

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina convened for a Business Meeting on Monday, February 23, 2026, at 5:37 p.m. in the Meeting Chamber of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Mayor Vi Lyles presiding. Council members present were Dimple Ajmera, Danté Anderson, J.D. Mazuera Arias, Ed Driggs, Malcolm Graham, Renee Johnson, Joi Mayo, James Mitchell, Kimberly Owens, and Victoria Watlington.

ABSENT: Councilmember Lawana Mayfield

Mayor Lyles said everyone, good afternoon. Thank you very much. I'd like to now call the run of our Business Meeting, the Charlotte City Council Business Meeting, call to order. I want to say good evening and thank you all for joining us here in person and for those watching online, for our February 23, 2026, Business meeting. Let's begin with introductions.

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INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Councilmember Owens gave the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was led by all.

Mayor Lyles said thank you all. I would like to take a moment and am privileged to remember that we should be honoring Jesse Jackson, who has passed away. I want to take that moment because he was a person from the South. He was from South Carolina. He was actually from A&T University and if you look outside, you can see that the flags are flying half-staff in his honor. Reverend Jackson stood for the forefront and the struggle for civil rights, economic justice, voting rights, and human dignity. From his early work along Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to founding the Rainbow Push Coalition, he dedicated his life to expanding opportunities for those left out and left behind. The North Carolina A&T University graduate reminded us that the promise of America is not automatic, it must be pursued, protected, and made real for every generation. I hope that you'll give me a moment of silence for Jesse Jackson for the work that he's done and made it possible for so many of us to be here today. Thank you very much.

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PUBLIC FORUM

Safety

Phillip Sanford, 107 West Poindexter Drive said thank you to the Mayor, the Manager, members of City Council and the City Clerk's Office for allowing me this opportunity to address you about a pressing matter of public safety and health, car violence against nondrivers. As a leader in the Charlotte running community, my request to speak was initiated by the tragic and senseless death of Lance Sotelo in January 2026. Lance's death is especially tragic since the driver who allegedly killed him should not have been driving due to a suspended license. Since Lance's death, five other pedestrians have died on the streets of Charlotte. A change in enforcement, infrastructure, and culture is desperately needed. We cannot implement our ideas or plans without the assistance of the City. I'm here to ask when you approve the budget in a few months, money for the Department of Transportation should include higher allocations for all citizens of Charlotte, and not just drivers.

City leaders boast about technology, where they can control all traffic lights in the City from a control room. While I'm impressed and in support of that technology, we are missing the basics, like properly painted crosswalks and functioning signals for runners and pedestrians. Upgrades are in place in small pockets of the City, including leading pedestrian intervals and mid-block beacon signals and that should be expanded with regular maintenance to ensure the ones that are currently placed are working properly. In 2025, Councilmembers Mayo, Mazuera Arias and Owens, each had pedestrian

mobility safety as a big part of their platforms. They defeated two incumbents and the spouse of a third incumbent. Our safety is a winning message and that needs to be delivered loud and clear to the Department of Transportation. We need real action from the City and not just to get handed off to Vision Zero, which so far has been among the least supportive group among the ones we have connected with at the City. Thank you very much.

Place Making Strategies

Logan Creech, 2325 Booker Avenue said thank you, Mayor and Council. I'm pleased to see some fresh faces among Council. I am Logan Creech. I am the Secretary of Washington Heights, a neighborhood off of Beatties Ford. We are here underneath new leadership. We are currently being led by LaDonte Lee as President, Shedrick Matthews as Vice President, and Nathan Hernandez as Treasurer. This group was formed out of the inaction of our former predecessor, who I think has fallen into elderly age and so, we have taken over the community. What we're here to discuss is the failed Place-Making Initiative at the Ritz of Washington Heights. The Urban Design Department has created these spaces without any clear oversight or programming into these spaces. All you need to do is just drive down Beatties Ford, go sit across at the Metro Police Station, and watch everything that occurs there on a daily basis. Police officers come out of the Metro Station. They look left, they look right on Renner, they look straight ahead at the park. They know what's going on and nothing's being done. So, we've already reached out to the Urban Design Department. We're getting some traction right now but what I need from you guys is to put pressure on them. Put pressure on them to program the space, to make sure that City staff is adequately maintaining it for all of our safety. So, thank you.

Firefighters Pay

Mike Feneis, 2601 East 7th Street said Mayor, members of City Council, City Manager and staff, thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Mike Feneis, and I proudly represent Charlotte Firefighters Association. We are here because we believe in this City and in working in partnership with you. Today we're asking for something reasonable, responsible, and necessary. Approval of our budget request, centered on priorities that directly impact public safety and firefighters who provide it. First, additional five modified duty positions. Firefighting is physically demanding and inherently dangerous. Our members experience line-of-duty injuries, cardiac conditions, and occupational illnesses after years of exposure. Some are medically removed from riding the apparatus under NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) 1582 through no fault of their own. Modified duty positions allow these firefighters to continue to contribute in essential roles such as training, logistics, inspections, and operational support while they recover and work towards returning to full duty. These are not handouts. These are needed positions within CFD (Charlotte Fire Department).

Second, pay parity. Charlotte has grown into a world-class city, but firefighter compensation has not kept pace with comparable cities, including those cities surrounding Charlotte. Recruitment and retention will not improve until pay reflects the responsibility and risks this job demands, including our nonemergency divisions, including our dispatchers in alarm. In 2023, this Council committed to maintaining pay parity with CMPD (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department). We stand with our brothers and sisters in blue of CMPD in supporting competitive pay, but parity is not a luxury. It's a City Council resolution and a promise you made to us. Firefighters are not asking for special treatment. We are asking to be valued partners in Charlotte's continued success. We respectfully urge you to approve five modified duty positions and pay parity. Thank you.

Animal Care and Control

Jackie Adams, 3634 New Town Road, Waxhaw said my name is Jackie Adams and I'm a resident of District Eight. Thank you for having me. I'm here to talk about Animal Care and Control. I support increasing its budget this year. I've never fostered a dog

before, and I didn't think I had the time, the knowledge, or the support to do it well. After hearing about the changes being made at the Animal Services, like clear volunteer pathways, I decided to step up. My first Charlotte Mecklenburg Animal Care and Control foster was a dog named Herk, a Mastiff-mix puppy who came in frightened after experiencing abuse. In those first weeks, every time I reached to pet him, he would flinch, afraid of being hurt again. With the guidance from the shelter staff and the volunteers, I watched him learn to trust, to play, and to be a dog again. While he was adopted, I realized fostering wasn't just about transforming the life of one dog. It was about creating space for the next one and helping to relieve strain on the shelter system.

Since then, I've fostered 14 dogs through the Charlotte Mecklenburg Animal Care and Control. I've seen how stretched thin the system is and how hard that makes it to achieve higher safe statuses. This experience moved me so deeply, that now I speak at Charlotte Mecklenburg Middle and High Schools about fostering dogs as a way to teach responsibility, empathy, compassion, and resilience to students. The animal welfare crisis in Charlotte is a community problem that requires community solutions. So, I'm here tonight as proof that your decision that you all made, helped create new volunteers, new fosters, and new advocates. With adequate staffing and continued support, thousands more Charlotteans can help in the same way. Thank you so much for your support of the Animal Care and Control here in Charlotte. We appreciate you.

Susanna Trotter, 4609 Hedgemore Drive said good evening, Council. My name is Susanna Trotter and I'm a resident of District Six and a proud resident of Charlotte. I'm a member of the Charlotte Master Chorale and I sing with the Charlotte Symphony and I'm also a volunteer at Charlotte-Mecklenburg Animal Care and Control. The shelter is what I'm here about tonight. I got involved with the shelter after my soul dog passed away and I wasn't ready for another dog of my own, but I wanted to give back and help other families find that kind of love and companionship. Firstly, thank you for your approval of the 2026 Budget and because of your support, the volunteer process at the shelter is much more accessible. We're also eagerly awaiting the construction of the Adoption Center that you approved funds for.

Since the transition from CMPD to General Services, I've seen wonderful improvements. We've added staff in critical areas, like the front lobby and expanded salary ranges to help attract veterinarians. The streamlined volunteer process has dramatically increased the number of active volunteers. There was a time when dogs went days without getting out of their kennels, adding to kennel stress and dangerous conditions for caretakers. Now, more often than not, every dog gets out and some even get out twice or three times a day, which is incredible. There's still much work to do. C-Meck remains vitally important to our community. There are still gaps in staffing, especially in the medical team and front lobby. Our medical team cares not only for the animals in the shelter, but the hundreds in foster home, like Jackie's.

More medical staff means timely care and more lives saved. The front lobby is the heart of the shelter. It's emotional, demanding, and busy and more support there directly impacts and serves our community members. Volunteering in an underfunded municipal shelter is difficult but deeply rewarding. The need never stops and the cycle of trauma and loss is real, yet volunteers and staff show up every day because we care deeply about the residents of Mecklenburg County. We have a hard working, robust volunteer and foster community. With your continued support in Fiscal Year 2027 to close staffing gaps and strengthen these programs, we can keep moving forward toward the 90 percent plus live release goal. Thank you for your time.

I-77

Shannon Binns, 2317 Laburnum Street said good evening, Mayor and Council. My name is Shannon Binns, founder of Sustain Charlotte. I'm here tonight to speak in strong opposition to the proposed I-77 South Toll Lane Project on behalf of Sustain Charlotte and 24 other community-based organizations. Please stand if you are here as part of those organizations tonight. Look around the room. These are your constituents.

They're here because they feel unheard, and tonight I am submitting a petition signed by nearly 1,300 residents from all across our City, in every district, who feel the same way. Last week at the CRTPO (Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization) meeting, Commissioner Altman called this process what it appears to be, a bait and switch.

In October of 2024, you, City Council, were told you'd have a meaningful opportunity to vote on this project again in the future, to change your mind if you didn't like where it was headed. That opportunity never came. The state moved forward. Preliminary road designs that had existed since October of 2024 were not shared with the elected officials or the public until just three months ago, and only after NC-DOT (North Carolina Department of Transportation) had secured the assurances that support would not be withdrawn once procurement began. That is not transparency. That is not partnership. It is not how public trust is built. Meanwhile, cities across America are removing the freeways that divided their communities. Charlotte is being asked to add four more lanes, lanes many working families cannot afford to use, at the expense of air quality, equity, and long-term cohesion. The people in this room and the 1,300 whose names I submit tonight are not asking for another conversation with NC-DOT. Whether or not you believe you have formal authority, you have influence and we ask you to use it. Thank you.

Shauna Bell, 1610 Van Buren Avenue said good evening. My name is Shauna Bell, a resident of McCrorey Heights. Our opposition to I-77 has been consistent since we were given just 24 days to comment on two predetermined options. We have raised concerns about cost, equity, environmental impact, and the history of highway expansion through black neighborhoods. We recognize congestion is real, safety concerns are real, and growth is real. The question is not whether something should be done, it's whether this is the best solution, a solution that felt decided before we ever walked in the room and are now expected to accept it. In your adopted 2040 Plan, you committed to safe and equitable mobility, prioritizing Transit Oriented Development, and reducing exposure to harmful environmental contaminants so that all Charlotteans can live in healthy, resilient neighborhoods.

A \$4.3 billion highway expansion through residential communities does not align with those commitments. I understand your position that you do not have unilateral authority to pause this project, but you do have political influence. You can advocate. You can apply pressure, and tonight you can publicly call for a vote to pause so that meaningful engagement and the full evaluation of alternatives can occur. You were elected to represent all of us, not just the most powerful voices or the loudest interest. Leadership is not about brokering commitments after decisions are made. It's about standing up for the communities that do not have the same influence, access, or resources. For those who support the plan, my question is what sacrifice are you willing to make for the sake of growth? If this were coming through your neighborhood, would you accept it or demand better? We simply want the same quality of life, environmental protections, and considerations that everyone wants for their own families. Charlotte has a choice and history is watching, and our legacy will be shaped by whether we choose convenience or courage. Thank you.

Vera Falkner, 16003 Spruell Street, Huntersville said good evening, City Council. From I-77 to CLT (Charlotte Douglas International) Airport, we are here today with the Housing Justice Coalition demanding a stop to displacement. We are here today because the recent lease negotiations between Charlotte Douglas International Airport and American Airlines, along with five other carriers, will bring displacement to the people of West Charlotte and surrounding areas. The public was not given transparency on these decisions or an opportunity to review what is being decided. It is clear that workers, families, and homes are not being taken into account and for far too long, people's homes and land are being taken away for capital greed, as they can go through with big projects, with including the major factor, people's lives.

The ongoing expansion of Charlotte's highways, infrastructure and airport means that neighborhoods and families in Steeleberry, West Boulevard, Clinton Park and

neighboring areas are going to continuously disappear. We've seen this happen before. While corporates profit, how are working people supposed to work without wage increases? How has airport city handed over land for manufacturing and expansion for decades, while never ensuring that those who have been living here can afford the affects? It is the question the political power that our elected officials have on the City, and whether they will use this time to represent the public or continue to prioritize entrenched corporate interests.

Communities deserve a say in what is happening, especially when expansion projects like this are threatening their lives. So, we are here today asking for a 90-day public review period before any lease agreement is finalized. We seek transparency within these negotiations. We demand a standard living wage for airport subcontracted workers. We demand a displacement mitigation fund and we demand community grants for the neighborhoods that are going to be directly impacted. We stand here today in solidarity with communities fighting displacement across Charlotte, including those opposing the I-77 Toll Lane Expansion. Thank you for your support.

The following persons submitted written comments regarding this item pursuant to S.L. 2020-3, SB 704. To review comments in their entirety, contact the City Clerk's Office.

Housing Justice, housingjusticeclt@gmail.com

Sean Langley, 1621 Oaklawn Avenue said good evening, elected officials. We are here requesting you to take a strong and visible stand against what many of us view as a profound injustice. Your individual votes matter now more than ever. It will shape not only the trajectory of this I-77 Project, but the future of every constituent you represent. Today we're asking you to advocate for a pause in the I-77 Expansion Project so the full scope, intent, alternatives, and long-term consequences can be properly studied and understood. Many of you have seen the maps. Both options are deeply harmful and fundamentally misaligned with the values this City claims to uphold. The online survey conducted by NC-DOT between November 12, 2025 and December 5, 2025 was highly subjective, framed with leading questions and structured to generate socially desirable responses rather than honest, balanced feedback.

So, here is why so many organizations are vehemently opposed to this project, including the Black Political Caucus, Sustain Charlotte, Southern Environmental Law Center, Clean Air, Soul Nation, PSL, McCrorey Heights, Wilmore, Oaklawn Park, Dalebrook, Nations Ford and countless other neighborhoods are here because they vehemently oppose this project. The Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization convened a board called Beyond 77. The report produced 286 recommendations, not one of them recommended expanding toll lanes. Before moving forward with this expansion, we should pause and examine those findings in detail.

The City of Charlotte has adopted the SEAP, the Strategic Energy Action Plan, that calls for a 72-percent reduction in vehicle emissions by 2035. Expanding highway capacity directly contradicts that commitment. Charlotte continues to struggle with economic mobility. In 2014 we ranked last. While modest progress has been made, we remain nearly at the bottom. Adding elevated toll lanes that cost working families \$25 each way as noted publicly by leaders and Davidson, will create infrastructure issues. This is bigger than one neighborhood. This is about transparency, climate responsibility, economic mobility, and whether community voices truly matter. Leadership requires courage. Now is the time to show it. Thank you.

Ann Brooks, 330 South Tryon Street said Mayor Lyles, members of the Council, thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight. My name is Ann Brooks. I am Vice President of Government Affairs for the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance. As our City grows, we are asked to make generational decisions about infrastructure. The conversation around the I-77 Project is one of those moments. Community input cannot be occasional or reactive, it must be ongoing, structured, and transparent. The current timeline allows for exactly this kind of planning, education, and community involvement. We are years away from finalized construction plans. The projected delivery in the

2030s does not mean bulldozers arrive tomorrow. Community concerns around displacement, cost escalation, and the legacy of past highway decisions are critical voices that must be heard, respected, and provided direct outreach. We are here tonight to remind this body that addressing these concerns do not require stopping or pausing the project. This is not an all or nothing zero sum decision.

Charlotte has the opportunity to pair mobility improvements with clear protections, accountability measures, and sustained engagement. We cannot improve safety and mobility while protecting neighborhoods. This is the exact time for these conversations to happen. Starting over just means having to get right back to this portion of planning.

From 2014 when the CRTPO first added I-77 South to the state's plan as a Managed Lanes Project to today, other transportation planning has taken place with this project in mind. Transit planning, bus system upgrades and secondary road improvements have all been developed within the context of I-77 planning. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said thank you. Hey, you know, we can be courteous and we can be smart about being courteous. I don't think anyone has been booed or in what we're talking about now. Let's not change that. Let's not do that, okay? I appreciate it very much.

Damian Smith, 124 Lakewood Avenue said thank you, Mayor. I am here to oppose the I-77. I live in District Three. I live in the Lakeview neighborhood. I bike to work and that is endangered. I also picked my neighborhood because it's on a bus route. So, I have other ways than driving. I made those choices. My wife and I made those choices of how can we get to and from work without having to drive. Now, that also means that we're saving substantial money because right now the average cost of vehicle ownership, according to AAA (American Automobile Association), is \$12,000 a year. That's not including the fact that a used vehicle now costs between \$18,000 to \$30,000, depending on the age of the vehicle. So, that is a significant cost for individuals and the toll lanes are for the 40 percent of people who don't live in our state, who are coming from Fort Mills and Rock Hill. It's not for the people who can get to work on Tryon and other roads, but I also want to focus on some other things where the Business Alliance voted and supported our transit tax.

You know, they were a big force behind it and what we as a community are saying is, we want to make those investments now because the fact of the matter is, is making those transit investments for every dollar we spend on public transport, we get \$4 in economic return. If we were to take the Silver Line, which cost will go up with the elevated lanes, because it's going to have to go over the elevated lanes and anytime you go up, costs go up. So, if we build that transit line and it goes to the airport, hotels have higher revenues, businesses have higher revenues and property values go up. I want to point out that our Transit Oriented Development is one percent of our land, and it produces \$69 billion in GDP (Gross Domestic Product) for the county. I also just want to say I support the firefighters in getting a raise in pay as a former firefighter for 20 years. Thanks, brothers!

Evan Schultheis, 1001 Brookrun Drive said thank you. Esteemed Councilors, on January 2, 2026, my car was struck from behind on I-77, exit 6A, pushing me out into the middle of Woodlawn Road. Miraculously, the oncoming traffic stopped before T-boning me, but my vehicle was a total loss. We can all agree that I-77 needs change, but the Elevated Toll Lane Project will cause significant harm to our communities for no added benefit at all.

NC-DOT says stopping now would be wasting money already spent but this is just arguing the sum cost fallacy. State funding can still be used in ways that do improve traffic on I-77 without damaging our parks, greenways and historic black communities. The Charlotte Urbanists have previously presented alternatives before the CRTPO when member Parker Garrison offered affective solutions such as rerouting truck traffic around I-485 as Atlanta does with I-285, connecting merging and diverging lanes such as Virginia did with I-95 and eliminating exits from through lanes, turning the existing carriageways into local lanes at the I-485 intersection. These options can all be done at

low cost without expanding the right of way and can be combined with the redesign of dangerous exits to reduce congestion and improve carrying capacity without constructing elevated lanes.

Finally, members of the Urbanists have consulted directly with CATS (Charlotte Area Transit System) and the Silver Line's engineering team, confirming that the construction of the elevated toll lanes will likely increase the cost of viaducting I-77 significantly, delaying construction of the Silver Line. This will result in further cuts to the length of the line, making it unable to reach the Bojangles Coliseum. The I-77 toll lanes are a bad deal for Charlotte, and the project needs to be completely rethought, not just redesigned. Remember, NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) legally requires one of the alternatives to be no implementation. NC-DOT is just leaving it out of the list of options. Thank you.

Firefighters Pay

Mark Wilson, 6638 Wicked Oak Lane said good evening, Council, elected officials and all others here tonight. My name is Mark Wilson. I am the Secretary of the Charlotte Firefighters Association, IAFF (International Association of Fire Fighters) Local 660. We represent members in all divisions of the Fire Department, the inspectors, life safety educators, the firefighters and telecommunicators. We're the ones that ensure safety and protection of life when 911 is dialed. Tonight, however, you, Council members, are 911. We are calling you for help and the citizens of this City need you to answer that call. Public safety in Charlotte is entering into a crisis, not just the Police Department like we see on the news, but the Fire Department too. Our budget and pay plan has not kept up with the growing demands of the City. Our members have consistently been in the bottom 50 percent of pay and benefits compared to Charlotte's comparable cities. This is hurting recruitment and retention. We are struggling to get applicants in the door and keep firefighters on the job. Firefighters from all experience groups, those with a couple years of experience, and those with 20 years of experience, they are leaving to go to other departments and other fields of work that offer better pay and benefits. We are working a job that takes us away from our families for 52 hours a week. That is an extra 78 eight-hour working days when compared to other employees in the City. When someone gives so much of themselves and their family, it is only right for them to see an equal return.

The Public Safety Pay Plan Committee has been asking for maintaining parity with the pay plan and adjustment that is sorely needed. This will bring us closer to the average comparable cities. It will help ensure the next generation of firefighters will choose Charlotte as the city they want to work for. It is keeping experience and knowledge of our members on the street and providing the citizens with a level of service that they not only expect, but they deserve. Thank you.

Transportation

Reverend Dr. Janet Garner-Mullins, 1014 Comstock Drive said good evening Mayor and City Council members and community. I'm here representing residents along the West Boulevard and Wilkinson Boulevard corridors living at the intersection of highway expansion, airport growth and future transit investment. Charlotte talks often about growth. Growth is real but for far too many of our neighborhoods, growth has meant displacement, gentrification without consent, without protection, and without shared benefit.

I-77 has never been just infrastructure here, it's been a dividing line. Past transportation decisions displaced families, gentrified communities and weakened generational wealth and push black neighborhoods further from opportunities. Today, residents feel history returning to itself, not through eminent domain, but through market forces. Displacement today doesn't arrive with a bulldozer, it arrives through rising rents, property tax foreclosures, small landlords selling, aging apartments redeveloped out of reach, quiet removals that hollow out communities while the skyline grows. These neighborhoods sit at the center of Charlotte's future, surrounded by highways, airport expansion, and

proposed transit. That visibility attracts investment. It also attracts speculation. The difference this time is that Charlotte has tools it didn't have before, in the past. Anti-displacement policies, land acquisition, property tax protection and community-driven planning authority. Those tools exist now but what's missing is urgency. A faster road is not progress if the people who live aside it can no longer afford to stay. Thank you.

I-77

Sharif Hannan, 216 Twinflower Lane said good evening, Mayor and Council. I'm Sharif Hannan and I would like to make a comment about the I-77 Expansion Plan. I'm going to sum up with what a lot of other people are already saying. Everything about this plan stinks. We're planning to build a segregated highway for the rich on top of historically segregated neighborhoods that were already torn through by the original I-77. Should we be grateful now that instead of destroying homes and digging up graves, we're now getting a double-decker concrete monstrosity? It's amazing that NC-DOT has been able to just change that plan on a whim. Yet, Councilman Driggs, the Council's representative on the CRTPO, insists that we can't even rereview the terms of the public-private partnership that will likely funnel billions in total revenue to private interests. Really? A complex financing mechanism for \$4 plus billion, a complete redesign, and yet no mention or discussion about projected toll revenues or the toll revenues that will ultimately be siphoned off by private interests for 50 years. You better bet those private equity interests will be reviewing those figures, yet the public remains in the dark. Partnership, right?

Rough estimates show that the existing I-77 toll lane will net about \$6 billion over 50 years, yet the highway costs only \$650 million. Enough is enough. We need to consider changing our representative on the CRTPO. We need to make sure that every stone is turned to pause the I-77, including removing the project from CRTPOs Metropolitan Transit Plan. Alternative construction plans need to be explored including municipal bonds and utilizing the hotel and tourism tax and for God's sake, will you please remember that you represent the public in public-private partnerships? Thank you so much.

Mayor Lyles said so this is the end of our Public Forum speakers list, but I want to really have a moment with you to thank you for sharing with us your perspectives, your concerns, and we appreciate that you came here to speak today. I want to begin by acknowledging that many in our community are concerned and frustrated, more than you can imagine. We understand that. We hear you and your voices matter in this process. This project is being led by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The City cannot unilaterally delay or stop this project; however, it's important for us, very important for us, to get your feedback so that we can take this to the state. We have been in an ongoing conversation with state leaders to share these concerns and the things that we're hearing from you. I hope that we will have the ability to have Secretary Johnson, who is committed to a meeting directly that impacts neighborhood leaders and have shared that commitment in writing.

Our focus is on clear communication and making sure residents have meaningful opportunities to stay informed and provide input. I've referred this item to the March 5, 2026 Transportation Planning and Development Committee Meeting and NC-DOT has been invited to attend to explain the process and the next steps, but I'd like to take a moment to have you come up, if you would like to have more information, we certainly want you to have that. So, we have put together the ability to go upstairs if you choose to do so, to learn more about what we would be thinking about as a community, and your Council. I'd also like to ask if you would take a moment to allow our City Attorney to share and extend more about this project.

Andrea Leslie-Fite, City Attorney said thank you Madam Mayor, Mayor, members of Council and members of the public. The I-77 South Express Lane Project has been part of the region's long range transportation improvement framework since 2007, and it was incorporated into the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization's Metropolitan Transportation Plan in 2014. This is a state-designated transportation

project involving an interstate and facility which are governed by federal and state transportation law.

The CRTPO is this region's Metropolitan Planning Organization. MPOs are regional transportation planning bodies required for areas to receive and program federal surface transportation funds. NCGS (North Carolina General Statute) 136-200.2 authorizes MPOs to receive and expend federal planning funds. One of CRTPO's core functions as an MPO is to establish a Metropolitan Transportation Plan. These plans usually last or span a 20-plus-year horizon. Another core function is the adoption of a Transportation Improvement Program. MPOs do not construct projects directly. Instead, they prioritize projects for inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Program, otherwise known as STIP.

The I-77 South Express Lane Project was prioritized as part of District Ten's major projects with its original approval occurring in 2014. The authority to designate and operate toll facilities in North Carolina rest with the North Carolina Turnpike Authority, under NCGS 136-89.183. The General Assembly grants that authority to the state, not municipalities. Interstate facilities are governed by Federal Transportation Statutes including 23 USC §134, and 23 CFR part 450. When the CRTPO included this project in its Metropolitan Transportation Plan and its Transportation Improvement Program, that completed the step for requiring federal planning approvals and it was satisfied from that point forward. A single member government, including the City, cannot unilaterally reverse the regional vote. The toll project was approved by the CRTPO pursuant to NCGS 136-89.183, which requires approval of the affected Metropolitan Planning Organization before letting the project, which is the P3 (Public-Private Partnership) model solicitation that, part of this public discourse. Authority over interstate facilities rests with NC-DOT, the State of North Carolina, and federal entities where applicable. Once CRTPO authorized the P3 and the request for qualifications was advertised, the process advanced under state and federal jurisdiction.

As we understand it from talking with state and federal officials, the project has several key components remaining, including the actual review of the Request for Qualifications, the Request for Proposals and the National Environmental Policy Act process, otherwise known as NEPA, which is designed to explore environmental impact including design and other environmental impacts. Further, it is our understanding the NC-DOT will release reference information documents as an initial step in the ROP (Record of Proceeding) process and that is slated for March 13, 2026. NC-DOT will share the project data with short listed teams and they will begin to generate preliminary designs.

So, at this point, it's critical for the community to remain involved and encouraged and engaged with the remaining steps of the process. Mayor, as you mentioned, you have referred the item to the Transportation Planning and Development Committee, which is charged to review the status of the process, to identify opportunities for support and additional community engagement and lastly, to determine any recommendations that Council can make on how the City can best leverage the project in areas design. So, I'll turn it back over to the Mayor.

Mayor Lyles said thank you very much. The City will continue to work with NC-DOT and regional partners including the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization to better understand the available resources that can support community priorities. I've asked our City Manager's Office and Community Relation Team to be present for you this evening. We have two people here, Monica Allen and Terry Bradley, if you raise your hands, where are you guys? You're right here. That if you would like to have more information that we can provide, and I'm not saying that we can, but we want to make sure that if you have the ability to tell us what you want to do and how to do this, we will provide that information, working with the staff over here and then we will actually put it in for the remaining work that we're going to do with the Secretary when he comes down.

So, as I said, we have Communications, we have Monica Allen, Terry Bradley. Please participate. I know signage is great. I love it too, but if we have things that are written down or things that you've already said that you need to have done or you want to do, and we haven't had that part where we can put it in some kind of format, so that we can be a part of what we are trying to accomplish. So, I would really like to ask you to make sure that you work with our team and staff, make clear what you want to do and how, and that we can do that. I understand.

Unknown said we have signatures already!

Mayor Lyles said sir, sir.

Mayor Lyles said thank you very much for that thought. Thank you. Help us do it. Help us do it, please! Thank you very much.

Unknown said stop it! Vote on it! Can you try to fight with us? So, he will take it to the Department of Transportation with Board signatures?

Crowd said stop the expansion! Stop the expansion! Stop the expansion!

Mayor Lyles said that's it. Okay, all right. We have a number of people on this dais that would like to have an opportunity to speak with you.

Councilmember Johnson said first of all, can we ask the Madam Clerk to pass the petitions around for Council members? Thank you. One of my concerns since at least 2021 has been that it takes six Council members to get anything on the agenda. You probably heard me talk about that. What I would have liked to have seen tonight, given the thousands of emails between the 11 of us that we've received, and we knew that there were going to be 300 people here tonight, was for this item to be on the agenda for us to discuss, at least to get these questions asked and to speak about it as a Council. These individuals have taken time off work or come down here, so to send them to another room to ask questions when we have their questions, I think more could be done to listen to our constituents.

So, in order to get something on the agenda, we need unanimous decisions or support from all of our Council members.

Motion was made by Councilmember Johnson, and seconded by Councilmember Graham, to add the item to the agenda for tonight's meeting to discuss and/or take any necessary action on the I-77 Project, or the referral to CRTPO.
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Councilmember Driggs said so I believe our procedures say, Madam Attorney, please correct me, that we cannot add something to the agenda for same night vote without unanimous, and I believe it's improper to do that. I think what we need to do is vote by a majority to put it on the agenda for a future meeting.

Unknown said I think we can still try.

Ms. Leslie-Fite said it does require a unanimous to take action tonight.

Ms. Johnson said okay.

Councilmember Watlington said point of order. Because we're discussing it by virtue of it being on the Public Forum, I thought we could discuss it, but we couldn't vote.

Ms. Johnson said can't take any action, yes.

Ms. Leslie-Fite said that's right. That's correct. You can discuss it tonight, but you cannot take an action of any kind tonight.

Mayor Lyles said so, if we add it to the agenda, if there is any action to be taken, it needs to be an agenda item, so that's what we're voting for, and we need unanimous support in order to add it to tonight's agenda. Now the majority can add it to a future agenda. Currently, it's going to Committee, but we can also add it to a future Council agenda. Does everybody understand that the City Attorney has said that that is a viable option? Let's see where did we land?

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

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Mazuera Arias, Graham, Johnson, Mayo, Mitchell, Owens, and Watlington

NAYS: Councilmember Driggs

Ms. Johnson said so, because it wasn't unanimous, we can't put it on tonight's agenda but we can put it on a future agenda.

Motion was made by Councilmember Johnson, and seconded by Councilmember Ajmera, to put this item on a future agenda, as soon as possible, the next meeting that we can discuss it, to put it on the agenda instead of to the Committee in order for a more transparent process and to avoid any appearance of lack of transparency.

Councilmember Graham said thank you Ms. Johnson for the motion about a future agenda item. I believe that this thing is really time sensitive. We do not have a meeting next week, we have a retreat. Can it be placed on the retreat agenda to talk about because the RFQ (Request for Quote) that's going out is March 13, 2026 and that's going to shape the design of the project. I think what we really need, which I've talked to a number of my colleagues as well as NC-DOT, is a pause. This is not to stop progress, it's to make sure that we're all on the same page and that we're all aligned. We are not aligned. The community is not aligned with the Council. The Council is not aligned with CRTPO, CRTPO is not aligned with NC-DOT. There's a misalignment of what we're trying to do. I represent many of the residents who are here tonight. I agree with them. I agreed with them back in October 2025 when we first got both plans. I agreed with them in February 2026 when, to my surprise, NC-DOT chose the elevation design after I was speaking with them for weeks, and they didn't call me, text me or inform me that they were making a decision.

I appreciate that the Mayor has done a really good job of elevating this conversation to the Secretary of Transportation. He is meeting with a number of community members and leaders, I think as early as this week. The referral to the Transportation Committee on March 5, 2026 is necessary, but I am concerned about the calendar that we may be running out the clock on making a decision and so, I think that the concerns are real. I think they are real, and we don't want to be in a place where we are repeating history.

We clearly, and I clearly understand that something needs to happen on 77 South. I drive it every day. There's a bottleneck from Morehead Street to Westinghouse Boulevard from 3:30 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. in the morning, from 6:00 p.m. to about 8:30 p.m. So, something needs to happen. It's how it happens, and making sure that NC-DOT is not talking at citizens, that they're talking to citizens. Tonight we may have done the same thing, too, where we're talking at people and not to them. So, I hope that we can convene as soon as possible, even if it's a special meeting to ensure that there's a meeting of the minds and that we don't lose the opportunity for expansion but certainly, the clock is ticking. Both proposals, as submitted in October 2025, were awful in the impact it had on communities and people.

Ms. Johnson said so, is that a substitute motion?

Mr. Graham said substitute motion, or we can talk collectively about how we can get this issue in front of the Council for some type of action immediately. Simultaneously we

have the [INAUDIBLE] top conversation with the top leadership at NC-DOT with members and the community about how we move forward. I don't need to have a conversation with NC-DOT about what they want to do in the future, I want to have a conversation with them in reference to will they give us 60 days as a community to try to figure it out together. That's what we're asking for and so, I think that's what they want and going to another room to have that conversation, we've heard loud and clear what they want, and I agree with them.

Mayor Lyles said all right, Mr. Graham, you asked the question about timing and so, I know that we've been doing a lot of work, but if this is that important for the retreat, we ought to go ahead and I think Mr. Mitchell would agree that we should do it at the retreat, so if that is going to be possible, but we will have to do notification. I understand that.

Ms. Leslie-Fite said no, no, I was just asking a point of order. I just wanted to make sure we have a motion from Councilmember Johnson, a second from Councilmember Graham or was that a substitute motion?

Mr. Graham said no, I think if we're following the Mayor's logic and I agree with her, that I think you would withdraw your motion if we say that we're going to put this on the agenda for the retreat, which is Monday.

Ms. Leslie-Fite said okay.

Mr. Graham said the retreat is in town. This is important too. I don't want to, this is extremely important because it's time sensitive so, and allow the Council to do its job. So, on Monday and that we tackle this issue and we use our political influence with our friends to say we need 60 days as a community to figure it out alongside, with NC-DOT.

Unknown said make a motion.

Mr. Graham said I don't think it needs a motion. I think the Mayor can put it on the agenda by herself.

Mayor Lyles said I don't want our attorney to say, "Well, no we didn't have a motion," so we had a motion.

Mr. Graham said okay.

Mayor Lyles said and the people supported it, everybody supported it, so now I think we need a second one.

Ms. Johnson said there wasn't a second. We need a vote, so I can withdraw it as long as I know that we're going to, it's going to be on the agenda at the retreat.

Mayor Lyles said okay, so we have a retreat on the agenda.

Councilmember Anderson said I was just asking the City Attorney. We had a motion and a second and then did we vote or did we not vote?

Ms. Leslie-Fite said we did not vote.

Mayor Lyles said so, what we have today is, I think everyone has said pull back, we'll be okay. If we can do this at the retreat on Monday.

Ms. Johnson said so, just to clarify, it seems like we voted. We asked for a vote to put it on tonight's agenda. That failed because it wasn't unilateral. We have to have unanimous, thank you, unanimous approval, so I made the motion to put it on future agenda which takes six people and I'm withdrawing that because it's done. We're going to put it on the agenda for Monday.

Mr. Graham said so, next Monday will be the second week of March and that would be way too late.

Ms. Johnson said okay.

Mayor Lyles said is everybody all hearts and hands?

Mr. Graham said there's consensus, Monday.

Councilmember Mazuera Arias said so when this room overflows at this capacity, it tells us something very important. It tells us that people feel unheard. It tells us that the decisions of consequence are being made, and it tells us that the trust the community has in us is on the line, and I want to begin by acknowledging the residents who are here, particularly those from historically black neighborhoods who have too often born the cost of infrastructure at the sake of growth. It's always been made without them, and I want to be clear tonight and I support my colleagues, Councilmember Johnson, Councilmember Graham. The message is simple. We got to slow this down. We got to slow this down. I have inherently always believed that express lanes, toll lanes are inherently classist. Those signs, "No fast lanes for the rich," is very true, and we do not need another presentation about what happens next in the procurement process or a detailed explanation of the RFP timeline. In fact, we do not want to hear what's next. You all don't want to hear what's next. We want to pause this project.

The I-77 South Express Toll Lanes Proposal is not a minor adjustment to an existing corridor. It is a generational infrastructure decision, and it carries multi-billion dollar implication, and it will disrupt historically black neighborhoods that have already express the harmful legacy of highway expansion, and it locks us into particular mobility model for decades. As Councilmember Graham mentioned, there are some misalignments happening with this project. Alignment between the City and the State, between transportation investment and our climate communities, between growth and racial equity, between what the public has been told and what is programmed in the State Transportation Improvement Program, and alignment between community voices and government political action.

Right now, that alignment does not exist but as you have seen tonight, we are not powerless. We control whether we signal that the process has earned the community's trust, whether we say engagement has been sufficient, and whether we lend political legitimacy to advancing a project at this moment. Tonight, I do not believe that legitimacy has been earned by the community. Residents have raised serious concerns about the cost, the property impacts, environmental justice implications and about whether alternatives, including transit and other options, have been rigorously evaluated.

When communities most likely aired the burden, they say do not feel meaningfully heard, the responsible response is not to move forward. The responsible response is to pause it, and so I join my colleagues, Johnson and Graham, for a 60-day pause on advancing this project so we can level set, and we cannot move forward with the current framework until it ensures us a more inclusive, transparent, rigorous, community-centered feedback approach. That includes deeper community engagement, clear environmental justice analysis, and alignment between this project and our broader mobility and equity goals. As it has been said before, a pause is not obstruction. It is not anti-growth. It is not anti-mobility. It is our due diligence. If this project is truly in the best interest of the City of Charlotte and the region, it can withstand 60 days of deeper scrutiny and stronger alignment. So, we need to slow it down; we need to realign and I support my colleagues in doing that. Thank you.

Mr. Driggs said good evening, everybody. I'm in sort of an unusual position here. For the last four years I've been operating within the legal environment described by our City Attorney to represent the interests of Charlotte, and that is a complicated thing. So, what I've tried to do, I've written a memo which I'm going to circulate tonight, will be a

public record, telling you the story of how we got where we are today, and talking about what our options are.

I want to be clear for one, to be fair to us, we did not reauthorize this project in 2024. We absolutely did not. Authorizing a project is an evaluation process that involves all of the analytics that go into proposing a new project. It was done in 2014, and that project has been on the state project list ever since. It has rolled forward for lack of funding. So, what happened a couple of years ago was the CRTPO was asked, "Okay, we could do this with a P3, should we do a P3?" and a working group was created on CRTPO that included myself and several other people that you know, and kind of looked at all the problems emanating from the prior P3 on I-77 North, the alternatives and said, "Okay, there's nothing to talk about unless we examine this possibility," and so, the Council voted unanimously then only on that, should we consider the P3, should we look at it. I'll note, too, at that time, there wasn't a crowd like here in the room. We didn't sit here and look at people like that and just go ahead and make that vote. We did not actually realize the full scope of opposition to this until those maps went out and everybody, I guess, became aware.

So, where we are right now is all of us, myself included, are concerned about what we see and the question is not whether we're concerned or I am, the question is what is the best thing we can do? What I would urge you to consider, is at the moment, the way the NC-DOT Process is moving ahead based on the description, for one, nothing is happening in the next week or two that's irreversible. If we have any possibility of intervening or exerting any influence, we can do so, frankly, at any time in the next six, eight, or whatever, months.

What would happen, though, if this body presumes to instruct me to go to the CRTPO and the CRTPO, we've been advised by NC-DOT that one thing that will not be available for anything that we might choose to pursue there, and Mr. Graham acknowledges, we need to do something. The \$600 million is gone and \$100 million for local projects that are associated with that is also gone. So, what I'm recommending is not that we in any way ignore. I'm saying we need to act, we need to amplify the voices that we're hearing and our engagement. We need to use our influence with NC-DOT to deliver the message that we've heard tonight, and by the way, I have done so. I mean, you guys haven't heard me. I've been on the phone with the engineers, with the entire establishment there in my capacity, saying, "People, you know, you cannot ignore this. We have got to work on this," and the question is whether completely eliminating any improvement there is really the best thing. If we put a pause on for 60 days for example, then everything will be as it was. There will have been more conversation, but we can have that conversation without the pause and we can preserve the availability of the state funds for any solutions that we ultimately deem acceptable and if that doesn't materialize, then we can explore what our possibilities are to interfere with NC-DOT.

I can just tell you for us to step out of the intended authority that we have and try through the CRTPO process to obstruct what NC-DOT is doing is not going to land in a good place. So, my thought is, again, we have influence. We, the Council, do, and I think all of us are intent on making sure that NC-DOT does not disregard or minimize what it's hearing. They understand now from us that they can't do that and if you look, the way in which they have escalated their engagement since we started to hear this and since those emails started coming in, they're scrambling to find new ways.

So, I think we just lean on them, hard, and then if the time comes in a month or whenever, when we determine, okay, it's just not working, then we can talk about just blowing the whole thing up, but I really think it would be a mistake to do it right now. Thank you.

Mr. Graham said again, I look forward to meeting with Secretary Johnson ensuring the concerns of the neighborhood leaders, what they expressed here tonight, and I look forward to our conversation on Monday at the retreat. My thoughts will be centered around getting the Council to approve a 60-day pause and sending that message that we need clear understanding on behalf of the community to reestablish the alignment

with the City Council, CRTPO, and NC-DOT and community leaders to conduct a clear review of environmental and neighborhood impacts, to evaluate design assumptions with urban planning and equity lens. We do not, I do not want, my neighbors do not want concrete and steel three-story highway on the edge of our Uptown community. The design itself is flawed and to continually moving forward is like putting lipstick on a pig. It just doesn't work. Lastly, and probably more importantly, restore public confidence in the process. Right now, they have lost public confidence. Thank you.

Councilmember Owens said so, first I want to thank all of you who've come out tonight to share your perspectives and your passion with Council. I want to thank our attorney for weighing in. I want to thank the Mayor for her good thoughts and all my colleagues who've spoken. I feel that we're always better for the input received from our fellow Charlotteans and you've made your voices very clear. I do appreciate all of the input we've received. My frustrations with the current I-77 situation stem from guideposts that I have set for myself as a public servant.

First, I don't think that government can fix everything, but I do think that the primary function of government, municipal, state, or federal, is to make people's lives a little bit better. Second, I believe in the principle that when you know better, you do better, both personally and in governance and those two elements of my world view are being challenged right now with this I-77 Project.

Are we actually making people's lives better with this toll road? Are toll roads actually going to address congestion? Is this project either on the ground or elevated, going to make life better for our citizens? I ask NC-DOT to show the work when it comes to why options to CRTPO have been limited to which type of toll road we pursue. I implore our governor to pause the project if we are not able, to dig in on exploration of options, to ask hard questions about whether the data shows that this project will deliver the promised reduction in congestion. I implore our governor to direct NC-DOT to meet the moment with focus on broader options for moving people and freight, not just moving a few cars of people willing to pay a high toll.

What alternatives to toll roads have been explored and when? What assumptions about those options may have shifted, given the accelerated speed of growth that our region has experienced? What have we explored by ways of managed routes, reversible, bus, rapid transit or truck lanes or any of myriad other options that ease congestion, other than a toll road? Is there data on why a toll road for 50 years, a toll road that reverts to us just as it will need expensive maintenance, is the choice that accomplishes our goals? We cannot pave our way to prosperity. Let's look at how we move people, not just how we move cars. Cars don't shop in our stores. Cars don't work in our buildings. Cars don't attend our sporting events and concerts, people do. Let us refocus on people-first mobility solutions to the challenges we face.

As for the displacement that would come as part of this project, I again go back to when you know better, you do better, and I believe in 2026 we all know better. Going through vibrant neighborhoods with any transit solution should, in my opinion, be a path of last resort. Let's show our work with respect to the harm caused. Should not the benefit be greater than the harm? Where is the proof that diminution and congestion is worth the destruction of homes and businesses? I do not like to throw bad money after good, and yes, I said that right. We've been investing in reconnecting the Westside by investment and infrastructure and now would be effectively undoing the work and doubling down on destroying connections and neighborhoods, destroying generational wealth paths once again.

I'm trying to imagine if a project like this I-77 expansion were proposed in my District Six. I try to imagine the level of inquiry I would do on behalf of the residents of District Six, the amount of energy I would want to see put into a wider variety of options for the different movement of people, for the efficient movement of people, before going to my constituents and asking them to give up their homes and business, I would expect to see proof that what was being proposed for the greater good was worth the sacrifices. I

cannot in good conscience ask anything less simply because this project doesn't displace residents of District Six.

Councilmember Mitchell said I just remember attending a Town Hall meeting that Councilman Graham had, and to sit in that front row and to feel the frustration that was in the room. This evening, citizens, you have shared your frustration and concern. I think it's clear, you are expecting us to do better, you're expecting us to listen, and you're expecting us to use our influence. So, I support Councilmember Johnson's motion when she said let's put it on our agenda for the retreat the first day. So, the promise I'm going to make to you tonight, as we leave here at 10:30, it's going to be a long night, is I will start working on how we arrange our retreat agenda to deal with what I think is probably the number one priority we're going to face, because it's about the future growth of Charlotte. Thank you all for coming out and to my two colleagues, Councilmember Mayo and Councilmember Graham, thank you for your leadership on a tough issue in your district.

Mayor Lyles said I think you've heard enough from me from all of the names and everything and I just want to say thank you for showing up and being a part of it. We all know that McCrorey Heights is a special neighborhood. You know, I grew up with my aunt's house still there, so when you start doing these kinds of projects, they do get to be where you have a place, where it's human to you, and I have to say this is much as possible. I hope that we can do something that will make this proud for everyone, and that's the goal. The goal is not about what we want to do or see done or how much it's going to cost, it should be around how do you make the community better. So, I hope that you'll always think of that in a way that works for everyone. So, thank you very much.

Ms. Anderson said I want to thank everyone in the community for coming out, but more importantly, over a series of weeks communicating to all of us. I've been talking about this particular project and its impact on neighborhoods in District One since October of last year with residents. I have been advocating for the North Carolina Department of Transportation to actually come and listen to everything that the community has to say, not just in District One, but throughout the entire 11-mile corridor that is a part of the project. I've been having those conversations with residents. I've been having those conversations with people who are involved in the program, in the background, and so, I'm absolutely thrilled that the secretary is coming and will be listening. My understanding is that there's a Listening Center that's being established as well. I will echo everything that the residents say, but I want you guys to speak, the same thing you're saying to us, speak that to our NC-DOT and our General Assembly. Speak that to our state leaders, and I think we can move forward together. So, thank you so very much for your engagement over the last several weeks, but for some of my constituents, over the last several months.

Councilmember Mayo said I won't say too much. I echo a lot of the comments that people have said, particularly Councilmember Owens. Definitely want to see those remarks later. I think you have some really great points for that. I'm excited that this is going to go before full Council for us to have these discussions, to talk about pausing this project. I think talking about this kind of being finalized in 2014, we know that we have new technology now, and I think that we need to think outside the box instead of just expanding with toll lanes, particularly when we talk about elevated lanes. We know that that's not best practices right now around the country, so I'd hate for Charlotte, you know, as we think of ourselves, we're the Queen City we're, you know, 14th growing city and biggest city in the country, I think we need to think differently. I don't think this is the way to go, so I'm excited to continue the work with you all to really elevate this concern so that we can continue that trajectory of being a great city and I, personally, don't think that where we are right now is doing that.

Ms. Watlington said good evening again. I won't belabor the points. I agree with my colleagues. I stand with you all. I see my West Boulevard Neighborhood Coalition neighbors here and so many others, Historic West End, thank you. Thank you, thank you for coming out and for the work that you do, not just tonight, but continually,

because y'all have been on this a long time. I love to see neighbors from all over our City that are impacted standing together and we got to respect that. And so, when I think about this conversation, I absolutely support the 60-day delay. I support having this conversation in taking a vote to direct our CRTPO member to move for a 60-day delay. I don't want it to get lost, though, that after 60 days there still is another decision to be made. What I'm hearing is that you don't want to just delay the outcome, you want to change the outcome, and that's what matters.

And so, with that, I want to make sure that I understand, Madam Attorney, if you've got it, very plainly, what are the remaining decision points, because I don't want us to get 60 days later and find that we thought that we had an opportunity to impact but all we did was kick the can down the road.

Ms. Leslie-Fite said thank you, Dr. Watlington. So, the Request for Qualifications Allowed, or the short list of contractors or proposers to tender their Request for Qualification, the next step is for them to submit proposals and with proposals it will help to share the options for the community, from their perspective on how the project can be delivered, and that's a really important point for community engagement. I believe NC-DOTs plan at this point is certainly to continue to have meetings with community leaders and engagement with stakeholders, certainly like City Council, to help inform how that project delivery may be given. I know there's been a lot of discussion about the two options that are available, but again, I highlighted it just a moment about NEPA and the process with those community meetings. I think there were several opportunities for community engagement and it would be really important for those voices to be heard about the concerns, not just about the maps themselves, but the options that are available for delivering the project.

Ms. Watlington said thank you for that. Just as a follow up, the gentleman that was here earlier, mentioned that there is always an option to not proceed. Is that consistent with what you have found in your research?

Ms. Leslie-Fite said so, as I understand it, and I want to place a disclaimer, of course, I don't represent CRTPO, I'm advising on behalf of City Council at this point. It is my understanding that if there is a pause in the project or to stop the project altogether, certainly DOT would have to revisit how that funding model would work more broadly, and how the projects may be managed, because again, we're part of the regional authority and part of District 10 and so how those moneys will be disbursed in the future are really up in the air and hard to determine at this point. I wouldn't want to commit at this point about how it would actually land.

Ms. Watlington said okay, thank you so much. Last question then, when we get to that point, will this Council have an opportunity to take a vote to direct our member to move to pause, delay, advocate for a particular outcome?

Ms. Leslie-Fite said Council can direct its representative, based upon a motion and a vote by the full body; however, CRTPO's adjudication and their agenda process is managed by their bylaws and as I understand it, and I just had an opportunity to review their bylaws today, it presents that their agenda items are based on their Chair placing items on the agenda and so, certainly, it would have to work through their typical process with adding agenda items and so, directing perhaps the representative to explore what those options are and how to get that information before the full body would be the appropriate next step.

Ms. Watlington said gotcha. So, it sounds like there's work to do. Sounds to me like the next step or one of the next steps would be, to be reaching out to the Chair of CRTPO and let them understand that the community desires that this becomes an agenda item as this discussion goes on. I look forward to continuing to work with you. As I learn things, I will certainly share with you and I'm sure that you all will continue to do that, but this certainly is a journey, and we're committed to taking that journey with you. Thank you.

Councilmember Ajmera said Madam Attorney, thank you for clarifying the Council's legal authority in terms of the next steps. Is there a legal obligation for CRTPO to share project maps, design concepts, before any deadlines or binding votes in order to ensure that public and government decision makers have meaningful notice? Because we were not provided a notice.

Ms. Leslie-Fite said thank you Councilmember Ajmera. CRTPO acts as an advisory body to NC-DOT, and the way the statute is written, before any sort of toll projects can be approved to move forward, it has to come before CRTPO and in doing that, that's what the 2014 vote was about and then subsequently the P3 delivery model. The piece about the maps, there is no statutory, that I'm aware of, let me say that, give that disclaimer. That I'm aware of, there's no statutory responsibility that CRTPO do that, share the maps; however, that role really lies with NC-DOT and NC-DOT sharing the maps makes it available to the public and ultimately the delivery of the project is governed by NC-DOT.

Ms. Ajmera said it looks like that we need to explore options, not just with CRTPO, but also with NC-DOT and the Governor's Office. Let's be honest, issuing a RFP is not destiny. It's not democracy, and it's certainly not community consent. What we are facing right now is a decision of consequence. Elevated toll lanes through the heart of Uptown, that would shape our skyline, mobility, neighborhoods for generations to come and yet, critical design components were not fully understood by this body or the public before the process advanced. This is not how transparency works, and if this project is truly in the best interest of our City, it should withstand a pause, a scrutiny. It should also withstand public debate. We pause projects all the time, when new information emerges like in this case. We pause when community impact is unclear, we pause when cost exposure is uncertain. I don't know why we would move faster on this project and something this consequential.

We are not able to answer what is the true financial liability, what are the displacement and equity impacts, what authority this Council has and retains, and whether alternatives have been fully evaluated. So, then we are not ready to proceed, so I know that we are saying that this is another body. Leadership is not about saying that our hands are tied, it's about asking who tied them and why.

I agree that we need to pause, but I also think we need to take an action that is in the best interest of our community. I'm sure I'll have more questions for you, Madam Attorney.

Ms. Leslie-Fite said if I may follow up on one thing that you asked me. So, with respect to the maps, its really important to remember that there's a procurement process that CRTPO participates in, but there's also the NEPA, the NEPA process, that allows for map submittals, consideration, feedback, public comment, all of the engagement pieces that we're talking about here tonight and so, it's a both and, and so it's about CRTPO. CRTPO does play this advisory role, but there's also the Federal Highway Administration's role available and should be utilized as well.

Mayor Lyles said thank you. I think everyone has had an opportunity to speak and I really appreciate so very much your listening and providing the information that you believe is most important for our communities. So, thank you very much, and you're welcome to stay along for all of the business items that we're now going to try to work through. So, with this, we're going to start our Consent Agenda. Thank you guys for coming.

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CONSENT AGENDA

ITEM NO. 1: MAYOR AND COUNCIL CONSENT ITEM QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Mayor Lyles said okay, before we begin our discussion and vote on consent items, there is one property transaction on the agenda that has been settled. It is item 36, so you can have that and make sure that that's done.

Marie Harris, Budget Director said yes, ma'am, that one is settled and there's three that are deferred. Items No. 33, 34 and 35 are deferred.

Mayor Lyles said we need to recuse Mr. Mitchell.

Councilmember Mitchell said Mayor, Council, ya'll can recuse me on item 22, please.

Motion was made by Councilmember Watlington, seconded by Councilmember Graham, and carried unanimously to recuse Councilmember Mitchell from Item No. 22, Airport Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting Station 47.

Ms. Harris said so, Madam Mayor, thank you. I've gotten a chance to speak to several of you this evening. I believe Councilmember Mazuera Arias has a few questions.

Councilmember Mazuera Arias said I have some questions regarding agenda Item No. 13, the 2025 Urban Area Security Initiative Grant. Thank you so much, Marie, for talking to me about this, but I just want to put it on the record, make sure the community is clear what this DHS Grant does and does not do. So, what is the grant funding to be used toward? Please clarify that the funding Charlotte is receiving is not going toward any immigration enforcement and can you also clarify how much of these grant funds equipment versus training specifically. What surveillance technologies are included and these are federal funds and not City funds.

Ms. Harris said correct, federal funds, and yes, thank you for a chance to highlight this collaborative effort. So, this is a ten, the UASI (Urban Area Security Initiative) Region is ten counties that we come together with, and they do a lot of exciting things. Some of them are privileged because we don't want to highlight a risk. They routinely take risk assessments and hazard assessments and develop disaster preparedness plans and exercises and I don't have the details of what this is specific is going to be spent on. As an example in the past, these monies have been invested in things like our Public Radio System that allows us not only our police and fire are on it, but also across the region and then helps us bridge when we're all responding from different jurisdictions, so that was the example, but it's really for disaster preparedness, hazard mitigation.

Mr. Mazuera Arias said thank you, I appreciate that. I just wanted my colleagues to level set. Don't want a headline to go in the media saying, "Charlotte approves a DHS grant," and think that it's regarding immigration. So, the other question I have if I may, is on agenda Item No. 28. SEAP+ Implementation Consulting Services. So, we're estimating \$200,000 annually in consulting and I want to know how many of these professional consultants are based locally and how much of this funding is directed toward implementation in historically heat burdened neighborhoods, which are typically black and brown, low-income neighborhoods and do we have measurable interim impacts before 2030?

Ms. Harris said thank you for that, and to your first part of that question, five of these different vendors have a local presence, key staff that are locally based, and this is an on call so there's not specific, like, we know we're going to do \$200,000 this year for this, but they are planning to use them towards the GreenPrint Projects within the corridors where they do Environmental Justice Blueprint Assessments, so that is one of the projects they're planning on. This is by PAYGO (Pay As You Go), so it's what we talked about earlier, one time money, but it's set aside for projects if they come up to make sure we have environmental focus on it, and this one is not specific to the tree canopy. To your point that they are now using those types of assessments in terms of where the least amount of tree canopy is or the most heat index, so those are factors that are coming into play now.

Mr. Mazuera Arias said thank you so much, Marie.

Mayor Lyles said all right, are there any other questions from Consent Agenda Items?

ITEM NO. 2: CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS 13 THROUGH 38 MAY BE CONSIDERED IN ONE MOTION EXCEPT FOR THOSE ITEMS REMOVED BY A COUNCIL MEMBER. ITEMS ARE REMOVED BY NOTIFYING THE CITY CLERK.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mazuera Arias, seconded by Councilmember Driggs, and carried unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda as presented with the exception of Item No. 33, Item No. 34, and Item No. 35 which have been deferred, and Item No. 36 which has been settled.

The following items were approved:

Item No. 13: 2025 Urban Area Security Initiative Grant

Authorize the Charlotte Area Homeland Security Director (Charlotte Fire Chief) to accept a grant for \$3,428,028 from the United States Department of Homeland Security for the 2025 Urban Area Security Initiative Grant Program.

Item No. 14: General Vehicle Collision Repair Services

(A) Approve contracts for general vehicle collision repair services for a term of three years with the following: Donald Gardner's Paint & Body, Inc. (SBE), Mecklenburg Automotive & Collision, WRG paint & Body LLC, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contracts for up to one, two-year term with possible price adjustments and to amend the contracts consistent with the purpose for which the contracts were approved.

Item No. 15: Median Maintenance Services

(A) Approve contracts for median maintenance services for Districts South A and South D for a term of three years with the following: MB Premier (MBE), Turf Commander (MBE), (B) Approve contracts for median maintenance services for East District B, West District B, and the South Corridor Infrastructure Program for a term of three years with the following: Champion Landscapes, Inc., Roundtree Companies, LLC (MBE, SBE), and (C) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contracts for up to one, two-year terms with possible price adjustments and to amend the contracts consistent with the purpose for which the contracts were approved.

Item No. 16: Truck Bodies for Transportation Sign Installation Vehicles

(A) Approve the purchase of sign truck bodies by the sole source exemption, and (B) Approve a contract with Adkins Truck Equipment Co. for the purchase of sign truck bodies for a term of one year.

Item No. 17: Site and Civil Engineering Services

(A) Approve contracts for site and civil engineering services for a term of three years with the following: Armstrong Glen, PC, Bolton & Menk, Inc., Gavel & Dorn Engineering, PLLC, Timmons Group, Inc., and (B) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contracts for up to one, two-year term with possible price adjustments and to amend the contracts consistent with the purpose for which the contracts were approved.

Item No. 18: Solid Waste Services Facilities Renovations

Approve a contract in the amount of \$2,107,944.53 to the lowest responsive bidder Cinderella Partners, Inc. for the Solid Waste Services Equity Facilities project.

Summary of Bids

Cinderella Partners, Inc.	\$2,107,944.53
W.C. Construction Company, LLC	\$2,154,111.00
Tullace Construction, LLC	\$2,495,006.59

Item No. 19: Concrete Maintenance and Repair Services

(A) Approve a unit price contract with CROM, LLC for on-call concrete maintenance and repair services for a term of two years, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contract for up to three, one-year terms with possible price adjustments and to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract was approved.

Item No. 20: Municipal Agreement for Relocation and Installation of Water Infrastructure along Asbury Chapel Road

(A) Adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager to negotiate and execute a municipal agreement with the North Carolina Department of Transportation for construction of water and sanitary sewer line relocations, adjustments, and improvements, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to approve the reimbursement request for the actual cost of the utility construction.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 56, at Page(s) 226-227.

Item No. 21: Wi-Fi Services on Transit Vehicles

(A) Approve the purchase of wireless services from a cooperative contract, (B) Approve a unit price contract with Kajeet for the purchase of private wireless services for a term of three years under Sourcewell contract #020624-KAJ, and (C) Authorize the City Manager to extend the contract for additional terms as long as the cooperative contract is in effect at prices and terms that are the same or more favorable than those offered under the cooperative contract.

Item No. 22: Airport Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting Station 47

(A) Approve a contract in the amount of \$40,931,866 with J.E. Dunn-McFarland, a Joint Venture, for construction manager at risk services for the Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting Station 47 project, (B) Approve contract amendment #2 for \$894,650 to the contract with Stewart Cooper Newell Architects PA for construction administration services for the construction phase of the project, and (C) Authorize the City Manager to amend the contracts consistent with the purpose for which the contracts were approved.

Item No. 23: Airport CLT Center Roadway Improvements

Approve a contract in the amount of \$1,768,381.25 to the lowest responsive bidder Ferlco, LLC (SBE) for the CLT Center Roadway Improvements project.

Summary of Bids

Ferlco, LLC	\$1,768,381.25
Blythe Development	\$1,887,656.28
Blythe Construction	\$2,371,262.91

Item No. 24: Airport Concourse E Expansion Phase 10

Approve a contract in the amount of \$4,396,300 to the lowest responsive bidder Messer Construction Co. for the Concourse E Expansion Phase 10 project.

Summary of Bids

Messer Construction Co.	\$4,396,300.00
Keach Construction	\$4,805,330.00
Edison Foard	\$4,897,800.00
Archer Western Construction, LLC	\$5,759,700.00
Cleveland Construction, Inc.	\$6,208,276.00
Batson-Cook Construction	\$8,536,279.80

Item No. 25: Airport Crowd Control and Queuing Equipment

(A) Approve the purchase of crowd control and queuing equipment by the sole source exemption, and (B) Approve a contract with Lavi Industries for the purchase of crowd control and queuing equipment for a term of five years.

Item No. 26: Airport Facility Lease – 4308 Yorkmont Road

(A) Approve a lease with Air General, Inc. for a term of three years for an office and warehouse facility at the Airport related to its airline support services, and (B) Authorize

the City Manager to extend the lease for up to two, one-year terms and to amend the lease consistent with the purpose for which the lease was approved.

Item No. 27: Airport Valet Management and Parking Support Services

(A) Approve a management agreement with ACE Parking Management, Inc. dba ACE for a term of five years for Airport valet management and parking support services, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to renew the agreement for up to two, one-year terms with possible price adjustments and to amend the agreement consistent with the purpose for which the agreement was approved.

Item No. 28: SEAP+ Implementation Consulting Services

(A) Authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute contracts for on-call sustainability-focused professional consulting services for a term of three years with the following: Blue Strike Environmental, Inc., CleanAIRE NC, Key Environmental Consulting (MBE), Kimley-Horn & Associates, Inc., SchermCo, White Label Management Group, LLC (MBE), and (B) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contracts for up to one, two-year term with possible price adjustments and to amend the contracts consistent with the purpose for which the contracts were approved.

Item No. 29: Refund Property Taxes

Adopt a resolution authorizing the refund of property taxes assessed through clerical or assessment error in the amount of \$221,997.63.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 56, at Page(s) 228-232.

Item No. 30: Meeting Minutes

Approve the titles, motions, and votes reflected in the Clerk's record as the minutes of: January 12, 2026, Business Meeting, and January 20, 2026, Zoning Meeting.

PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS

Item No. 31: Aviation Property Transactions – 7100 Steele Creek Road, 9100 Dorcas Lane, and 9134 Dorcas Lane

Acquisition of 310,645 square feet (7.299 acres) at 7100 Steele Creek Road, 9100 Dorcas Lane, and 9134 Dorcas Lane from John M. and Jessie Long; Metrolina Land Co. (John M. Long, President) for \$3,296,550, and all relocation benefits in compliance with federal, state, or local regulations for EIS Mitigation Land South.

Item No. 32: Charlotte Water Property Transactions – Barrington LCR 77 Replacement Sewer, Parcel # 9

Resolution of Condemnation of 24,171.64 square feet (0.56 acres) in sanitary sewer easement and 24,347.74 square feet (0.56 acres) in temporary construction easement at 5126 Grafton Drive from Shannon Park Swim Club, Inc. for \$16,425 for Barrington LCR 77 Replacement Sewer.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 56, at Page(s) 233-234.

Item No. 37: Property Transactions – Harrisburg Road Shared-Use Path Winterwood to Sam Dee, Parcel #6

Resolution of Condemnation of 3,015 square feet (0.070 acres) in storm drainage easement, 432 square feet (0.010) in sidewalk utility easement, and 1,807 square feet (0.041 acres) in temporary construction easement at 10333 Harrisburg Road from Ruth Sullivan Family Trust, Lloyd L Sullivan and L'Tanya Gordon, Trustee for \$11,125 for Strategic Investment Area Harrisburg Road Shared-Use Path Winterwood to Sam Dee.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 56, at Page(s) 235-236.

Item No. 38: Property Transactions – Pebble Street 4150, Parcel # 2

Resolution of Condemnation of 296 square feet (0.007 acres) in storm drainage at 4101 Sourwood Street from S&S Realty of Charlotte Inc. for \$5,475 for Pebble Street 4150.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 56, at Page(s) 237.

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PUBLIC HEARINGS

ITEM NO. 4: PUBLIC HEARING AND DECISION ON THE R. KENT AND GERTRUDE N. BLAIR HOUSE HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION

Mayor Lyles declared the hearing open.

There being no speakers, either for or against, motion was made by Councilmember Driggs, and seconded by Councilmember Owens to (A) Close the public hearing to consider historic landmark designation for the property known as the "R. Kent and Gertrude N. Blair House" parcel identification number 078-036-16), and (B) Adopt Ordinance 1099-X with an effective date of February 23, 2026, designating the property known as the "R. Kent and Gertrude N. Blair House" (parcel identification number 078-036-16) as a historic landmark.

The ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book 69, at Page(s) 218-225.

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POLICY

ITEM NO. 5: CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Marcus Jones, City Manager said Mayor, members of Council, I was going to go over the retreat, but I prefer to work with the Mayor Pro Tem and see how we can juggle this and get back to you. I prefer to get some more feedback on how we can share some of this stuff.

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ITEM NO. 6: FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDAS

Motion was made by Councilmember Graham, and seconded by Councilmember Driggs to (A) Approve the Budget, Governance, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee's recommendation to approve the 2026 Federal Legislative Agenda, and (B) Approve the Budget, Governance, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee's recommendation to approve the 2026 State Legislative Agenda.

Councilmember Graham said so, first I want to start off by really thanking the Mayor, the City Manager, the Police Chief, our District Attorney, and the staff who, over the last 60 days has prepared our presentation to the members of the North Carolina General Assembly two weeks ago. They represented our community with class, knowledge, capability, and demonstrated why we're one of the best cities in the country. I think that relationship in Raleigh is extremely important. That hearing was extremely important. They represented the City and this Council extremely well.

The Budget, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee with Councilmembers Ajmera, Owens, Mitchell, and Mayo, have been working on the Legislative Agenda since October of 2025 with new members seated in December 2025. I want to thank Councilmember Ajmera for starting the process in October 2025, and she's still joins us as a member of the Committee. I think it's important that we underscore some of the issues, items in the agenda, because a lot of it refers to public safety. I think for the record that we need to say that to the community. Our Tier One priorities include additional state funding for mental health support, support for local law enforcement

retention and recruitment and an increase for staffing for the District Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office and the courts. We're also seeking to reestablish the local Juvenile Detention Center and supporting House Bill 258 to strengthen penalties for assaults on public transit operators. In addition, we continue to prioritize efforts to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on our roadways throughout strategic infrastructure and technology.

Our Tier Two priorities focus on strengthening citizen guidelines for chronic repeat offenders, approving statutory qualifications and compensation for magistrates and addressing certain quality-of-life issues through the state statute. We also have our federal package included for your review. The Council will be attending Washington, D.C. for our legislative day, March 17 and 18. We will be meeting with our federal lobbyists to discuss our federal agenda as well as our federal delegation to talk about the City's priorities.

Lastly, we made a commitment to work with Mecklenburg County, the District Attorney's Office and the business community and other local partners to ensure that all of our legislative agenda items are coordinated as much as can, so that we can speak with one voice as a community, and so, I'm really pleased and proud of the work that the committee has done. Again, much of it was done by Councilmember Ajmera before the Council was seated in December 2025. Thank her for her support, but move for approval.

Councilmember Anderson said I thank the Committee for all the work that you've done on both the state and federal legislative agenda. Just a couple statements. I was a part of the discussion in Committee around a couple of the items in particular, some public safety items and the item as it relates to the Juvenile Detention Center in Mecklenburg County. I appreciate some of the massaging of the language to clearly articulate the fact that we, as a City Council, we don't have direct responsibility for the Juvenile Detention Center, but we support the efforts, especially with the ability to keep our young people close to their supportive networks here in Mecklenburg County, and not sending them out to other counties.

Just a question on the federal level of the agenda. I see that the housing statement is to support the production of more low-income and workforce housing. Completely understand the concept of the workforce housing and the need for such, but what would be the expanded emphasis on low-income housing? Is that an Inlivan question through HUD (Department of Housing and Urban Development) or is that a different ask at the federal level?

Sarah Hazel, Chief Sustainability and Resiliency Officer said thank you, Councilmember Anderson. So, this language is consistent with the past several federal legislative agendas. If you dig a little bit deeper, we talked about three things when it came to the federal agenda, related to housing. It's reversing the regulatory changes around the Continuum of Care change, which impacts folks who are closest to becoming unhoused, so that is one piece, and a reason for that language. We also are supporting reauthorizing home improvements and investments, and that's about home ownership, so not simply in the lower-income bracket and then third, supporting the bipartisan ROAD to Housing bill. So, the emphasis on low-income folks is more on the Continuum of Care portion, but it has also been consistent with our language over the past several years.

Ms. Anderson said thank you for that explanation and added dimension because it was unclear just through that one line item as to what we meant by low-income housing.

Ms. Hazel said sure.

Ms. Anderson said thank you very much.

Councilmember Ajmera said Councilmember Graham, Committee Chair, did a great job summarizing what we are asking from Raleigh as well as D.C., and also he

mentioned about the hearing and you all did a great job. Chief Harrison did an excellent job at the hearing in Raleigh earlier this month. She just didn't talk about the progress and success, but she was transparent about the challenges we face as one of the fastest growing cities in the state. Some of the challenges that she mentioned and some of the things that she was requesting is part of our State Legislative Agenda, specifically when it comes to public safety, like reestablishing Juvenile Detention Facility here locally, increasing the pay for our officers as well as getting support for our courts, our Public Defender's Office as well as District Attorney's Office, and I believe that kind of honesty builds trust and helps us solve problems together with the state's partnership. I would be remiss if I did not thank Shawn Heath. He started this effort back in October 2025 and he met with all the stakeholders, along with some Council members and including the DA's office, the courts, the Business Alliance, and I know that he has met with at least 15 to 20 stakeholders group in less than two months before he presented this comprehensive State Legislative Agenda's Focus on Public Safety. So, thank you, Shawn. Also, Sarah, thank you for your advocacy, not just on the public safety but just overall, both Federal and State Legislative Agenda. Certainly appreciate and I also appreciate how as the region, we will be speaking with one voice as Councilmember Graham mentioned, because we want to make sure that some of those priorities are reflected, not just for the City but as well as the County, the Business Alliance, the DA's Office, so that we can get meaningful progress done. Thank you.

The vote was taken on the motion and recorded as unanimous.

BUSINESS

ITEM NO. 7: INITIAL FINDING RESOLUTION FOR AN INSTALLMENT FINANCING CONTRACT FOR EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

Motion was made by Councilmember Ajmera, and seconded by Councilmember Owen to (A) Adopt an initial findings resolution making certain findings and calling for the execution of various documents necessary to complete an installment financing contract, and (B) Adopt a resolution setting a public hearing for March 9, 2026, for an installment financing contract not to exceed \$120,000,000.

Councilmember Ajmera said yes, I think this is very timely because just a couple of hours ago we were discussing emergency response times and we were talking about how can we improve and Mr. Jones mentioned about he did put a pitch out there that make sure you all support this agenda item because this does include facilities that includes public safety facilities, like fire and police, and I also want to lift up Animal Care and Control facility that some of the speakers had raised that at today's Public Forum. So, this is very timely and I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this.

Councilmember Driggs said I just think it's worth clarifying. This is \$120 million and the public should appreciate this is not a new spending commitment that we're making. We have already identified these uses for funds and what you see here is kind of a procedural step in order to borrow the money that is needed to carry out projects that we already agreed to. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said okay, thank you Mr. Driggs. Always good to have an up step, like, someone that can tell us all exactly what we agreed to do.

The vote was taken on the motion and recorded as unanimous.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 56, at Page(s) 208-211.

ITEM NO. 8: LEASE OF CITY-OWNED PROPERTY ON NORTHERLY ROAD

Motion was made by Councilmember Anderson, and seconded by Councilmember Driggs to (A) Adopt a resolution approving a lease agreement with Envision Charlotte for a portion of city-owned property located at 3300 Northerly Road (parcel identification number 077-181- 01), and (B) Authorize the City Manager, or his designee, to negotiate and execute all documents necessary to complete this transaction.

Councilmember Ajmera said so there were a couple of questions as part of our Business consent agenda Q&A. So, do we still have Mary? Oh, okay, Mr. Reiger. So, as part of the Q&A, there are a couple of questions. So, first question was, "What revenue have been generated at this point in totality, and how much annually comes into the City under this contract?" So, for those of you who may not be familiar with this agenda item number, this is approving a Lease Agreement with Envision Charlotte. It's a nonprofit for a \$1 lease annually. So, if you could help me.

Phil Reiger, General Services Director said sure, sure. Phil Reiger, General Services Director. Good question, Ms. Ajmera. From a revenue perspective, I believe over the four years that we've collected revenue from this, the sum total is less than \$20,000. I believe it's \$19,500.

Unknown said \$19,125.

Mr. Reiger said \$19,125, and I believe the high, the annual high is about \$9,000. Early on we maybe only collected \$2,500 a year from the property, so this is for, to help advance the circular economy. It's taking in wood waste at our Statesville Landfill, processing that wood waste and finding reuses for it. So, that's what this is.

Ms. Ajmera said yes, I remember when this project was started and we wanted to implement the circular economy and we wanted to partner with a nonprofit who would help us do that. I know there were some questions and concerns around why pick this organization over the other. Was there an RFQ done before the lease renewal was sent out?

Mr. Reiger said no, we didn't.

Ms. Ajmera said to see if there were any nonprofits.

Mr. Reiger said this is a renewal of the lease. This was not RFQ'd or RFP'd (Request for Proposal).

Ms. Ajmera said so, do we know if there are any other organizations who would be interested, who would help us advance circular economy concept? Because I understand the work that Envision Charlotte does, I think they are a great partner and they certainly help us with our CF goals, but I also wanted to see if there were other organizations who operate in this space who be interested in similar partnership with the City?

Mr. Reiger said I'm not aware of any. We did not put this out for RFP.

Ms. Ajmera said that's all I have, thank you.

Councilmember Johnson said thank you for your questions, Councilwoman Ajmera. I have a question. So, this property on Northerly Road, so this is in addition to the building that they have on Louise?

Mr. Reiger said yes, ma'am, this is the old Statesville Landfill, and so the Innovation Barn is on Louise Avenue and that's sort of home base for Envision Charlotte where they do their circular economy programming, but in addition to that, we lease them a

space at the Statesville Landfill. It's a landfill that has very few uses, and they sublet this to what was originally one of their tenants at the Innovation Barn, and again, they are basically reclaiming wood products from various different activities around Charlotte, whether it's storm debris, it could be wood waste from other activities as well.

Ms. Johnson said okay, thank you. I agree, they do great work over at the Innovation Barn but I have a question on how long they've had a \$1 lease for both locations? Because we do have other nonprofits that approach us a lot and they're not able to get this type of deal, so I'd like to know how long they've had a \$1 lease for both locations, what that square footage is, what that looks like, because I know that they're able to sublet to other organizations so we've really given this nonprofit organization a leg up in the community. So, if we're looking at it from an equitable perspective, we should be asking those questions. How long they've had this lease? What is that plan? I believe the Innovation Barn, is it 50,000 square feet, something like that?

Mr. Reiger said the Innovation Barn is 15,000 square feet.

Ms. Johnson said 15,000 okay, so if we could get that information, how long they've had that lease, when the lease is up for renewal, and just some information, and the market value, I guess, of these two properties.

Mr. Reiger said I can tell you that they've had the lease at Statesville Landfill since 2020.

Ms. Johnson said okay.

Mr. Reiger said last June 2025 we renewed the lease at the Innovation Barn and so they've had that lease for over five years.

Ms. Johnson said and we renewed it for how long? How long was the renewal?

Mr. Reiger said the renewal was for five years with two renewable options for additional five years.

Ms. Johnson said okay, do we know if there are any other nonprofits that have an arrangement where they have a lease for \$1?

Mr. Reiger said yes, we have other nonprofits that have leases with the City for \$1.

Ms. Johnson said can we get that list? I know we've asked those questions before but if we can get that.

Mr. Reiger said yes, ma'am, we can reproduce that list for you.

Ms. Johnson said thank you. Thank you. That's all I have.

Councilmember Anderson said I just wanted to advocate for all of the work that Envision Charlotte does in District One, both on the Louise site as well as this site in particular and the lease structure that they have is very similar to many of our art structures within the City. They have a very similar \$1 annual lease structure and all of those leases, in particular with the arts facilities, are being touched and revisited as you know, because I met with you to talk about that, sir, a couple of days ago, so really good work that Envision Charlotte does, and they are very much deeply rooted, not only in the Belmont community but also within Plaza Midwood in the entire part of town. So, I just wanted to thank them for their work.

Ms. Ajmera said I just have a follow-up question, Madam Mayor.

Mayor Lyles said yes.

Ms. Ajmera said so, \$20,000 a year that we have received from Envision Charlotte as part of the partnership?

Unknown said it's not a year, it's total.

Ms. Ajmera said is that for both properties or just this specifically?

Mr. Reiger said it's just this specific and it's just under \$20,000 total.

Ms. Ajmera said total over the five-year period.

Mr. Reiger said over the five-year lease.

Ms. Ajmera said okay, and what would have been the market value?

Mr. Reiger said for the Statesville Landfill?

Ms. Ajmera said yes.

Mr. Reiger said it's really not.

Ms. Ajmera said I'm talking about the lease market value.

Mr. Reiger said it's hard to say, it's a landfill. They're not very many useable opportunities for that property and this is one. It's an open-air use. Can't put buildings on it, so I'm not sure that we could, at least not tonight, be able to give you a value but we could follow up with that.

Ms. Johnson said just a follow-up question. Could commercial trucks be parked on that space?

Mr. Reiger said no, ma'am, the grounds not compacted in a way that you could move a commercial truck around, particularly on a wet day, just not good for that use.

Ms. Johnson said okay. We're looking for spaces for truck [INAUDIBLE].

The vote was taken on the motion and recorded as unanimous.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 56, at Page(s) 212-213.

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ITEM NO. 9: AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT FOR FIVE POINTS LAND ACQUISITION

Justin Harlow, 16546 Bastille Drive said I won't keep you long. I heard you mention Closed Session. Mayor, members of Council, Mr. Manager, staff, thank you for your ongoing work that you do for this City. As a former District Two Council member, I thank you in advance for the affirmative vote, hopefully unanimous, that you'll take tonight on this Business item to support the Historic West End Partners and LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation) in their efforts to acquire these parcels in Five Points and eventually develop them for a larger, mixed-use and housing development. This funding and the future development it will support will be a catalyst in ongoing efforts to add valuable gathering spaces and needed business opportunities to the corridor, and of course, affordable housing.

James Mitchell's here with you on the dais with Malcolm Graham and Al Austin was here earlier, so I hope you can appreciate the continuity and leadership over 25 years in making sure public dollars continue to lead as private investment always follows in District Two. This funding item is more than just gap financing, but also another way to further leverage past City capital investments, like the CityLynx Gold Line, the now

completed \$20 million CIP (Capital Investment Plan) for West End Rozelles Ferry CNIP (Comprehensive Neighborhood Improvement Program), that later turned into your current capital spending through Corridors of Opportunity with Beatties Ford Road and Rozzelles Ferry. You're also following House Charlotte framework as well as following funding investments from the NEST Commission through our Commission Displacement Study last year. J'Tanya Adams is here. She deserves all the flowers and so I'm giving them to her. Her work for decades has really made her a living legend on the West End.

Other partners, like LISC, when we brought them on in 2018 and then they've hired Ralphine Caldwell and the work that Charles Thomas has done with the Knight Foundation, Alicia Davis's work with the West End Initiative, and countless residents who have engaged to help build the community we deserve on Charlotte's West Side as the gateway to the West Side. The work always continues, but this funding item tonight is just another step forward in showing your commitment to making equitable investments across our City.

Mayor Lyles said thank you very much. I appreciate it. J'Tanya, good to see you. You're just amazing.

Motion was made by Councilmember Graham, and seconded by Councilmember Anderson, to (A) Approve up to \$4,131,000 in combined Housing Trust Fund and Transit Oriented Development Affordable Housing Development Bonus Program Fee-in-Lieu funds to support Historic West End Partners, Inc.'s acquisition of property at Five Points on West Trade Street for affordable housing development, and (B) Authorize the City Manager, or his designee, to negotiate, execute, amend, and renew contracts and other required documents as needed to complete this transaction.

Councilmember Graham said thank you Council member for those remarks. There is an old saying that if the people will lead, the leaders will follow, and we've been following Ms. Adams for years in terms of the work she's been doing on the Beatties Ford Road Corridor. She literally has made my job a little bit easier in terms of the work she has done to bring us to this place. I want to thank, in her absence, Councilmember Mayfield for her leadership on the housing side of this and the Mayor Pro Tem on the economic development side for their support of me and the community on this very important initiative.

This is a major puzzle piece for what we're trying to do on the Beatties Ford Road Corridor. Five Point is our Trade and Tryon. It's the center of education, business, and commerce, and the gateway to Beatties Ford Road or to Uptown Charlotte, and it's also leveraged the investments that we've already made on the Corridor. The Council member mentioned some already, but I'll mention some more. The current Interchange Project that we're working on with C-DOT (Charlotte Department of Transportation). We'll talk more about that on Monday. The [INAUDIBLE] issue, Mayor's Racial Equity Program, \$85 million, the extension of the street car from French Street to Rosa Park, our investment in the Historic Excelsior Club, the work we have done on the corner of Beatties Ford Road and LaSalle, and our collaboration and fighting crime up and down the Corridor, but specifically on Beatties Ford Road and Catherine Simmons.

This is a major puzzle piece that brings all that together and leverages the investments that we've already made on the Corridor. So, I enthusiastically support this. It brings food to the Corridor. It brings more housing to the Corridor. It brings some parking to the Corridor, and we get to leverage the streetcar, which drives right by that lot each and every day, so individuals who move there eventually or shop there eventually, can use the streetcar for mobility. So, thank you very much for your leadership. Thank you, team, for supporting what we're doing on the Beatties Ford Road Corridor. Went to the Fish Market Saturday. We need some more red snapper. Thank you for the business

leaders who have been supporting each and everything that we've done. Charles, the Knight Foundation. It's a team effort led by our quarterback. Thank you very much.

Councilmember Anderson said I just wanted to thank the community for your level of involvement and investment in leaning into this, in particular Ms. Adams. She has never shied away from helping other parts of the community to get up to speed to the good work that is done on the West Side and in particular, one of the Corridors of Opportunities in District One. Thank you for walking with me and being a partner as we jumpstart that particular Corridor.

I love this, that this Transit Oriented Development and its mixed use, but in particular what I really like about it is the access to fresh fruits and vegetables in a part of town that is considered somewhat of a food desert. As we discussed this in committee, I shared a thought that our Fire Chief had shared with me when I met with him at the end of last year, which is food deserts are a safety issue. Because, when we have moments like the ice storm and the snowstorms that we suffered through, people need to be able to walk to get the amenities that they need, including food. So, the walkability and the connection with Transit Oriented Development to leverage our public transportation is just a huge win-win across the board. I just want to say thank you for everything that you guys are doing and I'm so glad that the Council is able to support an initiative like this. Thank you.

Councilmember Owens said I'll be brief and say that this is one of the types of projects that really brought me to want to serve as a public servant and I'm delighted to have such an early opportunity to lend my vote of approval in favor of something that really meets a lot of my personal priorities. I grew up, and my mom still lives in a food desert, and unless you've had Dollar General be your only local grocer, you can well appreciate what it is to have access now to fresh food. That's just huge. It's outcome determinative, it's health determinative, and it's really an exciting facet of this project. I share Councilmember Anderson's good thoughts on it. So, I'm wholeheartedly in favor of this. Thank you.

Councilmember Mazuera Arias said I absolutely love this project because earlier, when we were talking about I-77, we were talking about how growth oftentimes harms folks, especially predominantly color communities, but this is a project that is sustainable growth, that allows black and brown communities to prosper, particularly in a historically black area of Charlotte, Historic West End, and this is a mixed use, mixed income development along transit. What does that mean? That means housing near opportunity, it means walkable retail and it means a co-op grocery store led by the neighbors. It means affordability is built into the community, and it's not an afterthought from the community and I think it means also that black and brown residents who built this community have a pathway to remain in it as investment arrives and it will not displace them. I also think this does not happen by accident. This happens through strong business district organizations, like Historic West End Partners, led by the great J'Tanya Adams and I especially just want to recognize your leadership, your vision, and your persistence has been central to moving this forward, so I'm delighted and I'm delighted that our Housing Committee was able to move this forward in front of Council and I'm super excited to vote on this. Thank you.

Councilmember Ajmera said first I want to thank both committees. This was in the Housing Committee as well as Economic Development Committee, because it's multifaceted. We are looking at affordable housing co-op as well as incubator space. So, we are not just building affordable housing, but really enabling small businesses to scale up. I appreciate the collaborative partnership here of Ms. Adams, Charles Thomas, LISC, and all the organizations that have been part of this. I know Ms. Adams has been working on this for almost a decade now, and I certainly appreciate your leadership on this. I hope that you will mentor other neighborhood leaders in the City, because this is a model that we want to replicate in other parts of the City, especially in underinvested areas historically. How we can bring opportunities and how we can build affordable housing as part of the overall development so that we are also creating upward mobility. So, I appreciate your work and love to see more. Thank you.

Councilmember Mayo said I'd love to echo what my peers said as well. I'm very excited for y'all. I think this is a great opportunity. Really shows what a community can do together when they rally behind an idea and a leader who is so innovative. Also very excited to replicate this in other places. I know J'Tanya and I have talked about some opportunities in District Three, and I just texted one of my people, "Have you scheduled the meeting yet?" So, I'm very excited about that. I think this is a great opportunity for us to start replicating and thinking through how do we create developments with the community in mind to kind of help with some of those systemic issues that we're always chatting about. So, I am excited to vote yes today.

Councilmember Mitchell said first of all, I'm going to echo a lot of comments that my Council members made, but this really started with Councilmember Graham, Councilmember Mayfield and myself and said we move to quickly on this project. We have a great opportunity to do something special, so while he was given accolades to all of us, I have to thank the District Rep for putting fire underneath our feet, because we knew there was a land acquisition date that J'Tanya called all of us 7:00 in the morning to remind us what time we need to be done. City Manager, I got to thank the City staff, because from my meeting, we quickly got two DCMs (Deputy City Manager) involved, Monica Allen and Alyson Craig, along with Rebecca and said we could put it on two agendas and we can do it quickly. So, hats off to the team, J'Tanya, accolades.

Let me say something about Charles Thomas, who I think is a really quiet leader in our community. Charles just makes stuff happen. He just makes stuff happen. Charles, we appreciate you, your passion in Corridor and you continue to be a good corporate partner for us. Ralphine, thank you for teaching me about housing when I was on the Charlotte Mecklenburg Housing Partnership Board with David Howard, and your leadership means a lot to us. I don't want to belabor the point, but great job to everyone. Councilman Graham, thank you.

Councilmember Johnson said I wanted to ask a question. I noticed in the committee I voted against it, and you all know I'm an affordable housing advocate. So, I wanted to ask some questions. If Mr. Heath could come up or someone on our City staff that I can ask about the project.

Rebecca Hefner, HNS Director said last week I had to phone a friend so tonight I brought my wingman up with me.

Ms. Johnson said thank you. So, there was a project, and maybe this wasn't it, but there was a project that was presented in committee that I asked about, we talked about, that there was no housing for residents in the 30 percent AMI, and we talked about at that time that there was a 40,000 unit deficit for individuals in the 30 percent AMI and I think the report came out last week that it's 32,081 or something like that. I have it written down somewhere. Is this that project?

Ms. Hefner said no.

Ms. Johnson said okay, is there housing for 30 percent AMI residents in this project?

Warren Wooten, HNS said so this is a land acquisition project that's being funded with your Housing Trust Fund, so in what you're, what is before you tonight, there is not a specific affordability matrix because this is the two-step process where you put money into the land and then they come back to you with the details in the project, and we'll explain the entire affordability matrix. Because this is your Housing Trust Fund, and because of your policy which says, "All Housing Trust Fund Projects will have 20 percent of the units at 30 percent," unless you waive your own policy they will have to meet those guidelines for getting funded for the step two of the project.

Ms. Johnson said okay, thank you.

Mr. Wooten said you're welcome.

Ms. Johnson said so, I want to make sure that there was a project that was City land was going to be donated for a project, I think, and we talked about there not being any units for 30 percent, so if this not it, we can talk about this later before it comes to the agenda, so I make sure that we stay on top of it. Okay, thank you for the clarification. Thank you.

The vote was taken on the motion and recorded as unanimous.

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ITEM NO. 10: INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT FOR CONTINUATION OF RISK MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Motion was made by Councilmember Mitchell, and seconded by Councilmember Ajmera to (A) Adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager, or his designee, to negotiate and execute an interlocal agreement with the Metropolitan Public Transportation Authority for the provision of risk management services, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute all documents necessary to complete the interlocal agreement.

Councilmember Anderson said just wanted to ask a question because I was reviewing the Interlocal Agreement, the actual language, and can a staff member or perhaps Mr. Manager, yourself, just share more about the risk division and the clauses that relate to Medic, the library, the regional authority, and other entities? This is at the end of Page One.

Matthew Hastedt, Chief Financial Officer said thank you Councilmember Anderson, Mayor and Council. Matt Hadsteadt, CFO. So, Risk Management is a division within Finance. So, Risk Management as a division, has many services, but it includes procuring insurance services, workers compensation, property and casualty claim investigation and handling, also with health and safety. So, we do this for across all City departments, CATS, Aviation, Charlotte Water, Storm Water, or General Services, but we also do this for a number of outside agencies so they actually contract to the City of Charlotte to perform these services for them.

So, we provide those exact same services through separate agreements with Mecklenburg County, Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, the library, Medic and CRVA (Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority). So, it's very common for us to have these type of agreements, because we get a little bit of buying power in economics to scale, so that we're looking to continue that through with the MPTA (Metropolitan Public Transportation Authority). CATS is currently serviced by Risk Management, so this is ensuring that as we work through the transition, that there's absolutely no loss in coverage for any of their insurance programs, handling of claims as we're really starting already now to look at procuring insurance services for a July 1, 2026 effective date, because its really at a critical time to make sure that the insurance underwriters know that that sort of continuation of services will be maintained.

Ms. Anderson said thank you, I appreciate that and absolutely appreciate the concept of leveraging scale, all right. Is this effectively a service-level agreement as an extension? I'm trying to understand the relationship as it transitions over to the MPTA.

Mr. Hadsteadt said sure, I think that there's probably going to be a multiple-step process to this. So, I think initially, you know, it will be maintaining us providing services to CATS as they remain a department of the City, and if there is things that come up during this transition that the MPTA needs above and beyond what we already have done for CATS, say they lease office space for themselves, they start hiring direct employees before we transfer ours, we may need to provide workers comp services or insurance for physical building space. That would be a new service that we would be providing to the MPTA and get compensated for, reimbursed for, but as we sort of look at that long-

term relationship, it would absolutely be a sort of full-service service agreement between us and the MPTA.

Ms. Anderson said so, will this vote tonight then cover any potential addition of scope as you're speaking of or will it cover a finite level of scope and any additional scope or increase of scope, would it come back to Council?

Mr. Hadsteadt said sure, I may look for Angie or Stewart to help me with this, but I believe that specifically, what we're looking at here is through the FY27 year, which is primarily focused on getting us through that transition and allowing us to have time with consultants and the City to really determine what that long-term partnership needs to fully encapsulate, because there's a lot of stuff that's, we're actually still working through and figuring out, but this is really to make sure through that transition, that it's completely seamless for both us and the MPTA.

Ms. Anderson said got it. So, it's effectively continuing the service, but then also laying out the framework for forward-looking level of service.

Mr. Hadsteadt said yes.

Ms. Anderson said all right, thank you.

Councilmember Ajmera said will the City be reimbursed for the services once the revenue starts getting collected?

Mr. Hadsteadt said sure, so as CATS budgets for a lot of these services already, so anything that's a part of the already CATS budget as a City department, there'd be no additional cost for that. If there's anything above and beyond that we have to do but for the MPTA, that's when a reimbursement would occur for the City, but absolutely.

Ms. Ajmera said all right, so is the Risk Management under you, Mr. CFO?

Mr. Hadsteadt said yes, as a division within Finance.

Ms. Ajmera said oh, got it. It's a man of all trades.

Mr. Hadsteadt said yes.

Ms. Ajmera said all right.

Mr. Hadsteadt said my best.

Ms. Ajmera said that's all I have, thank you.

The vote was taken on the motion and recorded as unanimous.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 56, at Page(s) 214-225.

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ITEM NO. 11: MAYOR AND COUNCIL TOPICS

Mayor Lyles said this concludes our Business items for the vote, but I would like to ask, you know, we talked about at the meetings at the end that we would have everyone have an opportunity to speak about whatever was going on, and so I thought we would do this before we go into the Closed Session, and I think we said we'd do three minutes, no more than three minutes for each person.

Councilmember Mitchell said in honor of Black History Month, I would like to just acknowledge those whose paved the way for us. So, first of all, in 1965 Craig D. Alexander became the first African-American elected to Charlotte City Council modern

era, breaking decades long, the absence of black representation and setting the foundation for inclusive. In 1977, when District representation was implemented, Charlie Dannelly and Ron Leeper became the first District Representatives. District Two, Charlie Dannelly, District Three, Ron Leeper.

Then in 1983, Harvey Gantt was elected as Charlotte's first African-American Mayor. His leadership marked a defining moment in the City's history and a firm Charlotte commitment to progress during a critical period of growth. In 1991, the late Ella Scarborough became the first African-American female elected At-Large and in 1987, Ella Scarborough became the first female elected to Charlotte City Council.

In 2011, LaWana Mayfield became the first openly LGBTQ member elected to Charlotte City Council, reflecting Charlotte's continued expansion of inclusive representation. Then in 2017, Vi Lyles became the first African-American woman elected to Mayor of Charlotte further strengthening the legacy of leadership that continues to guide our City today.

Last, but certainly not least, in 2013 former Mayor Anthony Foxx was appointed United States Secretary of Transportation, becoming the first Charlotte Mayor to serve in a presidential cabinet and carrying the City leadership to the national stage. These are milestones that represent progress built through service, so please join me in recognizing all the firsts for Black History Month.

Councilmember Ajmera said well, you know it's hard to follow Mr. Mitchell, but I'll just say that Mayor, thank you for paving the way for women, especially for women of color, in this position. You paved the way for girls, and my girls do look up to you, especially my oldest. Recently for their Black History Month, they were asked to write about a leader that they look up to, and Charlotte actually chose you as the first black Mayor.

Mayor Lyles said thank you.

Ms. Ajmera said so, I just wanted to tell you that, and many girls look up to you, and you are seen as a role model.

Mayor Lyles said thank you very much.

Councilmember Watlington said I just wanted to remind folks that this Saturday, February 28, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. at the University City Regional Library, I'll be hosting a Town Hall and we will be following in the footsteps of Councilmember Mayfield's Town Hall previously, reviewing many of the Northeast and East Side's Community Area Plans, updates related to Zoning, Storm Water, and other capital projects that are happening there. So, please come on out. We want to hear from you, and we want to share some important things with you, and have an opportunity to fellowship with each other.

Councilmember Mayo said so, I hope to see you all Thursday at Kenndy Middle School, Steele Creek Residents Association will be hosting their annual meeting for the Steele Creek area. Our Mayor also will be there speaking for the City, so excited for people to join at Kennedy Middle from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. this Thursday.

Councilmember Anderson said so two things, one is I, too, have a Town Hall coming up. It's going to be on March 14, 2026, and it's going to be in the Tree of Life Forum at the Pearl and it's a lovely space if you haven't had the opportunity to visit the Pearl. We'll be talking all things as it relates to Workforce Development, Economic Development, Housing and more.

Actually, Mr. Mitchell, I had another comment I wanted to make that's aligned with what you just brought up. For Black History Month, there are a variety of different spaces throughout the City that have been honored for art, in particular art in our parks and in our green spaces, and several of them are within District One. One is within Independence Park and it's called Natural Rhythm, and as I began to represent District

One, and in particular that neighborhood, I came to find out, even though I'm a Charlotte native, that Independence Park was closed off to African-Americans initially, and, of course, there was a pivot to correct that and there's an art installment that actually celebrates that pivot, as well as several over in the Pearl Street Park that's along District One as well. So, I'd invite all of you to go out and explore some of our parks and some of the great art that honors African-Americans during this month. Thank you.

Councilmember Owens said I think everybody has heard plenty out of me tonight, so I'll be very brief. I, too, have an upcoming Town Hall. It is my first 90 days. I'm anxious to connect with folks. Will be at the South Park Regional Library on March 12, 2026, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Some of the topics that we will be covering, I'm going to have somebody from C-DOT there to address a number of the projects that will be undertaken in District Six, as well as someone from CMPD to speak to public safety. Then finally, and perhaps I'm most excited about, someone from our local staff who's going to talk about the ADU (Affordable Dwelling Units) process and give some greater clarity on that. As someone who lives in District Six, and has needs at both ends of the spectrum in terms of my children needing housing and my mother needing housing, I'm really dialed in on the ADU processes and how we're going to be hopefully perfecting those in a way that gives some greater clarity so that folks can avail themselves of those programs. So, I'm excited to do that and the flyer will be going out tomorrow. Thank you.

Councilmember Graham said just a quick commercial. Tomorrow from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., the Park Ministries will be hosting a "Let's Talk About It," Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Chief, Ms. Patterson, will be there as well as the service team from the Northwest District, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Park Ministries talking public safety in the District for sure, but specifically up and down the Beatties Ford Road Corridor. That's tomorrow from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Park Ministries on Beatties Ford Road.

Councilmember Driggs said so, you guys will appreciate the irony of this one. On Friday at 10:00 a.m. there will be a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the I-45 South Express Lane at the Ballantyne Hotel. Hope to see you all there.

Councilmember Mazuera Arias said I want to first start off that yesterday I got to attend Dominican Independence Day activities in District Five at Hickory Grove United Methodist Church. I want to thank the Mayor for doing a proclamation from yesterday until March 1, 2026, celebrating Dominican Heritage Week, and I also want to highlight the importance, which oftentimes I feel in either Hispanic Heritage Month or Black History Month, goes unspoken of or falls through the crack, is Black Latinos or Afro-Latinos which a lot of Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, the Caribbean, encompass of that and so, I just want to give that honor as well. Also, to support some black-owned businesses in District Five, we have Ms. DiDi's Caribbean Kitchen, Island Flavors, now a grocery and Ethiopian Restaurant, and we also have some incredible nonprofits in the impact-oriented organizations, black-owned organizations such as the Frankie Mae Foundation for caregivers. Thrive Liberation Community Center, Promise Youth Development, Jumping Dreams, Champions of Change, Educated Hoodlums, which helps out a lot of our BDOs, and Amity Medical Group, all located in District Five and owned by black entrepreneurs.

I also want to invite everyone, and thank you to the Planning Team for doing this, this Thursday, February 26, 2026, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Fellowship Hall at Eastern Hill Church, in District Five, we'll have a Community Area Plan Community meeting to talk about the East, Middle, and Outer Community Area Plans. Oh, and, we have, finally, a date for our Eastland Yards Sports Complex groundbreaking March 5, 2026, at 11:00 a.m., so that's next Friday, and thank you to Mayor Pro Tem Mitchell and to all the team that's been working tirelessly behind the scenes on that.

Councilmember Johnson said so first of all, I want to thank the City staff for the Community Area Plan meeting that was held in the University City at the University City United Methodist Church. Thank you, Mayor Pro Tem, for being there and taking the

lead. Bishop had a report to do so I wasn't able to attend, so thank you for that and thank you, City staff and to all those who came out. I heard there was a great crowd, like, 60 to 80 people or something. 80 people, so thank you. This delay in our voting was really necessary so I appreciate that.

Also, speaking of the "Let's Talk About It," there's a "Let's Talk About it" meeting in the Northeast Area at the Hickory Grove Baptist Church. CMPD will be holding a forum to talk about safety and issues that matter to us. So, there's a lot of safety initiatives going on in District Four right now. This is Four and Five, so, thank you.

I'm also honored to cohost a Town Hall meeting with Councilmember Ajmera on March 19, 2026, at the University City's Library. Starts at 5:30 p.m. and we will be talking about response times and other issues surrounding safety, so I'm inviting everyone to come out to the Town Hall on March 19, 2026 at the University City, the beautiful new library on the lake. Also, on April 2, 2026, the University City Partners is hosting a Safety Forum at the Mecklen Hotel. So, we've got quite a few events coming up surrounding safety in and around District Four, so I look forward to that.

Lastly, on March 9, 2026, this will be the sixth annual observation or recognition of Brain Injury Awareness Month. March is Brain Injury Awareness Month, so the City, thank you, Madam Mayor and colleagues, we will be recognizing the brave survivors who survived brain injury awareness and reading a proclamation and the skyline will be lit in those awareness colors, green and blue, again, for the sixth year. So, thank you to Moira at Charlotte City Partners and their support of this initiative and I'm looking forward to an exciting next couple months. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said I hope that that's something that's informative and as well, kind of like to make it possible for us to know each other better.

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ITEM NO. 12: CLOSED SESSION (AS NECESSARY)

Motion was made by Councilmember Watlington, seconded by Councilmember Mitchell, and carried unanimously to go into closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(4) to discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in Charlotte, including agreement on a tentative list of economic development incentives that may be offered by the public body in negotiations.

The meeting was recessed at 8:25 p.m. to move to CH-14 for a closed session.

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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:49 p.m. at the conclusion of the closed session.


Stephanie C. Kelly, City Clerk

Length of Meeting: 2 Hours, 48 Minutes
Minutes completed: March 3, 2026