

ANNUAL STRATEGY MEETING, DAY 2 - TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2024

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina reconvened on Tuesday, January 23, 2024, at 9:10 a.m. with Mayor Lyles presiding. Councilmembers present were Danté Anderson, Tariq Bokhari, Tiawana Brown, Ed Driggs, Malcolm Graham, James Mitchell, and Victoria Watlington.

ABSENT: Councilmember Renee Johnson.

ABSENT UNTIL NOTED: Councilmembers Dimple Ajmera, Lawana Mayfield, and Marjorie Molina.

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ITEM NO. 1: WELCOME AND OVERVIEW

DeAlva Wilson, Facilitator said good morning, good morning, good morning.

Councilmember Ajmera arrived at 9:11 a.m.

How's everybody this morning. Great words let's keep that energy all day. I do want to thank you all for your time, your effort, your commitment, your energy, your positivity and just the work that you did yesterday because you guys worked. You got your hands dirty yesterday. So, thank you for that. I think we came to a really good place and certainly accomplished the goals of the day. So, thank you for that. I do want to offer two things as we get started this morning. One is that we ended the day yesterday with some new knowledge and self-awareness about your different styles and approaches to work. I want you to keep those things in mind today. We have a little prop that I use for coaching when I need to have people focus on their mat, focus on themselves. So, you have a prop in front of you. So, we pulled the mat and ask you to focus on your mat, you'll know what that means. So, you know in yoga, any yogis here? So, you know the goal is you kind of want to watch everybody else who you think is doing it better than you, but the teacher will always tell you to focus on your own mat. You can get the same benefits even if you're not as deep in a stretch, you can get the same benefits.

So, today we're going to ask you to focus on your own mat. You'll get a lot of information from staff members' updates, check ins. Not a deep dive on most of them. You'll have a deep dive on a few things, certainly Safety, I think Workforce Development, Safety and Mobility and maybe one or two others you'll have a deeper dive on, but most of them will be check ins. There will be a lot of conversations, a lot of questions. I think this might be a good day to use our parking lot today to park things that we may not have the opportunity to answer or go into detail around. So, I'm going to remind you that that's there. I'm also going to ask that you use a two-minute rule with your comments today. So, it's not a one stop shop. You get to speak more than once, but when you do, I'm going to ask that you please contain your comments to two minutes to give people the opportunity to respond so we can have a discussion around these things and the day can flow easily and on time with all of the information that we have to go through. We will have a deeper dive on Safety and Mobility as I mentioned, and we will have some experts joining us today at lunch to talk about mobility and have a great discussion around mobility panel. So, that's it for today if there's no other business or opening comments, please from the Mayor or Manager.

Mayor Lyles said yesterday was a great day for us I think. I think back on the number of retreats that we've attended together, and I thought that yesterday was a [INAUDIBLE]. I thought that the day was really valuable for all of us. I think that the idea of identifying how we can better work together is going to be what's necessary for us to tackle the topics that we have today. We know in this community that people want our City to be safe. We also want our City to be vibrant and able for people to move around for work. We want economic development, all of these things we want and this is the day to talk about not just the what, but the how and move forward with that. It's really good, the two minutes. I think I might be into one minute and 30 seconds, but I really

also want to say to the team that's working on all of this that's making it possible, there are so many good things that are going on with our people that we don't even know about. So, one morning I got a call from Bloomberg Foundation and the guy says, "Well I wanted to just call and let you know that we're going to be awarded one of the top grants in the City from the Bloomberg Foundation about sustainability." A lot of that is because the team that puts together sustainability helped get that application through. It's going to be impactful for three years of money that we can do things better in some of the things that are most important. I think all of our initiatives have that opportunity because that's the way Charlotte rolls. The team helps us all be better. We may get to cut the ribbons, we may get to sing the praises for these things, but I know where the real work gets done and I just want you to know how much we appreciate all of each and every one of you. So, with that why don't we go ahead and get the day started.

Ms. Wilson said our first topic of the day is Affordable Housing. I'm not sure who's coming up Julia. Rebecca, okay. Very good. Now we'll hear from Rebecca Hefner. Thank you.

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**ITEM NO. 2: IMPLEMENTING CURRENT PRIORITIES/STRATEGIC INITIATIVES
CHECK-IN:**

Rebecca Hefner, Director of Housing and Neighborhood Services said alright. Good morning, everyone. As you know Julia of course put together a lot of the logistics for the retreat, especially for this morning. So, she sent out an email on Friday and said, "Rebecca, you're going to be the lead off batter for strategic initiatives." So, I said, "Okay, I can bring it. This is my sweet spot. I can really bring it." So, I was letting my younger son know I wasn't going to be home last night and he's a big baseball fanatic. So, I thought to myself, it's like a classic parenting mistake, we make it over and over, I'm going to impress my kid. That's what I thought to myself, with a baseball analogy. So, I said, "This is what I'm doing and I'm going to be the lead off batter," and he said to me, "Hmm, yeah, all you have to do mom is get on base." I said, "I'm swinging for the fences." He says, "No mom. You just get on base." So, I think what he was saying was, "Tone it down a little would you?" As you know, I'm passionate about affordable housing. So, I'll do my best.

So, this isn't much of a presentation. The format today of course I'm just going to share a few highlights and then turn it over to y'all for conversation with one another. I'm here for questions during that if needed. So, a couple of things I just want to highlight out of your pre-read, some of the things that you all have accomplished this year. We made significant enhancements to the Housing Trust Fund really thinking about a couple of things. One, how do we leverage our local bond dollars along with other funding, federal funds and ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) dollars, to really maximize what we can get through our housing development RFP (Request for Proposal). So, you may recall when you saw projects come through last round and the round that closes this Friday, you'll see projects that have additional funding sources or really trying to maximize the use of our local dollars and also extend affordability terms.

Councilmember Molina arrived at 9:20 a.m.

So, a couple of really important things that came out of your Housing Trust Fund tune up from last year. We've also posted the NOAH (Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing) RFP and recently posted the Strategic Land Acquisition RFP, again, all components of enhancing the Housing Trust Fund. Of course, we've also advanced our anti-displacement efforts in partnership with the NEST (Nuisance Enforcement Strategy) Commission and you all approved some investments in additional programs to support anti-displacement in October 2023 and those are moving forward. You also of course received a recommendation from the NEST Commission about how to support funding for anti-displacement going forward.

Then, the last point I would make is it's not just about the number of units that are produced in any given round of the Housing Trust Fund, but with our partners and through your decisions and investments last year, we supported over 12,000 households with a variety of programs and services that really support residents' stability, neighborhood affordability and economic mobility. So, we're excited about the objectives and goals conversation from yesterday because we've really been pushing as staff to think about housing as not just the production of units, but what are the outcomes for our residents. What I keep saying is housing and. We shouldn't ever have to make an investment that's just in a housing unit. We have other resources and we have partners. We tested all of this through the Staying In Place pilot. Housing and health. Housing and digital inclusion. Housing and workforce development and of course when we get it really right, it's all of those things wrapped up together. So, that's where we're focusing our efforts at the staff level to really optimize the investments that you all are making and that's all I have. I'm going to turn it over to conversation.

Marcus Jones, City Manager said so, as we go through each strategic initiative, there are a series of questions and one is should it continue to be a strategic initiative? I think this is a no brainer on this one, but as you go through your comments or the discussion, it's really based on these series of questions.

Councilmember Ajmera said like Mr. Jones said, this is a no brainer. I think most of us would agree that affordable housing should continue to be our strategic priorities. I think we have tough decisions to make in this year's budget and we have seen increased funding requests in the Housing Trust Fund from the NEST Commission, \$100 million and out of that, \$25 million that they're requesting for it to go to specifically towards our anti-displacement efforts. So, if you could just Mr. Jones give us your thoughts on the recommendations?

Mr. Jones said so, that's a tough one. As we put the budget together we talked a bit yesterday about capacity. So, during this strategy session, if it's the will of the Council to have more resources whether it's for transportation or affordable housing, we will find ways to develop that capacity for your priorities.

Ms. Ajmera said so, I think regardless of what we do on affordable housing in terms of \$50 million, \$75 million, \$100 million whatever that number is, what I would like to see is have increased focus on anti-displacement efforts that we currently don't have dedicated funding source for that. It becomes very difficult when we have anti-displacement we have seen with Lake Arbor, we have seen with other rezonings that have come in front of us. So, I think it is critical that we continue to fund anti-displacement and find a consistent source of revenue for that.

Councilmember Driggs said you mentioned this and that and that. I'd be interested to understand better who qualifies for our units. Is it just an income test or what criteria do we use and I think that we could be more productive with these investments if they were tied to the type of workforce development or other efforts. In other words, people get the benefit of the housing but they also participate in programs that help them get to the point where they don't need that assistance anymore. How long for example do people who get into our subsidized housing typically live there? Do they move in and then that's it, they stay there? Or do we have requirements as to efforts they should make in order to graduate from needing that assistance. So, can you tell us a little bit about that?

Ms. Hefner said sure. So, the City doesn't manage any of the affordable housing units directly and typically the City is providing gap funding. So, the [inaudible] and our money is usually last in. So, while we get the deed restrictions, we don't always have a position to require how the property is managed. What we do manage is the income requirements. So, when you approve an affordable housing investment for example, there are a specific number of units at each level of AMI (Area Median Income). So, the way the property is managed is then residents are required to demonstrate that income level in order to live there and then there are checks annually about how are you maintaining that income, has it increased. So, the property management does that and then the City also, we have an asset management division that ensures compliance with

those requirements. So, other than the partnerships that we have intentionally entered into for example with the NOAH investments at places like Lake Mist or Hill Rock where there is a partnership built into the investments. So, those have community health workers on site, we've partnered with Atrium Health and their workforce development programs. So, we don't require that, but we have those opportunities to create more partnerships along those lines.

Mr. Driggs said is there anything to say, with DreamKey for example, we would say, "Okay, we're going to subsidize this but here's the deal. These are the conditions," and they would just have a program that might be different than what they do for others in order to meet a number of our priorities and not just do it the same way they might be doing it.

Ms. Hefner said we're not prohibited from that. The thing that we want to think carefully through is that not every person or household is in the same place of readiness when it comes to participating in workforce development for example. So, the research-based models about housing are all housing first models. You get into housing, and you get stabilized and then empower residents to choose paths to participate. So, we would want to think carefully through that based on the models that we have in our community and what research says is effective in terms of helping people move through those stages of economic mobility.

Mr. Driggs said if their incomes go up, do they lose the eligibility for the subsidy?

Ms. Hefner said yes.

Mr. Driggs said so, do they have to move out?

Ms. Hefner said it depends if there's a unit available in the same place or across the portfolio of the property provider. One of the things that we've heard consistently from you all and are working towards is how do we create a way for people who are displaced to have some kind of priority in terms of when new housing units come online? So, we've been working with the State and some of our partners around that.

Mr. Driggs said so, last comment. Other than a number of units, we have no metrics for the productivity of this that I've seen. It would be interesting to see if there was a way that we could establish a kind of return-on-investment criterion because in these constrained environments and especially if we're talking about increasing the money further, I'd really like more accountability around that investment. Thank you.

Councilmember Watlington said as we talk about metrics, I just wanted to circle back here to the conversation from yesterday regarding the Safe Communities and Great Neighborhoods Committee. I did have a chance to go back through and wanted to just frame a little bit some of this discussion around housing in terms of what we have on our plan as it relates to housing. The ones that I think bubbled up to the top that really captured the essence of what was in each one of these buckets were increase the percent of households both new and existing within the 10-minute walk or transit ride to amenities basically because when we think about housing and affordability the most choice housing is the most expensive because of where it is. It's about location. So, in terms of metrics specific to housing, definitely I think that is one that we'll want to craft some language and some monitoring around because I think that informs our housing location policy and much of the scoring that goes into Housing Trust Fund etc. When it comes to preserving affordable housing stock, which is another one of the goals here that I think ties directly to metrics in terms of affordable units that have been built but matching it to the AMI because we have vacancy across the City but it doesn't necessarily match the price point where we're trying to house people. So, the extent that we can get visibility as to how our dollars help match that more, I think that would be very helpful. Then the other component, when it comes to Housing Trust Fund, for us to go \$100 million, what would be important for me is that we're investing dollars specifically into homeownership and homeownership rate I think is something that would be significant to be bubbled up to our community dashboard because we know

that there are so many things that tie to the quality of life as it relates to homeownership and to the quality of our neighborhoods.

So, those are the things from the metrics. When it comes to this conversation overall in terms of strategy. Absolutely I believe that affordable housing should continue to remain one of our strategies. The things that I'd like to see us focus on this year is again housing by income and really trying to match that because I think it drives the different conversation at each level what the work needs to look like. Whether it's getting people stable housing or whether it's how do we help folks increase their income which may impact where we choose to locate folks next to employers and those kinds of things. So, housing by income, affordable homeownership I'd like to see us invest our dollars there and work with our intergovernmental partners about how we can incentivize a development of for sale property rather than just for rent like our LIHTC (Low Income Housing Tax Credit) dollars do. Land acquisition, we know that we're planning a major transportation initiative. So, to the extent that we can acquire land and plan for affordability ahead of investment, I think those are things that we really need to be wrapping our minds around this year.

Councilmember Graham said I think we're aligned in terms of what I think we need to be focusing on, certainly it should continue to be a strategic initiative moving forward with an emphasis on homeownership for sure. The down payment assistance program, does that need to be modified to reflect the rising values of homes in the community? Are we doing enough in reference to the home repair program? Are there enough resources there? Are the guidelines flexible enough to really benefit those who want to take advantage of it. Those are things I think we really need to tweak and make sure that we're consistent to where we're going. The Housing Trust Fund, great model. I think we celebrated 20 years two years ago, something like that and we talked about really tuning it up. Kind of kicking the tires, changing the oil. I don't think we've done that yet. So, we're coming on another round of funding. So, if we can use this year through the Committee to really look at the Housing Trust Fund to see what we can do differently to achieve a greater impact. I think we need to do that for sure. So, if we can do that, that would be fine.

Then we also talked years prior to you about the City-owned land and I just don't understand what is the strategic plan or the outcomes from those discussions. Have we identified it? Those are old conversations that hopefully can be a greater point of emphasis this year in terms of working with real estate to really getting us to understand where the land is located and do we have a strategy for utilization and etc. So, I think we're just kind of running in place with that. We all say on the campaign trail, "We're going to City-owned land," and we don't have any results from my perspective to kind of point to this is what we've done, some examples but certainly not enough throughout the City.

Then innovation and housing. We talked in previous years about the tiny homes, the container homes, now that we have all these vacant buildings Uptown, that should be a part of the conversation with economic development about how do we incentivize our work with developers to convert some of these empty high rises into affordable housing, workforce housing, etc. There's a cost associated with it for sure, but how do we begin to be a lot more cutting edge in what we're thinking about doing around those things that are really important. Then lastly NEST Commission, we need support. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said so, I'm going to try to take this to another place for a moment. This is a huge problem. We own a portion of it but I would like for the staff to help us inventory the people that are also doing this work. So, we talk about down payment assistance and Bank of America has a whole program around down payment assistance. You walk in that day and you walk out with a house. They do the whole thing right there in just one day, but that program, nobody talks about. So, in some ways we're doing our part but there are people in this community. So, I'd like an inventory of who's doing what. It has been a long time since we really took a map and said, "Who's responsible for what?" you know, we've funded a lot of money into the housing rental for women and that initiative, I don't know how much is left for them, but we need a bigger picture of this

on who does what and where are the gaps that we can help fill and how can we support others to do this. Then I think the other part about it is the prevention metric. I would like to see if instead of doing new construction, what we need to do to prevent displacement and how aggressive can we be or how aggressive can our partners be.

Then the final thing I want to say is two things. One the Federal Home Loan Bank is going through an entire review of their system and they're going to be asked by the federal government to increase funding for affordable housing. So, we need to get in line for that. We need to begin to think about who else has the money and how do we use that. The second part of it is the mobility plan. If you have a train or whatever, HUD (Housing and Urban Development) and the Transportation Department will provide you access for funding to purchase affordable housing because they too understand the difference between having a place to live but getting to a place to work. So, they've already got their program ready. So, what do we do? It's a part of how do we combine these things and I believe that the inventory needs to be very consistent for us to see what we are leaving on the table instead of bringing new things to the table.

Mr. Jones said I'm going to try to prevent something from getting into the Manager's parking lot. So, a couple of things. Mr. Mitchell has been asking about the inventory of properties. We have it. We're going to launch it as early as next week and there are a number of parcels that are City-owned, Shawn if I get this right, that would be available for affordable housing. More than I think we've ever had in the past. The same thing with economic development and some of the opportunities for City-owned facilities. So, I think that's important.

The other thing that came up was down payment assistance. So, the City had a program a couple of years ago, \$30,000 but also if you live in a Corridor, you can get an additional \$50,000. So, that's \$80,000 for down payment assistance. Maybe we're not marketing it the right way or things like that, but those are the kinds of things that we have to raise up to the top to make sure people understand that they're available.

Ms. Ajmera said Ms. Wilson, you're doing a great job. Please keep that up. Just a quick question. Are we collecting any data from our affordable housing developers in terms of upward mobility? So, are families staying there for five years, six years? Is there a plan to upward mobility [inaudible] in our [inaudible] that currently need affordable housing. So, we'd like to see some sort of plan towards upward mobility so that it creates space for our next batch of residents?

Ms. Hefner said we do not currently.

Ms. Ajmera said so, I would like to add that to the Manager's parking lot. If he can have that. I think we do need to have that as part of our metrics because ultimately, we need to provide upward mobility and housing alone cannot do it. We need to have wraparound services with it. When I served on Inlivan's Board, it was called Housing Authority back then. We actually had a Workforce Development program that was paired with the housing. So, everyone was required to work at least 30 hours a week. So, not seniors or those with special needs and I think we need to have some sort of requirement or similar requirements. Do we have that?

Ms. Hefner said no.

Ms. Ajmera said okay. So, I would like to see some sort of metrics around that because we truly need to tackle the 30,000 backlogs that we have in our affordable housing.

Councilmember Anderson said I do agree. Inlivan actually shifted their model a couple of years back with a name change to focus on up and out and I think that has a place here in our strategy. I don't believe holistically that needs to be a stamp on our strategy overall, but there's a place for that here. I want to make sure that, and I've said this before, from a homeownership perspective, I would like for us to increase. If we're talking about metrics the number of units that we bring online this year that are for sale, I would like for that to increase. I'd like for us to set a goal. Last year I said 10 percent

would be a good goal to increase, but I'd like for us to set a goal in terms of the number of units that are for sale because that's a pivot and we know that that alters family's outcomes. So, I would like to see that somewhere in here. Housing is peppered throughout all of our strategic priorities, and we discussed that in transportation and planning yesterday and a couple of other groups did as well. So, I think we make the funds from the Housing Trust Fund work pretty well there, but for gap funding dollars, I would just like for us to focus on ownership and allowing that to be a bigger part of our portfolio.

Mr. Jones said just for clarity. We spent some time in San Antonio late last year and they have \$150 million for five years for their Housing Trust Fund and I think it was 28,000 units or whatever the number was, but they have it in categories. So, whether it's homeownership or 30 percent AMI and below, once you hit that category, that's it. So, when we talk about metrics, I would like to have some clarity at some point, maybe not today about are there are total number of units per category that you're interested in or something that you can put a framework around this so we can make sure we're hitting a target that you've identified.

Councilmember Brown said good morning. Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak. So, I'm listening and I'm learning. So, I've got to listen a lot more. I'm hearing \$30,000 and \$50,000 really caught my eye. Then when the Mayor said that there's a down payment assistance program, I'm going to speak to a group of people in my district, I don't think they know anything about it. It's going to be a charge to me and all of us to make sure that we are definitely putting this information out there for our constituents, the people that trust us and put us in these positions when we're out there on the campaign trail saying what we're going to do. I want to be able to deliver things authentically and to be transparent. So, I want to ask a couple of questions. I heard \$30,000 for down payment assistance, then I heard another \$50,000 if they're in a Corridor of Opportunity. Where is this information at and how are we putting this information out there? How do we just deliver that information to the people that need it? I want to say this too. With my main line of work being beauty [inaudible] and me running my nonprofit organization, we're looking for a home. I got a grant for \$450,000 and I've been over bid three times. I've seen the house that I wanted in my district and I haven't been able to get that home because every time I got to put my bid in, somebody's over bidding for the house. So, I bid it on one that was for \$429,000 somebody bid it \$513,000. They really wanted it. So, these opportunities are really good for the people that need them the most, but how and where are we delivering the information and where is it because I really need to know so I can be able to put it in perspective and deliver this information and make sure people go get homes because \$80,000 is a lot of money.

Councilmember Mayfield arrived at 9:46 a.m.

Mr. Jones said yes. I may phone a friend on this one in terms of our communication. Shawn or Rebecca?

Ms. Hefner said so, a couple of pieces to that question. One, there's a real barrier right now around homeownership that we can't control, which is interest rates. So, even with \$80,000 there's a challenge. The other barrier is supply, what's available. So, one of the recommendations of the NEST Commission for example, the Acquisition Rehab Resale program, putting more money towards the City funding the acquisition of properties which can then be offered as homeownership. I'll just say Ms. Mayfield, excellent idea many years ago. Then on the communications piece, we rely on a network of partners primarily around communications. We do our typical communications with email and social media, but to get to the people who need the information most, we really rely a lot on our partners. So, for example DreamKey administers our House Charlotte program. So, we work a lot with DreamKey to get the word out. Our partner of our realty community and our financial partners are some of the most important relationships we have to get this information out as well. Then also paying attention to this issue, we've added this year, if you go on Zillow and you're searching for something, there's a button that says is there down payment assistance programs available. Ours shows up on

there now. So, there are some ways that we're really trying to be thoughtful and intentional about how to get the information out. Then of course we rely heavily on our network of neighborhood leaders and neighborhood organizations to share this kind of information in their communities.

Ms. Brown said I'm learning so I need to ask questions. So, how do I put this information out there when someone wants information from me? I understand the partners, but I am one of the members that was elected. So, I want to be able to deliver information when people ask me for the information. So, am I just to recap what you said to me because I take very good notes.

Ms. Hefner said even better, we'll equip you with information, printed collateral, digital information that you can share with your constituents.

Ms. Brown said okay, I'm going to be looking for that [inaudible].

Ms. Hefner said so we have our Neighborhood Engagement Services Team. Each district has a neighborhood liaison and then our At-Large members also have an assignment. So, in addition to your constituent services support staff, you have a neighborhood liaison who helps work with the neighborhood leaders in your district and that person can also provide this kind of information to you.

Ms. Brown said well thank you so much. You're doing a great job.

Ms. Wilson said this is a great topic. There's a lot of energy around it. We have two more comments or questions and then we're going to have to go to the next topic so we can stay on track.

Councilmember Bokhari said I think what I would humbly ask that as we approach this, we've done a lot of work in the last six years. A lot of people have worked hard, but I think as we look back on it, we probably haven't made the impact we all would've hoped to. So, as we look forward, I think we need to look towards what scales, what makes the biggest impact in this problem that we all know exists and we want to help solve for. When I look at a topic we have really not looked at, at all, it makes such a bigger difference in this space which is the zoning and permitting processes. We all get pinged on zoning stuff, but for those of you, I'm assuming many of you do, are there to help with the permitting process, it is long, it is painful, it is slow, and all of those things cost money. So, in a quick search out there, I saw roughly in last year 2023, 20,000 new units of housing, market rate, anything built in Charlotte about 12,000 single family, 8,000 is multi-family. If you take an average cost of that being \$300,000 rough math for illustrative purposes that's \$6 billion of capital that invested in our community. All the experts say that they say over 30 percent of overhead is in the red tape of everything that's built from zoning and permitting. That's an accepted figure. That means last year alone, the cost was \$1.8 billion that goes straight away to make housing less affordable and if you calculate that over the last six-year period where we've spent \$150 million, a record-breaking number on affordable housing, that's \$10.8 billion that we didn't even look at. If we can shave that off by 10 percent, we're talking about \$1 billion that goes straight to affordability. So, there's a lot of assumptions in what I'm saying there, but it's reasonable to think that's possible and that math works, and we haven't spent the time. So, when we go back to the metrics and the things that I hope we leave here with, I hope one of them is we take a laser focus towards time of average permit process. Dollar amount assumptions that show what zoning and the red tape is costing in overhead so that we're managing that, we're holding staff accountable, we're creating new processes. If we want to make a massive difference there, there's still things that won't get solved like under 30 percent AMI and we'll have to look at that in a different way, but this will solve a huge amount to where the puck is going to be.

Councilmember Mitchell said Councilmember Brown said it best. So, just a couple of things I think warrant just some information. If we can show the breakdown of those 12,000 units, 30 percent, 60 percent, 80 percent AMI, I think it'll be helpful as we try to measure that. How close are we to our target or how far do we need to go? Secondly, I

want to thank the staff and the City Manager for doing that inventory list. I think you've heard even from Councilmember Brown, there's a need of City-owned property and then there's an opportunity for City-owned buildings to make sure we're using those for opportunities. Thirdly, I would like to say, and the City Manager touched on it, we need to be very clear on measuring if we say homeownership, what category are we going to focus on for homeownership. Is it 60 percent, is it 80 percent, or 100 percent AMI? So, I want us to be very clear. The last challenge for all of us and I would say Council is still NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) and somehow, we need to control the narrative that affordable housing is great for the entire City of Charlotte. So, when we have the situation of NIMBY we need to be prepared because we know going in how some neighborhoods would feel. So, great job, let's continue to make a strategic priority for this Council. Thank you.

Ms. Wilson said thank you Rebecca, great job. I want to introduce Monica Holmes. Monica will cover Corridors of Opportunity and the 2040 Plan UDO (Unified Development Ordinance). Thank you.

Monica Holmes, Planning, Design & Development said so I'm going to be wearing two hats today. So, I'm Monica Holmes. I think I know all of you but if not it is very nice to meet you. I will start off with Corridors of Opportunity which I've been leading that program for the City with a really wonderful team and then I'll transition to the 2040 Plan UDO after we have that discussion. So, we'll kind of break it into two parts.

So, today Corridors of Opportunity. We've gotten a lot of things done. So, I want to take 30 seconds to just mark some of those accomplishments over the past couple of years. We've really been focused on it and then I want to really look forward to what's going to happen in 2024, in this year. So, we have built a communications machine, and a lot of that work is in partnership with our Communications Department. We've launched a newsletter. We've had over a 1½ million impressions. WFAE did a whole year in focus on the Corridors of Opportunity program. I think that has built energy and awareness around the program and is really one of our big successes to show the work that we're doing and that we're continually investing. We finished up all of the playbooks. So, the Freedom Wilkinson draft is about to hit the streets. So, that is the last playbook. We'll actually come back and start some work in Beatties Ford to put together a strategic document for that over the next year. While I'm on that topic, we'll also be looking forward to doing what I call roadmaps in the Corridors that we don't have them. So, to pause on that for a second, we have playbooks which is everything the community prioritizes, and the City prioritizes. They range in implementation items from 60 to 150 depending on the Corridor. That's a lot of things. That takes years and years and years to implement. What we have been actively doing is going back and doing a roadmap which is these are the 10 things we are actively progressing and working on right now that the City is leading. So, we have those for a couple of Corridors. We'll be this year focusing on expanding them.

We are also highly focused on leveraging federal dollars in regards to infrastructure and programs. So, we are about maybe a little over a fifth of the way to our big audacious goal of \$100 million of federal investment in Corridors. We are currently in progress of working on an application for about \$15 million more. We have an application out that's several million dollars more and we're actively working on a very large application that's to the tune of about \$40 million to \$50 million. So, we're in progress that's the good news. We just need to again, hit that homerun and get it done and bring those dollars home. So, that's going to be a huge focus over the course of this next year and I think it ties nicely to the topics that you'll look at later today too. We also have been highly focused on how we measure success. That was a topic we talked about a lot over the last year. We've really been honing in how do we isolate what we are doing as the City, what other partners are doing, great partners like the United Way, the Knight Foundation, LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation), Leading on Opportunity, what are they doing and how do we see what that impact is. I'm really excited to let you know that we're working on a partnership with United Way where we will together evaluate and do a pilot in one Corridor, a deep dive that includes a thorough survey. It'll be statistically accurate. We're working with people way smarter than me with their

doctorates in research and science to understand the impact of our investments across the board. So, that will be a focus in this coming year within Corridors.

Just a couple other highlights before I read off these discussion questions to kind of get your thinking going on what the next year may look like. I just want to hit some of the things that we launched last year that you're going to see coming out of the ground this year. That's the business opportunity hubs, so you'll see those in all six Corridors kind of come to life. You'll see the e-bike pilot. We launched that in the North Graham, North Tryon Corridor in December 2023. That's a public private partnership. Really, it's a public private nonprofit partnership with DreamKey as our partner. So, you'll see that continue to expand in the coming year as well. Again, just some of the infrastructure projects coming to life, the Albemarle Cultural Trail, we'll be doing more thorough planning on that getting more dollar and cents so that we can continue to pursue the federal dollars in that Corridor. So, just a couple highlights, things that we've kicked off, launched in 2023 will be big focuses in 2024. I'm just going to close with a few discussion questions. What challenges or opportunities do you see in the year ahead? Are there any major goals the Council wants to achieve in the next year within Corridors of Opportunity, and should this continue to be a strategy initiative moving forward?

Mr. Graham said first I want to thank the Manager and the staff and the Council. I think this is a perfect example of making a district issue a City priority. I mean this thing started on Beatties Ford Road and it expanded throughout the City and I'm not sure if people really understand the significance and the importance of the biz hubs that's now located on each Corridor [inaudible] up by nonprofit organization providing resources and services to those people in those communities. That's huge and it's really commendable how we kind of build this thing together. So, I'm really supportive of this. This certainly should be a strategic initiative that we continue to move forward. I like the way that we are pivoting from, I think we talked about it, not being on the grid for funding, but there appears to be a strategy for other governmental fundings to continue to support the work. I think that's really important. I think it's really important that we continue to merge and marry the work with housing and with what Victoria is doing in terms of Public Safety and Housing and the recommendations of the NEST Commission which again impacts these Corridors. I think that's critically important and the partnerships that we're making that the City again is not putting just our dollars into it. I think we continually need to lean into working with the corporate community to provide additional resources as well, as well as the small businesses on the Corridors. I think that's a place for opportunity to really lean in even more to begin to stand them up a little bit stronger and a lot more focused in terms of being very intentional about how we work with some of the small businesses on the Corridors. This is really I think a flagship program. I got a call I guess about two weeks ago from a guy in Atlanta asking the question about tell me more about this Corridors of Opportunity. I see your name is on it. Can you please share what you guys are doing? I told him I'll share with him at a cost, but I think people are now watching what we're doing. It's a whole of government approach. Every department is touching this thing and I think it's really good work, good staffing, a lot of problem solving along the way. We're not getting everything right with it, but we're like 95 percent hitting the ball, going back to the baseball analogy. Our winning percentages are really great on this thing, but it continues to do more work on it.

Councilmember Mayfield said good morning. Thank you for the information. Question for you. You stated that we're looking at a new Corridor investment. Here's the question. Are we going back to one of our initial Corridors or are we saying with that new Corridor investment where we're getting ready to look at things and you have people smarter than you and we have experts coming around, are we identifying the new Corridors or are we going back to one of our original Corridors to see how we have done and how we're growing. Beatties Ford Road, it took a minute, but they figured it out as far as community engagement, not just academia coming in and saying, "Hey, this is what's great for your community with [inaudible] and so many others." You have it coming out the ground and it's much more organic. Off of Freedom Drive Wilkerson, the Corridors of Opportunity has not necessarily created opportunities for the community as was once thought that it could be. One of our honestly biggest failures was a minority owned business that was over there that faced obstacles left and right and we weren't there to

help. So, if we're going to put an investment of new eyes and new ideas, I don't want that to be in yet another area. I think we will be much more beneficial if we go back to the beginning at one of our areas and make sure that they're shored up. So, has an area of town been identified for what you were just sharing about?

Ms. Holmes said what I was sharing about with the United Way is just evaluating the work. So, we will not add another Corridor currently out of that portfolio as part of that. It's really saying where have we had investment and what's the impact of that investment and let's do a deep dive into that Corridor to understand our impact. So, we have not yet selected with United Way which Corridor we're going to pilot, basically measure the success of the program. So, that's one. The second, I just want to address really the Freedom Wilkinson piece because we just are starting to really kick off implementation there. So, we've been working with the community to kind of make sure that message is very clear that we are just starting an implementation phase there. Really the business opportunity hub was ground zero, step one. So, there's a lot of work to be done there and I want to be really transparent that there is no assumption that we're done there. I mean we're just really getting started.

Ms. Mayfield said so, for further clarification, and Mr. Manager, it's really for the direction of you and your team. We created Corridors of Opportunity. Investment came in in certain Corridors. Other areas we created a playbook or started the conversation of a playbook. They didn't necessarily align as far as what support was created for the community in tangent with we're promoting a Corridor and here's what you need to step in. I would just like to have a suggestion and a thought that when you're looking at the area, don't just look at the areas of success, look at the areas of opportunity because some of our areas have not seen as much growth under our Corridor. We would have a better picture and a more detailed picture if we're looking at both where we still have opportunity or where we see unintended consequences as well as where we've seen success so that we can try to figure out that middle of what needs to be created to fill in, if that makes sense.

Mr. Jones said so, this was intentional. Monica, I may be a year or two off. Because of funding constraints, we started two playbooks at a time. So, over a three-year period. So, while Mr. Graham has a lot of success, he was the first one. So, there are some that the ink hasn't really dried on the playbook yet. So, they're going to be a little bit behind. So, a little patience, I guess may be too charm a word, with building on those playbooks. The other thing that I mentioned a little bit yesterday, later today we're going to talk about the strategic investment areas. So, there's 16 of those and it's not like they're new Corridors, but think about 16 areas throughout the entire City where there is going to be investment, not just in infrastructure, but in these community, area planning processes, if I got that right, Alyson. There's an opportunity for citizen engagement input into what we do in those 16 additional areas.

Unknown said thank you.

Ms. Watlington said thank you for the presentation Monica. Thank you for the work of the team. Certainly, Corridors of Opportunity is one that I'm particularly fond of given our work with the West Boulevard Neighborhood Coalition in our Corridor playbook years ago. A couple of things. I'm glad to hear the United Way connection. I know that we all met and have been meeting ongoing with their neighborhood champions and what I see in the next round of Corridors of Opportunity or in our next phase, we've done a great job of identifying the place-based investments in terms of transportation, infrastructure and things like that. I'm happy to see, and I hope that we continue this year to focus on the people focused investment because we want to make sure that as these neighborhoods become more attractive that the people who are in them get to be a part of that growth and mobility and so to the extent that we're connecting to the neighbors. Whether that's providing more information about our City programs as was discussed before or that's connecting people to workforce development and business development programs, I really want to see us dig in there because there is a difference between the Corridors who started out very community-led, community-driven, pulling on Council's coat tails, "Hey, we want to do something," versus we've identified this from various

database standpoints. We know where the Corridors are and then we as the City kind of initiating that work. I want to make sure that we play our role and support to what the community is driving. So, where there are needs to really invest in capacity development, I want us to do that so that ultimately, it's the communities that are driving that and we are one of several public sector partners. My hope is that as we move through this evaluation process, not only do we set up this process for evaluation, but we also create a structure with our United Way neighborhood champions for ongoing communication. They should function, in my mind, like another one of our community input groups or our Board and Commission that's tied to the Housing, Safety and Community Committee. So, I'd like to offer that up to our Committee and to the Council for further discussion.

I also echo the comments around investing in businesses in our Corridors. I'm very happy to see the business hubs and I want to make sure that as we think about not only equipping our people in the Corridors with jobs, but we're also really seriously helping folks get their businesses going. I know that we've got several programs at different tiers of business, but that very first, I want to go from widget maker to widget maker business owner. That's the piece where I think our Corridors of Opportunity residents really could use some assistance there. So, I'd like to see us do that as well as start to make those connections between education and economic mobility, because we've got plenty of schools in our Corridors that really need support. So, I'd like to see those connections because we also know there's going to be ties there to our safety work as well. The question that I have is, as we think about capital, I noticed yesterday that our set aside for Corridors of Opportunity goes away after Fiscal Year, I think it was 2024. What is the plan for how we continue to invest in this work or what does that look like?

Unknown said [inaudible].

Mr. Jones said yes. So, initially we used about all the capacity that we could in each of the bond cycles as it related to the infrastructure piece of Corridors of Opportunity. As we review the bond going forward, again I'm sure that those zeros will become some numbers as we have more resources to utilize.

Ms. Anderson said I can't think of a better program that we have holistically across the board. Corridors is just a tremendous program that's grassroots oriented connected to the community, listening to what the community wants and we are investing dollars, but more importantly the additional dollars that are secured from a private and federal perspective really add dimension to this program. I can tell you the constituents in District One and the Sugar Creek Corridor, they can feel the effects of what has been done and the North Graham Corridor's just really kicking off implementation, but the neighborhood is excited about it. So, as I mentioned yesterday Mr. Jones, I noticed that we have that drop off investment, but our budgets do reflect priorities. So, as we think about these out years, we do have to have some reflection of Corridors in our budget because I think that just underscores how truly important it is. The other piece I want to say is you can see some of the effects of what we're doing will have a longer runway and some will have some more immediate impacts. Not having that hotel, the Economy Inn, I can't tell you how many calls I've gotten about that. Just the fact that it's not there anymore, let alone what's going to come in its stead which is homeownership opportunities, but constituents are having very visceral reactions to what we're doing in the Sugar Creek Corridor. So, I want to say kudos. I want to take the model that you've developed Monica with the comms plan. I think we need to tell our story better. We have other great things that we're doing in the community that we don't tell the story about. So, I would like to take your model of comms from a comms perspective and put that on other great stories that we have and get it out, so the community understands what we're doing.

Ms. Wilson said thank you.

Mr. Driggs said so, I'd like to offer a different perspective. District Seven is not part of the Corridors process. We need to understand that the government economy in Mecklenburg is, among other things, a large wealth redistribution process. So, for

example the amount of spend in the schools is about a third in South Charlotte and not part of the Corridors, not really beneficiaries. So, it would be I think a good idea. This is not a political statement, but I would just say it's a good idea to be kind of mindful of where the money is coming from and where it's going. It's normal that there will be a sort of surplus of payments from middle class and affluent neighborhoods to fund a lot of our other efforts, but when you reach a certain point, and I've been going on about this for a long time, where you can't get a sidewalk in a place where there's a school bus stop and the kids are standing at the edge of the road waiting for a bus while the cars go flying by in the dark, people start to get pissed off. So, what I'm saying is if we could be a little more focused on that redistribution aspect. Identify where we're spending it. I think Ms. Molina you made the point about let's be more aware of how we're spending the money and if you meet a minimal level of requirements in those source neighborhoods, it'll be fine. It'll be fine. People will pay \$5,000 and \$10,000 tax bill, accept the fact that they don't have the same kind of police presence because they don't need the same kind of police presence, but nonetheless there is a subsidy that is coming from a certain part of the City to fund a lot of this activity, and if you don't meet the minimal requirements of those parts of the City, you start to have tension. So, this is a sustainability argument. You should like that. That's the word y'all like. So, seriously, this is about a certain kind of social harmony where everybody is onboard with what we're doing instead of one group feeling disenfranchised or taxation without representation, that kind of argument. So, if there is some way that we can actually demonstrate what that looks like, what that picture looks like of where we're collecting the money, where we're spending the money so that we can make the case to the net condoners in this process, that it's an equitable, that it's a reasonable proposition. Nobody expects, from the higher income neighborhoods, that they're going to see the same amount of money coming back, but you need to kind of defend the amount of transfer that's taking place. Thank you.

Ms. Ajmera said so, to change course here, in terms of Corridors of Opportunities, I often hear from mothers that childcare is one of the huge barriers. As a mother I actually can understand that more than ever before. I can relate to that. In Corridors of Opportunity as we are looking at investing our small businesses, entrepreneurships, bringing more jobs, workforce development initiatives, have we looked at working with our partners to really address childcare? Childcare not just in terms of cost, but also availability and access. They're both issues. I think we do need to work on that.

Ms. Holmes said can I just make one comment? Leading On Opportunity has been taking, and Tonya is here, a strong lead in organizing that topic specifically. There have been several working meetings that our team has been sitting in and I know Danielle has as well, on understanding what the City's role is in that and what are the things that we control and what are the things other partners are doing. So, yes, they're all involved in that. Yes, the County and there's a good group of partners having that childcare discussion. So, I'm by no means an expert on it, but I just want you to be aware that there are conversations happening and some of those people are here.

Ms. Ajmera said so, I think that needs to be part of our overall message as we are meeting residents in our Corridors of Opportunities with the resources. I often hear from residents that there are workforce development opportunities, but if the mother doesn't have childcare services, they can't attend workforce training opportunities or other small business or entrepreneurship sessions. So, I think we really need to address that. That's not really in our wheelhouse, I get it. It's really where we have to collaborate with County and other nonprofits, but it needs to be part of our outreach. So, if we can get those resources out in our communities as we are doing outreach, I think that will certainly help get the message out.

Mayor Lyles said I think Ms. Ajmera, Dimple is saying this in a great way. So, I think we ought to start a parking lot item for collaborations with the County and the people that help us do this work and put these specifics down so that we have a list of what do we think is most important. So, I would hope and suggest, in the parking lot for Council discussion, is the collaboration with Mecklenburg County and add childcare and those housing issues that we talk about and start working through that.

Unknown said [inaudible].

Councilmember Molina said good morning, everyone. Specifically speaking to the Corridors of Opportunity, last year I had the rare honor to represent us on the panel for the National League of Cities discussing the Corridors of Opportunity. On a higher level, what I was discussing was the Mayor's racial equity initiative because the composition of the conversation was about leveraging municipal bonds for racial equity. What I learned in that experience was despite the fact that we're monitoring this brand-new idea, we're really adding to this idea incrementally, we are mounds ahead of other places. The amount of questions and interests that I received from our colleagues that are proximate, some of them, and some of them far away, was astounding. I came home really proud of the work that we were doing despite some of the things that we're continuing to add and subtract from this project. The one thing that I noticed, not us, I'm not picking on us because we use words and I understand what they mean, but a lot of times we dehumanize the experience of someone in that Corridor as a them and not an us.

So, I want to paint a picture for a second. Albemarle Road is a Corridor. I can walk to Albemarle Road, and I've lived there for 13 years. I have a Master's degree, I speak three languages, I raised my children there, my children's home school is a D rated school, both of them. So, there are "me's" there. Do you understand what I'm saying? To make it real, so that people start to really humanize, I chose to be there. I left South Charlotte and moved to East Charlotte. My house is older than me. We're one though. She's like my big sister. The vegetation, there were just so many gifts on that side of town. My house was literally a fraction of the price. Do you understand what I'm saying? It was an actual choice. So, I think we have to start challenging ourselves to not dehumanize the experience of need because first of all, the face of need is changing. You've got real people who go to work everyday and sometimes I resent the idea of how we paint the people in need. Most of the people who are in need go to work every single day. They're not people who are just sitting on their kiester not doing anything. So, as we continue to go through this process, really enveloping the idea that we are a community, really enveloping the idea that we belong to a membership and that membership is Charlotte and understanding the value of who She is and how we continue to add to that platform exponentially. What was perspective for me, and I'm going to end here, was really to step outside of ourselves and see how other people saw us from the outside. They were like, "Charlotte is great," and I'm dealing with our issues and things like that. I just want to sit that home while we work through this.

Ms. Wilson said thank you.

Ms. Mayfield said Manager, between Councilmember Molina and Councilmember Driggs, I agree that we need to look at who has helped to fund development throughout our City. What I want to make sure that you include in that is our areas that have seen displacement because we have paid a lot. Now a lot of those same areas now have \$600,000, \$700,000, \$800,000, million-dollar homes that are right next door or right across from a home that was purchased for \$35,000 to \$70,000. So, there has been a wealth shift predominantly and overwhelmingly in areas of our City where it seems like we put a lot of investment. The challenge is those investments didn't necessarily help the people who are living there. So, a number of those people have now been displaced. So, we're seeing money shifting, especially once we realign districts. So, it will be helpful to get a full view of not just, "Oh these more wealthier areas have contributed." No, contributions have come from all over because we have quite a few of tax base that came from Southwest Charlotte and the west part of Charlotte and even out by Whitewater where we have working class people that have contributed a lot but not necessarily benefitted. So, I just want to make sure we get a full picture of where money investment has come in from community and where we have placed it back out into community and that snapshot of then and now. Because now some of those communities look very different. Thank you.

Ms. Wilson said very good, thank you. We'll end our comments and questions here unless they're any final comments from the Mayor or Manager around this. Thank you, Monica.

Ms. Holmes said okay. So, switching gears, I'm putting on my Planning Department hat now. So, I'm going to give you an overview of the 2040 Plan and the UDO and our Area Planning Process and Aligning Rezoning Process. So, to frame the conversation I just want to point out that all of the work that is currently ongoing in these large initiatives is built on the foundation of the 2040 Plan that was adopted a couple of years ago. So, the foundation of that work are the 10 priorities and 10 goals that came out of that plan several of which you prioritized yesterday when talking about metrics. So, to give you a review of 2023 and where we're going in 2024 is we are in the middle, about halfway through a two-year Community Area Planning Process which is really to get into those details of programs, projects and partnerships into the 14 area planning geographies. So, those were set in the 2040 Plan and now we're really in the details of getting down into the community needs, community priorities. So, year one was really spent focusing on those needs and priorities, that was phase one. Phase two, which just wrapped up, is understanding the land use implications of those priorities through the equity framework. Then phase three through five will be in the next year which is really focusing on, like I just mentioned the programs, projects, partnerships that need to come to bear to make these community area plans really the community's vision and help realize that vision.

So, we over the past year have done over 40 workshops, three in each geography. We've had hundreds of comments, hundreds of participants over 1,000 library hours and story map YouTube views to get the word out there about this process. So, this process will culminate in those adopted area plans which will then serve as the framework and tool for communities to use and to go back to and reference to really check themselves. How are we measuring, how are we getting things done? So, the companion that area planning process is the alignment rezoning. So, you have the recommendations, you have the land use recommendations, what the community wants to see happen. The companion piece to that is the zoning to make it happen through the legal process and the entitlements. So, that process will kick off with a lot of education around it. It's complicated, there's a lot of legalese and honestly a lot of people do not understand what the difference is between what you want to happen and what can actually happen. So, we'll be focused on the education around the alignment rezoning this spring with the map coming out to follow and then running that through the process of adoption and really getting into the fine details of aligning the community's vision with the actual entitlements.

So, that's our look forward. I will pause there. Just before I pause, on one more note, is that the things that you'll hear around the strategic investment areas this afternoon. I just want to acknowledge that how the puzzle pieces fit together between area planning, alignment rezoning, and those strategic investment areas is really critical. We have ongoing conversations for how those work and how they can be complimentary to each other so that the infrastructure meets the growth from the land use side and that we're really thinking comprehensively about those two together. So, with that, what challenges or opportunities do you see in this 2040 Area Planning and alignment rezoning in the next year? Are there any major goals that you want to achieve in this calendar year and in this fiscal year? Then, should we continue to make this a strategic initiative moving forward? I know that was part of the conversation yesterday as well.

Mr. Driggs said I think first, it's important to acknowledge the heroic work of Alyson and the Planning staff. It's been amazing. This is a huge undertaking and it's bumpy, but I think it's important for all of us to appreciate the significance of the community's Area Planning Process and the alignment because this is what brings what I would call a fuzzy picture of the UDO into focus. Now we're going down to a level of detail and we're resolving a lot of issues that people still have as a result of the first cut, the broad sweep of the area, the plan map and those initial steps. So, pretty critical challenges are precisely to make sure that we do address. Right now we infrastructure overload. Are we properly acknowledging the impact on infrastructure as a result of a lot of

development going on. I think when you seek community input, I'm always a little skeptical about the participation in some of these groups. It's so limited, the people in question have agendas. So, we're challenged to know it's up to us, I think, to know our constituents and to make sure that there's a broader base of feedback from what can be derived only from those meetings. Major goals let's get this done on time. So, are we still on schedule for the two-year horizon we intended? Personally, I would be interested to understand a little better what the Community Area Planning Process is doing. We've been told it's going on, it's going on, it's going to finish at such and such a time and then something is going to come back to us. It would be good to know on an interim basis what kind of things are taking shape as a result of it so that we can respond to them and then provide that feedback I was talking about. I don't think there's much question about should it continue to be a strategic initiative. We don't have any choice. So, that's not really a relevant question, but if we could get that continuing and move informative feedback about how it's taking shape, that would be helpful.

Mr. Bokhari said for me I think for takeaways and what we're doing, I think there's three main parts added on one, the infrastructure. As we leave here, my hope is that we leave with the top 30 or so metrics and the objectives that we're going to manage towards. This I think is clearly one of them. So, the infrastructure question that we talked a little bit about yesterday, it's critically important here. I keep calling it backlog of infrastructure, that's not the right words because we don't have policy that sets the minimum standards. So, I'm just going to refer to it as the need, the infrastructure need across this community and then we'll set policies and know what the backlog is. It's just doing that on its own and a snapshot today is complicated, but then doing it also with the lens of what growth through the UDO did we overlay on the City and therefore by-right it can go to here and the infrastructure needs go to here. So, we actually need a today view and then a post UDO by-right view so that we have the same need-based assessment that we set our policies on for infrastructure, so we know where the bar is as we're prioritizing. So, that's number one.

I think number two, the Community Area Planning Process is vitally critical. I don't think that we exactly know. I'm not discounting all the work and everything. I don't think we exactly know how it's going to go or what we really truly need out of folks because I think what I've been telling my folks is two things. Work with staff, work with your community and figure out what your infrastructure needs are around there so that you can overlay it and make sure it's part of this Community Area Planning vision that makes its way up to us. Then look at all of those parcels and where they're headed and look at the intended uses because this is your shot to figure that out. So, to me that's what I've been saying but we have to get the most of out of this. This is the one time they're all going to be paying attention at a level they haven't before because the next time they're paying attention is when someone rezones something next to them. We'll just never have as much attention as when that happens, but we're starting to see it. So, that's two.

Then three is the process after all that measure to get us from here to there. There's just so much stuff under the hood of this that is being figured out by staff right now, real time between departments. I think we need a measurement at the highest level that's simple, that we can look at overall that shows us, "Okay, this is where the bottle necks are slowing things down." We need a simple way to see it that then connects to a more complex way that staff is managing it so we know the backlog of all of the unresolved issues between departments, between how are we going to do this or that because a lot of it is now coded in there, but a lot of it isn't figured out on how staff makes a decision here or there. So, I think looking at that and then having a measure for looking at how, in the alignment process, what percentage of parcels are not through it and where is there backlash from the community. So, at a whole bucket, we know that if it's 100 percent unresolved and then zero percent resolve, zero percent contested, we need to be able to, at a board level, to be able to know how that's going in tracking because I think this is going to be a huge set of pushback and friction that we're going to be going into as we've already started to rise.

Ms. Wilson said thank you.

Ms. Brown said Monica, great job this job. Alyson and the Planning staff, thank you so much. As I'm coming in new, I'm the rookie to the policy and learning all this stuff, but as I sit here and listen and take notes, the 2040 Plan, the UDO, the playbooks and West Boulevard, Corridors of Opportunity, road mobility, all of this stuff concisely put into this book, it's a lot. It's a lot for me. So, I know it has to be a lot for you guys just trying to learn it so I can actually implement it and put it into play as I go out in the community everyday and tell people realistically what we can and cannot do. What I'm hearing from people is that they never knew, just the people that I'm speaking to. I know LaWana does a phenomenal job in the community and has a great relationship as she was in District Three the longest, but I'm saying for me, my footprint, to listen to you and the way you delivered this information. Of course, we get to meet with you and set up the opportunities to meet. I just want to say thank you to all of you guys. I know I haven't met with everybody, you don't know my style, but I just want to actually be able to deliver this, simplify this to the people that need it the most. I know we're working on a lot of different things. There's a lot of opportunities. We still have a lot to do, but from what I'm hearing, there's a lot that has been done. So, that's the piece I'd like to focus on, what we've done and then add on to what we can do and deliver that to the constituents and the people in the community that say, "Hey, you guys are not doing anything." Well, actually we are, but maybe you don't know how it's being done and where it's being done at. So, that's the piece that I always want to focus on. We're doing things. This is what is being done, but maybe you didn't know we were doing that. So, I just want to say thank you to you guys. It's a lot and it gets frustrating, but I do want to say thank you because we've got a lot of Ds in here. There's a lot of smart people, but I also want to acknowledge that even with being smart, if you are the smartest in the room, you might want to go in another room. I've always learned that. So, I just want to make sure that I'm delivering the information, I'm receiving it as I'm learning and then give the feedback in real time. So, thank you so much.

Ms. Holmes said please let us know. We're happy to sit down and talk with you or any other [inaudible].

Ms. Brown said awesome, awesome. I'm like, "Wow, this is a lot of information," but I'm going to get it together, but thank you so much okay.

Ms. Ajmera said thank you for all the work that you all do like Councilmember Brown said. I don't think we say thank you enough to our staff for the great work that they all do. A couple of questions on the UDO. With our UDO and increased density, we often get questions about what are we doing on the infrastructure side, especially from District Three, District Four and I know one of the items that I had highlighted that Councilmember Brown, Tiawana and I had highlighted is the metrics on infrastructure investments and measuring that in our existing areas that are developing at such a fast pace. So, sidewalks, water, street lighting. I have been advocating for streetlights on W.T. Harris Road all the way from Old Concord to Plaza and I think we have gotten up to a certain point and still we have miles to go. So, that just shows that it takes a number of years just to get streetlights in less than half a mile. That just shows the amount of gap that we have in our information investments. So, I agree with some of the points that Mr. Driggs had made earlier that UDO needs to continue to be one of our strategic priorities, but I think we do need to measure our infrastructure investments and I look forward to having that discussion as part of our budget in how do we tackle increased investments, especially Vision Zero and how we tackle those high injury networks. I think that needs to be prioritized.

So, I don't know what the ask would be if you were to look at all our high injury networks. What is the ask? We don't have that. So, I think if we can get that as part of our reports. I know Ed is going to do a presentation on this later today. It might be a part of his presentation, but having that information ahead of our budget session when we discuss this would be very important so that we can really put some context around it. So, if you put \$50 million, what does that get us? Maybe 10 miles of sidewalk and that's not enough. So, I'm looking forward to just having a deeper dive in that.

Mayor Lyles said I think Dimple has made a great point. I can see the Manager writing everything that we've talked about and at some point it has to have a cost and it has to have some assessment of value. I think that we should put all of this on the table so that we can have this discussion, but I wanted to go back to the UDO. I think they're two things that I heard Ed and Tariq say. It's the interim reporting. Not just to us, but to know who the leaders are in these various plans and sit down with them on an interim basis so that they can communicate. I know that we can't all be out there, but I really think that this might need a special dashboard for the Council, and that dashboard could be used to provide information to people that are participating in the process. So, dashboard may not be the word, but when we start talking about these parcels, when you get down to the parcel level and what is my parcel, what do you want next door to you, are you going to do something in your backyard, all of these things, we need to respect the neighborhood leaders and provide them the same information that we have and where we're going. So, I hope that we will do more interim on this and in a way that all of us agree to make some decisions that we can move forward on the plan.

Ms. Wilson said if we're [inaudible].

Ms. Holmes said thank you all.

Ms. Wilson said [inaudible].

Sarah Hazel, Chief Sustainability and Resiliency Officer said so, Sarah Hazel, Chief Sustainability and Resiliency Officer. Really glad to be here this morning. What I'm going to do is just touch on a couple of highlights, some of which I had a chance to share with the TPD (Transportation, Planning and Development) Committee a couple of weeks ago and then talk a little bit about what we're going to do moving forward. So, I know that we're under a time constraint. So, I'll be brief and then open it up for some discussion.

So, a pretty exciting way for us to continue to measure our efforts is the fact that we do some reporting to the CDP (Carbon Disclosure Project), that's a global reporting agency. That agency looks at different local governments, how they're doing with their climate action initiatives and their efforts to support sustainability. So, for the second year in a row, we were very thrilled to receive an A minus. I share that with you to just highlight that since the Strategic Energy Action Plan was adopted in 2018, we've laid a really strong foundation. You've really laid a strong foundation with the work and the investments and for the second year in a row we were recognized for that with an A minus score. I'll touch on a few things from this past year. We've worked with some of our private partners to stand up the program called Power Down the Crown. So, as we continue to work on our energy efficiency in our own buildings, we worked with partners out in the community. People like Honeywell, Novant, CPCC (Central Piedmont Community College), UNC (University of North Carolina) Charlotte to work on reducing their energy use intensity in their buildings. So, that was a program just last year that was launched that we're really excited about that helps to amplify the efforts towards our goal to be a low carbon City in 2050.

A couple of things in terms of the progress in our own infrastructure, because I know that's been a big topic of conversation. We just turned on the biggest EV (Electric Vehicle) infrastructure project that we had as a City which is the Governmental Center parking deck with 50 ports. Yes, really exciting stuff. So, you can see it from your offices probably, but what we now have is the opportunity for the bottom part of the deck to be opened to the public, more ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessibility. So, in alignment with a lot of City Council's goals with that project and an opportunity to advance electrification of our fleet in an even bigger way. So, I think in your glossy, you'll see that we have 109 electric vehicles since that number was published. We now have 120. So, the supply chain is beginning to free up and we're seeing some of the investments that Council has made over the past couple of budget cycles come to fruition with some of the electric vehicles that we're getting. We got our first e-transit van and Tesla for CMPD (Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department), but all that is to say is that we continue to advance our efforts in the clean energy space, both as a

municipality and then working with partners in the community to advance becoming a low carbon City.

So, the biggest update I think that is important to know for this year is that we'll be doing a refresh of the Strategic Energy Action Plan. It's been five years. So, it's really an opportunity to look at the SEAP, to build on the great work that's been done and to update it in alignment with the latest climate science in alignment with your additional priorities, many of which you've talked about over the past 48 hours, and to make sure that things like the Comprehensive Plan, like the Strategic Mobility Plan that are embedded in the way that we do work also are in embedded and aligned with the Strategic Energy Action Plan which we know they are. Specifically, when we're talking about mode shift and becoming a low carbon City by 2050. So, with that in 2030 we want to be zero carbon in our fleet and buildings and then by 2050 the goals that you have are to become a low carbon City. So, then as we look at the discussion questions, I think what could be particularly valuable is understanding as we embark on this update our Strategic Energy Action Plan, what policy areas and objectives are the most important to emphasize or align with the plan. So, I noted a couple. With your investment and partnership with Duke Energy, we're working on a low-income high-energy use pilot. So, there are these alignments and intersections between housing, between transit and it would be critical to know where you see gaps or where you see points of emphasis that we can really embed into the update of the Strategic Energy Action Plan. Then the final two questions, which are what challenges and opportunities do you see in the year ahead and should this continue to be a strategic initiative?

Ms. Wilson said thank you Sarah. As we move to questions, I do want to point back to our working agreements and ask that you honor them. Watch the use of your technology please and also the side conversations so that we can be respectful of our guests and give them our attention.

Ms. Ajmera said thank you. This continues to need to be one of our strategic priorities. We adopted this back in 2018 unanimously and I feel very strongly we need to continue to forge ahead to meet our 2030 goals to go carbon free by 2030. When we talk about SEAP it's also a question of equity because climate change disproportionately impacts Black and Brown communities. There are stories after stories. If you look at Clean Air Carolinas Report, that shows how air in the historic West End area has impacted communities for generations. So, this really addresses the carbon pollution, and we need to make a continuous strategic investment in our budget to electrify our fleet to make increased investments in our energy generation so that we can meet our 2030 goal. Also, I would like to thank Sarah. Really, she's done a great job with the two people team or three.

Ms. Hazel said I had three.

Ms. Ajmera said yes, three. I think that's tremendous. That speaks volumes to a great team that we have. We are a leader in sustainability. We don't often talk about it because our goals are just so ambitious, but we made bold goals and I think we can attain them. I would like to see as we discuss our budget, increased investments in our SEAP goals. Also, the tree canopy. If you look at those two pictures, the one that you cannot see is at the bottom, you can clearly see trees. Trees are our reach asset that not a lot of cities can claim, and I think we need to do more to preserve and protect our tree canopy. So, I would like to see in the Manager's parking lot there, we are still waiting on recommendations on the tree canopy and I think that's been pending for several months now. I would like to see getting recommendations on how we attain 50 by 50 goals. So, on the Tree Ordinance, I know that was a topic of discussion several months ago and I know Councilmember Johnson had brought that up several times with certain rezonings, but I think we need to have a comprehensive look at that. So, I look forward to having a deeper dive on recommendations on policies from the Planning staff specifically Alyson and the great work that Alyson, [inaudible] Porter and the entire team is doing.

Okay, then obviously the dashboard. I think we need to continue to enhance the public facing dashboard. I know we had gotten some feedback on that from various stakeholders. So, if you can continue to address those that would be great. That's all. Great work team. Thanks.

Mr. Jones said so, for the parking lot. Don't we have a plan in place related to the 50 by 50 question?

Unknown said yes, Alyson can probably speak best to it.

Alyson Craig, Planning, Design and Development said yes. So, we will do a tree canopy action plan update and that's when we will have community engagement, have recommendations and talk about how we can reach that goal or [inaudible]. So, that would be an effort to study this [inaudible].

Ms. Ajmera said so, last we had discussion on this, Mr. Jones, we were waiting on recommendations from Alyson and her team. We had a discussion on this just not too long ago.

Ms. Craig said we are planning to go [inaudible] for further discussion [inaudible] probably the end of March 2024.

Ms. Ajmera said okay. So, that's when we'll see recommendations from your team?

Ms. Craig said yes.

Ms. Ajmera said okay. So, I think that's what I'm looking for.

Ms. Hazel said I'll just add that that's another example of a plan that we want to make sure is aligned with our Strategic Energy Action Plan. Obviously, trees, carbon syncs and also support using less energy when you have a beautiful tree canopy. So, that's an alignment opportunity.

Ms. Ajmera said yes, thank you.

Ms. Mayfield said thank you for the presentation. You all are doing an amazing job. I'm always going to ask a very similar question. One, for you Mr. Manager, why does CMPD need a Tesla? Help me understand that. We can put that in the parking lot. I'm trying to understand the purpose of that. So, I need to understand why the first Tesla is slated for Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department. Also, we're still having conversations across the nation with EV batteries. A number of them are making their way into landfills. Across the nation, we know that no fire department has figured out the chemicals to put out an EV battery related fire. That vehicle must burn down where it is because there is no product that's putting them out. As recently as two weeks ago, we're in our winter, Chicago of course has a very different winter, a number of EVs, the batteries froze. They were in subzero temperatures. The most we get is probably 12 to 19 where our temperatures will be low but there's impacts where even with the charging stations because of the certain levels of cold. So, as we're moving towards this idea of being environmentally friendly, somewhere along the line we must also bring the experts to the table and talk about environmentally friendly to who. Where are these resources? We're looking at the impact of the Congo. We're looking at the impact across the nation of these landfills of where these batteries are going. Back in 2020, there was federal legislation that was created around \$150 million or so to do a study to look at the impact of trying to recycle the lithium in the batteries to try to make the batteries more conducive to be recycled and not end up in the landfills. We haven't gotten any of that information.

None of that has been presented so that when we're going to the community and saying, "This is a good thing," and we're talking about the environmental impacts, whether that environmental impact is through air. Remember we talked about a data center, there is environmental impacts with that, with the humming. That would be

helpful to have that information brought to us as well. So, it just doesn't look like we're telling you that this is the great thing without talking about not even the what ifs. Here is what has happened and here is where the City of Charlotte is already looking to take steps. So, understanding that true picture of the impact as we go in this direction. On that parking lot, that Tesla is going up there for CMPD, but also thinking about when we're saying, "This is the thing," and even in our mixed income housing, to say the trade off is you're going to provide x number of EV chargers, who the hell can afford to buy an electric vehicle? That's a different target of individual. Yes, we want mixed income, but let's just think about is that the trade off that's going to benefit the need that we have in community versus a charging station being in that 10-minute walk versus actually in that parking lot when something else could benefit the community. Like, give me three more units.

Ms. Wilson said Councilmember Mayfield, respectively, we do need to move on as we're running behind time.

Mr. Driggs said so, the environment is occasionally a very controversial topic sometimes with political over tones and there are some proposals that would create an enormous economic burden and not produce much benefit. For that reason, I'm especially grateful for SEAP. I think this is an accountable actionable plan. It identifies us as a leader in this space and Charlotte benefits from that regardless of politics or anything else in terms of economic development even. It contributes to the image of our City as this sort of happening and forward-thinking place. So, grateful for the plan. Definitely should continue to be a strategic initiative. I would highlight our agreement with Duke Energy on solar that we just entered into. Very innovative and big. It gets a large portion of the way towards our goal for 2030. We need to study the buses. The conversation around the buses has been how do we transition to environmentally friendlier buses given the technology of the buses and whether or not they have, for example if they are all electric, the ability to go an entire route. We had some controversy about buying hybrid buses because we really couldn't have electric buses serve all of the routes. So, I think that scenario where we need to continue to work, I agree about the trees. I think in my mind at least, our position on trees is not well articulated yet. Personally, I think the growth we expect is going to make it extremely difficult for us actually to have a 50 percent canopy and we need to have a realistic goal, an accountable goal that we're working toward and not keep talking about 50 percent and then fail to get there and have no way of measuring what we might have done.

My question is the low carbon City thing. I'm wondering what our ability is to influence the carbon generation in the City. What authority we have by ordinance and so on and what goal have we set for low carbon? What does that actually mean? I think there was a description of what it means, but can we say after five years how we're doing in terms of having the private sector move in that direction as a result of our initiatives? So, do we have that information?

Ms. Hazel said so, a couple of the things that I didn't highlight. So, first, I don't know how I forgot to talk about the fact that y'all made such a big commitment with the Duke Energy program. So, I just want to make sure that that is highlighted. We have on our dashboard our base line 2015 carbon emissions per capita in the Charlotte community and we have the 2019 numbers. So, you can see a decrease per capita. So, those numbers don't move fast and it's hard to identify a project that moved the needle on community-wide emissions, but they are per capita going down from 2015 to 2019 and we'll be looking at that again through the next SEAP update, but things like using smart growth principles that are embedded in your Comprehensive Plan, 10-minute neighborhoods, more access to transit, the conversations that you have been having over the last 24, 48 hours, that really moves the needle on community-wide emissions and then just to speak to your questions, programs at this point we're still working to pilot. Like EV car share opportunities. So, people don't need to have an EV, but can have access to clean driving. At scale, those types of things can move the needle. So, we do have data. It's on the dashboard and we'll continue to look at that, but it's going to come in the form of partnerships and also some of the ordinances where we have influence. Like, supporting the development of infrastructure that's sustainable, but

there are some tools that we don't have and that's where some of the partnerships really come into place.

Mr. Driggs said very nice work. Thank you.

Ms. Anderson said thank you. I think of course for many of the reasons that my colleagues stated that the SEAP needs to continue to be a strategic initiative moving forward. I actually think one of the largest things that we can do to impact our goals is to crystalize our plan on mobility and to ensure that we're building a micro-modal transportation network. I think that's one of the biggest things we can do to impact this, but specifically on that first question around what policy areas and objectives are important, I feel like you're doing a great job on the macro-objectives. I think we need to double click and go down to those micro-objectives because that's what's really collectively if we can get to that micro level in aggregate, that's really going to help us get to that overall goal. So, things like low-income high-energy homes. Trying to pair down there, but it's going to be the aggregate of those types of initiatives. So, as you think about what we're doing this year, that's where I'd like for us continuing to do what we're doing at the macro level, continue to do that. The Duke Energy program was an excellent program that wasn't received well on Council about 12 months ago and you went back, sharpened the pens, an opportunity presented itself and we were able to get that passed and that helps us get towards the goal. So, I just would like to see the micro initiatives that you can come back perhaps with an update and let us know how that would impact it and how we can help you. Great job overall. Thank you.

Ms. Wilson said thank you.

Mayor Lyles said I have one request and that's to put on our parking lot list for the connection of how we do our affordable housing with heating appliances that are available at a discount cost under the President's plan for both appliances inside of the house and heat pumps that are more energy efficient. So, working with our partners, we ought to align to take advantage of what we can do now to help people with their energy, plus it saves them money. This whole idea of how do we build with keeping in mind the house being energy efficient in its kitchen and all of these things, you talk about the cost of housing, I think we can do something there but that's an add to your list.

Ms. Wilson said Mecklenburg County has a program too called (LIEAP) Low-Income Energy Assistance Program. It's federally funded.

Mayor Lyles sad right.

Ms. Wilson said so, we'll add that as well. Thank you. Alright if there are no more questions, thank you so much Sarah.

Ms. Hazel said thank you.

Ms. Wilson said team, we're going to make an adjustment to the agenda quickly now and move to our safety conversation. Chief Jennings is here. So, we'll move to our safety conversation and then come back. If we could take a five-minute break and return in five minutes, we'll start with the safety discussion. Thank you.

The meeting was recessed at 11:11 a.m. and reconvened at 11:18 a.m.

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ITEM NO. 3: EXPANDED DISCUSSION: SAFETY:

DeAlva Wilson, Facilitator said thank you for engaging discussion this morning. We're excited to welcome Chief Jennings to begin the presentation on safety. If we could have all Council members in seats, we're going to go ahead and get started. We're trying to be respectful of our time and your time today as well. Thank you.

Chief Johnny Jennings, Chief of Police, Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department

said thank you so much. I appreciate it. Thank you, Madam Mayor, members of Council, Mr. Manager, appreciate it. It's an honor to be here today. I think I've had more questions about Tesla's than anything so far. I'm sure that'll come up. This is a much nicer setting than what we have in Charlotte, but I'm glad to be here and wanted to talk about some of the end of year report that we have very briefly. What I plan on covering today is our community services and engagement within CMPD. We'll hit briefly on some end of year crime data which you all should have in front of you as well. Arrest breakdown and juvenile crime which has been a hot topic, not just within CMPD, but across the State. Then also what we are doing moving forward and also be able to have an opportunity to answer any questions and to have any discussions that you'd like to have.

So, first of all in community engagement, I've always had a great deal of pride in what we have been able to accomplish within CMPD over the years. We have taken a lot of initiatives with particularly our youth programs. If you'll remember, for those that were here in 2020 in discussion of how we were able to do a lot of our youth programs is through a lot of grant funding and private funding that does not necessarily come out of the general budget. We've had a great deal of success and just to touch on a few with ours, we have 13 total programs with about 813 participants, mainly youth programs that we have. We have our Youth Envision Academy, we have our diversion program, Police Activities League, our Reach Out Academy, Impact and we have our cadets that are from middle and high school students as well. As we are always looking at ways that we can improve how we are having outreach with particularly our youth, one thing that we did pilot last year is a program called Fifth Element Youth Outreach. What that is, is a tailored response to youth who we see that are going down the wrong path that we are able to grab a hold of and basically mentor that individual with our police officers. We take them to events, we are visiting their residence, we're making sure that they're given job opportunities. We piloted that last year with five students and this year we hope to have about 13 candidates that we have in the hopper for 2024.

Just to go over crime stats last year. Last year our police department received over 1 million 911 calls for service, and we had over 530,000 police interactions with our citizen, community, not all based on the calls for service but 534,000 interactions with people. It's no secret, we did do the end of crime press conference last week. We did have a 14 percent overall increase in crime total. We were flat for violent crime and just a caveat to that our violent crime, the last two years, has seen respectively a seven percent decrease and a five percent decrease. So, coming out flat this year certainly should be a respectable number for us as well.

Property crime was up 17 percent, and I say that because there is a deeper issue that comes with our property crimes and that deals with our automobile thefts. Automobile thefts, we had 8,032 vehicles stolen last year, 8,032. That is a huge increase from what we've seen in years past, and I'll tell you as we go into further discussion, that the automobile thefts had a great deal to do with the Kia-Hyundai challenge with juveniles. Our juveniles are responsible for a great deal of those auto thefts and also largely for models that we've seen across our community as well. As a matter of fact, we'll talk more about the Kia-Hyundai challenge and the thefts that we've seen across the county and not just here in Charlotte, but we certainly were not immune to the effects of that where there were a lot of Kias and Hyundais that were being stolen last year. So, our juvenile arrests last year totaled 3,026. That is a 34 percent increase than what we've seen in 2022. So, for 2023 our total arrests were 15,343 and 11,614 accounted for those over 15,000 arrests. Even a more telling number is that there were 700 more repeat juvenile offenders in 2023 compared to 2022. That means there were 700 juveniles that offended more than one time. I say offended, that means that we caught them more than one time in 2023 than we did in 2022. Our repeat adult arrests are up seven percent, but our repeat juvenile arrests were up 62 percent total. Also, just to throw a little extra on top of that, 5,105 juveniles were listed as suspects in crime in 2023, and that's a 21 percent increase in 2022.

So, as we move forward my priorities are going to be pretty clear for 2024. We're going to continue to work on violent crime and reduction efforts and I've always said that crime is more of a management thing for us, and we talk about fighting crime and violent crime. We just need to make sure that we are managing it and handling it in the most appropriate way that we're able to because until we have zero violent crime, that's when it's not going to be acceptable but that's also a very lofty goal there. So, reducing automobile property crime, this is kind of a new one this year because we have seen a lot of the relationship that comes with the automobile property crime such as auto theft and larceny from auto, how that relates to violent crime that we're dealing with as well. Whether you're stealing a gun out of a vehicle or you're stealing a car and running from the police or driving recklessly and end up killing somebody, it certainly is something that plays a little bit more into just the crime itself. We're going to continue our recruitment retention efforts. We are looking for some positive things for recruitment and retention. We have seen applications go up quite a bit and we're seeing hiring go up quite a bit. So, very proud of that and we hope to continue that trend and we'll be able to make way towards closing the gap on our vacancies that we have. We are doing that now and we're going to continue to do that.

Then also continue our customer experience training that we have been doing since 2021 that was implemented. For those of you who remember our customer service training and CMPD Serves, I think that's important for us to continue to build relationships within the community and that we are continuously not only knowing how to treat people in a positive light externally but also internally. So, that's very important for us, but we do know there's a lot of work ahead. I'm going to stop talking because I know there's probably a lot of questions that hopefully I'll be able to answer, and we can have some good constructive conversation here.

Ms. Wilson said thank you. Thank you for the update, Chief Jennings about a very important topic.

Councilmember Graham said thank you. I really don't have a question for this Chief. We've met several times over the past two weeks. I've had the opportunity also to have conversations with the District Attorney as well as other community stakeholders. So, these comments are really for my colleagues specifically and to the members of the public. I'm really concerned about what's happening in our community and I acknowledge that there are issues or problems that we are to address. CMPD is doing their job as law enforcement as they have arrested over 15,000 folks last year. The District Attorney is dedicated to prosecute those who commit crimes in our City. I think the message is that if you commit a crime in Charlotte, you will be arrested and you will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law no matter how old you are, black, white, young, old, rich, poor, our community will be safe.

The stats speak for themselves. Fourteen percent increase overall, 19 percent property car theft, youth offenders which is a stunning 34 percent. Uptown, which has decreased but if you don't feel safe, you're not safe and so there's a perception that safety is an issue in Uptown Charlotte, especially in light of what happened on New Year's Eve. I think we need to get a thoughtful response as the Council as a whole, to these issues and we need to bring the community along with us. Those who represent faith-based organizations and nonprofit organizations and certainly government plays a role, local government, County government, certainly our school system and our grassroots organizations many of whom we fund through our budget to provide hands on grassroots boots on the ground support like Alternatives To Violence program, Mel's Place, Block Love Charlotte who works with our unhoused population all contributing to some of the impact that we're seeing overall within our City. I think we all know the blocking and tacking that we have to do which is access to educational opportunities, community programming, family support. We can't arrest all parents. Those who are negligent should be, but there are also parents out there pleading, begging for help with their kids. I think we need to be mindful of that, youthful employment opportunities and activities, a juvenile system statewide that's effective and efficient that serves the purpose of not only our youth here in Mecklenburg County, but statewide and certainly mental health support.

All of those things, we can do a better job of leaning in to support, which I think is the problem, youth offenders in our community. Certainly, I'm just one man with one opinion and I would leave it up to my colleague Councilmember Watlington and her Committee to really help me and help this community focus on where we should go. What are we solving for and what are we trying to do really put programs or a structure in place that makes sense that the Council collectively as a whole can buy into? I think we demonstrated it two years ago through the Safe Charlotte program where we came together in a short period of time and made some meaningful impact bringing the community along with us, asking the tough questions and over the last two weeks, I've had a number of community meetings, individual meetings, everyone wants to lean in and support and work with us. So, I don't think her committee will have a hard time identifying resources to help us problem solve as we move forward. Certainly, there may or may not be items that we need from the General Assembly. I believe through our legislative agenda collectively as a Council, we can decide what's most important to us collectively as we try to frame and do the work together. So, I just hope that one, obviously I'm very interested in this topic. Many of you who were paying attention at the swearing in noticed that I made mention of it, of youth offenders and violent crime and made mention of I think this is where we really need to talk a little bit about this. When I gave two examples of incidents of kids who killed themselves literally with guns and [inaudible] there's been at least 10 kids in our [inaudible]. So, I just think that [inaudible].

Councilmember Watlington said [inaudible]. It was mentioned, there's been a number of conversations that have happened over the course of the last several weeks and I think that most everyone here has at least had a chance to see or get first look on where we think that we want to go. So, it's already in your books here under this safety framework. Councilmember Graham mentioned four years ago almost, we had this discussion around Safe Charlotte and violence reduction. It's in your community safety tab, your binder.

Ms. Wilson said there's a tab entitled community safety in the binder. Councilmember Watlington please continue.

Ms. Watlington said sure. So, as we're thinking about where are we now, we understand the state of the numbers, but there's an opportunity to look deeper into what's going on here, which I hope that we would do. What I would suggest that we do as part of our committee work this year, when we think about some of the work that started last year with Uptown quality of life and how some of those items have since come back to us and we are currently deliberating about ordinances and reinstatement of such ordinances, that is really part of a broader conversation. So, we're thinking about this conversation three buckets if you will. We're looking at Uptown quality of life in the public realm, we're looking at how that relates to Uptown vitality in our overall region economic development and then we're also looking at crime overall, specifically youth crime or crimes involving juveniles. So, as we think about that, those are the three areas that we'd like to focus on or contribute to within our committee. So, we're thinking of this as a continuum. So, we've got CMPD, we've got Great Neighborhoods, we've got to focus on safe communities. So, that's a reason why obviously we're having this conversation here. That said, certainly we understand that there's a spectrum of work that goes from City responsibility to where our primary responsibility lies versus where the City has secondary responsibility everywhere from things like law enforcement that firmly sits within the City, up through the built environment, economic mobility, over to things like homelessness and mental health and the judicial system, which obviously we would have secondary responsibility behind our partners intergovernmentally.

So, we certainly are not seeking to drive the entire process in every one of those realms, but our attempt is to identify the full spectrum of what's involved so that we can identify key partners. We believe that we've done that to a large extent. We would like to continue the same kind of structure that we have with Safe Charlotte in 2020 where we create an Ad Hoc type of working group that's comprised of our Council, our Committee specifically, City staff, individuals from the justice system as well as a number of partners in the community including CMS (Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools) for sure, our District Attorney's office who have been great partners, our judicial system, the Office

for Violence Prevention from Mecklenburg County. I do want to call that out specifically because the Office of Violence Prevention is a tremendous asset and resource that does not sit within the City, but stands ready, willing and able to allow us to join the fight in reducing crime in our City.

One thing in particular that I think is unique if you will about this approach, is that we're going to be engaging our universities to really understand what the data looks like. Who are we seeing that ends up within our justice system continually? What are some database methods? What programs are we using that we need to evaluate to make sure that they're effective. So, we really want to make sure that we bring that database approach to the conversation as well. One of the things I know that Councilmember Brown, you brought up that I absolutely agree with is ensuring that parental engagement is a part of the framework, because at the end of the day, we are a community and it starts at home and each one of us within our individual neighborhoods has responsibility to our family members to ensure that we are creating a network of engagement there. So, absolutely to the extent that we can engage the parents as neighbors and also through the CMS system. We definitely want to do that as well.

Ms. Wilson said time check.

Ms. Watlington said I'm just framing the conversation. So, certainly consider this part of the presentation. As we think about areas of focus and how we want to go about doing this, we're looking at again different parts of the work. There's enforcement which we've discussed, there's prevention, diversion and intervention. So, as we pull together a response, please understand as Councilmember Graham mentioned that it's not one or the other, it's all of these components and we've got to look at it holistically. To that end, when we think about next steps, certainly we're not going to solve crime overnight. We're not going to look up tomorrow and say, "Oh, there is no more crime in Charlotte at all," but what we do need to consider is what can we manage in the short term as people come to Uptown, how do we work with Center City Partners and some of our business community to ensure that when there are special events Uptown that there is appropriate resourcing so that when folks come in they can have a pleasurable experience. Those are some of things that are short term, but when it comes to long term we know that there may be policy changes. There may be things that we've got to put on the legislative agenda that we need to go to Raleigh, that we need to go to D.C. and advocate for. So, all of those components certainly will be part of this framework, but the first step is getting aligned as a Council today on how we go about that work. The details of course will come through the Housing, Safety and Community Committee ongoing and we'll continue to work with that Ad Hoc group and certainly interested Council members as you so choose, but today, just really wanted to lay the groundwork for this framework considering an extension of the work that we began several years ago. Happy to take on anybody else's additional adds or suggestions.

Ms. Wilson said thank you. Thank you for walking through the framework. It has been provided as a part of the pre-read. So, hopefully you all are familiar with the details of such. I think there's a lot of obviously passion and warranted passion around this topic. So, I do want to ask that the remaining comments come in the form of a question about the framework that's been laid out. There's a lot of work to be done here outside around this work that will happen outside of this room. So, we won't solve everything in this room. There's a lot of probing, collaboration, research, etc., to be done to get to the final answer. That won't happen here today. So, as you think about framing your comments, we have the benefit of having the Chief here. So, if there's a question for him, I think this is the time and the opportunity to ask a question of him and some of the recommendations that you may have, should happen actually in Committee or in your working group or referred to Council to actually get a lot of that done. So, recommendation. If certainly there are statements that are top of mind, please be there, but just be respectful with your two minutes so we can get back on agenda and the main point here is that it will not be solved in this room today. So, let's keep our points on two minutes, questions while we have the Chief here and move on with the discussion.

Councilmember Mayfield said Chief, thank you for the presentation. This Fifth Element Youth Outreach Program, you identified that we had five youth enrolled, two of them graduated.

Chief Jennings said yes.

Ms. Mayfield said what happened to the other three?

Chief Jennings said the other either dropped out or did not complete the program. So, again it was a pilot that we wanted to test out. I think it has some good merit with a bigger sample. If we can go into a bigger sample for 2024 and then we can do another evaluation. This was something that we started in 2023 and liked the concept of it and the hands-on approach. It can be very manpower intensive because you do put such a great deal of attention to each individual young person that goes into the program, but I think we need a bigger sample to be able to truly evaluate the effectiveness.

Ms. Mayfield said so, what I would like Mr. Manager is our team working alongside CMPD, I would like for us to take into consideration that it's not a numbers game. So, creating a bigger sample versus identifying, "Okay, why did we lose those three?"

Chief Jennings said certainly.

Ms. Mayfield said because if we started out with five and we weren't able to keep all five engaged, there's still some type of disconnect, whether it's challenges at home, at school, whatever it is, to truly create something successful versus just increasing the number to try to balance it out.

Chief Jennings said certainly.

Ms. Mayfield said also, just as Dr. Watlington mentioned, when we talk about Uptown resourcing, with this Fifth Element Youth outreach, we might have the possibility and with a number of the programs, I would like to know if there is a consideration of us thinking about how do we involve our youth in Uptown. So, we see a lot of the challenges that are happening. We're of a different time period. We grew up at a time where park and rec was free. You had programming in park and rec that was free. We paid taxes for it, but that is not the case today. So, there's a disconnect for what programs are available for young people between eight and 19 for them to do where they're actually engaged, and it does not cost them anything. So, it would be helpful for the extended parking lot to give us some of these things outside of just telling me the Police Academy, the Reach Academy, the reach out. What are you doing in there so that Council can be utilized to get some of this information out to people I really want to encourage that we not make it a numbers game, but an impact to youth and figure out why we have the disconnect. You mentioned earlier in the year or someone from the team, a number of these youth that are coming before us are first time offenders. So, they wouldn't even have been on our radar as someone that might be having a problem. So, it would be helpful to also know how you all are identifying the possibilities there and that can be the follow up to Committee just to get a better idea of, okay, three might've dropped out or whatever happened.

Ms. Wilson said time check.

Ms. Mayfield said help us understand how we lost them.

Chief Jennings said certainly. To your point, also first-time offenders, our concentration is not necessarily on the first time offenders. You saw 700 are repeat offenders this year, 700 more and that's where I think the focus needs to be and that's what the Fifth Element tries to do as well, and it's time consuming. So, the kid that are dropping out, because it is a big commitment, they may not be prepared for that commitment.

Ms. Wilson said thank you.

Councilmember Driggs said thank you Chief. We really appreciate you and your officers. You've been through some difficult years nationally and locally and your guys have been professional and really deserve our respect.

Chief Jennings said thank you.

Mr. Driggs said I want to point out Safe Charlotte and a lot of the things that we've done in the past years don't appear to be working. We're up 14 percent this year. This is not where we wanted to be when we went through those past exercises. We know that they're problems with the courts and the DA (District Attorney) and that persists. So, this sort of roundtrip Uptown and back makes it hard to enforce things. So, I think we need to continue all of our community efforts and try to intervene early and prevent the situation where a crime is being committed, particularly by repeat offenders who seem to be able to act with impunity, but in my mind that means that we have to take some pretty dramatic action. I think the community is looking to us right now in view of the recent rise, the relatively really dramatic rise recently in perception of crime and lawlessness, the fear that people feel on the streets of all denominations. I've spoken to people who've said that they live in certain communities and were afraid to go out. So, what it comes down to in my mind though is that we have to step up deterrence. The reason that could be difficult for this Council is there is a tension between deterrence, proactive policing and the rights of members of the community, the perception of targeting our minority. I'm being very plain here, but if we don't allow the police to do their jobs because we're being overly protective of certain people, then we're going to get what we've got. So, I think that for one, we should come up with some pretty dramatic action and we should be prepared when we have failed to steer somebody away from criminal action, we should be prepared to deal with those situations more forcefully. Chief, my question to you is, you've described here what's going on. It's kind of an ongoing report. Is there anything that you can point out to that you could get from us that would enable you, that's different, in light of the recent developments that would enable you to combat this rise that we've seen?

Chief Jennings said certainly. We talk about the 14 per increase in crime overall. It's driven by the automobile theft and youth that are stealing these cars. If you take our increase in automobile thefts and just make that flat, then we're talking about a very insignificant crime increase in Charlotte last year.

Mr. Driggs said juvenile crime is up.

Chief Jennings said juvenile crime. So, Governor Cooper and the Director of Public Safety Eddie Buffaloe were kind enough that they visited CMPD yesterday, had a very productive conversation and we talked about just that. When we raised the age four years ago from 16 to 18, regardless of what you think about that, there were no resources that went along with that. So, I'm pretty sure the Governor was aware, but there's no juvenile detention center in Charlotte and that is almost hard to think of. My answer is not saying that we need more places to lock juveniles up or to detain juveniles, but the resources with DJJ (Department of Juvenile Justice) and everything that comes along with it to give that to these young people so that they don't go back and reoffend, is absolutely something that we need to do. It would scare me to death in the community to hear the number that 700 more juveniles were repeat offenders this year in 2023 than they were in 2022. That's very concerning because that number is only going to continue to grow unless we can do something different when it comes to these young people.

Mr. Driggs said so, my point is let's think about what new action, what can we do different because of that fact which is a departure from before. Thank you. Appreciate you Chief.

Chief Jennings said thank you.

Ms. Wilson said thank you Ed.

Councilmember Brown said hey Chief. Thank you so much for your data, your information, and your sheets. I've listened to my colleagues and a lot of times I cringe. I think people forget that I was once a young person that went down this path and I do consider myself an expert in this area. There's been a lot of work that's been done and people will say all over again and again, if you have not lived this life or you haven't come from this environment and I'm very passionate about it, it just so happened I landed on the Council unanimously, won every district. So, people want to see something different. I've asked to meet with you. I actually was hand picked by Governor Roy Cooper for the record to work on the women in incarceration work group with SRCC (State Reentry Council Collaboration). So, I was considered to be an expert. These numbers, they are alarming and when I spoke with Gary and he told me that the juveniles were leaving, I had a fit because I was one of the ones working with them, but it's not a whole lot you can do if the resources are not there. I look at it from a different approach. You guys have a very hard job to do. I couldn't do it, they wouldn't let me do it anyway because of my background, but I think I probably would be a good officer honestly. I'm very serious about that, but we have to make sure that when we make these decisions about our juveniles, that they are in the room. You can't make a decision for someone that continues to get in trouble, continue to go down a wrong path that may not even have parents at home. I did. I made decisions because my mom was a single mom, and had to walk to work and she had to work long hours and she was feeding us and taking care of us off Kentucky Fried Chicken salary, and that's on the corner of West Boulevard and Remount Road, that's now, Nick's. It's now Nick's but it was Kentucky Fried Chicken. So, when you start talking about parents, maybe they don't even have parents at home. Parents might be on drugs, in abusive relationships like mine was. We really have to have the juveniles in the room. It's easy for all of us in here that think we're D, that think we know everything, we don't. So, for this particular subject, when you make decisions about youth, you cannot do it without them in the room. You have to ask them. They are the experts. Get mad all you want to, I hear the grunts or whatever. I don't care. When you talk about our youths and them offending downtown, it's just not downtown Charlotte. It's all over the City of Charlotte. Steele Creek, they're doing it in Steele Creek, they're doing it on West Boulevard, Beatties Ford Road, it's just not about Uptown downtown Charlotte. It's the City collectively. So, for the third time, I've asked to meet. Someone took notes and said they want to meet, please hear me out and hear what I have and what my suggestions are.

Chief Jennings said I think we have a meeting on the schedule, don't we?

Ms. Brown said I don't see it. I didn't see it.

Chief Jennings said okay.

Ms. Brown said I know I'm working with Dr. Victoria Watlington. I don't have all the answers, but I do have some of them, and I think if we just listen and bring those youth in the room like the programs that you have, a lot of the youth don't even know the programs exist. I'm in Southwest Middle School, and that is a Title One school and it's in Steele Creek and those children, all colors. White, Black, Chinese, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, everybody. Those children are being affected. So, I just wanted to say it's not just Black kids.

Chief Jennings said certainly.

Ms. Brown said yes I'm passionate about who I am, but I love all people and all children. So, they're all being affected.

Chief Jennings said yes. Let me just say this. As proud as I am of all of our programs and youth programs and the things that we try to accomplish, that should not be our role. It should not fall on the Police Department to rehabilitate kids, but we do have resources to be able to do it. We see programs that we are able to get funding for and try and help as many kids. I'd rather spend effort on the programs than to continue to have to see these kids over and over and over again in the court system.

Ms. Brown said Chief, again I said you guys are doing immeasurable work. I can't even imagine what your day to day is, but imagine what ours is out in the community as well where people are saying the kids did what they did in Uptown or they're robbing, they're stealing, they're in cars, but what are we doing to combat that? Are we actually [inaudible]? We're not a part of the School Board, but that's not saying that we can't work with the grassroot organizations and put them in the school and be viable and get the empirical data and make sure that we're keeping a track. It's not your job, but you've got to be a part of the solution because if you're not, then you're part of the problem.

Chief Jennings said absolutely.

Ms. Brown said okay, thank you. Alright.

Councilmember Ajmera said Chief, I want to thank you and your entire team for the great work that you are doing in addressing our violent crime, addressing our recruitment. Certainly, numbers are looking good from the recruitment perspective. So, from the budget perspective I'd like to see what are the things this Council can do to help with the priorities that you outlined. Also, there are two questions that I have. One is for the budget and second is for Intergovernmental Committee. You clearly laid out that there needs to be funding at the State level. I would like to see as part of our State legislative agenda that we champion some of these items that the Chief has just mentioned. So, if we can get a list of all the items that you'd like us to champion at the State level along with our budget that Council has authority to do, I would like to get that list.

Chief Jennings said thank you Council member. In all seriousness, we are talking about really closing that gap in on our vacancy rate. Hopefully by the end of this year you will see that down to almost zero. At the same point based on studies across the country and what we are needing within our agency, we are allocating a little over 1,900 sworn positions. That should be about 2,400. I know that doesn't happen overnight, but over time I think gradually we need to really look at building the allocations for the police force, but we can't do that unless we can fill the vacancies that we have.

Ms. Ajmera said thank you. I'd like to just mention one more thing. Chief Jennings, I really like your candid remarks.

Chief Jennings said thank you.

Ms. Ajmera said yes. You just lay it out there and I think we need more of that because public safety is an issue. Charlotte is a safe City, but the perception is that there are many parts of our City that are not safe. We need to do everything that we can to address that. It's not just Uptown as Tia said. There are many parts of our City where residents do not feel safe and that is an issue that we truly need to tackle and put our resources behind. Alternatives To Violence is a great program and I'm glad that we are expanding that program in other Corridors but that's just one part of the solution. There needs to be enforcement, there is State funding involved, we need to make sure the DA gets more funding. So, it's a multifaceted solution, but I think we do need to address that through our Intergovernmental Relations Committee as part of our Federal and State legislative agenda. Thanks.

Chief Jennings said thank you for saying that. DA funding is critical. Our DA system needs a lot more than what they're getting right now.

Councilmember Anderson said Chief, thank you for the presentation and the information. I agree that if we can just have a singular focus on one or two of these large numbers. Vehicle theft is up 120 percent, and so if we were to attack that and continue to do the good work that you all are doing, that overall crime number of 14 percent would drop dramatically. Certainly, the laser focus that you've had in the Uptown area, I share Uptown with Mr. Graham and with Operation Heartbeat and everything else that's gone, to see a decrease in crime, in that area by seven percent is indicative of when you put a light on an issue and we focus on it, we'll get some results

that we need. So, I think if we have a singular focus this year that would be great. I just want to make sure when we talk about our State and Federal legislative slate, I want to make sure that we are clear eyed about what we're asking. We have Ad Hoc Committee that we've been meeting many times to focus on this and it's indicative of the work that's in the binder and Ms. Watlington and her community is going to continue to focus on this. I want to make sure that when we have an ask, we have a specific ask that's going to fit into an overall plan that we can take action to. So, I think that's important. These numbers that you have on slide five around the 2023 arrest information, there's a clear need for our young people and as was mentioned earlier, we're not going to solve it by ourselves. There's so many great evidenced based programs out there. We have community partners like the Urban League that has Save Our Sons program that is not being implemented here. It's just fertile ground for us to curate these programs and then communicate that so that constituents know what's available and how to take action on them. So, I just want to commend you for the results that we've gotten withstanding this vehicle theft. Also, when you look at these numbers here on slide nine and you have the auto theft stats, you have a little over 8,000 auto thefts, but then a little less than 4,000 recovered. So, 50 percent of those cars are not recoverable. I'm wondering where they're at. I'm wondering if that is indicative of local activity or something that's going on in the larger region, in the southeast region.

Chief Jennings said it is. We actually have a really good case that was solved nationally where some of these were being shipped out to other locations, they were being stripped and as we speak today, speaking of auto theft, we're currently meeting with the Hyundai manufacturers in Charlotte because the issue with those auto thefts is because of the ease of them to be stolen. We are meeting with them and I know some other Chiefs, some of my colleagues across the country have even gone so far as to initiate lawsuits towards the auto dealerships because they will not fix the issue. So, I think it's productive and it's a very good sign that they're meeting with us and having these discussions to try and curb that.

Ms. Anderson said excellent. My last comment that I'll make is around the numbers that you have on page eight, around the guns that have gotten off the street. That's gone up by 10 percent, but I know that a lot of the crime that's done with guns with the youth are from stolen guns.

Ms. Wilson said time check.

Ms. Anderson said I'd like to see us be more stringent around legal gun owners and how they are responsible for the guns that they legally own and storing them properly. If a gun is stolen from a car that's just sitting on the passenger seat or just slid underneath the seat, I think there needs to be some ramifications. You know, you have to go through a process to have a concealed carry, things you have to do, you're educated on that, and yet these guns are being stolen from cars every single day because they're not properly stored.

Chief Jennings said certainly, and that is a challenge for us and we try to do that through education and compliance. I don't want to deter someone from reporting their guns stolen because they fear that they would get in trouble because it was stolen. So, that's the fine line that we have to walk here.

Ms. Anderson said thank you.

Chief Jennings said thank you.

Ms. Brown said alright. So, thank you again Chief. I want to go and I want to thank [inaudible]. I've been appointed to the Safety and Housing Committee. I'm very excited about that and to be working with our Chair, Dr. Watlington and our Vice Chair, LaWana Mayfield because they both are very familiar with District Three, they come from there previously before me. I'd like to ask you about recruitment because I like to come with solutions. So, I consider myself an expert in this area and we can into what expert means in that subject, but I am one for this area. When we talk about recruitment, I

would like to see our young people and what it looks like for them to come into recruitment and to feel safe again, to represent our public safety officers and to get into the community and to be engaged. So, what I like that you presented today, because I'm really tough on language and I teach language on how we are to be received and I cringe at certain language, but I know in the law enforcement field, they still use offender and certain words that really just make my skin cringe, but I can deal with it for the sake of policy and what we have to do. I'm mature enough to know that we just have to hear that language sometimes although in a perfect world I wish we didn't have to hear that language.

So, when we talk about this phenomenal lady that's coming here today and she's done this consulting for us and we have rules of engagement and we're supposed to follow those, it's the same thing with the turn away from things that are not working in our community. If we've been doing something for so long and it's not working, we really have to dig deep and see if there's something else that we can do. The youth crime going up, I saw those numbers, because this handout is perfect, it's wonderful, colorful. I know it cost money. Whoever put it together, the 2023 arrest information, to see the arrests go up by 3,016, 34 percent for our juveniles, that breaks my heart. It really does. It really put tears in my eyes because I know that there is a disconnect with our youth because I speak with them on a regular basis. We can't say that we're going to arrest those parents. Some of them do need to be arrested, okay, let's just be flat out honest. They know what's going on, their children leave out of the house, there's no control, but what about the ones that are at home by themselves that don't have any parents? There's no role model, there's no figure. So, with these community services and engagements that you have, I'd like to work with you to see how we can implement what it looks like to be recruited for them once they graduate high school, what that looks like for them to come in. I have to be 21 to be an officer, right?

Chief Jennings said yes.

Ms. Brown said 21 to be an officer. What that looks like after they turn 21? Is there some type of program that we can put in place, maybe go in the parking lot I'm sure, but for them to get involved and to become the officers that we used to see when I was growing up, and that's in the community. You have great officers, and a lot of officers are involved in doing great things, but I'm going to share with you, these programs, I didn't know about them. I didn't hear about them at Southwest Middle School. So, how can we just get the literature out, the information and educate the people, the parents, the caregivers, people like myself, the volunteers, Council members that care about our youth.

Ms. Wilson said time check.

Ms. Brown said they are truly our future in making sure that we can get them involved in these programs. That's what I would like to see. Once again, thank you for everything that you do.

Chief Jennings said thank you.

Ms. Brown said I'm just very passionate about this area.

Chief Jennings said certainly.

Councilmember Bokhari said I'll just chime in with two quick things. I'd say that the last two days of this conversation is I think a really big thing and I think 90 percent of everything that's been said, there's unified head shaking which is I think a really important thing of everyone supporting each other's ideas and doing it together. So, very excited about that. I'd just mention the takeaway for us as a Council in the metric discussion like we've been having, what are we going to set our goals, what are we going to measure them by and how are we going to be involved. I think what we've heard loud and clear from everybody is kind of the triple bifurcated lens of property crime, repeat offenders and youth both would have a huge impact and it's something

that is focused enough that it hits a lot of the things we need here. So, we need to continue. This will be a huge success if we take that agreement and common understanding and turn it into the metrics that will drive the next steps so we don't lose the steam. That, through Victoria's committee I think will be great, and as we compile that concise and mutually agreed upon legislative agenda coming out of Dimple's committee, I think we have the outlets to do it, the will to do it, now it's how do we get from here to there. So, very excited about that.

Then the second and last thing, just for you Chief. I believe that you guys, for the most part, there's not that much more to ask of you. It's the rotating door of your officers who say, "I picked that person up yesterday." So, when we get focused on this, I think a lot of the work is going to be outside of there, but there's one thing I'd ask you to consider in your second priority of four for this year, is expanding that auto thefts to property crime. The reason I say that is we get bogged down sometimes looking at percentages, one way or another and it's dangerous because it doesn't tell a complex story, whether it's down or up 10 percent when you look at the numbers and the bottom line is 8,000 auto thefts is wild. It's a wild number and we should all be worried about it, but that sits atop 30,000 other property crimes and whether it's near neutral or not, no homicide or anything like that, a violent crime is acceptable, but it touches such a smaller number of people. I believe this perception issue that we've been talking about is a reality because 30,000 people not relating to their automobiles have had property crimes affect their lives and their neighbor's lives. So, if there was a way to expand that and again stay in your focus on automobiles but expand your objective to be all of the property crimes and not at a percentage, but through math and everything else we're doing. What's a number? Where can we reasonably get in a year and another year. That'd be a big win I think.

Chief Jennings said yes certainly, and if you look at it, there's a 12 percent increase in burglaries last year. So, certainly a concern as well.

Councilmember Molina said first I want to say Chief Jennings, thank you for your service to our community. You and your officers, the one thing that I've enjoyed since being elected is getting to know the officers that serve our community and the one thing I want to actually bring and not belabor any points, because again, I agree just most recently with some of what my colleague Councilmember Bokhari said about we all have a lot of ideas and I think for another time, another space, we're going to, through Councilmember Watlington's committee have deeper conversations. One thing that I remember specifically that I've done was right after getting elected, I went, and I hope you don't mind this, but I actually arranged a meeting with the Captains from the East Charlotte Precincts.

Chief Jennings said what?

Ms. Molina said yes. So, that was Eastway, Hickory Grove and Independence and I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know them. They were very gracious with their time. I've gone on a ride along, I've done several different things to really get to know them and understand how they serve East Charlotte. Some of the issues that they deal with in the East Charlotte community specifically, and there were a few things that they brought to my attention. Mr. Manager, I don't want to overstep my boundaries with you because you know I love to go through you. So, I don't ever want you to feel like that I'm superseding that relationship, but getting to know the constituency and the community members means a lot to me, but I'm really interested in having some of their concerns lifted up because in 2022 I remember the Captain of Independence telling me about the stolen gun issue. He told me, he said, "You know Councilmember Molina, we got a lot of stolen guns on the street and it's because gun owners are leaving their guns in their vehicles." I wonder as a Council what can we do. Like I said, there's a lot more information, but I feel like collecting that from our Captains who know the pulse of their precincts, who bubble that up to you, but I'm really interested in understanding the granular pieces of that puzzle. I can't speak for my colleagues, I'm sure they probably would be too, just so that we can decide how from a policy making perspective, we can be great partners in trying to create some of these solutions. So, like I said a lot of what

was already said is some of what I agree with. So, I don't want to belabor any points, but I really want to lift that up to you specifically and see if there's any interest in that.

Chief Jennings said yes. Our stolen guns, the last two years I've usually highlighted the fact of how many guns we have recovered off the streets and it's gone up every year. No different this year, it's up again, but it's almost like a broken record at this point. I do have to fact check real quick. I said 12 percent increase in burglaries, that's commercial burglaries. Our residential burglaries are down two percent.

Ms. Molina said very good.

Ms. Brown said home burglaries?

Chief Jennings said yes, that's for the home, yes. Home down two percent on the residential and the commercial, which is businesses, they're the ones that's up 12 percent.

Ms. Wilson said awesome. Thank you for the clarification.

Chief Jennings said yes.

Ms. Mayfield said thank you. Chief, follow up to the conversation. I didn't hear you mention that your department is working with the License and Theft Bureau which is through DMV (Division of Motor Vehicles) of which that is their whole purpose, to help with vehicles because you stated we identified basically a ring and that things were going out of town but I didn't hear you state do we have a relationship and are you working with the License and Theft Bureau?

Chief Jennings said we do. That actually came up in a conversation with the Governor and also, I met with them at a conference last week in reference that they're trying to initiate something that would help with the stolen vehicle issues particularly, but the City of Charlotte obviously requires a great deal of resources and I know some of the rural cities that need help as well. So, we're going to see what's kind of left over and what kind of assistance they need in other areas, but they do want to have that focus in Charlotte and I think we're going to be able to do that.

Ms. Mayfield said okay. So, for clarification, we have not previously worked with the department through the State that handles this. We're talking about possibly creating a relationship?

Chief Jennings said yes. We'll you're talking about for stolen vehicles?

Ms. Mayfield said specifically the License and Theft Bureau which is through DMV that has been there for a while. Have we worked with them or are we talking about possibly working with them in the future?

Chief Jennings said I can't answer the past have we worked with them, I don't know that for certainly, but I do know that the conversation has started as far as what we can do down the road. So, I guess we can get that back to you and let you know exactly if we have, but I don't know of any programs within CMPD that have been directly related to the License and Theft Bureau with working with them.

Ms. Mayfield said so, Councilmember Ajmera as Chair, which we're all on BGIR (Budget, Governance and Intergovernmental Relations), I think it would be helpful when we're talking about the legislative conversation because we have some relationships that are already out there and just like it's been mentioned, and Councilmember Brown mentioned it with a clear spotlight. If the work that we're doing isn't achieving the results, the other part of that is if we have relationships out there that we're not utilizing, then that is an opportunity that we should step into because there's a whole bureau through DMV that helps with this and if we're not utilizing that as one of the largest cities

within North Carolina, there's an opportunity that we might be missing. We can probably check into that. So, parking lot. Thank you Chief.

Chief Jennings said yes. Thank you.

Ms. Ajmera said [inaudible].

Ms. Wilson said thank you so much. We thank you for the discussion, Council and Chief Jennings, thank you for being here. Bringing your team up. A lot of information.

Chief Jennings said thank you. I do want to recognize who's here with me today. Our Police Attorney Jessica Battle is here with us. My Executive Officer Major Brad Koch, Deputy Chief Dave Robinson. Our Public Affairs Director Sandra D'Elosua and with me as a guest is Deputy Chief Derek Elmore from Phoenix, Arizona. He is here following me this week because at some point I'm sure he will be a major city police chief somewhere. So, thank you so much.

Ms. Wilson said thank you all so much. Again, thank you for the discussion. We're going to break for lunch now, but what I'd like to ask is that we allow the Council members to go. It's a working lunch again today. So, I would like the Council members to please go first and grab your lunch and come back in. Let's take about 10 or 15 minutes to come back in. Thank you.

The meeting was recessed at 12:19 p.m. and reconvened at 1:00 p.m.

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ITEM NO. 4: TABLE TALKS: EXPANDED MOBILITY DISCUSSION

DeAlva Wilson, Facilitator said good afternoon. Thank you for a great productive informative morning. It's been great discussion on some important topics so far. We appreciate that. To carry on our afternoon, we've got a good deal of information scheduled for the afternoon and I want to just make a quick note on the changes in the agenda so everybody's on the same page. We're going to continue with the mobility discussion now. So, we'll continue with the agenda as planned. We'll go to the mobility discussion now. Marcus is going to kick us off and then Ed will go into our local blueprint followed by a panel discussion and then we'll go back to the Council discussion, okay? After that we will go back to our staff check ins and continue with the digital divide, small minority businesses, arts and culture, Hire Charlotte and workforce development. I believe that the closed session will be moved to tomorrow. Is that right Marcus?

Marcus Jones, City Manager said [inaudible]?

Ms. Wilson said you're going to try to keep it today. Okay. So, we're scheduled right now to end the planned agenda at 5:00 p.m. today. So, again a lot of information to cover and we appreciate the Council abiding by the working agreements. We'll use these as our established protocols for the day. So, I'll remind you to keep your comments to two minutes and limit the side conversations and the use of technology. We are going to push for time just so we can get everything done. So, we're going to do that regardless of who's in your seats. So, we'll be careful to make sure that you have a break at some point, but we will begin the agenda now. So, Marcus. Patrick, do we have enough people to start in the room?

Patrick Baker, City Attorney said the meeting hasn't stopped. It's still the same meeting it was when we started.

Ms. Wilson said let's go.

Mr. Jones said okay. So, thank you Mayor and members of Council. I'll be brief before I turn it over to Ed McKinney. What I'm trying to do is maybe establish what we're trying to accomplish today. It would be great to have a good conversation about mobility,

that's been somewhat of a struggle over the past few years, but I think we're going to bring it home today and put you in a very good position. We talked a bit about what the City can do by itself and what the City needs in terms of other partners whether it's the towns, the County, or the State, the General Assembly. So, while we're talking about projects today, the backdrop is, and we've been talking about resources over the course of the last couple of days, whether it's a property tax or a sales tax, but ultimately whatever the choice that it would be would help us fund the priorities that you talk about. So, when we talk about what can occur through the help our partners like the towns, the County and Raleigh, we're really talking about the CATS (Charlotte Area Transit System) 2030 Plan which is a transit plan. It's dealing with buses and trains and mobility hubs and things of that nature. Let's call it buses and trains, and with that we're going to need a lot of help.

Also what you asked us to do is, what could we do for our residents? So, that is really what Ed will concentrate on today and that basically means that if for whatever reason that there isn't the sales tax that goes through a referendum or things of that nature, then Charlotte has to think about how can it deal with its growth and its infrastructure needs. So, as Ed speaks today and you have a couple of handouts in front of you, it's about a little bit over 2,000 projects and those are roads and sidewalks and bike paths and greenways and all the things that we've been talking about over the course of the last day and a half. If that's a course the Council chooses to take, then you could use property tax to begin to build sidewalks and intersections and greenways and bike paths. We don't think that that is the best way to do it, however, it is a path. So, my ask is as Ed goes through his setup, instead of focusing on the resource side, I would ask you to let's take a look at the projects. Let's take a look at how we can have these projects bundled, how we can have these in strategic investment areas, 16 of them, something that would be new in terms of discussion throughout the entire County. I will say, Ed, this is the only thing I'm going to steal from you, is that we're ready. We are more than ready to begin to advance these projects. We believe that we're going to put together a process very similar to Corridors of Opportunity where we take a cross section of our organization, we work together to deliver projects better and faster than we have in the past. So, with that said, no pressure Ed, I'll turn it over to you.

Ed McKinney, Strategic Mobility said thank you, thank you. Again Ed McKinney, Special Assistant to the City Manager for Mobility. Excited to kind of have the time with you today. You're going to meet them shortly, but we have this great panel of experts here this afternoon that are also going to be part of our discussion. So, we'll get to that after I've gone through a little bit of an update for you. Sort of intentional to do the update for you and for the panel because in some ways I'm interested to get their take on the work that we're doing. They are doing as ambitious of the kinds of things that we're looking to do and so they've got a lot of experience in this world and I'd be curious to get their peer review to sort of get a sense of what might we be missing, opportunities that we should be looking at, and just kind of give us a sense of are we going in the right direction as well. So, it'll be a good dialogue and hopefully you'll get a great chance to kind of talk back and forth with them as we go into the panel. So, as the Manager mentioned, and you've all got a copy of this. This is sort of the latest version of our summary of the work, but it's probably good to repeat about all the stuff we've given you. So, about a year ago we did a full update. You may recall about a year ago we did a full update of where we were. This was sort of the first iteration of our work following the adoption of our Strategic Mobility Plan which was really part of the Comprehensive Plan. So, those things all flowed together, and we've been taking that vision and converting it into something we can implement and turn it into projects. We were back with you in August 2023 to kind of give you a sense of where these strategic areas were going, how we were thinking about bundling. The Manager mentioned, so I'll talk a little bit more about that. Last but not least, I know there's several of you that were very interested in the 2000. This is the book of 2000. This is all of the needs and opportunities that describe the breadth of everything that we have. You'll see in a moment, it was a very important foundation for the work that we've done to help us think about how we would prioritize all of that work.

So, I think Councilmember Mitchell said something interesting yesterday which maybe speaks a little bit to what I want to talk about. The question was, "What is the City we're trying to create?" The question about what, if we've got all these things going on, you've been talking about all these things over the last few days, what does it add up to? So, this is an attempt at sort of what does that mean from a mobility perspective? The way I would describe it is really mobility is in the service of opportunity and for us and a couple of your biggest initiatives and focus is really around simply put, housing and jobs and where mobility sits within that is connecting those two things together. Our job from a mobility standpoint is to make that as seamless as possible to advance opportunity. We can do that in a number of ways. It's providing more ways to move. That's transit, that's roads, that's bike, that's pedestrian, but we can also think about less time. How do we reduce the time? How do we reduce the distance? How do we reduce the cost? That's not just transit, it's not just bike. Certainly, we've got congestion needs. I know we've talked about that a lot and part of our strategy is to look at ways that we are also thinking really about all modes. We can quantify that, we can find strategies to work to that goal, but at the end of the day our job is to really serve that broader goal, make mobility easier, make it cheaper, make it more efficient for everyone, and that's across the board whether you commute on Providence Road or whether you're taking the bus down Beatties Ford to get to a job. So, that's really the broader vision for us we've talked about in our Strategic Mobility Plan. Our Vision Zero, everything we do has to start with that and it's about being equitable and that gets us to this notion of mode and choice and opportunity for ease of mobility.

This describes what the Manager was just talking about, but I think it's an important thing to continue to be clear about because we are, in many ways, mixing some of our language around the Mobility Plan. In our Mobility Plans, we use Mobility Plan interchangeable. So, as the Manager described, you can sort of think about in three simple ways. We've got our City Plan, our Mobility Plan that I'm going to talk about in more detail today. You've got the larger Transit Plan which covers all of the City, all of the County and the towns within the County and then you've got the Regional Plan which is Connect Beyond. So, they're connected, they're interconnected. The only way we're going to be successful is if all of those are successful in working together. I also would say to the Manager's point, they're not interdependent, meaning we can move. We don't need to wait. Dependent upon your decisions and your priorities in the plan that we put in front of you, we're ready to go. All the things that we have in our plan are completely supportive of those other plans and in many ways there's things we can do faster or in the short term to prepare ourselves for these bigger investments. So, it's important that we sort of put it in that context so that we don't get muddled in the language of what our plan is relative to these bigger plans. The last thing I'll say about that is that the green bar there is you. You make the decisions on that, you set the priorities, you decide the funding. Absolutely these are the plans that we are a part of, a bigger decision-making process, but number one, this plan you're able to do today and you're able to prioritize and fund it based on your priorities.

So, I want to talk a little bit about the process that we've been in and sort of describe the uniqueness of this. So, again all of this flowed from a vision which was the Comprehensive Plan and our supporting Strategic Mobility Plan, but we're doing something probably that we've never done before from an infrastructure planning standpoint, and it was made possible really because of the Comprehensive Plan. We were able to start from ground zero to say, "Okay, now this is the adopted set of policies around the way we want to grow," and then our question from a mobility standpoint is, "How do we shape our plan, our vision, and our program for investment to support that larger vision." So, it allowed us to rethink a new sort of a fresh start as to how we might build a strategy around investment for mobility based on the fundamentals of that plan. So, vision, that's where it started. Need, which was this. So, you have a vision, but what's on the ground? What are you trying to do? What are our gaps? Where are the challenges? What are we hearing from the community about what our challenges are? So, that's important. As mentioned, it's a list that goes beyond our ability to fund obviously. So, the question now is how do we prioritize and how do we take that, screen it down in a way that makes it impactful, makes it focused, makes it something that we can implement and execute. So, if you're trying to move on 2,000 things, you're never

going to move in a meaningful way. So, the idea now and you've been talking about it the last two days, how do we prioritize across the City? How do we make sure we're being equitable across the City?

So, we did that and it was extremely data driven. So, we took our priorities, as was mentioned earlier, we took our high injury network as a starting point. We looked at where we had street lighting gaps, we looked at where we had sidewalk gaps. So, we looked at the needs, but we also looked at what are our aspirations. Where is our bike system going? Where are we trying to go with our bike system? Where are CATS going with our bus priority system in the mobility hubs, in the micro mobility strategy they have? Where are we going with growth? So, we looked at where the Policy Map said centers are going to be. We also looked at the data of census growth. In 20 or 40 years, where is population going to be regardless of our Land Use Plan? We know where that growth is going to go. So, we layered all of those things together and analyzed what was the result in the heat map. Where do all of those things begin to align in meaningful ways which was a way to focus us across the City with 2,000 needs. It's like let's let the data take us where it wants us to go and let that be the focus across the City. It's sort of agnostic too, whether it's a political priority or community priority. We went where the data told us. You could say there's over 10,000 points of that. So, it's completely data driven and I'll mention as we go forward that gives us the foundation to measure success. So, that data now is the way that we're going to use to track and measure what we're improving and what the impact of that. So, the foundation of this is really data driven.

The strategies are the strategic areas. So, that took us to these heat maps. We defined 16 areas. I would love if we have all sorts of time in the afternoon, I would love to show you what all of those are. I'm sure you're very interested in what those are. We'll have plenty of time. I'm sure the Manager will find some time in the next month or so for us to go to a deeper dive. We've actually developed an online platform that has all of this data that will allow the community to move around, see where those areas are, zoom in, see the projects, understand the strategy. So, that's still in the works. Again, that was something I would love to show you today, but we don't have time and it's still sort of in beta version, but again the idea there is it becomes a transparent way that we can communicate to the community and demonstrate the work that we're doing from a strategy standpoint. Then the question is impact. So, now we've got to pick the projects and find the things that are going to move the needle and we've now gone from 2,000 to these 16 strategy areas and now we're honing in on plus or minus about 100 what I would call projects or bundles. So, example, street lighting, sidewalk gap and pedestrian crossing. We've mapped all those things but where do they cross and how would we bundle a project that is street lighting, that is fixing the sidewalk gap, that's connecting a pedestrian crossing to a bus stop, that's what the strategy is driven around. It's not let's pick and choose and prioritize across the City. Let's find where we can have the most impact bundling those projects that are executable in kind of a quick way.

So, that's the broad view of this strategy. Data driven, it's comprehensive, it crosses our geography, but it's specific. One size does not fit all. Far East is different than the west side. Steele Creek is different than Mallard Creek, Beatties Ford is different than Nations Ford. So, the notion is that this strategy areas approach, because it's the ability to context specific, it's really built on the success of Corridors of Opportunity. The same attitude, the same structure is to go into these areas, understand the needs and tailor the implementation, the investment in a way that's specific to those specific geographies. You end up with using the language of Corridors of Opportunity. You end up with playbooks. Each of these 16 areas are a series of playbooks with projects and that allows us to be ready so we can do some of those things quickly. We can partner with federal opportunities like Corridors has done with the Raise Grant. We can partner with private developers. I'll show you an example of that in a second. So, the notion is that playbook just like Corridors gives us the ability to be adaptable and quickly take advantage of our ability to partner for funding, our ability to do small projects in short term to build to a larger term vision. Scalable, the bundles, talked a little bit about the idea that the sum is greater than just the pieces and the parts and again, ready for execution and advancement based on the plays and the projects that we've laid out.

So, what I want to do is demonstrate this using an example. The danger of using this example is it's specific to a certain part of Charlotte and some of you may wonder how does this apply to your part of Charlotte. So, I'll describe that but I think it's a great example of how a strategic area could work around mobility. So, this is Ballantyne, and you are familiar with the approval process that you went through about two years ago, probably one of the biggest rezonings that the City went through. Maybe just smaller than River District, but probably one of the biggest ones we went through. Huge partnership. Rethinking Ballantyne, new uses, a mix of uses, intensity and at the same time what I would say is we built a playbook with that which was really the entitlement process of the rezoning. So, we spent a tremendous amount of time negotiating through the rezoning, analyzing all the impacts of that growth and development and came up with a series of projects. Some of those projects are sort of described here on this graphics. So, Blue Line extension was part of the commitment. Preserving that Corridor was part of the commitment of that project. So, it sets up like I described. It sets up for the long-term opportunity for transit that allows us to do things and implement it in the short term. There's a new street. Again, that's built holistic, completely as part of the development of the plan. That is capacity. I'll describe that in a second. That is building capacity. Intersection improvements. That intersection again was improved adding capacity. I also mentioned and show you an example of how that capacity is added by at the same time providing for bicycle facilities and connections. So, my argument is you can do this in the right way. So, we can improve and have a roads first approach. The way I would describe is that's everything. That's cars, that's pedestrian, that's bike, that's transit. So, that's the notion of taking all those pieces and parts and working them together. The greenway, that was a part of that plan. This greenway connects into the Cross Charlotte Trail into the four-mile creek that gets you to South Charlotte. So, that one small piece of this project in the plan connected you to this huge system and it's just this small implementable piece of what I would describe as a strategy area.

The Blue Line obviously connects you to other strategy areas. You can see Arrowood at the top, Uptown, ultimately that's connecting you to University City. So, the other part I want to describe here is we're focusing strategy areas in these projects where we also have this larger view that says, "Okay, we are also wanting to make sure that that investment is connecting to a larger system," and having the benefit of mobility across our City. So, the point here is mobility tied with growth, in this case a very specific approach in Ballantyne, intense mixed use, that approach is going to be different in University City, it's going to be different in Steele Creek and the Far East but think about the strategy the same way. It's just going to be scaled and designed that's in a context appropriate way based on the uniqueness of one of those 16 areas. Let me show you. Just to make a couple of final points on the projects. So, that's a road. That's one of the new roads that was part of it. We partnered. That was another good example of where there was partnership. There's public and private dollars in there. I think Tracy will correct me, it was maybe around \$35 million of public support. That was more than doubled by private investment. So, this is an example of that. So, that's a road. It's roads first, it's got bike lanes on it. It's got one of our best connections of pedestrian enhancement. It's one of our best examples of a complete street, but it's two lanes, one lane in each direction adding east-west connectivity in South Charlotte where east-west connectivity is one of the most important challenging parts of congestion and imagining traffic in South Charlotte. So, two lanes. It's a small two-lane road but I can demonstrate and we can measure the impact of that in South Charlotte. So, it's an example of adding capacity in a roads first strategy but also doing everything else that is part of the vision of that place. Another example, that's an intersection at Ballantyne, I'd just make the same point. That's capacity all day long, but you probably can't see the details. That's one example of a number of intersections that we've been doing now where we've integrated completely the bicycle connectivity to make it one of the more advanced designs for incorporating bicycle connections in an intersection. You've got to do that in a very careful way to coordinate with traffic, but that's capacity for all modes, the way I would argue it. It's measurable capacity for cars, pedestrian and ultimately transit, etc. The last one I'll just show is that's the greenway, but just to make the point. Actually, the one thing I did want to say about this is all of that I just showed you happened in two years. So, we had a playbook, the rezoning was done two years ago. Obviously, the public-private support, that's what made it happen. The private side built this but with

our public dollars in support, all got implemented in two years. That's the example of with the playbook, in the right situations, public-private support, things can happen quickly.

One more thing about this. Let's talk about equity. So, that had an intense playbook through the rezoning and I'm familiar because I was leading off transportation negotiation of that. So, we analyzed the heck out of that plan and came up with all sorts of projects. We haven't spent that time and energy in Far East or in Steele Creek or in Mallard Creek. So, this strategy around these areas will allow us to do that kind of thinking in what we've done in Ballantyne, but in the areas that our analysis, our data took us to. So, this gives us the platform to think about and have the same kind of energy equitably across the City and come up with a gameplan that's specific to every part of our City. So, we can't continue to do this with this strategy by just going where growth is going and just doing it episodically when these kinds of projects come out. We have to have a strategy that cuts across the whole community and thinks about these things holistically from a mobility standpoint.

Just to wrap it up, put it all together for the moment and give you the bigger picture and lead to the conversation we had over the last day or two around funding. So, strategic areas, specific areas across the City. From those areas we define these project bundles and now the bundles have to be funded. So, the question now is we've got a gameplan, we'll put these bundles together but as Ryan described yesterday with if we just stayed in the capacity we have for our bond program now, we can't do any of this. We would continue with the programs, we would continue with the named projects, some of which are very big. The notion of these bundles gives us the flexibility to do big and small projects, but we need more funding and another little subtle thing about that graph is more funding for these bundles also gives us the ability to maybe think about based on your priorities, more funding for some of the other programs. So, we still do the other programs, we would still have a sidewalk program that would still look at the gaps across, but we would have this strategy playbook approach that would allow us to still focus and have investment in those areas while still doing the programmatic things. So, a lot of priority conversations you'll ultimately have about how that funding works, but the point being, this strategy doesn't do us any good without more funding and we need to think about it and we're ready essentially as the Manager said. We're going to have this platform set up online if we're ultimately going to use that as the foundation for the conversations in the Community Area Plan process coming up. So, these areas, Monica described that earlier, that this work becomes the foundation of a community conversation we'll have to confirm where we're going, prioritize this investment and make sure it's tied to the vision and the growth of all these community area plans and tied to the community's desires and intent for growth throughout the community.

So, just to wrap up to give you a summary of what I've been talking about. We have a plan. The process today in the beginning and all the way through implementation, tracking, measuring is data driven. It is bold and we're going to need a significant amount of funding to do it, but it's also scalable so that we can do things quickly. Get stuff on the ground quickly. We've got to have a mix of both big and small projects to prove. I think somebody said it earlier, if we're not doing things, if we're not building a sidewalk and a bus station and people see that day after day, they're wondering what we're doing. This strategy gives us the ability to have that impact quickly where people see it. It's multimodal. Roads, you can call it roads first, but roads are there. It's integrated, it's seamless, we're not prioritizing one or the other. We've got a gameplan that works across and it's building to the longer vision for rail and bus. I mentioned already it's measurable. We'll be able to define metrics that you all can help us shape and make sure that we're accountable to this work. Obviously, it's interconnected to these bigger plans. We don't need to wait and we're essentially ready to go with the funding conversations that you're going to have over the next few months and certainly in the longer-term vision and question around sales tax and bigger funding. I'll stop there.

Mr. Jones said Ed, one thing before you go to the next steps. So, Council, I would like to just throw a couple of numbers out so you'll understand the magnitude. So, as we've

talked about the sales tax, I want to just clear up some things. The sales tax has never been 100 percent transit. It has always had a transportation component to it. The roads, the bike paths, the mobility hubs, what have you, whether it was 10 percent, 20 percent, 50/50. So, I just want to make sure no one leaves here today believing that when we began the discussion with the one cent sales tax, it was only for trains and buses. I will tell you that whatever you do, whatever this community does if you did a one cent sales tax it would be worth about \$345 million in year one, and I believe Ryan that's based on July 1, 2025. Based on the sales tax and the growth in that, pretty conservative, that's worth about \$10.3 billion over 20 years. However, you decide to allocate it, however it can get on the books, whether it's approved, things of that nature, but again, that's something that's bigger than City Council. I also will say, and I'll say it again, that the projects that you have and the 2030 Transit Plan from MTC (Metropolitan Transit Commission) is a part of Connect Beyond and the projects in Charlotte are the backbone or the spine of building out a system for the region. If you were to look at just the CIP (Capital Investment Plan) and something that you could do on your own as Ryan talked about yesterday, one penny on the property tax is worth \$21 million. So, that's kind of the scale and in no means would Charlotte get everything that's related to the one cent sales tax, and you do know that the one cent sales tax is paid by people that actually don't live in Charlotte versus the property taxes 100 percent borne by the Charlotteans. So, I just wanted to do that as a backdrop. It's not getting into the process. I think they're a bunch of subject matter experts who are going to talk about their processes and how things happen, but that was just a little bit on the revenue side versus some of the projects.

Mr. McKinney said what I'll do is, let's do a transition because I want to get to our panel. So, maybe I'll have our panel come up now and I'll introduce and transition to that conversation, but as we do that maybe it's a good time to get some initial reaction from you to maybe warm up the conversation for our panelist. I'll introduce them or go into hopefully an informed dialogue with our experts here for the afternoon.

Ms. Wilson said Ed, we do have some questions from the floor, and then we'll cut there and move to panel. I'll remind you to please keep your comments to two minutes.

Councilmember Mayfield said Ed, great presentation. I'm not going to make you try to go back through the slides, but question for you. You said we were able to see Ballantyne Reimagined come out of the ground in about two years. How long did the strategy playbook take?

Mr. McKinney said the strategy, again let me clarify. That strategy was essentially the rezoning and so that took probably a year and a half or two. If you asked the developer, it probably took 10.

Ms. Mayfield said so, let me rephrase it. We're looking at like you said, connection possibly Albemarle, Mallard, Steele Creek, out by Whitewater. What do you imagine those individual playbooks looking like to make sure that it's supportive of what's in that community?

Mr. McKinney said so, great question tied back to this idea of the planning that's going on with the Community Area Planning process. So, we've done a tremendous amount of work. As I've said, we've got this outline platform that has the projects sort of already in place. So, that's the great foundation to go out into the community and say, "Let's connect it to where the planning conversation is going, where growth is going, the community area, the whole intent of the Community Area Planning process," but we'll have this as a foundation to test. Here's the analysis that we did. Here's what we think the needs and opportunities are, let's test that in a full conversation that's not just a mobility conversation, it's a land use development and growth conversation, much like Corridors. We shouldn't and can't talk about mobility in isolation, it needs to be around the community. So, yes, and each of those then gets informed by the unique characteristics and nature of each community.

Ms. Mayfield said part two. The sidewalk transition slide, which was beautiful going from the bike lane to the sidewalk and cutting back around. Is that the plan throughout the City where we have bike lanes that are created to now look at how we transition to that sidewalk?

Mr. McKinney said absolutely. Yes, so you caught some good detail there quickly. So, we've been doing that already. We already have some good examples as we're retrofitting and converting some of our existing intersections on our bike system map. So, we're still scratching the surface of that, but these folks will tell us a little bit about what they're doing but that is the next iteration of being a bike pedestrian friendly community in the design of intersections to make all of those things work in a safe way.

Councilmember Ajmera said Ed, how is this plan different from what we had seen last year?

Mr. McKinney said when we presented to you last year?

Ms. Ajmera said yes.

Mr. McKinney said this is the same plan, we've just spent the last year doing all of this analysis project identified, this kind of focus work. So, there's been a lot of stuff we've been doing behind the scenes, but this is essentially the next iteration of the work we've been doing since we talked to you last year.

Ms. Ajmera said so, in terms of the allocation between rails, roads, that hasn't changed? It still stays the same? I would like to know how would this work really in the University area where we've got sidewalks to the Blue Line, street lights, bike lanes and sidewalks. I think envisioning that would really help. This all looks great in terms of the plan, but I think the bigger problem we have is the funding. How do we address that? Mr. Jones gave us some numbers here, but certainly based on that property tax, it's out of question. So, really the conversation begins here about sales tax and how do we get that. So, we do need to discuss the strategy around how we get to sales tax ask successfully. I think that's what's missing.

Ms. Wilson said Councilmember, we have about 45 minutes after the panel discussion for Council discussion around some of the [inaudible].

Ms. Ajmera said on funding?

Ms. Wilson said yes. Well, specifically whatever you want to talk about during that time.

Ms. Ajmera said yes, I think at some point let's allocate some time on discussing how do we go about funding asks successfully. We need to develop a strategy behind that and as a Chair of the Intergovernmental Relations Budget and Governance Committee, I think this could be part of Committee discussion, but I think at some point we do need to discuss that as a Committee and then have a specific Committee charge. I think the plans are great. Certainly, I think we need funding to implement them. Thanks.

Councilmember Driggs said first of all Chairman of the Transportation and Planning Committee, I want to welcome our guests. Really look forward to hearing from you. Interested in the experience of your respective cities because we have studied them. Ed, your reputation as a planner is well deserved. Sterling, very good work. I think a lot of us are trying to figure out how we implement, which gets back to a money question, but it also raises other questions and we don't have time, certainly in two minutes, I don't have time. You know, infilled sidewalks, things like that. What does the City do while private investment is going on in order to bring together the private pieces and the public pieces? That's something that will require funding as well. I did want to mention, I thought it was clever highlighting Ballantyne to preempt any attempt on my part to complain that we weren't getting any investment. However, I will point out that investment took place in support of a billion and a half dollars of private investment, 6,000 jobs, two acres of land for affordable housing and my recollection is it was \$42

million of public money being \$25 million of TIG (Tax Increment Grant) and \$17 million of CIP versus some \$60 million or \$70 million of private. So, when you get a deal like that you take it all the time wherever it happens, right, but you're not going to. So, then you get back to the question of how we allocate to the geographies if you don't have all of those incentives.

Another thing is you said they're not interdependent. If we are counting on sales tax, there is a certain independence. We have got to present a unified regional plan to the State Legislature and the feds in order to qualify to get the permission to run the referendum and to qualify for the 40 percent of the funding of our plan. It is still assumed to be coming from federal sources. So, I'll mention that. Quick question for you. It says here 80 miles of new street connections. It doesn't actually specify how many miles of sidewalk, but is that laid miles or is that street miles?

Mr. McKinney said that's got to be street miles.

Mr. Driggs said okay. So, how many miles of streets are there in the City of Charlotte in total?

Mr. McKinney said Debbie will have to correct me. How many?

Debbie Smith, Transportation Director said about 5,300.

Mr. McKinney said street miles, 5,000 laid miles?

Ms. Smith said laid miles.

Mr. McKinney said laid miles.

Mr. Driggs said five thousand laid miles. So, divide by some number to get an estimate of street miles.

Ms. Wilson said time check.

Mr. Driggs said it's a couple thousand street miles. My only point is 80 miles is a drop in the bucket compared to the growth that we are expecting, and I'm still concerned that we are under investing currently in maintenance and in sidewalks. We have this backlog of projects. We were told at one point how many millions of dollars it cost to do a mile of sidewalk and a mile of street. We need to bring all that stuff into alignment. We need to be realistic about the needs and where we are in our existing capacity and then what it's going to take to keep up with growth going to the future. That's all I have now. Otherwise, it's endless, but Ed really good work. Do appreciate it. Thank you.

Mr. McKinney said thank you.

Ms. Wilson said thank you.

Mr. McKinney said two real quick responses to that. The drop in the bucket of the new street miles, yes, but as describing that Ballantyne example, that road is probably three-quarters of a mile, that new road. Again, I can demonstrate. That's east-west capacity in a growing activity center may sound like a small piece of infrastructure, but it has a huge benefit for connectivity access capacity. So, most of those 80 miles you described are in those kinds of places. Part of our planning has been anticipating where areas are going to grow. So, yes, in respect to the sheer number of our network, it sounds small but it's where growth is going and those will have important capacity impacts. The last thing about Ballantyne, \$40 million of public investment with that private growth, yes, but again every year is different. I guarantee you, like Corridors, we could have great impact for \$5 million in the right areas with the right strategy. So, Ballantyne was risky as an example because it's huge and we did a lot of investment, but we can scale that and we can have impact if our strategy is focused and community driven.

Mr. Driggs said thank you.

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ITEM NO. 5: MOBILITY PANEL AND Q/A

Ed McKinney, Strategic Mobility said no other questions? Oh good. Okay. So, I'm hugely grateful to have these three folks here. You can see from above, I'm not going to go into their full resumes but these are serious people. I was nervous bringing them here to be in front of this conversation. So, this is a great opportunity to get some really good feedback. A couple of things, you see it on that slide, they're coming from big places and doing big things. So, these are cities that are at least our size if not bigger. These are the executive folks that are leading the infrastructure planning and implementation in those cities. So, they understand this as well and I think probably better than we have given the scale. They're doing things that if we did what I just described, we would be doing what many of them already are doing. So, they'll give us a sense of where the lessons learned are and how to approach this. The last thing I'll say is I got these folks to come with what two or so weeks' notice. It's incredible to me in sort of this national city transportation official's world how there's a bond and if you have a question or a need folks like this will sort of drop their schedule and come. So, you'll see this from the passion that they have to want to share their work and their thoughts. So, again, I just can't thank y'all enough for being here. We'll have a little bit of time this afternoon, they're going to be here this evening. So, if need be the conversation can kind of continue into the evening to kind of get to know them a little bit better.

Again, I'll let them talk a little bit more about themselves, but Eulois Cleckley from Miami-Dade County. He's the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) of their Department of Transportation and Public Works. They do roads and transit. They do everything. So, he'll give that perspective of how that works. So, that scale. Greer Johnson Gillis, Jacksonville. Same scale. The Chief Infrastructure and Development Officer for the Jacksonville Transportation Authority. That's the countywide, Duval County coverage. They do transit and transportation. So, she'll talk about that connection and understands all that interconnection between all of those modes. Then lastly Adam Phipps, who most recently was the CEO of the Denver Department of Transportation and Infrastructure. Again, everything. These are huge departments, they're a major investment across all modes and all of these folks have really extreme experience and how to implement the kind of projects and ambition that we have here today. So, I'll let them talk a little bit more themselves as we get into the conversation. I don't want to spend a lot of time on bios and resumes because you'll see their experience as we get in to it. I think what I'll do is pose really the first question to the three of you. Each of you have been leading or are leading major infrastructure programs around multimodal investment with big funding, local funding in lots of different ways. So, I think we're going to be interested to hear how does that funding work, tell us about the scale of it, tell us about the connection between all these modes. There's a lot of interesting things about workforce, economic development and things like that, but let's start by just painting the picture for what your programs are, how they might relate to what we're doing and just share some of your perspective. So, I'll start with you Adam and maybe elevate Denver and the big bond program.

Adam Phipps said yes certainly. First, I just want to say a quick thank you to everybody for having myself and my colleagues up here today. The other thing Ed I just want to mention real quickly is just a little bit of a shout out for you. I hadn't had the chance to see this strategic plan until this presentation today, and what I can tell you is this is what good looks like. Most cities in the U.S. don't have this type of strategic document. So, when you think about the cadence of increasing the delivery of infrastructure, having an intentional plan that has metrics, that has KPIs (Key Performance Indicators), that has accountability in it, is that foundation component. Ed, I only got to see the two or three slides and hear you for 20 minutes to talk about it, but just want to reassure everyone in this room that that is a wise place to start and certainly that necessary foundational component. Really a well-done job there.

Second, I want to congratulate all of you for having a growing City. If there's one thing that I've learned through my experience in local government is that there's really only two directions for a city to go and that is to expand or to shrink, and shrinkage creates a lot more challenge socially, economically on constituents than even growing does, but that doesn't mean that growing doesn't create a challenge. Really, I think that bridges the conversation into that mobility, that transportation, that infrastructure investment.

So, to talk a little bit about what's been happening in Denver. I joined the City and County of Denver in 2016 really with the purpose of twofold. One was to expand the capital funding opportunities that the City had. Again, a growing city that had mobility needs, that had disparity across the different modes, that had congestion issues, a city that needed more funding but also to put into place programs and an implementation strategy that demonstrated that we are good stewards to that public tax dollar and that we have the ability to scale up and make that investment. So, not only get the money but spend the money as well. I always joke that there are few things in government harder than to spend money quickly when you have a specific purpose to spend that money on. So, in 2016 Denver's five-year capital program was just about \$600 million. I think similar to the City of Charlotte, we do a regular cadence of property tax bonds. For us, that cadence is every 10 years. It sounds like that's a bit more often, maybe every two years for the City of Charlotte, but typically what we had seen was bond packages that ranged between \$200 million, \$300 million, \$400 million. The administration has the desire to really increase that. In 2016 we were at that \$500 million, \$600 million mark. I just left the City and County of Denver two weeks ago. Our five-year capital plan right now is \$5.2 billion. So, we scaled up by approximately a factor of 10, but really what I think is a testament not only to the governance and the elected body to get us that funding, but the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure has been able to maintain an on time on budget delivery of above 94 percent for both of those metrics. So, not only did we increase the funding by a factor of 10, but we also increased our implementation accordingly so that we could get that worked on.

Two things that I think I want to add to that that, but I think draws a strong nexus to some of the discussion we just had here was what we've really done in Denver which I think is certainly an opportunity for the City of Charlotte right now is leveraging OPM as we call it, other people's money. Whether that is a private investment, you can certainly leverage that from a development standpoint when you're a growing City, but there's also an opportunity that exists today that I haven't heard mentioned yet, that didn't exist when we started to do this in Denver and that's the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. I'll share one thing with that and I'll hand the conversation on. Every federal investment and infrastructure in the history of the United States has had one thing in common, and that is that the subsequent availability of funding has been increased even when indexed to inflation over what the previous package was. When you look at the \$1.2 trillion in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, certainly greater than the ARA (Awaiting Receipt of Application) funding that came in 2009, 2010 timeframe, even when adjusted for inflation. So, that's the one thing that's in common. The one thing that makes the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law different than any other federal funding is that cities and counties are eligible recipients. No federal funding opportunity at this scale had ever been a direct opportunity for cities and counties. I can certainly say that that's something all three of us are trying to leverage and take full advantage of.

So, as you have these conversations about, is property tax and kind of a more locally controlled capital revenue source a possibility, versus a sales tax that might have a slightly different governance model require that State Legislature participation, do know that these are all funding sources that are eligible to act as local match for pursuing that Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Most cities across the U.S. are not in a position where they're prepared to accept those dollars, deliver on those dollars and be able to meet those federal spending commitments. So, certainly one thing I would advise as we further the conversation today is, strategic plan is step one. Step two is really developing a delivery mechanism, a delivery program such that you can be competitive in pursuing those federal dollars. I don't want to get into the world of a campaign here but I suspect if sales tax were to be something that this collection of bodies ultimately wanted to pursue, that's much more attractive to voters when it comes with a similar

sized dollar commitment from the federal government, and thinking about that with intention as you go into it is really I think an opportunity that everybody should be aware of. Excited to be here, excited to take your questions, and with that, I'll turn it over to Greer.

Greer Johnson Gillis said alright. Thank you, Adam. First let me start off by thanking you all for having us, Madam Mayor, Mr. Jones and really everyone on the City Council. Thank you for allowing us to be here today. My name is Greer Johnson Gillis. I am the Senior Vice President and Chief Infrastructure and Development Officer at the Jacksonville Transportation Authority. With that role I oversee all of the capital program development for our agency in collaboration with the City of Jacksonville and the Florida Department of Transportation, but I'm also responsible for delivery of our autonomous vehicle program, our ultimate urban circulator. It's really an infrastructure program, the way we look at it, but we're bringing innovation and technology to our City. I want to start off by starting with where Adam actually left off with the IJJA (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act) and how much of a game changer that is. We saw that in Jacksonville to be a game changer as well because the way the JTA (Jacksonville Transportation Authority) has always operated was we receive our operating funds, our revenues from State and local factors, but we also receive significant funds from federal discretionary grants, especially to deliver our capital program. So, when we saw the IJJA come out for the same reasons that Adam mentioned, we thought this was a gamechanger for us to be a part of, but then we also realized as the transit agency for northeast Florida, whereas previously we would always go after these grants ourselves, for this one and the competitive nature of them, we had to partner with the City. We had to partner with the State, we also had to partner with the community in terms of nonprofits and many of the community organizations. We've partnered with those who advocate for affordable housing, we've partnered with those who are advocating for workforce development, and we package our grant applications such that we all are on the application together. I just wanted to mention that point because of everything that Ed showed with regards to your Strategic Mobility Plan, everything you're doing, reads partnership in it.

So, those partnerships are so important, especially if you're going to consider those large-scale monies, and of course whereas we're all competing for them, we are up here advocating for you to do that. Let me also step back because I heard a lot of similarities to what you all are doing to what we are doing in Jacksonville. I heard the word seamless providing some seamless options for everyone getting from point A to point B. Multimodal, we're looking at it the same way. We're not just the bus company. We do bus rapid transit, we do a ferry, we do paratransit services, we do on demand services competing with your Lyfts and your Ubers if you will. Besides the autonomous vehicle program, we're also looking at commuter rail. Yes, we're looking at commuter rail to solve some of the congestion problems. We're a car centric environment in Jacksonville. Lots of highway's thanks to our Department of Transportation and one of the things we find every year is that there's a lot of construction on our interstates. So, when we need to get around that for the future, it's commuter rail. So, we're looking at that and we're looking at a variety of different options and loads because we think that seamless mobility is really the nature of this, getting from point A to point B. We too did a Strategic Plan, we call it MOVE, MOVE2027, and one of the things we did with that plan was that we went out to the community, we went out to the elected officials, we went out to the nonprofits, and we asked them what do you want the JTA to be when they grow up. The businesses said, "We need you to help our employees get to our jobs. They can't get there." The nonprofits said, "We need you to help people get to where they need to go." The community basically said you need to not just go everywhere within the County, and our County is 800 square miles, we need you to hit the other Counties as well because a lot of people who work in the City live elsewhere.

So, we're facing some of the same things you're facing as well and for us, the capital program, the infrastructure we put in is important. So, it's those complete streets that we partner with the City and the State to build to make sure that our buses can get from point A to point B, but it's also looking at the different types of modes that we can provide to help people to have options and innovatively whether it's on their app, even if

they're using Cash App, or even if they come and get a Star Card from us, how do they get from point A to point B. So, I wanted to give you a context of what we have in Jacksonville, some of the similarities that you have and I look forward to the dialogue today. Thank you.

Eulois Clekley said so Ed, thank you for the invitation to come today and Madam Mayor and City Manager and members of Council. It's always good to get in this part of the country. Just as a quick plug, I went to North Carolina A&T. So, I had the opportunity to go back and visit campus again. So, as my colleagues have said there's really an acknowledgment that needs to go out to each and every one of you for taking the time to actually step back and strategize around how you're going to invest with regards to your infrastructure pertaining to mobility and transportation. I can tell you this does not happen everywhere. So, I'm sure there was intense fellowship this morning and throughout the rest of the days, but this is something that at the end of the day will put you in a better position to be on the same page with respect to how you need to move forward. Just a little bit about Miami. I used to work in Denver and we used to work together back in D.C., so we have a collective group here, but in Miami we are in the same position as many of these other cities.

So, if I were to have to sing a song today, it would Michael Jackson's You Are Not Alone because everybody is in the same boat. If you're in a burgeoning, growing City, you're going to have these infrastructure challenges. So, just understand that's what it is. In this country, everybody is overly reliant on their single occupancy vehicles. I think on average about 70 percent of folks and how they travel is by themselves in a car. The responsibility as transportation professionals and leaders in this industry is to figure out ways to have a more balanced transportation system. That means providing options. It's not saying one option is better than the other. It is saying that there shouldn't be an option that's prevalent and dominate over another. So, it's balance. I say all the time in Miami, we have 2.8 million residents, we have 2.8 million commuters and 2.8 million different types of commutes. So, each one of them is important and we need to figure out a way to have our transportation system and service to be able to provide those types of options for folks.

So, just a couple of things I would say is that in order to be successful, we also run into the first the projects. It's always about the projects. However, before you start talking about projects or services, it's important to have local consensus and strong leadership in place. You can have the greatest plans that you want, you can have the greatest ideas. If you're not collectively aligned from a leadership standpoint across all branches of government as well as department leadership and sister agencies that are in a respective area, you will always have friction. So, in Miami we're in a special case where I work for the County. There's 34 cities within the County. So, we have to work with all of them to figure out ways that we can leverage our current funding source as well as where we're going in the future to move Miami forward. We have a County Commission, we have our current administration and we have I think the department leadership in place now to really advance and deliver on what is expected of us.

So, I'll go right into the funding because I know that's important, and I think it's very appropriate for this discussion around sales tax and what has transpired in Miami. Back in 2002 there was a surtax that was passed, a half penny surtax and in the State of Florida municipalities and Counties and the like are allowed and have the authorization to put up to a one percent sales tax on a ballot referendum that the voters would approve. After several failed attempts back in the 1990s, it was decided upon to go with a half cent sales tax. That came with caveats. The sales tax passed in 2002 but what ended up happening is that it got diluted a couple of different ways. One is that 23 percent of what gets collected under the surtax which is around \$350 million a year goes directly to municipalities. So, for example the City of Miami is the largest City inside the County. It's about 450,000 people. They are taking away from the surtax where otherwise it would've gone to transit. The surtax was specifically to go to expand our transit system. As a part of the deal to get the ballot referendum approved, there were no expectations of a requirement for the municipality to spend their portion of the surtax, which means that a transit surtax that is going to go to expand the system, now

we have 23 percent that's going to roadways, sidewalks and whatever the municipality wants to decide. Fast forward now 20 years later, what has happened in that period of time is we've only have built half a mile of rail to extend for an existing system at the time to the airport. We have a \$10 billion capital program that's focused on transit expansion and in 20, 22 years, we've built half a mile. Now, currently we actually now are building out our first ever bus rapid transit system. It's a 20 mile all battery electric operating system with [inaudible] iconic BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) stations. It's a \$368 million project. We partnered with other people's money from the Florida Department of Transportation and the federal government. We will be substantially complete in 2024 and revenue service is 2025. We are expanding and actually creating the first ever commuter rails service that's connecting downtown Miami to Aventura which is kind of on the border of Broward and Miami-Dade. It's about 9.8 miles, \$620 million or so project and is utilizing the existing inner city rail tracks that currently Brightline service runs on at this point in time. We have a variety of different other projects. We have four other corridors that we are working on to actually implement and deliver these projects. It took 22 years to get here and the reason why is because there wasn't local consensus, it wasn't a financial commitment and there wasn't a project delivery capacity. You need those three things to be able to do anything that you're talking about today.

The last thing I'll just mention is that the other restriction on the surtax, due to the fact that the general public did not feel confident in the ability for the County to be able to deliver on these transit type projects, is that they implemented an oversight board called the Citizens Transportation Trust. I would encourage you to not do that. You hire people that know what they're doing and have the expertise. Allow them to actually deliver on those projects. When you start adding additional oversight, which on it's face may have been a good idea, but in practicality, it creates a concern with how you implement and just more angst and controversy when it's not needed. So, I would encourage you as you start to talk about local funding sources to set everything up right, try to get as much as you can, try to allow the funding source to be as flexible as possible. If you have a list of projects that make it clear that that's what the ask is of the voters, and then figure out ways that you have systems in place to actually go and implement. That will help you out for the next round of funding or any other revenue raise that you need to have.

Mr. McKinney said so, let's stay on the funding theme for a moment and let's pretend for the moment that we got the sales tax, we got some other funding and we're spending billions of dollars. There's an interesting thing, and I'll start with you Greer, there's also an attitude about that spending that is an economic development local business, small business, minority business, it's a program. If we're a public agency spending billions of dollars, we should be thinking about it in that light as well and I think you all are doing very interesting things. I wanted to start with you Greer. Talk about Jobs for Jax.

Ms. Johnson Gillis said I would love to. Thank you for that. So, in Jacksonville, at the time in 2020 we had a City Council and a Mayor who were really not interested in doing the sales tax even though that is the option in Florida. Florida also has the option that you can tax gas and the local option sales gas tax. So, according to Florida statute, you can actually tax up to 12 cents on every gallon and that funding will go strictly to transportation infrastructure improvements. In Jacksonville, Duval County, we are combined City and County. We had only taxed up to six percent and that six percent was split between the City of Jacksonville and the Jacksonville Transportation Authority. So, in 2020 we actually together lobbied City Council to not only increase the number, increase the cost from six cents to 12 cents but extend it for 30 years. It was already in place, but extend it for another 30 years and it passed, because it passed on those things that you mentioned Ed. City Council directed the City of Jacksonville and the JTA if you do this, it goes to transportation infrastructure in the County, you have to spend 25 percent for local and small businesses in the County. Not a goal, it needs to come back and you need to give it to County businesses, local and small businesses. Those who are certified with the City of Jacksonville to be able to work on these projects and we want you to make sure that you hire residents in the County to work on these jobs. You need to come up with the workforce development plan and make sure that residents are working on the jobs. Just to ensure that you are doing this, we're going to

hold you accountable. We want you to have a website. We want you to put on your website your numbers. How much money have you collected from the local option gas tax? How much have you spent? How much of it has gone to those local small businesses? How many new jobs have you created? They were very intentional. Don't just say you hired somebody and they're working on the job as an FTE (Full Time Equivalent), but they're actually hiring from the County and they're working on your job. So, those are the metrics that are placed on us.

So, what we did, in answer to your question Ed, was we came up with a workforce development plan and we thought that we would develop this ourselves. We would put together the workforce development plan and then tell the community this is it, and then we went out to the stakeholders, all of the nonprofits who are in the workforce development business and they said we can do this for you. There's no need for you to reinvent the wheel. So, we partnered with them. How we did this was we actually attained grant funding, we provide that to those partners so that they can start the training as we work on the projects. We also said and what we have done in all of our solicitations, we put in a clause that we will evaluate professional services for design contractors, for construction projects and we said workforce development, you need to hire this many people and you need to partner with these nonprofit agencies for this. We didn't just make those numbers up. We actually commissioned a study with our local university in North Florida to tell us how many jobs can we anticipate. That has been a gamechanger for us because it was that one thing that brought that consensus Eulis talked about, for the City Council, for the businesses, for everyone in the community to be able to say we are willing to do this local action gas tax for the next 30 years in order to see these investments be realized, but we also can see the benefits to the community. Not only helping small businesses to become primes, and working projects, but helping residents who are under employed or unemployed get an opportunity.

Mr. McKinney said Adam, you must be doing similar or have done similar things in Denver?

Mr. Phipps said yes, certainly. In fact, let me highlight a little bit of what we're doing in the small business space because I think that's important as well. Not only did we see this expansive growth in our capital program, but we have both small business and minority and women owned business utilization goals and requirements on each one of our projects. It's been a really effective way to grow business, to grow jobs in Denver. When we expanded this capital funding source and this capital implementation, we also, as a department, were able to triple the percentage that went to small business. So, when you think about that, we increased our capital program by a factor of 10, but we not only scaled the small business utilization at that same rate, but we tripled it on top of that. So, really what that did was it contributed to a thriving small minority diverse business community, but also added to our workforce challenges. That connectivity to the community, that workforce availability wasn't what we needed to do. So, we were actually, I hate to admit it, but on the lagging side of the workforce component. Just in fact recently in the last six months, formally adopted an ordinance that now requires it in all of our capital projects, but what I can say is when we first piloted it about three years ago, we didn't know what the targets should be. We didn't know what good looked like for our community, and the workforce needs, similar to Mr. Cleckley's point around 2.8 million different people, 2.8 million different commutes, every individual in your community has a different workforce need, right? So, we had to kind of do a little bit of shooting in the dark. What should we expect? We set ourselves a stretch goal. So, what we said was we wanted 15 percent of all labor hours on any City and County of Denver infrastructure project to be a workforce development hour. That was either somebody that was new in the trades, it was either somebody that was doing a career shift, somebody that was maybe justice involved at one point, somebody that may have experienced homelessness at one point. We created a whole bunch of different categories and said cumulatively 15 percent of our project labor needs to come from this.

In an effort to be transparent, I think that's a cornerstone of good government. In our vertical construction projects, that wasn't a problem. We hit 15 percent. In our

transportation, in our mobility space, it's been more of a challenge and we're okay with that because what it says is we need to continue to be innovative, we need to continue to look at alternative ways to do this. One thing that we have found to be extremely beneficial, and this may be a good transition point in the conversation as well, is how you deliver projects will greatly influence how you can be effective in this workforce and small business space. If we had continued to try to deliver projects in a traditional design bid build type of capacity, we would've never been able to do it. So, when we shifted how we look at selecting work and contractors, vendors to work with, and when we shifted what our risk tolerance was as a City for delivering capital infrastructure, is when we could start to thread in some of our values around small business, around workforce and do so in a successful way. So, I just want to make sure that we keep that conversation, I think to the benefit of all of you, very tied as it relates to both funding opportunity and also in openness and embracing of new approaches to how you're going to deliver this funding once it's in hand.

Mr. McKinney said so, you just opened a box I don't think we're going to be able to close, but for your context, that's been very timely for a conversation Council has had. Maybe take that Eulois and talk what you're doing in Miami, build upon this notion of project delivery. Questions I'm sure are in people's minds is all this stuff you just described, that sounds like it costs more. That sounds like there is no workforce, like there's challenges to that. So, maybe Eulois talk about some of the challenges and what that looks like in Miami.

Mr. Cleckley said yes. They're definitely challenges in the industry around infrastructure just to have the number of experienced people to be able to just perform the work and we're experiencing that in South Florida where I've talked about just my projects that I have, but we also have to contend with the Florida Department of Transportation and their district. We have partner agencies that have major capital programs as well. So, what ends up happening is that you have a resources strain in a specific region if you're not all intertwined and you're not figuring out ways to deliver projects the best way you can. So, fundamentally you may not have enough people to do the work that you want to do. So, that's a real thing for the consultant community but also for staff to have to manage the projects. So, it is a concern. To go back on what we're doing in Miami with respect to small business and minority owned businesses and we have to be careful with how we say this, but there is a focus on a capital program over the next five years which is roughly \$7.9 billion worth of infrastructure projects to commit 20 percent to small minority owned businesses. That's a goal from the County irrespective of other forces around that topic. The reason I'm saying that is you have to be intentional with it. You cannot expect to have a stretched goal. I remember in Denver the leadership from the Mayor all the way down to our leadership in the department, we forced ourselves to make sure we appropriately identified the best project delivery strategies to be able to help meet that goal. That's an intentional thing that you have to do. I would say that the way for looking at project delivery, there's a couple of ways that you can look at it and use the term bundling of projects before as part of the plan. That sometimes can be a proper approach to how you go out and procure services from a design or construction standpoint. You have to monitor that because depending on whether or not you're designed to build and the like, you might inadvertently squeeze out those small and minority owned businesses taking that approach. Inversely there might be bigger projects that might be higher dollar value and if you want to build capacity within small minority owned businesses, unbundling a certain task within a project might be the option that you would want to take to be able to get there. So, you really have to take the time to evaluate those options and figure out what the best approach is. The way in which I know we did this in Denver and we're doing it now here in Miami, is this all starts in the planning phase of your capital program, and in the process that you have to implement to understand the project life cycle development of a project is important. Adam, how long did it take for us to get that in place?

Mr. Phipps said it's embarrassing to admit. It took us almost three years to get from shifting how we thought about project delivery to a process, a practice, a manual that was repeatable in a quality fashion to get there.

Mr. Cleckley said right. So, outside of the project that you identify the process by which you want to deliver the project is on an individual project basis. So, setting up that process where you have the right amount of rigor and you understand what the best strategy would be to deliver that project based on the goals that you want, is critical in this as well. So, just as a background, I used to be in Denver. I used to run the Denver Department of Transportation Infrastructure. Adam was our Deputy City Engineer. He got promoted to City Engineer and then when I left, he took over that role and I went to Miami.

Mr. Phipps said Ed, can I add one piece on workforce that I think just puts us into context? This is a major problem in infrastructure. If you look at the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the workforce within the United States that is in infrastructure job categories, this is about 17 million people. That's everything from the trades, that's everything from a laborer's standpoint, that's everything from a traditional engineer project manager, architecture standpoint as well. So, 17 million is our workforce today. That workforce is reducing at a rate of about 1.7 million people a year. So, 10 percent is leaving the workforce and we're only graduating folks into this at a 340,000 person per year rate. So, if you look at a simple linear extrapolation of that data, we're about 12 years away as the United States not having a workforce in infrastructure, which means our traffic signals aren't going to work, our water treatment's not going to work, our wastewater treatment is going to be an issue. This is a serious problem. So, when we talk about workforce, and I think you've heard all three of us really emphasize how that has been such a big component of our capital delivery program, it also needs to start very early. So, what you do today in your primary schools, in your secondary schools, in community colleges, that is a pipeline for that workforce tomorrow as well and when we speak to different approaches and different ways that we think about project delivery, those requirements, that type of decisions today will ensure that sustainability, that viability of the community in the future as well. So, just know that that is certainly a challenge that is facing this industry that if you aren't already feeling it now, I suspect you probably are, is one that I certainly would forecast as continuing to become more challenging as we continue to see that workforce and infrastructure decrease.

Mr. McKinney said now you've really sobered the mood. This is good.

DeAlva Wilson, Facilitator said Ed, if I may really quickly, just a quick time check. I know we're running a little bit behind in terms of opening the discussion. So, maybe your last one or two questions and we can open it up.

Mr. McKinney said yes. So, what I've been doing is trying to set the stage. I think we've got a lot of good stuff. I'm sure you're thinking about questions. So, I want to get to that. I have one last question because I want to lighten the mood and talk about the future a little bit and then let's dive in. So, let's talk about innovation. The world is changing. We're in a post pandemic world, all sorts of new things happening in transit, micromobility on demand. I know you guys are all doing those kinds of things. So, lighten the mood. Talk about what's cool, what's going on, what are some really exciting opportunities for us to think about mobility in different ways, and then let's go into a conversation with Council. I'll start with you Adam because I'm familiar. The last time I was in Denver I got to see the Denver connector in the Elyria neighborhood which was incredible the connection between an underserved neighborhood in a very targeted micromobility on demand service. It was a pilot. Tell us that story.

Mr. Phipps said yes, certainly. This is my opportunity to throw a little bit of credit to Mr. Cleckley's direction. So, under Cleckley's leadership in Denver really, we envisioned a micromobility solution that is entirely free, but geographically constrained to our neighborhoods that have most historically been under invested in. Just after Eulois moved to Miami, we launched the service. What I can tell you is it's our Montbello connector. Montbello is one of our most underserved communities. What we had estimated for ridership in the first year, we hit seven weeks in to our service. So, what we realized was this was incredibly pent-up demand for a mobility solution that we knew existed but we didn't realize existed to the degree that it did. So, we had to completely kind of scratch our plans and say, "How do we expand this?" Since we did that in 2021

we've now launched to four other neighborhoods and what I love to remind my Mayor of is we did that without a capital investment from the City. We were able to do that entirely through grant funding, entirely through partnerships with our regional transit provider and really hit those neighborhoods that needed it the most.

I'll tell you what surprised me second most to the demand that we had with the micromobility is the destination that it was taking folks. When you think about micromobility, I think there's a tendency for folks to think of it as a first mile or a last mile solution, and certainly that is a high percentage of the utilization, but the number one location within Montello community where this micro transit launched was actually the rec center. If you think about healthy lifestyle choices, you think about the resources that a recreation center provides the community similar to a library, at the time the community didn't have a library. We actually built that as part of the elevate Denver bond program, but that was what the community looked for.

The second most visited destination was also the grocery store. Montbello is a bit of a food desert within the City and County in Denver and what we realized is it's really burdensome if you are transit dependent or you have a transit preference to get groceries. This micro transit solution allowed you to go to the grocery store, get more than just a few bags of groceries and have a service that took you then directly to your home. So, that if you had something that was perishable or just the burden of the capacity or the weight issue was significant. Those were our top two destinations.

Transit stations was number three. So, it really informed us on that community need and it's certainly been something that we have shown to other cities across the U.S. as we have demonstrated how good of a solution this was for Denver. Now you've heard across this table, and you will continue to hear every community has a different need and so every solution is going to look slightly different, but micro transit has certainly been one that has filled a void and continues to fill a void in Denver.

Mr. McKinney said Greer, I think you mentioned your ultimate urban circulator. Talk about that a little bit more.

Ms. Johnson Gillis said sure. Let me share that with you. That's our autonomous vehicle program. In 2025 we will launch the first autonomous vehicle revenue service in downtown Jacksonville. It's a three-mile loop in downtown Jacksonville on a fixed route and it'll be electric autonomous shared vehicles. So, a small shuttle that will go from our headquarters at the Jacksonville Regional Transportation Center all the way to the east which is our sports and entertainment complex where our new Jaguars stadium will be built. The reason why we did that was solving a need. How do we make sure we provide services? Not just first mile, last mile but consistent services to everyone in the downtown core. Ultimately, we're going to expand this and make this a 10-mile system. One of the things our CEO Nat Ford has always said is that if we're trying to make sure we provide these to everyone, how do we make sure we have those services for everyone where they need to go. As I know, CATS has probably faced, just like all of us in the transit industry, operator shortage especially after the pandemic has been huge. So, what if we put autonomous vehicles to serve a need on a fixed route, in a fixed location and a shuttle service and allow us to take operators and put them on these high volume routes where that capacity is needed and where we can't put a 40 foot bus in some of the rural areas or some of the underserved areas. We see this as the future of mobility. A lot of my transit brethren and sisters also see that. So, a lot of agencies are looking at how do we make those use cases for autonomous vehicles. So, we feel that this is going to be a gamechanger for our community and they're going to see this as something that's going to help them get to those jobs, get to those food deserts and what have you.

On top of that, I do need to add one bit of innovation that we just launched at the JTA that allowed us to save costs. We all have paratransit services to serve many in the disability community, but then the JTA also had a Ready Ride which is our on demand service that really took the place of Lyft and Uber in many cases. We decided to comingle those services. So, now we have one vehicle that will actually go whether it's

someone who is disabled and needs support or someone who just wants to get a ride. If they're going to the same location, why have two or three different vehicles taking one person back and forth. Now we're looking at AI (artificial intelligence) to help us schedule so that we can say, "Hey, if we've got someone, we're dropping off maybe for dialysis, and someone next to them needs to be picked up to go to the grocery store, then why don't we just have one vehicle do that?" That allowed us to save about 25 percent of our cost on the paratransit contract that we had as well as the Ready Ride contract that we had. So, we were looking at innovation as a way to help us save cost. So, just some ideas to think and consider of how autonomous technology and innovation can help you to save costs.

Mr. McKinney said I'm sure Eulois you have a few things to share?

Mr. Cleckley said yes. I do want to give shoutout and kudos to our partners to the north of us JTA. Greer and Nat have been leading the way on AVs (Autonomous Vehicles) in the transit space to the point where you're having healthy competition amongst the rest of the transit agencies, they're trying to catch up. So, in Miami we have an old but autonomous people mover system that's elevated that connects people to areas downtown. It's about a 4.4-mile loop that needs to be replaced. We're working on that. We also most recently have started a new service called MetroConnect and it's an additional new service that is on demand that has also autonomous vehicles as a part of the fleet that we've been able to contract with the Via to be able to provide, to be able to get people more accustomed to taking these types of vehicles as they start to proliferate into the transit space. So, we just recently reoptimized our bus network where we expanded the MetroConnect service to be able to provide proper on demand service to those people that were affected by the changes in our bus routes moving forward. As context, we're at 101 percent of pre-pandemic levels on our ridership and transit. The biggest growth has been in our bus network. Our bus system moves 70 percent of our riders and it continues to grow month over month of about five to six percent per month. So, a lot of times in a transit space everybody gets very excited about rail and the like and all of these other options outside of a bus. The bus system is the workhorse of any transit system across this country. So, don't be afraid to look at, once you get to a point where you have those different types of modal options to consider that the people that need to get to where they need to go are going to rely on a bus system that's efficient and effective.

So, our MetroConnect service, again, it's something that's very akin to Uber or Lyft. It's a shared ride. We have 10 different zones throughout the County and right now we're moving close to 1,200 passengers per day on that service. So, that's the wave of the future. Once you start getting into autonomous vehicles, you can start to expand that service because you're not as reliant on operators which will continue to be a huge issue within the transit industry. It's just an added layer of mobility that you can provide. The last thing I'll mention about innovation in a tech space, and this in not with respect to transit but has an indirect benefit to transit, is that in Miami we have the largest advance traffic management system project in the world. It's \$250 million. We have 3,000 traffic signals. We have a contractor that's updating all of our signals that will make them dynamic and operable as well allow our traffic management center to be able to reconfigure our signals based off of dynamics out in the field so we can be a lot more nimble. That means that you can move traffic regardless of your car, you're on a bus, or you're biking or you're a pedestrian. Our traffic system will be able to adaptively change itself to be able to make sure we move people efficiently. So, that's another added layer that you might want to consider on a technology space to again have that efficient comprehensive transportation system.

Mr. McKinney said we may not have the biggest one in the world, but we have a pretty big one too. We're doing very similar things. We have a traffic management system that does a lot of things that you're doing, but make a back plug to our investment plan and our strategies that connecting that system through fiber is the only way you can make that work and that's part of the plan and part of the strategies we talked about. So, that's a layer to the investment that we know we need to continue to make. So, good segue. So, hopefully I've primed the pump. If you guys aren't worn out, hopefully there's some

questions, dialogue. We can go deeper into any or all the topics that came up or you must have other questions. I'll open it up to the floor.

Councilmember Watlington said first of all thank y'all for being here. Appreciate your expertise and your willingness to share. Many of the questions that I had, you addressed, but I want to dig a little bit deeper into Jacksonville because of the square mileage. Here, even though we're much smaller in land size, we've got this idea that bus is kind of the transit of last resort, right? So, getting folks around the idea of having a bus, especially when they've got multiple stops to make in the morning on the way to work, they've got to drop people off or do whatever, it doesn't really feel like something that they'll ever get the benefit of. I heard you talk about the Jobs for Jax and the play with MWSBE (Minority and Women Business Enterprise) participation and things like that. Today, how do you sell investment in bus or in rails versus some of the micromobility options given the land mass that you all have? I don't know how far and wide you cover, but I would imagine that you've got diversity in like Clay County versus Duval County in terms of what people need and what they want. So, how do you package that?

Ms. Johnson Gillis said so, like Eulois said, our fixed route is our workhorse and even though we have 800 square miles, some of the areas are more rural than urban and some of those areas are difficult to get a 40 bus into and what have you. We do cover all of the 800 square miles and the frequency changes, especially depending on the routes. That Ready Ride system that we've put in place, that sort of on demand service is what we have put up to be able to get to those areas where we may not have as frequent of a service that many of the residents may need, and we use it as a way to connect you in a first mile last mile way. So, if you're trying to get from maybe in a rural area and try to get to a bus stop or one of our hubs, this Ready Ride system will be able to get you there and connect you to one of our more frequency routes. So, how we package it and how we get it out, a lot of it is collaborating with the City Council members, collaborating with the Mayor and the City of Jacksonville and getting them to be able to tell their constituents of this service and this need. Of course, marketing is good and ourselves being able to get out to the residents, get out to the community to let them know the services are available, but that's been the biggest thing that we have been able to do is just a lot of outreach. We have a customer service team that we actually send out into the community. We go to community meetings. We let people know, "Hey we have this service. Are you using this service?" Especially in those areas where there are food deserts. This has been a really good tool to be able to help people to see if you're in a food desert, use that route on our fixed route to get to an area to buy groceries or use our Ready Ride and here's how you use the Ready Ride. We also use travel trainers to teach people. We go to senior centers, we go to schools, we go anywhere we need to go to help people. Here's how you use the services on the JTA. So, I share all of that, just a combination of things to help people understand and know what the services are and be able to utilize the services.

Ms. Watlington said okay. Thank you. As I think about initial buy in for the sales tax.

Ms. Wilson said we will need to move on to the next question momentarily.

Ms. Watlington said okay. My question is about buy in to get a referendum to pass. So, when you talk about right now you've got a large square footage. You've got people in urban areas, rural areas. Right now today, a lot of traffic goes as I'm sure in each of your cities, goes in and out of the County lines. So, someone who lives out in a Steele Creek for example is going to say, "I'm not getting on this transit line because I have other stops to make or I'm not going Uptown." We've got this hub and spoke system. What is the [inaudible] for me? So, I'm trying to understand what is it that you're selling to get the buy in from the folks that are a much more dispersed community?

Ms. Johnson Gillis said I think I understand. Let me just ask the question back because I want to make sure I answer it. In those areas where someone may be a choice rider and not your essential rider?

Ms. Watlington said that's it, yes.

Ms. Johnson Gillis said how do you get them to support this transit investment or what have you? Let me give you a real-world example. How we did it when we were advocating for the extension and expansion of the local options gas tax because that's what we heard. What we appealed to them was two-fold, not just your neighbors see the need and the value, but this will contribute to a better working transportation system, i.e., help with the congestion as well. So, we used those two things, but then we really appealed to the investments need to be made somewhere along the line because of the infrastructure. There's a time limit on all infrastructure and it's going to crumble. So, if we don't make the investments now, it's going to be more expensive down the line and when we all come back years later, it's going to be more costly. So, between those three things, that's how we were able to advance it. I will say one other thing. Adam mentioned this earlier. If you have a track record of delivery, if you have a track record of keeping your word, that solves it as well. Mr. Ford, our CEO was the one who went to every public meeting and spoke at every public meeting, and he went to every City Council meeting and spoke at every City Council meeting. A lot of what we heard from everyone was, "JTA, yes, you said you were going to do this the last time, you did it. You said you were going to deliver this project the last time, and you did it. Because you did that, we'll do this." So, that track record is also very important because they know if you were true to your word back then and delivered on projects back then, you're going to deliver now and that helped to build that consistency and win that support.

Mr. Phipps said the one thing I would add to that too that I think may encourage you to challenge how you thought about this in the past is if you were to do a sales tax referendum, depending on the financial mechanism what you can now go to voters with is an infrastructure package that is much more diverse. So, yes maybe a portion of it is transit, maybe a portion of it is those mobility hubs you spoke to, but you can start to scale a transportation package that really does have something to benefit every single community within Charlotte. So, that's not something you can do with \$80 million, that's not something you can do with \$200 million, but if you have I think I heard \$10 billion over 20 years, you can do that. You can start to look at a program that has diversity and is spread across the entire community so that what is in it for me is a direct translatable project for every person that lives within the City of Charlotte.

Councilmember Anderson said thank you for being here and your comments. I think those last comments were particularly salient for us as we have our updated plan and we've identified 86 high congestion intersections throughout the City and 380 miles of high frequency bus corridors. So, that is something we can directly use. I have two questions for you. One is I'm interested Ms. Gillis and perhaps Mr. Cleckley as well, but there's a perception around autonomous vehicles with the community and then certainly the latest events with GM (General Motors) cancelling their Cruise line. Crews had come and they had mapped out our City and we were next on their list and all of a sudden that was halted. How did you sell that to your resident base that this is a safe option that they wouldn't have to worry about?

Mr. Phipps said I can go ahead and start. As we mentioned in our current contract, we were trying to ease people into using this as a mobility option. So, before we decided to add in EVs as part of our fleet for MetroConnect service, we did a demonstration pilot where we actually had an autonomous vehicle that we used at the zoo that we promoted very well, that we branded very well and it allowed people to come and actually test out an actual vehicle. Zoo Miami is a large place. So, people park and you have to walk basically about a mile and a half to get to the entrance of the zoo. So, we said this is a great way to start to brand not only this service but expose people to the ability that this is a safe option for you to be able to get around. I think that's one option. That's how we've done it. JTA is a lot more advanced, and they'll probably have some more ideas of how they market and branded their service.

Ms. Johnson Gillis said what we did is multi-fold. Before we actually decided to go forward with it, we would get autonomous vehicles. We asked vendors to give us autonomous vehicles and it would be the shuttles, not the robo taxis that we've all heard

but actual shuttles and we'd actually run them on the corridor so people could try them. We also went to the first responders, the police, the fire, we asked them to come test it out. What do you see? Anything we should be mindful of and we got them to build consistency because we said, "Help us write the testing protocols based on safety around that." Then we decided almost like Eulois in Miami went to the zoo, we went to the schools, and we stood up STEM programs where we would go to elementary and middle schools and get young students and educate them around autonomous vehicles so they could see that it would be safe. We would stand out in front of the vehicle, they would see the vehicle stop and then they would go home and tell their parents. All of that helped to build the understanding of it so when we said we're going to be launching this, that many of the residents saw it and knew from either firsthand experience or from their kids that this was coming. Now with that being said, we are still out there educating, we're still out there talking to people. We take every opportunity that we can to take a vehicle out, an actual shuttle out and demonstrate it so people can see it. We put popup shuttle rides around to get people ready for the service when it launches. So, a lot of that touching, feeling, the education so people can see it and continually doing that to help them really get that confidence into that technology.

Ms. Anderson said great. Thank you. That was really good point. My last question is, and I'm sure Mr. Driggs will highlight this when he speaks, but we have an interesting structure here in Charlotte in the region with the MTC (Metropolitan Transit Commission) and then we have responsibilities as a City for pieces of transportation, but we have our neighbors who surround us who want to have a voice in this. We don't have a transportation authority. We don't have an authority here. I'm interested in if you could perhaps talk about how the JTA was established and your views around the benefits of having an authority versus working with an individual municipality or a County.

Ms. Johnson Gillis said I think we all can add to that. For the JTA, we started in 1955 as really a toll authority, an expressway authority that morphed into a transit authority in the 1970s when we took over all the different coach operators in the City. By means of that authority, we are technically a state agency; however, we are governed by a seven-member Board. The Board makes policy decisions on behalf of our agency; however, the CEO has full autonomy to be able to move and deliver on any of the services or needs. The City of Jacksonville does not have any authority per se over the JTA. However, there is a portion of sales tax that comes to us through the City. It's a nominal amount, about \$1 million every year, but because of that we are required to go before the City Council for approval of our budget. Technically our Board approves our budget and we follow what the Board says, but we follow the process with the City because they provide that sales tax to us. The benefits we see is having the Board really guide us and direct us on policy decisions and help us to be able to move and be as nimble and as innovative as possible. That's been, I would say, one of the benefits that we see with that type of governance structure because we're not considered a municipality agency or what have you, we don't have a lot of oversight by the City with us, but with that being said, we still take an opportunity to partner with the City every chance we get, especially on the roadwork that we do because many of the complete street projects that we do, we're doing it on behalf of the City government. I'll turn it over to Adam or Eulois if you have any thoughts on the municipality side.

Mr. Phipps said I can certainly add a little bit to that. I think where authorities, from my experience, I have not worked in an authority but certainly work adjacent to them. Where authorities are most effective is that they have that full breadth of authority to implement, authority to raise funding, authority to operate, that they're not reliant on another group or another body to ultimately deliver what it is that the taxpayers expect for them to deliver. So, what I would really say is from a municipal standpoint when you may not be that authority or when you're working with an authority, I think it gets down to what Mr. Cleckley had said at the very beginning which is making sure that there is alignment. When you don't have that ability to push independently you must be aligned and if you're not aligned then you'll see a capital program that stalls, you'll see that delivery no longer be an area of trust with the community and what that collaboration looks like without additional layers of governance, but truly in a partnership capacity is

the way to be most effective within that. To Greer's earlier point, federal funding can be a great tool to use to drive that partnership because certainly what our elected representatives in D.C. and what the USDOT (United States Department of Transportation) look for when they're awarding these grants is what does that regional partnership look like? When the authority, when the municipalities, when the Counties, and Charlotte is the City and County correct? So, that's a little bit easier from that standpoint. So, when you have County alignment with City alignment, with State alignment with authority alignment, that's how you can be effective there. So, I think what I simply identify is an area that if there is a path there, if there is a possibility to work towards common goals or common visions on something. That will be valuable and that will be a focus without that transportation authority existing within Charlotte.

Mr. McKinney said we're working on it, right?

Mr. Phipps said that's why you've got Ed now.

Councilmember Driggs said so, Ms. Anderson was right. That's kind of the general neighborhood I was interested in. We have recognized the need for that alignment. We are pretty far away from achieving it, I'll just put it that way. So, I hope what we take away here is an understanding. You said they're not interdependent. My point is in that sense they are. I'd be interested to hear a little more still about the authority. So, how are these seven members of the Board chosen? Are they representative of communities? Who are a part of this structure?

Ms. Johnson Gillis said for us in Jacksonville, the Mayor selects three members, the Governor selects three members and then the seventh member is the representative from the Florida Department of Transportation, our District Two Secretary.

Mr. Driggs said does the authority issue debt?

Ms. Johnson Gillis said yes.

Mr. Driggs said when that debt is issued, do the investors who buy the debt, do they have any recourse to any community or is their repayment solely derived from the authority?

Ms. Johnson Gillis said the latter, solely derived from the authority.

Mr. Driggs said okay. So, it's not recourse debt. This is kind of important for us to think about. The other question I had then. Mr. Cleckley, you alluded to difficulties that were experienced in getting a referendum, like a couple of failed attempts. We were aware of other communities who have offered these referendums and been unsuccessful. Could you describe in more detail the public information campaign that leads up to it? Like, who does it? Who pays for it? How long does it take?

Mr. Cleckley said yes. So, for the successful passes of the 2002 referendum, that was about two years' worth of outreach that at that time, I wasn't working for Miami at that time, but it took an extensive amount of effort across the board to be able to get in front of as many communities as possible, business stakeholders and the like to articulate the need for the surtax. What frankly happened is that the original plan which, again I mentioned the half penny surtax that was supposed to go solely to transit expansion. Out of those discussions, the plan was revised. Again, getting to Adam's point, you're figuring out other projects and other communities and municipalities that people were desirous of implementing and you included that as part of a project list in what we called the People Transportation Plan. So, every single municipality actually had their own independent infrastructure project that wasn't tied to a transit expansion project. So, ultimately it's a very long process if you're going to do it right and it's an all hands on deck type of process. I can tell you right now where we are with respect to long term funding solutions because we're going to be running up against to a point where we need to identify whether or not we want to go after the other half penny surtax. So, we're actively starting to do some polling now. So, as an example, our Chair of the

Board of County Commissioners put a question on the ballot in August when the elections are going to occur asking a simple question. Should the County invest into expanding a mass transit system? He is taking that to say, "Okay, now the answer should be yes. It should be yes for the most part." Then the harder question is going to come which will be, how are we going to pay for this? So, I think you're starting to have that conversation now to then over the next two years we'll be hiring consultants, we'll be going out doing polling, we'll be boots on the ground and going to every single community to make sure that they understand the need for any additional revenue sources that we would want to raise. I think in any referendum and in any municipality, you would need to have that extensive type of outreach. So, it's a multiyear effort.

Mr. Driggs said do you get private sector businesses and so on involved? Is there a booster group? Is that some question for us about who would actually pay the cost of a public information campaign.

Mr. Cleckley said right.

Mr. Driggs said so, is that from private sources [inaudible]?

Mr. Cleckley said it can be a combination. I can tell you that there's heavy interest in South Florida amongst the business community to figure out the transportation infrastructure problem, and quite frankly sometimes having the business stakeholders be at the lead of that conversation is better than government going in and saying, "Hey, this is what we're going to do for you." So, every area and every region is different. It just depends on the circumstances. In Miami it's more difficult because of the perception of not delivering on what's been promised in the past and we're actively changing that. I would just say, as I mentioned, credibility is key and I think if you have a demonstrated ability to deliver projects, it's a lot easier to have that type of conversation.

Mr. Driggs said this is so helpful. Thank you. This is exactly what we're [inaudible].

Mr. Cleckley said very good.

Councilmember Graham said no. Most of my questions have been asked and answered, but I have one simple one though. How do you get everybody to play in the sandbox together? I'm talking about the regional governments and getting regional cooperation and regional buy in behind a singular vision for the community?

Mr. Cleckley said it's difficult. So, in Miami-Dade you have 13 County Commissioners. Those same 13 County Commissioners sit on our Metropolitan Planning Board. I mentioned the Citizen Advisory Transportation Trust, 13 positions appointed by the Commissioners and the Mayor. So, not to mention the State legislature and dealing with the district offices. I would say you're always going to have friction. That's not going to go away; however, taking the time to put egos and personalities aside and aligning yourself to a plan is the first step. In our County, we are moving forward with our County specific transportation master plan that's on top of the plan that the MPO (Miami Planning Organization) has already set forward. Our MPO is a one County MPO which makes it very unique. So, now I can say MPO, MPO Director, Board and all the municipalities, our plan is aligning with your long-range transportation plan. So, we're all on the same page here. The issues that we're talking about is how we're going to be able to implement and get this stuff done. It's not a philosophical issue. So, I think fundamentally that's key and I do believe that it depends on who the leaders are in a region. You got to have the right people in the right positions to be able to help facilitate that discussion and be okay with having a discussion and listening and hearing people out. So, it's a challenge and I don't know if there's one silver bullet to it, but that's been my experience.

Ms. Johnson Gillis said I concur with Eulois. I know for us in Jacksonville, especially when we work with the other Counties, at first there's that sense that the big JTA is coming and what have you, but how we were able to work effectively with them and build some consensus with getting alignment on one thing. Helping that one thing and

then seeing how you deliver on that one thing, turned things around. There was one County in particular where we were trying to do some projects there and even increase and expand services and as opposed to us going in, we waited for them to come to us. Then once they came to us, then we were able to have the conversation to get some alignment. Then we asked them to really comment to us on our strategic plan, be a part of the strategic planning process to show that we want to hear from you and take in your thoughts, your feedback and really your goals so we can find those alignments. If we didn't do that, I don't think we would've been able to overcome that. It's a lot better than it was, but I think by us coming to that alignment with that one area helped bridge the gap on everything else.

Councilmember Ajmera said this is very helpful, very insightful. What certainly clicked with me is when you talked about delivering on promises. Credibility is important. Certainly, those are some of the challenges that we are dealing with here locally. Most of my questions were addressed. Mr. Driggs asked some really good questions and so did some of my colleagues. I do have one question that did not get addressed around ridership numbers. So, we get this question often asked. What have you seen in your region around ridership, pre and post pandemic? Once you have a response, I'll have a follow up on that.

Ms. Johnson Gillis said for us, ridership, we were tracking about 70 percent of post pandemic and post pandemic of our pre pandemic number. Yes, we're at 70 percent.

Mr. Cleckley said across our entire system, so that includes rail, or people mover, metro bus and our para transit, we're above pre pandemic levels. Above. So, yes, we're at 101 percent pre pandemic levels. The biggest increase that we saw was actually in our bus system. It's important to note that our metro rail system, which is 24 miles, 23 station elevated metro rail, it's been the one that's lagging the most. So, this is a by product essentially where that alignment is and it's further south, southern part of the County and it kind of loops around to the airport, where we're only about three-fourths of our ridership return. The reason I make a point on that is because everybody is excited about rail. Everybody, and I keep reminding people that the ridership levels that we're experiencing, and the increase is not on our rail system, it's on our bus system. So, that's just a little snapshot into the ridership.

Ms. Ajmera said that's helpful. So, my follow up question to that. I think you both acknowledged that the ridership number has reduced post pandemic, especially light rail. So, when the question gets asked why do you invest in the infrastructure, especially light rail, what would you say to that?

Mr. Cleckley said I'll take that first. So, one again it's about the fundamental stance that you need to have to have a burgeoning city to provide multiple different types of transportation and mobility options for folks. So, that's just fundamental. The second piece, and this is something that we sometimes miss in the transit space, but it's something that we're focused on. There's a clear nexus between housing and transportation. Miami is probably the most challenged place when it comes to housing. I don't know why, everybody wants to move to Miami. I don't know why. What we found is that we are laser targeted in making sure that all of the available land use policies and available land that we own from a transit perspective can be transitioned into housing. So, right now we're building 6,000 affordable housing units which is more housing units that we're building than our public housing and community development department. So, it's a nexus. So, we talk about investment, it is you're investing in the infrastructure. Mobility is one component of it, but if you do it right and you plan for it right, from a land use perspective, you're also addressing your housing need and that ends up being an improvement in quality of life. So, kind of think about it holistically to kind of get around that concern with, "Well the ridership is not this," it's more than that. You're figuring out ways to leverage that infrastructure investment to make people's lives better in housing and transportation space.

Ms. Johnson Gillis said we whole heartedly agree. We're doing the exact same thing. Transit-oriented development is the way to connect people to jobs to transportation and

providing what they need. That was the biggest thing we saw in the pandemic, those people who relied on us. So, we don't want to take that away from them but we want to be able to provide them with the places to stay. We are too building affordable housing with our transit-oriented development. Not as many units as they are in Miami, we're a little smaller than that, but we still see that viable need. We're even taking it to those future services that we're going to put online. The autonomous vehicle network, we've already identified the transit-oriented development locations where we need the support with workforce housing. The commuter rail line that we're studying right now, we know this is long term. When everything does come back, we already looked at transit-oriented development locations there as well. It's got to be holistic. It's got to serve the need for everybody and that's how we're telling that story. We're saying the buses are still very important. Everything else is equally important, but if you're going to connect the community and allow the community to grow and have that economic development that everybody wants, especially as all these other things come online, that transportation is still the key and it's got to be focused on the public transportation, not the single occupancy vehicle.

Ms. Ajmera said this is very helpful.

Ms. Wilson said Council member, we'll need to move on.

Ms. Ajmera said yes, just one last question.

Ms. Wilson said Council member, we have two. We have to move on. We can come back to it.

Ms. Ajmera said no, I don't need a response. I just need to put that in the log.

Ms. Wilson said you just want to make a statement? Okay.

Ms. Ajmera said yes.

Ms. Wilson said I got you.

Ms. Ajmera said I think one of the speakers mentioned that they had put in referendum just the question about transportation. I think it's worth exploring that option. I do not know if we need an authority from the State to have that, but I would like to just get a response on that, that would be helpful.

Mayor Lyles said so, Ms. Ajmera, were you speaking to Marcus and me?

Ms. Ajmera said yes. Patrick is not here. So, I was going to directly ask.

Mayor Lyles said about a referendum?

Ms. Ajmera said yes, about a referendum [inaudible].

Mayor Lyles said you can put it in the parking lot and we can do it and come back to it. I think we'll have some time later today, this evening to have more conversation following up with some of the panelist. That could be one of the questions.

Mayor Lyles said okay.

Councilmember Bokhari said great. I'm just going to make a brief comment more holistically because this is our time to discuss the presentation we saw as well as what we heard, but I'm basing it on some of the themes you guys said. Again, I'm teeing this up in the spirit of collaboration and really give everyone time to think and reflect before having to react to it because that's what we learned yesterday. So, the thing I heard from you guys that resonated most with me for our current situation which is a log jam. A lot of plans, a lot of visions, but a log jam nonetheless. You said we need to have that unified front of the stakeholders. So, if I was going to lay this out as something for us to

take away and think about and talk about, I think you start with where do we all agree. I think we all agree from the top General Assembly to the feds to every one of us, we absolutely need a transformational investment in transportation. Missing that opportunity would be a killer for us and the future. No doubt about that. When I say transformational, \$7 billion, \$8 billion, \$9 billion, \$10 billion plus because that's what a City like ours needs. What we're missing is that unified front with all the stakeholders all the way up including the voters.

So, I think the why on that is we've done a ton of work, but as a unified voice, we haven't clearly defined and really communicated our ultimate goal. Is it reducing congestion? Is it increasing options? Is it economic impact? It's a lot of goals and subgoals, but we have to agree on that together. Then what is key, in my opinion, it's clear that we need a roads first strategy. That's just a buzz word. It doesn't really mean that much until we go into it, but we need a roads first compromise in some way that's measured not by marketing this same plan that we've had to being roads first and showing. I'm not a critique, I love the things I saw out of that, but measuring it in the spend allocation that we're doing. I believe if we design that plan and more importantly the capital allocation around it to be that roads first. For an example sake, in a \$10 billion investment, \$6 billion is going for car congestion mitigation efforts, like intersection capacity, the bus rapid transit, smart technology, AV infrastructure and then \$4 billion is for mass transit like the Red Line and then we're getting inside baseball here, but one of the problems is we can't do everything we want because when we put the Silver Line back in, by definition, there is no way to make it a roads first capital allocation. The Silver Line is too expensive. So, having to table that, not saying we're not going to do it, but table it so we can get the transformational investment, I think that allows us to unite all the stakeholders and not only get a referendum approval from Raleigh, which is what we need to do this, but also unlock funding from Raleigh which was something that was not even contemplated before all of this. So, it requires compromise, but what it is not, is a remarketing of saying roads first. It comes in the form of the capital allocation, but I think we're at a point now where we have to do this work and reflect on it because in my mind, the options in the foreseeable near and maybe midterm future is it's either something like that or it's nothing and we stay in the log job. I think we can all agree, starting where I began, that we all need this transformational investment in transportation. So, I would give that in the spirit of [INAUDIBLE] speaking to I's an C's of something to reflect on and we can discuss and figure out how we can negotiate that, but that's it.

Councilmember Molina said okay. So, albeit one caveat and I'm speaking out of turn. Raleigh is where our State capital is. Just to mention that.

Marcus Jones, City Manager said thank you. I hope this was useful for the Council. Just a couple of things and why we did what we did today. Maybe we should've started that way with that. So, there were questions over the course of the last few years, and it was, "Well, what's the regional plan?" Good, better, indifferent, Connect Beyond is the regional plan. It is Geraldine Gardner. Everybody's plans are thrown in that and the City of Charlotte is the backbone of that plan. In terms of the CATS, there's a 2030 Plan. That 2030 Plan has been approved over and over and over again by the MTC. That's the plan dealing with buses, light rail, commuter rail, streetcar. So, what we tried to do today was some of the stumbling blocks were, well what is the City's plan? So, over the course of the last year, we've taken those 2,000 plus projects and we've tried to bring it down to something. We may have to use a different term, bundling. It means something different to Ms. Mayfield when it comes to projects, but we have strategic investment areas. It's data driven, it's throughout the entire City. So, we believe we have the projects, which are the City's projects, and there are two other plans out there that are regional plans and then the CATS plan. So, we're growing and what I wanted to do today is just do a reality check. Even if you receive authority in the short session, there's no way you're going to put that on the ballot in 2024. So, you're easily almost two years away from having something on the ballot. So, as your City Manager and I believe regionalism first. Got to do it. Have to do it. I owe you something to start to begin funding your plan absent anything else. Whether it's a little bit of property tax, a lot, I

don't know, but we can't continue to do nothing as we have these plans and these projects.

The last thing I'll say to give just a little flavor. Panelists, thank you so much. I like what Mr. Bokhari said. I think what's missing now is the strategy around how do you get this on the ballot to let the voters have a chance to discuss it, and right, wrong or indifferent, for the last three years, it's been around getting the six towns, the County and the City together to agree upon something and promises made, promises broken, trust, things of that nature, there's this thing called the Red Line. Because the Red Line, the commuter rail was not delivered, the three northern towns rightfully so, felt some kind of way. So, the concept was, how do you get those three northern towns on board, get the right sponsor of the bill to be introduced in Raleigh and to have some agreement amongst Mecklenburg County? The last thing I'll say, again because you'll probably have some conversations around dinner with the Council members, is that one of the things to unlock this was the conversation around the Red Line, which we are having right now with Norfolk Southern. So, as you think about strategy, whatever that strategy is going to be, we do have to put a budget together this year and we do know that there won't be a one cent sales tax in that budget that you will approve in June 2024, but there needs to be some discussion about how we begin to fund some of our needs. Thank you.

Mr. McKinney said last thing I was going to say. Thanks again. It still amazes me that we got these three folks. It's kind of like getting three Marcus' in Charlotte for half a day. These folks are extremely busy. So, thank you. We really appreciate it. Sounds like we'll have a lot of great conversations.

The meeting was recessed at 3:23 p.m. and reconvened at 3:36 p.m.

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ITEM NO. 6: DIGITAL DIVIDE

DeAlva Wilson, Facilitator said good afternoon again. If we could have Council members and staff members in seats we're going to start and continue with our updates from staff around some of our important initiatives. I do want to thank the panelist again for just an amazing conversation and sharing all of your knowledge and expertise so freely. We are going to revisit this conversation in the morning. Part of the goal for that session was to really get some alignment and common threads among the Council members and to also just to have some agreement or alignment with the strategy or framework that Ed brought forth. So, we need to revisit the conversation and put a bow on it. Not that it would be complete as of tomorrow, but at least some understanding and alignment around some of the common themes that we heard from the team and from the discussion, and just to get some alignment with the Council. So, we heard funding options, importance of alignment with other stakeholders or organizations, collaborations with key partners and some creativity around that, we talked about schools and a number of different organizations having brought value proposition to get buy in, community and business led strategy. So, having communities and businesses out front instead of government. Leveraging past performance as credibility. Creative approaches to build trust, holistic approach specifically as it relates to using mobility as a catalyst for economic development and quality of life and most importantly, we heard validation of the financial reports that Ed shared with us. So, we will revisit this conversation in the morning again just to really understand the common threads and understand where there is alignment on the Council. Okay? Without further ado, I'd like to introduce Rachel Stark who will talk with us about the Digital Divide. Thank you.

Rachel Stark, Smart City Manager said hi everyone. I'm glad we had a really great panel. Thanks, Ed, for pulling that together because that was really cool as a former planner to hear some of the cool ideas of how you actually implement that work. So, I'm Rachel Stark, I'm the Smart Cities Program Manager for you all and with that work, it ties into some of the things they were talking about like AVs and I know up here behind me there's a picture of some really cool stuff coming down from the sky. I think it says groceries being delivered, Amazon flying warehouse. Those are things we envision, this

really more advanced digital world than we already live in. Even just getting here. Obviously, we use Google, things that make us get where we want to go when we want to go and packaged in a way that we want it to be. Every day we're informing these technologies, we're wrestling with these technologies, we're probably cursing some of these technologies, but we're really benefitting also from these technologies and even creating some of them.

So, as we become the majority of how we go about our business using these technologies, we start to get this expectation that everyone can do the same things and are doing the same things that we're doing and that's just not the case. So, as you know we have a Digital Divide that's out there and that means that some of the things that we expect people to be able to do, they may not be able to do, and we really want to continue to work on that. I want to say a huge thank you to all for your commitment, the \$3.2 million from CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) and the \$10 million for ARPA. Kudos to you all of your investment in that work and because of that investment and because of our partner's focused investment in this, we have narrowed the Digital Divide by a good quarter which is some really good progress. We still have a ways to go, but some of the things to keep in mind are things like our ACP (Affordable Connectivity Program) funding from the federal level is set to expire at the end of April 2024. Some time in May 2024 it will be all spent out. So, again, thank you for putting that on your legislative agenda making sure that we're advocating for the ACP to continue because that impacts over 67,000 households in Charlotte. So, those folks are going to be wrestling with what they do with that internet bill and that loss of a \$30 savings that they're currently experiencing. Additionally, your investment has gone to supporting over 4,000 households, currently connected to Access Charlotte. We also have wi-fi on all the City buses as well as the Gold Line Lynx and then we also have our digital navigation service. So, anyone within the City of Charlotte or Mecklenburg County can call 311 and say, "Hey, I would like to get help connecting to affordable devices or affordable internet. Can you help me?" Through our partnership with Queens University, we can get that to everybody. As we know, it's really essential to the work that we do. Whether it's communication, whether it's the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and we want people to weight in on surveys or to know what activities are coming up, whether it's around entrepreneurship, education, health care, everyone is more and more needing this digital connection. It's also essential for jobs. Ninety-one to 92 percent of all jobs require a digital skill and jobs that have three or more digital skills are likely to pay 45 percent average more in the state of North Carolina. So, it's a really key piece to some of the upward mobility that we want to get to in the City of Charlotte.

Which feeds into why we're doing the learn to earn model and exploring that through a pilot. We haven't spent the \$2.5 million that you have set aside through what we talked about in early 2022 but we're getting ready to set that up because of the learnings that we've done with that pilot where we've been able to explore some basic digital literacy as well as workforce development training to get people devices at the end of those trainings. So, we did the first run last summer and we're getting ready to do the second round starting in February 2024. There will be another push going out probably some time in March 2024, for additional folks. With the learnings that learned last time, the library is really helpful because obviously people go to the library for a lot of services and they have that trust and relationship, but there's others who may not go to the library. There may be a language barrier. They may be reentering society for a variety of reasons. They may be a new immigrant. We're looking at how they connect with the service providers they're already working with, the people who are well connected with them to get them ready to be able to provide these resources. In addition to that, what we're looking to do, this is something that I keep thinking about in the work we do. We have in mind what we want people to do which is here's the digital world we want you to get ready and go do it, but we're trying to basically follow the principles of that Irish blessing, "May the road rise up to meet you." I feel like that's kind of what we're trying to do here. We're saying this is the path that you need to travel, but we're also trying to make this path as easy and visible for you to travel it. So, we're trying to raise that path up for people to be able to do that. So, that's part of the work we're doing. Then we're also looking at the our digital resources. Obviously, we have apps within the City of Charlotte that we push people to use, but we also have applications for resources. So,

one of the things that we're deploying as a proof of concept is really getting out in partnership with Google.org, pulling out this program that we're calling "a universal platform." It's not going to be universal at the very beginning, but it's going to be a proof of concept starting with some of our housing services. So, it's really just a starting point for really thinking about how do we deliver that basic digital access, thinking about how do we provide information around the technologies and tools that we get out there and thinking about how do we make it easy to find and get the benefits from these digital resources. Then, how do we create new tools with communities that really gets them what they want? So, with that, I'm going to go to the discussion questions which are one, what should the City's long-term role be in supporting efforts to close the Digital Divide? Another question that could kick off your conversation is, what are the challenges and opportunities do you see in the year ahead around this topic, and then should this continue to be a strategic initiative as we move forward? Did I do alright on time?

Ms. Wilson said you did actually. Thank you so much Rachel. Any questions from the floor?

Mayor Lyles said I have a question. I know that we have invested a lot of things from the City. At some point again it would be nice to figure out who else is doing this work because while we are very successful on the idea of over 7,000 people. Who else is doing this? I know that you guys have a collaboration and it's organized, and having a little bit more information about that would be a good idea for us to see what is actually being addressed. Then a couple of weeks ago, I was talking to Charter Spectrum, and they were talking about their possibility of continuing to provide reduced cost to certain communities. So, I don't know Rachel if you've had a chance to look at what they're saying and it's something we could really engage.

Ms. Stark said yes, we've had some initial conversations, but I think we need to continue to talk, especially to the leadership that you're also talking with.

Mayor Lyles said okay. Thank you.

Councilmember Bokhari said this is something that is critically important that we get right, but there's a lot of opportunities for us to go down a wrong path or not have the outcomes we want. Braxton and I sat down years ago and this was kind of one of our first shared passion projects. As we scoped it, worked with Reneé and the team and several others, I think what the initial vision here was how can we make this huge impact that is needed and kill multiple birds with one stone? I think it went back to starting with, well if we're talking about planning mobility autonomous vehicles, we need ubiquitous 5G coverage across the community for that, but there's secondary outcomes of having that and being able to say, "Okay, well maybe we don't have to figure out the fiber and some of the other problems that exist just trying to focus on Digital Divide by itself." So, having that ubiquitous coverage was number one. Then coming up with this learn to earn concept enabled us to skip the great work but maybe obsolete work of putting these mesh networks into communities and complexes that brought it from the street to their house and being able to say 5G is there. We ship you a smart device that's populated with the learn to earn capabilities of partners everywhere, training, upscaling and as you achieve, you unlock a laptop, and we mail you seamlessly the laptop to your house and your phone becomes your 5G hotspot at gig plus speeds. So, it totally disrupts the concept, the old model of solving the Digital Divide by accessibility and then it gives the other pieces of the training and of the hardware needed to do it. So, I think that the team has done a great job with the initial scoping, figuring this out, but what I think is absolutely necessary next is us reengaging and saying, "Okay, a big vision requires big investments sometimes," collaboration across these other verticals that I mentioned and us getting more directly involved. So, I think the takeaway needs to be us revisiting where we left off in the strategy setting to say, "Okay, what does the next chapter need to look like?"

Councilmember Driggs said I just want to say that digital access is a utility like water. So, if anybody's in doubt about the answer to the third question, it's yes.

Councilmember Molina said I have something just really quickly, and this brings to mind actually two things. One, the Digital Divide is actually a part of the Mayor's racial equity initiative. So, my first question is how is that particular initiative; is that kind of concurrent with our work or is it completely separate and apart? Where are we in that particular portion of delivering to the community? You know this better than I do. One of those deliverables is directly related to the Digital Divide.

Mayor Lyles said it's integrated into the Queens University program that's referenced in the document that we have where it talks about the ARPA funds and the households that were given the internet. What I am concerned about is the two-year grant that puts Bruce in his position to keep this going, but I think that there's time to figure out who's going to do what. I feel like the equity program is so far away gone. So, things have changed and I think that what Tariq said and Ed actually said is how do we figure out the utility aspect of Digital Divide and to go back and do some work around it.

Ms. Molina said okay, thank you Mayor. Then the second part of my question. So, thinking about what Councilmember Bokhari was talking about, about a ubiquitous connection, I know that Kansas City and other cities like that have actually taken initiatives to welcome in, and not to say that our current providers aren't doing a good job, but they've actually welcomed in and this is long standing. They probably are eons away from other people, and we're double their size. They've actually kind of stood out front and this was during the Obama Administration, to achieve 5G, to make that access available throughout their community. Have we looked at any of those cities that kind of jumped out ahead of 5G and access and things of that nature?

Ms. Stark said we have had some conversations both with carriers and with cities around the country. Another one that's similar is Chattanooga went in and did their own network. I think one of the challenges we run into is obviously every state's a little bit different in terms of the rules and regulations, but we are trying to figure out what is it that we can do that's creative and especially going into this next year. It's going to be key to continue to have these conversations and work with the carriers to get some of the things that you all are talking about so that everyone can benefit and that we have that infrastructure in place for what we want to do.

Ms. Molina said okay. I'm really excited to hear that. Just kind of following up on the rationale for my thought, one of the things that has been very fruitful for me is when I go somewhere like the National League of Cities or something like that and I'm talking to another leader from another city and they're sharing with me just like what we just did, and I really love that practice because it really resets possibility for us. It has for me anyway when I talk to other people who are doing various things. Like I said, that piece of that information came simply by being within proximity to someone talking about something else that they were doing that made me kind of Google and get familiar, kind of a baseline understanding for what some other cities were doing as far as connectivity and their Digital Divide. So, I'd be interested in knowing, especially how we drive this forward looking at what other cities are doing and seeing what possibility is for us here in Charlotte, considering our size and the scope of our work. So, that's all I have.

Ms. Wilson said thank you Council member. Thank you Rachel. Great job. Appreciate that. Awesome.

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ITEM NO. 7: SMALL AND MINORITY BUSINESS

Holly Eskridge, Assistant Economic Development Director said I would like to begin by saying thank you to everybody in this room who supports Steve and I every single day. Without you guys we wouldn't be able to stand up here and talk about the good work that's going on, and I think really what the future of both of our areas are going to do. So, I will start with what we do in economic development. I'm first going to talk about the ecosystem, which is something that I know you all are passionately engaged in, gave over \$5 million in grants in ARPA and CARES Act funding to our partners and the

ecosystem. Christi Floyd, by the way, is here in the back on our team. Her team actually really is the work who does this work day in and day out, but we work very and hard very closely with our partners. We are a leader, a convener of this ecosystem. We meet on a quarterly basis. Councilmember Mitchell, I see you shaking your head because I know you hear all about it and as a result of that, really what we are able to do, was we were able to take small businesses that come to us, that ask us questions that say we have this problem, we have this concern and we can actually give a direct handoff to a partner that will help with that work. So, we did that with over 700 businesses this past year.

The other thing that we have is the AMP Up Charlotte Program and this is a really cool thing. Actually, we're going to be collaborating more and more with Steve and his team on this, but AMP Up is our program. It's a seven-month initiative that puts a minority business owner through a program that grows their business. We've had several success stories. Leah and Louise is one that actually most of you know in this room. So, to date we have graduated over 102 businesses from AMP Up. We currently have an existing cohort of 20 companies that are going through it. CBI (Charlotte Business INClusion) comes to every cohort. They talk to the businesses about getting registered and they actually help them through that process. They actually help us with recruitment to the AMP Up cohorts and one thing that we're really excited about over this next year is we're going to talk about ways to really partner up the contractor development program in AMP Up Charlotte. Then the last thing, which I'm incredibly excited about, you know, we got our inspiration from everything that happens with workforce development and HIRE Charlotte and y'all's commitment to really saying how do we make this ecosystem easier to navigate and how do we make this as easy as possible for somebody who has that desire to get that job. Where do they go? So, we actually want to do the same thing for the small business world.

So, what we would like to do, you all graciously approved funding last year for us to do the first ever small business strategic plan. This has never been done in this community in the history of the Charlotte community. This won't just be about the City of Charlotte organization, this is truly looking at what is the ecosystem. Who are the players that exist within that ecosystem? What are the strengths? What are the challenges? What are we doing right? Then what are those opportunities to grow? What are the duplication of resources? All the things that we need to do. So, then they're going to dive in obviously specifically on what the City of Charlotte as an organization does as well. So, what we want to make sure in the end, the end goal is that the investments you all make in the work that we do, or within the ecosystem itself, that those investments are not duplicative of anything that is going on. They actually truly fill a need that exists within that ecosystem. So, we're very excited about it. The other thing I've heard a lot today is data, data, data. Small business data is hard. I won't go into why that is here, but this plan will have data which we're really excited about. And give us an implementation plan with measurable steps that actually tell us what to do as far as how to move forward in the work that we do as a community but also a City organization. So, I'll turn it over to Steve.

Steven Coker, Business Inclusion Officer said thank you Holly. Let me just say good evening. One of the good things about going towards the tail end of the retreat is the fact that you get to listen to all these great ideals and all the serious communication about serious issues. This panel, listening to their discussion, I tell you, there's a reason why they call things best practices because folks are doing it. It's tried and proven and I think the great thing about Charlotte is we just have commitment across the board. I've been here now for three and a half years. One of my first conversations with Manager Jones, we talked about commitment, and I can say, he's demonstrated everything that's needed, but there's so much more. Beautiful thing about it, if we're talking about good news/bad news. Good news is there's so many straight-line approaches to what we need to do to get where we're going. So, if you're a student of geometry, A to B straight line, quickest path. Also, the fact that 80 percent of what we need to do to get our programming, we make no bones about what we want to do, to be the nation's leading, 80 percent of it can happen inside the City. Council leadership, tremendous, they hold us accountable but we're going to ask more. My theme of what I'm talking about is the

very capacity building programs that we talked about. We have two. It won't cost a whole lot of money either. The first of which is our mentor protégé program, LinkUP CLT. That's a program that was recommended by our disparity study consultant. We've put our Advisory Committee to work, and they delivered something that I think is very solid. We ran it by our Attorney Thomas Powers, and we feel good about it. We're going to hire a position that's going to lead that effort and I think coming out, it'll be just an amazing program because it's well-received already. We've done the ground work for it.

The other, this is I think going to be signature to Charlotte, and that's CBI University. When you think about capacity building, we've got just a tremendous program. We've got NXTCLT, now we have Contractor Development Program, but if you look at our resource partners, those in the ecosystem, there's so many organizations that's committed to capacity and it's confusing to our almost 1,600 firms. So, what we want to do is consolidate all of that, centralize it, have an assessment component to it, direct them in the right direction, and guess what? When all of this is fully implemented, we have three years, I've said to my team before the next disparity study. We want to get ourselves to nations leading, but we need to have more certified firms. We're working on that. We need higher levels of spend, we're working on that. We need to take some of these very tools that we talked about and implement them and do them in such a way that's smart. Again, I know we have the commitment, so I'm highly confident we'll get there. Thank you.

Councilmember Mayfield said great presentation from both of you. I'm excited about how we're moving forward. When we have the next follow up, unless you already know it, we have that we awarded \$193 million to MWSBEs in Fiscal Year 2023, but you're not telling me out of what total awards that we gave out because the biggest ask that I have is making sure that we're aligning those totals spend dollars to the opportunities. So, \$193 million is great, but it would be helpful to know out of what total spend so that we can see if that \$193 million two percent, five percent, 27 percent of the total spend.

Mr. Coker said that's a good question; 10.8 percent of our discretionary spend. If you look at the breakdown in terms of designations, \$51.8 million with MBEs (Minority Business Enterprise), \$86.9 million WBEs (Women Business Enterprise) and \$54.5 million with SBEs (Small Business Enterprise).

Ms. Mayfield said so, it can go into the parking lot. You said 10.8 percent of our discretionary spend. I'm saying what was our total spend? What percentage is this \$193 million out of our total spend. You don't have to come up with that number right now if you don't have it, but that would be good for us to know so that we can help give you all the language that you need to hit the goals that we've identified for you all. Other than that, absolutely wonderful. Let us know how we can better support how you're moving forward with staff and/or financial support because we have limited funds.

Councilmember Ajmera said great job Steven and Holly. I have referred many minority or women-owned businesses to Steve, and he's been able to help them with the process of getting certified and connecting with opportunities. I appreciate it where he's also made himself available to some of these community events especially with minority and women-owned businesses and that certainly goes a long way. Holly, thank you also for attending some of the small businesswomen forums I have invited you to and I certainly appreciate that. So, the first bullet point where you have economic development team referred over 700 businesses to partners. Are these minority and women-owned businesses or small businesses?

Ms. Eskridge said I'm going off the top of my head. I'm not looking at the data. I'm going to guess it's about 70 percent MWSBEs. They come to us from you all. They come to us from the different events that we throw and we throw events. Councilmember Mayfield, I'm going to give you a shout out. You're a 100 percent attendance I think at every single one of them. I think when you weren't even on Council you were attending them, which is great. We have over 250 businesses at a minimum at these events. They come up to us, we make those referrals there, it's organic. It's just word of mouth, so it kind of

comes from all over, but if we can track that data we will. So, I'm guessing it's about 70 percent.

Ms. Ajmera said so, are these two partners outside of the City?

Ms. Eskridge said yes. So, we are very fortunate in this community to have the number of resource partners that we do, and yes every ecosystem, you're never going to have one that's completely connected because it's just not the nature of ecosystem. Ours can strengthen and get better, but it is pretty amazing what's done. So, Christi actually on a quarterly basis convenes over 30 partners and to us, those are partners that are academic, nonprofit and government that do something to support our small businesses. So, they all do something different. Some of them do some of the same things, but we know when a small business comes to us, we know relationally where to send them and it's great because the small business doesn't have to, as Steve was talking about, to navigate the internet and find all of that. They just come to us and we say, "Okay, here is the person that you need to talk to," and we do that email introduction to them.

Ms. Ajmera said got it. So, I just have a follow up question for Steve. Do we have data on how many of our certified business owners are actually getting bidding opportunities? I know it was very low last time that we had been given a presentation on and I know that your team was working on increasing that number so that there are more meeting opportunities or at least they're getting contracts. We were trying to work on that. So, where are we today?

Mr. Coker said good question. It fluctuates. I've been here again for three years, but it's in the range between 25 percent and 30 percent of our total MWSBE certified firms.

Ms. Ajmera said so only 25 percent are actually getting contracts. What do you think should be our goal?

Mr. Coker said I've said this to Brandon Miller who is a whiz at our reporting. Brandon just gave me a sense of if we just bumped it up seven percent that would be millions of dollars of spend. Now, we're performing an economic impact study and so you're going to see what the ROI (Return on Investment) is on our program in the next couple of months, but what I want to be able to do is give you a sense of also what that seven percent would mean. In time I will be able to give you a sense of what that means in a way of an ROI.

Ms. Ajmera said I think that would be helpful as part of our next steps because certainly it's great as they're getting certified and becoming certified minority and women-owned business owners, but I think we need to take a step further to also ensure that they are getting opportunities whether it's through the City or whether it's through our partners or even the private sector. Thank you.

Councilmember Graham said Holly, Steve, just want to thank you for really doing a good job. I don't think you guys get enough credit because when folks think about economic development it's always the big projects, the big things that we do, but again, you guys are doing the blocking and the tackling work with our small business owners and our minority firms, and I think that's really important. The impact that we're making is great. Certainly, we should continue to do this as a strategic initiative and be very focused on it. I think that the small business strategy plan is spot on. The CBI University is spot on. It's consistent to where I think we should be going, but we're really highlighting the utilization of small, and minority owned firms throughout the community. A couple of questions, two. One, Councilmember Brown alluded to it earlier on another topic, is making sure the community knows that these programs exist. That continues to be a struggle on a wide variety of platforms for us. So, could you kind of help us understand how we're communicating to the general public that these programs exist Holly? Then Steve, the Council's engaged in a lot of high profile public projects. I think we talked about this before. The Pearl District, Atrium, whether it's the Spectrum, maybe even the Panthers. How are we tracking and working with these entities at the

appropriate time to ensure that the Council's desires for greater input for minority participation is being tracked and that the end users are fulfilling their obligations to us?

Ms. Eskridge said okay I'll start. So, you're right. It is something that I feel like it doesn't matter how hard we try to work on the communication front, there's always that gap. So, I feel like for someone to say as part of the strategic plan when they're doing that assessment, I think that's going to come out. So, I'm not going to predetermine what would be a recommendation, but I'm guessing that that will be a recommendation and I told you these recommendations aren't just like statements. It's measurable, it's actual steps. Like an implementation plan of what you can do. So, we're really excited about that, but what I will say is we're really grateful to Jason and his team. So, Beverly is a big part of this as well with AMP Up. They do some really creative things to market this. Like radio campaigns, all kinds of different things that are absolutely amazing and have really bumped up our numbers. Then honestly graduates of this program just absolutely love it. We also support, just so you all know, we really have worked hard on the external front to really build out a pipeline for MWSBE support, mostly minority-owned business support. So, we actually provide funding to Boost Pad and Aspire Community Capital which is a pre-stage of AMP Up and then NXTCLT and Scale Up CLT. So, what I will say is this whole community of business owners are huge advocates for us as well. Then we use the City's social media channels. We attend every single event that we possibly can to talk about this information. Another thing that's happened is the Alliance has a new digital platform where they're actually putting all of these different resources in one spot. They're working through the kinks of that. You know, any kind of new technology you put out, there's always going to be something. So, what I would say is that we're using what we know is at our disposal, but we know that there's so much more that we could be doing as well. So, we're open to suggestions I would say, but then also I really think this plan is going to give us a really concrete communication strategy that we can implement and move forward.

Mr. Coker said just quickly. Piggyback on that. Councilmember Mitchell, I thought he was going to smack me on my hand when we talked about the bonding program and the early wins we got. He said, "Steve, you need to be telling us about this." So, that really hit home I should add. Part of our disparity study, one of the things that came out of it was outreach and engagement. Our CBIAC, (Charlotte Business INclusion Advisory Committee) we started a subcommittee focused on that area. They're spread throughout. Our 10 staff members, we're spread throughout multiple organizations throughout the City. We, of course, attend those of you who have town hall meetings and speak to the constituents, particularly those who are either in business, thinking about being in business, or have a family member who's in business. Of course, we've recently hired a dedicated outreach and engagement person who is just tremendous. He's been with us just a month and he's already made impact. So, we're going to get out there. So, you'll soon see newsletters coming from CBI. We haven't done that. We're working with communications and marketing, a concept called CBI TV, visuals and video form. It's just incredible. So, a lot more effort in this area. It's a lot more focused and I think you will see it.

Mr. Graham said and the high-profile projects?

Mr. Coker said relative to that, we have I think the most strategic communications, especially when something is large, oftentimes ED (Economic Development) is involved. We have early communications. I forget which one of those panel members talked about the ideal of getting in front early so that you can actually have some real impact. We do have that kind of communication with ED as well as those who support the Pearl, the Corridors. So, that's definitely something that we do.

Councilmember Mitchell said I'm going to say kudos to both Holly and Steve. Holly thank you. The emails that I've sent to you, how you've quickly been a great face for our small businesses in our community. Your can-do attitude, it works well for our small business community. Steven, three years ago, I can't believe because you really hit the ground and you've been running. I'm all excited about Link Up CLT, CBI University. One

question though for you Steve. We've got 1,600 firms. What is your goal if you have to throw out a goal for being certified firms?

Mr. Coker said well I talked about let's call it Operation 2027.

Mr. Mitchell said okay.

Mr. Coker said by that time, I want to turn that to at least 1,800. That's a lot. We've opened up the entire state. We went from a 13 county CSA to all 100 counties and York County in South Carolina. So, I see no reason with the effort that we're doing in the way of outreach and engagement why we can't at least hit that mark. I have a woman on my team, Kimberly Tibbs. We call her KT. She is just tremendous. I think we'll hit that number. Keep you posted.

Mr. Mitchell said a couple of more comments if I may DeAlva. I love the work you're doing with the CBI Advisory Committee. Continue to do that. Let me go through the questions though. So, yes for me. Great initiative. We continue to move forward. Specific policy areas to explore next year. Steven, I do think you have the [inaudible] on this program. You guys have done an excellent job of getting that started. I would like for us to kind of expand that and get more results if we can. City Manager, here's one for you though. There's challenges and opportunities ahead. One of our speakers touched on it. We have to be careful, and our project delivery method has to support our CBI. I think we all had a conversation about a project we had and the participation was low due in large to the project method type we selected. So, let's make sure we can have that in our whole DNA throughout the City that what we do, let's make sure we have a lens, how can we support our CBI program? Thank you. Great job.

Councilmember Watlington said so to hit the questions. Yes, absolutely this should be a strategic initiative moving forward. I concur with Councilmember Mitchell in regards to our project delivery. I think that is one of the highest priorities in terms of policy areas that we need to look at, particularly in general services. So, I'd like to see how we intend to restructure or approach project delivery to better enable MWSBE participation. When I think about that, in addition to the project delivery method, when I think about good faith efforts, I really would like to see us give some effort to how we can invest in our MWSBEs and invest in those relationships between the primes and those potential MWSBEs because those good faith efforts for me often fall short. I think there's a role that we can play to improve those efforts. When it comes to workforce development in small business, I know that there is already work happening in this space, but I absolutely am looking forward to seeing how the two marry up. How do we enable small businesses to hire locally? How do we enable our potential employees if you will, or our workers, those that are seeking employment to connect with small businesses here within our own ecosystem. So, I definitely look forward to that. I did want to follow up on a previous request, and if it needs to go to the parking lot then it can go there, but I want to make sure that I lift it up again. I'm very interested to understand as we look at all of our spend and who our primes are, how we're performing there when it comes to percent MWSBE. So, for each prime or project or however you want to do it, I just want to get an understanding of who are our best partners when it comes to really trying to build capacity in MWSBE and who might we be able to come alongside to help make those connections or to help build capacity in those particular industries or in those particular trades so that there are MWSBE partners that can be worked with. Well let me pause for a second. I know that was a previous request. I just want to see if there was any update to that or we can put it to the parking lot.

Mr. Coker said well, I will say this. Most of the goals we set, we meet. Now who's at the top of the food chain, you know there's some that are just great to work with them.

Ms. Watlington said well if you don't have a list now, it's fine. We can put it on the parking lot.

Mr. Coker said I can get you that.

Ms. Watlington said awesome. Then finally, I know I've had this conversation a few times with the City Attorney, and I just want to make sure that as a Council, we're really looking at these larger projects. How do we make sure that our legal framework as we go into contracts, ensure participation targets are committed to on the front end and that we're getting that information back? I know time and time again we've asked about that and have not yet seen that. So, that one, I don't want to pass that one by in 2024. Thank you.

Councilmember Bokhari said I just have three quick comments that I'd like to hit on in a nonthreatening way as I focus on the big picture. So, in the scope of that last one, should this continue to be a strategic initiative moving forward. I think we'll all agree the answer is a resounding yes, but I think the sub question there is how are we scoping the body of work and the outcome that we're responsible for achieving here. So, the three things there I'd love us to really consider as we walk away from here. One, making sure we don't reinvent any wheels and we don't go at this alone. We've had a lot of work in the past on this we want to make sure we build upon and we know that the County and other really material partners are doing similar things. So, I think it's really important that we collaborate and not reinvent the wheel in that way.

Number two is the elevated focus on the small business piece. We often say small business, minority business kind of as a tagline for it all. While both are being worked on and I know staff is doing a great job on both fronts we have the elevated programs and processes and investments that we make on the minority business front, rightly so, but we really need to focus on a broader lift up of small business overall. It's been a while since I've seen the stats but the last time I saw them, over 10,000 small businesses, defined small businesses, are in Charlotte and they make up over 60 percent of the workforce. They're coming out of a pandemic and in the middle of an economic environment where they are really struggling and this includes from mom and pop bakeries to a burgeoning start up scene in Charlotte that most people, it isn't even on their radar. These are things I think we can go in with a holistic focus and lift it up at an elevated level where it deserves to be and then focus on the minority and women owned aspects within the cross sections of where they may not be getting the same opportunity. So, that's number two.

Then finally, number three. I think this is one we've talked about before. I think it's critically important. The role that we should be playing as the City of Charlotte in minority business development between capacity building, we've heard a lot about that already here. Capacity building meaning who is an existing minority business to get into that program. Operation 2027 you just said was 1,700, 1,800, versus the equality of the contract awarding process. So, the latter is our internal scope and we have to get that right and when we see percentages that are down and not representative of what the community of these businesses represent, that's a problem and we all need to be focused on it. I think capacity building is incredibly important. The City's role should be a convener of the private sector, of nonprofits and of others to go out and do that, not the responsible party to say, "We're going to create more minority businesses because that is the goal." I think both are noble causes, but I think we need to make sure we know where we're a convener in the ultimate necessary accountable party versus our in-shop responsibility.

Ms. Wilson said thank you. Okay. If there's no further questions, thank you so much for a great presentation.

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ITEM NO. 8: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Danielle Frazier, Special Assistant to the City Manager said well good evening, everyone. I am Danielle Frazier, Special Assistant to City Manager for Workforce Development. So, thank you all. I had about two hours of slides to share with you all today, but I boiled it down to two slides and hopefully a couple of minutes that I hope that I'll be able to share with you, HIRE Charlotte and a Workforce Development update

and hopefully to share some things with you all that will spark some great dialogue as we dive deeper into this strategic priority. So, we've heard a lot of great presentations and discussions today and I heard Workforce Development a lot, whether we were talking about Housing, Mobility, Transportation and so I think it just goes to show how critical Workforce Development really is to our community. So, I've been here for a little less than six months now and so I've learned a great deal about this organization and the great things that we are doing. One of the things that I really learned is how much the City of Charlotte is really supporting internal and external Workforce Development efforts. I think Councilmember Molina said it yesterday, "We don't celebrate our wins enough." So, I really want to highlight one thing of many things that I've learned about this organization, is that we do well, and it's our registered apprenticeship programs. I know you all have been a proponent of that but we have 17 registered apprenticeships across this organization. It is absolutely unheard of and pretty impressive, but we are one of 300 organizations across this Country that are endorsed by the Department of Labor for being an apprenticeship ambassador and we're only one of three municipalities. So, again, very impressive. I wanted Council to know how much that this organization is leading as an employer across not just our community, but across our nation.

So, we play a key role in our ecosystem as an employer, but also as a community serving organization. So, we also play a convener, a connector. I think I just heard Councilmember Bokhari say a convener, an investor. So, we're a piece of this ecosystem and we're a piece of the pie if you will, not to make you hungry, but a very important one. So, speaking of those pieces of the pie, I'd like to share an update on HIRE Charlotte which has been a very critical community collaborative that has been in our community for the past few years. I just want to give you a quick update. I know you have more detailed information in your appendix, but as a refresher, the HIRE Charlotte initiative was an economic development led initiative that was focused on creating and filling good jobs. There were two project goals under this initiative and the first was to develop a vision and framework to fill good jobs of today and tomorrow. That framework was actually completed in April of 2022 with the help our ecosystem partners and it was heavily focused on skills attainment and credential attainment.

The second goal was to be informed on how we deploy our ARPA dollars to help support this framework. So, if you recall, you all approved a \$9.1 million budget to help support this framework last year and again, these details are in your packet, but the update that I'll just share here is that we accomplished goal one, check, and then goal two is in process and that you will be getting updates in the near future where we are with these projects and how we will be deploying these funds and you'll probably be seeing some RCAs (Request for Council Action) coming your way soon, but with these goals of HIRE Charlotte and with all of the data and all of the great work, I've got to recognize Tracy Dodson and her team for all of this work. This was hard work. She brought together the community partners. I was able to be a part of the steering committee. So, there was a lot of great work that went into this and it was ecosystem informed. I really believe that this is going to lay a strong foundation on how we move forward and what our Workforce Development plan will and can look like.

So, this brings me to the last bullet on this slide which is just to say to you that we have a robust Workforce Development ecosystem that is very collaborative, it's very connected. It includes our private sector, our public sector, our workforce partners, our nonprofit partners, our education partners all coming together to try to solve some Workforce Development challenges on helping individuals get good jobs and helping businesses to find good talent. So, again, we play a key role in all of this and we are connected to all of these key collaboratives. Okay. So, looking ahead which I hope is going to be the meat of your conversation today and for the sake of time, I won't read through all of these but we did do some peer city reviews and that's where I think you saw the samples over there on the wall yesterday, but what we did know in the research that we did on other cities is that we are all struggling with some of the very same things. Businesses aren't able to find talent. There's a misalignment between the available talent we have and the skills needed for those jobs. We have some residents that lack the access and the opportunity for the resources that they need and they may

have some barriers to education and employment, and to retain and obtain employment.

So, we have a lot of things in common with our peer cities, and again, I'm not going to read through these things, but I did want to give you some things to think about in your discussion today and to consider those three bullet areas of consideration, are really areas that I think that we have an opportunity to continue to lean in, whether it's career resource awareness, career pathways, credential attainment, etc. What I really wanted to focus in with you all today and again for this discussion is to point out a couple of the questions. I think I had more questions than everybody else today, but really want your thoughts and your feedback on Workforce Development as you made this a strategic priority and ask you, what was it that you wanted to solve through Workforce Development? Do we want to focus on specific communities whether it's Corridors, or whether it's specific geographies? Do we want to focus on specific talent? Who do we want to impact the most? Do we want to focus on specific skills? I think I heard Councilmember Mitchell and Graham in their readout yesterday say that they wanted to focus on jobs that don't require a two-year or four-year degree, but a post-secondary credential. So, thinking about all these things as we want to create a plan of impact. Also, of the industries that we have in demand in our community. Are there specific ones that we want to focus on? I know in that infrastructure conversation, there was I think a lot of opportunity. I think I'm going to have a lot of work ahead, but also what does success look like qualitatively and quantitatively? I heard Councilmember Driggs say yesterday that, "The numbers are great, and we need them to measure, but what story are we trying to tell and ultimately what impact are we trying to make?" Also, I heard Councilmember Anderson say "We want to make sure that we're tying digital inclusion to Workforce Development in a greater way to ensure that our talents can have the access and the literacy that they need in order to get a job and to get a better job." So, we're already having those conversations, Rachel and I and Assistant City Manager Askew on how we can bridge those two already. So, then of course our last question, should it be a strategic initiative, but again, I kind of breezed through this. So, I really would love to pause right there and hear more from you and answer any questions that you may have.

Councilmember Anderson said thank you Danielle. I personally think this is one of the most important priorities that we have. Of course, housing is important and the other ones are as well, but to have a strong viable workforce will allow us to attract from an economic development perspective, companies to come here, and it will allow individuals to move themselves up the economic ladder. I think those could be, for me, two elements of what success would look like year over year if we have people who are moving up and out of poverty and up the economic ladder and we're able to attract new companies to come here or existing companies to expand. That would definitely be something I would like to see us track. I think we could probably have a first Monday conversation about the industries that we'd like to specifically address because I think that deserves a more robust conversation. I'm really excited about having you onboard and I agree with a couple of Council members that said yesterday we need to have the credential attainment for those individuals who don't have the opportunity to attend a two- or four-year university; however, we want to give them that opportunity to live and thrive in Charlotte so they can afford to live here and enjoy living here. So, looking forward to what you're going to put together this year. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said I agree with everything that Danté said. I do think the industry, matching industry with opportunities is an important factor that we have. So, thanks for what you said and I say it too. I also had a question when we talk about on specific community's talents and skill levels. I think one of the things that has been a concern of mine is that we no longer have a relationship with CMS (Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools) for those trades that they used to have like auto repair. I always remember, what was the guy's name? He was the drywall? He kept saying, "You need to have some drywall training in here!" I think one of the things that I say this is because not everybody is going to go and get a two-year degree when we talk about young men and women coming out of high school that are not going to go to college, but have to have a career. So, I'd like to ask how do we look at this focus on working with CMS to

determine some of those talent and skill levels that when people walk across that stage, that they can walk into something that we have that will allow them to make a sufficient living in our City?

Councilmember Mayfield said thank you Danielle for a good presentation. To answer the questions that you have, for me, what does success look like? I would like to see more local partnerships versus out of state companies winning bids and then having to utilize local companies to learn how to do business in Charlotte. To me that is a part of that success of homegrown and promoting from within. For the question of do we want to focus on specific community's talent skills levels? I would like to see us focus on specific partnerships that we already have such as Urban League, such as the Goodwill training where we provided funding and construction, as the Mayor mentioned, Central Piedmont Community College. We already have some relationships with certain corporate partners where we've connected individuals to training. What does that follow up look like versus specific community or talent? Those specific partnerships that we already have, to make sure that our funding for whatever that training is, eight weeks, 12 weeks, we just helped fund training for the individuals that put the lights up on the poles, that climbs the poles. It would be great if we are tracking and building that relationship with Duke Energy to have those people get direct hires because those are young people without necessarily a two-year degree. It's a 12-week program and they're making \$60,000 \$80,000 a year. So, that's what the combination of success looks like for me and where to focus. As far as the question of should this continue to be a strategic initiative, I believe yes. I would also like to see us be much more targeted on how we're selling this initiative to the community. Thank you.

Ms. Frazier said if I could just add there. Thank you, Council member, for your remarks. Through our ARPA funding, we are extending the Renew program with both Urban League and Goodwill as well as Goodwill is receiving a grant for the BankWork\$ training. So, yes to your point, I agree with you. It's happening.

Councilmember Watlington said thank you. Yes, we should continue having this as a strategic initiative moving forward. Success for me looks like having a workforce that reflects the industries that we want to target, and we've got the right skills within the community to deliver a community going forward. Do we have tool and die makers? Do we have sanitation workers? Do we have telecom workers? We know that we've got basic community needs, and we know what industries that we're going to target based on the work that was done several years ago in regards to the growing industries. So, recruitment, matching up to our industries, matching up to our workforce, that's what success looks like for me, that people have choices here in Charlotte where they don't have to go to other cities to earn a living. Obviously, we want that to line up to wages that they can afford to live here. So, that goes back to the types of industries that we're trying to recruit. When I think about focusing on specific communities, absolutely, and I think it has to be hyper focused on our youth. I know that we have adult Workforce Development programs, I think we've got to go deeper. We've got to reach down into CMS and work more closely with them as best we can because we know, even as we talk about crime, as we talk about people having barriers to employment, we want to really be able to prevent some of the things that now we're having to be confronted with. So, I think that requires us to be much more connected at that level and at an individual level. I don't know if it's the guidance counselors or whoever particularly within the schools, maybe it's community in schools as partners, but it's got to be youth focused and it's got to be down to the individual. We don't want to label someone too early on as their potential or anything like that. I'm not saying we want to stunt people's potential, but we also want to be able to get folks exposed early on to what options there are and get them on track to get to where they want to go. We know that other countries have amazing apprenticeship models as well. So, there's opportunities to benchmark from there, but that's what success looks like for me.

Councilmember Driggs said Danielle, you know how excited I am that you're here. The key priority for me has been the apprenticeships and that's partly because I lived in Europe and I saw how widespread apprenticeships are and how effective they are. I think a key thing though in Europe is that it's accepted that they're kind of two tracks.

There's a trade track and there's an academic track and people split and go in those different directions. In this country, there is still a perception that college is synonymous with a certain kind of success and that failure to go to college conversely is a certain kind of failure. That's unfortunate because a lot of people who go to college don't graduate, a huge percentage, or they graduate and they're not employable because they actually didn't acquire any skills. So, I guess my first question is what can we do to make the idea of not getting a four-year degree kind of more socially acceptable or remove a little bit of the stigma or conversely maybe the association of the four-year degree with success because the connection is not good? So, can we actually do more to promote that understanding?

Ms. Frazier said yes, I do think so. You're singing music to my ears. I sat on the CTE (Career and Technical Education) Advisory Board of CMS some time ago and that was one of the things that we talked about, awareness. There is a stigma around career and technical education, that it's not a viable pathway and that they're not good jobs. I do think that the City of Charlotte can help with this and one of those was just around pathway awareness and talking about all of the pathways that are available to our community and especially to our young people if a two-year and a four-year track is not their goal. I think that our apprenticeship programs even as an employer has been a great example of that. I think that we could potentially partner with some community with industry and even have awareness campaigns around that. You've got to get to parents. You've got to get to faculty. You've got to get to teachers. You've got to get down into K through 12 and align with them. I know some schools do it more than others in how they're promoting CTE. I do think that there's opportunity in partnering with how do we get that message out and how do we spread that awareness even more about all of the opportunities that are non-two-year or four-year degree.

Mr. Driggs said the second question. I raised this when we were talking about housing. Is there a way that we can connect Workforce Development to our subsidized housing to leverage our investment in housing by having people improve to the point where they don't need help paying their rent? So, do you see a potential tie in there?

Ms. Frazier said yes. Rebecca and I have actually had that conversation on a couple of occasions and she has educated me on the housing first model. So, we know that based on certain regulations and the focus areas of certain funding, that that may be a challenge. I do think that there's opportunity to one, make sure that we're connecting individuals with Workforce Development efforts and I know that's something that's already happening, but Rebecca and I spoke about that and said that there's more opportunity to make sure that there's a stronger connection.

Mr. Driggs said there could be a kind of benefits cliff problem though [inaudible].

Ms. Frazier said absolutely there's a benefit to it.

Mr. Driggs said then they don't qualify for the subsidy. Thank you.

Councilmember Mitchell said so, first of all, let me just say thank you to the City Manager and Danielle for you being here. Council, I want to remind you all this all-started January 2023 when we had our strategy session at UNC Charlotte. This Council said that Workforce Development was going to be a priority. So, I want to say thank you. We're so excited you're here. I'm going to echo Councilmember Graham though. He whispered to me, he said, "We just need to get out of her way." So, I purposely have not scheduled a meeting with you for a whole year so Danielle can be Danielle. So, let me go through the questions real quick. I think the first one for me is what we're trying to solve is make sure those citizens in our community who want to be productive, who want a skill set and I would like for us to follow the lead of what school systems are doing. Not only CMS, but also Guilford County Schools. Part of their RFP request now is to have a Workforce Development plan. So, those who are bidding on their work, you have to show and they tell you at a minimum, we would like for you to hire one or two people from the nonprofits. I think that's the direction we should go, especially having someone of your level here.

Number two, what community do we want to focus on? There are three of us who were raised in the southside. Tia, Danté and myself. There's an organization in place called StriveCLT, Dr. Gwen High. I think that will be a great opportunity to focus on the community southside homes with a partner already there with Inlivian, then we can do some real good work. So, I'm adamant about focuses on southside. I'll throw that out. Industry, I'm partial to construction because we are a forgiving industry and those who are trying to come back in the workforce, the construction industry, we embrace that. So, in my mind when we build, we see buildings we're trying to build, we should be building people at the same time. What does success look like? I'm sick and tired of us being 50 out of 50. So, successful us based on the Chetty Study that somehow now we're making progress. We're no longer seeing we're 50 out of 50 but hopefully through your leadership we can at least move up 10 or 12 and not be 50 out of the 50. Yes, I think we should continue to move forward because this is very important to our community.

Councilmember Molina said I just want to echo the sentiments of Councilmember Mitchell and actually he hit on some points that I was going to hit. So, the first thing I wanted to ask the Manager, the Mayor, the Attorney, we now have Danielle and it's a deliverable to this Council, but I'm wondering is this work that's going to continue? In other words, is her place a place of permanence, hers? We now have Ed McKinney. We have these specific roles. CBI, the way that CBI right now is embedded I think that these are deliverables that are inevitable in perpetuity whether it's this Council or any Council. So, I'd like to think about how we create this as a position of permanence, something that beyond regular deliverables, beyond just we got it, check, and then a new Council comes and says, "Well Workforce Development is not that important, or small business is not that important," then it's just this up and down trolley thing. Like I said it sticks out to me because again when Councilmember Mayfield returned, she talked about things that had been done prior years before that seemed like they were kind of repetitious to what we were trying to create now. So, I wonder when we hit these milestones, will we find success? How do we cement those practices into the organizational structure of Charlotte? So, I'd like to think about that and that's offline, maybe that's a parking lot issue that we can kind of talk about, circle in.

Secondly, I am a proud product of Guilford County Schools my entire life. So, when I graduated from high school, we had National Honor Society and we had something called Vocational Educational Honor Society which something that concurrently for the high achievers encouraged them to look for education that would be specific to a four-year institution and then it also ushered certain students into a technical background. Having them be encouraged to do both because imagine honoring a student for the ability to have a technical path and realize the earnings that were possible as a result of being honored in that way. So, thinking through the process of CMS and some of the things that I see and don't see once I got here is something that we can kind of talk about to promote how we engage our students to get them to consider what's interesting to them, and kind of remove some of that stigma like Councilmember Driggs said.

My last thing is as we think through the talent that we'd like to attract, steer our residents towards, we attract six industries according to what the alliance works on day in and day out for our region. I really like to think about that because that's who we're attracting from the outside. I think we have to work with the business community concurrently. The jobs that are being created, I think we have to respond to the jobs that are actually being created in our region while we think about what we're going to specify as far as workforce training. We can talk offline because you know how excited I am. So happy you're here.

Ms. Frazier said thank you.

Ms. Molina said happy to work with you. I can't wait to get started.

Councilmember Bokhari said first and foremost I'm really impressed by the thoroughness of everyone's comments and I agree with just about everything that's

been said so far. So, just a quick comment here and this comes from a place of I have been deep in the weeks of this vertical for a long time. What does success look like? To me, what I've learned is nearly anybody can create some programs and run a few folks through, a few dozen, even a couple of hundred. What success looks like at our level is scale. Can it be done for tens of thousands in a meaningful and sustainable way in where they're headed? So, this would be a wholesale change Mr. Manager, and I don't know that we have the appetite for it, but I don't believe that we are going to be able to build the thing that has that scale if we go about it as we're building the product. The product is complex and there are hundreds of private sector companies that are doing this and failing, but if we step back at a more strategic level and try to build a platform that other's products could scale, and I think in doing so, my simple initial concept and it may or may not be good, I just thought of it right now as we were sitting here and I was listening to everyone talk, is maybe something similar to the voucher or stipend program, but holistically where these stipends or vouchers follow students, follow adults. They get to choose where they go within a City approved vendor list of different things that strategically align with where we want to go and then Danielle and the team's work becomes, after teeing up the initial stuff, finding and shepherding in existing programs and products, finding new ones that need to be built, but it doesn't all have to be quarterbacked out of the City. I think if we were to step back and do that, then the level of operations it takes to do this is really tough, doing that is something that isn't going to be easy but achievable and then the focus of the team can be how to integrate this vertically like we've already said with the vertical pieces. So, it becomes horizontal. How do we tie this into our transportation plans for equity? How do we tie it into affordable housing? How do we tie it into transportation and clothing and food and childcare so that we're solving something horizontally there? Even if you have the one percent chance of success at building the product, you'll never have the time to go really focus on those unless you build a platform.

Councilmember Graham said most of my colleagues have already articulated a lot of what I wanted to say in reference to a strong focus on apprenticeship youth involvement, youth employment which is really important as well as just being a top priority for this Council. I can't speak for everybody else. This is really important to me and we look forward to you coming at the appropriate time in front of the Economic Development Committee for us to have a more deep dive in conversations with it, but we're very excited that you're here for sure. A focus would be certainly working with our Corridors of Opportunity. We have these six business hubs now strategically located throughout the City. That could be a place where folks can drop in and identify a Workforce Development opportunity and employment opportunities. I don't know whether or not if there's a community job board where folks can go and see what's available there. Could you talk about your relationship between the City and Central Piedmont Community College and what does that look like as it relates to Workforce Development?

Ms. Frazier said sure. I'll first start off with thank you for the question. Our relationship with Central Piedmont is one from an employer standpoint in our relationship through our prepaid tuition program. So, that's the program that we help support our internal talent. Through external, it's really around just outreach and around collaborations. Maybe around job fairs or around educating Central Piedmont as well as our other partners on what are the jobs that we have at the City of Charlotte. So, it's more from an employer standpoint which is great, but I think we have an opportunity now that we are furthering what Workforce Development efforts look like and what our plan is to incorporate them, especially from an external training provider so to speak in helping us to train and develop talent.

Mr. Graham said what about the certificate programs? An employer comes to town. They need workforce. That workforce needs to be trained through Central Piedmont Community College. Is there a relationship where you would know that's occurring and how do you facilitate that?

Ms. Frazier said right. So, let me go back to my previous life being at Charlotte Works. So, at the Workforce Development Board, we had what was called and eligible trainer

provider list. That was a vetted list of providers that we subsidized training vouchers to. So, just through my relationships and my connections there, knowing what has been vetted as industry recognized credentials, and Central Piedmont was one of the largest training providers that partners with Charlotte Works and receives funding. So, I would go through my existing partnerships and channels that way and I'm pretty familiar with the programming that they have available, and especially through those certificate programs and even through their short terms credentialing programs. Does that answer your question?

Mr. Graham said yes.

Mayor Lyles said I just wanted to ask one question Danielle, and this is something that happened. We have been trying to work with Central Piedmont to do some Workforce Development training. I don't know if this is still the case, but we were talking about people that can't get away from their jobs because that's essential for them. So, they had to come in on Saturday and Sunday. When I talked to the President, she said that it was for the jobs that are in the medical industry, and it was very difficult for her to get teachers because the state funding didn't always support that kind of flexibility of where they could be. So, I'm posing this as a question because I do think that those 5,000 jobs at the Pearl are going to be very significant and important to us. So, are you able to get the kind of resources for people that are working but want to upscale themselves for these positions? Just let us know if that's another avenue for us or if Central Piedmont is already covering it.

Ms. Frazier said absolutely. I can definitely do that.

Mayor Lyles said thank you.

Ms. Frazier said thank you.

Councilmember Ajmera said so when you're one of the last, most of the things are covered, but I do want to highlight and uplift a specific group that Mr. Mitchell and I met back in 2019 when we were working with Refugee Support Services and other immigrant communities. I think because of the language barrier, I do see not many nonprofits Workforce Development programs that cater to that group specifically. So, I think we do need to look at that, but Mr. Bokhari's right when he talked about how we need to talk about scalability, and we don't need to reinvent the wheels here. We already have so many organizations that are already providing Workforce Development opportunities and trainings and just partnering with them. I'm not aware of many organizations that provide training in different languages. I'm sure there are workforce opportunities for those that have English as a language barrier. There are construction jobs. There are fiber optics that are very heavy technical jobs that you don't have to be fluent in English. So, if we can explore that option, because when we looked at some of our high-end employment areas, those were all focused around Corridors of Opportunities. One of those areas, one's Albemarle and Central Corridor where we have demographics that have language barriers. Also, we need to look at this internally. We have 8,000 plus employee workforce even within our organization. We have a shortage of workers when it comes to bus operators. I don't know how we are doing with water, sanitation workers. So, if we could also have apprenticeship opportunities for folks to work with the City, especially CATS, it's a perfect example, I think we can stand up those trainings internally for our workforce. So, we need to look at internal partners as well external partners. That's all I have. I look forward to working with you. Thanks.

Ms. Wilson said Danielle, excellent work. Thank you again.

Ms. Frazier said thank you.

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ITEM NO. 9: ARTS AND CULTURE

Marcus Jones, City Manager said so, hopefully this will not take long and the reason I'm stepping in is not because Priya couldn't come up and deliver an amazing update, I just wanted to talk a little bit about where we have been since the Council accepted the Arts and Culture Plan late in the fall. So, great work from Priya, the City's first Arts and Culture Officer. A lot of good things are happening. If you could just turn to page 38 of your booklet. I think it tells us a story. So, let's go back a little bit in time. If you think about the conversations today around safety, we were in a very similar situation a few years ago with arts and culture. You may recall that there was a failed quarter cent sales tax initiative from the County as well as we knew that our corporate giving was drying up. So, I'll just point you to two data points. The low point of funding for those organizations that the City funded over the years was in 2021. That low point was \$4.3 million. So, we have the Infusion Fund. So, the City comes together with the private sector and basically has a \$36 million commitment over a three-year period, \$6 million from the City, \$6 million from the private sector and the private sector actually raised an additional \$5 million. So, we had about \$41 million for this three-year period. That three-year period goes through this current fiscal year. So, when we get to the budget and we begin the FY (Fiscal Year) 2025 budget, there's a decision that needs to be made in terms of arts and culture. There's some colors on this chart. One, I guess that's lime green, the Thrive Organization. For the most part, one of the things that the Council said is that we are paying debt on facilities and a top priority are the facilities that we are paying debt on. They can't go dark and those organizations that occupy those facilities can't go out of business either. So, during the course of these last few years, there was an Ad Hoc Committee back in 2021 and then the City Council had a policy framework back in 2023. So, I believe that as we have moved forward as a City, we have stayed within those frameworks with your top priority being let's make sure that we make those investments in those facilities that are our facilities.

So, over the three-year period of this Infusion Fund, you can see what has occurred in terms of the increase in these particular categories. So, think about the Thrive Organizations, that's been a 103 percent increase from the low point. The [INAUDIBLE] when we start to think of some of the minority organizations that are in the system, they have gone up by 190 percent and all of the other organizations and that's the list that's not in green or in red, have also gone up by 51 percent. So, I would say in terms of funding there has been a stabilization in the ecosystem, but it's more than going from \$4.3 million to \$8.4 million. There's also been a great deal of collaboration. So, you appointed with the private sector, an Arts and Culture Board and they were able to put out different grants that were based on collaboration across the system. So, I would say that the infusion fund has been very successful in stabilizing this subset of the arts and culture community and the question becomes, what do we do going forward? I would say that the good news is that as you're having your Annual Strategy Meeting, the County is also having their retreat. They're having a discussion about arts and culture, and I believe that the co-chairs of the Arts and Culture Advisory Board are presenting. This is good collaboration. So, I don't want to get too far in front of [inaudible] but we are actually at the table talking about having lanes in which the City can make contributions and lanes in which the County can make contributions. It was you Mr. Bokhari that talked about hardwiring or restricting some funds that are related to your priorities, same concept for the County. Then opportunities for collaboration across those identified restricted lanes if you will for some of the other concepts that you had about how can we make sure that this ecosystem is actually collaborating.

So, while I'm not asking for a decision today other than are we heading in the right direction, and the other thing that I think is important is that I believe if these different entities are still important to the Council, start thinking about at least \$8.5 million if these are the groups that are important to us, think about it that way. So, also think about stabilizing the community. If you start to think about the City and the County from the public sector coming together and putting funds together, I think it would be bigger than anything we've had up to this point. The one thing I would say to you that's an outstanding issue will be governance and governance is difficult in anything that we do whether it's mobility or whether it's arts and culture funding. That is just the update. The conversations are beginning to happen between the City and County about funding. I do want to bring to your attention that stabilizing these groups is more that what you have

put in in the past. I guess the last thing that I would say along these lines is that the private sector's involvement up to this point has been if there is public funding for those entities, organizations that are important to you, then the private sector would be able to fund in a very different manner. In other words, sponsorships for things of that nature. So, don't need a decision today. Last time we didn't have a chance to talk about this at the Annual Strategy Meeting and I know there's a lot of passion around this. I do believe the path that we are on right now is consistent with the priorities of the Council. That's the update.

Councilmember Bokhari said so, I'm going to base this comment on what you said there without having a ton of detail of where the rubber meets the road. That would be one of the more promising things I've heard in a long time on this very important and difficult topic. If what you just said is directionally going to be the thing that happens, I think that it is critical that the County plays a major role in making that come to fruition. So, that sounds good, but obviously that's a wild card and that has to happen. I think you said my magic words which I've said from the beginning which are, we don't need to be in the weeds of parsing out \$100 here and \$200 here, we need to be at a policy level. So, to your governance point, 90 percent of the governance problem goes away when we articulate our vision and our policy and if there are two buckets of which, one larger bucket is the responsibilities we already bear, but then the other bucket is more of an allocation that says, "Here's what we want to accomplish. Here's what we value." So, no one's going and telling us here's the plan. Do you sign off on it. They're reading what we value and they're building the plan and executing it on based like that. So, if it's in policy, it shouldn't even really have to come to us. The point there is, just as an example, what I mean by value is we might say we value things that our private sector leans into in that second bucket, therefore we [inaudible] matches up to this amount to have this thing happening. So, I think there's enough guardrails we can put around that. I have, as many of you have, been frustrated for a very long time about being unable to get to the finish line. So, the devils in the details, but if that's the direction we're heading that sounds good to me.

Councilmember Driggs said are we going to hear an update on the plan or is this the arts conversation?

DeAlva Wilson, Facilitator said this is the arts conversation.

Mr. Driggs said so, the list that we have here on page 38, is that basically a legacy list that came down from the Arts and Science Council process?

Mr. Jones said absolutely. If you go back in time, the first time that the Council put in its first \$6 million, that was the list that we put on the board.

Mr. Driggs said yes, right. So, we're still kind of waiting to see the full implementation of our arts and culture plan, which contemplates a new modality for deciding on where the money goes, that sort of laid out criteria and represented presumably a departure from the past which is why we went through the trouble to do all that. I believe that Ms. Sircar had told us in the past that she would be bringing forward more in terms of the governance and the grant making process if that's right.

Mr. Jones said yes. So, Mr. Driggs, what I would add to what you just said is that, I think I said this back in the fall, think about the plan as the community's plan. The Council will never implement that entire plan, but the community gets to implement that plan and we'll have a lane or two or three in that plan and I believe that it begins with what we've been doing over time.

Mr. Driggs said okay.

Councilmember Mayfield said parking lot. I would love to hear from Priya because we didn't get her in, but I know we're coming up on time.

Councilmember Ajmera said so, Mr. Jones, I had stepped away for a minute. So, from what I understand this \$8.4 million is what we will recommend?

Mr. Jones said I would say at a minimum.

Ms. Ajmera said okay.

Mr. Jones said when you start to think about what was provided over this three-year period was basically \$12 million a year. If you back out almost \$900,000 related to the ASC (Arts and Science Council), you get closer to about \$11 million that was put into the Infusion Fund. The bulk of that, and I think that's where Mr. Bokhari's going, the bulk of that would be hardwired to these organizations that you have funded over the years with some allocation for more collaboration.

Ms. Ajmera said okay. So, there will still be a line item for ASC or no? No. Is it a line item specifically for organizations?

Mr. Jones said so, when you get to the governance, I think that would be some of the issues. So, let's back up a little bit. So, it's been very easy for the City, and I would recommend that we continue down this pathway. It's an allocation that's set in the Foundation For The Carolinas, and to put all this money out, it cost us something like \$60,000 to get \$11 million out. So, having funds hardwired, the Council not making determinations about who gets what, much like in the past when we went to the ASC, now we'll say the Foundation, a very low administrative fee that's related to it and the funds getting out into the community with agreements with all of the organizations that are going to receive funding, that they are doing things that are consistent with the values of the City, but not line items in the budget where people are coming in to comment on those.

Ms. Ajmera said got it. So, not individual financial partner application. I think that's huge because this is .001 percent of our budget, and we spend two hours every year discussing this. I think that's great. This is great but we have individual artists. I just want to make sure, how are they going to get funding? Currently they're getting support from ASC.

Mr. Jones said so, what I would suggest is that if you start to think about it, think of the Infusion Fund, individual artists have been able to get funds out the Infusion Fund. So, if we move forward and we have something that's close to \$11 million, then you're almost replicating the Infusion Fund going forward with a good deal of the money hardwired. I know in my heart that the County isn't going to spend a lot of money on our facilities nor should they because they're our facilities. As they bring money to the table, they're going to be some things like artists that the ASC has funded through County funds prior. If you start to look at this as just one big pot of money and you start to look at the resources that goes up through the entire ecosystem, then once again the City Council is not implementing the plan, we're implementing pieces of the plan that are important to us.

Ms. Ajmera said so, the way I see this is like this big pot of money. Each entity is distributing their share and then the foundation with a very low management fee gets the money out to organizations based on some sort of criteria.

Mr. Jones said yes, but let me add one other thing. That doesn't mean just as the County is funding the admin costs of the ASC this year, they may have that a priority going forward also. So, the admin fee would be different depending on how the entity that's putting out the grants. For us, if it's just an allocation to the Mint Museum, it's writing a check. If there's a process where people are competing, that's a bit different, and there are some administrative fees related to that type of process.

Ms. Ajmera said I'm fine with the model, I'm just only concerned about what happens if some of these organizations that we support do not end up getting funding that we are obligated to.

Mr. Jones said you hardwire it. It's restricted. It's not even a discussion.

Ms. Ajmera said okay, as long as that's in place, I'm fine.

Councilmember Graham said so, recapping. So, possibly an \$8.4 million allocation. No City funding for ASC.

Mr. Jones said that would be your call. Right now, I don't have that built in.

Mr. Graham said I get it. You used the word corporate sponsorship. What does that mean?

Mr. Jones said so, as the private sector started to look at how they would best value their contributions, I'm not good at this Priya will help me out, there may be an exhibit that comes in and maybe it's Bank of America that is sponsoring that exhibit. Maybe there's a quarter of a million-dollar contribution. You've done the same thing with like Picasso from time to time, you have, as a City Council, have sponsored these types of events. So, that could relieve you of having to do things like that in the future.

Mr. Graham said but that's no guarantee, right?

Mr. Jones said no guarantee.

Mr. Graham said it's optional. They can do it or not. What about the public art?

Mr. Jones said it stays the same. Right now, public art comes out of your CIP and there would be no changes to that.

Mr. Graham said who administers that?

Mr. Jones said ASC.

Mr. Graham said they'll continue to do that?

Mr. Jones said correct.

Mr. Graham said and governance? That's a whole nother problem for some of this?

Mr. Jones said a whole nother problem for a different day.

Unknown said we don't know when that day's coming, but it's going to be a different one.

Mr. Graham said well that's the rub right?

Mr. Jones said yes. I would say let's have the beginning of the conversation. So, let's start to think if you put in \$11 million and \$8.4 millions goes to these organizations and then there's something in there that is flexible for collaboration, there could be a conversation about how many appointments would the City Council have to avoid when there's little money that isn't hardwired versus if the County put in a bunch of money, let's say that's not necessarily hardwired. So, that's what I mean. I think the appointments and things like that would be the conversation that's not for today, but a conversation that has to occur.

Mr. Driggs said just quickly I think the question is who makes the decisions about the grants with the discretionary money. That was kind of, I thought, going to come out of the arts and cultural plan process. So, I'm wondering if we're still waiting for more information.

Mr. Jones said they're still working through that.

Mr. Driggs said yes, okay.

Ms. Wilson said okay. That wraps our last agenda item today. I know it's been a very long day with a lot of information. Thank you very much for leaning in again today, staying with it, engaged with great questions and great information.

Mr. Jones said DeAlva, I know we're 30 minutes off schedule. We had a closed session and I want to know if that's something that Council still wants to do today.

The meeting was recessed at 5:25 p.m. for a closed session.


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ITEM NO. 10: CLOSED SESSION

Motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, seconded by Councilmember Driggs, and carried unanimously to go into closed session to (A) Consult with the City Attorney to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the City Council pursuant to NC General Statute § 143.318.11 (a) (3), and (B) To discuss matters related to the location or expansion of industries or other business in Charlotte including agreement on a tentative list of economic development incentives that may be offered to the body public pursuant to NC General Statute §143.318.11 (a) (4).

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The meeting recessed at 6:07 p.m. following the closed session.


Stephanie Kelly, City Clerk MMC, NCCMC

Length of Meeting: 7 Hours, 14 Minutes
Minutes completed: October 7, 2024