

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina convened for a Legislative Briefing on Thursday, April 28, 2022, at 12:03 p.m. via WebEx with Mayor Vi Lyles presiding. Councilmembers present were Tariq Bokhari, Larken Egleston, Julie Eiselt, Malcolm Graham, Gregg Phipps, and Braxton Winston II.

ABSENT: Councilmembers Dimple Ajmera, Matt Newton, Renee Johnson, and Victoria Watlington.

ABSENT UNTIL NOTED: Councilmember Ed Driggs.

State Delegation Present: Natasha Marcus, Mujtaba Mohammed, Deandrea Slavador, Mary Belk, Terry Brown, Nasif Majeed, John Autry, Rachel, Hunt, Wesley Harris, Carla Cunningham, and Brandon Lofton.

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ITEM NO. 1: GREETINGS AND INTRODUCTION

Mayor Lyles said [inaudible] our State Legislative Delegation for a briefing on these Legislative recommendations and requests. I want to say on behalf of everyone in the City of Charlotte, to the Delegation, we thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule and having a meeting today with my City Council colleagues and myself. I am Vi Lyles and I serve as Mayor of the City of Charlotte. Now I'd like to have each member of the City Council that's available either virtually or present introduce themselves before I turn over the gavel to Senator Natasha Warren for the introduction of members of the delegation. So, we'll start with those that are present in the room and with the Council. Then we'll have the staff for introductions as well. This meeting is being done consistent with the notifications required for virtual as well as an in-place meetings.

Councilmember Driggs arrived at 12:06 p.m.

Senator Natasha Marcus said thank you, everybody. I am Natasha Marcus. I represent District 41, which is the Northern Mecklenburg area in the North Carolina Senate not the US Senate like Senator Warren. I'm the chair of the Delegation. So, I don't speak for our members, but I do try to keep us organized and in order. So, to that end, it's hard for me to tell who is joined, some joined late. So, I'm just going to quickly read through our District Number, and if the person is here, who represents that District if you could just quickly unmute and introduce yourself. I think that's the most efficient way. So, again, I'm Senator Marcus from District 41 in the North Carolina Senate, and then we'll start with District 37. Are you here? 38? Senate District 38?

Mujtaba Mohammed - District 38; Deandrea Salvador – District 39; Mary Belk - District 88; Terry Brown - District 92; Nasif Majeed - District 99 John Autry - District 100; Rachel Hunt - District 103; Wesley Harris - District 105; Carla Cunningham - District 106; Brandon Lofton - District 104.

Dana Fenton, Inter-Governmental Relations Manager said thank you, Mayor Lyles, and for the record, I'm Dana Fenton, the city's Intergovernmental Relations Manager and I look forward to working with the Delegation again this year. Senator Marcus and Delegation just want to let you know that Senator Waddell is also trying to get on. I've been emailing her here just the last few minutes.

Our meeting agenda today is very, very straightforward. We're going to be discussing or presenting at least the mobility and infrastructure, community needs, and Legislative positions that were adopted by the City Council. We will also have an update on how we're using our American Rescue Plan Flexible Dollars, followed by open discussion, then adjournment. We always try to get you out of here by 1:00 p.m. or actually just an hour after we begin, because we know that you have a very busy schedule, just a lot of other things to do as well.

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ITEM NO. 2: POSITION: MOBILITY

Dana Fenton, Inter-Governmental Relations Manager said getting into our Legislative position on mobility. This should look familiar to some of you because it's the same as last year's position. Work with key stakeholders to support Legislation that provides dedicated stable and permanent sources of revenues for state, regional, and local public transportation, roadway, bicycle, pedestrian, passenger rail, trail, and safety capital improvement projects. In just a few minutes, John Lewis, the Chief Executive Officer of the Charlotte Area Transit System will provide an update on our efforts to improve regional rail facilities, and also our bus service facilities. First, we're going to turn to Liz Babson who's the Director of the Charlotte Department of Transportation to speak to the street maintenance issues, and specifically the role of Powell Bill revenues that they play in funding our local street maintenance needs. So, with that, I will turn to Liz.

Liz Babson, Transportation Director said yes, thank you, Dana. As Dana mentioned, my name is Liz Babson, I'm the Director for the City of Charlotte Department of Transportation. So, we're going to talk about street maintenance, but specifically Powell Bill funding. I want to start by saying that we are appreciative of the state's Powell Bill Funding and your support of that funding. On this map, you see a lot of green and that's intended because it's important that we point out that all of these green lines on this map represent city-maintained streets. That's where we use Powell Bill funding. So, again, we're very appreciative of that Powell Bill funding and like many cities, Charlotte uses that Powell Bill Funding to maintain a significant part of our street maintenance budget. We are concerned though because over the past two years, the city's Powell Bill allocation has been capped at an amount below the FY-2020-statutory allocation. So, our ask of you, the Mecklenburg County Delegation, is for support that the city's allocation be restored to those statutory funding levels that previously existed.

So, just really quickly, this shows you, I call this sort of transportation by numbers. This shows you some of the numbers of those transportation elements that are eligible for Powell Bill funding within the City of Charlotte system. So, it's not just street maintenance, but it's also our pedestrian facilities or bicycle facilities, really important pedestrian crossings that focus on pedestrian safety for the users of our transportation system. It also touches on schools and emergency vehicle support and with that, I will turn it over to John Lewis, who is our CATS (Charlotte Area Transit System) CEO.

John Lewis, Chief Executive Officer Of Charlotte Area Transit System said thank you, Liz. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm John Lewis, Chief Executive Officer for the Charlotte Area Transit System. It's great to be here with you all and I want to thank you first for the opportunity to provide this informational briefing on a portion of the mobility network, we've been focused on across this great region that we serve. Before I start, however, I'd also like to thank each of you for your support that you've given over the years and continue to give to the Charlotte Area Transit System. CATS is proud to serve our region, the city, towns, and communities, and the county, and the surrounding regions. We couldn't do it without your continued support. So, thank you for that.

We've had continued progress on many of our ongoing projects that I know you're familiar with. I'll speak to them briefly today as a part of our overall transit system plan. I also would like to start with a new regional mobility initiative that I had the honor of co-chairing, along with Geraldine Gardner, the Central Line of Regional Council the CONNECT Beyond initiative. CONNECT Beyond is a bold regional mobility plan that sets the vision for how to better connect the rural, suburban, and urban communities in our two-state, 12-county region. This plan serves as a blueprint for implementing a robust, integrated, public transit network that meets the individual needs of each county in our diverse region, and will combine high-capacity transit lines in the urban core with enhanced bus services, and innovative mobility options for rural, human services, medical and work trips.

CONNECT Beyond includes key recommendations paired with specific strategies and implementation steps to create a network that transforms the way residents and visitors travel throughout our region. I'd urge you to check out the website for even more detail on the various community engagements that occurred throughout the development of this

process for this plan, and the final plan itself. Plus, additional videos and graphics that help to tell the full picture for this initiative better than I can in this short briefing. The CONNECT Beyond region, our region, is a diverse two-state, 12 County area of rural communities, small towns, suburban areas, urban hubs, and booming business Districts. The CONNECT Beyond region includes Anson, Cabarrus, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly, and Union counties in North Carolina, and the urbanized areas of Lancaster and York counties in South Carolina. Each county has its own distinctive geography, diverse demographics, and unique transportation challenges, and needs. To build a more connected future where people can travel across municipal, county, and state lines with greater convenience and efficiency. The Central Line Regional Council and the Metropolitan Transit Commission, CATS strategic board and our regional partners have set out to create an innovative mobility plan that will transform our region's mobility future.

The CATS 2030 Transit System Plan is at the core of this effort. CATS has worked since 2007, with the opening of the South Corridor Blue Line project to deliver high-capacity rail connections that extend from the urban center of our region. The Blue Line Extension opened for revenue service in March of 2018. A \$1.2 billion project delivered on time and under budget, followed closely by the Gold Line streetcar project, whose second phase opened in August of 2021. CATS is currently in design for the Silver Line, which will connect Indian Trail, Starlings, and Matthews in the southeast, through Charlotte, and west to the airport terminating in Belmont, three counties in multiple towns in the largest single project we've ever initiated. However, while these high-capacity rail corridors serve as the arteries of our system, I'd like you to think about the bus network as the veins of this body. It is a well-integrated bus network that makes for an equitable, connected, mobility network.

Allow me now to tell you about that initiative, Envision My Ride. In 2017, a national study was released that ranked the 50 largest transit systems across the nation in terms of access, frequency, and reliability. While CATS scored well in terms of access, riders can access most destinations across the county utilizing buses. However, the average trip for that study was over 90 minutes. Frequency and reliability of service needed work. The Metropolitan Transit Commission commissioned this study with the goal of building a better bus network. Those efforts resulted in Envision My Ride, a three-phase plan to restore, and restructure our outdated hub and spoke model of transit, invest in more frequent rail service with 22 high-frequency routes, with service intervals no greater than 15 minutes, and an overall system with no bus route with frequencies greater than 30 minutes.

Finally, bringing the kind of service reliability to our bus network that our rail system provides by investing in bus-only lanes on high ridership corridors, signal priority, and queue jumpers and intersections to keep our buses moving. Which connects us to the vision of improving time, enhancing the experience of our riders, and increasing access throughout our entire network. The end goal is a total mobility network bringing seamless connectivity by way of high-quality and multimodal transportation services. A network that offers frequent bus and rail service with easy access to stations and mobility hubs for drivers and users of rideshare services. Safe and easy access for pedestrians, cyclists, and scooter riders. Taking advantage of opportunities to partner with private sector mobility companies to provide micro transit and on-demand options in the less dense areas and towns of our counties. Creating a total mobility network that meets the needs of the citizens that we serve, no matter where they live, work, or play. Now I'd like to turn the microphone back over to Dana Fenton to discuss our Legislative platform, Dana.

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ITEM NO. 3: POSITION: INFRASTRUCTURE & COMMUNITY NEEDS

Dana Fenton, Inter-Governmental Relations Manager said thank you, John, and Liz, for discussing those important transportation issues. The second position at our Legislative Agenda this year is called Infrastructure and Community Needs. This position is a new position for the City Council. It's not very similar to what you've seen before. It's

really come about because of the action the US Congress took last year to pass the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Basically, we like to work with the governor and General Assembly to allocate federal resources received by the state to advance needs that are here in Charlotte, in our region related to aviation, surface transportation, housing, environmental, digital inclusion, workforce development, climate change, resiliency and sustainability. Essentially, again, this is because the bipartisan infrastructure law that was passed last year and enacted into law will allocate a substantial amount of federal funds to the states for pass-through distribution to local governments to address long-standing community needs. You have seen this before, probably, a lot of the loans that are available to water, sewer, and stormwater agencies come from federal funds that are allocated to the states for disbursement to those types of agencies. We're also going to be seeing some additional new grant programs coming through the state for digital inclusion, workforce development, climate change, resiliency, and sustainability. There is the possibility that some of the funds that the state has received already, through the American Rescue Plan Act, there may be legislation passed that will allow that to be used for other purposes, such as surface transportation, and for housing needs.

Our request is that as the Governor and the General Assembly consider how to allocate these and other federal funds, is that a long-standing need of urban areas such as Charlotte be prioritized? I know we're asking for a lot with this position. There's a lot of funding coming down to the state, but also at the same time, you may think that the city has received some American Rescue Plan Funds through its local fiscal recovery fund that can be used for some of these needs. We have allocated a lot of that funding for these types of needs.

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ITEM NO. 4: AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN FUNDING UPDATE

Dana Fenton, Inter-Governmental Relations Manager said with us next is Shawn Heath, he is a Senior Assistant to the City Manager. He will be presenting how the city will be expending its flexible, local fiscal Recovery Fund dollars. So that you will know that, in addition to asking that, we're also putting our money where our request is, as well.

Shawn Heath, City Manager Office said thank you, Dana. Once again, Shawn Heath from the City Manager's Office. This really is a brief overview of how we're leveraging federal stimulus funds received via the American Rescue Plan, and primarily emphasizing the community-facing work that we're doing. Here, you can see that under the American Rescue Plan, there were really a number of funding branches for the City of Charlotte and other local jurisdictions, each with its own rulebook, so to speak. Moving left to right here on this slide for airports across the country, there was an \$8 billion overall allocation, which for the Charlotte airport translated to \$168 million, which is being put towards operations and debt service. Those are eligible uses. For the transportation system under the American Rescue Plan that was an overall \$30 billion dollar allocation across the country, which through various allocation formulas translated to \$88 million for our transportation system here CATS (Charlotte Area Transit System), and that's available for operations, support, payroll, et cetera.

Moving into the section here shaded in green, which is really the focal point. These are the three primary allocations under the American Rescue Plan that provided us with the ability to do work that's truly community-facing in nature. First on homeless assistance. Of course, in Charlotte Mecklenburg on any given night, we have approximately 3,000 residents that are facing literal homelessness. This particular allocation has been a wonderful way for us to connect to an initiative that you may be aware of that was launched here locally last year by Charlotte Center City Partners in Mecklenburg County, with participation from the City of Charlotte, Bank of America, Atrium, and really dozens of other corporate philanthropic and nonprofit partners here. It was referred to as the 2025 housing and homelessness strategy. More recently, it's been rebranded as A Home For All. The idea is to bring this collection of stakeholders around the table to evaluate what are some meaningful actions that can be taken to really address the homelessness issue here in our community.

So, with this particular \$12 million, all of this has been authorized for use by City Council through a range of programs that fall into two primary categories. One is tenant-based rental assistance and supportive services, which go hand in hand. Here it's really an emphasis on bridge funding to help individuals that are currently homeless move into self-sufficiency. That can often take months and sometimes years. Self-sufficiency could be supportive housing, or it could be true, independent living. The supportive services are designed to provide housing, navigation, and all types of other wraparound services that this particular population may need in order to position themselves to be ready for a permanent housing solution. So, we're working with local partners like the United Way and Roof Above, and Salvation Army to activate on that particular strategy.

On the rental assistance here it references \$29 million, which is accurate for the American Rescue Plan. Just for a bigger piece of context, since the beginning of the pandemic, if you go back to the CARES ACT (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security), and then there was a late calendar year 2020 stimulus plan as well. The City of Charlotte has received and activated in excess of \$60 million associated with rental assistance, which has been quite helpful given how the pandemic translated to tremendous housing instability for members of our community. So, the \$60 million in total has been leveraged to support 20,000 households in our community. Mecklenburg County has received separate allocations through various stimulus plans. Both Charlotte and Mecklenburg County are working with Dream Key as our local administrative partner to put that money to work. It's really prioritized individuals in the community that need it most. So, these would be folks that are low-income and/or unemployed, and/or have received an eviction notice. So, we're really trying to be very intentional about how that funding is deployed.

Then finally, on the larger green bar here, the \$142 million would be the local, state, and Fiscal Recovery Fund is the long form name for it. For the City of Charlotte that translated to \$142 million, which has been provided in two tranches. We received \$71 million in May of last year, and we expect to receive another \$71 million in May of this calendar year. Separate and distinct from this Mecklenburg County has received approximately \$216 million under the same program. With the pie chart on the right here, you can see City Council's decision in terms of distribution of the \$71 million was to put approximately 85 percent of that allocation into the community. With the remainder \$11 million going into city operations to support things such as premium pay for frontline essential workers, pandemic-related emergency leave, and then also a pandemic-related vaccination program that we stood up last year.

This is just a super simple illustration of the key factors that have really been shaping our community investments. With community needs very early in the pandemic, the Mayor and City Council stood up a community recovery task force which included a collection of some external stakeholders here. It was a valuable way for us to have a sense for the impact of the pandemic needs in the community with a particular emphasis on small businesses and also housing. We're also over the last couple of years through our annual budgeting process. We've historically done a survey each year but during the pandemic, we're including a question or two related specifically to resident feedback related to the use of federal stimulus funds. On Council priorities, the City Council, of course, goes through an annual exercise to identify and affirm its priorities. This has been helpful for us as we've looked for ways to put stimulus funding to work with a particular point of view around health, and small businesses, workforce, and jobs, housing, and digital inclusion would be good examples there.

Then finally, while the American Rescue Plan local fiscal recovery fund does provide a fair amount of flexibility, there are certainly rules and in terms of eligible uses of funds, so we're always having to be mindful of what those eligible uses are. Wrapping up here, this chart ties back to the \$60 million in the pie chart from a couple of slides ago in terms of ARPA, tranche one of \$71 million, with \$60 million going into the community. This gives you a sense for the types of investment categories that we're advancing. The way the process works is staff works on specific recommendations and brings those to council for discussion and vetting, and ultimately voting. Of the \$60 million City Council has already authorized, approximately 60 percent of that amount is for programming, and the remainder, staff will be bringing to the council in the months ahead for conversation. In

terms of the three primary areas of emphasis, housing one, workforce development and employment and community vitality, and how housing staff is still working through specific investment plans. This funding will be of great help to us as a community. As we are just now in the midst of evaluating opportunities for us to advance our work on affordable housing, to advance our work on improving access to homeownership for members of our community. We know that due to market dynamics right now, that's particularly challenging. We're also evaluating ways to address concerns related to gentrification and displacement. In terms of workforce development and employment here, there is a real emphasis on small businesses and workforce and hospitality sector support. Then with community vitality, I won't go through each one of these. The digital inclusion, for example, is an area of emphasis here, recognizing, and of course, we knew this before the pandemic, but the pandemic really brought it to light that members of our community tens of thousands of members of our community are on the wrong side of the digital divide. Which puts them at a disadvantage in terms of job training, access to jobs, healthcare, and banking. So, we're hopeful that we can do our part and be a catalyst through part of the larger public-private partnership to make a real difference there.

Nonprofit support, we're in the midst of standing up a program for local nonprofits. I would emphasize that we will need to be very intentional about how that's challenged \$3.5 million. In order for us to get a good value proposition, we want to have a few specific investment priority areas and we want to be sure that the money is going into communities that are distressed as a result of the pandemic. Then finally, I would end with just a reference to the youth and teen impact. In terms of the partnership, we have with the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association), we've identified six specific YMCAs that are generally in the crescent. Among other things, kind of the signature piece of that program is providing access to teenagers at those six particular YMCAs is so providing access for up to a year for about 1,300 teenagers in the community. So, that concludes my presentation, Mayor Lyles, I'll hand it back to you.

Mayor Lyles said I want to thank you for giving us the time to present what we believe is a strategic focus that's meaningful and realistic to the residents of our city. I also want to express our appreciation for your work in Raleigh. Doing the things that we need to have done at home, I want to reiterate that the issue around street maintenance and the Powell Bill are very, very important to us. Especially for you that have to drive around a lot. You can see what that experience is like and then the other strategic effort around infrastructure that we believe the federal government intends to get out to build jobs and opportunities at the same time to improve our nation's cities and towns. So, with that, we want to open this up, give you the time that you need to ask us any questions, or provide us any comments, or any advice and guidance that you can give us as we try to work towards making sure the City of Charlotte, is a part of our region and is part of a place where we can provide quality of life for every resident and opportunities to live here safely, in a decent home, have a decent job, and the ability to move around in our city. So, with that, I'll turn it over to Senator Marcus.

Senator Natasha Marcus said thank you so much. Dana Fenton does a wonderful job of keeping us connected with what the city needs. We're often in Raleigh, you know, not here at home. Appreciate so much the work that he does to make sure we're always on top of what we need to know. My only questions relate to two bills that I've specifically filed for Charlotte. On Charlotte's request last session and whether we need to tweak them or refile them or wait till another year, so I won't take up everyone's time with that. I can talk directly with Dana about that at another time. I do see that at least one more member of our Delegation has joined since.

Okay, Representative Carney is here. Do you want to quickly introduce yourself, Representative Carney? Then I'll open it up to any of my Delegation members who may have a question or follow-up comment.

Becky Carney, North Carolina State Representative said yes, sorry, I was late to the party. A lot of tech problems. I am Representative Becky Carney. I represent House District 102 and again, I want to say to council members and staff and the Mayor that Dana does an incredible job of keeping us informed and connected with the city.

Nasif Majeed, North Carolina State Representative said I have a question to the council, about this red line. Where are we with the red line, I know there has been a lot of talk about communication, different interests, and social harmony on the northern sector of Mecklenburg County. Tell us how that is proceeding. Are we making progress?

Mayor Lyles said well, that is a great question Representative Majeed. I want to say that this council has invested a lot of effort in being very clear that the way that we want to proceed with our strategic mobility efforts is to be consistent both locally in Mecklenburg County and regionally with CONNECT Beyond. That means that we have to have the ability to address all of the rail lines that people see as being needed. One, especially the red line as it's being needed, prior to what we've been talking about. That has to be a priority for any step that we take to move forward for mobility. I hope that's a simple enough answer, but we're certainly glad to answer additional comments or have additional comments. We recognize that in order for us to move forward as a county, that means every part of the county has to be served.

Senator Natasha Marcus said I'll make a follow-up on that since North Mecklenburg is my area and we don't need to get into all the details of this, but just for the record, it's my understanding that the people in North Mecklenburg were I represent very much want not just a toll lane, and not just buses, but a rail option. So, I know I've made that clear to folks before when we talked about the transportation plan, but that's what we're looking for. So, we hope we can work toward that. Thank you, Representative Majeed, for bringing that up. Does anyone else have a question or comment from our Delegation?

John Autry, North Carolina State Representative said this is for CATS. During your presentation, sir, you mentioned something about private-sector mobility. Could you have some examples of that? I'm curious as to how those private sector entities are renumarated for their service.

John Lewis, Chief Executive Officer of Charlotte Area Transit System said thank you, Representative Autry, it's a great question. One of the things that we are trying to do through Envision My Ride is, as I mentioned, to provide frequent, and reliable, and efficient transportation options to the citizens of our region. In doing that, one thing that we've realized is that CATS does very well in moving large numbers of people along established corridors. So, we have very frequent bus service as an example, along Central Avenue; we have very high-frequency rail service on the Blue Line and the Gold Line. There are areas that we serve where we find less dense communities where a large 40-foot bus and a train isn't going to operate effectively in those communities.

As an example, our towns of Huntersville, Davidson, and Cornelius, we have been operating our village rider system for a number of years. We're using the same cookie-cutter approach where you put a 40-foot bus in a small neighborhood as if we were moving hundreds of people along that corridor each day. That has not been effective for us. That service operates on an hourly frequency, and it just isn't meeting the mobility needs of those communities. So, we have an opportunity to make use of other more effective services that could be offered by private sector providers that would be under contract to CATS to offer on-demand service using smaller vehicles, maybe even cars or in some places vans, to move people in those communities where they need to go, connecting to our high-capacity transit lines, and do so at a more cost-effective means. So, we've partnered in the past with Lyft in our North Davidson communities and in the University City area to provide those kinds of services, but they are under contract with CATS.

State Representative Autry said thank you.

Mayor Lyles said we found that service to be operating in other cities our size. We saw it in Austin. I think Mayor Pro Tem and I, had that conversation with their system and they are very very pleased with it. The neighborhoods are much more pleased that you have on-demand service as quickly what we would ordinarily pay for if we are using those services.

State Representative Autry said yes, I understand that. I know that's the common conundrum of all transportation systems is, but what about that last mile? So, I appreciate your response. Thank you.

Rachel Hunt, North Carolina State Senate said I have a question. This is Representative Hunt. Could you explain a little bit about the umbrella center that you mentioned earlier in the presentation?

Shawn Heath, Housing and Neighborhood Services Director said yes. Hi, this is Shawn Heath. So, one of the opportunities that we've evaluated this would be back to that slide that showed different investment opportunities for the American Rescue Plan. Public safety was a broad category that we identified very early on in our analysis. Through that work, the umbrella center emerged as a great use of that funding. So, conversations have been had at the Safe Communities level, I believe it was voted out of committee. We will evaluate when and how to batch it up with other investment opportunities to bring it back to the full council for conversation.

Mayor Lyles said Senator, you're familiar with the history of the Umbrella Center?

Senator Marcus said no, I want to know what it is.

Mayor Lyles said I thought she might want to start at the beginning. So, we'll go ahead and come back to you. It's something that we're very, very intimately aware of as a Council because it serves a great need in our community, and I turn it back over to Shawn.

Mr. Heath said so, I probably can't do the best job of explaining all the context. This would be a new facility that would provide for a way to do an integrated service associated with members of the community that have faced domestic abuse, and sexual assault. So, it's essentially, at this point, a vision for a fundraising campaign to establish that facility in this community. It's based on a best practice model that's been done elsewhere across the country.

Mayor Lyles said so think of Doves Nest, Pats Place, and Safe Alliances. Any other questions or comments on what I hope what a very viable legislative agenda for our city, but also recognizing that we're part of greater Mecklenburg and knowing that there are other demands that other urban communities will make, and we will join them and be supportive of their efforts as well.

Councilmember Bokhari said hi everyone and thanks for listening to our Legislative Agenda. As you can tell, it's at a high level, there's some specific points to it that we're tracking, and we're looking for help, but as always, it's fluid. We'll be watching what the federal government does, what you guys do in the short, and then long session, and then how our needs evolve, and partnerships evolve. So, there's a lot that's more art and science. As you well know. At this time, I'd just like to ask if there's anything as part of a two-way partnership that we can be helpful to our delegation and what your strategy is in the coming sessions.

Mayor Lyles said I see lots of smiles and I don't know if anyone wants to dive in.

State Representative Carney said well, I appreciate the question and the comment. I think today, it's been a good start of putting us all on Zoom so that we can hear your legislative request. We used to do this frequently in the past, and I think for us, we get so many inquiries about city issues sometimes about a city road that's part of State Road responsibility, issues of that nature.

Again, I think you've got someone representing you in Raleigh have working with us, Dana, that we go to with a lot of these questions. I think the most important part, I'm speaking for myself, and my colleagues can chime in. We are looking at, and I'm sorry I missed the beginning of all of this, but the mobility plan, CONNECT, all of what we're moving ahead with building out our transit system and the multi-pronged system that

we're looking at. Anyway, that total mobility network, that's what I was trying to get to that screen. I do think that is a question that I have, maybe you've covered this in your earlier part of the presentation, I was late getting on, when will you all be at the point that you're going to need us within Raleigh for enabling legislation to move forward with funding?

Mayor Lyles said I think that the City Council's goal is to do that when we are ensured that we have the agreement among all of the towns and the city to do so. So, that is a work in progress. I think that we would not like to come to you with something that's more difficult than something that we have worked out through ourselves and working with you as we go through this as an opportunity. So, you'll have the opportunity to weigh in. We certainly will come to you when we have a recommendation that we have a concurrence upon inside of the county. I think that's only fair.

State Representative Carney said I agree. Thank you. I would like to ask the question, about the beginning of this lecture that CONNECT Beyond, and the slide looking at our region. Is the mobility plan, is that looking out into the region beyond Mecklenburg County? Are you all working in that capacity? I ask that question because we build relationships with our counterparts and the surrounding counties and looking at this region when there are issues that come before us in Raleigh. So, has there been any work in that capacity beyond our county line?

Mayor Lyles said we have one of the Co-Chairs of CONNECT Beyond, John Lewis, but I'm going to ask the manager to address this because a lot of times when we began with this question, it's not just reaching out to the person that operates the service. It starts with getting some ideas around how things are managed and understanding the ethos of those communities. So, I think Mr. Jones?

Marcus Jones, City Manager said thank you, Mayor, members of Council in the Delegation, Delegate Representative Carney I think that's the best question because it establishes a foundation or a baseline. So, when we think about CONNECT Beyond, it is the system that goes across two states in 12 counties, and we start to think about all of those different transit lines that will connect us. What's special about CONNECT Beyond is that the Metropolitan Transit Commission did endorse it. So, if we start to think about what's happening in Mecklenburg County, I believe it was a seven-one vote that the MTC (Metropolitan Transit Commission) did endorse CONNECT Beyond, as we take it down a level, there's the 2030 Transit plan. The 2030 Transit plan includes those lines, whether we're talking about the Red Line, or the Silver Line, or the Blue Line Extension that goes into Pineville to Ballantyne, that also has been unanimously approved by the MTC. So, we start off thinking about some of the lines in Charlotte as the spine. Ultimately, it is a regional system that we're attempting to build out. That, again, includes two states in 12 counties and so we started that CONNECT Beyond level.

Mayor Lyles said so, I will tell you that we are beginning to have deeper conversations, in fact, in other counties and beyond. The goal is to have a regional system that works for, again, the footprint that we have to serve for economic development and employment. As well as you know, the ability to have diverse housing price points. So, all of that is important to us as we go through this. All of those are equally important, transportation, jobs, and places to live.

State Representative Carney said well, thank you for that. That's very enlightening and it's good news to me. I'm sure, my colleagues, that this CONNECT Beyond, it's very futuristic thinking, and good to know that you're already working with other people and especially, since we're looking at the two states and I know that Pineville did not come to the table, and they began 25 years ago, and now understand they want to be at the table and South Carolina wants into this too. I think we're in a good position and glad to hear that the city is already working in that direction.

Mayor Lyles said for saying that Representative Carney as a transportation expert, we're flattered, thank you.

Councilmember Driggs said so, I have a question. It relates to our Legislative Agenda, but it's a little more specific. We were told a few months ago that NC-DOT (North Carolina Department of Transportation) was running about \$10 billion behind in terms of funding for its 10-year capital plan. Essentially, they had budgeted about \$20 million, it looks like it's going to come in costing 30 or so. I understand that there's a process going on right now to basically reprioritize or to try to align their work schedule with the new reality of their funding. So, I'm wondering if any of you on this call could give us any insight into how that is progressing. I think the results were supposed to be announced this summer sometime. Can our delegation engage in order to ensure that Mecklenburg County doesn't end up deprioritized as a result?

Senator Marcus said obviously very important to all of us that the urban areas, Charlotte being at the top of that list, not get overlooked, and not have our sales tax or other taxes redirected to more rural areas without recognizing that we are a major source of revenue here. Specifically, DOT (Department of Transportation) funding, as you know I'm sure Councilmen Driggs, has a problematic way that we fund it. It's driven by gas tax and that's a shrinking source of revenue. So, you're right. There's a lot of discussion in Raleigh about how we need to change that. Some people think it's urgent. Some legislators think it's not so urgent. Again, I don't speak for my delegation members, but I believe we agree that it is an urgent need. I know not just Charlotte, but surrounding towns, the towns of Huntersville, and Cornelissen, Davidson that I represent as well, have the same concerns that Charlotte does. Which is we're getting super crowded on our roads, and we're not getting fast enough help from DOT.

So, we have to change how the funding works because there have been so many factors. Between the pandemic and the fewer employees and fewer resources to build what we need to build, but also the funding and the Map Act and all the money that took in the hurricanes. The hurricanes are going to keep coming, damage from storms and climate change. It's all connected. So, we definitely need to address it. As far as where things are in the negotiation. I cannot recall whether anyone on the call today is on the Transportation Committee, either in the Senate or House. If anyone is on that committee and can maybe give a little more detail on where things stand right now. I know we're waiting to hear back from DOT and where they're going to rank certain projects that as you all know, get pushed back from time to time in a frustrating manner. So, I know that should be in the next two weeks we should hear some updates about local projects, and when those will be back on from DOT. As far as the bigger question of how we're going to structure funding for DOT going forward and prioritize going forward, I don't have an update on that. I don't hear anyone else joining in.

Mary Belk, North Carolina State Representative said Senator Marcus, this is Representative Belk. From the House standpoint, I would say exactly what you just said and that we know that this is essential. As urban areas, we tried to make sure that those allocations and when they reprioritize, that were part of it but although we keep pushing that, but right now, we can't give you an update. We'll probably do that in the short session. We'll know more then.

Councilmember Winston said thank you. I'm wondering if you guys can, since you said you have relationships with your counterparts from different parts of the state, wondering if you can give us some vision around the Powell Bill numbers, how they got there, and where they're going. This has significant effects on us from a budgetary perspective, you were obviously a growing city, but also in the way that we're growing. For instance, we're becoming a regional logistics hub. So, that means that we have a lot more heavier trucks, in and around neighborhoods, for instance. So, the need to upkeep streets is only increasing. So, if we have to do that, in the absence of our Powell Bill funding, that's going to take away from future investments in things like affordable housing, or potentially transportation, or other issues that are very specifically local issues. So, kind of what do you see, you know, we were just told that I think just us in Raleigh, had this reduction. Nobody was aware of it. It wasn't in the committee. It just kind of happened when the budget was presented. So, it really does feel like from a council perspective, we're flying

blind. So, if you can give us some vision on what's going on there and what we should expect. I'd be grateful for that.

State Representative Autry said so would I.

Senator Marcus said I don't know what the exact question is, Councilman Winston?

Mr. Winston said okay, I'll try to be more specific. Can you give us some insight on to how we got to this level of Powell Bill funding, and what the future horizon seems to be in terms of getting to an acceptable level of Powell Bill funding?

Senator Marcus said I'm pausing to see if anyone from the Transportation Committee has any insight. I'm afraid that the answer is a political one. I don't want to get too much into politics, but time and time again, we see legislators who are in the majority party in Raleigh, finding ways to short the urban areas of our state, they feel like Charlotte and Raleigh have the most money, they can somehow manage things on their own. I think they look a blind eye to the way in which we drive our state's economy and need support and can't continue to press on the county, and the city and the residents to pick up the difference over and over again. They're using the tier system, which is not supposed to be for this sort of thing to justify sending less to our urban areas that are considered wealthy and more to the rural areas that need help. That's my guess. I'm not on that committee. I don't have insight into why they decided again on this issue as they have on others to make it harder on Charlotte.

Mr. Winston said did anybody ask the governor why he signed this and at least lobby to the effects of this budget and future budgets, any response from that, because this has to be done with the governor's signature, right?

Senator Marcus said if I'm not mistaken, it was part of the whole budget, the big budget for the entire state on everything. Is that right?

Mayor Lyles said that's correct.

State Representative Autry said right, so no Vision. Thank you.

Brandon Lofton, North Carolina State Representative said this is Brandon. If the question is why the Governor signed the budget, we can give a lot of reasons about why we needed a budget. Since we haven't had one, we didn't pass for 2019, and teacher raises were in there as well, as well as minimum wage increases for non-certified staff. So, there were a lot of things in the budget that were objectionable that we had problems with, and the governor's office had problems with. Regardless we needed to have a budget, and we needed to help move our state forward. That's part of the problem. We're not talking about standalone bills or efforts, and you're not talking about committee meetings and deliberations, you're talking about a 400-page document dropped on your desk at 9 pm and you start to vote on it the next day. It has a lot of problems in it and a lot of things you're working to try to get out, and a lot of things that need to happen. That is the process.

We're actually in the process of gearing up and preparing ourselves to deal with that here coming up in a short session. So, in terms of why the governor voted for it, or signed the budget, and why several of us voted for the budget. That's a longer conversation, broader. In terms of this issue of the Powell Bill, I think that is something that you know, for the transportation side, we'll have to be on the lookout for and see if we can try to fix it in the short session when the new budget process starts up.

Mayor Lyles said all right, thank you, Mr. Lofton. We did say that we would be conscious of your time it is now a little bit after one. So, let us express our appreciation for your time and the work that you do for us. We are here. We're glad to hear that Dana is being informative and responsive to you. We are also here to do that same thing. Feel free to call any one of us if you have a question or if you here have a constituent that needs an issue resolved that we can manage or help you with. We are here to support you as our

delegation. Thank you for your time. Senator Marcus, do you have any closing remarks for us?

Senator Marcus said none other than that. We are proud to be from Charlotte and represent Charlotte. We will continue to do our best both with our influence with the Governor and most of us are in the minority party in Raleigh. As you know, one of our members is in the majority party. We try to work together for the benefit of Charlotte and the county and the region at large. We'll continue to do that, thank you for your work as well.

Mayor Lyles said thank you very much and have a great afternoon everyone.

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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:03 p.m.



Billie Tynes, Deputy City Clerk

Length of Meeting: 1 Hour, 0 Minutes
Minutes Completed: June 22, 2023