

**ANNUAL STRATEGY MEETING, DAY 3 - WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2025**

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina convened for an Annual Strategy Session on Wednesday, January 29, 2025, at 9:07 a.m. at The Restoration Asheville, 68 Patton Avenue, Asheville, North Carolina with Mayor Vi Lyles presiding. Council members present were Danté Anderson, Tariq Bokhari, Tiawana Brown, Ed Driggs, Malcolm Graham, Renee Johnson, Lawana Mayfield, James Mitchell.

**ABSENT:** Councilmember Victoria Watlington

**ABSENT UNTIL NOTED:** Councilmembers Dimple Ajmera and Marjorie Molina

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**ITEM NO. 1: WELCOME**

**DeAlva Arnold, Facilitator** said good morning, good morning, good morning. I'm DeAlva Arnold with D. Wilson Agency. Welcome to day three. Let's give ourselves a round of applause. For two jam-packed days, you guys have worked hard to get us to this point, so thank you so much. On the agenda today is the review of your strategic project tracker. I'm really excited about this, because this is a deliverable that came about as a direct result of the feedback that you gave to staff last year.

They heard you and they responded, and Monica Allen is going to come up and walk us through the strategic project tracker and where you can find it and how to use it. Then, we'll move directly into confirming and reaffirming your strategic priorities. So, we've had a lot of information over the last two days to provide insights and expertise around initiatives, projects, and priorities that are important to you as a Council and important to the City. We'll now use all of that to influence how you want to provide direction to the staff to move forward in terms of strategic priorities for 2025. Then, we'll revisit the high-performing Council's work that we started on Monday, we'll get back to our team rules of engagement, and then we will close today, and I do want to remind Council that there is a closed session today.

**Councilmember Ajmera arrived at 9:09 a.m.**

I do want to welcome Councilmember Ajmera back to the team today. I'm happy to see that you're feeling better. Without further ado, if there are no other questions and no other business to open with, Mayor, Manager. Alright, we'll go directly into the agenda, Monica Allen. Thank you.

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**ITEM NO. 2: STRATEGIC PROGRESS TRACKER**

**Monica Allen, Assistant City Manager** said alright, good morning. How's everyone doing? Alright, so in your packet you have a copy of the strategic progress tracker. It's just a printout. We wanted to put in PDF form for you, so that you can just kind of go through it on your own. I'm not going to go into the numbers, and I'll give a little bit of background as to why, but I just wanted to re-orient y'all to this particular tool. Is there a way to navigate through the tool on here to click on a link? Well, while they're doing that, I want to just give a quick background on the strategic progress tracker. I'm doing this on behalf of Julia Martin, who's not here with us, so I do want to give her a shoutout, as well as the I&T (Innovation and Technology) team, because they did a great job in putting this together for you.

So, as a reminder, in January of 2024, when you went through and you set your strategic priorities, what was birthed out of that was a set of metrics or indicators that ultimately helped comprise the strategic progress tracker, and so that work was done through the various committees. In June of 2024, it was presented to Council, I believe, in a couple different forms, for you to be able to take a look at and walk through. One of

the things that they said at the time when they presented it was that the tracker was going to be updated two times a year. One of the main reasons for that is because when some of the data is provided to staff, some of that data comes in on a calendar year, and then at other times some of that data comes in on a fiscal year. So, one of the things I want to just caution ya'll about is that when it was presented in June of 2024 to you, this is actually the half year, so we haven't completed one full year of the data that's within the tracker, and so there's not a lot of things that we can say, oh, we implemented this plan, we executed this work, and we're seeing a lot of movement. So, I don't know if I can navigate through there or not.

**Councilmember Anderson** said Monica, are you saying that this data in here is a half year or the end of the year?

Ms. Allen said well, it depends. So, some of these measures are on a calendar year cycle, and then some of the measures are on a fiscal year. So, one of the things that staff said that they would do is that they would make sure that when they produce a tracker, so they produce at the end of the fiscal year, so there's probably a set of metrics that in June 2024 we're ready to go at that fiscal year mark, but there's also data that doesn't get reported in until the end of a calendar year. So, in December 2024, staff took some time to update the information within here. The thing I want to point out, is that we haven't cycled through a full year yet, so that's why there's not a lot of insight here around trends, but I did want to just walk you guys through and re-orient you, one, to the tool, and then, two, to get some additional feedback from you if there's anything that you have for staff, so that as we continue to update and modify the tracker, we can make it a little more user friendly for you. I think the team did a really great job. When I came on board in October 2024, I took a look at this tool, thought they did a great job, but I think at the same time, they're also looking for maybe some feedback.

Just really quickly, so this is a live site. This is where the tracker is on the City's website. When they shared it with you last June 2024, this was the same location, so it hasn't changed. So, on this top page you'll essentially see, what I would call like tiles, if you will, that are going to be to the various strategic priority areas. So, the one thing that I want to just point out first is how to use the tracker. So, if you click on that, and you can also walk through this at the same time. So, the second page of your handout has the, how to use the tracker, and so on here it's essentially the same thing, we just printed out for you here. So, essentially it just talks about on the left [INAUDIBLE] side are the list of objectives. Many of the measures, as I mentioned, came from the various plans that the City has in place, those are the Council adopted objectives. Down below, of course, we list the five strategic priorities, and then on the right side, how to read the measures. So, at the very top, you'll see the actual measure name, so we call that out pretty clearly for individuals, and then right below that, is whatever that data point is for that particular cycle. So, whether it's a calendar year or a fiscal year or even a bond year, that's also something else that we had decided to put in here. To the right, you'll see a call out there where it just has the previous indicator. So, in this particular case, the metric is proximity to financial services. The result is 35.5 percent, and then the prior year was 35.2 percent.

One of the things that we're considering and would love your feedback on, with regard to updating this, is potentially being able to show trend data once we get going beyond a year. So, while you do have the previous data point there, sometimes visually it may be helpful for people to see things going up or going down, and so that may be a modification that we're going to make, but we've got to work with I&T to figure out specifically how to make that work. Then, sticking on the right side, essentially there's another little callout. I know it's a little hard to read up here, but basically, we're saying, what's the directionality there. So, if we're looking at the prior year result of 35.2 percent, and you're looking at current year, 35.5 percent, we're essentially saying that's an increase, and so we're very clearly just calling out and saying, this is increased, or it's decreased compared to prior year. Then, just kind of going around clockwise at the very bottom, we wanted to reference the actual source of the data. So, we know that sometimes data that exists in other places is just best pulled in as opposed to replicating everything. So, in this particular example, the measure came from, or the

data is coming from, the quality-of-life explorer. So, individuals who are interacting with the tool can click into the actual dashboard or the location for where that data sits and get a little more insight around the actual result. I think that's a great approach, because it helps us not cloud the actual dashboard with a lot of context and information where people can go to the original source data there. Then, going around on the bigger box on the left side, you can see there that we call out whether it's a fiscal year measure, a bond year measure or a calendar year measure.

So, if we click back out, and I'll just do one, for example, because I wanted to keep this update short, but let's just go into great neighborhoods. So, when you go into this particular space, essentially again, what we printed out for you is what you see here. So, you can see here in a clean layout what the measures are, what the results are, I mean, all of those other specific pieces of the tracker that I had mentioned on the previous slide. So, I would encourage you to walk through this on your own when you have some time, dive into some of the additional source data that we provided for you in there. Take a look, reach out to me and let me know, and I'll work with Julia when she gets back to update this tracker, and if there's anything that we can do to enhance it and make it a little more clear, we'd be happy to do so.

I do want to just share with you, in case you were looking at the tracker from last June 2024, I think there were 12 measures that were updated in December 2024. So, if you were looking at a particular set of metrics in June 2024, there were some updates that we had to this document, and if you want to know more, I call those out for you specifically. Questions?

**Councilmember Mayfield** said Monica, I'm trying to follow you. How do we access the tracker again, specifically, once we go to charlottenc.gov?

Ms. Allen said yes, so I can't read it up top, but it's actually on the City of Charlotte's page, but I can send a link.

**Councilmember Brown** said [inaudible] strategic progress tracker.

Ms. Mayfield said okay, because I put that in in the search and it didn't come up and I wanted to make sure.

Ms. Allen said Councilwoman Mayfield, I'll send a link to the Council as soon as I sit down, that way you can go directly to it and then you can link it as a favorite, or something like that.

Ms. Mayfield said and I'm also wondering, while we're looking at the breakdown for great neighborhoods, are we going to add a tracker in here for Faith in Housing?

Ms. Allen said that's something we can consider. From what I understand, the work to develop these set of measures went through committee. So, I think that's something we would want to go back through committee and do. Also, when we get to the end of this fiscal year, because we would've had this tracker in place for one year, I also think it would be good to just kind of go a little deep with the various committees on this subset of the measures that you guys said that we should track. So, yes, if there's anything that we wanted to modify, that work will be done through the committee, as opposed to just sending it to me and we update, because we want to make sure it's a good metric, we want to make sure it makes sense, and aligns to the plans and the like, but yes.

**Councilmember Mitchell** said thank you, Monica. Just one question, I think, on the initial page. The last item was Charlotte Business INClusion policy, and then when you were giving us the demo, I didn't see a page dedicated to it. So, will we be updating the Charlotte Business INClusion policy on the tracker this year?

Ms. Allen said so, is it a particular indicator?

Mr. Mitchell said yes, ma'am.

Ms. Allen said okay.

Mr. Mitchell said so, on the first screen, it's under equity and governance framework.

Ms. Allen said yes, so the equity and governance framework piece, it said adopted October 2022, is that what you're talking about?

Mr. Mitchell said yes, ma'am.

Ms. Allen said okay, and so your question is?

Mr. Mitchell said are we going to have a dedicated page for the Charlotte Business INClusion policy, like we have for the great neighborhoods and the other topics?

Ms. Allen said yes. So, what we would do is, if it's a particular measure that ties to CBI (Charlotte Business INClusion) that ties back to one of the strategic priorities, then we would embed within whichever place it fits, I'm guessing either workforce business development, well-managed government. We'd had to figure out where it goes. We wouldn't dedicate a page to it, because we only have the pages for the five strategic priorities, not for specific programs, if that makes sense, but if there's a metric that comes out of that work, then we would add it to one of the tiles there.

Unknown said so, these are your five strategic priorities.

Ms. Allen said these are your five strategic priorities, yes.

Unknown said [inaudible].

Mr. Mitchell said but Mayor Pro Tem, that's workforce development. I guess what I'm looking for, we're talking about the Charlotte Business INClusion.

Unknown said [inaudible].

Mr. Mitchell said okay, got it.

Ms. Arnold said so, these are your five [inaudible] strategic priorities. So, these are the ones that came out last year [inaudible] there are a number of [inaudible] that are underway to address priorities [inaudible] working with [inaudible].

**Councilmember Molina arrived at 9:22 a.m.**

Mr. Mitchell said okay, great. I'll wait until the conversation.

Ms. Allen said yes, we debated should we do the tracker after the conversation of those strategic priorities or before. So, sorry for the confusion. In January 2024, when you reaffirmed your strategic priorities, these are the five, and from there, that resulted in a springboarding in developing the dashboard, or the progress tracker. So, getting down at the indicator level, but yes, if we decided, or if you decided, to do something around changing these, then it would be a new tile and we would have a subset of metrics, or if it was not a decision to have it as one of your strategic priorities, then we would have whatever measure that may be associated with the CBI program within one of those existing five, or some subset of strategic priorities.

Mr. Mitchell said thank you. I wait until we have the conversation.

Ms. Allen said real quick, the measures do follow the set of strategic priorities, and so I think what would be really good, and maybe this is a nice segway into the next section after the questions around this is, once those are reaffirmed or changed or modified or staying the same, then the data will follow. So, that should always be the case in terms of, now that we have these things that we want to focus on, what are the subset of metrics that we want to go along with it. So, this dashboard probably will change

depending on what comes out of today, but yes, short answer is yes, depending on what you guys decide.

Ms. Arnold said I do want to make sure that we highlight really quickly, if you didn't hear me at the very beginning, this tracker is in direct response to your feedback from last year. You asked for governance. You asked for an ability to check in and see where the projects are that you have deemed and blessed and approved to move forward. So, this is what that tracker is. So, at this point, we're at a higher level and I think, not to repeat, but I want to make sure that we kind of just do step one, two, three, these are your high-level priorities. Once the team has decided, and you've given feedback on what are the key metrics of success that we want to measure, which some of them Monica has already walked through, that's what you'll see when you click these boxes. Again, what has been through committee and approved as key metrics of success to demonstrate whether or not this project is on track or not. So, it's a very important tool that you should see very often and use often. Thank you, but I do want to call out that this was, as has been everything else this year in the retreat, a direct response to your feedback and net new because of that.

Ms. Anderson said thank you, and Monica, thank you for the update, for the information. I have a couple questions. One is the safe communities tracker. The reason why I was asking initially where's this data that we're looking at on our slides here coming from is because, in the CMPD (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department) Updated Crime Report, end of the year, I don't think these numbers align with that. So, I didn't know if these numbers on safe communities, for example, the violent crime rate and the property crime rate, those don't correlate with what's in here, this CMPD end of the year report?

Ms. Allen said yes, we'll have to just crosswalk with that. It could just be how the data was sliced. It could be that it's reported there on a fiscal year, this could be a calendar year. So, yes, it could also be timing, but let us go ahead and do that due diligence to make sure, because the other thing too is when we get the data, like on violent crime or anything that ties back to CMPD, we would ask them specifically for the data. So, we're not going to curate something separate from them. So, I'm trusting that there's alignment, but it could be the timing and the reporting period.

Ms. Anderson said okay, yes, it might be the timing. The other question I had is, I just reviewed this, because we got in our packet last week, I believe, and so on the transportation and planning side, the proximity to fresh food. For example, there was a decrease in that number as well as, I can't remember what slide I saw it on, but the proximity to banking decreased as well. Okay, it's on the workforce and business development, the proximity to financial services. It'd be interesting to see what the driving factors are of that, because I know we've had a lot of growth in corridors with financial services. I just want to understand what the driving factors of some of these things are, because we're seeing progress, but it looks like our numbers are not reflective of that progress.

Ms. Allen said okay, and that's also something that we've talked about as a team around how do we make this a little more user friendly, because if you don't understand the drivers for the change, then you see a change, but you're not clear on what were the reasons. So, we may be working with the departments to get some context, so that we can put it on there, just a little color commentary, so that people are understanding, what are some of the reasons for the change, but there could be no reason for the change. It could just be just normal whatever's happening. So, it may not be a specific behavior or may not be a specific initiative that's driving the change. I think all of that aside, still giving something around what could be driving this, would probably be helpful as the users. We want the users to look at this, and it stand on its own, as opposed to always having to call somebody up and get their questions answered, but yes, I think that's some feedback we can take back and incorporate.

Ms. Anderson said okay, thank you.

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said so Mayor Pro Tem, that is exactly how this is supposed to be used. It's a progress tracker. We're going to see trends, whether we have headwinds or tailwinds. What I will say, to your question earlier Councilmember Mitchell, we have thousands of metrics and hundreds of dashboards throughout the City, whether it's the SEAP (Strategic Energy Action Plan) or whether it's Vision Zero. We've taken certain measures, and we brought them up to this dashboard. It doesn't mean there aren't these measures in other dashboards in other departments. We're just highlighting a number of those, and Mayor Pro Tem, yes, this is how you look at it, are we making progress, and why aren't we?

Ms. Allen said yes, and the other thing I just want to say really quickly when it comes to making progress, and I used to say this with the county folk, is that sometimes when you're doing initiative work it's going to take a couple years or three years or four years. It's going to take some time to see change. I think sometimes we say, oh, the number didn't move from one year to the next, or it didn't move when we implemented something last year, but it's only been a year, so let's give it some time. So, you're probably going to see maybe incremental changes in a lot of these things until those initiatives really get going and baked into the work that we're doing as a city day to day, and so over time, hopefully, we see some of those significant changes, whether up or down, that we want to see. In this particular case, this is the half year reporting out, so there's not going to be probably a lot of swings in the numbers from year to year right now, but we do think maybe two years or three years out, we should start to see some things happen depending on what that initiative is to drive it.

**Councilmember Brown** said good morning. Thank you so much Monica. For me, I have a few meetings coming up, neighborhood meetings, so this is great information for me. It's not perfect, but you just explained what we're doing with it, as well as the Manager. If the link gets updated, and I can send my neighborhood leaders that are trying to organize in their communities to this, to show that with all of the things that we've done, here is some information for you, and there are other dashboards as well that they can go to. This is kind of something like what I needed, and they were asking, and I didn't have a clue, so now I have a clue, and I can tell them that, although it's a work in progress, if you go here, this is some information. They always have questions after that anyway. Somebody can go in right up to the minute and put the data in, and people will still have questions. They just will still have questions. So, it's not going to be perfect, but it shows the community and the people that here's something that, because they obviously think we're in the mountains with our feet up, climbing the mountains, running in the mountains, that could be the least from the farthest thing that we're doing. So, when we come back and say, this is from the information where we gathered it last year in Winston-Salem, as we planned together as a Council. Now, we can say, these are the fruits of our labor. So, I'm happy to see it, although, it's not perfect. Nothing is perfect, but when you're dealing with data, it goes up and down all the time. Even in the world that I work in, the nonprofit sector with justice involved individuals' data [inaudible] well this happened this day [inaudible] we're going to get it, but we're moving towards the right direction. The one thing I would say, though, I was looking at the solar projects. Now, I see that that went up tremendously, and I had a few people ask me about the solar projects, and so is there more information that I can get for them on solar projects that you have?

Ms. Allen said yes, we can follow up with the individual that's responsible, or the team that's responsible for the data, and just get some more insight and get that out to you.

Ms. Brown said alright, well, I greatly appreciate that, okay. Thank you so much.

Ms. Allen said you're welcome.

Mr. Jones said so, also to your point, there's a SEAP dashboard that has more information around solar projects.

Ms. Brown said alright.

**Councilmember Driggs** said good morning. This is impressive and very useful, appreciate it. I think it demonstrates that we're willing to be accountable and we're trying to be as transparent as we can. Two suggestions. For one, for a lot of people going and looking at this website, kind of hard to pull together a big picture. I wonder if it's possible, with each update of the data, to also have a commentary, like a Manager's report, or actually ideally, on behalf of the Council, that says, okay, here are our big successes since the last update, here are our continuing challenges, and just sort of give ourselves a grade in terms of how we're doing on all these different fronts, and give our own impression of what our overall success has been. Because a laundry list of data like this is kind of hard to assimilate. I think there's a burden on us to just sort of say, hey, we're happy, because we achieved these things. We're frustrated with these things, but we feel good about how it's going.

The other thing I'll mention, on transportation and planning, if you go to a Zoning Meeting, you know the biggest concern that people have is traffic, and I can't see from this what the trend in traffic is. So, one way to look at that would be, how many F-rated intersections are there? Are we making any progress towards addressing congestion at F-rated intersections? Do we have a metric that talks about what the wait times are at intersections? Because those are the things people experience, and I think if we talk about transportation and planning, and we don't acknowledge that, then we're actually kind of missing the concerns that we hear about so often in our Zoning Meetings, the things that bother people. The truth is, we are working to address that with our mobility plan, the sales tax, all of the plans that we have, but we're not acknowledging here what the status is or what the current trends are. So, those are two suggestions. Thank you.

Ms. Allen said thank you, that's great feedback. So, I just want to say if you have any additional questions or want me to sit down and walk you through this a little more, don't hesitate to outreach to me, and like I said when Julie gets back, I'll make sure I work with her and the I&T team to provide some of these updates that you gave us some feedback on today, but let me know if you have any questions. Thank ya'll.

Ms. Arnold said thank you, Monica, and to the team who've really taken the feedback and responded. So, thank you for that and all the hard work that you put into it. Now, the moment we've all been waiting for. We get to talk about what you want to approve in terms of strategic priorities for next year. The five that were there are currently what stand as our current strategic priorities. They're in your binder as well. So, if you go to page four for today, we want to just do a little bit of setup in terms of priorities versus initiatives. So, your priorities are the five that we just looked at on the tracker. There are a number of initiatives, projects, programs, actions that are being taken to make progress towards those strategic priorities. So, we'll take a snapshot at the priorities that are higher-level, and we're going to look at your initiatives, which are the bodies of work that are supporting your priorities.

Then, we're going to ask you, we've got a quick survey link, this is the exercise we did last year where you had the stickies on the board. This year, we're going to do red, yellow, green on your phones or on your computers, just to give us feedback really quickly, because where there's agreement, we'll keep moving forward. We'll ask you if there are questions, and then there may be some that you don't agree that move forward. You'll see that there're some in the initiatives that are pretty advanced, and you may want to consider pulling those off in terms of the list of initiatives coming out of this session. It does not mean that the work will not continue, because some of them were net new bodies of work that are established bodies, or that are just now the way that you do business as a city, and they'll continue as a normal course of business for the staff. You may want to replace those again with some net new initiatives that you heard over the course of the day. This is your time to lean in and have a very clear direction for staff after this session when we end today. Here's just a quick look in your book in terms of priorities versus initiatives, just to make sure we understand the difference in the two, your top five priorities versus some of the initiatives or what we may call significant projects, programs, big rocks, that should be represented there, that there will be a set of projects, initiatives or actions that are carried out under these initiatives. Marcus, is there anything else you want to add here?

Mr. Jones said no, you nailed it.

Ms. Arnold said okay. Any questions about projects versus initiatives? I think we beat that horse pretty well last year, but I wanted to make sure we revisit it. You can see your set of strategic priorities as they stand today, well-managed government, great neighborhoods, safe communities, transportation and planning, workforce and business development. So, those are your overarching themes. Your strategic priorities. Your strategic imperatives. So, meaning, if there's nothing else that gets done that we focus on, focus on these five things. On the next slide, you'll see the set of strategic initiatives that are in place to carry out, to support those priorities, affordable housing, mobility, Corridors of Opportunity, the 2040 Plan and UDO (Unified Development Ordinance), HIRE Charlotte, which includes arts and culture and workforce development, small and minority business development, and the digital divide. So, I'll pause there and ask if there are any questions? Makes sense, okay.

Mr. Mitchell said DeAlva, I like how you framed it, that if we don't do anything else, we will focus on these priorities. I would tell you, I guess you heard some of the conversation around our CBI program. I think there's a lot of passion about MWSBE (Minority, Women, Small Business Enterprise) for this Council, and when you think about the upcoming projects we have in our community, I would really hope that we make this a strategic priority for us. I think it's very important that minority businesses realize they are important for the City to continue to thrive. City Manager, what is the process of adding another strategic priority?

Ms. Arnold said I can help with that. Thank you for that feedback. What we're going to do is, we're going to ask each of you to go to a link to give us that feedback. So, a couple of things. We're going to ask you simply red, yellow, green. So, you'll see each of these on a form. So, instead of getting up, you'll do it from your phones, red, yellow, green. Red means I don't agree that this should move forward as a strategic priority or an initiative for us, not that you don't agree that work should cease on it, you just don't think now that it should be at this level of management.

Mr. Jones said so, to your point, Councilmember Mitchell, so workforce and business development, the way it's crafted now, words like economic opportunity for all residents tries to be encompassing. I want to make sure we're do just doing nice level set, the strategic initiatives, small and minority business development is what we do daily. So, we've taken something [inaudible] back that's embedded within a priority. If we go back to the previous slide, on the workforce and business development, and we've elevated it for an initiative that we spend a great deal of time on.

Ms. Arnold said that's a great point of clarification. What I thought I heard you saying is that you wanted to elevate it to a strategic priority, but that's different, because I'm assumed that you saw it there, so thank you for that clarification, because it is a good point of clarification, to make sure what the Council member's asking for.

Mr. Mitchell said so when we look at our citizens, and I'm particularly thinking of those small businesses, do they look at that the way we have it worded, and say, "They are working on my behalf." I think when you look at their language, or what they would like to see, MWSBE connects or resonates more closely with them saying that this Council is passionate about making sure I get work, I get contracts, in our community. I think the workforce and business development, which a big fan of Danielle so let me make sure. I think it just doesn't capture it, what we're hearing from the community when they question, is there a priority for us to get more City contracts? If we point at workforce and business development, I'm not too sure they connect it. Sometimes I [inaudible] Councilmember Graham say, he says, KISS, keep it simple, and I just want to make sure the language we're showing is the same language that resonates to our community loud and clear. Just for total transparency, I think all these are great. I like how he said level set, if we had the ability to add one, I would like for us to have a discussion about MWSBE. So, I don't want to delete any of them.

Ms. Arnold said no, that's the way I understood it, so thank you for the confirmation, and we will address that in just a second. We just want to get everything on the floor right now, and we'll go into survey, thank you.

Mr. Driggs said I just wanted to say to that, in view of the current political climate, whatever you think, in Washington and in Raleigh, raising the profile of a program like this right now, raising the profile. So, we're going to have to do what we can in the context of what's going on, and it strikes me as painting a target on our backs if we choose this moment to escalate. What that means in my mind is that the language is more encompassing. It's not as specifically addressed to a certain population, but we have the understanding that the things that we're doing for small businesses, or whatever, are going to benefit minority businesses, because many of them fit the description. If we're explicit about the intention as to who's to benefit, in order to address a certain audience, we're also going to get the attention of another audience. So, I would hope that we can do the best we can in this space and not handicap ourselves with words.

Ms. Arnold said that's important context, thank you for adding.

Mr. Mitchell said, and I think our panel kind of shared with us yesterday that it's about the economic impact analysis. So, if our language changes, it should be how are our small businesses making economic impact? So, I think we all need to be sensitive, we're in a different climate now. To Councilmember Driggs point, we want to be intentional, but we've got to be smart about it. So, I think if we need to change the language, let's make sure it's about economics, let's make sure it's about impact we're making in our community, and let's make sure we're proactive in our approach.

Ms. Arnold said very good, thank you.

**Councilmember Johnson** said thank you. I was just going to say, I agree with both of my colleagues, but I think that everything we do falls into one of these categories. So, I understand when Councilmember Mitchell talked about the need to be more specific or intentional, but I also understand we have to be careful. I think if we have specific goals, such as infrastructure or MWSBE or whatever they are, I think we should be more intentional than these broad categories, because I think, again, that everything we do could fit into these categories.

Ms. Arnold said and that's why we really want you to focus also on the slide. If you agree that these are the higher-level focus areas and it is all encompassing, that may mean that we're okay there. Still open for discussion as to what to add. We've been here before, add, remove, etc. You may look at that list and say, we've advanced these to the point that they're established, and they could come off at this time. Again, not that the body of work will not continue, or the staff will continue to do the work, or work on the programs or initiatives, but they don't need to be here, and we replace with something that you talked about this year that's new. So, if it's appropriate, if there are no other pressing questions, we can go into the survey, get your feedback, because what the survey will do is have us understand what there's [inaudible] agreement on, there's no discussion needed. Then you're going to ask, there's a place where you can click yellow if you have questions. you want to discuss it before you decide, and then there's a place where you say, no, I think it should come off.

Ms. Anderson said I just have more of an observation or a comment, because I'm following you DeAlva, and these initiatives here, they're baked in, of course, they undergird our priorities. We should, therefore, see some element of presence in our tracker. A couple things I want to call out. Mr. Driggs asked about traffic and signal stops, etc. On the Safe Communities tracker, we have a mean travel time to work in minutes. I'm having a hard time understanding why that's in the Safe Communities tracker and not in the transportation tracker. The other question I have is, we clearly call out arts and culture, which we could double click on the progress that we made as it relates to that this year, but that should be reflective somewhere. what are we wanting to achieve with arts and culture, our progress, specific initiatives, something should

show up in this tracker. It may show up in a tracker, I just can't see it. Can I have some help understanding that?

Mr. Jones said so, Mayor Pro Tem, if we flip back to your priorities, even in the budget book we establish everything by those priorities, and there are performance measures by those priorities in the budget book. So, if I were looking for arts and culture, I would go to great neighborhoods, because what we're trying to do is focus on the comprehensive initiatives designed to create affordable housing and provide opportunities that align with creating great neighborhoods. So, I guess what I'm saying is, we won't be perfect, but this Council tried to create words over the years so that something like arts and culture becomes a part of the fabric of creating a great neighborhood, as opposed to arts and culture being spelled out under one of these, if that helps.

Ms. Anderson said I totally agree with you. That's where I thought it should go. I think we should have some indication of what we're doing with our arts and culture on the great neighborhood slide. That's what I was advocating for, but I totally agree with the City Manager.

Ms. Arnold said and it may be, and again, Marcus or Monica, please chime in. It may be because that's also new, so the data is not there. So, the update needs to be more of a narrative at this point, because there's no data. because this literally again is in direct response of what you asked the staff to focus on, arts and culture. So, I think they're just at the point of closing it out. So, there's no lived data to report on, but perhaps we can consider putting a narrative, updating there in terms on the status of the project, to your point.

Ms. Anderson said makes sense, thank you.

Mr. Driggs said so, one thing I notice in here is that we have a number of items in these various categories that are environmental. I don't really see that as a priority in and of itself. The other point I would make is, we don't necessarily have to have each of these metrics only in one place. Some of them could actually appear in two places. So, you just go to the transportation planning screen, or you go to this screen, and the same thing is in both places, why not?

Ms. Arnold said which makes it that much more pointed. If you have one initiative that addressing several priorities.

Mr. Driggs said that's right, and environment is a good example. There is this interdependence of a lot of this activity, the housing and transportation, and so on. So, let's take whichever metrics are relevant to whichever heading, and you could have an environment heading that pulls all of the things from different places that are environmental in nature, the green building, solar, those things, but right now, you don't actually see environment. We don't have a committee that's called environment. It really sort of pervades everything we do, but maybe if you just recognize the importance of that more clearly it would help.

Ms. Arnold said very good, environment is a gap, thank you.

Mr. Jones said so, two things. So, if we go to well-managed government, we have a commitment in focusing on equity and safeguarding the environment. So, we have the environment there. So, we flip to the next slide, please. You've taken a priority, and you then drilled it down to a strategic initiative. So, under the 2040 Plan, you have once again raised, includes SEAP in that. So, I apologize, some of the stuff is just embedded in it, and over the years we've tried to make it more encompassing, but I think what I'm hearing today is that maybe within the priorities, you want more specificity around certain areas like the environment or minority-owned businesses.

Mr. Driggs said so, if I could respond. It's not a criticism, it's a suggestion, but what I'm saying is, you could have a page like this that pulls together, because people say, what

are you doing? You've got your SEAP or whatever, but let's acknowledge that subject, which appears in all those different places, and pull the items that relate specifically to our environmental priority into one place where a person who wants to know about that can see it, that's the idea.

Ms. Arnold said, and we do have a view like that from two years ago, in which we had the initiatives and then we had a chart that shows all the priorities that they addressed. So, I think that framework is already there.

Mr. Mitchell said so, DeAlva, in the spirit of compromising and teamwork, if you go back to the first slide, I think we have a solution, and I give Monica and the City Manager credit. So, under business development, if we can add the language small, minority and women-owned business, I think it would capture what I'm trying to suggest as a priority for this Council.

Ms. Arnold said okay, and so on the survey, I want you to write that in the open box. I have it captured if you don't, so it's okay, but each of you are going to give your feedback on each one of those, and that's where we want to hear the ideas from each of you. For those that agree, we won't even spend time addressing if there's no change. If you have questions, just mark yellow. If you're not ready to say red or green at this point, you have a question mark yellow, and if you have red mark red. What that allows us to do is quickly get through the process. Again, we won't discuss what's green, and we'll put it on the screen so you can see. We won't discuss what's green. If you mark yellow, we'll ask you what your question is. If you mark red, we'll ask you to provide your perspective on that, so we can come to a final conclusion from that. Then, we just may need to have it teed up twice for them to do it again based on the discussion.

Mr. Mitchell said just as a followup, I was trying save us some time to do the exercise, and if there's no objection, Council just say, these are our five.

Mr. Driggs said I don't have a problem with that, but I would like the City Attorney, on a future occasion, to advise us about what kind of an environment we're in and what is closing in on us, because it's a language thing. James and I could debate CBI and so on some other time. Right now, I'm really worried about us kind of stepping up or being confrontational instead of being strategic. You mentioned [inaudible], I agree with that, but maybe the answer is to be clearer about what the legal environment is that we are in and entering, and then conform what we say about what we're doing to the reality of what's happening.

Ms. Arnold said my firm is working on a lot of this with several clients right now as well, and we are focusing intentionally on language for that reason also. So, we are using some very intentional terms so you can tie it to the data a little bit. So, when you talk about, you can say things like communities who need it most. You could talk about underutilized communities. You could also talk about, with some of them, we're focusing on local as well, so that it is encompassing, but with things like DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion), you can call it anything, you can call it orange. It doesn't matter unless your processes and systems change. So, I agree, nobody asked me, but I'll put it there, put my DEI consultant hat on, I agree that you have to be sensitive about language at this time, and I've had this conversation. It's a mindset and an intention. So, you can't go from 50 to 38 without focusing on businesses. I think Councilmember Bokhari talked about this, in terms of workforce development. Those things are just essential and just what you have to do. It has to be the way that you do business. So, the change is going to become, because the staff is focused on this every single day, and that they understand it is a priority in terms of what they do on a daily basis. Some of the decisions they need to make won't even be in an initiative. It would be from the understanding that it is a priority for this Council, and they need to move that number. So, I do agree that this is a time to be very sensitive about the language choices that we make in terms of what we highlight and be more intentional about that, but also, at the same time, making sure that what's happening at people's desks on a daily basis reflect your intentions, because you can call it here, but then if it's not happening in processes and systems, you still won't see the numbers change. Any other thoughts about, I think

that is a recommendation, because what I'm hearing that overall, there's no objection to these five, everybody's good with these five, and is there any feedback you still maintain that we should change the language here now? Do you want to address the language later? Can we get some feedback on what to do with these five now?

**Mayor Lyles** said I think that the suggestion that I would have is that we don't try to wordsmith this in this group, but we can also give each one of the priorities to a Council committee that it stays in. If there are some changes, then if we say in the next month, the committee would report back, we could do that. I think that might be easier than having everyone today. That's up to the Council, whatever you would like to do there, but I do think committees would have the ability to have a little bit more depth in their discussion.

Ms. Mayfield said Mayor, for clarification, if it's going to go to a committee, what is the timeline? Because one of the challenges that we brought up over the day and a half is that we've had some discussions thinking something was going to come to committee. It hasn't necessarily come. I've completed the survey. Personally, I was fine with doing the survey, because I do have a couple of questions. I wasn't going to go into them in this space, because we had a survey created for that. So, how are we going to identify if there are questions, and the turnaround time for identifying which committee it should go to and getting it to committee. Since, when we went over our roles and responsibilities, we know that there has always been a timeline out there of when things should come to committee, but we haven't necessarily been able to hit it, because we've had so much going on, and we only get two hours in each committee. So, how would that work?

Mayor Lyles said I'm not asking it to be the committee's normal time. I'm asking you to pull out a time that you could do this, and I think in the next 60 days that we could. You think that's too long right? So, we should be doing that maybe in the next 30 days, come back and say this, but I would see this as a special committee meeting, because this is going to relate so much to what we're trying to do and build on our budget.

Ms. Arnold said and will allow you to officially close this out.

Ms. Brown said I understand the sense of urgency, so I thought 60 days would be too long. I said maybe in the next 30 days, but then I see some Council members might not be good with that. So, what would be the immediate way to get this done?

Ms. Arnold said when is the next Workforce and Business Development Committee?

Mr. Mitchell said Monday.

Ms. Arnold said okay, then is there an opportunity on the agenda on Monday?

Mayor Lyles said you can do it on a committee time, or you could call a meeting for your committee. I don't want to interfere with the other work that's being done.

Ms. Brown said okay, so for point of clarity, I don't know how we can get it clarified, but we would just need to know when it would be done. I know 60 days would not be sufficient, and then I hear that we maybe can't get it done Monday from the Chair. So, could we just try to figure what would be the timeline for it to get done, since it is an urgent need, and we all agree to that?

Ms. Arnold said so, the Chair has said that there is time on the committee.

**Councilmember Graham** said no, I didn't say anything.

Ms. Arnold said I'm getting my Chairs mixed up, so hold on.

Mayor Lyles said I said 30 days, and have a call meeting if necessary.

Mr. Graham said in the sense of being efficient, 30, 60, 90 days, what I see before us makes a lot sense already, and to address some of the concerns that Mr. Driggs and Mr. Mitchell has, if we just go with small business, that takes care of everybody, and then we just do what we've got to do, and we pass this today and we can start this year just really being efficient with our time. I'm not sure we need a call meeting to do this. I'm not sure we need to do it in the next 30 days. Let's just do it. It's small business, we know what our intentions are, and let's start this year off really, really being efficient with our time, that's all.

Ms. Arnold said is everyone okay with the language as it is? We have some feedback in the room and the recommendation for a change. Does anyone else want the language to change? Do we want the language to stay, particularly around this piece? The addition of some language to identify MWSBE businesses.

Mayor Lyles said I think that we know what we want. We just don't know how we can get there as a city that we're working with now. We don't know what's going to come up. As you said, you're working with some firms on language. I mean, a lot of us are trying to figure out what this language has to be, but I do believe that you have choices. I mean, if one of the committees understands exactly, we go to the next one, they don't have to have a meeting. In this case, I think we've been trying to figure out how to do something that the community understands that we can do, as well as what we can do for the tracker. There's a little bit more complexity to things that are going on in this environment now. So, I don't think everything is equal or defined together, and I think that we want to get this one right, but I would always say to the Chair and to all of the Vice Chairs, it's a question of what the committee can do and accomplish, and whether or not you want to do it today.

Mr. Jones said so, let's see if I can be helpful. So, can we go to the next slide. So, I'm pretty sure you're not going to take small and minority business development off as a strategic initiative. So, if you go back one, and help me out Fox, I'm not so sure it's a problem to take those same words and put them in workforce and business development.

**Anthony Fox, Interim City Attorney** said the discussion debate is around the sensitivity of the current political climate we're in. I think, when you look at successful small and minority business climate versus a successful small business climate, the small business climate doesn't have a race conscious suggestion in it, so therefore, it's absolutely defensible. When you put minority or women in it, then it raises a specter that it is a race conscious program that is going to be dependent upon your disparity study to support if you were challenged, and that's really what the debate is about. You have it on the other page there. If you were to do a successful small business climate, and then as an initiative, keep the minority and women, I think you still have the coverage you want, and it doesn't highlight it as much.

Mr. Driggs said our priorities haven't changed. This was a big priority last year. This was what we adopted last year. To change the language, it looks as if we're stepping up. So, why don't we just keep a low profile. Go with what we have. Our commitment is unquestioned, and not invite the possibility of somebody saying, look what they're doing. I mean, I don't want to wave a red flag at Raleigh. I feel that this is sufficient, and that the changes in language are not going to be supported by a change in our activity or policy, and could have the effect of inviting, in this climate, more attention, and therefore, I think we just sort of go with what we have. These priorities look pretty much the same in every big city in America, they're not controversial. We will make decisions over the course of the year about a budget and so on, about how to allocate, but I think leaving this language alone would be the smartest thing. I'm not advocating specifically to taking the line out of the next slide. I'm just saying, please, just leave it. Leave it like it is, don't rock the boat, and we'll find out.

Mr. Mitchell said let me do it in the spirit of how Ed articulated it. I think we're all sensitive to the climate that we're in right now, but we've got to be very careful and continue to work from Charlotte, with the balance of not having a bullseye on our chest.

I think we just got legal counsel from our Attorney on what language he thought would be appropriate. This is not a time for us to stop serving Charlotte on these priorities for the 15<sup>th</sup> largest city in America. I think there's a challenge, there's opportunity. If we don't do anything, there still could be a bullseye on Charlotte, and so I want us to be committed to what we think we need to do to make our City continue to thrive, and I just want to make sure all our citizens, including our small businesses, realize that we're going to continue to work for them in this tough climate.

Ms. Arnold said I think that's the right decision, absolutely. Just to give some personal anecdote. Last Tuesday, I was working with the Federal Agency, OSDBU (Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization) Office, and we started at 11:30 a.m., and by the time we finished everybody was sent home. Every single person that I was working with in that session was sent home. This is a very important time, and I think you're right and all of you are right. It's just to be about the work, don't worry about the words, just do the work.

Mayor Lyles said [inaudible] where we're going to add or [inaudible] legal [inaudible].

Ms. Arnold said can I put a bow on it, and can I start with a new baseline and get your feedback on that? I think what I'm hearing collectively is that we leave this as it is, that there is no change here. We focus on small business and then we make sure that we are tracking. Making sure that the intention, the focus, the work, and the metrics are there to move the needle with small and minority business development, and our reinforced metrics, as I close that statement. Is there anybody who doesn't agree with that at this point based on discussion, that the language should not change, under workforce and business development that the language should not change here?

Unknown [inaudible] said [inaudible].

Ms. Arnold said you still want the language to be changed, okay. So, what I'm going to do is, we're going to put a pin in that. I want you to put it on the survey. We're going to go to survey and address that again encompassing with everything else, because we've still got to get through the others and your feedback on the initiatives.

Mayor Lyles said I think that what Anthony said, it would be appropriate to allow for the language here, and to keep the language on the initiative. I'm not putting words in your mouth, but I think that's where we are agreeing, but that may not be the agreement for everyone. I think the question is, is there anyone that's not okay with keeping the words as their own, and carrying the initiative explanation as is?

Ms. Arnold said so, let's do this [inaudible].

Mr. Fox said I think you may have consensus around that point.

Mayor Lyles said right, that's what I'm saying, I think so.

Ms. Arnold said so, everybody's okay with taking small and minority business development and putting it [inaudible].

Mr. Mitchell said no we're good.

Mr. Driggs said everything exactly the way it is.

Mayor Lyles said no, I was saying that I think that we're trying to get to what Anthony said, and everybody will agree to that.

Ms. Arnold said so, I'm recommending [inaudible] nothing changes.

Ms. Anderson said DeAlva, I don't want us to create churn for ourselves. I didn't hear. I know we wanted to revisit our priorities and initiatives, and from what I'm hearing in the room collectively, there's no real rally cry to change our priorities or our initiatives. We're

going to keep focused on what we were focused on 2024 and continue to be laser focused on that without any change of language. So, I feel like we're having a circular conversation here. I think we have agreement overall, right, that our priorities are going to continue to be our priorities, our initiatives are going to continue to be our initiatives, and let's just move forward.

Ms. Arnold said so, everything that [inaudible].

Mr. Jones said I think what Councilman Mitchell is struggling with is that, it was placed in the room that potentially on the previous slide, you could use the word small.

Mr. Mitchell said no, no, small, I'm okay with that.

Mr. Jones said but that is a change.

Mr. Mitchell said no [inaudible] change.

Mr. Jones said it is a change, and that's what he's struggling with. So, on the previous slide, I think what Anthony was saying, is you could say encouraging small business development.

Mr. Fox said yes, because that's not race conscious. It's appropriate. You can do that. The only element to consider there is, Councilman Driggs' concern, that that does manifest a change of what your priorities were in 2024, going forward to 2025. Albeit small, it's still a change of those priorities, and I don't think it highlights much if you just make that little change. I don't know, but that's for you guys to decide.

Mr. Mitchell said [inaudible] small.

Ms. Arnold said so, is everybody [inaudible] add the word small? [inaudible] recommend that we don't use the word small? [inaudible]. Are we adding the word small?

Ms. Brown said you saw more hands down than up. Let's just do it again for clarity.

Ms. Anderson said is this an actual vote?

Ms. Arnold said let's just do it again. If you agree on adding the word small here [inaudible]. If you agree on adding the word small, would you please raise your hand. We have four people, okay, so that means that we don't add the word small [inaudible], is that correct? Thank you for [inaudible]. So, as of now, your priorities stay as they are. [inaudible]. Is there's anyone who has a reservation that anything [inaudible] changes or comes off based on [inaudible]?

Mayor Lyles said I have one question, and a large part of this is around the digital divide, that I'm not so sure if I know the status of how the payments are going, or whether or not we're still getting federal funding for it, or what's happening. So, I guess what I'm saying is that the digital divide had a definition that was really supportive of households that needed it, and there was funding for it, but I'm not sure that I know what that is or where we sit with digital divide right now. I know it's something that we can help with, and I know it's something that every part of our community is dealing with, but I just don't know the current status.

Mr. Driggs said have we spent the \$10 million?

Mr. Jones said so, we have not spent all of the \$10 million. I believe there's close to \$2 million that we're putting out for an RFP (Request For Proposal).

Mr. Driggs said ongoing, right.

Mayor Lyles said okay, ongoing. Alright, I didn't know that we had the \$2 million. Okay, I'm good.

Ms. Johnson said I just wanted to clarify the process. If we complete the survey, won't the survey identify.

Ms. Arnold said absolutely.

Ms. Johnson said okay, so after we do the survey, then we can take a look and compare it with this? Okay, thank you.

Ms. Arnold said so, it's just an easier way to quiet the discussion a little bit, identify what actually needs to be discussed, because if we see on the survey that there's one person that has a question or one person opposed, and we ask why, to put that in the room, but if not, we're just going to keep moving with that. Is that okay? So, we tried to provide a process that would simplify it. So, if we could jump into process, I think that will help move the conversation along, okay, in terms of that. So, we have thoughts about, if you feel like something should come off, just put it on there, and we'll know that that's what needs to be discussed, okay, thank you.

**Councilmember Molina** said I'll be brief. So, just for a point of clarification, when we say priority, and something's not I guess in the top five, I think we need to make sure that we communicate that that's not something that we're saying we're not focusing on. Does that make sense? For public consumption, when we're saying these top five are items that the Council has given directive on, does not take away the emphasis of the other items that are on this list. It's just that these are things that would be an emphasis on a top level. I guess we need to give some language to that, because it's very important to say that we're not striking down the other items on this list.

Ms. Arnold said absolutely. There are thousands of bodies of work happening right now. Even with some of these here at this level, I know there's been a lot of work around arts and culture for the purpose that it would become owned by the City, managed, governed, and raised as an important part for the City, but does it still need to be here, or does it now move to business as usual, because that's what [inaudible] as an example.

Ms. Molina said one other comment I'd like to make, because what I see, my collective, my opinion, based on what I'm seeing. What I'm seeing now is the same thing we experience, which means that we still have work to do. What I mean by that is, we have Council members that are absolutely passionate about items. They don't feel heard, and what happens is, in an effort to try to lift them up, sometimes it feels like a Hail Mary. You're trying to understand the emphasis. So, my suggestion on this process is that we still have work to do to caucus amongst ourselves, because a lot of these things are important, but it's really just to understand where someone is coming from, what they're positioning is, and how do we allow a parenthesis to give them space, so that if there is an appetite to entertain it, that we can do that in a proper manner.

Ms. Arnold said absolutely, and again, getting back to process, if we can get into process, then everyone will have an opportunity to have their space, because there's literally a place where you say that you have a question that we will acknowledge, and there's a place for you to say no, and if there's a red, we're going to ask you to acknowledge why you said red. So, everyone will have a voice and opportunity to share, but we're just trying to get beyond, those that you're in [inaudible] agreement about, it doesn't require a discussion. So, we can quickly see that. If we can get to the survey, we can see who's in agreement, and we can see where there's discussion that's needed, so that you can have the space for that discussion. So, can we move to survey now? Thank you so much. Can we pull the survey up, please?

Ms. Anderson said DeAlva, can you explain the colors again on the survey?

Ms. Arnold said yes, thank you. So, red means that you recommend that we not move forward with it as a priority or initiative. Yellow means I'm not sure, I have a question. I think there's some discussion needed first; I need more information before I decide. Green means yes, keep it as is, no change. I forgot we added purple last night. Green is

it's approved as a strategic initiative for 2025. Yellow means you have questions that need to be answered before you decide; yellow just means question. Red means not approved. Purple means not approved as a strategic priority, but the work should be continued as a normal course of business. Okay, if you're done with your vote, we're going to take a break until about 10:45 a.m., please. I know some have to grab our things from the room, some of you have to grab your things and be out by 11:00 a.m. So, if we could take a break until 10:45 a.m., thank you.

The meeting was recessed at 10:32 a.m. and reconvened at 10:45 a.m.

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**ITEM NO. 3: COUNCIL PRIORITY DISCUSSION/REAFFIRMING COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

**DeAlva Arnold, Facilitator** said thank you, thank you, thank you. We ask you to take your seats please. We'll jump right in on survey results. We have a few that are there. This is just a great process to see what needs discussion and not. Here's a snapshot. We had a total of nine people who responded. The colors on the chart do not match the colors that we reported. You'll see the higher numbers are red, so ignore the colors please, but you will see that there's no discussion needed on affordable housing. No discussion needed on mobility. There's no change there. No discussion needed on MWSBE. There's one yellow on UDO, and there's a recommendation that UDO falls underneath Corridors of Opportunity, and so that is a point of discussion. Then, the other recommendation is that digital divide, three people said purple, that it should become business as usual, digital divide, and there were three yellows on HIRE Charlotte. So, if we were to take that in order, we'll go back to UDO. There was one yellow, and I'll ask the person if they're in the room who marked yellow on that, if they also asked the question or made the recommendation?

**Councilmember Mayfield** said I thought we said that if it was only one, then we were just going to keep moving it.

Ms. Arnold said I'm okay with that. Councilmember Molina asked for time to make space in the room for people who felt differently so I want to make sure that we acknowledge that.

Unknown said [inaudible].

Ms. Arnold said yes. Although a living document, I'm concerned that some of the groupings are too broad and open to interpretation.

**Councilmember Brown** said it wasn't mine. I want to be respectful of everybody's [inaudible].

Ms. Arnold said do you want to speak to that?

Ms. Mayfield said [inaudible].

Ms. Arnold said can I thank you for respecting process, Councilmember Mayfield. Back to UDO, there was one person that said that there was a recommendation that UDO falls underneath Corridors of Opportunity. Is there any response to that? Agreement, not agreement, or should it stand as is with the majority? Alright, it looks like that stands as is. We're going to go to HIRE Charlotte now. There were yellows on HIRE Charlotte. I don't think there was any commentary there. So, if there's anyone in the room who marked yellow, there's any question there. How is arts and culture tied to workforce development? Arts and workforce should not be together. Arts and workforce development are not the same.

Ms. Mayfield said well, for this one, since we have three different individuals that spoke to it, I think we do need to have some conversation around it, because I think there's still

some concerns regarding arts and culture. Unfortunately, some people are also trying to pack and get ready since checkout is at 11:00 a.m., so I don't know if we can circle back to it if everyone's not in here. Mine is one of them. Mine is still trying to understand how it's tied to workforce development, and having a clear line on it, but the fact that two others also have concerns that it should not be tied to workforce, which was basically my question, and that workforce development and arts and culture are not the same, so even if a staff member has an opportunity, since we do have our Director of Workforce here, have any ideas or comments of how the two are tied together, that might be helpful.

Ms. Brown said so, DeAlva, one of them is mine as well. I just wanted to get an explanation of how they went into the same category, and if it's explained to me, and then something that falls on clear ears, then I'll be susceptible to it, but I just wanted to understand how they got in the same category?

Ms. Arnold said okay, and can I baseline, just for purpose of conversation? HIRE Charlotte is fine to stay as it is. The question is, and I want to be clear, you're saying that arts and culture should still be on this list, it should just be under a different category or identified in some way, or are you saying that arts and culture should move to business as usual at this point as well?

Ms. Brown said for me, arts and culture should move to business as usual. I just wanted to know how we group them in workforce development. I don't have a problem with it. I know arts has a significant impact on our City, and we need that and I support that, but workforce development in a category by itself, whether its digital, the innovative opportunities that we're coming into, and especially what we're dealing with now. Workforce development and arts, I'm trying to understand how they're rated in the same category.

Ms. Arnold said good. So, you're okay with the arts and culture staying on the list, or should it go business as usual? Okay. So, if that's the point, then I think there may not be a discussion. We could just move arts and culture to business as usual. There's an investment, certainly the work is going to continue. So, is that okay? Okay.

**Councilmember Driggs** said [inaudible] based upon this conversation.

Ms. Arnold said thank you. Is there any objection? Do we think arts and culture should stay here under HIRE Charlotte?

Mr. Driggs said [inaudible] rules.

Ms. Anderson said I just want to be clear here, because the question was around making a move, and if we don't have a majority consensus, we shouldn't make a move. Absolutely, we should discuss it and make space for the conversation, but if we're going to make any movement, we should have some kind of majority.

Ms. Arnold said yes, I was literally just writing that so I didn't lose it, but there should be discussion around it. So, I'm just trying to make notes to follow the conversation so I don't lose anything.

Ms. Brown said so, I just asked my colleague, because I respect his opinion. He was explaining something to me. So, I think it would be sufficient to have staff come up, if that's okay, because we're not moving it, but for the sake of people that are watching on our social outlets, to clarification of arts and workforce development in the same category. I'm not making a big deal of it.

Ms. Arnold said before we do that, though, let's just get agreement with the Council, because I get the point about clarification, I want to respect that point, but let's just get to the point of decision with the Council, in terms of whether or not anything changes on the page, or if it stays as is, and we're referring to page four in your binder now.

Ms. Brown said yes, because everybody agreed that arts and culture should stay. Okay, I'm ready.

Ms. Arnold said okay. So, it sounds like the overwhelming majority would say that arts and culture as it's presented here should stay under HIRE Charlotte. Can I get a show of hands that there will be no change with arts and culture as presented? Okay, we have five, okay, so there's no change.

**Mayor Lyles** said [inaudible] was this a vote for the record or was it a vote for whether or not we're moving something on this [inaudible]?

Ms. Arnold said the Mayor can't vote on strategic priorities for the city? They're focus areas for what you want the staff to focus on.

Mayor Lyles said I understand what you're saying. I think that if you feel like that this has to be a vote of record, and I would not vote unless it's a tie, but I thought we were voting generally on what the focus areas would be for the Council [inaudible].

Ms. Arnold said and I think that's what we've done in the past.

Mayor Lyles said [inaudible].

Ms. Arnold said okay. So, the question is about whether or not, on slide four, HIRE Charlotte, arts and culture, that's how the conversation started, but the question is now whether or not the Mayor can vote on these priorities. That has happened in the past, that we've considered her opinion about what moves forward in terms of strategic priority for the City, but there's a question about it currently, and now so that's the floor.

Ms. Mayfield said so it's really a point of clarification since we got nonresponders. Mayor, did you participate in the survey?

Mayor Lyles said yes, I did.

Ms. Mayfield said okay. That's what I just wanted to figure out. So, the nine participants include the Mayor.

Ms. Arnold said yes.

Ms. Mayfield said thank you.

Mr. Driggs said I thought in the survey, we had responses from everybody. So, anybody who's not in the room that was green in the survey should be counted virtually as a yes.

Ms. Arnold said great point, thank you. That's correct.

Mr. Driggs said I mean no change, yes.

Ms. Arnold said that's correct.

Ms. Johnson said just a point of clarification. If these are Council priorities, can we get an opinion of the Attorney?

**Anthony Fox, Interim City Attorney** said your rules provide that the Mayor only votes in certain instances, and this is not one of the exceptions that allows the Mayor to vote, if there's a vote to be taken, and that's what your rules provide, unless there's a tie.

Ms. Arnold said okay.

Mayor Lyles said I'm sorry, [inaudible] I don't mean that that way, but I do think that we should be respectful of whatever the rules are [inaudible].

Ms. Arnold said okay.

Mr. Driggs said in the survey, nobody said no.

Ms. Arnold said nobody said no in the survey.

Mr. Driggs said you said there were three yellows and the rest was green, right?

Ms. Brown said so, the yellow one, it wasn't a no.

Mr. Driggs said those weren't nos, and you've got seven or whatever greens. I think given the absence of people here, I think that's a good indication of the majority position of the Council.

Ms. Arnold said if everyone is in agreement with that, we'll move on, thank you. Then, as it relates to digital divide, there were three who were purple, business as usual. So, of the nine, three were business as usual, or of the eight, three were business as usual, and it depends on how the Mayor voted on that one in terms of what we move forward with. So, if we were to say, no discussion, move forward, then digital divide stays where it is and there is no change.

Mr. Driggs said yes, and you've got six greens. Mayor, did you vote green on that one?

Mayor Lyles said yes, and so you can just [inaudible] take away the green, then it becomes five.

Ms. Arnold said okay. So, now we have five green and three purple, so that means that it stays, unless there's discussion that is warranted. Okay. So, I think we're closed out on priorities and strategic initiatives. Give yourselves a round of applause. We'll transition now to high-performing Councils. I think the first question, based on the conversation from yesterday is, is there agreement that this Council should focus on becoming a high-performing Council? Yes? Raise of hands, continue something that we want to pursue? Thank you. Just grounding again on what that is, strong focus on alignment, ethical governance, and collaboration. Based on some of the root cause analysis that was surfaced on Monday through the discussion, trust and respect were some things that were under the ground, that we're preventing some of this, particularly around collaboration. What we want to look like as a Council is aligned on strategic vision, collaborative culture, not only demonstrated but felt, accountability and transparency as the order of the day, commitment to results, and then adaptability. That's what it looks like.

At the beginning, I asked you to take a survey before we did the work. I have to be honest with you, and then from some discussion, I think some of the survey was not taken with the full Council in mind. Some of the results came from particular experiences, individual experiences, and so we're going to ask you to take the survey again, and in this instance, we want you to take the survey with the full Council in mind. So, when you think about these components on the next slide, is this true in particular interactions, or is this true for the entire Council? Your responses should be as a Council, is this present for us as a Council? Does this exist for us as a Council? Also, for point of clarification, five means yes, present, we've mastered it; one means does not exist at all, as a Council, not with a person, not with an instance, but as a Council as a whole. I think we want to make sure that we reframe that in terms of that perspective as we go back into the survey and the survey results. I do want to thank all of you for your openness and your honesty around the conversation that we had on Monday. There's work to be done. We'll continue to do some of this work outside of this session as well, and I also want to make sure that I thank Councilmember Mitchell and Watlington for having some transparency and honesty around surfacing trust and respect as a root cause issue. There are likely others as well, but you brought voice to that and kind of opened it up in the room. So, I want to thank you for that, because this is your time, it's your conversation, it's your experience, it's your team, and your work to do, and it should come from you, and not necessarily as my opinion or my observations.

I also want to have you to think about a couple of things too as we go about doing the work, and so I'm happy to hear that each of you are in agreement that this work is important, because you are modeling for the staff and your constituents in the City in terms of collaboration and all the other things that we discussed and talked about.

So, we've done the survey before. I think we could get it done in about three minutes, and move right into where we stand today. Then, after that, we are also going to go to the charter. That was some work that you were doing at the table with your groups. We'll go back and revisit some of that language, and then we'll work to close out with next steps, okay.

Mr. Driggs said I did it the first time based on the Council as a whole. I'd like to just resubmit my last responses.

Ms. Arnold said can he resubmit his last responses? Yes, thank you. Is there anyone else where you feel like there's no change? Okay, thank you. If you have no change, and you would like Lindey to resubmit your responses, please let her know. Thank you.

If I could ask everyone to take your seats, please. Thank you, thank you, thank you. We've had a shift in agenda, and we're going to move to begin to close the retreat. I'd like to ask each Council member and give an opportunity for any closing remarks or questions from Council members. We have staff members who are still here. We have staff members who've joined us. If there are any particular questions, please raise them now.

Ms. Mayfield said DeAlva, I want to take this moment to thank you. Not only did you capture from last year the conversations that we had, some of the challenges. We had some real conversations in this day and a half, because we really had a day and a half, okay, we'll say two-day conference, but we did address a lot. I think, ultimately, my colleague, Councilmember Molina, I definitely agree, that we are a functioning board. We have done a lot together. It was brought up, imagine if we were a little more strategic and targeted, yet you have 11 very distinct personalities, very distinct experiences, various ages, various levels of education and socioeconomic status, that have decided to step into a role of service to the community, and we bring all of that and all of those experiences with us. You also have really 11 very passionate people. We have 12 very passionate people, even though we try to tell the Mayor, you don't get to be passionate this time, you get to be passionate next time, but we have 12 very passionate people that care about our City, and we're looking at it from different angles. Staff, you all make us look very good, because there are no requirements, other than to be 21 and a registered voter, and then to go out to the community and ask the community to support you. We cannot do the work that we attempt to do without all of you, because you all are the experts, and you teach us how to be better.

For my colleagues, you all teach me, and I'm going to continuously push back, yet that is part of that growth. Growth is that push and pull. I do want you to give me the challenge, what we learned in Harvard Kennedy School, give me that other perspective that's going to prove me wrong. I'm going to take it all in. The Manager and I have plenty of back and forth to try to understand, because I want to understand your view, but I think this day and a half, two days, has been helpful for us as a Council. We are going to continue in 2025 to do amazing things for our City, but I wanted to take the moment to tell you as our coordinator, I know it's not easy dealing with these multiple personalities, but I appreciate the grace that you maintained throughout all of it, and helping us move forward. I truly do appreciate being able to go back and forth with my colleagues, because at the end of the day, we know we want to do something better for this City, and we're going to get there even if some of us take a left and go down the hill then come back up. We're going to meet and figure out a way to move our City better.

Manager, thank you for listening to all of us, and trying to figure out a way to bring that together. Mayor, I do not make it easy for you. I appreciate the fact that you try to guide us in a way where you give space, and what I've seen and especially in this last term, that when we say you're not hearing us, you step back and say, okay, you know what,

tell me what you're saying, because I might not be hearing you. So, I'm going to say that publically, because together we can continue to do something amazing, because we have a beautiful city.

My last piece, it is a privilege to do business in the City of Charlotte. It is not a given. I would like for all of us to see that and recognize that, because everything that you bring before us isn't necessarily good for our community as we continue to grow, and if we keep at the forefront, equity and access, I think we will see fewer people leaving Charlotte-Mecklenburg than other communities have, when they reach the point that we are today in growth.

Ms. Arnold said thank you so much, Councilmember Mayfield, it's a privilege, thank you.

Mr. Driggs said so, on this occasion only, I agree with most of what Ms. Mayfield said. I want to commend you on your management of this process, because you came in with a game plan, and we derailed it, and you kind of moved with it, so I think we got a lot of good things done. I don't think we reached a conclusion on Monday. So, I think all of us need to reflect on what we learned and interpret it and apply it. We may have that charter that you proposed, but there's definitely work to be done to achieve greater productivity and focus in our meetings. I enjoy working with this group. I think it's unfortunate if it ever gets personal, when we have these disagreements, and I speak from a vantage point of a different perspective on a lot of issues. So, I think it's been a good meeting.

I particularly want to emphasize, it's customary to sort of say to the staff, great job by the staff, and so on, but this group is truly extraordinary. This is like a Superbowl team. Everybody that gets up there speaks from a vantage point of subject matter authority and confidence, and I respect and appreciate that there's a kind of neutrality about it. I don't feel that anybody's personal beliefs are being infused into what we are doing, and so, special acknowledgement to the staff, thank you guys, and I won't mention any names. I will recognize the Manager, because he is the guy who put this team together and has spearheaded a lot of the effort. I mentioned during the meeting that we have a Mayor who is carving out a place for herself in the history of Charlotte, I strongly believe that. Thank you, Mayor. We have set the stage for the year. I think we accomplished what we came here for. Thank you.

Ms. Arnold said very good, thank you so much, thank you so much. Any other final comments?

Ms. Johnson said I'll keep it brief, because Councilmember Mayfield, you summed it up wonderfully, but I also wanted to thank you, DeAlva, and your team for the facilitation as well as a productive meeting. I think the fact that our rules are already on the City Council page, I think that was a huge step forward in the direction of transparency, and I also wanted to make sure that our City Manager did summarize the accomplishments of this Council. That is something that I will request, because we may have given a bad impression on Monday, if we did, but this Council, we've done great work. It's an honor to serve, and we are just 12 very strong and passionate individuals. I think it's important that we do have the diversity in thinking, and so I think that while there could be more decorum, and we could agree to that, I think it's important to bring the different perspectives. So, that's all, but thank you.

Ms. Arnold said thank you so much, Councilmember Johnson. Any other final comments?

Ms. Anderson said DeAlva, I want to say, last year you were our facilitator, and looking at how you built on what we started last year, even our tracker that we did as a collective exercise and where we're at with that, you've done a great job of facilitating the meeting, pulling together the agenda, and ensuring that we're focusing on what's important. So, I want to thank you, and being nimble is incredibly important as a facilitator and you definitely have demonstrated that over the last couple of days. I think, beyond a shadow of a doubt, we have accomplished tremendous things in 2024. There

are cities out there that would love to have accomplished half of what we accomplished. To Mr. Driggs' point about having a Superbowl All-Star team, the key ingredient of being able to perform at that level and sustain at that level, is that you're constantly thinking about how to get better. You acknowledge where you're at, but how do you get better? It's those small nuances and gains that keep you at that great high-performing level. So, we have to do the work that we've done. We started to do the work, we have to continue to do the work, and we'll continue to stay on top if we stay true to that level of being great.

The last thing I want to say is, I think we had some really good candid conversations this retreat, and I think we should build on that. Individually, I love working with all of you. I value all of your perspectives. We have to have diversity of thought. I try to reach out to every single one of Council members to ask, in particular when we have something controversial or knowing that we're going to have different views, but it's important for us to dialogue with one another. Because even though we might not come out at the same end, in terms of whether we agree or disagree, it's important to have that understanding of context. So, my line of communication to you is always open. I'm going to always call you all, and I want you to feel like you can call me on anything big and small, and I'm going to help work through trying to get to a better answer with you. So, I think we just need to focus on keeping those lines of communication open and doing what we've been doing, and we'll maintain that great level that we're performing at.

Ms. Arnold said absolutely, thank you so much, Councilmember Anderson.

**Councilmember Graham** said I won't be long, because much of what I wanted to say has already been said by some of my colleagues. I do want to thank you also for your participation and your support and your leadership, and also again just acknowledge the staff members that are here and those who aren't here, those who are line workers, in the departments, on the streets, kind of doing the work. I want to acknowledge our police officers for the work that they do and keeping us safe and secure. I just hope that as a Council this year, as we move forward, that we do the work with lenses that are far and wide, and become very narrow when appropriate. We've got a lot of big issues this year that go beyond the boundaries of the City. I think a lot of that work centers around mobility, but also interface, as we talked about with housing and workforce and jobs. So, our lenses really need to be far and wide, and like I said, appropriately narrow when we have to be.

The first conversation that we had earlier in the week was very interesting, but it's not what we say, it's what we do, and how we treat one another, and the deference we give to one another, that's going to decide whether or not we're going to be a high-performing board. We made a step or two, but we've got a long way to go, and that's just being honest. I think we can get there if we provide some deference and some respect to one another along the way. So, I'm certainly open to doing that, and I try to carry myself in that manner. The work is hard, but I think if we're strategic, that if we play chess versus checkers, on issues that we're facing along the way from the feds and the state, that we can find a way to thread the needle to accomplish the goals and objectives for all of our citizens, our corporate leaders, our businesses, our large businesses, our small businesses, our minority businesses, our neighborhood leaders, old folks, young folks, black folks, white folks, Baptists and Catholics and Jews. We represent everybody. We represent everybody, and that's my perspective as a district rep, and that's why I will always have a wide lens and seek far and try to build consensus to create a community for everyone that's better tomorrow than it is today. Thank you for the opportunity.

Ms. Arnold said thank you, Councilman Graham.

**Councilmember Molina** said thank you. Not to belabor any points, I agree with my colleagues in the sentiment first that, thank you for your patience in this exercise. I know that this is an exercise in patience. Like many of my colleagues said, there are a lot of personalities in this room. To our Manager, I remain proud of the work that we've done together as a district and as a city, and I know we've still got a lot of work ahead, but I

appreciate you answering my calls when I call you. I appreciate you being absolutely open when I offer a suggestion in how we should move forward and activating our resources to get things done. I think that's a key component in how this sauce comes together. I think I try my best to model to our staff that I am not just a person sitting in an elected body, but I'm a human being that they can relate to on a level that we're all in this together. We're all government employees. We all are taxpayer funded, and we all execute with the same mission in mind. I think we have a great team that exhibits that every single day, and I'm proud of that. I'm proud of what we've accomplished so far, not ignoring that there's still things ahead, but there will always be things ahead in a great city. So, this isn't a statement of resting on our laurels, it just like Councilmember Mitchell said, celebrating, just for once to say that we're proud of what we've done, and that I am.

I've achieved some things in my life that I'm proud of, but being in this level of service in this city that I was raised in. I became a woman in Charlotte, and to serve her at this level is one of the greatest honors of my life. I think to have the gift to magnify voices that don't have the opportunity like we do, is a gift that I know that none of us take lightly. I listen to us. I participate in our dialogue. I look at us objectively. Sometimes I remain silent when I could say stuff, but it's really just to give space to learn the personalities, to understand how to interact with them.

The one thing I walk away with is what I feel like this exercise has executed. The little bit of time that we have, the more that we get to know each other, the more that we get to understand the why in a person's purpose, we can work better together. Diversity is our strength. I can't think of any offensive lineup in any sport where you've got people who are all the same. Everyone has a mission. Everyone has a purpose. Yes, you hear the quarterback in the news all the time, but he can't do it without a wide receiver. He can't do it without a full back to protect him. He can't do it without the people that make that line possible, and at any given moment, any one of us can be a wide receiver. Any one of us can be a full back. Any one of us can be a corner. I'm talking about football. If ya'll don't know, I love football, but it's one of those things where the diversity of our strengths come into play. Recognizing what we have as strengths and utilizing them so that we can continue to be, like what we're saying, a high-performing Council, and that's how we do it. It is respecting those differences. Understanding that we are not going to agree on everything, and I'm okay with that. I literally want you to really say what you feel. Be respectful. I tell my own children, it's not what you say, it's how you say it. Anybody can receive something if you consider the method in which you deliver that information. So, it's always that respect lens that we should be looking through, but we should also be able to say those things that make us different. I stand and confirm that I feel like more exercises like this throughout the year are needed. I hope we remain open to some type of intermittent connection to where we have honest and open conversations with each other, so that we can continue to learn and grow and remain focused on the mission of achieving the goals of our great city. That's all I have.

Ms. Arnold said thank you, Councilmember Molina. I want to say that I've had the opportunity to move from Charlotte a few times, and I've decided not to, because I absolutely love this city. I think there is no better city in the nation, honestly. So, it's an honor to be here, and it's an honor to be here for the third year in a row. I don't take that lightly, and it is not easy, as you know and as you said, but I see each of you, and I see each of you leaning in, and that's all I can ask as a facilitator. You pushed me, you prodded, me, you made me better, but you've also listened, you trusted the process, and that's the hallmark of a great leader. I see each of you individually, and I see the strength in each of you individually. You guys are a very, very strong team. You've accomplished some amazing things for the City of Charlotte. I'm here with my leadership hat on, which is to say, let's get to the next level, because what you have yet to do is going to require a new version of you. So, thank you for trusting me with that process and being open to it. I do not take it lightly at all.

I cannot take credit for everything. I want to say to your Manager, you're an amazing leader. You're a quiet leader, and I had to do this for 2½ days, you have to do it every day. No small feat, and I want to acknowledge you and your leadership and being at the

helm and leading this great team that you have behind you in getting this city to where it is today, because you're doing it for all of us. So, thank you, sir.

I'm going get to some people, but I have to acknowledge Jason Schneider, who poor thing was thrown into this role, because Julia decided to have a baby. It's normally Julia and I are partners in crime, but you see two days, but I myself personally have been engaged here since the top of Q4 (Quarter), in getting us to this point. So, there's a lot of thought and work and effort that goes to, and I'm always saying, what is the staff working on? What do we need to say? Where do we need to be by end of the Council? What do we need to do? So, I want to thank Marcus for allowing me and giving me that space to do what I do. Thank you for your partnership, Jason, and being a great partner to create a successful retreat for us this year. I know there's always consternation about what's on the agenda, and we never have enough time, because truly you need a week to get it all done, and so thank you.

I want to also acknowledge the people behind the scenes. So, all the staff members who have been working on it, and pulling this information, because you didn't get slides, you got data. So, you've got work that says you can trust what's in here today what's put before you. There's a lot of work that goes into putting the time together. I want to acknowledge Amanda and Beverly, who's not here today, and all the AV (Audio-Visual) guys, because it's easy to come into a room and have things go well for you. Can I have the AV guys come in? They're always sending me notes, and the team in the back. I just want you to see who's making sure that we're on the rails here. Thank you, and of course, Stephanie and Billie, but really it takes a village and takes a team to get us to this point. So, thank you.

I want to acknowledge Tracy Dodson, I can't give you a title right now, I'm not going to say it. I just want to acknowledge you for all of your work, and literally what you have done for the City of Charlotte. You have masterfully championed us through some really, really big rocks and big initiatives, and literally things that we can visibly see as we drive down the streets here. So, thank you, Tracy. We look forward to your continued partnership as you go into your new role, thank you.

Then, I also finally want to acknowledge the Council again. Thank you for your servant leadership. You are essentially volunteers for the work that you put in, but I do want to thank you for your servant leadership and for your heart for the work. I'm a little fussy in terms of what you do, but I cannot say. I know that each of you are here, because you care about the people that you represent, and you fight hard for the people that you represent. Thank you for doing that. I'm going to give you a path and some tools to do it differently going forward, but we have to acknowledge your commitment to the City of Charlotte, and I want to say thank you for that.

Finally, thank you to our great Mayor. Thank you for your quiet leadership. Thank you for your visionary leadership, and you masterfully just kind of work the City at the top of the house and have gotten us to this beautiful place that we are today. So, thank you so much. So, with that, I'll ask for closing comments from the Manager and from the Mayor. Thank you all. I appreciate you.

Ms. Anderson said DeAlva, can I add something really quickly. I just wanted to say, I wanted to thank the Mayor and the City Manager and the ACMs (Assistant City Managers) for focusing on western Carolina and having this retreat here in Asheville. I haven't heard anything but positive responses from all the Council members around the actually experience of the retreat. Very happy to be here in Asheville and enjoying, not only the day, but in the evening where we're able to go out and enjoy the good restaurants and the good atmosphere. So, thank you for centering western Carolina this year during this retreat.

Ms. Arnold said absolutely. It's been a wonderful experience, and it was the right thing to do. Thank you.

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said so, thank you, DeAlva. Sometimes I have control issues, so to turn the reins over to you for 2½ days, I always cross my fingers, but you've done a tremendous job. Council, you're a tremendous board. I've told you this privately, I'll say it publically. I love working for you and with you. Mayor, sometimes I get to see some things that other folks don't see. How you maneuver when we're in D.C., and you're in other cities, and I'll tell you Council, she's royalty. Just really, really proud of what you guys are doing here in Charlotte, and how the Mayor represents. The big thing for me is, thank you for allowing me to lead the team and build a team. That's very important, and stop saying so many good things about them, because people will start to steal them from us. So, we did some recruiting last night, to steal some people from maybe Boston and Philly and Phoenix. What I will say is, this has been a tremendous few days, and hopefully we have a bunch of credits that have been deposited in the bank. Some days there will be debits, and I sure hope that you remember that what we're trying to do every day, the best job we can do, sometimes we're going to make mistakes, and I would hope that you don't judge us for those mistakes but do the full spectrum.

Tracy Dodson, All-Star, we're going to miss you, but we'll keep the light on. So, we actually enjoy having the Annual Strategy Meeting, because now we can go to work. So, that's the thing. You've given us the blueprints, and our goal is to come back next year, and have the same intensity and to continue to have you proud of us. So, thanks a lot.

Mayor Lyles said so, I've heard a lot of great words. If you have one of those crossword puzzles, you can use things like candid, committed, amazing, strong, but I have one that I think that I want to recognize Marcus for, because if you think about how we have gotten to the Red Line, it is a regional effort. It has been times when I'm not quite sure that we could actually get in the car and not just blow up, but over the three to four years, I can't even remember how many, the ability to talk about this mobility plan, is absolutely astounding to me. I hope that you, as Council, see that there's a real commitment that I make in this area. I do this by buying lunch for every Mayor in the county. So, that commitment's big, it costs you a lot of money too, but we have these conversations, and those conversations are beyond what we do as a city. When you start thinking about how Huntersville is going to do something, or how even Davidson, which I think is the smallest town, how they're reacting to this opportunity that we have for this Red Line is astounding, and something that I think all of us should be proud of. It wasn't easy, but every one of you stood and said, yes, we can make this happen, and that's going to be something that I think, like when you go to heaven, and God says what did you do right, and you can say, the Red Line, the Red Line, it was me, on the Red Line.

For the staff, being someone that was a staffer, I can't tell you how much I love you. I mean, I know so little about what's done now. It's really great, because you have transformed what we can do. We've always been a good, steady place, but what you've done as a staff and a team, has made this so exceptional. So, you can't go anywhere. The pension fund works, so you can still stay and get your pension. I couldn't be Mayor without that pension, I want you to know that. I mean, I think it's \$40 a month, but what I want to say is that, the first time that I ran for office, I tell people that I have a tangible love for this City, and I would say it today, and that includes each and every one of you. So, thank you very much for this day, this time, and the high-performing, we'll figure that out, it'll get there, but we will get it in a way that's done in the way that Charlotte does the right things to get things accomplished. So, I want to say thank you, Tia. I mean, it's been a joy sitting next to you. I don't know how much typing you could do, but you are really good at it. So, thank you all for the day, and DeAlva, class lady, class lady. We do have a closed session. It won't be long. Tracy, are you leading this closed session? Anthony, go ahead and read our motion.

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**ITEM NO. 4: CLOSED SESSION**

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

The meeting was recessed at 11:55 a.m. for a closed session.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:10 p.m. at the end of the closed session.



Billie Tynes, Deputy City Clerk

Length of Meeting: 2 Hours, 35 Minutes  
Meeting completed: March 18, 2025