earn and Learn opportunities so they can be placed in those employment opportunities, and then

upskilling, as I said, for that progression. So, we really look at workforce development as economic development in our city, and our Mayor and local electeds feel the same way.

Patrick Clancy, President and CEO, Philadelphia Works, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania said well, good afternoon, everybody. It is great to be here. I am Patrick Clancy. I'm the President and CEO of Philadelphia Works. I also have to say, I love the idea of having a City Council retreat. I have to say, this is impressive. In Philadelphia, we don't do that, we just fight, and we fight over stadiums and arenas and over billionaires, but I have to say to you, coming out here when I was invited by Danielle, I'm like, wow, this is really impressive how you get together and you try to figure out solutions and you work hard, and then you obviously play a little hard, hopefully, but it's really nice to be here. I would to say to you, yes, we are going to the Superbowl, and we are thrilled with that, but we're not winning a whole lot of other things. So, a couple stats that are not very impressive for Philadelphia. We are the largest city with the highest poverty rate of 23 percent, that's a boo; we also are last in the mobility, we are 50th in economic mobility for young people, that's a boo; and we have about 33,000 unemployed individuals.

Our challenge in Philadelphia is not so uncommon, from what I heard this morning, around transportation, childcare is wickedly expensive, if available, and then just housing, affordable housing. So, for us, we're a private nonprofit. I'm appointed by the Mayor, the Mayor appoints our board, and we try to figure out what's the best solution for us to get people back to work. I would say to you our state does some good things and then some bad things. So, let me start with the bad, because there's always a good. The bad thing is when individuals are collecting a public benefit, TANF, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the minute they go to work is the minute they cut their benefits dramatically. For us in Philadelphia, like many other areas, at some point, five months is really the number, after you've been working five months as a single parent, you then have to take all these benefits into consideration around, can you afford to continue to work? What we do in Pennsylvania is unfortunate, because individuals then have to make tough choices, and they wind up quitting their job and going back on benefits. Unlike other states that give a longer runway, Pennsylvania is a divided legislature. We were a swing state. I don't know what we are anymore. We do have a Governor who wants to be President, though, so who knows, but that's one of our challenges. I would say, and my colleague from Phoenix who was bragging a little bit about, we're 6th now, okay, but I would say our biggest growth is through immigrants. We have people coming into our community, coming into our beautiful city. We are the birthplace of America. Please come visit next year. It's our 250th anniversary, so please feel welcome, but we're trying to figure out, as a Workforce Board, where do we make the most important investments? I'll talk a little bit later about our career-connected learning model, which is really about getting young people engaged at a younger time, 12 years old, 12 to 24, but I don't want to hold up the rest of the panel, because these are really amazing ladies that are dying to speak as well.

Trinh Nguyen, Chief of Worker Empowerment, City of Boston, Massachusetts said my name is Trinh Nguyen, and I am from the City of Boston. Just a couple of things. So, one, I have to echo my colleagues here. This is extremely impressive. Boston always thinks we're the best at everything, but one thing that we're not good at always is collaboration, and this is an exemplary testament of the strength of Charlotte and all your works. I want to thank you for that. My name is Trinh Nguyen. I have the privilege of working with Mayor Wu. I have been in this position back and forth 16 years, four Mayors. I came here as a refugee immigrant from Saigon. So, I know where the bodies are buried in Boston. I'm not Irish or I'm not Italian, so that says a lot, and I'm still around. Mayor Wu got in office in 2021. She is the first woman Mayor, a first woman of color, and probably one of the youngest. Two weeks ago, she gave birth to her third child. So, she's the first Mayor mom that represents a lot in a city that's so parochial, like the Boston area. We're very unique in a sense that we're a little bit more boutique and smaller, about 5,800 residents. We have an unemployment rate of 3.9 percent. Fifty-five percent of our residents have a Bachelor's degree. I think last year, we were the largest recipient of NIH (National Institutes of Health) funding, that may change. I

read late last night, all our funding is paused and on hold, and Mayor Wu was called to testify in the house for our sanctuary city, because we're a big immigrant city, so that poses a lot of challenges.

I have the pleasure of working with Mayor Wu in the City of Boston. I report directly to the Mayor. In 2021, she created a cabinet level position, appointed me, and created three different departments under our cabinet. One is youth employment and opportunity, the second is labor compliance, and the third is office of workforce development, which I direct with many of our great staff leads. Our budget is about \$74 million, and 25 percent of it comes from city operating, about 63 percent comes from federal grants, and then about 25ish comes from private foundations that's leveraged throughout the City of Boston.

Some of the higher-level impact that we're working to address, and we have many challenges. When Danielle asked us to talk about it, I'm like, "Do you want volume one or volume two?" So, I'm going to really focus a couple of them. Earlier, I stated that 55 percent of Boston residents have a Bachelor's degree, 45 percent don't. What Mayor Wu and our city is really challenged by is ensuring that everybody has equal access to the economic mobility. So, those 45 percent are really critical to our solutions and to the economic success. We have to make sure that residents who don't have a Bachelor's degree, which is our primary focus, get equal opportunity to move up that ladder. So, all hands on deck, not necessarily the 55 percent, because they're doing well, 34 colleges, but what are we doing for 45 percent who don't have a Bachelor's degree? So, all of that is moved into some of the high-level impact that I'll just briefly go through. Summer jobs, a huge priority of Mayor Wu. In summer of 2024, we hired and placed 10,500 young people into career pathway jobs in various industries. We have two of the largest American Job Centers in the City of Boston. Last year, we served 11,000 job seekers and almost 700 employers, and within our office partnerships really matter. So, last year we invested \$17 million of grant dollars and private investment funds to do career pathways for specifically 8,200 Boston residents who don't have a Bachelor's degree. They are people of color. They are immigrants, and they are within the hardest to reach in the City of Boston. I know that Piedmont area, Charlotte, Raleigh, and Durham received a Good Jobs Challenge grant from the commerce department earlier, a couple of years ago. We are the colleague. So, one of the things that we're doing is challenging employers throughout Boston's regional area in healthcare, childcare and clean energy, and promise to train and place 4,600 Boston residents into good paying jobs, which we have strict standards of. After four casting tools, a late start, we're proud to say that we will hit 4,600 in August of 2026. Happy to talk about that after this panel.

Workforce development is also a collaborative strategy. We work with the state to utilize the earned income tax credit for low-wage workers. Last year alone, we translated and provided free tax prep in seven different languages to our immigrant population, to almost 12,000 households in the City of Boston, all volunteers, managed to put \$24 million back into the pockets of families and Boston residents, so that they can also do credit building within our Center for Working Families, and we have created 18,000 children savings accounts throughout K to two within our schools. Last, but not least, I have to say this. We know that we have to do better. This is not just best practices. Mayor Wu had completed 47 out of 48 collective bargaining within the City of Boston. It has never been done. Remember she's a mom, three kids, and a variety of things, and everybody said that she couldn't do it, and she excelled in that area, and we made the largest increase to city workers within those collective bargaining who made the lowest wage. So, the increase was to ensure that janitors, bus drivers, cleaners, the lowest within collective bargaining within city government, get the highest wage increases. Now, there's a lot more to do, a lot of work that has to be done, a lot of challenges in the next four years, but we stand ready, and I'm happy to answer additional questions.

Cynthia Bailey, Associate Director, Workforce Development, Atrium Health said hi everyone. I'm Cynthia Bailey. I am the Associate Director of Workforce Development at Atrium Health in Charlotte, North Carolina. We are going through a growth spurt right now. We've been going through it, I would say, for the past two years. So, while Atrium Health is the name that we call our healthcare organization in the southeast, we are

actually across six states. So, we are North and South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and also now Illinois and Wisconsin, which is the bigger conglomerate of Advocate Health. So, Atrium Health is a part of Advocate Health. We are, as Danielle mentioned, the largest employer. We have over 150,000 teammates, 67 different hospitals across our system, and as you could imagine, with our footprint just in the Charlotte region, I'm grateful to have a leader who believes in serving the communities where we have a footprint, and caring about the communities through jobs, through economic mobility, and that is what my team is tasked with.

We've not been in existence too long. Our workforce development team just started in 2019 right when COVID hit. We had all these programs and things we were going to roll out, and then 2020 hit, and then we had to shift a lot of our focus, how we run our programs, and how we bring people into the organization. Prior to COVID, healthcare already had worker shortages. So, you can imagine the hit that it took then, and now we're still recovering from that impact of COVID. We're getting better. We have quite a few programs for our youth, our communities, and of course, our own teammates, to help them grow and develop. Now, we are not talent acquisition. A lot of people come to me, "Hey, I want to get a job here." We are invested in developing talent. So, the youth, exposing them to the healthcare careers, as many of the individuals have mentioned here, letting them know that we're more than just doctors and nurses. We have pharm techs, we have surg techs, we have sterile process. We have all these other jobs, security guards, we have a shortage of security guards right now in healthcare.

So, as you can imagine, our team is trying to kind of increase the awareness of these opportunities with our youth and with our communities. The ways that we do that are through different programs, which I'll talk about here in a little bit, but a lot of our challenges are simply that, one, the youth are just not aware. So, they go for the sexy jobs. They go for the ones that they know about. They don't know what a surg tech does. They don't know what a child life specialist does in the healthcare organization. So, we as a workforce development team, we're working to educate our youth about these opportunities that exist, even with our education partners. So, oftentimes, for these seats to get the certifications to work in healthcare, there's a limited amount of seats with these community colleges to allow people to come in. So, we have people interested, but if they only accept 10, 20 individuals in a classroom, we can only pump out so much talent from those programs, so that's one of our challenges as well. Then, again, because we have the healthcare shortages, we need experienced individuals to be preceptors to these students that are up and coming. Many of our staff are taking care of patients. They're not always in a position to be a preceptor, and so we have limited preceptor shifts as well. So, it's this vicious cycle that is happening right now in healthcare, and we're trying to figure out creative ways to remedy that, but that's just a few of the different challenges that exist. Again, we're 24/7, 365. We don't close. That's not always attractive to some job seekers. It's a different industry in healthcare. You're dealing with patients. You're dealing with people who don't want to be there. They're sick. They're not well, and there's a lot of soft skills that need to come to be a successful and impactful healthcare worker. So, all these things are impacting how we're doing things, but I'm proud to say, we are making strides, especially with our youth, even with our own teammates and the programs that we have for them.

Ms. Frazier said thank you. Thank you, panelist. Council, I think I need to just mention a little disclaimer. As you can see, workforce development, and when it comes down to the implementation, it's different at every local level, whether it's the city that's driving it, or the Workforce Board. So, you're listening to the leaders that are really driving these in their respective areas, and so it's never an apples-to-apples comparison from city to city on how workforce development looks. It's just based on the ecosystem dynamic. So, with that, I want to continue to keep us rolling, and we might have to pick it up and you might have to abbreviate some of your comments here, but you all heard that we're in the process of finalizing our strategic plan, and when we think about us as the city and what our role is in this, and thinking about finite dollars and resources, we're working on what does implementation look like beyond our plan? So, you all talked about some of your challenges and the things that you're dealing with, but you also have solutions, and you mentioned that you have some very specific projects, efforts

and initiatives. Would love for you to touch on some of those. Why are they successful? Can you talk a little bit about what those metrics are, that's how you're measuring that success?

Ms. Bailey said sure. So, I was [inaudible] Youth Employment Program. Atrium Health is a partner in that program, where we bring in high school students to get exposure over the summer. It's a paid summer internship. We have about 30 kids that come through us every single summer, and that is one way to, again, expose them to the careers that they may not know about. Once we've hooked them with the Mayor's Youth Employment Program, we have our PATCH (Providers and Teens Communicating for Health) Program, which is another career exposure program. It's on Saturdays throughout the year for our individuals. Then, by the time they're seniors in high school, we have what's called our Rise to Success Program. That is where we're encouraging high school seniors to come work and go to school while they're with Atrium Health. So, over the summer, if they have their CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) Licensure, we put them right to work. CNA is a critical role within our healthcare system. Then, by that fall, they're entering a community college to earn one of our critical role healthcare certifications. So, they're working part-time and going to school at the same time. We have found it to be extremely impactful to some of our students. Many of them are coming out of that, becoming nurses, becoming surg techs, becoming pharm techs. So, those are just a few of our youth programs that we've implemented.

I will touch a little bit about one of our programs that I'm most proud and passionate about, is our Fair Chance Hiring Program, where we have individuals who have a criminal past, and our CEO has taken the bold step to say that we will have a Fair Chance Hiring Program at Atrium Health. It's been in existence since 2021. We've had over 117 individuals get hired through that program. We have a very thorough screening process through that program, but that has been one way to, again, go back into the community, prepare talent to work in healthcare, and then provide them meaningful opportunities. They go into frontline level roles, but I think one of the differentiators with our program is we want them to have a career with us. We don't want them to stay at those frontline roles. We want them to use our education benefits, get the skills you need to get a promotion and advance your own economic mobility, and all the things that you need to be successful, and never, ever go back to your previous lifestyle. So, those are just a few of the programs.

Ms. Nguyen said a few of the challenges that we're always dealing with in Boston, which may resonate with you, is what we call up credentialing, mainly because Boston has a lot of employers that traditionally can hire every position that requires a Bachelor's degree. So, moving employers to skill-based hiring is really important, but that's not always easy to do with employers when they can access the talent pool in Greater Boston to get those who are just completing the graduation. So, the Mayor has really collaborated with employers and the life sciences industry, and then also had a call to action to hire and place and train and retain diverse Bostonians who don't have a Bachelor's degree in life sciences, and the goal was 1,000. So, we're still doing the evaluation to learn more about how that really matriculates. The other piece of challenges is nontraditional pathways, moving into the competency base without compromising the academic integrity of the schools, the credentials, and the employers. I mean, we're still working around how some of those pilots are working throughout Greater Boston. The main challenge is getting it to scale, so quality versus scale. The last piece is more on climate and coastal resilience in Boston, and that we're moving into a workforce development strategy that leaves no workers behind as the city prepares for climate and coastal resilience. These are positions that don't have a Bachelor's degree. Municipal and government is the largest employer in that sector. So, the city has to really answer the call to hire the Boston residents who are graduates of these pipelines. Happy to answer additional questions.

Mr. Clancy said great. So, it's good to see everybody again, alright. So, back to the career-connected learning conversation I had before I handed it off to Trinh earlier. I'm going to talk a little bit about the youth programs as well, because I think for us in Philadelphia, we need to start having young people have better experiences, more

opportunities, and what the career-connected learning model does, it ties in what they're learning throughout the year into a summer opportunity, summer employment. I mentioned that this is a 12 to 24-year-old program model, of which we will serve 7,000 young people this year during the summer, but then an additional 2,000 year-round in internships. This investment comes from the City of Philadelphia, and also the state of Pennsylvania. One of the things we've been able to negotiate with our state, is they are giving us a TANF Block Grant for Youth. So, we don't think it's enough just to get money for adults. We negotiated, and our Governor, historically all the Governors in Pennsylvania, have put money into a youth programming model during the summer, which for us in Philadelphia, is about \$10 million. So, our budget is like \$17 million for the summer, and what we're trying to do with that money is then leverage it with foundations and other monies. Right now, the key partners are the School District of Philadelphia, the City of Philadelphia and Philadelphia Works. What we're trying to do is help young people, very much like Trinh had mentioned, expose them to other career opportunities, so they understand their path. The 12-year-olds are really important, because we have to start with the soft skills earlier and earlier, because I think what we found out in feedback from employers, is not all our young people are ready to necessarily show up on time, necessarily speak appropriately, take feedback appropriately. So, for us, it's weaving in the constant professionalism and the manners that are really important for young people to understand. So, that's one of the greater successes, and we look to keep pushing it. I would say to you, we are trying to convince the Governor of Pennsylvania to put in a line item in his budget, which will give us more money. So, we're pushing. We're a big advocacy group in Philadelphia. We believe that we never have enough money, because we believe we don't have enough opportunities for both young people and adults.

Ms. Lawson said so as I said before, Autin fought becoming a big city for a long time, and as such, we don't have the infrastructure. Our highways can't handle the traffic. I know, we had someone visiting from another city, and he actually texted me, because he was doing a presentation. He said, "It says it's an hour to go two miles." That is true. Our airport is small for what we have grown into. We don't have a good transportation system. So, what we are doing is developing that infrastructure system. Within the next couple of years, we have five major projects. One is Project Connect, which is light rail, which we are developing. The other is Interstate 35 Expansion, so people don't have to wait two hours to go two miles. We also have the Airport Expansion, Tesla and Samsung, which are developing right now and growing, and all of these require large numbers of skilled workers. Our Mayor, local elected officials, we realize that this is a once in a lifetime opportunity, all of these projects happening at once, to really change the landscape for everyone in our community, and ensure that we can tackle our affordability challenges, and ensuring people have jobs, but more importantly pathways, starting one place, and then moving into career progression to better jobs.

We needed to understand mobility a little bit more. As I said before, we'd always talked about skilled trades, and right now mobility for us is skilled trades, because we're developing that infrastructure. So, what we did is we launched a study to see what are the true needs. We know that annually, until 2040, 10,000 jobs will be created to meet the needs of these five projects. We also know that we don't have a skilled workforce, as I shared before. We also know that there is a training gap. We have a 4,000 slot training gap, in that the training providers aren't producing people fast enough to even meet that 10,000, let alone where we are now. So, to meet these needs, we are launching the first of its kind public/private partnership called The Infrastructure Academy, and it integrates recruitment, a comprehensive training hub, childcare and support, to connect local people to career pathways in construction and operations, and I bring up childcare, because this is huge for us right now. In our election in November 2024, our constituents voted for a 2.5 cent tax increase to provide affordable childcare for all in the community. So, that is bringing, we estimate about \$75 million of childcare into our community, and because Workforce Solutions Capital Area oversees the subsidized childcare program, we anticipate that we will be that mechanism to fund the training providers, so people that are going into these occupations, or really any of our target occupations, can access affordable childcare.

The Infrastructure Academy was launched by Mayor Watson and Judge Brown, but we also had public and private partners that were working with us in some foundations. We spent the last two years in the design phase identifying the critical jobs that were needed. What was really unique about this is everybody came to the table. We had different design groups, but we brought in employers who were telling us what their current and future needs are. We had training providers who were telling us what their capacity was, even telling us what their curriculum was, because what we want to do is standardize curriculum, so there's no wrong door. If somebody goes to training provider A, then an employer knows that that person has those skills. They may be lacking some soft skills, which we'll build in, but at least they have the basic foundational skills to be able to go into those jobs. We also brought in community colleges and community organizations, and everyone was really focused on the goal of aligning the programs with our regional needs. Workforce Solutions will serve as the hub. Our strength is in recruiting, assessing, career advising, providing training scholarships, identifying and creating earn and learn opportunities for people, and the supports to help people along the way. So, we see ourselves as the hub that is connecting people to all of these opportunities. The city has invested \$5 million into this program, the idea being that we are first going to prioritize city jobs that need to be filled, but the \$5 million, this initial investment, they intend to continue it, so that we can continue to meet the needs of the region.

What is really nice is our local community college, and we only have one in our area, is building a new building near the airport, and they are donating space, so to speak, so we really are going to have a one-stop hub. The community college will be allowing in our K through 12 partners, as well as local training providers, to come in and help recruit and offer services and CBOs (Community-Based Organizations) as well. So, really, what we're looking at is a no wrong door. Somebody can come in, if one training provider doesn't have the space, they'll be another one there that can help somebody. We are actually launching March 26, 2025, so we're very excited about that. We're launching with a Career Fair, a specialized Career Fair for mobility and infrastructure, and at that Career Fair, where we typically have 400 to 500 people showing up because of the outreach that we do, we're going to have the employers, but we're also going to have the training providers, and we're going to have career advisors on staff as that front of the house assessing people. Helping people to determine should they go talk to the employer right away, and if they do, do they need supports in order to take that job, or is training the best path. So, we're really looking at this event as a way to inform them first and then connect them to the opportunities. We're also looking at, what I call, the golden ticket. So, what we want to do is we want to assess people ahead of time, so they can have that ticket, so to speak, so they can go to that training provider and say, I have this voucher for up to X amount that I can attend your training, and be enrolled on the spot. So, we are very much appreciative of our Mayor, and we are looking forward to launching.

Ms. Hogan said so, I think I'd shared at the beginning that, because Phoenix has been rapidly growing so quickly over the last several years, I shared that there's been a huge skills gap that we're seeing in emerging industries, and also just a need for workforce diversification. So, one of the things that Mayor and Council did, which we are so appreciative of was, in the height of COVID, it became an extreme, important part to focus on workforce initiatives. So, Mayor and Council actually allocated \$35.5 million to just focus on workforce education and training. So, it was very strategically thought out on how they wanted to do that to help bridge this gap. They wanted to put a focus really on educating. So, we were able to have more funds available through our Workforce Board and through our service providers, which is through our Arizona Work Network, to be able to help people become upskilled and trained. So, certifications, even tuition assistance, leading up to a Bachelor's degree. If you're familiar with the workforce system, which I'm sure you are here in Charlotte, there's limited amount of funds that are available to be able to do that. So, that was a really big deal for us to be able to put that back into our community and work very closely with our community colleges.

One of the other things the focal point was, was really helping out our small businesses. We saw that they took the brunt of COVID, huge impact. We were just trying to make

sure that they stayed afloat to make it through the pandemic, so we were able to allocate some of those funds to help them with capital improvement programs, as well as to help save even funding for wages for their employees to help them get over the hump. Two creative things that came out of this was the development of purchasing an old Kmart building in a community that really needed to be revitalized. This community, in particular, there's huge high sex trafficking in this community, huge homeless population in this community, and the community was really looking for a way to, okay, how do we deal with this, a lot of immigrant population in the community as well? Many of them, not having a right to work, established their own businesses through food innovation. So, the city decided, we are going to take those funds, through ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act), and purchase this old Kmart building to revitalize it. Also, there is another building within the parking lot area, called The Crystal Palace. It's not what you think it is. It's actually a banquet hall. So, we took those funds to purchase that building also, to make it a food innovation center, and the Kmart building is going to be a workforce and training education center, where we're partnering with our education partners to bring in educational opportunities that are going to help people start off at entry level, and then eventually grow into a career. We're looking at advanced manufacturing being in that building, as well as some healthcare, and actually making a small business hub.

Another creative thing that came out of that was, our Mayor participated in the Global Mayor's Challenge through Bloomberg Philanthropies. So, her focus through COVID was, we weren't seeing people coming into our job centers. We have three comprehensive job centers in Phoenix alone, five total in Maricopa County, and people weren't making it. So, she charged us and many other departments to participate in this challenge to figure out ways, how do we get workforce services to the community? Why are we always wanting people to come to us, or come to a building? How do we make things more accessible? So, the grand idea that we came up with was to have a mobile unit. So, we were able to use the million dollars that we received from Bloomberg Philanthropies to actually build out that initiative. We just got our RV (Recreational Vehicle). It took us all this time actually to get our RV, but it didn't stop us from piloting the program itself, and then we discovered we really don't need an RV. It's really about ensuring that the services are readily available in the communities that need them most, providing access. So, through the success of that program, we've partnered with employer partners that are only willing to offer jobs on the spot, which is hard to do. A lot of employers don't want to do that, or have a hard time doing that, or getting through their systems to do that. What was really great about it, though, was that we were focused on good jobs as well. We didn't get the grant, as some of our colleagues did. However, we still wanted to work with the employer partners to establish, what does good jobs actually mean? We started with the city, because there's great benefits, pension, so we started there, actually working with HR (Human Resources) to have them look at all of their vacancies, because they had about 12,000 vacancies in the city. Let's look at this and let's see how can we make this happen, and I said, if the City of Phoenix can make it work, to actually be able to offer people jobs on the spot, or at least a conditional offer, because we understand you have to go through background checks, then we can get any employer to do this. So, we started with home. Our board encouraged us to start with the city and see how that goes. So, we did, it worked out really well. We've gotten other employer partners, large corporations, like W.L. Gore, to come and participate in this, who have a very strict way of doing their hiring practices, but that was some of the benefits that we've seen. So, since now we have the RV, we can actually take this out. We're actually having a ribbon cutting coming up here soon with our Mayor and Council in February 2025. I say all that to say that it took things to happen for us to think differently and be creative.

Now, I have to tell you, as a Workforce Board, we only receive a certain amount of funding, and I was starting off that way to say, that was a lot of funding that was allocated to focus on workforce initiatives. In Arizona, we've been very fortunate to be pretty steady in our unemployment rate. Over time, we have seen our unemployment rate continue to drop, which has actually caused our Workforce Boards in Arizona to lose funding. Our Workforce Board traditionally operates off of only the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act. So, we're in a position now, ARPA has dried up. So, how do

we keep some of the programs that we have, that have built great opportunities for our residents in place? How do we scale? You kind of heard that theme along the way. One of the things that our board is doing in partnership with Mayor, is building out a philanthropic arm, where we're bringing employers to the table, because we recognize that when you start with employers first, that's where you see the most success. We saw that in working with the Taiwanese Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, TSMC, many of you've probably heard them in the news. They build many of the chips that go into our phones and computers and cars, and things of that nature, putting them at the table to talk about, how do we build a talent pipeline for the 10,000 jobs that you're looking to fill, permanent jobs? Six thousand of those jobs are going to be in high tech. So, our board was able to become a sponsor for them, and we worked with them to develop registered apprenticeship programs. We were able to develop three registered apprenticeships. Because of TSMC coming to Phoenix, it's actually caused a lot of their partners in the advanced manufacturing ecosystem to move to Phoenix. So, now we're looking at them as well, how do we help you do this? We're able to utilize the funds that we have in workforce to do this, but what we have benefited from the most is having them at the table and them actually contributing to this matter, because in the end, it's their ability to give back to the community, as well as build a talent pipeline for their fabs that they're building, they're building three fabs as we speak now. So, yes, I'll pause there.

Ms. Frazier said well, thank you all for your responses. So, they have a number of projects. They didn't even scratch surface on this, but I'm going to call an audible, because we did have a final question, but I want to get us back on track. I have a number of questions, and again, I talk to these folks on a regular. So, I want to take this moment to pause, and now open it up to Council, so that you can all have some conversation and engagement with the panelists.

Marcus Jones, City Manager said awesome, thank you, and I appreciate everybody who's come to join us today. A couple things. So, I'll tell you a quick short story. A couple of years ago, a few of these Council members came into a retreat and said, "Workforce development is going to be a priority. I don't care what you say," and it was, and it is. So, much like mobility, we're working on a plan for workforce development, and much like mobility, it took us a while, but I think as it is being successful, I'm sure workforce development's going to be successful also. Also, Julia Martin, who won't leave us alone, basically said to make sure I put it in the room that, while we have an all-access pass, we also have prepaid tuition for all of our employees, and we also have home down payment assistance, I think up to \$80,000 if it's in a corridor. So, really cool stuff that we're doing here for our employees. I think, Trinh, you may be the closest to the way we've set Danielle up here, in the sense that you have an office. So, I guess my question is to you. What should we be thinking about? We have this internal focus, and we also have an external focus. You guys talked about a lot of money. I think Danielle is down to about \$2.9 million. So, what should we be thinking about as we put together a strategic plan with this focus that's internal and external?

Ms. Nguyen said that's a really great question, and I was thinking about that. Even when we had access to resources, it wasn't the best answer in the City of Boston. Don't tell our Treasury office that or our CFO (Chief Financial Officer) that. So, Charlotte has the power of you. You can help facilitate a lot of the partnerships that have leveraged resources. Your community college, when I read it like 10 years ago, was the best, and it still is one of the best in the country for workforce development. The question is, can you work with graduates of community colleges? I'm not saying you don't need workforce funding, but take the graduates of community colleges and link them to employers in which the Mayor's Office and the City of Charlotte has a political tailwind to say, "Hey, we have graduates, can you hire them?" Sometimes employers say, wow, yes, but I need X, Y and Z. For example, I need them to be able to read blueprints. I need folks to be able to have a certain coding language that are only what we call industry recognized certification that can go on top of that. It could be an extra two weeks, three weeks or four weeks. Then once you have the iteration of that model of hiring for employers, first could be a smaller scale. Take a cohort of 15 to 30, and then reiterate that module. Then get the successful track record of that employer to be the

feeder. You start with your anchor employers who have consistently 190,000 employment, and you have vacancies, and that's your anchor employer that you can always trust and go by. Now, the AI, the tech industry, we call them transient industries, meaning they change all the time, and sometimes people get laid off, sometimes they didn't get a buyout, but that's okay, because you can afford that mixture of employer risk assessment, because you have anchor employers who can always feed into that hiring.

So, I would say we always have plans of plans. In Boston, we've got super smart people, but the problem is the execution becomes an issue, meaning you have to roll up your sleeves and design incremental, quantifiable, measurable results, and keep iterating that process. So, use what you currently have. When Danielle said, "Oh, Trinh, we only have \$3 million." I said, "Well, you have people power." You have the power to convene community colleges and employers, but let's not forget that government is a very large employer. The city and municipalities in the City of Charlotte are very powerful. You have the Charlotte Housing Authority. You have the fire department. You have the EMS (Emergency Medical Services). You have emergency preparedness. You have water and sewer. All of that connects to climate, and all of that need workers, and I bet you if you did, let's say, a five to 10-year analysis on the rate of retirement, you can get data from your research department, your pensions, and your collective bargaining, you will find that rate of retirement anywhere between, let's say, five to 10 percent from your labor force. That means you need to really prepare young people, young adults, and graduates into that workforce, because you can't train them in two weeks. You need a more intentional process.

Mr. Clancy said so, Trinh, I'm just curious, I'm just going to jump in here, because one of the things we're doing in Philadelphia is looking at community benefits agreements. For every large-scale project that's going on in Philadelphia, we expect those big investors, those billionaires, to put some money in the table for communities for workforce development. So, we're not looking for an additional tax. We're looking for a large investor. So, for example, the Sixers, before they pulled out of the agreement, they were going to put \$60 million in a community benefit agreement, of which \$10 million to \$15 million of that was going to go to workforce development. So, I think there's ways in which you look at your landscape and say, what's being developed in Charlotte, and any of those big projects, is it worth getting some money to do the things that both Trinh and Danielle are doing? So, something to consider.

Councilmember Bokhari said thank you all for making the time to be here, very good conversation. In North Carolina and Charlotte is almost a mirror of it. We have a pretty good understanding of the problem statement. The good news at a macrolevel is we're 3rd in the nation in terms of job growth, and one in four of those jobs today are STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) related, which is fantastic. Even better than that, 60 percent of those people in those fields don't have a college degree, so that's the good news. The bad news is on our education and pipeline front, we've tumbled since 2019 from 7th in the nation to 29th in student performance. We have under 30 percent of 8th graders that have been assessed that are career ready in math. So, you can see kind of, if 60 percent of that crazy driver of our workforce doesn't have Bachelor's degrees, our K through 12 program and workforce things aligned to it, are all we have and we're starting to experience some real challenges, with 80 percent of our employers state wide saying they have trouble filling STEM roles and 60 percent have trouble filling all entry level roles. So, I think we've identified where the problem statement is, and clearly the programs to upskill STEM and do those things are important. I think one of you said it earlier, and Patrick I'll direct the question to you because of your summer program you mentioned, it is a mixture of quality of the experience to the outcome and ability to scale. It's fine if we have these great experiences, but 20 people touch them, we need thousands of them. So, I'm just curious your thoughts on that, but specifically, how many students and people do you traditionally touch with a good investment that I'm sure relates to a quality experience each summer?

Mr. Clancy said yes, it's a really good question. So, we have room for 7,000 young people. I would say to you, 60 percent of them are 15 and 16 years old. For us, we have

a large vendor that manages 50 partners. So, we have a youth intermediary, and then this spirals out. We go out into the community. They're the largest employer for the City of Philadelphia during the summer. They do all the camps and the pools. For us, though, we have 15,000 applicants. So, the reason why we keep pushing for more money, because we're nowhere near scale, and I would agree with you. I think our biggest issue in the City of Philadelphia is adult literacy. We've got to solve this problem, and we have to figure out, how do we continue to get young people engaged earlier. The other thing the school district is doing for the first time, is year-round school. So, this Mayor has come in with a mantle to change it in Philadelphia, and she's being a disrupter, and really wanting to figure out, how do we get young people at grade level, and not let this thing persist? So, for us, it's about the quality of the opportunity, but also we balance quality and the scale. We think if given more money, we could scale up bigger, which is where we're sort of unique, because our colleagues in the other part of Pennsylvania really can't scale. Our challenge is if we go to a Governor asking for money, we have to ask for a state-wide program, because Philadelphia is the ultimate beggar, and I think there's always a sense that we get all the money, but it's a really good question. I would say you, that's impressive numbers you have here, though.

Ms. Lawson said and if I can just add. I don't know if this helps with capacity, but one of the things that we have is a teacher externship program, which we run in the summer. I want to say we served 200 teachers this past summer, and what it is, we bring teachers in, particularly the career technical education teachers, and they spend two weeks with industry. So, they are learning from industry what the current qualifications are, what skill level is needed, what the jobs entail. They are paid for this, but really what we're finding is they go back into the classroom, and that they are better able to prepare the high school students for those jobs that are available.

Mayor Lyles said I want to say thank you for coming today and giving us this opportunity to think about what we can do. Danielle and I have been doing this for a very long time, but I often wonder, when you were talking about how to get this idea of Atrium, Cynthia, I'll just ask you this. All of us can look out of our window and see the medical school being built, and we can see all of this opportunity there. I remember somewhere along the way someone at Atrium said that we're going to have to have 500 nurses for the system, and one of the questions that I had is, if we know that data and we know the timeframe for the university and all of this, what have we missed in helping you do your job, because we want you to be successful, but we also want these young people to be successful? So, I wanted to ask you, specifically, what have we missed as an opportunity as we see what's going on with Atrium?

Ms. Bailey said good question. I'm not sure that anything was missed, but I do think we've just got to think differently about the pipeline, so the high school to college to employment. I think we've got to be creative with our students getting into the schools to really make it attractive to go to community college and get these Associate's degrees or healthcare certifications. Oftentimes we're trying to convince the parents, because parents want them to go to their alma mater, or their school, but I can tell you a lot of the jobs where we're suffering and falling short, are the ones that just require an Associate's degree or a healthcare certification. So, somehow, if we can really get the parents on board with this and get the students on board with this, I think that could make an impact as well. Atrium Health has two colleges that we own. We're starting to now think about evening and weekend programs, because again, when you think about individuals, whether they're our own teammates or the community, they may have a job, but they still want to go back to school. Some of our healthcare programs are only offered during the day. Their clinicals are only offered during the day, and this puts people at a disadvantage. So, I think we've just got to be creative and flex a little bit with what's existing out here, and I do think that could make a difference for our individuals.

Mr. Clancy said so, Madam Mayor, I would also suggest that we have to scale. We have to get our community college to scale better. If not, they'll just be okay with what they do. I sit on the Community College Board in Philadelphia, and one of the things we hear is that they don't have enough internship sites, or they don't have enough places to do what they need to do, but we need to push scale, because you're right, the numbers are

daunting. I think we all have to get in a room at some point and say, look, we need more than what you've been doing.

Mayor Lyles said I can't tell you how much I appreciate that, because one of the things that I've heard from our community college is that we do not have the staff to be able to have a weekend program. Imagine if you could have a job during the week, and not give up what income you have, and you could go and train on the weekends. I mean, it's like a big deal. So, sometimes I wonder if we're really investing in this, perhaps we ought to pay for it. I know that the state, there are probably rules that I don't know about, but at some point, we have got to commit to these young people that they can do this work. So, I don't know, Marcus, how it works, but if we're doing all of this great work with Atrium, and we're not getting people trained, we're missing it, and if it means that we have to invest, we ought to try to figure that out. So, I'm preaching, and I'm done.

Mr. Jones said oh, thank you. So, you guys know I'm a PK, Preachers Kid, and you try not to ever stick your chest out or anything like that. I think it's important, let me say it again. The City of Charlotte prepays tuition for its employees. So, somebody could be at Solid Waste Services, and they could end up working in a leadership role in IT. So, to your point, I think people have to follow what the City of Charlotte is doing, because we're doing some good things, and if folks could replicate that, Mayor, I think it solves some of the issues that you said.

Councilmember Mayfield said so, thank you all for the presentation today. Patrick, with your comment of scaling, we have a number of us in this room who are graduates of Central Piedmont Community College, which is one of the top community colleges in the nation. When you think of that, also in April of 2024, with it starting in August of 2024, Central Piedmont is one of only two, I believe, in the state that offers artificial intelligence. So, with that, Cynthia, the question I have for you is what, if any, conversations is Atrium having, especially for our workers that aren't directly in nursing and phlebotomy and other things? How do you see artificial intelligence playing into that, as well as continuing and growing that relationship with Central Piedmont? I know, we're hitting you with all the good ones, but we have to recognize the impact of artificial intelligence today in every aspect of work. So, it would just be helpful to get an idea.

Ms. Bailey said absolutely, in healthcare, and even our new Pearl, the new shiny building that is going up. We are starting to identify those innovative careers that will be impacted by artificial intelligence or will use artificial intelligence as we go about doing things. So, we're assessing that, our talent acquisition teams. There are folks prepared and getting ready to identify those roles. We recently got a Bloomberg grant, and that has really helped us. Neurodiagnostic technologies, all these different roles that didn't exist before, are now coming about, because we're realizing that we've got to leverage our technology a lot better, and so we are. We're starting to have internal training programs. If we can't go to the community colleges to do that, we're going to have our own staff prepare and upskill individuals to meet those individual types of positions. So, we're getting creative. I think that my team with workforce development, we've been focused on the Allied Health careers and more of the patient facing roles, the ones that may not rely as heavily on artificial intelligence, but that's evolving right now, is what I can say to that. More to come, but our Pearl is really focused on innovation. It is focused on really identifying the skills that we can really communicate to our youth, because they're interested in it. It's very cool, the simulation centers that we have. So, we're identifying and doing a better job with that. I can't say it's fully fleshed out all the way.

Ms. Nguyen said I would just add to that. I just got done with a two-day conference with MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) Sloan on AI and healthcare, by the way, and they have a lot of case studies that are online, we'll forward it to folks here, but one of the themes that I kept hearing was that AI is an important force to recognize, but it has not deeply penetrated the actual workforce in terms of getting rid of actual body positions and getting robots to treat you. So, I don't think that the industry is there yet, and I think that there are some surface level findings, but there's not anything

substantial that employers should worry about in terms of replacing the workforce right away.

Ms. Mayfield said so, just for a quick followup, and full disclosure. I'm in the process of going through the artificial intelligence programming and information technology. I don't want us to think of the replacement, since AI is just an enhancement, and it's only as good as the information you put in, but we do have some medical institutions that are entering information in regarding diagnosis. Well, there's a saying, garbage in, garbage out. If the correct information isn't uploaded into whatever format is being utilized, then the chance is that the information you're going to receive back isn't going to be as detailed. So, I'm not really looking at the robotics part of it, I'm more so just wanting to get an idea of what are the conversations that you're having with artificial intelligence? How are we utilizing the ethics that go along with artificial intelligence, the diversity, as well as making sure that we're creating a product that has removed as many of the biases as possible in order to help ensure that we're getting closer to better diagnosis and/or better assistance, even when you're calling in through Teladoc, or anyone, to help just move the conversation forward? I definitely appreciate the fact that the conversations are starting, but we don't have a landing point on it yet.

Mr. Clancy said so, I would just add, in Philadelphia, University of Penn Medical Center is using their recruiting tool on AI. So, there's a lot of uses at the workforce board. We're going to create our own subcommittee of AI, because we think this thing is moving really fast, and we know at some point, even in our centers, our American Job Centers, we can use AI tools to help out our customers. You can get that resume done quicker. You can learn how to navigate a job search tool better. So, we are looking at it, because I would agree with you, this is coming fast and it's coming. The idea it's not coming is not realistic, but for employers it's really a tough one.

Ms. Bailey said I mean, even on a diagnosis side using AI, obviously that is super critical, but that is more of the lane of our clinical teams and our Chief Medical Officers, and things like that. I am certain that is part of their conversation. It's just not within the workforce development space right now.

Councilmember Graham said thank you, Danielle, for assembling such a distinguished panel for us today. I chair the City's Economic Development Committee, and workforce development is a major part of that, and we look forward to receiving the strategic plan relatively soon, Mr. Manager and Ms. Frazier, so I'm excited about that. I guess my first question in two-fold is, one, especially for Ms. Trinh, how do you guys measure success and impact? How do you know when you go home at the end of the year, end of the month, that this was a good month? How do you measure that?

Ms. Nguyen said that's a tough one, which is why I always get upset, and the staff just wishes I'd just calm down. I mean, any of my colleagues, I think, employers would be the best to answer that, but at the end of the day to me and to us, the real impact is a good paying job for that worker and that resident in the City of Boston. That's why they go to a community college, that's why parents come here from immigrant families. At the end of the day, we cannot afford to spend all this money and resources, whether it's K to 12, which I don't have jurisdiction on, in community college, which Boston doesn't because it's a state profile and controlled. We need to know if Boston residents, who are not the traditional client profile, who don't have a Bachelor's degree, are getting good paying jobs. So, when those standards and impact are measured, the success starts to dwindle down, meaning the easier outcomes to report are number of recruiting, enrollees, completion, but the hardest comes when it comes to placement, retention, wages. I would also argue for community college, that you can't just focus on enrollment, you have to focus on completion. I would also argue post-secondary education start collecting data on, which is very hard, because like my colleague here, I also sit on community college's boards and the State Board of Post-Secondary Education, and I always say it doesn't matter until you collect the data of your graduates and where they are. In the City of Boston, we found that residents and students of color, graduates of community colleges, are getting lower paid jobs than what they're graduating with, and that is a crime in the City of Boston, and we have to do a better

job. So, getting the right metric really is the first and foremost data point, and then you have to own it. Because you have to go back to your mayor and the city saying we're not doing our jobs, and the community college presidents have to do a better job, and that's always hard to do. So, one, you really have to get those data points, and the state's not always with us, and they might be a little bit slower than the City of Boston.

So, those are some of the things that we have to tackle with, but the prime gold standard is the actual job, whether or not it pays over \$85,000, or family-sustained wages, pensions and health benefits, and then we start moving down that ladder, but that's our gold standard. We're collecting that, but the fine gentleman earlier said, "Well, what's quality versus scale?" Because politically, we're always pressured to deliver immediate numbers of people in jobs, but let's not forget why we're put here to work, which is quality jobs and making impact for the community. So, I think we're always a push and pull, and we don't have an answer to that, but getting the data points is really essential as a first step.

Ms. Lawson said and I'd like to share. Pat said I was going to brag, and I am, I'm going to brag. We do look at data, and we've been looking at [inaudible] for several years. In Texas, we are lucky we have access to that unemployment insurance wage system, so we don't rely on the state. Well, the state gives it to us, but we have it. So, we know that on average for low-income individuals that complete training and enter a job in what they trained for, they earn an average of \$27,000 more a year, a year after attending the training. We also know that there is a \$5 return on investment, so for every dollar we invest in that training, \$5 comes back into our community. Another thing that we did, building off of what Workforce Solutions did with the \$27,000, our Hire Local Plan that I mentioned before is really a community plan. So, part of what that entails is all of the training providers, including the community college, sends information to the University of Texas in Austin, the Ray Marshall Center specifically, and they do an evaluation of completers, wages, entry into employment. So, we have that at a community level.

Mr. Graham said and I was going to ask that question in terms of how do you kind of collaborate with others that work in the same space?

Mr. Clancy said yes. Let me tell you, Pennsylvania's brutal. This is why states matter, because in Pennsylvania we're not viewed as a trusted partner to get access to the UI (Unemployment Data) to see if our investment actually worked, and for us to have to track down individuals is unbelievably challenging, and why would somebody pick up your phone, because I'm getting spam calls all day like everybody else is. So, it really is frustrating at the state level. We're trying to get a data sharing agreement, because I think more and more and more, we have to show results, we have to show impact. The days of just saying, we enrolled or we saw or we were able to do this. Our colleagues in Texas and Phoenix, do you have these?

Unknown said we do, we have access, yes.

Mr. Clancy said see, not fair. See, people don't like Philadelphia.

Unknown said well, it is a gamechanger, though.

Mr. Clancy said it is. I mean, this is where we advocate at the state level, which is why I think City Council can play an active role with your legislators, and say, look, we just want to measure. We don't really need to get too deep into somebody's. The feedback we get is, "It's privacy information, we can't share." My sense is, well, you give us money to do a job, we want to do the job, and want to be able to report out on the job, and it's really hard to do that.

Ms. Nguyen said there's a lot of tools that we can compile after this forum to give you as tools on best practices that can or cannot work. Obviously, data sharing, MOUs (Memorandum of Understanding), employer agreements, modules, differ from state to city to municipalities, but we have those tools on a national level.

Mr. Driggs said so, I went to school and worked in Europe, and as you know, they have quite a different approach to education over there. There's a bifurcation, there's a trades track, and a university track. There's no stigma around the trades track, so you do not have the situation we have, where a lot of people go to college and have no benefit from it. One of the key things, and Ms. Frazier knows this is something near and dear to my heart, apprenticeships. So, the system puts people in school, puts them to work, teaches them, leading to a job placement and a certificate. I don't feel that we've been able to kind of realize apprenticeships in Charlotte on the scale that we should, and I'm wondering, what could city government do to promote that? Again, Ms. Frazier knows all about this, but is it a question of money, or a question of working with employers? How could we expand that program?

Mr. Clancy said yes, that's really a good question, and I know I'm fighting my colleague over here for the microphone. In Philadelphia, we have an apprenticeship unit. So, we decided early on that we were going to fund staff to work directly with employers to develop apprenticeships. I would say to you, Philadelphia is a highly unionized town, so our building trades are already kind of lined up with those pipelines. What we're doing is developing healthcare, transportation, education, and other logistics apprenticeships, because we do believe if you can earn and learn, that by far is our best model for our customers, because a lot of our customers come in with a catch 22. They need the additional skills, but they need to work. We don't have enough opportunities in the evenings and weekends, due to scale, that individuals can work during the day and go to school at night. So, if we can marry the two early, that's one of the things we are building on, and that's why we believe we've got to have staff that can go out and meet with employers to explain the benefit.

Ms. Lawson said we are leaning into apprenticeships, and our three major hospital systems worked together to create a medical assistant apprenticeship program, that has been very successful. On average each year, I think we're producing about 250 medical assistants, which is kind of similar to a CNA. I think it's a little bit above a CNA. So, we're definitely helping to meet that need. Then, from there, the hospitals are investing, taking somebody from a medical assistant to a rad tech, so they're even developing their own apprenticeships and paying for them, and paying the staff while they're taking those.

Ms. Hogan said and I'll just add to that. I love that you brought up the European model, because in our conversations, even with TSMC, if you guys remember during the Reagan Administration, many of our apprenticeship programs, or blue-collar worker opportunities moved over to China. So, that's how we ended up losing a lot of talents in that space when it comes to the trades. What's really interesting is that, as we've been in conversations with them, their main thing to us is, we don't need a four-year engineer person. We need someone that's a third-year engineer, simply because they need someone that's going to be able to work on operations, but also be able to supervise. So, be able to do the work, as well as bring mentorship to the people that are actually doing the work, and that's how we were able to develop apprenticeship programs with them. So, we're on our third apprenticeship program with them to scale. The City of Phoenix itself has actually got really smart around developing apprenticeship programs. To date, I wish I had the number, but I can give it to Danielle to get to you, but they really focused on those positions within the city that were hard to fill positions, positions that needed, whether it was a CDL (Commercial Driver's License), or if they were an equipment technician, many in our streets department, our public works department, sometimes in our convention center area. So, they really just looked at position and not necessarily department, to figure out where are we missing the most? So, they were smart, and they actually hired the State Apprenticeship Coordinator, at the time, and so now they're actually working in the HR department. So, she's there, and she ensures that all of the related training instruction is done. She does all the tracking for the registered apprenticeship programs, and each of them are registered with the State of Arizona, and they're great benefits. They're good jobs. The apprentices have the opportunity to visit multiple departments, so it's not necessarily just within one department, and they've been able to scale it.

Ms. Frazier said so, I'll just add, I've been quiet intentionally, so that you all can hear more from them, but I just want to say the City of Charlotte is an Apprenticeship Ambassador. We have 18, and here comes the healthy competition, 18 registered apprenticeships across our organization, numbers aren't top of mind. That is under the Office of Workforce Development. I think to Pat's point, when you look at apprenticeships, their model is from the northern European model, so in advanced manufacturing and that industry, that's how you get in the door. I think for us, as workforce development practitioners, it's having someone to be able to go out and talk about apprenticeships with other industries like healthcare, and I think, Atrium, you all have some apprenticeship programs now, and in other industries, so that they understand what an apprenticeship is, what it does, and what it means, and then what are those other resources and supports to help them. So, really this part of it too is about access and awareness for our employers to understand outside of those traditional apprenticeship industries and roles. So, I think that that's a place that the city can play a role in, as an Ambassador of Apprenticeships, to say, hey, here's how we've done it, and it's across a multitude of positions. Like Phoenix, it was our high turnover roles, our entry level roles, but then it's also some more technical roles too, so happy to share more about that, but I think we can be an Ambassador, and help grow those in the community.

Councilmember Molina said again, Ms. Frazier, great job. We're very proud of what we're doing here in the City of Charlotte. This will be a more challenging aspect of what we intend to do as a whole. Workforce development is an important challenge of course. My question respectively was with reference to Boston, because you have this asset of institutions in your orbit that many of us don't have. You have world-class institutions that are within reach. I spent some time in Cambridge over the summer, and just within a small distance, you have access to these institutions. So, are you all convening workforce development partners, and if so, are you seeing any impact from that particular work or implementation?

Ms. Nguyen said thank you, and I know that Boston is a world-class city, but it just tells you the deepness of our issues. I mean, 45 percent of Boston residents don't have a Bachelor's degree, but we're an R&D (Research & Development) city, so we have no manufacturing. We're a huge hospitality, which means the lower wage workers are, you're either that or you're this, there's nothing in between, so we have to do a lot more. I think we rely on the institutions for a think tank, but it's not unusual. You have state schools here that can do randomized control studies for social intervention programs. You have really great schools, researchers, labor economists. Yes, we have stem cell research that gives you the next best vaccines, but we're challenged by that, meaning, will our kids and our young people and diverse constituents be those researchers and scientists? No, they're not, and the majority of the higher level, higher earners, are not from Boston. Actually, Boston is a hub where everybody buses in, and they get the higher paying jobs. They get all the wealth that Boston tries to build. The question is what do our people get? So, Mayor Wu is very laser focused on that, meaning, we're about family's affordability, and we have a lot of challenges around that. Everybody comes to Boston for world-class everything, including homeless shelters, including public housing, everybody [inaudible] Boston, and the question is what's in it for the residents there? So, we have to make some bold choices, which is why I'm still standing here after 16 years behind a Mayor that will, not just preach about ideology, we have to have some bold choices, and those bold choices mean you have to hire Boston residents that don't look like you within legal confinements of community benefits, project labor agreement, whatever else comes down the court. You have to hold that front line. You have to hold developers and real estate developers and all the abutters, who love affordable housing by the way, but don't want it when it's being built in their own backyard.

Now, I'm talking about issues that we all have to deal with. It's great for you to have great schools and you're paying taxes, but what about our neighbors and the kids who don't look like you, who came here as refugees or migrants, a variety of things, that they don't have access to those rich institutions and those wealth pillars that Boston is known for. We don't have solutions to that, but I'll tell you Mayor Wu is up front. She's at it to

tackle these issues, and they may not be popular. They will not be popular in the next four years, but we stand by our values, and we will roll out what we can to make it happen, because at the end of the day, a great city is a civilized one. A great city is one that has access to everybody, not just Harvard, not MIT, I graduated from MIT, but it's for everybody and that's the civility of a great city and a great Mayor.

Ms. Arnold said wonderful, thank you. You're preaching to the choir here. I love that.

Ms. Molina said I just want to finish that thought and say, wow. I think I speak for multiple, especially here at my table in saying, wow, thank you for that.

Mr. Clancy said and you wonder why we love hanging out together, because you've got Danielle Frazier, who is amazing, and then the rest of the colleagues are just amazing, just amazing.

Ms. Arnold said there is no question that this is a powerhouse team that you've assembled, Danielle, thank you so much. We're beyond time for the break, but we have a lot of passion in the room, and we have three more Council members who have questions. So, I'm going to ask that you ask a question that hasn't been asked before, and we'll be able wrap up our comments at the end.

Ms. Frazier said and they will be hanging out with us, I think, through the evening. So, if you have any follow-up questions or anything, they'll be around, and again, they can send us anything that they have shared.

Councilmember Johnson said thank you for your passion, all of you, but thank you for your passion, Trinh. I saw a story about your Mayor on the national news. I don't know, Morning Show or something, so I know the great work you're doing. We have two of our largest employers sitting up at the table, City of Charlotte and also Atrium, and Atrium, you mentioned second chance employment, and you mentioned specific jobs, if I heard you correctly. Also, I believe the City has specific positions where we will hire individuals with a felony record or criminal background, and I don't know if that's broad, and I'm wondering, with the new administration, our country has demonstrated that they believe in second chances, no matter the position or the office. So, I wanted to know if, as industry leaders, and us as policymakers, how we're going to move forward in broadening the opportunities for individuals? Has there been any talk about expanding those positions, Atrium and the City of Charlotte, or anybody who wants to respond? Thank you.

Ms. Bailey said so, yes, we're always looking to expand. When we started the program in 2021, we had 10 targeted roles, all entry-level roles, all high-demand roles, for individuals to go into. Since that time, we've added community health worker. We've added additional roles that exist within our system. What we find is beneficial is, first, we want people to come in the door through one of those front-line roles. After they reach their six months of eligibility to transfer, they can go pretty much anywhere within the system. We have a coach that we assign them with, so they are constantly asking these individuals, what's your next role, because we don't want them to stay at those front-line roles. We're helping them with resume preparation, career development resources, all sorts of things to take them to that next level. We have one individual, she came in the door as a patient transporter. She's now entering nursing school in the fall. So, we have to look at what their aspirations are as well, and really put those support services for them to be successful to go down that path, but we just start them out there. We don't expect them to stay in those entry-level roles. We really want them to have a career at Atrium Health.

Ms. Hogan said and I'll just add to say that our Human Services department, this was an initiative that we had brought to their attention as well. In our planning department, they were really struggling with hiring Planner one positions, which are entry-level positions. So, we had brought to them this grand idea of, how do we bring that training into the prison systems? So, that didn't happen, but what did happen was that it caused them to think differently, whenever it came to their hiring practices. If you could imagine

it sometimes can feel impossible for people as they're applying for public sector jobs, because it takes a long time for a variety of reason. So, one of the things that our HR department has done is whenever they're going through hiring processes, the hiring manager ultimately has the decision as to whether or not they're going to hire that individual, for whatever the reason or cause is. HR has now stepped in to say, well, what is the real reason as to why you're not hiring this person? If it's a grant-funded position, of course, HR ensures that it meets all the grant funding requirements. If it's not, if it's a General Fund position, but let's say background is some type of challenge, then HR now, if they're a good candidate, they will actually get them into another role. So, they're looking to see where else in the city, because we don't want to lose this great candidate. So, how do we leverage that better?

The other thing that they've done is we used to contract out for fingerprint services and things like that, that's no longer. They've worked with Sterling, I think, is our company that we work with for background checks. They've worked with them to get those results quicker, so instead of it taking two to three weeks, I think we're down to like two to three days to get the information back. So, HR now does their own fingerprinting internally. Those are some of the things that they've worked on to really try to streamline the hiring practices, and really looking at the city overall, especially whenever we have great candidates that might not meet the criteria for that specific position.

The other thing that they've done is that, if there were something in a person's background that could prohibit them from getting that job, it was ultimately up to the director of that department to make that decision, yes or no, whether or not they were going to accept them. Well, they've actually taken that ability away, so now the hiring manager doesn't know anything about the person's background. The city had adopted Ban the Box a long time ago. Arizona, as a state, had adopted Ban the Box a long time ago, but you still have employer partners, including municipality, that still have their form of hiring practices. So, the hiring manager, the director of the department, they have no clue about the person's background unless there's something that would prohibit them from being able to accept the position.

Councilmember Watlington said just real quick. First of all, ya'll are singing my heart song, so thank you so much for being here today, and thank you for sharing your expertise. It is really exciting to hear about how we're focused on exactly what you were talking about, Trinh, and so many others on the panel. It's not just about chasing those high earners, top educated folks. We understand there's a trickle-down effect, but we've got to be much more intentional about making sure that everybody's bolstered. So, as I think about this conversation and tying it to our earlier conversation when we talk about big economic development and incentives, you all spoke a little bit about how you really tie that to what you call a community benefit agreement, which obviously we all sit in different states with different abilities, but that's to me the key. Like Trinh, we've got to say it with our chest. If that's who we want to be when it's time to really make some tough decisions, then we've got to say, this is what we're about, and we're willing to walk away or make adjustments to the deal if you can't meet us where we are. I think that that is something that, as I look around to my colleagues, and I know Councilmember Brown is in agreement to that. We've got to be able to do that. So, I look forward to us being able to take a stronger stance in that regard, because there's more that we can do, and I think that if we ask our partners, they'll want to do that. So, in the spirit of that, I wanted to ask Danielle, without putting you on the spot, but given that you really hold this flag for us in Charlotte. As you think about what are some of the other items that you've heard from your peers and things that you've been working on over the last few months, what is it that you think is working and what would you like to see us do in a stronger way, when it comes to tying our incentives to workforce development for economic development?

Ms. Frazier said yes, thank you, Councilmember Watlington, for that question. Well, first and foremost, I think it's really collaboration, and I think that's what you heard on this panel is, how are we all working together? It takes a village to develop a workforce. When we think about all of the opportunities that are coming through these economic development programs and projects, I think about Yael in Austin and what they're doing.

I think it's, what projects are coming here? How do we rally around the jobs that we're attracting or the jobs that we're growing here through existing projects and businesses? How do we create an ecosystem around training providers, community partners, the supportive services that are needed? That's what I think about when I think about where, I think, we can really hone in. We have finite resources, and I think we have an opportunity to drill in when we talk about mobility. The theme of this is, what projects are coming through all of that, through all of these different projects that are coming down, how much talent do we need to be able to support that, and how do we rally and connect our ecosystem around those opportunities? So, I see that as, I think, our biggest opportunity through what's before us and in front of us. There are a lot of examples out there around how you merge workforce development and economic development, as far as employer support, and I think we've done some things over time with whether it's apprenticeship programs or making sure that our employers understand the ecosystem and what's out there. What training providers are out there? What resources are out there? I think that's our role too, to help employers understand our ecosystem, and where the resources are, and how we can be a connector to make sure that all fits together. I hope that answers.

Mr. Clancy said I guess the main thing I would add is, Danielle or somebody who represents, has got to be at the table when these deals are made, because I think there's nothing worse than coming in your office in the morning and reading the Philadelphia Inquirer, and reading that this big company is coming to Philadelphia, and they're hiring like tomorrow, and geez man, how about us? So, I just think having access to that information is a better planning process.

Ms. Nguyen said and I would also put some resources behind the compliance. You have great plans. You went through all this way to get a deal signed, but yet you don't know what the numbers are. A gentleman was there, just asked about, what does the impact look like? You want to be accountable and report back to the community, or the city, to say, this is where we failed, this where we know we failed, and this is how we're going to forward for the next community benefits, but that compliance piece is really important, and it needs resources.

Councilmember Brown said I wanted to make a comment, because Danielle does amazing work. So, yes, I do want to give accolades where they're due, but I also want to go to Boston. Trinh, I know your name, because I work with two organizations that know you very well and you advocate for them. One is Families for Justice as Healing, I know you know them, and the National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls, which I sit on the board as an executive member of the board, and I know the work that you guys do in Boston, and you also know the language. If we change the south, you can change the world. We're not there yet with language. So, when I hear language, criminal background, felonies, all that stuff in the workplace, it stigmatizes and puts labels on people, and we have to really push back and away from that, and I do that on a daily and consistent basis, but I know it's a process. Again, we're in the south, another subject, another topic for another day, but Boston, ya'll got it. Philadelphia, ya'll got it. Coming to you for Atrium, you're amazing. I know the program that you're doing, and a couple of the women that come through the work that I do, they're over there. So, thank you so much for the work that you're doing as well. So, I just wanted to highlight a few things. When you talk about workforce development and meeting people where they are, you also have to change your language, so that you're not retraumatizing people in the aspect of where they're going and how you're going to get them to where they need to be, that's all. Thank you so much.

Councilmember Mitchell said thank you all for coming. Two quick questions. One, I would like to hear more about Hire Local, because I want to be intentional on who are we hiring. So, first question, any legal challenges around your Hire Local program?

Ms. Lawson said no, we haven't, because it's more of a philosophy. We're trying to grow our own through training, through apprenticeships, and earn and learn

opportunities. So, when employers are here, we have the pipeline for them, so they're not going out.

Mr. Mitchell said okay. Mr. Clancy, I'm going to tell Brian O'Neill you did a great job representing Philadelphia, your long-time Council member, and Ms. Bailey, we just left the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) breakfast, and one of the things they talked about, engaging more with Pearl Park. So, when we get offline, I want to set up a tour to bring their local YMCA, because they want to bring some opportunities to expose our youth to what you're doing at Pearl. Thank you.

Ms. Arnold said very good, thank you. Thank you for such a robust discussion. You guys are amazing. We have left with so many amazing ideas, as Danielle and team continue to finalize our comprehensive plan locally. Thank you. We're going to take our break now, and if you could return, please, at 1:55 p.m., we're going to start in 10 minutes. Thank you.

The meeting was recessed at 1:45 p.m. and reconvened at 1:55 p.m.

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ITEM NO. 4: WORKING SESSION: SMALL AND MINORITY BUSINESSES

DeAlva Arnold, Facilitator said [inaudible] how this comprehensive strategy will all come together and flow together. So, having said that, I want to introduce you to Monica Allen, who will take it from here and introduce our panelists. Thank you.

Monica Allen, Assistant City Manager said well, good afternoon, Mayor, Council members, honored guests. Monica Allen, Assistant City Manager. It is my privilege to introduce today's panel, which focuses on the vital work of Minority, Women, and Small Business Enterprises, commonly known as MWSBE. For anyone unfamiliar with this topic and is listening, MWSBE is more than just an acronym. It represents the heart of inclusive growth and opportunity in Charlotte and beyond. When we talk about building a team of teams, it is clear we can't achieve this without the talent, innovation and determination of our minority, women and small business partners, especially as we take on large-scale mobility and other infrastructure projects. These businesses are the engines that power our community, creating jobs, driving innovation, and enriching the diversity that makes Charlotte strong. Today's panel brings together voices from different backgrounds, levels of experience, to provide insights that will inform our path forward. As we reimagine the CBI, MWSBE program, we are focusing on key priorities, enhancing processes, expanding outreach and education, and building capacity, and ensuring more businesses are qualified and ready to partner with the City.

This discussion is not about solving every challenge that we have with our program today, but rather it's about setting the foundation for transformative action. What we learn here will shape our three-year roadmap, a strategic plan to position Charlotte's MWSBE program as a model for the nation. Now, let me introduce the exceptional panelists that are joining us today. So, I'm going to begin with Franklin Lee. He's with Tydings & Rosenberg, and he brings unparalleled expertise in legal, political and regulatory landscape of MWSBEs. Mr. Lee's contributions to Charlotte's early MWSBE program or MBE (Minority Business Enterprise) program, laid the groundwork for where we are today. His insights on navigating the current political climate will be invaluable. Next, we have Eulois Cleckley, CEO of Friends of the Underline, and he will share his unique perspective on integrating MWSBEs into infrastructure projects. From his work, transforming Miami's urban spaces to advancing transportation systems, Mr. Cleckley will highlight the economic impact of making MWSBE central to major investments. Then, last, we have Marcus Kirkman, who's a Business Inclusion Manager for the City of Asheville, and he'll provide a candid look at how the City has involved its MWSBE strategies. His experiences, particularly in the wake of Hurricane Helene, demonstrate the importance of adapting policies to meet the needs of diverse communities. Then, I also have with me, Steven Coker, who's the MWSBE Manager for the City of Charlotte, and he's going to be assisting me today.

So, with that, each panelist will have about 12 to 15 minutes to share with you more of their background, their experience, highlight the roles in the MWSBE space, and provide their perspectives on key topics. Some of those key topics include, just what's the general landscape and some of the challenges that are facing MWSBEs; representation and inclusion, and if there's any initiatives that can help increase representation and be more inclusive in the public sector, especially with regard to decisionmaking; what are some various resources and tools that can help us grow this program, expand this program and make great impact; the future of MWSBEs in the public sector; and then any broader legal or policy implications that are before us. With some changes that have happened today, I'm sure there's some questions that people may have. So, after each panelist offers their perspectives, we'll open it up to Council for questions, and then just broad general discussion, because I do know that this Council is particularly interested in our MWSBE program and seeing what are the ways that we can expand and enhance our program. I also want to hear from the Council on things that we need to consider as staff, so that as we go forward and prepare the strategic plan, and again, our three-year roadmap, that we're taking all the input that we can receive on the frontend, especially as we go into the development of that plan, but also as we conduct our assessment. So, with that, let's get it started. Alright, so I'm going to turn it over to Mr. Lee, and he's going to kick us off.

Franklin Lee, Tydings & Rosenberg said good afternoon. It's great to be back in North Carolina. When I first got involved with the City of Charlotte and its efforts in economic inclusion and public policy, I had no gray hair, so I've earned every last one of these, particularly given the challenge that we're experiencing right now today. When I was called to Charlotte back in the early 1990s, the City's MBE program had been sued, there was no disparity study, and so the City was forced to convert into raising gender-neutral type public policy, small business program, and I was helpful in that effort. I remember working with Harvey Gantt in a number of stakeholder meetings to try to develop a commercial nondiscrimination policy. We had a number of efforts that came out of that. I think Vi Lyles was actually City Manager at the time, that's how long ago that was.

However, fast forward to the present. Well, you've got a challenge from, I think it was the Southeastern Legal Foundation back then. In 1989, there was a constitutional challenge to minority business programs that kind of shocked the whole nation back then, led by the Heritage Foundation, does that sound familiar? They are the kingmakers, once again, with this whole network of anti-DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) efforts that we're seeing across the nation today. So, it's not terribly surprising, but this effort that we're dealing with right now in dismantling any efforts at diversity, equity and inclusion, is far worse. It's almost like it's on steroids. I can tell you that it's gone beyond what happened after the Croson case. Most of the challenges after Croson were involving state and local government MBE programs. They're trying to dismantle everything at the federal level now. They're also trying to even go after private sector initiatives, Minority Supplier Development Councils, and supplier diversity programs and major corporations. Any federal contractor that has a contract with the federal government, if they have a supplier diversity program, they're going to be challenged.

Just this morning, we've seen that the federal government has actually pulled the plug on all grants and loans to state and local governments. The same mechanisms that we used throughout the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, to extend an inclusive public policy in terms of affirmative action, or what's come to be known as DEI, to extend that to the private sector. Those same pathways are now being used to challenge any efforts at inclusion. It's kind of wild to think that the word equity has somehow been demonized. Equity is a legal term that goes back to our nation's founding, and it's built into our jurisprudence. Now it's being called a dirty word, it's immoral. Inclusion, trying to include those that have been here to [inaudible] relegated along the shores of our economic mainstream as mere spectators, that's considered a dirty word. We've come a long ways, and now we're on the verge, or really on a precipice, of a return to quite frankly Jim Crow 2.0, that's what we're facing. It took a tremendous amount of courage to get over the initial hurdles of Jim Crow. I participated in a number of disparity studies across

the country where we actually talked to minority businesses in communities across this country, Durham, Charlotte, Columbia, South Carolina, and elsewhere, where we learned how overt the discrimination had been when African American contractors tried to engage in contracts with the government. Some cried during interviews and said they'll never forget what happened when they tried to submit their bids in the City of Atlanta, for example, and they watched the city employee on the other side of the counter take their bid and drop it in the trash can right in front of them.

Old racial stereotypes die very, very hard. Those programs required a lot of courage on the part of elected officials, folks like Maynard Jackson in Atlanta, who took a stand saying that that airport, the Hartsfield-Jackson Airport now in Atlanta, would not be built unless there was 30 percent black participation on that contract, and he caught hell for that, but he was intentionally inclusive, and the rest is kind of history, in terms of the firms that came out of that effort, are now some of the most well qualified, successful entrepreneurs in the country. H.J. Russell really took off and got its start as a result of that airport project in Atlanta. If you go today to our nation's mall, Washington D.C., there is an edifice there, absolutely amazing, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, which was built by a joint venture between two black contractors, one being H.J. Russell and the other being Smoot Construction out of Columbus, Ohio. The architect of that building was the Freeland Group out of North Carolina, and if you have not visited that museum, I urge you to do so. Technologically, design wise, it is astounding. We hear this mantra about, well, now we've got to get back to, what do they call it, meritocracy, but it took these firms this long to get to a point where they could get a major project, even though, for example, Herman Russell was considered one of the best contractors in the country. Still, he could not get access to capital that he should've been able to get. He could not get the bonding that he should've been able to get.

Another example of political courage, political will, to make sure that there was inclusion, came about in Atlanta in 1996 with the Olympics. Andy Young was able, because of his contacts with nations around the world, to bring the Olympics to Atlanta, a multi-billion-dollar economic opportunity. There could be no law, there could be no rule that required any minority participation in those Olympics opportunities, but he did convene a meeting of all the players, all the major players in Atlanta, said, "I can bring this to Atlanta. I have one requirement, that everybody have a seat at the table, and that every segment of our business population has a chance to participate in this mainstream." Herman Russell was awarded the contract to build the Georgia Dome Stadium; however, because he could not get equal access to bonding, he had to joint venture with a large white contractor and give up 50 percent of the profit on that project. That is the 21st Century cost that we have in discrimination, unequal access to capital.

One other example of that I will give to you, and then I will allow others to speak. How many of you are aware of this thing called the Internet? Well, contrary to some rumors, it was not created by Al Gore, but back in the early 1990s, DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency), an agency of the Department of Defense actually developed the Internet. They created and designed the Internet, and realized that it had tremendous application in commerce, and they saw the need to privatize it. Through the Department of Defense's affirmative action efforts, they were able to position an African American on the firm to be the first firm to actually assign internet protocols for websites. The name of that company was Network Solutions. It was owned by an African American named Emmit McHenry. He had a monopoly on assigning domain names for websites. That was a huge economic opportunity, and as the internet finally began to catch on, there wasn't a business in the country that could really be competitive if it didn't have a website, and you had to go through Network Solutions in order to get that domain name, an IP address assigned. When the Internet finally took off, the demand became so great that Network Solutions needed additional capital in order to expand its operations to meet the demand. They could not get any additional capital, either investment or debt capital, to do so, and as a result, that \$10 million operation had to be sold. The company that purchased Network Solution, purchased that opportunity, became a billion-dollar outfit. That too is a 21st Century cost of marketplace discrimination. So, is that equitable? Is that fair? No, but it is critically important in this day and age that we have fairness, not only in workforce, which is very,

very important, but the truth is, every time we go through one of these inflationary periods, wage earners, workers, fall further behind with each generation. I've seen it in my lifetime. The minimum wage, when I came out of high school, got my first job, was \$3.50 an hour. Fast forward to 2025, the federal minimum wage is \$7.50 an hour, it's double. Meanwhile, the two-bedroom apartment that I had when I was in law school was \$285 a month in Mount Vernon in Baltimore, that same apartment is about \$2,500, it's gone up 10-fold. The cost of gas has gone from 30 cents a gallon to over \$3 a gallon. The price of eggs, I just learned before I came here, went from 30 cents a dozen, it's like \$6 in my hometown and \$8 out in California for a dozen eggs. What happened? Did the chickens form a union and demand higher wages? The only way you can ever keep up with inflation and actually accumulate wealth, is if you own an appreciating capital asset in this economy. That's either real estate or business, and homeownership among African Americans in this country is considerably lower than the rest of the country.

Here's another troubling statistic as to where we are today. The Census Bureau has issued estimates that the average black family of four in America today has a net worth that is only one-tenth that of a white family of four in 2025. If that is the case, and as this country gets browner and browner, and as we have more and more immigrants, more and more the country becomes browner, and that wage gap gets bigger and bigger, and the standard of living goes down and down and down for working class being able to afford things that we used to be able to afford when I was in college. If we do not address this differential, this gap also in terms of ownership of business and ownership of real estate, this nation is in huge financial trouble. It's actually a matter of national security in my view. So, that's the bad news folks, that we're in a tough spot. There are definitely opponents to DEI, that are seeking to dismantle, not only with the federal government, but with state and local government too. They're going to try to attack any local government that seeks to be intentionally inclusive and to promote supplier diversity, and hold their federal funding hostage. So, you're going to be in a very difficult spot, but there are ways around this, and I'm looking forward to sharing some of those ideas with you this afternoon. There are things that we can do to follow the Nike motto, which is, Just Do It. How many of you remember Halliburton? A sole source contract for \$20 billion that somehow got awarded by the U.S. Department of Defense, to rebuild Iraq, of all places, after they blew it up.

Throughout history, we've had examples of these sorts of things, and when we have a disaster like we've had here in Asheville, and there's a need to rebuild infrastructure, there's a need to rebuild housing and communities, you have to be inclusive, intentionally inclusive, to rebuild those communities, and make sure that the residents of those communities can participate and thrive. Otherwise the communities will not survive. So, there are models that we can look at. I've got examples going all the way back to 1918 with a day labor program in a water/sewer district outside of D.C., where in law, the government set up a set-aside for contractors in the area to learn how to build modern day water and sewer systems using ductile iron pipe with heavy construction methods that didn't exist prior to that.

All of these things are lessons learned, and we can make a difference if we smartly look to indigenous businesses and partner them with our more competitive successful firms from around the state and around the region to grow their capacity, and we redirect the flow of commerce, we redirect our capital, to make investments where they need to be made to have a truly inclusive economy. Without that, we're in deep trouble.

Eulois Cleckley, CEO, Friends of the Underline said thank you, Mr. Lee. I appreciate that history lesson, and thank you for all your service in the small minority business space. So, I'm Eulois Cleckley. What's listed here on the title slide is that I'm the CEO of the Friends of the Underline. It's a new role that I've assumed over the past month or so. How many folks have heard about the Beltline in Atlanta? How many have heard about the High Line in New York? So, we're building the same thing in Miami, and I've been tasked to help lead that effort to build out 10 miles and 120 acres of a destination, essentially, for Miami that supports business, entertainment, recreation, art, culture and the like. So, exciting opportunity for me, but before that, I was actually the Director and CEO of the Department of Transportation and Public Works for Miami-Dade County,

had over 4,000 employees, was responsible for all things transportation with respect to transit, as well as public works, transportation infrastructure and the like. So, in Miami and Miami-Dade, there are 2.8 million people that we had to figure out ways to move around from a mobility standpoint, and we really focused on making sure that we leveraged what you all are doing now, which is to identify a sustainable funding source for transportation and mobility projects to actually deliver and expand transit, to make sure that you're keeping up with the demands of your general populace, as well as the growth in business and residents that you're going to experience over the next two decades. Before that, I was the Executive Director of the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure in the City and County of Denver, where we did a lot of work in the small business space. The rest of my career is kind of split between private sector, nonprofit work a little bit, and public sector. So, I've had executive positions in D.C., Houston, and a variety of different cities.

So, I'm laying all this out, because regardless of if you're working on the private or nonprofit side, or in the public sector, this challenge of ensuring that there is opportunity for all individuals, as well as businesses, just permeates regardless of what sector that you're in. I find it really interesting that we continue to have this fight. Mr. Lee's a little bit more aged and wiser than I am, but it's the same thing that persists for decades, and it's this fight against this idea that diversity is not natural. Diversity is natural. If you just go out into the nature and you see the birds and all the animals that are running around, everybody might flock and pack together, but everybody figures out a way to eat. The difference, for some reason, when it comes to human interaction, we have certain individuals that feel a need to clip the wings of the birds, having something that can be of benefit to all of your residents and businesses throughout the City of Charlotte.

So, in my previous experience as a public servant, one of the aspects we wanted to make sure that was clear to all the staff, because when you have a large organization or a large department you can have the leadership at the governmental level, but even the leadership with an executive level of department that can set goals around small business and minority business inclusion. Ultimately I typically was not the one that was interfacing directly with our contractors, or providing task orders. So, you have to figure out a way to permeate the goal, and essentially an ethos down to all of the staff to understand that it's not a mandate. It is a part of the fabric of who you are as a department. So, if you come in, especially on the public sector side, and you worked in any one of the departments I had to honor to lead, it was expected of you for you to understand the importance of equity. Equity, simply put, even though I think it was mentioned earlier that it turned into an evil word, it's about justice, and justice is about ensuring that the areas and the assets and the people and where they reside, if they need help, they receive the proper resources and attention. It's very simple. So, as an individual that's responsible for being a purveyor of the public and the taxpayer dollars, it is your responsibility to ensure that you're creating that balanced equitable landscape, and if [inaudible] people need help, you focus on those people and those assets [inaudible] specific city.

So, with that being said, one of the things that I'll just make mention of, and how to figure out a way to permeate this down through a large department and kind of change the culture, is not have people so focused on a person aspect of it. It's focused on these three things. One, which is equitable investment, equitable contracting, equitable workforce development. The Workforce Development panel is very interesting in that a lot of the same issues reside in terms of how you're to be set up to be able to support small and minority-owned businesses. So, I don't see that there's a divergence even in that workforce development conversation. Because it's really ensuring that you are creating a philosophy and a daily mission to meet those goals that you might set out as a city, or specifically within a department.

So, some of the work we did in Denver, as an example, is to one, actually create a division that was focused on community and business engagement, where every single day they came in to ensure that they're providing the proper amount of outreach to those specific businesses that may not have been aware of all the great work that was available to them within the department. When I was in Denver, we actually passed the

largest bond program, it was a billion-dollar bond program, and we made it a point with Mayor Hancock to ensure that we had a very high percentage of small and minority-owned businesses that had the opportunity to participate in that bond program. By doing so, and I think it was between 20 to 25 percent at a minimum, we expected to exceed that, and we established a very robust tracking mechanism to ensure that we're holding ourselves accountable in meeting those specific goals. It was important that we informed all of the business community of the opportunities that were available to them through the bond program, and the way in which we did that, was actually to have dedicated staff that was their daily job.

Second piece is that we really wanted to focus on capacity building, and you'll hear this a lot from a lot of our prime contractors, that they feel that they would like to meet a goal around small and minority-owned businesses that would be set on the task or their contract, but folks are just not available, and we know that that's not the case. Folks are available. You may need to take a little bit more time to perform that additional outreach, or actually participate in any other teaming type activities to meet that specific goal, but don't come back and say that there's not available businesses in this space, especially when the disparity study shows and through the research [inaudible] there is significant availability in these types of businesses that can suffice the scope that you might put out. So, the capacity building component kind of has two sides. One, you have to have a business that wants to step up and participate, but also to force the primes to ensure that we have supportive programs to help build capacity for our small businesses, and that can be done in a variety of different ways, from mentor-protégé programs and the like.

I mentioned intentional tracking, but also it bowls out into really two things, management and leadership. None of these aspects can happen without having strong managers that understand the value in setting a high goal and meeting that goal and be held accountable to it, and it doesn't happen without having the highest level of the executive leaderships that forces that accountability down the ranks. If you do not have that, especially in large organizations, something will get stuck somewhere in the pipeline. I used to always say that excuses are not reasons for why something doesn't get done. So, if you set a goal, your goal is going to be a part of your performance plan, and that ties up into the actual performance that will be shared and distributed out to Council, to the administration, and to the general public, so far as how you're meeting that specific goal. So, we're all held accountable and we're all in this. At the end of the day, if folks don't want to get onboard, that's fine, you can go find somewhere else to work, but ensuring that you set that high standard. There's not been a time that I've been in those positions where that has occurred, where folks don't step up and meet that goal, because everybody is proud, everybody is competitive, and if you stick with it and you hold folks accountable, you can eventually stem the tide and change the culture.

So, the last thing I'll leave you with is compliance as well. We would like to think that everybody wants to do the right thing, and sometimes that doesn't occur. So, as a part of any process, ensuring that there's strong compliancy protocols, whether it be a timely invoice payment, whether it be if you have the ability to separate scopes and the like, and I'm sure we can get into that a little bit as a way to provide those other opportunities for small business, but having the ability to have timely compliance and allowing the compliance process to be open where there's no fear of retaliation from the primes and the like, is extremely important as well. So, there's a carrot that exists and then there's the hammer that you need to also have as a part of this kind of life cycle of contract management and making sure that that platform that you set is going to provide one that is equitable for small and minority-owned businesses. So, I'll leave it at that and then turn it over to Marcus.

Marcus Kirkman, Business Inclusion Manager, City of Asheville said good afternoon, everyone. On behalf of our City Manager, and also our Mayor, I want to say thank you all for being here with us today. Marcus Kirkman. I serve as the Business Inclusion Manager for the City of Asheville, and I thoroughly enjoy what I do. You may have seen my very short bio. I'm retired Navy of 22 years. I retired about 12 years ago. North Carolina is my home, and I'm connected. So, I just put the uniform back on in a

different way. I've been with the City of Asheville now for three years. Just to give you some context, because I think it's really important, especially for our conversation. When I came on board, I served as the Equity and Inclusion Training Consultant for the City of Asheville. Long and short of it is, I had the opportunity to facilitate very real, open conversations, helping us to understand as an organization what diversity, equity and inclusion is. What it's not. To take a look at our policies and our practices. To institute measurable outcomes, so that we can really show that we're committed to the work that we say that we're about. Very proud of the work that we were able to do. One of the mind-blowing things that I learned, and I'm a native of North Carolina, and I did not know this, our beautiful City of Asheville, that so many across the world really come to Asheville. In 1922, Dr. Joel Noland was the City Planner. It is written these are his exact words, "Asheville is the beautiful place to come and visit. It has all of the natural attractions. Please come to Asheville." This was in 1922, "Please come to Asheville, but when you come, we have a separate place for the negroes and then we have a separate place for our white population." That was in 1922. At that time, the population of the black community, an African American community in Asheville, was 33 percent, 33 percent. A hundred and three years later, what do think that percentage is now? It's about 7.5 to 9 percent. In 103 years, that plan that was put into place, we're living that out as we speak. So, when we have a catastrophe like Helene hit, that only magnifies the challenges that were here, and we've got some incredible work to do.

So, what my office does is, we work directly with minority women-owned businesses and small businesses, and taking a look at and saying, where are these very clear disparities that are in our procurement and contracting? Like many other jurisdictions, especially across North Carolina, we conducted our most recent disparity study in 2023. It was very clear where those opportunities were. We can put a lot of words to everything that we do, I am a firm believer, especially when we talk about community. Community is really about defining who belongs and who doesn't belong. That's what community really boils down to, and it's built on authentic relationships, how we relate to people. This is how this has played out so far to this point with Helene hitting our beautiful city. So, when I stepped into the role in community economic development last year, I had already served in equity and inclusion. I learned the community. I learned the pain points of our community. I learned the challenges. I learned those areas and organizations who were doing really great belonging work, that we call community work, creating a sense of belonging for all people, and develop really great partnerships. When I stepped into the office, one of the first things I did was, I created what I call the Inspire list. Inspire stands for being an inclusive north star with strategic procurement and contracting policies that inform and repower our community through economic development. It was a list of minority women-owned businesses, small businesses in our Asheville community. No one knew the storm was coming, but two to three times a week, I would send out emails about different opportunities. There were learning opportunities. There were training opportunities. There were partnership opportunities with other jurisdictions, and we built this really close relationship.

In September 2024, Helene hits, and we're all taken off guard by that, by the magnitude of it. I was really fortunate to get a chance to serve on our Emergency Operation Planning Team with the fire department. So, I had really strong relationships with the fire department. The storm hits, we're about three weeks into it, and then we start talking about debris removal contracts. You can only imagine that we had made national news, so you have people from across the country coming in saying, "I want to be a part of that action," but we cannot forget that in 1922, the plan was already put into place th [inaudible] community was already here, you were probably going to be left behind. So, when these large contractors came in, we sat down and had some very open conversation, and I shared with them, our community that's here, it is vitality important that they are engaged in these rebuilding opportunities. Let's have a real open conversation of what that can look like, and we did that. We established the language, developed the contracts where our minority and women-owned businesses can be a part of rebuilding in all community to have a sense of belonging, because if you can't repair your own community in a storm, when can you repair it? That is a large part of the work that we are going through. Our disparity study in 2023, working with a great consulting firm, they provided us with 14 recommendations. Our team is currently

staging out those recommendations. Mind you, Helene was not on the map at the time, but a large part of the recommendations is that internal work within our departments, and that relationship building, so that we don't get so complacent to say, I've been doing business with this business for 20 years, and I have a whole list of people that I can go to and not be willing to entertain other lists. So, one of the things that has been really successful that I did for all of our project managers, for those pre-bid meetings that are held on a Thursday, I set up a one-on-one meeting with that Project Manager that Tuesday before. I want to know what the pain points are. I want to know what struggles are they having in minority and women business contracting, and they shared that with me. When we sit down and connect at this very human level, amazing things can happen.

I just want to share one major success story before we open it up. I had a young man who had a residential landscaping business. He reached out to me April of 2024. He said, "Mr. Kirkman, I'd like to learn more about how to contract with the City of Asheville." I said, "If you are hungry, I am willing to feed you, and I will show you, just like I show everyone else, how to engage with these opportunities." Any time I had a training, he was there. Any time I had an outreach event, he was there, he was present. NC-DOT (North Carolina Department of Transportation) came, I shared that information, he was present. The storm hits, he said, "Mr. Kirkman, I only have a landscaping business, but I'd love to be part of debris removal." That young man has transformed his landscaping business, with a couple of lawnmowers, to now purchasing all of the major large equipment for contracting jobs way beyond. An incredible story of what's possible when we create that sense of belonging for all people, match it with the opportunity, and have the commitment from our organizations.

Ms. Allen said thank you very much. I'm going to see if Steven has follow-up questions for our panelists. If there's any additional comments after Steven of our panelists, please share, and then we'll open it up to Council for Q&A.

Steven Coker, Business Inclusion Officer said first of all, thank you all for being here. I love hearing about your experiences. In my many conversations with our City Manager, our Mayor, and of course, our City Council, one of the things that we are all on board with is being one of the best, one of the nation's leading program. I think we have all the elements in place, but there's other things that we can do. So, the question for the panel is what prescriptive measures can a city like Charlotte put in place to become a nation's leading MWSBE program?

Mr. Lee said yes, there's I guess three different types of models that I would recommend you consider. Keep in mind that this whole economic inclusion movement is about irrigating economic deserts, wherever they are, and the panel that preceded us, the workforce development panel, also raised this issue, that if you're not planning to succeed in the future and you're not grooming your workforce to be able to take jobs that are going to be coming about in the next 10, 15 years, the same is true in a business community. So, one approach, one thing that I think is worth taking a look at is looking at the future business opportunities that are coming down the pipe, particularly in emerging new technologies. Whether that is hardening your power grid, using renewable energy sources, perhaps installing community solar gardens that maybe your low-income residents can actually have ownership interest in, creating a stream of revenue. At the same time, those workforces can be trained with livable wage sustainable jobs in installing solar panels, and new battery technology for creating microgrids as they're starting to do in Texas now. That's the lowest barriers that you would have to entry, is new industry segments that are just emerging, and that way you're not taking away anybody's slice of pie by being intentionally inclusive, you're actually growing the size of the pie. That's important, because when you do your economic impact analysis, and I'm also urging every jurisdiction, including the City of Charlotte, to amend the scope of your disparity studies to include economic impact analysis that looks at the return on your investment through these programs. What we've seen in those economic impact analyses that have been done elsewhere, is that these programs tend to pay for themselves 10-fold over time, because every business that has its capacity grown and becomes competitively viable in your marketplace,

becomes a positive source of revenue for the government, for one thing. Tax revenues from its employees, tax revenues from its sales, those things can drive and irrigate those economic deserts. When you start to do that, you reverse that negative cycle of disinvestment and make it a positive cash flow in your community, everyone wins. It's a win-win scenario. So, focus on those emerging new technologies that are beneficial and may be necessary to rebuilding your infrastructure in a 21st Century way. Make sure you position your local indigenous businesses, be they small, minority, or women owned, to be mainstream participants in those new industry segments. Then, also press to network those firms regionally, if not even nationally, with firms that have deeper pockets, that also have technical expertise, that also can help transition and diversify those businesses into these new market segments. I think that holds the greatest deal of promise for being able to irrigate those economic deserts, and create a positive benefit, not just for the government, but also for all the citizens. Also, keep in mind, that every small business, every minority, women business that you add to your marketplace, is also a perspective customer for all existing businesses. You can accelerate the velocity at which business transactions are taking place, and the entire region grows in terms of its GDP (Gross Domestic Product), that's very important to remember as well.

Then, finally I would suggest that to the extent you can use mentor-protégé programs, you can use joint venture initiatives, incentivize that kind of behavior with your more established MWBEs (Minority and Women Business Enterprise) and small businesses with those local firms. Like the example of the landscaping firm that's now using heavy construction equipment to remove debris. We've seen that at work in Florida, we've seen it work in other places, that is a positive influence that integrates the marketplace in a way that all business segments can truly be a part of a viable and robust marketplace.

Mr. Cleckley said I think those are all fantastic. I'll just piggyback on a couple of ways that you can be the best. Right now, hopefully you'll have your referendum on a ballot, and it will be passed in November 2025, to raise that dedicated funding source around transportation. I would strongly suggest immediately thereafter, after you program your projects, regardless of if it's a road project, transit project and the like, quickly establish what those small and minority-owned business requirements will be, and set those specific goals right off the bat, so it's very clear. That's another way to actually get support to actually approve the referendum, that this will allow fantastic opportunities for small businesses to, not only partner with existing primes or other businesses, but also venture into new enterprises themselves and take advantage of the opportunity moving forward.

The reason why I'm mentioning that is, in Miami, and I've lived in Miami for 4 years, and I've come to learn that there's a difference between South Florida and Florida. Did you know that? Miami-Dade County is not Florida. So, even in a state where there at a certain level, there may not be as much support for these types of programs, that doesn't mean that you cannot set goals and still achieve them. In Miami-Dade County, we have a similar type of initiative called the Smart Program, a transit expansion program. It's about \$10 billion worth of funds to expand about six corridors in Miami-Dade County. The first corridor that was being built, and some of you had the opportunity to actually come down and visit Miami and tour our Bus Rapid Transit project, which was the longest all battery electric bus operated BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) systems, I say, in the world. Our project had a goal that was set, it's a mixture of state, local and federal dollars, our goal was set at about 18 percent, to go to small, minority-owned businesses. I just checked with the staff there, we've exceeded our goal, and it's about \$66 million, out of that project, it's about a \$385 million project that went to small, minority-owned businesses. The only reason why that happened is because we were intentional, we got together to focus and make sure that we track the success of, at that time, which was a design build project. They were lagging behind, and I give the design builder credit. When we pressed them on ensuring that they were to meet their goal by any means necessary, they stepped up and they figured out a way to meet it, and they did one step further, because they want more business from the county, where they exceeded it.

So, again, it goes back to setting those high expectations, and driving that competitive value, and then ultimately the industry's going to catch up. So, I want to encourage everybody to focus in on that as you move forward, and then also to figure out ways to be innovative on how you let projects, the terminology let versus actually release RFPs (Request For Proposal) for projects. There are opportunities from a very, I would say, technical and nuanced way, to allow smaller type projects to go to pooled vendors and contractors, so they can build their own capacity. One of the things that we always heard about is that if you let a \$20 million project, a new emerging business may not be as capable to be able to go after those RFPs, so then they're either relegated to not competing for it, or getting on a team that might not support them. So, figure out innovative ways to break out those smaller contracts, create an established pool, where you have more opportunities for individuals that can still meet the scope and the schedule of what you want on a specific project, but allows just more bites of the apple and builds that capacity over time. You have the opportunity, as you develop a very robust multi-year capital expansion program, to really be innovative on how you let those specific contracts out. So, I want to encourage you to do that as well.

The last thing is mentor and protégé programs are vital to the long-term sustainability. Both my time in Denver as well as even in Miami, some of the best small, minority-owned business contractors that we have, actually came out of a mentor-protégé program. They graduated, and they ended up becoming primes on major efforts of work, and even out of that, they expanded their reach to other markets throughout the country. There's Triunity that's in Denver. Before I left, I think Adam, we had them actually be the program manager over the bond program, so a billion-dollar bond program actually was run and managed by what used to be a small business. That same business, I believe, had work in Boston as well as LA, and they continue to expand and do great work. We have something similar in Miami called BCC Engineering. Again, they came through that program, graduated out, and they are one of our most valued small businesses that we have that does a lot of program management work and design work in that space, which you always hear that there's not enough capacity in the A&E (Architectural and Engineering) or professional services side of the house. So, I would encourage you to really invest in that, figure out ways to partner with different institutions, provide those wraparound services. A lot of the successful protégé programs, the larger primes actually provided back-office support, whether it be legal or financial systems, and the like. The way in which you encourage that, again, allows some of the bigger firms to get onboard, and they will adapt, but you have to set it up for the outset, and if you do that, over time you'll be successful.

Ms. Allen said so, Mr. Kirkman, if you could just take a couple minutes to respond to Steven's question, then we'll punt to Council for questions. Thank you.

Mr. Kirkman said absolutely, I'll be really brief. I just want to echo the possibilities with active mentorship. The young man with the landscaping business that I described, he's under a mentorship program. He reached out to me three weeks ago. He said, "Mr. Kirkman," he said, "I just want to let you know that I had to hire three crews for this work," and I said, "Can we just pause for a moment and understand the significance of what you just said, because we're going through economic recovery here in Asheville, and your business is now an active part of that economic recovery, and you're creating economy for other small businesses providing opportunity." So, I just want to echo that. I would also add, Steve, really quicky to your question, about one of the ways to measure being one of the best to provide support services, I think it's incredibly important to go beyond just looking at the numbers, but allowing the minority, woman-owned businesses and small businesses to share their stories, share their successes with others. Whenever we hold a training, I encourage all of the businesses who attend send me an email, because I'm going to send out what you learned to everybody else. It becomes real to other businesses when they say, "It's not just attending, but I actually can learn something," so sharing their stories and being intentional about that.

Ms. Arnold said thank you so much. Please give our panelists a round of applause. Thank you so much for sharing such great information and insights for us.

Councilmember Mayfield said thank you. Mr. Cleckley, this question really is for you, but any of you can answer it. When you were speaking about being very focused in the partnerships with the primes, how have you all been able to maneuver around those good faith efforts? So, of course, the City of Charlotte, we've had a number of large contracts that have come through, and we have had some challenges with individuals saying that they can't find the businesses, but yet it goes through our CBI program first. CBI has identified eight percent, at some point we'll get to 20 and 30, but we identify eight percent, you come back with one percent, but you're able through the good faith efforts to still win that contract. Can you give any recommendations on how we can be stronger when, if we've already identified businesses and we've said this is our goal, which is already a low goal, at the bare minimum, there are no excuses for you not to hit this?

Mr. Cleckley said so, one of my remarks had to deal with leadership, and I think there's a term, I don't know if it was on this panel or the previous panel, the word was used, courage. I can tell you this, it requires that. It requires courageous leadership. Simply put, there has to be a clear direction, regardless of wherever the contract is coming out from, of what the expectation is. The good faith effort is very easy to use as a way to not meet the goals that are set that have been articulated clearly and reviewed via a disparity study, as well as whatever process that exists within a jurisdiction. What happens is that whoever the actual contract manager is, a lot of times it's not a director level person, they're allowed to make that individual determination on whether or not the good faith effort has been met. The part of the processes that were put in place, an organization I had a chance to run, is that if the goal was not met and a good faith effort was used as an excuse, that was not to be signed off by the project manager, that was to be signed off by the director. So, there's been instances where I've been, especially in previous roles, where there was a goal that was set, and the alleged winning contractor came back with a 0 percent goal. There's no way in the world that that is the case. So, you, Project Manager, go back and you figure out a way to figure it out. So, a lot of times it just boils down to some courageous leadership a little bit, and to help support the existing processes that you have. That's the hardened way. I'm not suggesting that's the best way to go about it, that's just the way I did it, and there might be other ways that you can move around that.

The other piece from, I would say, the soft side, is on the front end of a project, strongly encourage the outreach component and the pre-bid meetings and the like and really encourage that on a consistent basis. I truly believe that once you set an expectation, people want to meet it, but they have to be given the opportunity. So, a lot of times our primes will come back and say, "Well, I don't know who's out there," so responsibility of the city or jurisdiction to figure out ways in which that you can provide those opportunities for people to get together in a room and partner on specific types of projects. I'll wrap up the answer and just say, one of the things that we did back in Miami is that, every single year we hosted a small, minority-owned business summit in conjunction with COMTO for transportation projects. So, COMTO is a Conference of Minority Transportation Officials, and I'm sure there's a chapter here. We had it sponsored by some of the primes, and we had over 350 people show up, and what we did is for any infrastructure project, whether it be water and sewer, airport, transportation, we let everybody know what's coming up for that fiscal year, we had the small businesses in the same room with the primes, and we encouraged networking. Out of that, that allows the process, I would say, to be a little bit more aligned with meet the goal. Don't come back and just start off with a default setting, that good faith effort is all you need to do. So, those are two suggestions.

Mr. Kirkman said a really, really quick share to that. When I was speaking about meeting with the project managers before that, that's where we get the opportunity to walk through those very conversations. Secondly, I'll share, one of the things that I'm implementing right now is that when that project manager submits that project, that I actually provide them a list of those minority, women-owned businesses with NAICS (National American Industry Classification System) codes, so when we get to that point, if there's a question about, I wasn't able to find, there's a list right here where we can address the good faith efforts.

Mr. Lee said and just to quickly piggyback on that. I'm a strong proponent of using technology to make the whole good faith efforts evaluation process, to streamline it and make it more effective. I've actually advocated on pretty much every order, so I've been drafting in the last 10 to 15 years, that you have an automated centralized better registration system where you can drive the procurement opportunity, subcontract opportunities, to the primes. When they indicate they have an interest in bidding on a project, they automatically get the full detail of all of those subcontractors and the commodity codes of where they're looking for subcontractors. The second part of it is, you can quantify that objectively. I believe in giving an objective score, so that every bidder's treated the same in terms of whether they've met good faith efforts requirements or not, what's the passing score, 70 or 80 points out of 100, and you bifurcate the bidding process, so that all waiver requests for goals have to be submitted before the final bids are submitted or opened. You evaluate all the good faith efforts, waiver requests at the same time. If it turns out nine out of 10 bidders don't have a problem meeting the good faith efforts goal, the 10th firm has got quite a hurdle to overcome in demonstrating that somehow they're different. That creates a competition, unless they collude, all get together and say none of us can meet this goal, but you want to evaluate the reality or evaluate the authenticity of those waiver requests all at the same time and then determine if the goal will need to be modified or adjusted. Sometimes you do have to waive the goal, because there's not enough available firms out there willing to meet it. There's a whole lot of details that go into coming up with a goal that's weighted based on your relative availability for each commodity code that's in the overall prime contract, and whether you've got relative availability to meet it.

Councilmember Johnson said thank you for the presentation. That was a great presentation. I have one question to start. Is there a healthy industry utilization standard that we should be striving to achieve? Did I ask it the right way? Is there a healthy percentage that should be a minimum expectation for a city as large as ours?

Mr. Lee said well, the best practice, in terms of legality of these programs, is that each goal is set on a contract specific basis, and you want to have maybe a goalsetting committee that analyzes each upcoming contract, to look at what the relative availability of your small, minority, women-owned firms is for the types of goods and services required for that contract, and then set a goal accordingly. You also have a waiver process where folks can seek to get a waiver if, for whatever reason, the goal still can't be met. You do not want to have, what's called a rigid numerical quota applied to these contracts. You don't take an annual aspirational goal and just routinely apply it to every contract. That's a good way to get sued and a good way to lose your program.

Ms. Johnson said thank you for that. So, my question is also for Mr. Cleckley. I love what you said when you talked about expectations and accountability and courage. I don't know if you noticed, but this Council, the majority is a Council of color, and I think that it's up to us to really be courageous in lifting individuals and businesses up that face so much opposition, especially now. Also, as far as women, in the nation we're like a historical Council. We're led by a black Mayor and so many women of color. So, we should really be intentional. You talked about it for not meeting those goals, then it's kind of on us, but I think where we face challenges is our state law. So, Mr. Kirkman, I think you can help with that, you're in North Carolina. So, we have certain procurement laws that I think prohibit us or are barriers to meeting our goals. Can you help me there, or is there anything that you can recommend?

Mr. Kirkman said really appreciate the question. So, for context for me, how would you describe the barriers that you say you're facing with the state laws?

Ms. Johnson said so, I'm not the procurement subject matter expert, but I believe that there's certain rules for procurement. We have to take the lowest bid, or something. So, there's boundaries, and I know that that's prime maybe, and we also have the different waivers, the different exemptions. So, there's certain constraints that we're told are barriers to meeting our goals.

Mr. Kirkman said so, our current ABI, Asheville Business Inclusion, policy exemption falls under, any time there's state or federal funds involved in that, then the ABI policy does not apply. When it comes to the bids, we do operate on the lowest responsive, responsible bidder for that, responsible meaning that they have responded to all of the required documentation. Responsive meaning that they've submitted the qualifications that show that they can do the job. That is just for the bids, but as you move up to RFQs (Request for Quote), there's a higher standard of expectation that we have for experience to perform those duties, but for the bids, at the lowest level, it is the lowest responsive, responsible bidder.

Mr. Cleckley said yes, I think a lot of what we're talking about has to do with open procurement, or an open RFP process. At almost every single state level, you're going to have the contracts that get out in the street that are going to be for the lowest bid, because you're trying to get the best price, because typically it's a standard type of infrastructure project. The more opportunities you have, if they're more complex projects, which sometimes you find that in the transportation, transit space. They're more difficult and there's a broader scope. Whatever gets built, you have a certain type of design, so you're going to go through a more robust RFP process where these [inaudible] arrangements that we've been talking about will be more applicable. So, that's the difference. I'm not sure how the state operates, whether or not you're going to have more RFPs versus more kind of low-bid types of projects, but it's something to consider, again, if you're establishing a brand new program in terms of how you let those projects. because if it's just low cost, a lot of times the small businesses won't be as competitive as some of the larger primes out there.

Mr. Lee said yes, I have one more comment to add to that. The one exception to those lowest responsible bidder requirements, procurement laws, most jurisdictions, and I'm assuming the state of North Carolina has this as well, that there is an exception for that competitive process when there's public emergencies that threaten the public health and so forth. That's how, I guess, Halliburton got a \$20 billion sole source contract without any competitive bidding. I'm just saying I've seen these things happen in my lifetime. So, let's hold their feet to the fire on that.

The other thing is the RFP process, the best valued contracts as a model came out of Department of Defense many years ago, which allows you to have pilot projects, where you're trying to grow capacity locally on an experimental basis of some new emerging technology or industry segment. That's another way that you can get around those lowest responsible bidder requirements and include elements in your specifications that will actually require some level of inclusivity, and compliance with those requirements is actually a material term of your contracts when that happens.

Ms. Johnson said thank you for the information, thank you.

Councilmember Watlington said thank you all for being here. My question leans along the lines of building capacity. So, I have a couple of questions. I'm going to try to frame it and would love to hear ya'lls thoughts. So, I know that we talk a lot about contracting in the sense of construction. Like, I've got my general contractor and I've got my trades. I'm more interested on the professional services side, particular design services. You spoke a little bit about your pre-bid meetings. Way before design is ever even started, and there's a request for qualifications for architectural firms and their teams, I'd love to hear more about what that looks like. As I think about building capacity, specifically in the professional services spaces, I think about what are our opportunities to partner with venture capital firms. Because oftentimes there are potential firms, or firms that need to scale, to even be competitive in some of these environments to get on teams, but they're in need of support in that regard. So, I'd love to understand how you're partnering with venture capital firms. Then, also, what could we be doing to partner with the private sector to better incentivize their inclusion programs, because we know that companies cannot grow their entire business off of public contracts. So, that's my first question around building capacity for professional services. Then, my second question is as it relates to payments for subcontractors, particularly for a professional design. We can control our service, our payment terms, whether it's net 30, or we have our

QuickPay system that I've learned is coming out as well, but what can we do as the client on the public side to influence what that downstream payment schedule looks like, because obviously that's extremely important to the small businesses. Then, my last question will be particularly for Steven, and I want to know specifically as it relates to this year's planning, what you need from us? So, first question is about building capacity for professional services.

Mr. Kirkman said I'll start really quick, and then pass it to my colleagues, and we'll stay on the professional services. So, for the City of Asheville, professional services include construction managers at risk, surveyors, and architectural engineers. Those are the three services. So, here locally in Asheville, we don't have a lot of minority, women-owned businesses who are performing that work, and we have even fewer who are interested, because sometimes just the terms alone can be really scary, but this is what happens. I offer once a quarter, what I call, an ABI outreach. I ask them to come in. We do a business assessment to see where your business is. Are you looking to grow? Are you looking for other interests? These are the opportunities that are out there. Maybe it's time to transition to a business model that is in professional services, because you're working kind of close to it. So, really knowing what the business is, what the minority, women-owned businesses' needs and wants and pain points are, is a really key point to being able to build capacity. Then, having a clear picture, what organizations are in the community that can provide that type of support to help edify and build up those businesses if they want to engage in that work or transition into that work, that's key.

Mr. Lee said I would just add that disparity studies around the country have shown that issue of professional services problems being pretty common place. I was retained by Palm Beach County in Florida to address that issue. Their disparity study actually showed that there were six African American prequalified engineering firms during their study period, and over the course of, I think it was five years, not a single one of those five engineering firms got a dime. So, my approach to remedying that form of discrimination, quite frankly, the commissioners there said, "We can't really explain that or justify that. They just keep using the same firms over and over again." I said, "Well, let's have, number one, a better rotation system, where everybody that's prequalified gets a bite of the apple." They get an opportunity to perform and develop a track record, so that people are comfortable using them in the future. The second thing we do is, we give evaluation preference points to those firms that never had an opportunity before, and you can justify that as a narrowly tailored remedy, even if it's race and gender conscious in that kind of situation.

On the issue of venture capital growing capacity. There's been a lot of effort at trying to figure out ways to facilitate more of that, because it's very necessary. If you're going to be competitively viable in this marketplace, and you're just relying on debt capital, you're not going to be as competitive. There are some firms on Wall Street starting to recognize this. I think Goldman Sachs has had a program where they've tried to focus giving business investments in minority-owned businesses, but understand the world we're living in today. There was a case in Atlanta where there was a foundation just giving, I think, \$50,000 grants to black female-owned startups. They got sued and that program has gone away. So, we're going to have to be innovative in how we go about this, but I know that there's a way to do that. The major corporations that are trying to grow their minority suppliers, for example, pharmaceutical companies that are looking for distributors or partners that they can use across the country, they need to get investment capital into those firms to grow their capacity. Again, if you have pilot project programs to demonstrate how that's done in an effective way, you can justify that from a business standpoint, business justification. The date is going to be very, very important to being able to defend that if you get challenged in court, not on the basis of race, but on the basis of we need to strengthen our supply chain, because when the pandemic hit, we were caught with our pants down. We have to have domestic sources of supply that we can rely upon. We have to have some redundancy in our supply chain. That's going to be the new strategy I think on that.

Finally, in terms of payments and prompt payment, we've done a lot of work in terms of developing policies to monitor and enforce prompt payment laws to flow down. When

you pay the prime, and please pay your primes quickly. I've never understood why local governments take 30, 40 days or 60 days or 90 days to pay a prime, and then the sub that's at the end of that chain is waiting for his monies, they can't hold their breath that long. So, accelerate the cash. You're going to spend the money anyways, spend it quickly. I saw a program at Montgomery County Public Schools where they had construction managers on site for building their schools, and they were able to pay their invoices within 48 hours. In this day and age, any time you buy something from Amazon, it doesn't take you 30 days to pay them. Why is it taking 30 [inaudible] to pay your own businesses? If the primes are happy getting paid promptly, the subs will be happy getting paid promptly. You can enforce that by notifying the subcontractor every time you cut a check to the prime, and track that for your systems.

Mr. Cleckley said just real quick to add to that. Everything that Mr. Lee is talking about is doable. So, going backwards a little bit for prompt pay, there's actually a process where, regardless of whether or not the prime gets paid by the city, the county or the state, once that invoice is submitted and approved by the prime, the prime pays all the other sub-tier contractors. So, that's one way to do it and you bake that into the contracts with the county or with the city or the municipality.

The other piece on the rotation of professional services and getting contracts. There's another program called Equitable Distribution program. So, basically, you can set up a pool of vendors in that specific professional services category. Especially for large projects, you can have task orders to be issued, and as long as you're on that list, you're, one, guaranteed the task, because you're going right down the list, and then once you get to the bottom of the list, you start back up to the next one on the list as well. So, that creates a great way to equitably distribute task orders in a fair manner.

The last thing I'll just leave you with is that, on the professional services side, a lot of times you'll find that a lot of folks get pigeonholed into one corner, and professional services means outreach, community engagement. So, go out and do a meeting, and we'll give you your five percent of our contract, and you're helping them meet our small business goal. I would encourage you to not allow that to be the baseline, because that's why the comment was made, the same people keep getting the same work. When you start getting out of kind of just outreach types of tasks and activities, you need to figure out a way to get other [inaudible] involved in other categories, such as A&E and the like, and there's a way to do it. Another example of how this worked, again going back to Denver, when we first started we got a disparity study, we were woefully behind. I think when we started, we had 11 percent for professional services, our goal was around 17 percent. During that time I was there, we got a new disparity study. The goal came out as around 17 to 18 percent. Then, within a year, we met this 18 percent, because we were intentional with it. So, I keep going back to the fact that all this stuff is doable. You just got to focus in on it, and there's tools out there, you just figure out which one you want to package up and just hold everybody accountable to it.

Mr. Lee said one last point on this prompt payment thing I forgot to mention. If you pay your primes quickly, you will save money to your taxpayers. The example that I was giving of this public school system, that they hired their own on-site project managers and could process invoices in 48 hours. They cut their construction's school cost by 20 percent. Why? Because you don't have to pay the bank to finance the prime to do the job and the subs also. They love you. They want to do work for you more, and they will sharpen their pencil to get more work from you. If you're going to spend the money anyways, spend it quickly and save money.

Mr. Coker said Dr. Watlington, appreciate the question. I'll simply say just continue to keep your eyes on the ball, which you guys do, continue to make us a priority, recognizing that a lot of the issues related to MWSBE changes with the wind, but it remains a focal point that we are aspiring to be the best, and any support that we can get from City Council is always welcome. Monica talked about February 28, 2025. We're going to have our strategic session that takes a lot of the findings that we've learned here today, as well as what we've heard from you over the past, I would say, 12 months. We're going to integrate all of that into a pot, and come out with that recipe to

create something much stronger, but we'll share that with you. Again, we appreciate the consistent engagement and it becoming more and more a priority.

Councilmember Mitchell said so, thank you, gentlemen, for sharing your knowledge and best practices with us. Franklin, I've got to give you a special shoutout. Because of your leadership and your advice, we were able to start our new program in 2017. So, thank you for always being a phone call away to help Charlotte. So, I just have three quick questions, if I may. Franklin, I'm going to start with you. We have had a lot of discussion about different construction methods, single, prime, design build and CM (Construction Manager) at risk. From your knowledge, which of those construction methods yields the best participation?

Mr. Lee said where there's political will to implement your program, clearly the CM at risk is probably the best. Design build can be if you've got good availability of A&E firms as well that can compete for that work, and you use an RFP process for both design build and for CM at risk. The old lowest responsible bidder thing can work, but it historically has not worked as well, I would say.

Mr. Mitchell said okay. Let me give staff a shoutout, City Manager. It's Teresa Smith, Brent Cagle or Steven Coker. Steven, I see you here. Is Brent here? Is Teresa here? Okay, she's in the very back. So, Franklin to your point, these three individuals created a quick payment pilot program for the City of Charlotte. We realized cash flow is a problem for our minorities, and so we're doing a 15 QuickPay pilot program, and I have to thank Teresa, our CFO, and Brent Cagle and Steven Coker, for putting our heads together and say, how can we do this? So, can we give them a hand. Thank you.

To my HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) brother. So, you're talking about the referendum and your transit, and I have to give Councilmember Mayfield a lot of credit. When we talk about our transmobility, she's very passionate about how do we include participation? So, you have talked about it, but can you share a little bit more about your plan, how you were successful, as we're talking about using transit also for more mobility and inclusion?

Mr. Cleckley said sure. Frankly, what we had to do is really step back for a minute. Both my times in Denver, as well as in Miami-Dade, and specifically in Miami-Dade, we had a referendum that was on the books for 20 years, and we didn't move one project. There was, I would say, a lot of headwinds with regard to that, but we stepped back and said, okay, we need to set this up as a program. Even how we named the initiative was wrong, because it was called the Smart Plan, which came out of our Transportation Planning organization, and they got everybody excited about it, but you've got to go implement this. So, when we changed it from a plan to a program, it started to really deploy some sound project management principles to get it done, and part of that was to embed that actually into our entire capital program, where we then said, okay, based off of what we know the capacity and the availability of small minority-owned businesses are, what percent do we need to apply to the overall program? Then, we backed in and actually developed a five-year plan. We were very clear. We had the opportunity to spend \$4.1 billion for transit in the next five years. We had \$600 million around road resurfacing, restoration projects, our entirety of our capital program. After the analysis, they came out and said, hey, we can get to 25 percent as a goal for this program over the next five years. We set that. We organized ourselves. We documented it, and we started to engage the industry around that. I can tell you, it goes a long way, because certainty in the business world it's extremely important. So, when you set that goal and you clearly articulate what projects you are planning to move forward with by a fiscal year, that are actually already programmed over multiple years, it makes it easier in the future for a lot of primes to be able to actually partner with subcontractors and the like, because they know what is coming out of a specific department. So, I think, again, you have a fantastic opportunity to set that up correctly from the outset, set those metrics up, and then as you're setting it up, having those conversations with the business community, so you're setting a goal that's realistic. That's how we were able to do it in Miami, and hopefully it'll stay there as we move forward.

Mr. Mitchell said thank you. Mr. Kirkman, I know the City of Asheville, and I've been fortunate enough to attend some of your outreach meetings. So, thank you for being totally transparent about upcoming projects in the City of Asheville and encouraging more participation. Franklin, I do have one legal question for you, though. We have had this discussion about Charlotte First for some time, and there always I think has been some question about the legality of trying to implement such a program like the Charlotte First. Can you share your experience across the country, what you have seen about a successful model of making sure your local minority firms are a priority?

Mr. Lee said yes, and I preface my remarks in response to your question by saying, these are strange times we're living in, and legal precedence are subject to change, but up until now, local preference programs have been upheld in every constitutional challenge against them. The key there is, you can't interfere with Commerce, their Dormant Commerce Clause is the issue. You cannot preclude people from competing in your market, because they're not from there, but you can set up a situation where local firms have more of an opportunity to compete perhaps than others. That seems to be the current status of the law. Now, there's some policy things you may want to consider as well. Separate and apart from the legal stuff, I caution you not to be too parochial and just making sure you take care of only your local firms. I would rather see you encourage in collaboration between your local firms and firms in Asheville, for example, build capacity that way. Encourage those kinds of linkages and partnership, because quite frankly, if everybody's playing in their own little sandbox, they're not going to grow very much, because what's going to happen is the neighboring jurisdiction's going to do the same thing. Well, if my folks can't play in your sandbox, then your folks can't play in ours, and who does that help? So, think about that in terms of policy. I'm kind of a free competition, fair competition guy, because I came out of the Federal Trade Commission doing anti-trust work in my early years, and I've learned that competitive viability means you've got to be able to compete globally, not just locally, and that's what we need, to keep our eyes on that prize.

Mr. Mitchell said thank you, sir. Thank you.

Councilmember Graham said thank you for this distinguished panel, and Franklin, thank you for your leadership on this issue. Franklin and I go back when I served as the Executive Director for the Carolinas Minority Supplier Development Council, and then subsequently Vice President for Minority Business Development for Bank of America. So, we've done a lot of work, and certainly we worked in the early 1990s when the City was sued by the Southeastern Legal Foundation. You made a number of recommendations back then that I took heart and implemented. So, thank you for continuing to work with the City of Charlotte and providing the type of advice throughout the country for those who support the utilization of minority firms.

I guess my comment is for Steve, and then I'll ask a question to Franklin. One is that, I hope that when you have your planning meeting on February 28, 2025, that you include legal there, so we can make sure that we safeguard the program from current events that's surrounding it. So, I would really hope that our legal department is in those meetings as well to make sure that we're dotting I's and crossing T's, and we're doing things the right way, so that if we are ever challenged, both from a federal perspective or an outside group, that we're prepared to face the challenge.

Then, secondly, Franklin, is there any recommendations you can give us, while we're on that topic, in terms of how do we safeguard the program based on what we're seeing and hearing, both from within government and outside of government?

Mr. Lee said yes. I think a lot of the pushback that we're seeing on DEI in general, is just a blatant pure power play, political power play, in a lot of ways. We know what the legal standards are, what you have to do to defend it, and quite frankly, Charlotte's been doing an excellent job at following that guidance. I'm happy to work for Charlotte, because you're one of the clients that would listen to me.

Mr. Graham said and we had to take a bitter pill years ago.

Mr. Lee said yes. So, part of what you have to do to kind of protect this intentional effort at economic inclusion, is to tell the story in terms of economics. What's the business case for what you're doing in addition? Because when your citizens realize, and the people that you serve realize, that their marketplace is growing, that the tax burden on each one of your citizens is reduced, because you have more businesses in your marketplace than you had before, their revenues are increasing, they're growing regionally, then your program will pay for itself. You'll be able to actually justify, not only investing in administration of the program, making it more effective, because you can demonstrate you're including everyone, all segments of your population have economic opportunity and are participating, and you'll be able to demonstrate that you can't afford not to, quite frankly. A number of cities like my hometown of Baltimore, we've got structural budget deficits, where you've got a dwindling population, all the monies fleeing going outside the city, the only way to reverse that negative cycle, is to grow your local indigenous businesses. So, that's part of the answer, strengthening your small business program, so that you can actually set aside contracts for small businesses doing pilot projects, doing demonstration projects, where you can simply position firms to take advantage of emerging opportunities and emerging sectors of the economy. That is legal, and it's been done at every level of government. So, if they push back and say you can't do that anymore, then they've got to explain Halliburton to me, they've got to explain a whole bunch of set asides going all the way back to the telecom industry and utilities and everything else. So, we in the civil rights community, are keeping a very close eye to see if we're going to be treated disparately on the basis of race in this day and age. That's how I think that you have to protect. It's a combination of messaging, policy, and also holding feet to the fire in terms of equal treatment.

Mr. Graham said thank you.

Ms. Arnold said thank you. Are there any other questions? Very good. Thank you so much for adding to the riches of this day. It has been an amazing discussion, and I think we have a lot to carry to move forward with as we have with all the other discussions that we've had today. So, while we transition for Ed to come up, we will take a 60-second standing break, how about that?

The meeting was recessed at 3:36 p.m. and reconvened at 3:51 p.m.

Ed McKinney, Strategic Mobility said it's been a big day. We started today talking about mobility. We did deep dives on workforce development. We just finished a deep dive on small, minority business development, and really the theme today has been about sort of connecting dots of all of our major policy initiatives. I think Mr. Driggs kind of teed it up for us this morning with a question about, how do we connect all of these things together? So, not just the three topics we talked about this morning, but there are lots of other initiatives that we're working on, and we thought we might want to spend the next 30, 45 minutes just having a discussion about the topics we talked today, and all the other initiatives that we're working on, and all the ways that we are doing some great ways to connect them, but certainly opportunities to do that more stronger and in new ways as we move forward.

So, as you probably have seen, I've asked a number of our leaders in different initiatives, to kind of sneak up and sit at the table. So, we've got Brent here to talk about transit. We've got Monica Holmes, Planning, Corridors of Opportunity, TOD (Transit Oriented Development), all sorts of things; Danielle; Sarah from Sustainability; Rebecca for Housing; Tracy and maybe Alyson, if they're around. Alyson can come up and be for Planning and Development. So, what we want to do is sort of facilitate a conversation, begin to talk about some of the things that we're doing, and sort of make that connection between the investments we're making, certainly in mobility, workforce development, small, minority business development, and just think about how we move those things together in a coordinated way. We've asked Adam Phipps. I think all of you have met Adam. He was with us last year at the retreat. He has spent the last year doing a lot of work with our team. All the work that you saw this morning on mobility was a large reflection of his work with our strategic investment team. So, he's done a deep

dive. He's helped us to think in very different ways. So, a lot of things, the success we've had that I shared with you, is in many ways a reflection of his work with our team. He has been consulting, but previous to that, he followed Eulois in Denver. So, he was the CEO of the Transportation and Infrastructure Department in Denver, so he has a unique perspective on all the things that we're doing. He understands the relationship between big infrastructure development, city priorities across all things, housing, sustainability, workforce development, all the goals that we're facing. So, we thought it'd be a great opportunity to have Adam help us connect some of those dots. He's going to sort of maybe try to get this conversation going, and maybe we can spend the next 30, 45 minutes, and just see if we can have a good vibrant discussion about how all this stuff connects for us.

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ITEM NO. 5: SMALL GROUP BREAKOUTS: HOW DO OUR PRIORITIES CONNECT

Adam Phipps, Facilitator said thank you, Ed, and good afternoon, everybody. It's good to see all of you. Council, I know it's been a long day, but this is simply an opportunity for you all to connect the dots. I think you couldn't have programmed today any better if you wanted to. The nexus between trying to get a referendum, and Mayor Cornett walking us through the effort and the intentionality around that. We talked about workforce, and the intentionality that's required around that, and then just saw an incredible panel here on MWSBE participation, and the intentionality there. So, really what my goal is, is how do we create intentionality around all of these initiatives, so that they're benefitting the city as a whole collectively?

Then second, I also want to get some feedback. Are we moving in the right direction? Does a policy, that you guys talked about wanting to take a deeper role in with City of Charlotte, align with these initiatives you heard about today? Are there gaps? Are there areas that we need to further explore? I've got a few topics, but really this can go the direction you want it to. So, I'm going to actually put Monica on the spot first, and I want to talk a little bit about Corridors of Opportunities. Councilmember Driggs, you talked about how do these all connect, during the mobility session. Ed just made mention of that, and you specifically called out the Corridors of Opportunity. So, Monica, I'm going to hand the mic to you. If you can kind of walk through a little bit of how that transition occurred, and how these three initiatives we talked about today support that work, it'd be great.

Monica Holmes, Planning, Design & Development said I was listening this morning as you were talking about the strategic investment areas, and how do we align housing and economic development and workforce development and jobs around our transportation investments. As I was listening to you talk, I was like, I think that one of the things that really the pilot of corridors has taught us, is how to cross-collaborate and align our investments in a specific geography, so that we're leveraging both infrastructure investments and housing and programmatic things like opportunity hubs across the departments, so that we have staff to sit in economic development, housing, planning and transportation, looking holistically at a community and at a place, and how those all work together in an additive way. So, while corridors has not been City wide, I think it provides an amazing template for that team approach, looking into the future with [inaudible] and where they could go, as to how we could expand that and use that model in other spaces, basically. So, that was just something I picked up on and thought it really related to kind of where your comments were.

Mr. Phipps said thank you, Monica. Any questions for Monica on that connection to Corridors of Opportunity? Alright, let's keep moving. If you don't mind, a quick show of hands, who on Council had the opportunity to go on the Munich trip? I might see a majority, I think I saw six hands. I'm going to assume there was a 7th that was shy. So, Council members, I want to put you a little bit on the spot here. In that trip to Munich, I know that there's a handful of things that you saw around land use, transit, affordability, and workforce development was a topic there as well. Was there anything that you had the opportunity to see in Munich that you didn't see represented in either of the

discussions, or any of the three discussions today, that you think is something we need to add to these city initiatives moving forward?

Councilmember Driggs said that's a tough question, because I saw a lot of things in Munich that made me grateful for what we're doing. We did a walking tour of a housing development that had been created on a 75-acre campus that was a military facility during the war. I was trying to clarify in my mind how the principles that we use had been applied there, and the truth was, they hadn't, and so there didn't seem to be much intentionality about who was living there, or they didn't explain how it was funded. So, they just put public money in it, and you couldn't tell exactly how they were assessing the value of it. They told us that a staggering number of residential units in Munich are rented. It's a completely different economic culture from ours, and it's not a place that I think we want to go. So, I don't mean to be negative. I lived in Germany for a long time. I've got a lot of German friends, but trying to change it the other way around, what did we see that we could learn from, they have a very well-developed infrastructure of bike sharing and car sharing, and they create parking facilities and things like that to support those. So, I think that's a constructive thing that we could think about in Charlotte. Their city government, to me, looked unwieldy. They had something like 80 members of their City Council, and talking to some of the bureaucrats, they were frustrated. I think we have a much more dynamic process here and we're more compact. So, there were some interesting things to observe in Munich, but I came back feeling very good about us, frankly.

Councilmember Anderson said so, Driggs actually took one of my comments that I was going to make around the transportation, because I haven't seen that in our transportation plan. I know sometimes we talk about multi-modal hubs and things of that nature, but what we saw in Munich was, there's a subset of the population, a significant subset, that they don't own cars, and they don't desire necessarily to own cars. So, that creates some opportunity to do a couple of things, car sharing, bike sharing, small vehicle access around certain areas, and then carving out public parking spaces on the streets to encourage that. Then, also the thoughtfulness around some of the housing that substantiates that. I can tell you last week, I was out in NoDa, and was hearing from several business owners around the fact that we've approved three buildings in that community that don't have parking and they are "sustainable buildings." The reality is, these residents do have cars, and there's no real penalty for them not having cars, and so that bleeds out into the streets, because there's literally no parking in these three buildings, and then it has a ripple effect on the businesses. We saw the inverse in Munich, which was some of those developments that were purporting car shares and removing parking spaces from the actual development. They built in car sharing and other multi-modal sharing within those sites or very near those sites. So, it's just something to think about as some of our priorities compete. We want to be a sustainable city, of course. We want to have non-vehicular ways to move around the city and get to work, but how do we support that and undergird that with other things that we stand up?

Mr. Phipps said yes, I think that connection between kind of a regulatory environment, as we look at parking minimums with housing redevelopment and affordable housing, that connection to mobility hubs, and I know Ed's in the room somewhere, right there in the back, that's included in all of those 22 strategic investment areas that you saw in the presentation this morning, but I think some further development of that is certainly something that's warranted. So, great comments, thank you.

Councilmember Mayfield said so one of the locations we're talking about is [inaudible] and their co-op. So, we had an opportunity to go out the day before to do I guess a little deeper dive in it. I have a challenge with the idea of the parking minimums, because the reality is, the average home is 2½ cars, yet, what they were able to do is, when they built underground, when you went into that garage, that garage was both for that vehicle as well as for that bicycle. The way we look at bike racks is very different versus the stacking that they have, which is much efficient, and you see them all over the city. Even when we think about the rideshare program, it's the same with the bicycles. So, for me, when we're looking at new development and we're looking at innovation around

workforce housing, it makes more sense to me to put more energy around a much more sustainable biking system, than for EV (Electric Vehicles) vehicles, because there's a very specific person with a certain level of access financially that's going to purchase that EV vehicle. That's a cute idea to have an EV station, yet, I would like for us to look at what we brought back, how can we better utilize wider streets when we are doing infill building? What you saw regarding that walkability, bikeability, was designated streets, but also the ability and very clear designation where the walker/rider had priority over that vehicle, the way the lighting system was set up to give people the opportunity to move through versus this idea of infill and parking restrictions, being more realistic with who we are until we truly build out our public transportation system, so that you're not spending hours. If it takes me 15 minutes in my vehicle, but it's going to take me an hour and a half on public transportation, I'm going to hop in my vehicle and go where I need to go. Imagine, even if I did a rideshare, or if I had the ability to bike or drive and bike, having a designated location for my bicycle to go versus what we use here with the little racks that can hold three or four bikes, looking at how we can utilize that. I don't think, necessarily, we're ready for co-ops just yet. Here in Asheville, they already had co-ops. Unfortunately, Helene came through, and I was looking at that model probably back in 2019, but there are some benefits regarding how they respect the environment, and how we can implement some of those, but those will be the two for me. Even when we're looking at parking underground for housing, making sure that it is accessible both for cyclists, as well as vehicles, and having designated parking sections for them.

Mr. Phipps said thank you. Anything else to add?

Mr. Driggs said on reflection, I've got a couple more. They have three different rail systems. There's a streetcar, a surface rail and a subway system. That they can do, because their population density is about four times ours, so it's not directly comparable. Interesting to note, by the way, that one of the streetcars broke down while we were riding on it, and we had an accident in two taxis. The other thing I would mention is that large pedestrian area, and I'm curious to know what we're going to do about walkability in our planning, Uptown walkability, but also the sidewalks. I mean, we have underinvested in sidewalks, and certainly as you get further out, like in my district, you can't walk without being on the same surface that is being traveled by cars, and that's not much of an incentive, again bike ability as well, those are prominent features, but I'm looking forward to finding out more about where the investment will occur.

I guess the last thing I would mention is safety. So, they were very proud of the fact you can walk around in Central Munich at night at any hour and not be nervous, and we're in a difficult spot there. How real it is, I don't know, but there's certainly a feeling I think that being in Charlotte Uptown at night can be risky.

Mr. Phipps said great, thank you. Council members, anything else to add, as we kind of reflect on the Munich trip relative to what we heard today? Monica, let me ask you this question. It's my understanding that you're leading an update to the small area plans right now, is that correct? So, in the conversation that we just heard around both, kind of the mobility hubs, kind of that nexus to land use and transportation, is the most significant one, in my opinion. Do you feel as though that effort you're working on in the small area plans aligns with what you saw in Ed's presentation on land use, as well as kind of the broader conversation with workforce development and minority, women and small business enterprise opportunity advancement?

Ms. Holmes said yes. So, our team in planning that's leading the community area planning updates or plans, there's 14 of them, are really closely coordinated with the mobility team and the [inaudible] team. So, you have a lot of the same people working jointly on engagement and how we tie those documents together, so that they are not dependent on each other, but that they relate to each other, so that a community has predicability around what the outcomes will be, knowing that not everything can be predictable, because you have new development that comes in and sometimes things don't happen necessarily in the order in which you originally plan them. So, I do think that it's coordinated, but I mean the reality too is, we're a high-growth city that is constantly changing and growing. So, you can have the best plan in place, and what

we're trying to do is create that framework and know that it's providing policy direction and guidance for us to be able to make decisions when something might come in the door that isn't outlined in that plan, and we know that that's happened time and time again. So, I think that walking that fine line is really important between the predictability and then being nimble and giving enough guidance when something unexpected comes.

Mr. Phipps said thank you, Monica. That was twice I put you on the spot, so I appreciate that. Let me do the same now to Rebecca. From an affordable housing standpoint, with what you just heard from the Council members and what you've heard throughout the day today, any thoughts that you'd like to add to the conversation?

Rebecca Hefner, HNS Director said sure, thank you. I am Rebecca Hefner. I'm the Director of Housing and Neighborhood Services. One of the things that really struck me, I heard this yesterday and then again today, the mobility plan is foundational to economic opportunity in Charlotte. We're not just selling a mobility plan, we're selling an economic opportunity, because it's not just even an affordable home and attainable job and a way to get around, we're also looking at affordable housing, attainable jobs, and the services and resources that our residents need to thrive, and how do you connect all of those parts and pieces. So, our Council, as part of their affordable housing funding policy last fall, created some priorities within that funding policy, that do connect a lot of these dots. One of them is the requirement to partner to provide resident services, so to create a closer connection between those housing and services. Location priorities are included, so access to transportation and access to good jobs are already included in your housing locational score. Then just think about all of the services that were mentioned whether it's childcare or healthcare or access to jobs. The mobility plan is really the key to making every site in Charlotte a good site for affordable housing. So, you think about, we want to put affordable housing in a place where everyone has access to opportunity. Well, with the mobility plan, you expand how many sites are great sites for affordable housing, because they already have that access.

Mr. Phipps said perfect. Thank you, Rebecca. Sarah, I'm going to send the same question in your direction. One thing I do want to note is that, although we haven't had a dedicated portion of the agenda for sustainability, it's been a theme throughout all of the topics today, from a sustainable workforce, to how do we sustainably grow our disadvantaged businesses? How do we have a transportation network that is sustainable? What would you like to add from a sustainability standpoint with the conversation today?

Sarah Hazel, Chief Sustainability and Resiliency Officer said sure. Sarah Hazel, Chief Sustainability and Resiliency Officer. Some of the things that I think really struck me throughout the conversation in the last couple days is how a lot of Council's plans seem to be kind of aligning and coming together at the same time. One of those is the Strategy Energy Action Plan, which we're currently doing an update right now, coming before the TPD (Transportation, Planning and Development) Committee. What we know, and what continues to be true is that one of the largest sectors where emissions come from that contribute to climate, which disproportionately impact our most vulnerable populations in our BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities, is transportation. So, creating more opportunities to get out of single occupancy vehicles is absolutely essential, not only to our impact in addressing climate, and then the disproportionate impact that has on people, it also just provides cleaner air. So, think about sitting in traffic with a variety of people driving alone and the impact that that has on the air quality of people who live in and around those areas. So, while we're talking about mobility, we're also talking about making efforts towards our Strategic Energy Action Plan, and our commitment to a healthier, more resilient community, where everybody can live in a place where they can breathe clean air. So, that really struck me.

Then, I guess the other thing, from sort of an alignment standpoint, I really liked what Ed described with sort of, it's not just a sidewalk, it's a sidewalk near a bus stop, and then the Mayor talked about a bus shelter. Well, one of the things that's new in your Strategic

Energy Action Plan update, is a look at our climate risks, and the risk that most Charlotteans who participated in our survey, and from the data and science, is heat. So, the difference between walking on a sidewalk and standing under a shelter or standing on a sidewalk with no shelter, and then add on the work that Tim and Alyson and Monica's teams are doing around tree canopy, and imagine now walking on a sidewalk with shade to a shelter, and the different experience you'll have in the summertime. So, I see how all of these kinds of pieces really do align, and while we didn't really talk about sustainability, that's all completely embedded in kind of the bigger picture.

Mr. Phipps said thank you, Sarah. Council members, any thoughts or comments based on those responses?

Mr. Driggs said sorry, this is my committee. So, I wanted to mention while I think of it by the way, I'm having a town hall on Saturday morning, and area planning and mobility are going to be a couple of topics. If you want to see how that plays to a live audience, maybe not the same as all of your audiences, but still, you're welcome to come. What goes through my mind when I think about this is the Blue Line. So, we invested a couple of billion dollars, and we put the Blue Line in, and I think it's really good for us to go back and ask ourselves, did we accomplish everything that we wanted with that? Clearly, it's been a major driver of investment and development. Has it offered the benefits to lower income people that we wanted, that we hoped for, or did it turn out that it was really just a foundation for a whole bunch of South End development? If we think about that, what are the possibilities to do things differently? I mean, there is such a thing as a TIF (Tax Increment Financing), for example, which is basically an incremental tax on people benefiting from the line, because the way it worked the first time, there were huge gains realized by private sector people while the entire population was paying for the line. So, can we align the benefits a little more closely with the costs?

Then, the safety issues, are our lighting decisions being informed by those safety criteria? Yes, they are, but I'm just saying. So, that to me, is this melting pot, and every time you move something here, you're also moving something here, and it's complicated to integrate all of that.

The last comment, as we go and finalize the plan, because Tariq had a point. This is not yet a plan. This is a plan process, it's advanced, and it's a big plus for us that we have it, but it's not a plan yet, and as you get down to the plan, and now you're saying, this is going to happen here, there are going to be winners and losers. It's going to get a little bit emotional and political. Same thing with the plan that's being developed for the rail and bus, we've already seen an example of that. So, I'm just interested, how are we going to navigate and achieve the best overall outcome in the face of what are likely to be parochial interests?

Mr. Phipps said Council member, I appreciate that, because as we get into the more granular aspects of all of these initiatives that we talked about today, not only is there an interrelationship, but in many cases there's interdependencies. So, we may have an impact in one direction that we didn't anticipate as a result of movement in one. I think that's something important for us to keep in mind for sure.

Councilmember Bokhari said I want to disagree with something Rebecca just said, but it's such a nuanced little thing in a positive sense, but it's something that I think is a really powerful thing to remember as we're trying to figure out how to attack these massive issues and problems and opportunities that are in front of us. This is my eighth Council retreat. It's amazing to say that. I'm so proud. The first one, I remember commenting and trying to champion around the difference between a vertical and a horizontal government, kind of approach to outcomes, not silos of, we're going to do affordable housing, we're going to do transportation, but rather what are the major outcomes we're trying to achieve? This goes back to what Rebecca said of transportation and mobility is foundational to upward mobility. The premise is fine, but I think the nuance is, when you pick something that's horizontal for the outcome, that crosses all the government departments, that crosses all the initiatives and the investments, like upward mobility, it is important to decide what the foundational

element is. In my opinion, upward mobility, there's nothing more foundational to that than the workforce development conversation, that the plan that Danielle is bringing forth, and all of those things. So, that is the tactical piece, and that plan will have nuances to it of, well, this stuff happens remotely, and this stuff happens in this part of town designed around the industries that are there, and so on and so forth. That's why, if upward mobility is your desired outcome, that has to be the foundation. It's the most direct touch point to it, and then you start overlaying the transportation and the economic job recruitments, and all the other things, because you can't do all those things at once, and if you throw out transportation, and once that's solved that's going to be good for it, you didn't get to prioritize around the key initiatives of workforce development. So, I'll bring us back to that first retreat's comments, which is the difference between vertical and horizontal, and falling into the trap claiming, well, because we do this thing in a silo, it is the most important thing to it. It very well may end up being in the end, but we have to prioritize our actions. So, I really encourage, Mr. Manager, all of us, to go back and decide what the stack of things we're going to do pointed at specific horizontal outcomes are, because it would change how we prioritize and how we do them.

Mr. Phipps said thank you, Councilman. You're really making city buildings sound complex, and I'm not sure I like that, but I think we all can recognize that's the reality.

Ms. Anderson said we have a pretty clear picture. We can debate as to whether or not this is a plan, but it's a clear picture as it relates to a map across the entire City, district by district, of where we need to invest. Conversely for transportation we also have, again, various snapshots where we can overlay a City map of where new lines or new potential bus line investment would go. So, we could directionally have a good snapshot of how transportation would grow in the City. I feel the same a little bit about our jobs, our jobs centers. We know where there are. We also know where some of our job deserts are. We know the far east is a job desert, and we know that's correlated to access to transportation, economic development, etc. One of the things that I think would help inform how to be more directive around workforce development and other things is having the same view of our housing stock. I'll just use District One, for example. If we had a view of housing stock of District One, with the work you're doing, Monica, around neighborhood characteristics, single-family neighborhoods, multi-family, etc., I think that would give us, at least from a district perspective and then wholistically, additively a municipal perspective around where our largest communities are, what are the incomes tied to those communities, are there job deserts, is it really viable to create 10-minute neighborhoods, and connecting that with public transportation. I think that's just one piece of the view, if you could overlay, superimposed map by map our priorities around the City of Charlotte, I think that would give us a good picture of how we could be more directive.

Mr. Phipps said great, thank you, and I saw Monica writing furiously, so I think it's on the action item list.

Councilmember Graham said yes, I concur. Over the last couple of days, the things that I think that are really important to me, and I think is also important for the residents, is the topics that we've kind of talked about consistently over the last year, workforce development, and we talked about that. Generally, over the last years, we've been kind of, not focused on, but the spotlight has been on, some large economic development projects, and so hopefully this will give us the time to really drill down and talk about what I think are the blocking and tackling of economic development, workforce development, small business utilization, apprenticeships, along these transit lines that we're trying to build. So, I think that's really important.

The mobility and transportation aspect of what we're doing is really, all of it from my perspective, thrown in a transportation bucket, whether it's our airport, whether it's the roads that we're trying to construct and build, trains and buses. I mean, all that's really important. It has to kind of connect to the workforce, and then our housing components. It's almost like a triangle, as I see it, they all kind of connect there. Something that we didn't talk about, but I think covers all of that, is a lens of public safety that kind of

touches each and every one of these, that triangle that I talked about. So, I hope that we would continue to have a clear picture of how we want to lay this out. I hope that there's a way for us to do it in a simplistic way, and we're dealing with very complicated topics. The devil's always in the details of what we're doing. So, I support mobility. I support workforce development. I support housing. Certainly, I support public safety. It's the details of that, and making sure that as we try to build this thing, that we are focused on, not only the big picture, the outcomes that we're looking at, but the steps along the way, to ensure that we don't leave anybody behind, and that, as we said earlier, someone said it about the Council, but it's also about our residents as well, we're only strong as our weakest link. The link that we build between housing, workforce and mobility keeps us all together. So, as we do this, I hope we do it in a way where it's the KISS (Keep it Simple, Stupid) principle, understanding that it's really, really complicated details that we're trying to put together, especially on the mobility side, where we will be giving up a lot of authority in terms of how things are laid out, priorities, etc., that I think is going to be really important.

Mr. Phipps said thank you Councilman.

Councilmember Johnson said I want to piggyback off what Mayor Pro Tem said. It sounded to me what she was referring to is the infrastructure report. We had an infrastructure meeting back in 2022, and Councilmember Bokhari and I championed that, and we've been asking for that type of report. When you mentioned the overlays, it was almost verbatim, I can hear you saying that, the overlays of certain areas, so that we can understand the cumulative impact and the large macro picture of all of the growth in Charlotte. So, I would just ask for that again, that's what we're asking for, and I think that this is a perfect time, especially if you want us to be a proponent, or we're expected to be proponents, and educate the public on the one cent sales tax. We should be able to say where the growth is, and the current status of what the City looks like. So, I'd just like to ask again for that infrastructure report, that's what we're asking for, not the monthly update, but actual tangible document, this is what the City looks like, this is the growth over the last X number of years, these are areas with the job deserts, transportation, safety, and all of that. So, we would like to see that. So, thank you Mayor Pro Tem, for bringing that up. Thank you.

Mr. Phipps said thank you. Let me pivot here. I've got about five more minutes before they take the microphone out of my hand, and there's one thing I want to talk about that we haven't really had the chance to really dive deep into, which is Ed put up on the screen this morning \$5.7 billion over the next 30 years of capital investments. Councilman Driggs, you had mentioned as a reminder to everyone, that that is 40 percent of this potential referendum, and so there's going to be a lot of dollars in the market. We also shared, and I think I heard a comment from Council during the last session, that maybe our MWBE goals aren't exactly what we would say is what good looks like in the industry right now. I think I heard 6, 7, 8 percent may be a typical goal. I know that, of course, varies on construction services versus professional services, and I've heard some similar challenges in conversation with Danielle, as it relates to workforce efforts, and I know that the strategic plan is something that's being initiated and something in process. What we're talking about here with this scale of an investment is not only an opportunity. We're increasing capital output as a letting agency by a factor of three to four on an annual basis, but it's going to also be a challenge, because not only do we need to have accessibility, have availability within the contracting community, we need to make sure we're growing that in the right areas. So, one challenge that I've thought of throughout the day listening, is how do we encourage our MWBEs and empower our MWBEs with the tools to also advance workforce development? So, contracting opportunities have a labor component, and if we know that we have either a disconnect in the labor market or a disconnect on the contracting side, we really have the opportunity to compound those issues as we grow this capital program. So, to Council I'd ask if anyone had any thoughts on that, any guidance that you'd like to provide or request of Steve and Monica before they come in front of committee on February 28, 2025?

Mr. Graham said I think one of the things that we've got to be cognizant of, and we had the tail end of the conversation about local versus regional, that we really have to have a broad perspective in terms of being able to meet the capacity. You talked about the building program that we may encounter, but Atrium is building, the airport is expanding, another major corporation is about to. Everyone's building, and so the capacity shrinks, and so we need a larger footprint to do that, and so I think we should. I think we also need be cognizant that we need to identify the best and the brightest in the market. Everyone that has a business card is not in business. Our report demonstrates that, who are registered with the City and/or the state, it doesn't qualify quality, it only certifies that the company's actually owned, operated and managed by a minority individual, 51 percent ownership. It doesn't take into account quality product, competitive price, value-added service, those things that major corporations and municipality makes decisions on. So, we have to ensure, one, that as we overlay all of this, that there's opportunities for all, that we create the opportunities, we create an environment where companies can joint venture and work together, break out contracts as much as we can to allow for a smaller firm to get a larger share of the pie, and that our programs that we have are intentional about inclusion along the way. So, the City is growing. I'm not sure that our vendor base is growing along with it at the same pace, and the capacity issue. I had an opportunity to visit The Pearl several weeks ago, and also met with the general contractor that's doing work at Spectrum Arena, and we just added another project over there in terms of a practice facility. I mean, he said, "I can't bid on that, because I'm still biting off the apple of the second phase of the renovation for the arena." So, the football stadium, Bank of American Stadium, there's goals there. So, there's all these goals that we're setting. We just need to be mindful of our capacity and making sure that we are advancing those who have a quality product, competitive price, and the ability to compete and do the job in a way that we all want it to be done.

Mr. Phipps said, and I would almost double down on that. How do we ensure that industry knows of the opportunity that's coming, so that instead of hitting capacity, we start building that capacity now as well?

Mr. Graham said building capacity, but the jobs are here. I mean, the work is here. So, the companies have to be ready. It's ready, set, go. So, we need to make sure that we identify our best and brightest, whether it's locally or regionally, who are ready to go. There also needs to be a separate component where we develop, enhance, nurture, feed into those firms who are emerging. The projects that we're talking about, there's a lot of work on the street that we want to ensure that everyone gets an opportunity to participate in. As a Council, we need to be aware of there's a lot of work on the street, and a limited supply base.

Mr. Phipps said thank you. Anyone else, thoughts on that interplay between workforce development and a growing capital program?

Mayor Lyles said so, I think that Malcolm and Danté did a great job explaining how much of an investment that this is going to be. More importantly, I think that we have to understand how much we are going to be able to support in the community. I think that all of this work that we're doing requires the leadership of the Council. I mean, it really is going to make a difference what we do, how we say, how do we talk about it, whether or not we're all on the same page. So, in some respects, I think that this has been a really good start for us, but I think we have to have some common agreements that work for the entire community. It could be infrastructure; it could be the way that we address the new projects that we're going to do in every part of the community. I really would hope that the Council carries the weight, because that's what people are going to look towards. You're the leaders. We can say, well, we want to do this and want to do that, but I hope that we will in some ways learn what we care most about and have a role in it for everyone that's an elected official for what we're trying to accomplish and do.

Councilmember Mitchell said I just want to add some context around, we were talking about MWBE participation, and I kind of agree with the Mayor from this perspective. Yes, there's outreach meetings we schedule, there are certifications [inaudible] future capacity and how we can start building those companies. Now, here's a prime example.

I know there was a minority trucking company that first did a City water project, zone one, and they probably did it at \$28,000 for their first opportunity. We continued to give them other projects, and that same minority company now is doing \$315,000 zones for our City water project. So, if we're very intentional about building minority businesses, we all have to do some lifting and be involved.

Mr. Phipps said thank you, Councilman. I think I'm going to go ahead and wrap it there. Any last thoughts from anybody before we give it back to DeAlva?

Marcus Jones, City Manager said so, I'm going to take a chance and be James Mitchell for a second. So, positive energy. It's going to be very easy to find a reason not to be supportive of the one cent sales tax. There's a million things that we do. So, I think a couple things are important [inaudible], Eastland, Red Line, Panthers, Hornets, \$400 million bond, all these things are working together. You asked earlier, how can we pull these things together, and we'll work on that. I think it's also important that, I'll go back to what Councilmember Bokhari said, this is the closest we've ever been to the one cent sales tax in any Council Annual Strategy Meeting. I think one year early on, there was maybe a zero percent chance, and we read in the paper 50/50. So, if we get on a particular track, which basically says, let's say if we got the authority from the General Assembly in this session, the county still has to vote to put on the ballot, and let's say there's a November 2025 referendum. Ed, you do great work. I don't know how much more we're going to have in terms of this plan between now and then. If that's a reason to say no, or something from SEAP's a reason to say no, or crime is a reason to say no, we're always going to have reasons.

Two things I think are extremely important. The MTC is going to have a recommendation in terms of what the rail projects are, but this Council has an opportunity to talk about \$5.7 billion that's coming directly to Charlotte as early as July 1, 2026, and it's not waiting a decade to build a project, it's something that's immediate. So, maybe we have to help you be able to articulate how impactful this boulder, Mayor Pro Tem, we need a different word, it's not a boulder, it's something bigger than a boulder. So, how can we get back to where we were yesterday, positive energy around this, and we just have a lot of work to do?

Mr. Phipps said well, Manager, I would say I just heard 12 folks say that they have no objections to moving forward with the sales tax. So, I don't know how much more work there is to do, no. I say that jokingly. I do see an opportunity for the City. I get the opportunity myself to work with cities across the U.S. I've seen opportunity in Charlotte that has aligned priorities and initiatives in a way that you don't see very often, and certainly at a scale that does not come around very often. So, I certainly think all of you in the room should be proud of the work that you've done to date. Manager, I think the work that I've seen your teams do, I see it from the experts at the tables up here, to the staff behind them, to the staff behind them, behind them. Incredible resources you have here, and I think you're well positioned to be successful here, and Council, we heard it from the Mayor, I think there's a leadership opportunity here for all of you, as we talk about getting everything across the finish line. So, I just want to take a minute and applaud you all for what you've done over the last couple of years.

Mayor Lyles said I'm ready for Victoria to have town hall meetings to get everybody in that room. Everybody deserves the opportunity to become something more from what you did with that town hall, and I know that there's a lot of identifications that we can make, but I hope that everybody gets excited about something, and we'll own it. I mean, really, really own it. Like, when someone asks you the question, you're like ready to just give it to them before they can finish their sentence. So, let's just figure out how well we can do something. I have to say to the team, Marcus, and everyone in here that's a part of this work, it's probably going to be the most difficult work that we're going to do, and it's not going to be easy. So, let's everybody be calm and steady, because that will make a difference in how the community sees us.

Mr. Graham said I wholly support what you're saying, and I'm speaking for myself. I'm totally on board in supporting it, but there's still a lot of questions to asked along the

way. I think it's my fiduciary duty to ask those questions along the way, as well as being very supportive of the bigger vision. So, the devils are in the details. Details are still being worked out, but certainly I'm very supportive of the regional approach that we're taking. I'm very supportive of working with the federal government to get the matching grant. I'm very supportive of what's happening in the General Assembly, but there's a lot of questions that still need to be asked. So, I think you can do both, and not being perceived as I'm not fully on board.

Mayor Lyles said **[inaudible]** speaking that it didn't mean or imply in any way that this wasn't going to be something that was going to really require a lot of work, and that's what I'm hoping that we're conveying. I think it's a lot of work, but there is a group of us that really needs to work together and constantly be thinking about how this is going to go. So, I totally agree, it's going to be difficult, but it's worth it, to get through this. All of those things that we've been talking about from infrastructure three years ago. How long ago was it Renee, three years ago? All of the things that we've been doing, we've got to have at some point the tipping point towards, let's get something accomplished, and that doesn't mean don't do the work that's necessary to get it done. It just means let's be really understanding what kind of step we're taking now, because we are taking a huge step now.

Mr. Graham said a tremendous step, and I'm very supportive of it and I'm on board, but like you said, let's make sure that we all are walking and stepping in the same direction with decisions that have not even been made yet, but will have to be, that Council as much as we can, are a part of those decision steps, and going back to June of 2024, when we weren't.

Mayor Lyles said well, I think that we all have to realize too we're going to be doing regional work. This isn't going to be just us. This is a whole thing about Cornelius, and all of the other towns that are doing this, and the kind of work that we have continuous communication. I mean, it's going to be continuous and necessary.

Mr. Graham said for sure. We're on the same page.

Mr. Phipps said great. Alright, well, it's been a long day. I'm going to turn it back over here for the closeout, and everything else that you're going to do. So, thank you very much, everybody.

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ITEM NO. 6: COUNCIL DISCUSSION; REFLECTION AND DAY THREE LOOK AHEAD

DeAlva Arnold, Facilitator said thank you, Adam. For all the reasons discussed, this is a really important discussion to really think about and think through all the connect points. Thank you, Adam, Ed, and team members who joined the Council members at their tables. I want to thank Council members for your engagements, for your feedback, for our insights, for your presence, and everything that you gave over the last two days to get us to this point. I think the staff has really enjoyed hearing your voice about these things, hearing your perspective, and hearing what you would desire to see going forward, which is also the point of this retreat. So, thank you for being here, leaning in and doing a lot of hard work over the last couple of days. I also want to thank staff and guests for being here. Thank you for bringing your insights and all of your expertise to the table. It's really been helpful to shape a number of really important initiatives and thoughts around those initiatives over the last two days. We won't have time to debrief today, but we will spend some time on doing that tomorrow, but as we think about planning for tomorrow, planning for some time together to reaffirm and confirm some strategic direction forward and strategic priorities for the staff to focus on this year, please think through what you've heard over the last two days, and any insights you want to make sure that they carry forward, because tomorrow will be the time to really make that clear for the staff. We'll also make sure that we review the parking lot tomorrow to make sure administratively everything is covered there. Then, I also want to

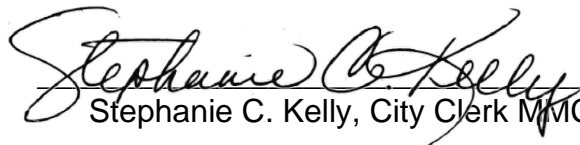
ask you to go back to your team working agreement document that we started on yesterday. We'll find time to finalize that document and revisit the attributes of high-performing Councils tomorrow, and close out with that conversation as well. So, we have a shorter day tomorrow, but certainly a jam-packed day as well, and we look forward to those conversations. I'll ask Marcus and then the Mayor if any final comments, and again, thank you so much for a great day.

Mayor Lyles said I want to say thank you for putting up with all of us.

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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.


Stephanie C. Kelly, City Clerk MMC, NCCMC

Length of Meeting: 6 Hours, 46 Minutes
Minutes completed: March 18, 2025