

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina convened for Committee Discussions on Tuesday, September 2, 2025, at 6:04 p.m. in Room 267 of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Mayor Vi Lyles presiding. Council members present were Danté Anderson, Ed Driggs, Malcolm Graham, Renee Johnson, Lawana Mayfield, James Mitchell, Edwin Peacock III, and Victoria Watlington.

ABSENT UNTIL NOTED: Councilmembers Dimple Ajmera, Tiawana Brown, and Marjorie Molina

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Mayor Lyles said thank you all for being here this evening if you are joining us. We may have some people that are reviewing us or being able to be online, I believe, but we are ready to start our meeting for the Charlotte City Council, Tuesday, September 2, 2025. I mean, the time has gone by so quickly. So, today we are going to begin with our Committee Discussions, as well as a deeper dive into the discussions around safety and health and welfare. We have invited a number of people to join us today in this discussion. I want to say thank you for all showing up. Let's see, I see Spencer, I see the Chief, and I'm just going to continue and not do this again, because then I won't be able to get everybody's name in place, but we're grateful for your participation in the work that we want to do for this community. So, we're going to start with our introductions, and be ready to move forward on the next item.

We usually start with our very first committee, and that would be with Mr. Driggs, and the work that we're doing around our Mobility Plan. So, with that, I'm going to turn it over to, Mr. Jones, do you have anything?

Marcus Jones, City Manager said no, Mayor.

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ITEM 1: MECKLENBURG PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Mayor Lyles said so, one of the things that I think is important, that we begin to level set what this is and what it isn't. This procedural vote that is intended to align timing actions by the members of the MTC (Metropolitan Transit Commission), including, I guess all of us know that those are the towns around us that participate as part of the MTC. The legislation requires that a new authority accept study opportunities by January 1, 2026, so the body needs to be in place by then. The MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) lays out a timeline for municipalities, so that the body can be in place and the work can begin. The MOU also ensures that transit rider voices are heard. One, it includes provisions that the City and the County will each appoint at least one transit rider to the Authority board. Council may choose to appoint more. The MOU sets the floor, not the ceiling. Two, it specifically provides that the Public Transportation Advisory Committee will continue to exist under the new Authority. All of the other towns have approved this unanimously. The City and the County are the last two municipalities to vote on this. Mr. Driggs sent an email on Saturday, and I believe has a copy of it that has layout of the MOU. So, Mr. Driggs, if you'll summarize your email and address any questions, we would appreciate it.

Councilmember Driggs said so on behalf of the Committee, I want to report on our discussion this morning, and I will note, first of all, I Chair the Transportation, Planning and Development Committee. The Vice Chair is Ms. Molina. The other members are Mr. Graham, Ms. Johnson, and Ms. Watlington. I think it's fair to say that we had a robust conversation this morning, for the second time, because we did last month as well, about the MOU, and unavoidably as we talked about the MOU, other topics related to the Mobility Plan were sort of drawn in. So, what I tried to emphasize this morning and what we discussed was, this action on the MOU, and as the Mayor pointed out, is really pretty limited. The MOU itself has got some verbatim text from the state law, and then it has a provision in it that there will be a rider appointed by the City and the County, and

that the PTAC (Public Transportation Advisory Committee) will continue to advise the Authority as it currently advises the MTC.

In the email I sent out, what I was trying to do was just acknowledge there is controversy about this. We are hearing kind of mixed reactions to it, and that I think has created concerns in the minds of some people. What I'm trying to emphasize here, though, is we can take this action on the MOU and not limit ourselves.

Councilmember Ajmera arrived at 6:09 p.m.

So, by voting for the MOU now, you're not limiting your ability to engage on behalf of constituents about concerns that they may have. We have time in order to finish the appointment process, and beyond the appointment process, the actual transfer of CATS (Charlotte Area Transit System) to the Authority won't occur until October 2026, probably of next year, when the revenue starts coming in from the sales tax. So, there will be a lot of time to work further on the modalities for moving it across.

I also emphasized in my memo, the Council has the ability, according to state law at any time, to remove one of its appointees and put somebody else in, and they can do so with or without cause. So, we will maintain that control on an ongoing basis into the future. We are not relinquishing our ability to control this. The MOU basically sets out a timeline for receiving applications and for making appointments. We have a lot of latitude, under the state law and under the MOU, to do this as we see fit, and the towns do too. So, everybody has agreed to this framework. What we discussed this morning was, what does it mean? Ms. Watlington, in particular, focused on the provision and state law that says that there will be, I will look at it, it's paragraph D famously. "Members of the Board of Trustees shall have demonstrated experience or qualifications in the area of law, finance, engineering, public transportation, urban planning, logistics, government, architecture or economic development," and the question was, "Well, okay, what does that mean exactly?" So, we get 100 applications, people with all kinds of backgrounds, and are the Clerk and the City Attorney going to limit the pool of people that we can consider? So, after the discussion about that, the motion I made, in particular in committee was, can we approve the MOU, and also resolve, that at our next committee meeting, we will discuss in greater detail with the City Attorney what the interpretation of that stipulation by the state is. In fact, I think I detected that there are slightly different points of view among members of the Committee about what it means, but the thing is, we have time to work on that. There's a period for the application process. The appointments have to be made by December 2025. So, we are not foreclosing in any way our authority, our freedom to act, our ability to make choices. We can't make choices that obviously disregard state law, because it's binding on us, but I think the way the thing is written, we will have some latitude to consider on a case-to-case basis what people's backgrounds are and whether they align with one of the areas of expertise that is called for. So, in the end, the Committee voted four to one in favor of recommending to the Council that we approve the MOU, and we also resolved that we would have this follow-up conversation in order to clarify the screening process and the meaning of that particular provision in state law, as to the backgrounds. So, it's basically to be clear about who might be excluded and who might not.

I will emphasize that the process that the attorney and the clerk are going to go through does not mean that we won't see all of the applications. So, basically, the applications will be available to us, but there will be a recommendation. The attorney is going to say, or the clerk is going to say, this application meets the requirements. In the case of the clerk, most of that is actually just kind of a factual determination. Do you live in the County? Do you meet those essential requirements? Then, in my view, it'll be up to the attorney more to interpret the state law as to what kind of qualifications or experience are intended in the way the law is written.

It is important that we take this action soon, very soon, I hope tonight, because this juggernaut is continuing. What's going to happen is, the Authority board has got to be stood up, basically, by December 12, 2025, and if we don't get through our process

broadly along the timeline that's laid out here, there will be a meeting of that board and we won't be there, our people won't be there. So, we need to kind of operate on two tracks, pardon the pun, but we need to keep this process thing moving forward and not stop the momentum, and at the same time alongside with that we need to satisfy ourselves that our control over the appointments and our selection of the people on that board will be as we would want. I don't see that by passing this we limit ourselves in terms of that. The state law itself is actually pretty liberal in terms of the processes that we can use. It says that each community can use its own process for vetting and deciding on whom they want to appoint. So, we're not closing any doors, but I believe it is important. If we had, for example, decided to go back to Committee next month, that would've been after the first couple of dates laid out in this timeline have already passed. So, I'm hopeful that we can get this done tonight. Yes, we were four to one in Committee in favor of it, with the provision that there will be this follow-up discussion about what the meaning is of the state law, and I think that's my explanation. I would invite members of the committee who want to chime in to do so at this point.

Councilmember Watlington said I just had two things. Thank you, Chairman Driggs, for your overview. I just wanted to lift up. I just want to make sure that I'm clear about where I sit on this. I am not so much confused about what the meaning of this is. I think that what's written here gives leeway and there's a necessity for us as a Council to align on what that rubric needs to be, so that there's something for staff to determine qualifications against. So, I think there's enough room here that's written that that's the work for us. Beyond just understanding what it says, it's aligning on what that rubric is, as we're talking about qualifications and what we believe are the minimum qualifications to meet that board that goes within the law.

I did have a question just in the overview that just happened here, and it was mentioned earlier in the committee meeting, this idea that if we don't, as Council of City of Charlotte, execute the agreement then it will still move forward, we just won't be a part of it. How many bodies have to execute this for it to be considered complete and move forward? That's just not super clear to me.

Mr. Driggs said so, this document is being voted on and acted on individually by the members of the MTC. There could be a quorum of the Authority without us, because we have our votes and that's less than half, but it's not one thing that's signed by everybody. It's different agreements by the different towns, and six towns have already approved it. So, I believe there are separate documents that are signed individually by the towns. This is not an action by the MTC.

Anthony Fox, Interim City Attorney said I think the question is, what is the legal effect of the MOU should the City fail to assign it? It's my understanding that everybody, all the appointing authorities in Mecklenburg County, have signed the agreement, but for the City. If the City were not to execute it, then it will have no binding or legal effect on the City.

Councilmember Molina arrived at 6:19 p.m.

The others, though, having signed it, indicate their approval and intention to conform to the language that's contained in this Memorandum of Understanding, which quite frankly is really just a procedural document that lines up the appointments to the Authority, such that the Authority could be stood up by the January 1, 2026, date that's required by the statute. Should the City not sign it, nothing will prevent them from moving forward, under that direction, to stand up the Authority by the January 1, 2026, date, with everyone except the City. To the extent they have a quorum, as a result of that, they can then take action as an authority even though the City may be absent.

Ms. Watlington said got you, thank you. Those were my two questions. I will defer to what I think Mr. Graham will eventually discuss, because I think we're generally aligned.

Councilmember Ajmera said so I agree with everything that's been said by the Committee Chair, Mr. Driggs. My question is not specifically about the MOU, it's about

the appointment process. Certainly, I understand that the MOU represents an important step for us to move forward and collaborate with our regional partners. So, I want to understand more about active transit rider, and this question is for Mr. Fox. I know that this agreement commits, from both the City and the County, to appoint at least one active transit rider to the new board, and I think that's important as we want to make sure that voices of people who rely on our transit system every day are being heard. So, I've heard from various constituents, does the transit rider have to have a professional background, whether that's finance or engineering, in addition to being a transit rider, to serve on the board? If you could just explain that, that would be great.

Mr. Fox said yes. The authority we get to operate the Authority is drawn from the General Assembly and this P.A.V.E. (Projects for Advancing Vehicle-Infrastructure Enhancements) Act. The P.A.V.E. Act is specific about the membership of the Authority in its Board of Trustees. Section D provides that the members of the Board of Trustees, of this to be formed authority, must have demonstrated experience or qualifications in certain fields. It doesn't qualify that, and so that is something that would be overriding on anybody that will serve on the Board of Trustees, including the transit rider. So, the transit rider would need to demonstrate how he or she satisfies those membership requirements.

Now, what are the membership requirements? The membership requirements are demonstrated experience and qualifications in things like law, finance, engineering, public transportation. It doesn't define how broad or how narrow public transportation is, but that is the language that is set out in the statute. So, I can envision where a transit rider would say, I have demonstrated experience in the area of public transportation, and then that person will define how he or she gained that experience and what that experience is. It will be for this body to determine whether or not that experience meets what this body believes to be demonstrated experience and qualifications.

Ms. Ajmera said yes, I think that's an important clarification, because if someone is riding a transit for, let's say five years, that could be interpreted as lived experience and be qualified under public transportation category, but I understand that would be something that will be discussed at a later point in time, but as the City Attorney, how would you interpret that?

Mr. Fox said as the City Attorney, what I do is file an action and get a court to interpret it, and that's what a judge does, but that's what happens when you have legislation and ambiguities around legislation as to what it constitutes and means. I will tell you I would look for a definition, a Webster's definition of what public transportation includes, and see if it fits within that definition. I would look for other sources that will give some direction and insight into what constitutes public transportation as indicators of what the layperson's interpretation of public transportation may or may not be.

Ms. Ajmera said that's fair. Well, I look forward to getting that memo about the definition of public transportation based on other sources. I think that will help us ensure that all voices are heard, especially our transit riders. That's all I have. Thank you, Madam Mayor.

Mayor Lyles said I'm going to ask of the Council, that we have had two speakers that signed up that want to address our committees before. So, I'd like to go ahead and have those two speakers come forth. You will have two minutes to speak, Mr. Lee, and the Council, if we'll make sure that we can hear what Mr. Lee is saying. Thank you so much for being here.

James Lee, 1818 Kennesaw Avenue said thank you, Mayor. I'm a history buff, there's been moments in Charlotte's history where it has had to make a tough decision, where it has had to look at both sides of an issue and had to make a decision about the future, about where the City's going to be. I think this person that you put on there that has public transit experience, would be somebody like I was the other day. I had two appointments that were two hours. The one in the afternoon took me 4½ hours in my day to wait for a bus and to ride the bus. You need somebody who has been on enough

buses that sees how the City's growing, and sees all the apartments that's going up, and thinking about what it's going to look like to drive a car or ride a bus or ride a bicycle, like I do every day. I support this. I just hope that in this moment that we make the right decision for our future as a city, because I've got friends that's on the opposite side of me, but I support this effort, and I think for us to be a city that we want to be, that we should be, for everybody, you definitely have to have somebody who has experience. If you saw my CV, my curriculum vitae, I've been an advisor in Charlotte for about five, six years. So, you need somebody who can also talk the talk and be able to talk 30,000-feet information and bring it down to the ground where folks can understand it. Do you know what I'm saying, so the folks that are in the transit right now, trying to find out what are they going to do for the rest of their night. I used to be there. You need to have somebody who can be at both of those spaces. Most of you know me, you know my professionalism, where I've come from. You need to have somebody like that on this Authority, that we just make sure things are going good for everybody. So, that's all I'll say.

Mayor Lyles said alright, our next speaker is [inaudible]. I have not seen her. Alright, so we will go ahead and go right back to our discussion.

Councilmember Mayfield said Attorney Fox, I have a couple of questions. So, you noted that the P.A.V.E. Act is specific in section D that it must be an individual that's demonstrated experience in qualified fields, the transit rider must prove how they meet the requirement. You also stated that Council is the one who's going to decide what those requirements are. If we were to move forward, just for me to understand, with the MOU tonight. Let's say we don't. Let's say we weren't going to move forward with the MOU tonight. Realistically, how are the towns going to afford the transportation system without the City, since we're the biggest contributor to our public transportation? If this Council, there were enough votes for the MOU not to move forward, because it was mentioned that they can just continue and move forward without us having a voice, but how are they going to afford it?

Mr. Fox said the act is specific about giving to the County the ability to establish a referendum. The County has called for the ability to have on the ballot the referendum. The County is proceeding with the notice as required by the P.A.V.E. Act for a public hearing. That public hearing is going to be held in September 2025. Should all of that continue to move forward, the act will provide for the Authority to be stood up if it passes in a referendum by the voters. Once it passes, then the ability to operate is going to be governed by the membership criteria set out in the P.A.V.E. Act. If a quorum, a majority of 27 members, if they have 14 members, then they can proceed after declaring a quorum.

Ms. Mayfield said so, let me ask a different question. If we were not to move forward with this MOU tonight, are you saying that Charlotte is still going to have the votes, we're still going to have appointments on this new commission, because that's the only way it gets to 27 members? So, if we don't put our 12 members on there, it's not going to be 27. So, you're saying whether we sign this MOU or not, if the voters were to support this, it's still going to be a 27-member board, and the way that 27 is allocated now, it's 12 coming from the City of Charlotte?

Mr. Fox said yes. This memorandum was designed to get each of the appointing jurisdictions in line to make the appointments that they are given under the act to the Authority. They have all done that, but for the City of Charlotte. So, yes, the Authority will have its membership. The membership will remain 27. The City will have not appointed its 12, but the others will be appointed and can proceed.

Ms. Mayfield said so, it will be a 27 member. So, I want it clarified. If we do not move forward tonight with this MOU, you're saying that if the voters were to support this tax increase that is going to be a forever new tax, where we are funding transportation and the growth of it, will the City of Charlotte still have 12 appointments on that board whether we sign this MOU or not?

Mr. Fox said the current law provides for the Authority to be composed of 27 members. It breaks out the composition and it includes 12 that are appointed by the City of Charlotte, three of which are by the business community. The Memorandum of Understanding was an attempt by all the parties to just come together and develop a process to expedite the appointment to the Authority. If the City failed to adopt the MOU, I believe it still has the right to make the appointments. If it failed to make those appointments, I can't predict what the legislature might do, what a court might do, with regards to mandating action by the City.

Ms. Mayfield said so, if we don't sign this MOU, you're saying there's a possibility that there could be court legal action to mandate we sign this MOU?

Mr. Fox said there would not be action to mandate you sign the MOU. There may be action to mandate you comply with the state law, which set up the Authority subject to the approval of the voters.

Ms. Mayfield said next question. So, if this MOU is approved, legally what is the likelihood of us being able to expand in writing how many primary bus riders? I personally have a challenge with the language saying, "a minimum of one bus rider." At minimum, in my opinion, is just that. We need four, because we need to be representing north, south, east and west, and these are primary bus riders, not people who occasionally ride. So, if it is approved, since it was said, this is just to move us to the next session and we have the opportunity to discuss it, what is the legal likelihood for us to be able to have an extended conversation, since we're being told this is a very short timeline to get this done?

Mr. Fox said okay, the fact that there may be a desire to have more bus riders, it's not mutually exclusive of membership. You could have all 27 members who happen to be bus riders, provided they meet the other remaining criteria. So, if you have a lawyer that rides the bus, that person could be a member of this. If you have an engineer, a finance person, a bank person, you just have to put them in the buckets that the statute requires, and the statute doesn't limit the number of lawyers, the number of engineers, the number of finances, it just requires that they exhibit those characteristics.

Ms. Mayfield said so, what I'm trying to get to is the time and space that Council has to actually have this discussion. Unless that lawyer, your primary source of transportation is the bus, for me you're not a consideration. If you're just catching the bus when it's convenient or because you don't want to drive your car, you're not the person that's being impacted by this. If the bus runs five minutes late, two minutes late, and you miss that next bus, and you have to wait 30, 45 minutes, those are the voices that are important to me if we're going to have this enormous board. When we look at other communities, they do not have a board this size. So, I'm really trying to understand, we're in September 2025 now. We now have a deadline when the community has not even voted on this. They're not voting on this until November 2025, but we're saying we've got to hurry up, figure out how to identify 27 people, when the state has pretty much already said, we want basically corporate people to be the ones that's on this, not the ones who are going to be impacted by this on a daily basis, and you need to be able to do that in a two- or three-week time period. I am trying to understand at what point does this Council actually have the ability to come together to even identify who are the people that we deem as the right type of person to ride this bus, or to be on this commission?

Mr. Fox said under the Memorandum of Understanding, I think you have between September 17, 2025, which is after the public hearing, to December 2, 2025, which is I think the deadline for the appointments.

Mr. Driggs said it's December 12, 2025. So, the application period begins on September 7, 2025, I think, and it runs through December 12, 2025. So, we have a couple of months.

Ms. Mayfield said the 12th of what?

pti:pk

Mr. Driggs said Ms. Mayfield, can I just comment.

Ms. Mayfield said the 12th of what, because I was talking to the attorney?

Mr. Driggs said I know, December 2025. I'm just trying to be responsive to your question. This is the only place. The memorandum is the only place that makes any reference to riders being on the board. The state law doesn't. It has a requirement that there be a small business, but it says nothing about riders. The only place you're going to see a requirement that there be at least one rider is here, and there is nothing if we pass this that limits us from putting more in there. All this does is say there must be one.

Ms. Mayfield said thank you for sharing that. So, I'm going back to Attorney Fox. As was noted by the Chair, there's nothing identifying. We have a minimum, but there's also no language that specifically clarifies that we have the ability to add more. Everything is in the language. Everything is in the contract. You know how many contracts has Council signed off on, and then when it came time to negotiate the details, we run into a number of challenges within the Attorney's Office. So, that interpretation is just that. So, the language says minimum. What I'm trying to get to is, if we don't have the language in the MOU that gives the wording of at least versus the minimum of one, at least four bus riders or six bus riders, whatever it is, I am concerned that us moving forward with this MOU, especially when some of our towns have voted against the actual November 2025 discussion, what could that potentially look like for us?

Councilmember Brown arrived at 6:38 p.m.

Mr. Fox said but the issue of the composition of your 12 appointees to the Authority lies within this body. You guys ultimately decide.

Ms. Mayfield said which is one of the challenges, but okay.

Mr. Fox said but you guys ultimately decide who will be the 12 appointees to this Authority on behalf of the City. You will take into account information that we will provide to you. We being staff, will provide to you as a result of an application. I spent this afternoon looking at a draft of the application process that's going to try to get at some of the information that you as a Council may deem important for your decisionmaking authority. So, you will ultimately decide is this person a rider? Are they a rider of the bus? Are they a rider of rail? Are they special transit riders? You'll get that information. You'll get information about how frequent do they ride the bus, the rail, and then you make your decision about whether or not these people, or these applicants, are worthy to sit on this Authority based upon your other considerations.

Mayor Lyles said just for a moment, the Manager has some responsibility and accountability for this, and I was wondering if he could give us an idea of how this works in addition to what the Attorney has done.

Mr. Jones said okay, so thank you, Mayor, members of Council. Let me figure out the best way to try to frame this, okay. So, the Governor signed this legislation into law July 1, 2025. One of the components of this legislation is that by January 1, 2026, that a number of studies have to be completed and turned over to the Authority. Those studies, they really I would say protect the City. It's about the City's assets, it's about our employees, and how this transition happens. So, if you back up a little bit, the attempt was for this Authority to be seated before January 1, 2026, let's see if every appointment can be made, all 27. So, in order to get all 27 appointed, there would have to be some type of agreement, nothing that's saying you must do this on this date, but let's call it a framework. I think what's also important is that if the referendum fails, there is no Authority. There's no appointments. It doesn't exist. So, it's not that you get an Authority with or without the referendum. What's also important is the tax isn't going to be turned over to the Authority until October of 2026, and that has a lot to do with the state system, and its ability, in their own schedule and their own systems, to be able to get this revenue to Mecklenburg County.

So, I say those things, because there's a lot to be done, however, the concept was, how can there be some level of alignment? Charlotte's process will be Charlotte's process. It is not Mecklenburg's process or Mint Hill's process. Our process will be our process, but is there some kind of way we could at least get alignment, so that there's an opportunity to make these appointments before January 1, 2026.

Ms. Mayfield said thank you for that, Mr. Manager. Have the requirements for these studies been sent to all of Council? So, before we're sitting up having this conversation about an MOU, but we know that the Governor, there's an expectation for studies to be done, again, in a short turnaround. Do we know what is being studied?

Mr. Jones said in the legislation are six studies, including one study is whether or not this actually works. Those studies have not begun, but those studies must be done before January 1, 2026, and turned over to the Authority.

Ms. Mayfield said so, help me with this timeline. So, you're telling me there are six studies out there that are expected to be turned in by January 1, 2026. We're having this conversation, and the application opens up on September 8, 2025, and is going to be open until December 12, 2025. So, who is responsible for, one, paying for these six studies, and identifying who's going to be leading the work for these six studies, that basically have a three-week time period to get that information back to the General Assembly?

Mr. Jones said that's a great question. So, that's why it's so important. I believe at the regularly scheduled MTC meeting in September 2025, Interim CEO (Chief Executive Officer), Brent Cagle, is going to come to the MTC with a plan for the studies, and you can't wait until December 2025, to begin the study. So, the concept is, can the studies begin earlier, so that when the authority is set up, these studies can make its way to the Authority. I think what's also important, the studies won't solve everything. It shows what are some areas of risk, and what are some things that we should think through as we go this transition from a City department into an authority.

Ms. Mayfield said who is funding the study?

Mr. Jones said right now there are funds within CATS budget.

Ms. Mayfield said so, the City is funding this, if it's through our CATS budget, or does MTC have their own budget where the towns have contributed towards these six studies?

Mr. Jones said there are options, and which it could be through CATS existing budget, or the MTC in the towns and the County have about a half a million dollars that they could utilize for issues like these studies.

Ms. Mayfield said so, we've identified that we need to have these studies done, but we have not identified specifically what budget line item it's going to be coming from?

Mr. Jones said true. I will say, Councilmember Mayfield, what's also important is that work has to get done, and what's before you tonight is really whether or not the City Council would like to be a part of this particular process to get certain things done in terms of, let's say the appointments within a timeframe, but again, if this isn't passed then the Authority doesn't stand up.

Ms. Mayfield said okay, you said that we're looking at 2026 before it potentially moves into this new authority. So, whatever funds are generated from the sales tax, are those funds coming to the City? What happens to those funds?

Mr. Jones said sure. So, the way that this is established, you have essentially Article 43, which is the half cent sales tax, which right now is governed by this combination of the MTC, the policymaking board, as well as it comes into the City. If the referendum passes, the way this would work is, 60 percent of the new sales tax would go to the

Authority, and the existing half cent sales tax would go to the Authority, and the 40 percent that is leftover will come to the City, the six towns, and a portion of that, if my friend Michael Bryant is still in the room, will be set aside for orphan roads within Charlotte's ETJ (Extraterritorial Jurisdiction).

Ms. Mayfield said thank you, Mr. Manager.

Councilmember Graham said I'll say what I said earlier today at the Transportation Committee Meeting, and let me preface my statement by saying that I'm a yes. I think we should do this for a wide variety of reasons, but I'm a yes but, and I'll get to the but in a little bit. After spending 10 years in Raleigh as a State Senator, I know there is no perfect legislation, and the payback is not perfect, it's imperfect. One of the imperfections is the January 1, 2026, start date to get it set up, and election is on November 8, 2025. In two months, we've got to stand up a new organization through the holiday seasons, Thanksgiving, Christmas, make appointments, doing whatever stand up means in a relatively short period of time based by the legislation. I think sometimes the end is in the beginning, and I wish we could take a going slow approach if it's yes, to make sure that we get it right from the very beginning. So, I think that's an imperfection in terms of the start date.

The second imperfection is the size of the board itself. I mean, 27 is a large board. In some cases you'll have the tail wagging the dog, eight or 10 members leading the rest of the Committee, but it's big enough to include everybody, and everybody means everyday riders to ensure, whether there's one or four, whether they fit into a specific category, that the ridership, whether it's bus or transit, someone who rides a bike lane, or walk a sidewalk, have the opportunity to be heard and represented on the board itself. I think, at least from my commitment as one voter of appointing to the authority, that that will be a top priority for me to make sure that everyday people have an opportunity to be on this board within the guidelines of the legislation. As I told the Attorney earlier today in transportation, every word matters. "Shall" matters, "but" matters, and so, I think there's a way for us to ensure that everyday people who have the experience like the speaker who was here earlier today, gets great consideration in terms of being able to be a part of the Authority.

Obviously, Authority members, again speaking for Malcolm, I will ask a quick question. Will you support an anti-displacement policy if you're on this board? I think it's really important, and I know what we're here to do, but we get very limited opportunities to really talk about this thing publically, so I want to take advantage of the opportunity that we have here today to express what I'm hearing throughout the community, as someone who wants to see this thing pass. So, I think it's really important that we talk about the membership of the Authority and where they come from and the commitments they're willing to make, which is to have a regional approach, to address our regional transportation issues and our infrastructure issues, but also our social conscious in terms of some of the things that we have to do to protect small businesses, to protect African American communities, etc., etc., etc. That is a part for me of the leadership questions that I will be asking for those individuals who are considering applying for membership.

Additionally, I think it's also unfortunate that we're right in the middle of this election of whether yes or no, that we're even having this conversation about appointing members, and how that member's going to be stood up right in the middle of this yes or no campaign, because the legislation requires us to start early, but it certainly doesn't play well in the streets of Charlotte, where I've gotten several phone calls already this morning since our Transportation Committee, saying, "Are you guys putting the cart before the horse on this particular issue?" I think that's valid to talk about, and Lee explained that the legislation requires us to act earlier so we can be prepared in the case that this thing does say yes. They kind of get it, but they don't, and so, it's really problematic in terms of trying to educate, inform the public, in terms of what it is that we're trying to do. So, that's yet another imperfection in terms of the start date. I wish we had the Fiscal Year, July 1, 2026, which would've given us six months to work out all the kinks, ask all the questions, do the due diligence necessary in an orderly way versus

being haphazard, which I think we're kind of doing, but we have to do because the legislation requires that we act in this manner, which I don't think is in the best interest of standing up an organization, a multi-billion dollar organization, that talks about transportation future.

Again, no legislation is perfect. I just kind of pointed out some of the imperfections of it, and even the process. With all due respect to all the small towns and their signing on it first, maybe it should've been the City kind of taking the lead, because we have the most questions about some of the Memorandum of Understanding, and if we wanted to make changes, that probably should've been given us the opportunity to do it first. We have the most to gain, certainly the most to lose, and any amendments to it could've been done then. Then the small towns could vote yes or no. Again, it puts us in the corner that even if we wanted to change some of the language in the MOU, you've already got six towns that've already approved it based on this timeline. It is problematic based on the process of the work.

So, those are just general comments that I will make. I think it's really important that we kind of, and I've been doing a lot of listening for the last six weeks, four weeks, since the election started. I had a lot of time, but I used that time to listen, as someone who wants to see this thing move forward, to what people are saying and what people are asking, what people are concerned about, and I think we need to listen if we want a favorable result in November 2025. Two questions, and I'll stop. One, notwithstanding the schedule, other than receiving applications, we won't be making any appointments or interviews until after the election, is that true?

Mr. Jones said okay, it's your process. The applications would be accepted between September 17, 2025, and October 13, 2025.

Mr. Graham said but we won't be making any appointments until after the election? That's the question I'm asking.

Mr. Fox said the schedule under the MOU provides for trustee appointments to be made to the Authority between November 8, 2025, and December 12, 2025.

Mr. Graham said okay, and again, sometimes you ask questions you already know the answer to. That's a short period of time. So, there has to be some work done in the interim to be ready for that, which is problematic when you're running a campaign, yes or no. I'm just pointing out some of the obvious things that people are talking about, and I think we should be aware of that for sure. Then last question. What if someone filed a lawsuit after the election, Mr. Attorney, for whatever reason? Would that stop the formation of standing up this board by January 1, 2026?

Mr. Fox said that's speculative, so you don't know what the lawsuit would do and whether or not the lawsuit would have any basis, because you do have a statute that's been adopted by the General Assembly, so you can't say no one will find a way to challenge it, people challenge everything, but whether or not they're successful would be another question.

Mr. Graham said thank you. So, I'm going to support to move it over in favor of it. Again, I'm a yes vote. I think we should do this for the region for our long-term future, but the devil's in the details, and right now we're dealing with a lot of details, and I think this discussion is so appropriate. It's really appropriate. It may be uncomfortable for some, but I think it's necessary, because there is a lot of conversation in the community, a lot of education going along, and this is the education process. The Manager has heard me say this before, whether it was the Arena or the Spectrum Center, we've got to bring the community along with us. We've got to bring them along with us, and we have to ask the questions that they're asking, and give them honest feedback about where we are. So, again, that's what I will continue to do, and I think that's what we're required to do, and so, I think the conversation is great, and we'll see where it leads us. Thank you, Madam Mayor.

Councilmember Anderson said I'm really glad that we're having this conversation as well. I think it's really important for the public to be scrubbed in on the intricacies of what's going on. I too have been listening quite a bit, and I've left lots of conversations where individuals have said, "Hey, I didn't know that about the referendum, I learned something new, I wasn't aware." So, I think the more conversations we have and the more discourse we have, the better off the public is, as it relates to understanding what's really going on.

The MOU is really a continuance of our regional alignment and collaboration with the County and the towns, and it also introduces the language for the rider experience. The actual legislation says nothing about any requirements for a rider experience to be a part of this board, and so, I think that's important language to have, and I think we as a Council should support the inclusion of that language, so we can have someone, at least one person, with rider experience. I also believe that that's the floor, and I don't believe we should set a ceiling on how many, because at this point, we can have as many individuals with rider experience as we would like to have, as long as they fit the other criteria. Engineers ride the bus. I'm an engineer, and I've ridden the bus before. I've leaned on public transportation in my lifetime, where I didn't have a car, or it was just a better option for me. So, I don't want us to put a ceiling on the number of appointees with rider experience. I think it's better if it's more open-ended, but still have that requirement through the language of the MOU.

Two other points. One is, if I heard Chairman Driggs properly, and I'm aware of this, we will still have the Public Transportation Advisory Committee. It will not be going away, and that Committee has tremendous ridership on that Committee, and that Committee will be advising this board. So, in addition to adding the language for ridership experience through the MOU, we will also have direct experience on the PTAC that can advise this board around the ins and outs, and to what Mr. Lee said. Thank you, Mr. Lee, for coming today and speaking about the real lived experience of actually relying on public transportation.

Lastly, what I want to say is, I know we had a lot of conversation around, well, this isn't the perfect situation, and it's not, but this is the situation that we're in. We have our General Assembly who has passed this legislation and given us the opportunity to stand up for our own region and invest in our own region. I think we need to put all of our efforts in figuring out the best way for us to undergird that, so we have really great, qualified people on this advisory board with a myriad of experiences. We want to have different types of experiences that, yes, fit the criteria, but if you have different points of view on the board, that's going to lead us to better policies, better answers and better outcomes for the Committee.

So, I think it's important that we move forward, and we have the responsibility of appointing these folks, and I think we need to take that very seriously. I think we need to have a process that we can speak about later. It's also important to know that this would be a brand-new body, and so, anytime you're standing up a brand-new body there's a lot of different moving parts. We spoke about the different studies and things of that nature that need to be done, and that's identified in the actual language of the legislation, and so, a lot of these things need to be done at a very quick clip. Again, for us to ensure that we have the best experience for our residents, I think we need to make sure we are putting great people on this board, and that they can get to work early, with the understanding that the revenue will not be transferred over until the end of 2026. So, it's a lot of work to be done. I'm personally going to support the MOU. I think it underlines our regional alignment and collaboration and spirit of this particular effort, and I hope that we can get to a yes vote this evening. Thank you, Madam Mayor.

Councilmember Peacock said no questions, Madam Mayor. I just would like to make a motion.

Motion was made by Councilmember Peacock, and seconded by Councilmember Anderson to adopt a resolution approving a Memorandum of Understanding with Mecklenburg County and the Towns of Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville, Matthews, Mint Hill, and Pineville for the creation of and the appointment process for the Mecklenburg Public Transportation Authority.

Councilmember Johnson said so I was the no vote in Committee earlier. We have heard a lot from the public, and the question is, when do we address those issues? I think we as a Council might've learned our lesson in moving things forward and then saying we're going to work out the details later. One of those decisions was listed as one of the worst economic decisions in 2024, because we didn't work out the details in advance. So, I think that we should be responsible. We've heard from community leaders, and I think that we should address, or we should respond. Yes, they have come out and they've talked to us, and they've told us what they want. So, it's not enough to say we hear you, but we're not taking any action. I understand there's a timeframe, but why don't we address some of the issues and work out those details, and then take the vote? We've spent the day talking about it, when we could've been talking about solutions today. So, I just think that we've heard a lot from the public, and we know what their issues are. Are we talking about addressing any of those issues before we move forward with the MOU? I know this is not the decision, and I'm not even publically a yea or nay against the tax, but I am against moving forward and not addressing the public's concerns. So, I'd like to know when that's going to be done?

Councilmember Brown said I definitely second Councilmember Johnson, and it goes without saying, she had some very valid points this morning, as well as now. Councilmember Graham asked my question about the lawsuit, so, has that been addressed, if someone in the organization filed a lawsuit, will there be a hold on it? Has that been addressed to move forward from January 1, 2026? I'm just asking. I have a list of questions if you want to do them one at a time.

Mayor Lyles said I think we should do them one at a time.

Ms. Brown said yes, ma'am, go ahead, that's the first one, if we have someone challenge us legally in proceeding, what's going to happen? Are we going to move forward?

Mr. Fox said you can't predict what a lawsuit might look like. We do not have a current lawsuit challenging.

Ms. Brown said yes, but these questions are coming in my email.

Mr. Fox said the response is, there's no current lawsuit challenging the P.A.V.E. Act or its adoption.

Ms. Brown said okay, alright. So, over the next 20 years, it's going to increase significantly, that's a concern there, it's not going to stay at the same. I'm wondering about that. I'd just like to say people that are marginalized, they're always invited to the table, but they don't get to really make any real decisions, because they're economically challenged. So, we bring them in the room, we invite them into these spaces, but are we really, authentically taking them seriously? Are we really caring about how they really feel?

Then, the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee has the ability to advise, just like the Citizens Review Board, but the decision doesn't mean that it's going to go in a way that it's being advised. Again, I said that I'm not disagreeing with supporting it, or agreeing with supporting it, but I'm overwhelmingly challenged with everybody saying they're listening, but are we really listening? Are we listening, or is it just going in one ear and coming out the other? Are we really listening? Are we intentional with how we respond and how we're going to move forward with the very significant and very

challenged questions that we have out in the community? There's a lot of folks in District Three that have questions unanswered.

So, for the MOU, I got a lot of emails saying yes, but all I got was just, say yes, and for me at this moment with what I'm hearing, and even with Councilmember Mayfield, she's very knowledgeable and goes in detail, and then her questions were not answered, and she just said, okay, Mr. Manager, and moved forward. Yes, I came in tardy, but with what I've heard and what I heard this morning as I reviewed, I'm not going to support the MOU.

Mayor Lyles said thank you, Ms. Brown, I appreciate that. We have Mr. Driggs and Ms. Watlington. I think unless there's someone that has not spoken yet and would like to speak, we would go around to the next to continue a discussion. Is there anyone else that has not had a chance to speak that would like to? Okay, with that, we'll start with Mr. Driggs and then come to Ms. Watlington.

Mr. Driggs said so, the way some people are reacting to this, you would think that we have no idea what we're doing here, and that we have not had any outreach to the public. I can go back five or six years to when we committed \$50 million to study the alignment for the Silver Line, and there was a lot of engagement, various meetings. There have been several meetings in my district, my townhalls, and a lot of work has been done on the area of roads by Ed McKinney to identify projects and criteria for prioritizing. So, it's not like we're completely unprepared. There was some work that wasn't done, because you don't spend a huge amount of money doing that work if you don't know that you're going to have the revenue to pay for it. So, to a certain extent, there were some things that we couldn't do until we knew, and I think we're actually as well prepared as we could be right now. If you go up on the website, there's a huge amount of information, and that is supported by a long history of outreach to the public, meetings in different places, again, some of our town halls. Then, at the same time, there are questions that haven't been or couldn't be answered yet, but the thing is, our freedom to answer those questions is not impaired by taking this action tonight.

What troubles me a little bit about this conversation is, I think we are comingling the question of, do we want the referendum to pass, or how should we do this? Whether we should do this or how we should do it? I think the idea of not doing it, given the traffic situation in the City, given the implications for mobility, for housing, our scope to make investments and address some of the challenges of our city, every Zoning Meeting, traffic, is going to be extremely limited. So, if we had a general consensus that we need to make a bold investment involving a large amount of money, and the only way to do that is from this sales tax, let's not cloud that conversation with concerns about how we do it, because how we do it is something that we have time to work on still, and I don't minimize the concerns that've been raised by people at all. I just wonder if anybody that's raising those concerns really thinks that we'd be better off doing nothing. If this doesn't pass now, I can tell you that the next opportunity we have to do something like this won't be for years. So, thank you everybody.

Ms. Watlington said I just want to maybe underscore this entire conversation and take it even back to something that some of my colleagues have said before. In some respects, we keep having the same conversation. We understand that there are certain things that are already baked into the P.A.V.E. Act. The nature of the tax at this point, either the public is going to support it or they're not, but there are a number of things that we keep mentioning, business participation; orphan roads in the ETJ; anti-displacement; qualifications, rubric and alignment for those who'll sit on the board; the details behind the asset transfer and what really the City is required to do when, because as I look at the P.A.V.E. Act, even the transfer of those assets are their own individual separate agreements that will have to be negotiated at some time. So, I want us to be very clear about where we actually can influence this process. I don't want us to paint this with a broad brush and say we've done a lot of work. We have done a lot of work, but that does not absolve us to continue doing the work daily. A decision that was made to proceed before is not a decision that is made for every other check point across the path to get to the end. So, we've got to be very, very careful on not kicking

the can down the road on a lot of the how, because sometimes that how is the what for people, because there are members of the community that may choose that, you know what, I'll let this train pass, no pun intended, because I don't think that it's the greatest deal for our community, and each person has to decide that for themselves, but we owe the due diligence for the things that have already been brought to us. Microtransit improvements, because at the end of the day, whatever many of us sitting around this table feel is the right thing to do, or what's menial or what's inconsequential at this point, we don't get to go into that ballot box with anybody else, and each person is going to decide based on what they believe is important and whether or not we've put something before them that they can have confidence in. So, given that, I do think we still have the opportunity to address many of these things, and I would like to see us do that.

So, I would offer that, I'm happy to help craft some of this solution language between now and the time of the referendum, because until I personally hear a clear plan around that, we're talking about dates, about appointments, let's talk about dates, about doing some workshopping and really putting some pen to paper on some of these issues, so that when organizations, like the Black Political Caucus, when organizations like REBIC (Real Estate and Building Industry Coalition), when organizations like the Carolina Labor Council come to us, we're able to speak directly to them about why each individual member should see the value proposition in this work. If we don't do that, I think we've fallen short of our responsibility.

So, I say all that to say, Mr. Manager, that I would appreciate seeing some kind of timeline, whether it's 3x4s, or whatever it is, to have an opportunity to work on some of these and respond holistically. I know that we've seen bits and pieces come back based on Council member questions, but if there was a place that people could land and see specific responses to these things, and not just the canned, this is a response, but this is how we've updated our approach based on what you've shared. I do expect that the small business participation, we're going to see something before the referendum, and so in that vein, would love to see these other items as well. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said so, Ms. Watlington, I really appreciate those remarks, because what my suggestion would be is that we do have a group like that, that we actually start talking about a working group of Council members that will help establish what is the how and what is the why, and what do we try to achieve, and to do that in alliance with the idea that we want to do this in a way that people could turn on their TV and see what's going on, because we all know how busy everybody is. There is an answer to a question for most of this, and we have to do more work around how do we put that information out in the community, as well as drive what we believe is why we are doing it. So, I would like to take some time to think about a working group of Council members to do that, to establish that, and to make some of those appointments, so that we can begin to actually determine what is going to be workable for the City, because I think the number one thing, and Mr. Driggs said it, we will not get this chance anymore in the short term. If we all see what at least in most parts of our city, the traffic is horrible, our buses are not what we want them to be, we have two train tracks that we can use. Think about how much information we gave to those towns, and we told them that we would support them and their efforts to have rail. We decided we would make a number of other kinds of activities available, like micro-transit, started before this was even taking place. So, how do we make some of those same decisions and know what's being done, and I think a small working group of Council members, working along with the remaining parts of what we have to do, would be the way the go. So, with that, I hope that we would have the opportunity for that, but again, I think have a discussion among yourselves about how you would take the next step. I heard what Ms. Watlington said, and I think that's a valid really, really good start for us.

Ms. Brown said the topic of discussion is very important, and we're going to be very intentional. I'm glad that you said that, and while I do support Dr. Watlington, because what about the people that don't have a website, they can't access the information. So, that is a very, very good point, and I had this in my notes when Mr. Driggs says, "Great information on the website." That's fine, but my mom, she's not really tech-savvy, and she's 70 years old and retired from Novant Health. I speak for people that work and

have worked and retired and moved around. Yes, there is a great need for us to be able to develop something for our City to be able to get around, smart growth. People to be able to get to where they want to go, and our City is growing every day with 157 people coming into the City, but we still have to be intentional. I want to be that voice for the people. I'm going to just be the voice for the people that don't know how to read, don't have the websites, maybe you won't knock on their door. I'm just going to be that person, because they need a voice, and I'm going to be that voice.

Mayor Lyles said and that is, I think, one of the dilemmas of having to be in this space at this time, because everybody has a different way of looking at the world these days. So, thank you.

Ms. Johnson said I want to just go back to the question that I asked before. People are not feeling heard, and even the question, when I'm lifting their voice, that question wasn't answered. So, the public wants to know how are we going to address their issues, and I think that these small groups are a good idea, but I think we should invite individuals from those groups, representatives from those groups.

Mayor Lyles said I didn't say that we wouldn't. I would make that inclusive.

Ms. Johnson said okay, I think that if we want to negotiate with the public and ensure that they feel heard, I think we should bring them to the table and try to work through some of these issues. We can't do this alone, we need them. We need their votes, and people need to feel heard and their issues addressed. So, again, I think we should give them something before we move forward with the MOU, a timeframe, and the plan to bring them as a part of the team, I think is a great idea.

Mayor Lyles said I think having the working group make a plan that everybody would like to have engagement, I think we should try to do as much as possible.

Councilmember Molina said I've just got a quick point of clarification. I remember when we voted to move this forward in Committee. It was done with the understanding that we would have, Mr. Driggs, some type of discussion afterwards. Is that correct?

Mr. Driggs said as I reported to the Council, the vote we took was that the Committee recommends to the full Council that we pass the MOU, and we will have at our next Committee meeting, a discussion further to Ms. Watlington's suggestion, with the Attorney about the interpretation of the state requirement that people have experience, so that we're clearer about what kind of candidates we can consider. So, there will be more work done about that.

Ms. Molina said okay, so I remember that being a part of the recommendation, so that's why I'm asking for a point of clarification. Also, to make sure that we're clear, I receive your point very well, which is why I'm raising what we talked about in Committee today. On the one hand we have the discussion around some of the concerns that are related directly to the one cent sales tax, and what the community is bringing to our attention, and then on the other hand what we have is this MOU that is potentially how we would stand up their representation in alignment to the rest of the County. So, from what I understand today, what we said is that, in the event that we as a body decided to move forward, there would be a continuation of discussion around some of the concerns that were raised in Committee. So, I want to make sure that I say that to you, because I don't know if that was said already. I don't want to be redundant.

Mayor Lyles said well, we have a motion on the floor to approve the MOU for today. We have a motion that's been made and second.

Ms. Molina said okay. So, I'm wondering though, with that motion and that second, is that with the understanding of what came out of Committee today, that we would continue an additional discussion?

Mr. Driggs said the Committee voted that the Committee would continue to work on it, that we would hear back, and at our next meeting we would talk about this. I said at the meeting at the time we were taking the vote, we need a clean approval of the MOU, so it doesn't look like it's predicated on something. We need an unqualified approval of the MOU, and we have the Committee's commitment, based on that vote, to pursue further some of these questions, like in particular, the interpretation of D, and how that limits or doesn't limit our ability to appoint candidates.

Ms. Molina said and again, Mr. Chairman, I'm completely in alignment with that. I'm just trying to ask for the clarification around it, because of some of the additional questions that I'm hearing come up. So, in my mind, the MOU is its own discussion item, but then there are these related concerns that we discussed that we would handle subsequently after potentially voting on the MOU. Am I correct in that?

Mr. Driggs said right, the motion right now is to approve the MOU, but what we did decide today in Committee was that there would be more work by the Committee for the benefit of the Council on some of the questions that came up in Committee. The thing I wanted to be clear about was, we can't as a Council take an action that looks like it could be reversed if some condition isn't met. Therefore, what I'm saying is we just separate those two things, we approve the MOU, and we also commit to a process where there will be more action in the Committee and more reports back to the full Council, with the Attorney, on this question, because we tore this apart every which way. What exactly is the applicability of the requirement in the law? It's a legal question, but there's scope for us to interpret it. So, we just want to try to establish a clarity in this next few weeks about how the Attorney is going to apply it, and how we will interpret that, but for tonight, what's on the table is a motion to approve the MOU.

Mr. Graham said yes, I just want to make a comment, and again, it's about process and how do we as a board become effective and efficient. I agree with Councilmember Watlington's suggestion that we need to study those issues and that we form a taskforce or a committee. We've already got a committee, it's called the Transportation Committee, and I know I've been asking for well over a year and a half for more information about this particular topic, so that we can, again, bring the public along with us. So, it's really not about the item on the table. I'm going to vote yes at the ballot box. It's about making sure that we operate efficiently. We've got a committee, it's the Transportation Committee. We should've been intimately involved for months, and we've been basically, from my perspective, on the outside looking in on a wide variety of discussion points along the way, and I've made that clear. Mr. Driggs, you've heard me say that at Committee meetings over and over and over again. So, I don't think we need to reinvent the wheel. I think we need to use the structure that we already have in place [inaudible], because this train, pardon the pun, is well down the track.

Mayor Lyles said I don't disagree that the Transportation Committee is the foundation for this, but I also understand that there are other things that people want to be and see concern about, which can come to the Transportation Committee as long as we can get this organized in a way. So, right now, we've spent half an hour. So, with that, I think that what we can determine is that we have a motion to adopt the MOU and a second on the floor. We have a commitment to review and have a purpose around how we will look at what's going to be, I think, a challenging thing for this community and our City.

The vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Anderson, Ajmera, Driggs, Graham, Mitchell, Molina, Peacock, and Watlington

NAYS: Councilmember Brown, Johnson, and Mayfield

Mayor Lyles said okay, we have two items and one closed session. So, with that, we'll take like a five-minute break.

The meeting was recessed at 7:29 p.m. and reconvened at 7:39 p.m.

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ITEM NO. 2: COUNCIL COMMITTEE DISCUSSIONS

Mayor Lyles said we will now get an update from CATS Leadership on transit safety and security. Before Brent and his team join us, I want to make a brief statement. This body has spent a lot of time talking about public safety, as we should. It's one of the most important roles that this organization has for our community, and we've made great strides forward over the past years. Earlier this year, we spent many meetings talking about public safety from law enforcement to how we create safer neighborhoods. Those are really important conversations to have. Five years ago, Council made significant progress on public safety when the City Council unanimously approved SAFE Charlotte. That work was the result of a committee referral to all of the Council committees, each addressing different aspects of public safety and law enforcement. We have important questions to answer for our community. There is this important work that we can do, but we also have to have important works that have our partners join with us. How do we support our partners? Mecklenburg County, I believe we have the County Manager here, where are you? He left? Okay, thank you. I guess it's been a moment for him, but we do have the District Attorney, Spencer, thank you very much for taking the time to do this. We have our own nonprofit partners, so if you're a nonprofit partner with our City, and how we ought to be addressing safety with it, please stand up so that we can see who you are, and let's give them a hand for the work that they're doing.

Now, you know, since I became Mayor, my passion has been housing, but housing alone won't fix what we're doing now. The work that we have done and the conversations that we've had over the past several months have led us to this point. My recommendation is that we continue with our Council topics. I want you to know that we continue to talk about that, as we have our meetings, and how we can address each other, so that we can have opportunities, so that everyone can have a possibility to explain what they believe is best for the City to move forward.

I also think that what's important is that we need to have more work done within our committees. My recommendation is that we have a referral to each of our committees for the next several weeks, as we define how we can address quality of life, specifically around housing, jobs, mobility, and more importantly, public safety. I will be making these referrals and we'll be working with each committee chair on those referrals, but tonight, I want to really again say thank you to the people that work with us, that are partnering with us, and I want you to join into the conversation. If you believe that you think that you can help us do something, we want to know about it. We welcome that participation. So, with that, I'm now going to turn it over to Brent Cagle, Interim CATS Leadership.

Brent Cagle, Interim CATS CEO said good evening, Madam Mayor. Good evening, members of City Council. Again, I am Brent Cagle, Interim CEO of CATS. Wanted to start off this evening expressing my condolences to the friends and family of Iryna Zarutka. Iryna was murdered, as you all know, on Friday, August 22, 2025, at approximately 10:00 p.m. in a senseless act of random violence. As we've moved forward, I wanted to give you some insight into where we've been and where we're going as an organization, as CATS, specifically around our safety and security protocols, and what we have planned for the future. So, with that, I want to start a little bit with thinking about the last 2½ to three years, 2023, 2024, and today through 2025.

First thing, and you'll hear from Eric in a moment, CATS last year acknowledged and understood the importance of elevating safety and security to the executive level within the CATS organization. We added a Chief Safety and Security Officer. Mr. Osnes is our first Chief Safety and Security Officer, and he has been on the job here in Charlotte for about four months. However, he has been on the job in transit security for most of his life, as well as with federal agencies, including the FBI. He comes to us from New York

MTA (Metropolitan Transportation Authority), and he brings with him a lot of experience around transit security, and he brings with him new and fresh ideas for CATS, as we think about what we can do today, and also, we think about the future, and the possibility of our expanding transit system.

Secondly, coming into 2023, we had a single security contractor. That contractor was really approaching security from a, what I'm going to call, a corporate or a contract security standpoint, posting guards at a position. As we moved forward in 2023, and we were seeking new alternatives, ultimately, in December of 2024, we consolidated our security contract with Professional Security Services or PSS. I want to introduce Lee Ratliff. Lee is the owner of PSS. He is local former CMPD (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department), and I'll say, we'll talk more about this, but I think it's well worth noting. With the former contractor, we understood that we needed to move away from a corporate security model and really into a transit policing model, and that's what Lee and all of his dedicated employees have helped us do. At the same time, we increased spending on transit security from around \$5.8 million with the previous contractor, to three times that, where we are today at just under \$18 million. To support a transit policing approach, we understood that it would take more resources, and CATS was certainly excited about doing that.

Thirdly, we have been evaluating our camera and access control systems. We have been replacing old cameras with new, higher quality cameras that give us better visibility. We've also been identifying blind spots throughout the system, and adding cameras across the system, to give us a better visibility of the entire system. You're all aware of transit center upgrades, but I will say, while we think about the transit center, the Charlotte Transit Center, the CTC, Uptown, we have four transit centers. We have the CTC, we have Rosa Parks, we have Eastland, and we have SouthPark. We have recently conducted a comprehensive condition assessment on all of those facilities, and all of those facilities are slated for a variety of upgrades. As we think about those upgrades, those will be things that are important to passengers, like passenger amenities, but they will also be incorporating security into the design of the upgrades as we're doing those. We've also completed deescalation training for CATS staff. You're all aware that we have gone through a series of FTA (Federal Transit Administration) audits over the last two years, the special maintenance review, the financial management oversight review. You also may or may not be aware, we just completed our regularly scheduled triennial audit with the FTA. That audit had three findings, none of them were related to safety and security, and none of them were repeat findings. As well, Eric and his team have also engaged the TSA (Transportation Security Administration) to conduct threat vulnerability assessment across our system and specific to our facilities. So, again, those are all things that have been completed and help inform us as we move forward.

CATS by the numbers. I think this is really important to hit on as we go. When we think about security across CATS, we also think about the magnitude of the system. Six-hundred and seventy-five square miles is the service area that we have, just under 15 million riders in 2024; 3,000 bus stops; 28 park and rides; as I mentioned before, four transit centers; 43 rail stations; 235 fixed route buses, serving 67 bus routes daily; 48 train cars across our two rail services, Blue Line and Gold Line; 85 paratransit buses; and then an additional four operating facilities specific to CATS, it is our two rail facilities plus two bus facilities. All of those are within our service area and are within the purview of PSS (Professional Security Services) and CATS Safety and Security.

So, we are gathering data. Councilman Peacock had asked us for actual incident data. We are gathering that working with CMPD, but we also wanted to present to you something that we think is interesting as we do customer and community surveys. We conducted our last survey in 2024, and one thing that we see is, when it comes to safety, I think we all agree, the perception becomes the reality. So, when we talk to our riders, and we ask them about their perception of safety, both in rail and in bus, and we talk to them and we're specific about that, rail and bus, not all transit, we get very different responses on perception of safety than when we talk to the general public or the community in general. I think that probably makes the point that as we are starting

to talk about transit, a lot of folks have perceptions about safety and security, but sometimes many of those folks are not our users. When we talk to our users, what is their perception, and that is very different between the two groups.

So, with that, I just want to stop here. I will ask Mr. Osnes to come up, but I will say, again, this is our organizational structure for CATS Security. Mr. Osnes, I've talked about his experience and skills. He will talk more about the details of CATS Safety and Security and our position moving forward.

Eric Osnes, CATS Chief Safety and Security Officer said thank you, Brent, for those kind words. I only wish that I was being introduced under different circumstances. The organizational structure that you see in front of you represents the highest level of commitment to safety and security by the CATS executive team. My position answers directly to the Acting Chief Executive Officer. My staff is a combination of safety and security professionals, to include sworn law enforcement officers, who are responsible for assessing and evaluating both system-wide hazards and vulnerabilities. The team includes two dedicated CMPD officers that assist us with CMPD assets and operational continuity. So, protecting CATS assets is predicated on principles of recognition, evaluation, and control of vulnerabilities that have impacts on the community we serve. This occurs through collaborating with our regional partners, such as CMPD, the Transportation Security Administration, and our contracted security firm, PSS. It is working and training with the first responder community where we jointly come together to plan, resolve threats and vulnerabilities identified, and respond to events as they occur. This relationship fosters a unity, and I have witnessed ample evidence of solid working relationships with our partners. We don't operate in a vacuum.

The main elements of the CATS security infrastructure encompasses a combination of enforcement, internal electronic security, and customer reporting systems. Cameras are a key component of our electronic security posture. It feeds dedicated command centers, which allows us to view and hear real time, 24/7, the entire rail alignments and the activities, both within railcars and bus vehicles. Dispatchers are also available that constantly surveil transit police dispatch and report out events, while providing information that may assist CMPD from our CATS security and PSS teams. Customer assistance, such as what is provided in the CATS App, call buttons on the train, blue light phones, allow a customer and the public to interact with security policing systems facilitating communication real time as events unfold. This function and the community truly serve as a force multiplier, bringing attention to incidents and responders, which initiates even faster, quicker response times. Initiatives, such as CATS Connect and the Bus Ambassador Program, allows CATS to engage with the unhoused and persons in crisis, so as to bring resources from community partners that may be available to assist their needs.

So, challenges. During my five months serving for the CATS organization, I've come to recognize internal and external challenges. Internally, we are in the process of evaluating security staffing and ideal baselines of security personnel truly required to represent and address the magnitude and complexity of what we need to surveil and protect. Fare collection and fare evasion strategies, we're taking a fresh look at both, as there is a recognition to fare collection and validating fares on the train as a first line security control. Therefore, fare validation will be decoupled from security, as we're proposing now, and become more of an operational administrative function backed up by security. This will allow security teams to do security while dedicated fare collection teams maintain a consistent presence on our system, fostering awareness and developing a culture that you must pay to ride the system. This strategy is consistent with other transportation systems within the country. The process of evaluating infrastructure and security systems is an ever-evolving process making sure that basic controls, such as lighting, signage are in place, in addition to evaluating camera coverages, avoiding dead spots, and updating camera technologies to achieve optimum surveillance. External challenges outside of CATS' control. With respect to external challenges, we cannot have an honest discussion about security without talking about mental health. Our transit system is a microcosm of the community we serve, and society as a whole is experiencing a mental health crisis. During my tenure with New

York City's Bridges and Tunnels, or as you may know, the MTA, I had the opportunity and privilege to work with behavioral specialists from Columbia University, and New York City's Health Department on behalf of the Suicide Prevention. One thing I learned from this experience is that a combination of impulsivity and hopelessness is a dangerous combination, where suicide can be triggered at any time. This very same dynamic can occur, not only with those who do harm to themselves, but from those who intend to do harm to others. This is what happened on the night that Iryna was assaulted and ultimately killed. Without behavioral cues or intelligence warning security of a potentially unbalanced individual, the ability and probability of a successful intervention is unlikely. We cannot have our police serve as the de facto public health entity within our community.

So, to underscore a more positive event, this past Friday evening, where community reporting alerted security to erratic behavior at the CTC, our PSS Security Team successfully deescalated, apprehended, that brought no harm to the security staff, the public or the individual who was suffering an episode brandishing knives and threatening the public. I only bring this to attention as a juxtaposition. When we have information, when we are observing behavior, we have the opportunity to react when that behavior is evident.

So, CATS has a security strategy that encompasses seven elements. The security support teams, training and procedures, fare policy, fare enforcement, system conditions, technology, social challenges and partnerships, communication and education. These all lead to the desired outcomes of enhanced security visibility, decreased response times, reduction of fare evasion, support a safe and welcoming environment for employees and riders, and counter the perception that public transportation is inherently unsafe. In your Appendix, there is a number of tactics that are associated with supporting this strategy. I invite you to take a look at some of the details related to those tactical applications. Brent, I'll turn it back to you.

Mr. Cagle said thank you, Eric. So, just to wrap up before we get into questions, a few key takeaways from tonight from our view. Number one, we have a new approach to security with PSS, really a transit policing model, not a corporate security model. Right now, PSS has an emphasis on achieving full staffing. Again, the total number of staff dedicated to that contract has more than doubled in the last two years, and PSS is successfully hiring, but they are not at full staffing yet. So, there is an emphasis on achieving that full staffing. Secondly, this is a continuous evaluation of total security staffing needs. We never stop that evaluation, even once we're at full staffing, because the transit system and its needs will continue to evolve, and therefore, so should our approach to total staffing needs.

Secondly, fare collection. When we think about fare collection, we believe there are three main elements. The first is our fare policy. CATS has been conducting a fare study over the last eight months. We are prepared to bring forward initial recommendations about our fare policy. We've heard folks ask about discounted fares, what about those folks. Everyone should be paying, but possibly there are ways to discount fares based on needs. CATS currently discounts fares for two reasons based on age, young and older folks. It is the norm to have discounted fares based on need, Veteran's, other groups rather than just age based, and we have been looking at that. So, one of those starts is the fare policy.

Secondly, fare technology. We've talked about it tonight. Ticket validation is important. What that means is, if you have a ticket you get that ticket validated. Some systems use ticket validators on their train platforms before you board, you validate the ticket. Some systems have ticket validation handheld with the fare inspectors, or the ticket review personnel. We need to continue reviewing that, and it possibly will be a combination of both. Ticket validation on the platform works very well for rail. It does not work at all for bus. So, we need to have a separate approach.

Then, lastly, but certainly not least, just fare enforcement people, going through visibly present throughout the system, routinely checking tickets and ensuring that the fares

are paid. All of these together we believe will create a stronger presence, and also help to educate the public that riding transit has a cost, that we need to have a ticket.

The third item is investing in infrastructure. Again, as we think about the possibility to continue expanding the transit system, but even with what we have today, a good example of expanding infrastructure are shelters. We've talked a lot about adding additional shelters. Part of those shelters is lighting. All of those things factor into both the perception and the reality of safety and security throughout the system, as well as thinking about, as I mentioned before, as we think about improvements and upgrades to our facilities, how do we integrate into those designs smart decisions to make it easier for our security team to secure those facilities and ensure that our riders are safe while they're on our property?

The last thing I'll say is, we acknowledge, and we know that external issues outside of control of CATS will continue to present challenges. I mean, said another way, we can't do it alone. We need partners. I'm really encouraged tonight to see so many of our partners here. CMPD is a strong partner, the District Attorney's Office, Mecklenburg County, and Social Services, the nonprofit community, we're all in this together. This is not an issue that CATS or CATS Security can solve alone, and we appreciate all of that collaboration and the partnership that we have received, and we look forward to that in the future.

The last thing before I wrap this up and move over to questions is, as Eric mentioned, this is our presentation for tonight. You also have an Appendix with those tactics involved in your printed material. Also, the Mayor asked us several questions. You also have questions and answers to those questions, and Councilmember Peacock, you have also asked about the statistics, and again, we are working on those with CMPD to get you the accurate information and we will release that shortly.

Mayor Lyles said alright, thank you, Brent.

Councilmember Ajmera said couple of questions. Mr. Cagle, thank you for updating us on the security enhancements that have gone in. You mentioned there have been increased investments that have been made in hiring additional security officers. When did these enhancements get implemented?

Mr. Cagle said yes, ma'am. So, when I began my interim position with CATS in basically the beginning of 2023, we immediately started evaluating our security resources, and that led us to selecting a new vendor and increasing the spending. So, that has been a continuous increase in spend since 2023, leading us to where we are today.

Ms. Ajmera said so, almost two years, is that fair to say?

Mr. Cagle said yes, ma'am.

Ms. Ajmera said okay. So, what is the gap currently? I know in key takeaways, you mentioned that there is an emphasis on achieving full staffing. So, where we are we currently, and what's the gap number?

Mr. Cagle said yes. So, I'll give you rough numbers. I'm sure Lee and Eric can give you exact, but today the contract allows for approximately 218 total personnel, and PSS is currently at 186 personnel, with a hiring plan to reach full staffing over the remainder of this year, into the fall. I will say that there's two challenges to staffing and to our new approach. One is, it's just hard to hire, this is a difficult job to hire. The second is, and there's more information in the Q&A on this, as we think about the skills needed to approach security from a transit policing standpoint, that requires a higher level of training of the staff than simply saying here's your post, stand there, and report out if you see something going on. So, I will say Lee and his team are working through that. They've developed those training programs, and they are actively hiring and putting people through the training as we speak.

Ms. Ajmera said thank you. So, there are 32 positions open, and I'm assuming it's already been budgeted for in this Fiscal Year's budget, and the plan is to fill that gap by end of this year?

Mr. Cagle said that is correct, if possible.

Ms. Ajmera said okay. I know you mentioned a very important point about perception versus the reality. I know that survey that you have on slide number five, that is from riders directly. Was this survey done before we lost Iryna Zarutka, or was this survey done after?

Mr. Cagle said it was done during 2024, so before.

Ms. Ajmera said so, this was before. I would like to see what would be the perception now, especially after several incidents we have publically heard about, because I've heard from riders, who take our public buses and our transit, that the confidence in the system has gone down. So, I'd be interested in seeing the updated number.

On slide number nine, I know you mentioned about what's within our control and what's outside of CATS control. I think that's important because, like you said, security and safety of our community, it takes all of us working together in collaboration with, most importantly, the District Attorney's Office, as well as our judicial system. So, with that, if you had all the key takeaways that you have right now, if they were implemented, would we have been able to save Iryna Zarutka's life?

Mr. Cagle said so, I will answer that based on the folks I have talked to who are law enforcement professionals or security professionals. The individual, Mr. Brown, did not present any indications that he was suffering from a mental health break at the time, and so, again, from what I've been told we do not believe so.

Ms. Ajmera said and that is extremely concerning, because after all of these investments that we are making, we still can't guarantee 100 percent safety. Did Mr. Brown, did he have a ticket?

Mr. Cagle said we do not believe so. So, we have reviewed the video. Mr. Brown entered the transit system that day via bus. He rode, and it does not appear that he presented a pass or a ticket. He rode to the transit center, where he then transferred over to the Blue Line, and rode out into South End to the south, along the Blue Line, and he was returning when this event occurred.

Ms. Ajmera said so, that means had we had this system in place for fare collection, he may not have been able to board the bus to begin with. So, that means our controls would have worked, and we would have been able to save Iryna Zarutka's life.

Mr. Cagle said with an open system, it will always be impossible to check every passenger every day on every vehicle. The importance of having more ticket validators is not to achieve 100 percent validation of all tickets, that that is not possible across the system. It is to create that visual presence routinely, so that passengers understand that they will be checked much more often than today.

Ms. Ajmera said so, I have a follow-up on that, because I'm a product of public transportation. So, as you enter the bus, there is an automated system that scans your pass. Was it not there on the bus, before he transferred to the light rail?

Mr. Cagle said it was. Another change in protocols that we implemented about a year ago, related to driver safety, because where an operator gets assaulted most frequently is trying to enforce fares. So, a driver, an operator, is there to operate the bus, not to try to enforce fares. So, it appears, based on the video, that Mr. Brown boarded the bus, did not stop and pay a fare, but then moved on beyond, and sat down and rode.

Ms. Ajmera said so, I guess that further raises the question then, how would we work on fare enforcement?

Mr. Cagle said by having dedicated fare enforcement officers or ticket checkers through the system who are routinely moving throughout the system. The light rail was built as an open system, and we can't change that. It is not physically possible to close the open system. The other thing I'll say on the light rail is, there are benefits that were known to building an open system. It is the norm throughout the Country. The bus system by and large is an open system as well, and so, it's not possible to check every rider every day every trip, but it is possible to increase presence, so that people understand that they are more likely to be checked, and therefore, they are going to be buying those tickets.

Ms. Ajmera said so, as part of the plan, in terms of the fare enforcement, that would be not on every bus. Am I understanding that correctly?

Mr. Cagle said it will be fare enforcement operations throughout the system. It is not a single person stationed on every bus every hour of the day, or every light rail vehicle every hour of the day. It is a visible presence throughout the system that people see routinely, but it is not literally one staff person or two staff people per vehicle every hour of every day.

Ms. Ajmera said how many citations have been issued for not having a ticket?

Mr. Cagle said I don't have that number in front of me. I assure you there are citations, and we can get you that number. I will also say, our goal is not to go out and write as many tickets as we can. Our goal is to gain compliance. So, it is frequent that our fare inspectors will encounter someone who hasn't paid, and they will give them the opportunity to buy that ticket rather than write them a citation, but I can get you the total number of citations.

Ms. Ajmera said yes, I would be interested in seeing how many citations have been issued for not having a ticket compared to previous years. How many staff members do we have that do fare enforcement?

Mr. Cagle said yes. So, again, I would defer to Lee on exactly their operational plan on fare enforcement, but clearly, we acknowledge two things. One, we need more staff dedicated to fare enforcement, and two, that fare enforcement should be decoupled from security and security is there to support them while they're doing their job, which is checking tickets. So, we can get you the answer specifically to how many are currently there, but we acknowledge that there needs to be more.

Ms. Ajmera said and I know you talked about the external issues outside of CATS control that's going to continue to present challenges. As we are looking at collaborating with other entities, whether it's the judicial system, the District Attorney's Office, our nonprofit partners, the County, could you highlight a few items that we could work on to address some of these external issues?

Mr. Cagle said yes. So, I'll give you an example, and it's not that we will start coordinating, it's we'll continue coordinating. So, we've already started conversations with Roof Above. During COVID, CATS made the decision to allow Roof Above, their folks who are staying overnight at their center on Statesville Avenue, to utilize the bus to get to their day center, which is over on Tryon at no charge. We see the need for folks to get to the services they need, but what we also see the need for is to work with Roof Above, as an example, to create a program that allows them to have a pass for when they are doing those things, not just board a bus with no fare. So, those kinds of things, also working with the County on CATS Connect. When we encounter someone who needs Social Services, working with the County to collaborate and to give them the opportunity to get those services. We also acknowledge that not all solutions are through security or policing, not every problem has a security or policing solution. So, it's those partnerships with the County, with organizations like Roof Above, with Center

City Partners, with CMPD, that we really work to strengthen and will continue to strengthen as we move forward.

Ms. Ajmera said thank you, and just one last question. You touched on this when you talked about investing in infrastructure. I know that some transit systems across the nation have physical infrastructure in place, it's a more controlled environment, when it comes to fare enforcement, especially on light rail. If you could elaborate on what that infrastructure would look like for us as we are talking about our Mobility Plan?

Mr. Cagle said so, what you're referring to is the difference between an open system, which we have, and a closed system, which cities like New York City have.

Ms. Ajmera said yes.

Mr. Cagle said so, most light rail systems are open systems. I'm only aware of one transit agency that has even attempted to convert an open system to a closed system, it's St. Louis, Missouri. So, thinking about the open system and the benefits it brings. One of the benefits to an open system is its convenience and how it's integrated into the communities it serves. When you think about the subway system in New York, it is part of New York City, but those trains are not integrated at street level into the community like they are across Charlotte, so you do lose that, but the other issue we have that we believe, as we've looked at it is, many of those platforms are designed in a way that they're really integrated with sidewalks or the rail trail. So, trying to put in infrastructure to close those platforms would be difficult, if not impossible, when it comes to meeting ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements, or other requirements necessary for proper size of the platform. The last problem I will note is, some of our platforms are big enough that you could do that. Even if you could do that, the system is built at grade throughout the City, and so, you can't literally fence out the entire system, because it crosses roads, vehicles have to cross, and that could create a new safety concern for fare evasion, where someone might try to walk up the tracks to gain access to the station, which is also very, very dangerous. We see what happens sometimes when people don't pay attention and cross the tracks without doing that. So, there are a variety of reasons. I think it's something that we can continue to look at, but I believe because of how we have built the system, and there are benefits to how we built it, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to go back and change that decision today.

Ms. Ajmera said I understand in terms of retrofitting what's already in place could be a huge undertaking. In terms of some of these key takeaways, I'm hoping that we can address some of the recent incidents that have happened, because we have seen, at least from the data I have seen in the news, that we have had more incidents in past year than we have had in the past, and that certainly instills fear in people, and we cannot let that fear drive people away from riding our transit system when we're investing so much more in our light rail and our public buses. I appreciate the action plan that you presented, and I look forward to hearing more in terms of the data that I requested. Mr. Cagle, as well as Mr. Osnes and Mr. Ratliff, I appreciate your leadership. I've always admired Mr. Cagle, your candidness, and how detailed each one of your presentations have been. I look forward to working with you in addressing some of these safety issues that we have seen. Thank you.

Councilmember Anderson said first, I just want to state my condolences to Ms. Zarutska's family. It was a terrible, senseless act, and very sorry the young lady lost her life. I want to ask a couple of questions, and I wonder if Mr. Osnes can join you, Mr. Cagle. Very happy to have your experience with us, Mr. Osnes, especially having come from New York City and the MTA. I spent some years there and utilized public transportation while I was there very heavily. A couple questions. If we could maybe go to slide four. First, we're talking about the opportunity to expand our public transportation system, and Mr. Cagle, in 2024 we had nearly 15 million riders. That's pretty impressive, and I think clearly a good baseline for the fact that we need additional options for public transportation, but also, the bus stops, a very high number of bus stops with a very low number of benches and shelters. So, when we talk about fare enforcement, to pay a fee to ride public transportation or to attend an event, there

should be some dignity that comes with that fare. I mean, that's a very low percentage as it relates to bus stops that have shelter and benches. So, we really have to have that investment to bring the dignity to the experience of our public ridership. So, I'm looking forward hopefully to the investment in that space.

I also wanted to know, Mr. Osnes, we also talked about technology, and I'm wondering where our technology sits. You spoke about the number of cameras and other technological infrastructures that would help with security, but where does our technology system sit as it relates to some of our peer cities for transportation?

Mr. Osnes said so, if you're asking me to judge where our current technology sits and capabilities related to technology, in comparison to what I've seen out of the systems that I've come from, I would say it's pretty good. Reason why I'm saying what I'm saying is because we have a clear line of sight between all of our rail alignments from the beginning of the line to the terminal stations. We are able to view movement of people. We are able to evaluate events that occur through our operating centers, and we get pretty good coverage of what's out there right now. Through the short period of time that I've been with CATS, we've been able to isolate aspects of an event that has occurred on our system. Case in point, last Friday during the assault that we're talking about today, we were able to isolate the event, shortly, almost immediate to the event. We were able to get pictures out to the CMPD, which ultimately led to the apprehension of the individual who did this act. So, I would say the integrated operation centers, the ability to review what's currently on the alignment, as well as within our trains, as well as within our buses, we can see, we can hear, we can piece an event together. I would add that system security is an ever-evolving process. We need to explore other technologies, like AI (Artificial Intelligence) overlays, that will help us evaluate further, but if the question is, my current perception in relation to what I've seen out of the systems that I came from, I would say we're pretty good.

Ms. Anderson said okay, great. You got to my second question, because I wanted to ask, as it relates to our technology portfolio for security, do we have the right elements within our technology portfolio? So, you mentioned AI, but I'm also thinking about sensors, near field operations, etc. Do we have the proper suite of elements within our tech portfolio?

Mr. Osnes said again, I would say it's an ever-evolving process to review the systems that are out there that may integrate with our current system successfully. The current system gives us a good capability to review events that are occurring, to listen to and evaluate events that are occurring in real time. There's always opportunity for improvement, technology changes on a very rapid basis, and I would say our security team is in consistent communication with the leads within the electronic security community to make determination on what may work with our system currently.

Ms. Anderson said okay.

Mr. Cagle said one thing I'll add on AI, because I do think AI will continue to evolve as a very helpful tool for security. We have had conversations with AI vendors, who as you contract with them, your video feed goes through their AI software, and can help to identify almost immediately weapons, if someone's carrying a weapon or has a weapon. One of the limitations, or that we want to see develop, at least with the vendor we were talking to, is their software was very, very effective at identifying firearms. It was not effective at identifying fixed blade weapons and knives, or other things. So, we are excited about, and I think many transit agencies are, about that continuing evolution of technology to be even more effective.

Ms. Anderson said that's great because I think this is an area where AI can be of benefit to us. We know that largely municipalities don't lean on AI for their operations, but within this specific case, I think it can help us with our security and standing up preemptive protocols to mitigate events like this.

My last couple questions. If you could go to slide nine. You had mentioned, and I do like the structure of internal within CATS, and then external, things that you don't control. We are seeing, not only on the transportation system, but just in general on the streets and in neighborhoods, the impact of cognitive illness and mental health, as well as public health. Mr. Osnes, I wanted to ask you, again, from your experience in other major cities, are there opportunities that we're missing to partner with community leaders to address this issue that is clearly outside of CATS control?

Mr. Osnes said I think that there are initiatives in place, such as CATS Connect, where we are interfacing with the unhoused along areas adjacent to our properties. What we're missing is the behavioral evaluation piece. Those that specialize in behavioral-based analysis. Those that are able to evaluate an individual's balance. That is missing from our portfolio. If we can work together through the resources of the City, and collaborate in that regard, where we're truly having a balanced approach to a security posture, taking into consideration the fact that we are dealing with an epidemic of the mind, and that we have people who understand what those symptoms look like, how to evaluate those symptoms, as we come together as a taskforce to engage with that population that we're trying to evaluate and getting the services that they need.

Ms. Anderson said I think this is one of our biggest opportunities, in addition to addressing the unhoused, but this opportunity to have an integrator, the role of an integrator, and I don't believe it's the City's role. I believe the City has a part as a player in it, but between our community members, our nonprofit organizations, the City, the County. We have lots of nonprofit organizations and yet, we don't really have that horizontal integration to assess that we have the right effort and people working on the right things and being able to allow us as a player to flex when we need to flex in certain areas. So, I think this is a great opportunity to work with our wonderful hospital systems that we have here, as well as our universities that have very smart graduate students who focus on behavioral health and social work and other areas, leveraging nurse navigators within the community. Right now, we all have very good intentions, but sometimes we're kind of clanking against each other like a set of wind chimes, and what we really need is for someone to steady that flow and help us integrate horizontally. It's something I've been thinking about, because I think it's a missing piece for us here in the City, but if there's any ideas that you have coming from New York City and other major areas where you've seen partners come in and attempt to do some level of collaboration, I think it would be very, very helpful.

The last point I'm just going to make is, I think it's great that you are decoupling security from operations. That's a very smart move, and hopefully you will see the alignment of the reduction of fare evasion and allowing the security officers to focus on what they need to focus on. We receive reports from CMPD every month, and when I go to the neighborhood meetings, there are incident reports that our neighborhood officers share with communities. I don't know if it's possible, but if it's possible, it might be great to have those incidents broken down on what's happening on our public transportation systems as well, so there's a column there on those report, if the officer's track that information.

Mr. Osnes said so, one of the initiatives that we're putting in play as we speak is, trying to normalize the data that's occurring on our properties in relation to the community that that particular structure or stop is associated with. It's one thing that I have to give credit to PSS is that they truly work as a police unit, that they work in relation to the Districts that are represented within the City, and that there's a unified approach there. You could see the strategy is more from a policing standpoint than a typical security posture, and Brent talked about this. That'll help us normalize our data as well, because then we'll be comparing apples to apples.

Ms. Anderson said thank you, I think that'd be very helpful. We want to make sure that our residents have faith in our public transportation system, but also our visitors. So, when visitors come to the City, we want them to feel comfortable on the public transportation system as well. I thank you for your leadership, and I know that you all will bring some great things to us so we can continue to move the needle on this effort,

because it's one of the critical issues that we have going into the new year. So, thank you. Thank you, Madam Mayor.

Mr. Osnes said thank you.

Councilmember Mayfield said thank you all for rather quickly presenting to us on some decisions that you've made and things you've been working on. I'm going to stay towards the end and move back forward. If we can click forward to slide 11, since we're on nine, thank you. So, we have this new approach to security, transit policing model. Are these armed guards that we're talking about?

Mr. Cagle said yes and. So, the security forces that are in the contract are a mix of certified law enforcement officers, armed security guards, and unarmed security guards. It is a mix. So, it is all three.

Ms. Mayfield said so, if there was to be an incident where one of these armed officers was to discharge their weapon and that resulted in the taking of a life, whose liability insurance is going to be hit with that, because if someone in community is engaged with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, it's the City that's generally sued. So, what would that look like?

Mr. Cagle said yes. So, I think there's two ways, and I'll let Lee answer from the company perspective, and then we'll talk about the City perspective as well.

Lee Ratliff, PSS said so, to answer your question, if one of our officers discharged a firearm, and it was a deadly force situation, our general liability insurance steps in, but one of the things that we did do, and I don't know if you guys are aware of this, is we did contract with a police attorney. We use some of our judicial officials to come in and do training classes with our officers, just like Sunday, we had the Honorable Rod Davis come in. We asked them to come in and work with our officers, and we don't just do police officers, we do police and security officers. The reason why we do that is we want to make sure that that level of training that we give them, that they fully understand the scope, not only just what the police officers are doing, but where they fit in that role. So, if they have a better understanding of how we train our police officers, those officers are more likely to work in conjunction with those police officers, and they can still achieve the same goal. To answer your question, if it's a deadly force situation with a security officer or a law enforcement officer, we are covered by a general liability policy, and that policy steps in along with our police attorney.

Ms. Mayfield said thank you so very much. Mr. Cagle, for the fare technology, including the ticket validation, so, if I've understood some of the responses that you shared with our colleagues. Unlike D.C. or New York, because of the way we built the system, we don't have turnstiles, for lack of a better word, to where you have to show proof of a ticket before you can go through. You may have mentioned this, and I might've just missed it. How many current fare inspectors do we have?

Mr. Cagle said again, that was asked. I do not have the answer, but we will get you the exact number. We'll follow up with that.

Ms. Mayfield said that would be very helpful. Now, if we were to back up to slide number four, and then I'll go to three. Thank you, team. So, on this one, that 3,021 bus stops, I shared the concerns with my colleagues as far as the number of shelters and benches that we have out there. This 3,021 number, is this from 2024, or are these recent numbers, because we've realigned some in-neighborhood routes, again, within this year. So, what are these numbers from?

Mr. Cagle said so, these numbers are 2024 numbers. They may have changed slightly, but they are generally the numbers as they would be today with maybe some slight variation. I will say, as part of the transit system plan, there is a plan to add improvements to 2,000 additional stops, and as you think about the plan, that leaves about 500. There's about 500 covered today, and 2,000 we're now at about 2,500. The

other thing you have to remember about stops is, as we implement microtransit, you need less stops, because you get picked up where you are. You don't go to a bus stop, it picks you up at home. You don't have to walk there, and so again, that number can change. With microtransit, we would expect the total number of stops to decline, as there are 19 total zones, and 2,000 stops to have amenities added to them, 2,000-plus stops.

Ms. Mayfield said thank you for that. It would be helpful, Manager Jones, to have an accurate overlay, not a percentage overlay, with the neighborhood routes that have been realigned or eliminated, along with the lines that are identified for microtransit. Okay, if we've eliminated a line off of Columbus Circle, and we don't have microtransit going off Columbus Circle and Marlowe, or Dowd Village, or any of some of our areas on the backstreets of Beatties Ford, that's an impact that's happening if we once had a bus route that neighbors were able to connect with. I want us to, as close as possible, be transparent with microtransit. Having microtransit in Birkdale, that's an amenity. Having microtransit, if you live in Steele Creek and trying to get to the airport versus an hour and a half on the bus to go literally around the corner, that's a very different impact. So, I would like for us to look at real numbers.

If staff can go to slide three, please. So, as my colleague talked about AI, I want us to be very intentional, as far as recognizing that we have had, across the nation, numerous lawsuits and cases, especially if we're ever going to consider, or try to slide in, the usage of AI for facial recognition, since it has been proven repeatedly that those of us who have the variations of melanated skin, that facial recognition is not as accurate on a consistent basis. So, I did hear one company you're looking at is able to identify what may be a gun. I don't know if that's the physical metal gun, or if it's a 3D printed, because unfortunately those are making their way through TSA. So, if we're considering using AI to help identify an individual, I would like for us to be very intentional, and you can actually connect through the City's partner, National League of Cities, through the NBC-LEO, National Black Caucus Local Elected Officials. Over the last three years, our leadership has actually interviewed a number of AI providers that specifically work in the space of identifying the diversity of our community, and they have figured out how to create programs that can help identify skin tones, from the three shades of the beautiful black women that you have sitting right here, as far as those who may be of Indian decent or other nationalities. So, if we're going to do that, I want us to utilize the relationship that we do have. That is more of a comment.

Mr. Cagle, when you talked about the Transportation Security Administration, the threat vulnerability assessment, so, we say right now, there's no precautions on the bus. This individual that unfortunately, probably was going through a psychosis and/or a crisis that took the life of an individual, that potentially did not pay a fare, why do we not have a way for that driver to basically, whether it is a walkie talkie or a button, that directly connects? We have the CLT+ App. We should have a way for our drivers to directly connect with the transit station, so as soon as that individual came on and they saw that that potentially was going to be a problem, do we not have something in place where that driver could've notified someone that, hey, next stop coming up, of which, Manager Jones, I mentioned this last Monday, we need to have a better integrated system where the buses are aligned also with rail, but some kind of way to have notified someone that, hey, I just picked you up, my stop, drop the pin, I'm on the corner of 3rd and College. By the time I get to that next stop, somebody should be notified that we might have a situation in place. We don't have something like that currently in place.

Mr. Cagle said we absolutely do. Drivers can always contact, via a variety of means, the Bus Operations Control Center, as well as directly to Safety and Security dispatch. So, those are in place, have been in place. A multiple number of means on the bus are in the place.

Ms. Mayfield said so, are you telling me that none of those means were executed when this happened?

Mr. Cagle said correct.

pti:pk

Ms. Mayfield said so, I believe that that goes back into that training piece. Is that what you're saying?

Mr. Cagle said so, I do think from an operator standpoint, do they always call and say, I need security to come and take this person off the bus? No, they don't. Does security look at that and have active conversations with the operators to determine where security needs to be positioned? Yes, they do.

Ms. Mayfield said so, that's a different question. So, Manager, what I'm hoping that you hear from me is if we have anyone that gets on the bus and they have not paid a fare, we should be tracking that. There has to be a clear way, where if that driver felt insecure or uncertain by the nature of body movement, agitation, whatever it was, that allowed them to let this individual get on. I don't care if it's a button, I would prefer it not be something where they need to actually get on the phone, because first of all you don't need to be on your phone while you're driving. We need to have some kind of way, because, one, we need to be tracking if people are getting on the bus and not paying a fare, but there has to be some type of logically way, when we're talking about the utilization of Artificial Intelligence and just using modern technology, that we should've been able to notify, because that split second, even if someone was there, it would've been very difficult for them to stop hi,. My colleague, Dr. Watlington, and I gave each other a scenario on that. Yet, when you first approach, we read body language pretty well. Our bus drivers read body language pretty well. What I'm hearing Interim Director Cagle say, that yes, we have mechanisms in place. One, none of those mechanisms were utilized, that's a problem. Two, it doesn't seem like there was a clear way to say this might be a problem. Whether it's a problem or not, we're not even tracking that an individual climbed onboard and did not pay.

Mr. Cagle said we do track that, those mechanisms are in place, and I think the point here is, that individual was not acting erratic at all. They boarded the bus, and they did not pay, or they did not appear to pay, but they were not acting erratic. If they had been, if there had been some kind of incident, absolutely. So, in those, if the person is acting erratic or there's a verbal altercation or something is amiss, then the operator is instructed to pull the bus over immediately, contact security, and security is immediately dispatched, but what I was trying to say is in this instance, Mr. Brown did not exhibit those behaviors in a way that would've indicated to the operator, I need to call for assistance immediately. They absolutely have mechanisms, multiple mechanisms, and they use them. This was not one of those incidents, though. He appeared to be someone who was using transit and going about his business. He did not exhibit erratic or other signs that this was going on with him and he was in the condition he was.

Ms. Mayfield said thank you for that. As you shared earlier, we cannot have an officer and/or a security guard on every bus, on every train throughout 24/7. I still think that there's some value to looking into us creating a way, outside of a bus driver pulling over, because depending on what the situation is, you just created a hostage situation, to say I'm going to pull the bus over and can bring it to a stop versus being able to connect with security, law enforcement, and keep moving until you get to that next stop, and have some other way versus coming to a complete stop.

Mr. Cagle said and they do have that ability. If they believe that it would put themselves or the other passengers in jeopardy, they have a button. They have multiple buttons, but one button will activate a sign, the sign on the outside of the bus, that says Call 911. It's an emergency. They also have a button, no one has to say anything. They do not even have to speak, but when they activate that button, the audio system, the speakers on the bus, the [inaudible] is alerted that there is a incident going on on that, and they immediately have an open microphone and camera to that bus, and the operator doesn't have to state anything, because we acknowledge that stating something may put them or others in jeopardy. Those are there for them. What we find when you pull over. So, let's say it's a verbal altercation between two passengers. Those verbal altercations, and we've talked about fights that occur on the bus, a lot of those fights start with a verbal altercation that escalates. When an operator pulls over and opens the door and says, this bus is not moving until this altercation stops, what normally happens

is, the altercation stops and/or one of the people exits the bus. So, again, that is a best practice, that is a standard protocol. Rather than allowing that altercation to continue stop after stop, you give an opportunity to break that cycle, if you will, that's going on and tends to escalate, but there are instances where that is not the appropriate thing to do, and operators have those tools at their disposal to immediately have Lee and his team on scene to assist them.

Ms. Mayfield said thank you so much for the clarification. Thank you, Madam Mayor.

Councilmember Peacock said Brent, I want to thank you all. Ya'll have done a really, really good job tonight. I've watched your interview on WSOC. I realize that each of you are having to answer a lot of questions that are difficult. I appreciate Chief Jennings being here representing all the law enforcement that responded August 22, 2025, as well too. I see Michael Smith here as well too with Charlotte Center City Partners. I know they've got a public safety working group. While I don't see my friends from the United Way, I know we have A Home For All. We're working on a City/County corporate partnership that we're trying to pull together to address a lot of the community issues that we're talking about.

Mr. Cagle, I wanted to share with you a rather unusual Friday night for me. Last Friday night, I ate dinner and finished up, and I know that no one here at this dais has ever multi-tasked while watching TV and also watching a screen on your hand, but it inspired me, that I was tired of looking at all these tweets about all the problems that were occurring, and my wife has seen me do this, I just jumped up and I said, I'm going to ride the light rail, and so, I rode the light rail from 9:20 p.m. until 11:20 p.m. on Friday night, from New Bern to UNCC (University of North Carolina Charlotte), it's 18 stops there and back. Just simply put on my observation glasses to see what was going on, Madam Mayor. Number one, first observation is it's a rolling living room. It is our community on full display. That night, ASU (Arizona State University) was playing UNCC. There was an electric nature to it. There were people that were entering that were young, that were old. There were hospital workers. There were construction workers. You just really saw what I consider to be a very mature transit system in full display.

I did interact with two of your PSS individuals, interestingly, right at the East/West stop. I had a brief conversation with one of them. It was most positive. I noticed that he had handcuffs, and I think what appeared to be mace. That was all we talked about, and I know that he was in a 10-hour shift, so it was a significant amount of time, as it relates to that. By the time I came back, Mrs. Mayor, I came back and simply the question to me is, can we remain an open platform system? This also brought me back to a similar thing that I had done in 1999 while living in Washington D.C. Many of us were all worried about what was going to happen at the turn of the clock in 1999, and was the world going to come down in the year 2000. I lived in between East and West Falls Church Metro stops, I frequently used them to go into Washington D.C., and it too was around 9:30 p.m. at night, and I said, I want to go to the Washington National Mall now, because I want to see the clock turn, and I'm not getting scared, I think we're going to be okay. So, the number one thing that night, Mr. Manager, was all about security. Was there going to be a mass attack on our rails, and that's what I thought about the most as I was riding back. What would happen, from my friend here who's been in a New York metro system where we have had significant attacks, is how can we control security when we don't know who's exactly on the train or not on the train, and it's simply open? I just worried about security, broad security, if we had an incident where someone detonated something, any type of incident, how would we be able to respond to that?

So, I commend you all for how you're answering these questions tonight. I'm pleased to see that we have a Council action coming here on September 22, 2025. It's a Mutual Aid Agreement between CMPD and PSS. My question for you all has just been, you have a mutual agreement that will allow PSS Officers to address transit-related security issues that may extend beyond CATS property. So, the question I have is that, have we not had a relationship with CMPD? Why are we having to set up an agreement?

Mr. Cagle said historically, we have not. So, as we talk about transit policing and how we work in collaboration, this is something that Lee and the CATS Security Team, Eric, has identified as another tool that will help us and CMPD, not just CATS, work together better. There are jurisdictional issues, and I'm not an attorney, so I don't want to get into all of the details, but there are jurisdictional issues that our employees, as well as CMPD, run into between the CATS properties and other off-property areas. So, this will help us better manage that. It will also give us better ability, specifically in the South End, to work and collaborate with CMPD along the rail trail, and other areas that connect those platforms, but are not specifically the platforms. We also have jurisdictional issues at bus stops. Those are, again, another area. So, let me say this. Security is not one thing. Every great security plan is layered. It's many things together to create security. The Mutual Aid Agreement is not the one thing. It is a thing that goes into our layered approach and assists CMPD and PSS and Eric and his team, as we're all working together to increase security throughout the community, but also throughout the transit system.

Mr. Peacock said one other question. Could you go to slide nine, the one that we pointed to internal and external? I just wanted to point out on the rise of incidents, and I look forward to getting ya'll's report back, I was sworn in on May 20, 2025, and on May 22, 2025, it was reported in The Observer that Jolene Hopper, she was thrown on a platform and was strangled, she had three stitches, and she had a broken elbow. Don't know where the status of that report is, but I look forward to learning more about that. Many of ya'll may have seen the news stories on August 12, 2025, on a CATS bus at Carolina Place Mall in Pineville, a Veteran was attacked by four individuals and on that I know there's an ongoing investigation there, and then obviously what we've seen on August 22, 2025, and I appreciate you all pointing out the incident that you prevented, it sounds like on August 29, 2025, at the CTC from there.

Final observation, Mrs. Mayor, just from the other night, and I was thinking about you. I've been in the airport, and I've heard your voice. I like it. I think it's a great reminder that you're welcoming us here. I wonder why we don't have a reminder to those riding individuals on the train for everyone, myself included, not only what is going to be the next stop that's coming, but I'm surprised that we don't have an announcement that displays and tells us what happens if you don't pay your fare? What's the fine? What happens to repeat offenders, and I think that needs to be put over the PA system. Maybe it wasn't on my train, I don't know.

Mr. Cagle said yes, absolutely, that is a great suggestion, and it's something we can look at. There is signage on our vehicles stating all of that, but we can certainly look at that.

Mr. Peacock said [inaudible] train coming. I'd like to hear train coming. If you haven't paid your fare, you could be asked to be removed from the train, number one. You're only going to be asked a couple times. I mean, I'm trying to give practical tips that we can use tomorrow if we possibly can, whether it's the Mayor's message, whether it's an automated voice, I don't care, but we need to remind people that if you're going to ride our system, you need to pay. I think that happens, and I noticed this with bus riders, when bus riders get on, I see the way that the individual, the bus driver, has turned people away, and if they don't have the money, they might not get on, but that's very hard to do in an open architecture system like we have right now.

Mr. Cagle said so, we instruct our bus operators not to do what you just said. I won't say it never happens, but we instruct our bus operators not to do what you just said. They are there to operate the bus, not to enforce, because we do see we have had, so rise in severity of incidents, things that maybe were verbal altercations. If you don't have the money you can't ride, and there's maybe some back and forth verbal, turns into physical assault of the operators. Post-COVID, that has become a very real concern, both in the number of times that our operators were being assaulted, and in the severity of the assault. The fare box is the point of contention on the bus, not always, but generally speaking, between an operator and the passenger.

Mr. Peacock said final comment, and I don't know where this idea would fall, but I know at our airport, we have volunteers who welcome people to Charlotte. They're wearing a vest. They're very pleasant. They're very positive. This falls in the category that you said, you have people that are fully armed, partially armed, and not armed, and I don't believe that our system can completely be staffed at full tilt all the time. You've already said that's a standard we can't achieve. Is it possible for us to be able to utilize individuals from our community who are interested in public safety that could be a part of being a very pleasant and positive force to remind people and to be there and to show some sense of order in that regard that are wearing identifiable volunteer things, simply to help people moving in and around the system?

Mr. Cagle said yes, what you're describing is the Bus Ambassador Program. Those folks generally are not volunteering, they are being paid, but they are not serving a security function there. They are there to assist passengers with questions, how do I pay, how does this App work, or those kinds of things? What you're describing is the Bus Ambassador Program or the Ambassador Program that we look to continue expanding.

Mr. Peacock said okay, thank you, Mrs. Mayor. Thank you. Appreciate it, Brent.

Councilmember Watlington said as I sit and listen to the presentation, and thank you for your work, thank you, Mr. Ratliff, for everything that you've done. I know over the last eight months, there's been a huge amount of investment into security on our trains. I think about, at the end of the day, what could've been done to prevent the tragedy that was the murder of Iryna Zarutsky? When we think about crime overall, we're seeing it all over the place. It's not something that's specific to public transportation. It's not something that's specific to Charlotte, or even to the U.S. Particularly post-COVID, we see an increase in crime, in general, as we think about the continual ongoing decades long underinvestment in mental health resources. We see that there is a connection between crime and a lack of mental health resources. What sticks out to me is a number of things, in light of the conversation that we had earlier tonight in terms of our transportation referendum, and it's that safety investment is just important as the infrastructure investment. So, we've got to consider the impacts, even on the available funding that we'll intend to generate when we talk about missed fares and we talk about the amount of investment that needs to go into security measures for a transit system that we're talking about expanding too, there's some real investment there. Even with all of that, we still have to ask ourselves the question, though, it doesn't sit specifically within the City, but it sits within other entities or other intergovernmental partners, what else can we do to invest in mental health resources? Because I think that at the end of the day, that's probably the biggest thing that we can do here. When you talk about fare evasion, yes, it's important. To me, that's more of a revenue thing than a safety thing, because if you look at other cities across the world, the same things are occurring with various levels of safety outcomes. So, I don't know that there's a direct connection between fare evasion and violent crime, in particular. Maybe quality-of-life issues, but unless you're going to be able to tie that person's fare to their identity in some way, it doesn't to me show up as a diversion of any kind when it comes to crime, specifically violent crime, especially considering that we don't have the resources and we're acknowledging right now that we will never have the resources to enforce it broadly. So, given that, I think we need to bifurcate this conversation and talk about what we can do from a crime standpoint across the board, which just so happens to show up in our public transportation, and these quality-of-life issues and associated revenue issues, as we think about a broader transportation system.

Thinking about one of the earlier slides that was shared in regards to the perception of safety for riders versus nonriders. That is an important component. I think the more important piece of data is what nonriders think, because if we're talking about investing in a system where we want to convert drivers into riders, we've got to speak to them from where they are. So, it would be interesting to see those numbers juxtaposed against this.

Mr. Cagle said Ms. Watlington, so that is what this slide is showing. The darker blue are in effect nonriders, the lighter blue are riders.

Ms. Watlington said okay, thank you, that's helpful. Okay, so then that underscores it here, around 40 percent versus mid-70 percent.

Mr. Cagle said significantly lower. You see 70 to 80 percent versus around 40 percent.

Ms. Watlington said exactly, and I think part of that is what you see in the media. Certainly, we understand that because crime numbers are down, that if you looked at the facts, you know that there is less crime per capita, but when that's what you see on a daily basis when you are interacting, if you will, or even just being made aware of the public transportation system, then certainly there's a lot more work to be done in terms of how to address that in particular. I don't know if it's incenting people to ride, but when you couple that with the inconvenience of it, I just think you've got a huge mountain to climb as it relates to that. We really have to ask ourselves as a community, do we make additional investment considering where we are? Again, that's a conversation for another topic, but I think there's intersectionality there.

Just a couple of quick things. You've answered some of these questions already, but I did want to go back to this idea of bus design for safety. I know there were some things that were done for drivers through COVID, in particular, but are there any other benchmark opportunities to improve the bus design itself? Not the shelters. Not the lighting. Not talking about an open or closed system. Just to improve the experience when you're on the bus or on the train, in terms of safety, like physical design changes? Have we explored that at all?

Mr. Cagle said from a passenger standpoint?

Ms. Watlington said correct.

Mr. Cagle said not that I'm aware of beyond physical presence, technology, having folks present throughout the system, not necessarily on each vehicle, but having security, fare evasion, ticket checkers, those kinds of things, have that physical visible presence, as well as video surveillance and those kinds of things using technology tools. If you mean specifically, is there a way to sort of separate each passenger from the others?

Ms. Watlington said that may be a solution. I'm not necessarily advocating for that specific thing, but I come from manufacturing, and there's a difference between behavioral safety measures and poka-yoking it. Like if you've got safety guarding around the equipment, for example, you can't stick your hand in unless you break a light curtain, or whatever, and it immediately shuts the equipment off. That's different than trying to remind everybody to make sure that they [inaudible] tag out, for example. You're relying on behaviors versus the actual components of the system. So, I'd be interested to see if there's any research there.

Mr. Osnes said yes. So, if I may, we talk about security through environmental design when it comes to the actual structure itself, and whether or not the engineering itself relates to potential vulnerabilities that may align with a potential event. I would say that our buses and our trains, as far as meeting the standards related to environmental design, and that design being a mitigator in potential security issues or promoting potential vulnerabilities, we're dealing with new systems. There's clean lines of sight the way the seating is oriented. It lends itself to a more secure structure because of that environmental design.

Ms. Watlington said thank you, that's helpful. That's exactly the kind of the things I'm thinking about. So, if there's any additional new opportunity to investigate that or to reapply something, certainly that could be another option. Everything else, I believe, you pretty much hit on, but I will just leave us with this idea. Chief Jennings has said this many times, "We can't police our way out of the problem." We know that we have work to try to secure additional resources for our District Attorney's Office, pass the budget,

but that's another discussion. I think we can't have this discussion without having a serious discussion about investing in mental health resources. Thank you so much.

Councilmember Graham said I too want to send my condolences to the family of the young lady that we lost. I certainly know the impact of senseless murder and the impact on the family, and so, my condolences go to her family and friends. I have two series of questions, and I'll be quick, I know we've been at this for a while. I wish the Manager was here, and I'll ask that last question last, in reference to, I think there was a slide that showed two CMPD officers assigned to CATS. Yes, assigned CMPD officers, too. So, is there a way, and the Chief is here, and I thank him for being a part of the conversation, of increasing that number immediately, and are there resources, Mr. Manager, if he was here, that we can augment until the private security gear up, staff up? I think that even if this incident didn't occur, that's an amazing low number to me.

Mr. Cagle said so, let me explain that.

Mr. Graham said yes, if you can just tell me what they do.

Mr. Cagle said yes, let me explain that. I think that number is a little bit deceptive, in that, what they are doing is literally day-to-day coordinating onsite. Now, I don't want you to take away that there are two CMPD officers in the whole City who assist us. There's an entire police force who does that.

Mr. Graham said specifically assigned to CATS.

Mr. Cagle said not specifically assigned to CATS, but collaborating with CATS actively throughout the Districts in the system, specifically as a good example, Saturday after this tragic event, I was on the phone with Chief Jennings, and we were coordinating how PSS and CMPD could work together as we increased presence. So, yes, these are two assigned officers, but I would never want to give the impression that we don't work hand-in-hand throughout the City with CMPD, because we absolutely do, and their officers are always there to assist, back us up, and likewise, and the Mutual Aid Agreement helps move that collaboration and partnership forward even more.

Mr. Graham said okay, so I get that, but again, is there a need for specifically-assigned CMPD officers, whether or not they're off-duty officers, who can help mitigate some of the shortage until they're fully staffed, that we can immediately employ to enhance public safety, immediately?

Mr. Cagle said let us evaluate that and come back with an answer. I mean, clearly, personnel is a good thing, and so let us evaluate that, and let me have a chance to talk to the Manager and Chief Jennings related to it.

Mr. Graham said I think that would go a long way to immediately respond to the perception, and I'll get to that perception word again, but this is reality. Someone was killed on the transit line. Several people were killed at the transit station in Uptown. I think there needs to be a dedicated, specifically to work with private security, off-duty police officers, working with the system directly, and if there's a budgetary item that we can do, I think we should do, and especially in reference to this text I got in. The last time we had this conversation about public safety, which was in February 2025, that started in December 2024, so we've been here before. We're not talking about public safety, and the last time I even used that, if you don't feel safe, you're not safe, which is still true, and talked about the perception, but it's not perception, it's reality. People, for whatever reason, this one is certainly mindboggling, because the young lady and the gentleman didn't interact at all until the incident occurred. So, I know we can't have a police on every corner, we can't have a police in every transit car, but certainly, I think a higher degree of law enforcement presence, with no disrespect to private policing, I think is needed and needed probably immediately, especially in reference to this text I got. "So, are there any plans to have security on light rail during events? It's a powder keg waiting for a match on game days, way too packed, very, very unsafe. It's amazing more stuff doesn't happen. I stopped going to soccer matches," dated Monday, March

25, 2025. So, is there a level of policing when we know that there is a football game or soccer match, a big event in Uptown, that people are going to Uptown? Is there a heightened level of security?

Mr. Cagle said yes, sir, from both CMPD and from PSS, we do see large crowds, especially on the Blue Line for special events, and yes, there is an increased presence around those events.

Mr. Graham said what does that look like?

Mr. Osnes said there's a lot we can talk about, and there's some things that we cannot talk about. We can't go into specifics. So, we can't go into specific numbers, and I think that's more of a TSA.

Mr. Cagle said yes, we don't want to give away our security posture by talking in an open environment and giving away our capabilities. It's an SSI (Sensitive Security information) discussion that we would normally have, and this is not necessarily the forum to have that discussion.

Mr. Ratliff said yes, because what we don't want to do is kind of tip our hat on some of the strategies that we use when we come into these types of events and venues. I will say that we do work closely with CMPD and some of the other resources that we've put in play when we do have special events. If we work together collectively, we can achieve a lot, and I think that's the spirit of what we're trying to establish here, is the ability to work together and share information. It's not just the police department. It's not just security. It's the public as well, and it works, just like the incident that happened the other day when we were engaged with the public and they shared information with us, and we were able to react to that situation, and end that situation peacefully. That means everybody walked away, nobody was injured.

Mr. Graham said peacefully?

Mr. Ratliff said well, without incident.

Mr. Cagle said not with Ms. Zarutska.

Mr. Ratliff said no, no, no, this is a different scenario that we're talking about.

Mr. Cagle said so, I think the point is, we don't want to get into all of the operational details, because they are SSI. Absolutely, during special events, there is increased presence, both from CATS security as well as CMPD in acknowledgement of the crowds that will be coming. I will also say, and one thing that Lee has done very well, is he has divided the system into districts, just like CMPD divides the City into precincts, and we analyze the data to understand the unique needs of each district to place security personnel who is focused on those needs in each district. Certainly, the needs of Uptown are not necessarily the same needs as South End or the northern district, and so, those are all things that are going on, but there are certainly increased security presence and protocols that are occurring during special events.

Mr. Graham said and then secondly, unlike Councilmember Peacock, I didn't ride, but I did take the opportunity to walk around the transit station in Uptown. From my perspective, it has outlived its useful existence. It needs to be replaced for a wide variety of reasons. Would love to get a status update since the old conversation we had with the Hornets about really the status of the transit station Uptown. It is really problematic for a wide variety of reasons, notwithstanding what may happen in November 2025, that I think we need to address that issue, sooner than later, but I think it's just time. It's too small, too dark, open-air environment, anyone can walk through. We've closed some of the restaurants, which is good and bad, because if you're a rider you still want to be able to get something before you jump on the next bus. So, I just hope that we can have a conversation about that.

Then, more broadly, and I'll be quiet. I just hope that we can have an honest conversation about where we are in the community in reference to crime, an honest conversation that's acknowledging the data. We've got to do that. Also acknowledge that there's several high-profile incidents, whether it's on our Corridors of Opportunity, whether it's individuals shooting into occupied dwellings, whether it's on our CATS system, that shocks the conscious and makes people in our community feel that they're not safe, and that we aren't doing anything. We had this conversation, Mr. Manager, in December 2024 and January 2025 and February 2025, about public safety. We had a lot of talk, and it seems like we're just running in a well-worn circle. I would love to know if we're making progress with the County in reference to collaborating on issues related to mental health. Are we measuring that? Are we further down the road now than we were in February 2025? I don't know.

I would love, again, we talked about our Corridors of Opportunity, again, to get more measurements on public safety activities on these Corridors. We're making significant investment, and we aren't talking about crime. We're not holding individuals accountable, individuals and institutions and businesses who are allowing some of these things to occur on their property. I'm not sure, again, our reaction, and I'm a member of the board, so I'll accept it too, as pointing a finger at myself as well, is we tend to be more reactive than proactive. It's not that people aren't doing anything. They're doing a lot. I've been to Cops and Coffee with Chief Jennings, probably at least four or five in the last six weeks. So, I'm out there. I'm talking to the officers. They're doing a good job. They are generally responding when something happens. They're trying to be proactive. We have our Alternatives to Violence Program. We have stood up the Youth Department, dealing with youths. So, we're doing all the right things, but we can't get around the narrative about what's happening in our community, especially in our Uptown living room. I just think that somehow, Mr. Manager and Council, we've got to find a way, and I'll refer and ask the Chairman of the Public Safety Committee, she's getting data and diving deep, this may be an opportunity that we really need to dive deep and figure it out. I think part of that, Councilmember Watlington, is being assertive in enforcement, and not being afraid to say that we're going to do that, because I think the times have called for us to do that.

So, I don't think we need to stand up a committee. I think we have a committee that we really need to give her committee the charge to help us figure this thing out, and it's just not CATS, it's all of it, because we have these conversations and it goes into a hole until something else happens again, and we're right back here, me still reading text messages from constituents who are really concerned about public safety, whether it's on the rail, the transit, a Corridor, or someone shooting in their homes. Thank you.

Marcus Jones, City Manager said so, Mayor, members of Council, thank you for the opportunity. I first want to acknowledge the horrible incident that needs to be addressed on many levels. So, Mayor, I appreciate having the conversation tonight and the concept of quality of life. I appreciate, Mayor Pro Tem, about the horizontal integration. I appreciate Dr. Watlington, about how do we really look at everything that's happening. I do want to make sure that I take a big step back and go to 2022, and tell you, Brent, how much I appreciate you, and what you've done to step in to stabilize CATS, trying to bring confidence back in transit. I don't think we would've had the previous conversation tonight about an MOU, if not for the hard work. Also, let's not let it be lost on us that Brent skimmed over a triennial report with essentially no repeat findings, and I remember for about a year, I would have to go to your Committee, Mr. Driggs, and set the [inaudible] with Brent being on the other side, to try to make sure that this confidence came back, at least in the operations. I will tell you, Councilmember Peacock, I can't wait to get the incident data. I pray that we use the data, added to informed decisions, because a lot of times we've moved away from data to perception, and I get it, I get it, sometimes perception becomes reality.

The other thing I think is really important is, as we start to go back, thinking about 2023 and 2024, we knew that we were going to have a big problem in terms of staffing at CMPD, because it was 30 years later. I don't know what President it was, maybe it was Clinton, when there were cop grants, and we knew that there would be this level of

people retiring. I want to give the Council credit that what you were able to do is be able to actually hire police officers, and I'm not so sure that large cities are able to say that they are within a rock's throw of getting to the complement of officers, doesn't mean that we don't need 400 more, but the point being, at least we were trending in the right direction when all the headwinds were before us. The one thing I think I need to do is provide you some of the information that you've done over the last six years, and what do I mean by that? If we go back to 2019, homicides were the highest that we've seen since the 1990s, and so, what happened then? We had a conversation about this framework with safety and health as a crisis, and what we did, there's a framework between the City and the County that both bodies agreed to, and there are five pillars, and a lot of the things we were talking about are within those five pillars. You guys did something, which I thought was pretty amazing in 2020 also, when you had the SAFE Charlotte report. There were six priority areas where a bunch of good work has been done there. When we started to talk about, we launched the Hospital-Based Violence Intervention. We launched the CARES (Community Assistance Response and Engagement Support) Team. We launched the Quality-of-Life Team. We actually looked at the 2024 Annual Strategy Meeting, and said, juvenile crime is a focus. We went into this public safety series that you discussed, but also you set aside \$4.5 million just for juvenile crime, including \$2.5 million for the Katie Blessing Center. I can just stop right there, but it's six pages of things that we've done.

So, I guess my ask, and I think that's where you're going, Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem, where all of you are going tonight, what's going to be different? I think what's different is some of our partners are in the room, like the District Attorney, like some of our nonprofits, and is there an opportunity to figure out what are the things that the City of Charlotte does well? What are the things that the County does well? What are the things that there needs to be efforts in Raleigh to change things? I'll stop with this one. For instance, we know that when a police officer gets to a certain number of years with the City and age with the City, they're going to retire, because of the supplement. Is there a way that we can have these seasoned officers just stay with us a little bit longer. So, I don't know the answer to all of the questions, and I know there was something that legislature tried, but I guess what I'm saying is that there is an opportunity to approach this in a little different way with having more partners at the table, as opposed to the City of Charlotte and the City Council trying to solve everything, that was just said.

Councilmember Johnson said I just had some questions. Thank you for the presentation, and thank you, Mr. Ratliff, and Mr. Osnes, thank you. I also want to extend my condolences to the family of Iryna Zarutka. It was a tragedy, so I appreciate the update. Mr. Cagle, you mentioned the survey. Have we surveyed the drivers, because I've heard that the drivers don't feel safe? Do we have information from the drivers on how they feel as far as safety?

Mr. Cagle said let me check, I'm not sure. We do survey employees. I'm not sure when the last survey was, but I can go back and get that data. I believe that what we are hearing is accurate. These events shake all of us, the entire community, operators, staff, riders, everyone, and so, certainly this has an effect on operators and the violence against operators certainly has effect. What we have heard is, again, I'll pull the data, but that we are moving in the right direction. The CTC (Charlotte Transit Center) is visibly changed. It's not perfect today, but it's far better than it was. Removing an operator's sense of obligation to enforce those fares has helped.

Ms. Johnson said so, let me ask you about that. If a person does not pay their fare, and this kind of piggybacks off what Councilmember Mayfield was saying. If they don't pay their fare, is there any reporting of that? Is there a call made, or is that kind of just accepted?

Mr. Cagle said so, the operators have the ability to record that. There's a button on the fare box that says in effect, didn't pay.

Ms. Johnson said okay.

Mr. Cagle said so, they record that. Do they call for security immediately? Not always. If there are other reasons why, yes. That alone, not always, but that recording of nonpayment then becomes data that security can review, so that they understand where that is occurring most frequently, and they start to position security folks to do that fare enforcement.

Ms. Johnson said thank you. Mr. Jones, can we get a report of missed fares? Can you get that to Council? Because that speaks to the revenue and we just want to know how big of an issue that is. Thank you. You mentioned that we could not change the system to a closed system, because of the design, on some of these stops, but are there stops that we could change to closed stations? You don't have to answer that now, but I'd like to kind of explore that or just get some information on what that would take.

Mr. Cagle said I can answer that now. Yes, generally speaking, they will be on the Blue Line Extension or other areas, not in Center City or South End. Yes, there are some stations that are large enough, that yes, you could install turnstiles or those kinds of things. You still have the problem of someone trying to evade fares by walking up the tracks, because the tracks themselves cannot be enclosed, because they cross roads frequently, but I would say, I would be concerned about the safety of someone trying to evade fares by walking up the tracks. I also would be concerned about partially closing the system, and the effect that has from an equity standpoint.

Ms. Johnson said thank you, okay, and how can the public get a copy of this presentation? I think there was a Facebook issue or a problem with Facebook a little while ago.

Mr. Cagle said we can make it available. This presentation will also be given tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. with the MTC. So, it will also be available via the City's website, where the MTC data presentations are available, but we can make it available. I will work with communications and Jason Schneider team to make the presentation available.

Ms. Johnson said great, thank you. Kudos on the progress with the CATS Connect. I think that's important to integrate the mental health services. Eric, or Mr. Osnes, you mentioned that jails aren't hospitals, or CMPD officers can't be mental health professionals. You're absolutely right, and so, I would say that jails can't be hospitals either. This one seems to be a mental health problem. It was reported, or I heard, I didn't read it, so I want to be sure, do we know if Mr. Brown had a previous court date where he was found not competent?

Mr. Cagle said I do not know. I've seen what was reported, and it seems that he had had several incidents or run-ins with law enforcement, but I do not know. I cannot answer that, but I can find out.

Ms. Johnson said so, I appreciate the partners that are here, but we need to work with the State. This is kind of an intergovernmental issue. We need to work with the State. We need mental health resources, because we had a police-involved shooting the next day, and that was a mental health condition, where the gentleman had been refused, or the family had been refused an IVC, an Involuntary Commitment Order. So, when we're not addressing mental health, people get hurt or killed. So, we have to do something, and it's not on City Council or CATS alone, we all need to work together. So, I don't know if we can have an Intergovernmental Committee meeting, but we really have to do something for our residents.

Mr. Ratliff, thank you for the work that you've done. I know that you've only been contracted in eight months. Do we have anywhere the work and the progress that you've done over the last eight months? I know there's been quite a few changes.

Mr. Ratliff said so, we started this project on December 14, 2024, is that correct? Yes. For lack of a better word, it was a lot of challenges that we saw, some things that we needed to go back and relook at. One is the distribution of manpower, and I know we're probably letting a little bit of our secret sauce out in the community, but I think it's okay

in this particular moment, because people need to know the work that we've done. The first thing we had to do was look at how big the system is and how do we break it down into small segments, and we can hire folks that we can hold accountable for those areas. Same as CMPD, we do response areas in districts. We've taken that same model and that same approach, and so, we've created three districts, northern, southern and central. By doing so, we created response areas, and then we start to assign officers in those response areas, so that they will be highly visible, as well as responsive to anything that happened along the line. Now, some other things that's involved in this, when it comes to the facilities, and that's a different group of officers and a different set of challenges, but before December 14, 2024, when I sat before you, when we first came about this project, we were responsible for the facilities and the buses, and so, we worked hard to turn that around and change some hearts and minds, and it's not perfect. Nothing that we do will ever be perfect, but we felt like in December 2024, we looked at a lot of the challenges that were facing CATS, and we were asked if we would step up and help. My wife and I, we really thought about it hard, because we knew it was a challenge, and we decided that we're going to put our heads down and we're going to use our minds, our resources, the people that we love, we love this community, and we're going to put our best foot forward to change hearts and minds and get this right. One of the things I really wanted to focus on is the training, building the training programs, revamping the dispatch center, creating the equipment that we needed to make sure that we have the right equipment for our officers. The training program, that was a biggie, because what we had to do is sit down and look at everything that was different, and the model that we wanted to implement required us to have our officers trained a different way, and so, that's what we focused on.

Ms. Johnson said well, thank you.

Mr. Ratliff said yes, ma'am.

Ms. Johnson said thank you for that information. You mentioned that it was hard to find or to recruit officers. I think that's what you said, it was hard to find people, did you say that?

Mr. Cagle said I said that.

Ms. Johnson said okay. Well, I was just thinking individuals who didn't make it through the CMPD training, or their application didn't make it through the next process, I don't know if HR (Human Resources) could reach out to them, or those would be individuals who'd be interested.

Mr. Ratliff said and that's great, I'm glad you mentioned that, because a lot of times we have people who want to be in law enforcement, but at the same time, they haven't been introduced to it, and so, this is a way to build this program with people with entry level coming into the security aspect of it, and then gradually working their way towards law enforcement, and we've had some of our officers transfer over to CMPD, and we're very proud of that.

Ms. Johnson said I think that will be a great collaboration, even in working with CMPD. If they're not ready for CMPD, maybe they can be referred to you, and then that would be like a next level for your officers as well. Thank you so much, thank you. That's all I have.

Councilmember Brown said thank you guys so much. I am extremely tired and exhausted, thank you, Madam Mayor, as I'm sure as everybody else is. No need to go back over all the information. You guys do great work. You've got your organization chart up here, which I was going to have you go back to that, because there's no hierarchy in safety. You have a great team, and you implemented the action plan to try to get some of these things resolved.

Definitely, the young lady that lost her life was in District Three, I yield to you, did not do any media interviews, because you guys are the subject matter experts, and it's a very,

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very sensitive subject, and so, I yield to you. So, thank you so much for interviewing and doing what you did and putting out the information you did from an expert standpoint on that side.

I heard all my colleagues. Everybody's opinions are very important, but Mr. Cagle, I want to really get down and be really quick. I heard a lot of information, but what I did not hear, coming from where I come from, and doing the work that I do, CMPD, I want to spare them when it comes to responding to, I did say condolences to the beautiful young lady and her family, because I have two beautiful daughters, and they mean everything to me. So, my heart goes out to her family and everybody who's affected by her loss, but my heart also goes out to Mr. Brown's family, because I have mental health in my family deep. I want to share, we go back down to 2022, when we lost Mr. Ethan Rivera; in 2024, we had Joshua Overton; in 2025, we had Leashan McBeath. I might be pronouncing them wrong, and no disrespect in regards to that. In August 2025, we had a 57-year-old Veteran, whose name was not disclosed publically; March 25, 2025, we had a 64-year-old Veteran who was paralyzed; and Qualo Trevon Daniels, 31, in April 2025; and then more recently, the beautiful young lady on the light rail.

We have to remember that CMPD and over-policing is not the answer, it's not going to happen. I know safety and some things they need to be dispatched to. I don't disagree with that at all, but the preventative measures, if we could put those in place. So, people that are unsheltered, normally the PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) comes from being incarcerated. Sometimes the mental health and wellness, it can expand to a big crisis, but do we have, and I would like to see, extensive mental health expand the crisis response teams, strengthen mobile crisis unit and maximizing and get the training in intergovernmentally, like one of my colleagues says, crossing over with the County, the crisis stabilization centers. I don't know if we have any of that, and if even people know what that means, but how they work, and how they work in other areas, places where I've been and how the crime goes down. We've got to train and train and train for trauma-informed care. I don't know if we have, I'm just speaking on that, because everybody said CMPD needs to be dispatched. We need more police officers. They need to go here. They need to go there. They cannot be everywhere, and so, I'm going to spare them, because when it comes to mental health, they don't need to respond. I want to see us expanding community-based mental health clinics, peer support groups, housing stability programs, workforce that supports people that have mental challenges and wellness and shelter, and before they reach their breaking point. That means so much to me, and then build the bridge and partnerships with Veterans and nonprofit organizations. This work is so important and so needed, and we just do not have enough of it.

I leave with this, when we are making these policies for individuals that are challenged to the point of where they just need to be embraced and loved, and there's a different level of care that's needed. We fail people with mental health all the time, and I'm not a mental health expert, but I know for a fact, I read some things, don't know if it's factual, that Mr. Brown should've probably in a different environment where he was cared for on a different level. I'm going to say that for the record, and people might not want to say that, because we're speaking of the young lady that left Ukraine to come over here to be safe. Well, what about all the other folks that was on CATS, and they wanted to be safe as well? To me, we lost Ethan. He was our driver in February of 2022. So, things like this, it's very near and dear to my heart, and that's what I'm going to leave you with. Over-policing is not the answer. It's not the answer. Police might need to be in some areas, but when it comes to mental health, I don't think they need to be there. We have nonprofit organizations that are trained. If not, we need to partner and contract with them. Thank you for all the work that you do, your team, all the work that you do. Like I said, when they came, I had several media requests. You did that, thank you so much for that, but we've got to figure it out. If we don't have the folks in the room that are the experts that have the lived experience, then we failed again. So, thank you so much. I yield back to you, Madam Mayor.

Mayor Lyles said thank you very much. I know it's been a while that we've had time to do this, but I want to make sure that you understand, we will be getting information for

all of the committees to talk about how we can do a number of these things, so we're going to do that. Also, we have a closed session, but before we do this, I just think sometimes we need to pause. So, just for a moment, take a moment in thinking about Iryna, and the discussion that we've had today, I think, is in honor of her loss, and for her family. We must understand that this was something that she came to the states, as Ms. Brown said, to be out of the war, and here we are today. I also want to announce that at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning, the MTC will be meeting, and they will have the same discussion, I think, if not more, with the MTC's team. So, Brent, thank you very much, and look forward to it. So, give us just a moment to get ready for our special meeting now.

ITEM NO. 3: CITY COUNCIL BUSINESS MEETING CALENDAR DISCUSSION

No Business Meeting calendar discussion occurred.

ITEM NO. 4: CLOSED SESSION (AS NECESSARY)

Motion was made by Councilmember Driggs, seconded by Councilmember Anderson, and carried unanimously to go into closed session pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(3), to consult with an attorney on matters protected by the attorney/client privilege, in relation to the actions captioned Walton versus City of Charlotte, and Huffstetler versus City of Charlotte.

The meeting was recessed at 9:54 p.m. to go into closed session.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Driggs, seconded by Councilmember Mitchell and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at the conclusion of the closed session at 10:25 pm.



Ariel Smith, Lead City Clerk

Length of Meeting: 3 Hours, 40 Minutes
Minutes completed: September 9, 2025