

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina convened for a Strategy Session on Monday, February 7, 2022, at 5:04 p.m. in Room 267 of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Mayor Lyles presiding. Council Members present were Dimple Ajmera, Tariq Bokhari, Ed Driggs, Larken Egleston, Julie Eiselt, Malcolm Graham, Renee Johnson, Matt Newton, Greg Phipps, Victoria Watlington, and Braxton Winston, II.

\* \* \* \* \*

**This meeting is being held virtual in accordance with all of the laws that we have to follow regarding electronic meetings. The requirements also include notices and access that are being met electronically as well. You can view this on our Government Channel, the City's Facebook Page, or the City's YouTube Page.**

**Mayor Lyles** said welcome to the Charlotte City Council Strategy Meeting. It is on February 7<sup>th</sup>. We have really been working on the idea of the Strategy Session, so I want to talk about that. Before we start this meeting, I would like to address a current local media focus. The Charlotte Regional Alliance released a statement this afternoon on this topic. I wanted to state clearly that I nor the Charlotte City Council nor any Council member had any role in the hiring of the Alliance staff. The Alliance statement has been made, and it's available to both the media and the public and I would expect that any questions regarding that item should be referred to the Alliance for their comment. So, I just wanted to make sure that everyone was aware because we've gotten inquiries about that.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### **ITEM NO. 1: COUNCIL COMMITTEE S: 2022 WORK PLANS**

**Mayor Lyles** said the second thing I want to pivot to, is tonight we're going to begin a new way of looking at our agenda. Which is we're going to start with Council Committee , and we're going to have the chairs talk about the 90-day work plans that everyone has accomplished. This is a new process for us and as a group, we're going to be holding these sessions in collaboration, quarterly, to share these updates and progress in a more meaningful way. You know, the purpose of this discussion is to really give the Council as a whole, each individual member, to comment on the directions that any Council Committee is taking. We also want to see the overlap in the collaboration and issues between Committee s. So, if one Committee is working on something that can impact another, we want to learn about that and work through that discussion as well. We also want to really have the ability to talk about this important work that's being done. Committee s are the foundation for public policy, that should come to the Council as a whole. At the end of this, these reports, what we would like to do is just basically, ask each Council member to give a head nod, even those virtual can nod their heads as we look at what that Committee has determined as the next step. And so, that gives a sense of how much support there is among the Council members for the efforts and what things need to be done differently. I think these work plans will help us be more effective and will

not be a reading of minutes of other meetings, it is to have a robust discussion. So, I know that we're going to start with Councilmember Driggs for our first report, but before that, I would like to ask the Manager if he has any comments as we're moving forward in this new process.

**Marcus Jones, City Manager**, said thank you, Mayor and members of the Council, just two quick things I would like to share with the Council, and I call it trying to respond to some of the recommendations that the Council gave to me as it relates to the Committee. So, you will continue to have staff support, the typical liaisons like Brandon, Tracy, Sarah, Shawn, Dana, Emily, and Liz. What's different going forward, is that you will have an additional 2-3 subject-matter experts who help support the work of the Committee, and those would be Department Directors, Deputy Directors, and Managers. The concept is and you have said this over and over again, how can we make sure that as an organization, we have horizontal collaboration and information sharing?

Secondly, I think, it's equally important as issues arise in the various Committee s, we will have staff try to run down some of the data or information for you and give it to you prior to your next Committee meeting so that there's always enough time for you to discuss the policy and the topics at the Committee. So really twofold, more resources, being provided for the Committee, and more cross-collaboration and information sharing prior to Committee meetings. So, I wanted to let the Committee Chairs and the Council know that we heard you loudly and clearly and we're trying to address some of the concerns from the last go around with the Committees.

**Councilmember Driggs** said good evening. Are you ready for me to start my report now?

Mayor Lyles said we are ready. We're going to go into Budget and Governance first.

Mr. Driggs said the Budget and Governance Committee consists of myself, as the Chair, Ms. Ajmera as Vice-Chair, and Councilmembers, Bokhari, Eiselt, and Phipps. We met on February 3<sup>rd</sup> and agreed on a work plan. I'm just going to mention some of the initiatives and the rough timeline we intend for that.

In February and April, we will have a review of the budget development schedule and budget workshop content. So, this is our usual annual process for assisting the Manager, with the preparation of the budget. On a quarterly basis, we will review the Hospitality Capital Funds and this is a result of conversations we've had in the past about making priorities and allocations for the Hospitality Capital accounts. We will also review an agenda for a City Council Annual Strategy Session when one is scheduled. I don't think we have one scheduled right now, but we'll deal with that when it comes up.

In the October, and December time frame, we would look at the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. The Committee is also responsible for our relationship with our auditors and hearing the report from the auditors and reporting to the full Council on their findings. We also received from time to time, reports from our internal auditors on a variety of topics

if they may choose to investigate and as appropriate we report on those to the full Council. There are a couple of items that are left on our to-do list, but that are now still on the to-do list, one of them is to review Council rules of procedures. This is a variety of things, including staff requests and how items get put on the agenda, there have been a number of questions on the Council about the procedures and how exactly we do things. I think that the idea here is that the Committee would try to clarify those things for the benefit of the full Council.

We also have an outstanding item, which is the final decision about virtual meetings and remote meetings policies. This is something that we have talked about and reached a certain point in Committee in terms of what would happen when the State of Emergency is lifted and we're no longer under COVID-19 rules. There are one or two loose ends here. If I could put it that way, possible exceptions to the preceding policy of having in-person meetings. I think that the Committee will take that up when it becomes more apparent when the State of Emergency is likely to end and we will be confronted with the question of what rules apply after it's lifted, and we'll consider that in the context of what is going on, COVID-19 wise and health-wise at the time.

There was a recommendation by the Citizens Committee that we appointed on Governance, to consider an additional City Council District. I think that from our conversation, this is probably something that we would look at when we've gotten through the current process of districting and gotten around the uncertainty around the timeline for the election. We'll probably look at that under more stable conditions. I expect that will fall to the next Council to take that on.

On four-year City Council terms, also recommendations from the Citizens Committee, there is a kind of process, a rather long lead time that goes up to a referendum and so we will work with the City Attorney to decide on a given date when we might want that to become effective; If we want it to become effective; where we need to start and what steps, we need to take and when. We'll get information about that, so that we know at least if we're going to target say the 2023 or the 2025 election, for a transition to the new terms when we need to get to work on it. But there's no decision about trying to adopt that yet. It's really more of a process thing at this point, just knowing when we have to make up our minds about that. Those are the items on our work plan.

Mayor Lyles said okay are there any questions for Mr. Driggs on the work plan, any comments? Any overlap with something that someone or another Committee may be working on or towards or thinking about?

Mr. Driggs said Mayor, I would mention that as we do our budget process, there's always the possibility of overlap to the extent that decisions in other Committee s involve possible commitments of resources. I've always been of the opinion that we need to avoid having policy conversations during our budget process. I could see that as being a potential area, so if there are ideas, for example, on new things that we ought to do that come up during

our budget discussions, they should properly be referred to the respective Committee s for a policy decision before we start rolling the money around.

**Councilmember Eiselt** said yes, thank you, Mayor. I have a question. We talked about the idea of, you know, I mean, that item is on this Committee 's agenda for four-year terms or the additional district, but I'm not clear on the process for making that decision. In terms of if we do put it forward, isn't that something that at this point the whole Council would have to have a conversation about? Or does it make sense to leave it in Committee? I think that the confusion for me is because the Governance Committee made the recommendation, shouldn't we be talking about this as a full Council at this point?

Mr. Driggs said well, I think it is still a referral that is outstanding. So, if it was decided to take it up, we would then do an assessment. We would get advice from the staff and consider how it would work or think about the issues and then bring a framework for conversation to the full Council. That's not something that we decide in Committee. I think the Committee in this case could sort of facilitating the full Council conversation. So, we don't just roll it out on the floor and kick it around to the full group.

Ms. Eiselt said yeah, I know, I think that part should stay in Committee, but what you just said, Mr. Driggs, about if we decide we want to explore it, presumably, we mean the whole Council. So, is there a mechanism by which the whole Council says, yep, let's move forward and get this discussed in Committee? I'm a little bit confused about that.

Mr. Driggs said well, again, the suggestion I'm offering the full Council right now, is that this is probably something, given the time that it would take to implement and so on, and the connection the future elections, that it's likely to be tackled seriously by the next Council. Given that we're already in fact in that term at the moment. So, to that extent, I guess my suggestion was, and I think that we sort of agreed in Committee that the next Council would decide what action they want to take and what instruction to give to the Committee, about framing the conversation.

Ms. Eiselt said okay, I guess that is what I want to make sure there is some, if that is how the whole Council feels or understood that to be the case that we would go ahead and wait.

Mr. Driggs said we have kept this on our to-do list, in order for it not to be forgotten as it were. This is an outstanding item and it's a question of when is the appropriate time to tackle it. I think as we considered it, it seemed that trying to do it under this circumstance when we're well into the term after the one to which we got elected, and given all of the election timeline uncertainties, maybe this isn't the best time to try to answer that question.

Mayor Lyles said I know it's difficult to have a dialogue virtually, but Mr. Winston wants to weigh in. So, Mr. Driggs and Ms. Eiselt, Mr. Winston is going to weigh in on this and we'll try to keep it as informal a discussion as the two of you are having.

**Councilmember Winston** said no, actually, my question was going to be for clarification, because they were explaining themselves.

Mayor Lyles said can you speak up a little bit more?

Mr. Winston said I was going to ask for clarification, but they started explaining where the discussion was and was making a bit more sense. So, my question was actually answered by their discussion.

Mayor Lyles said this is what I think I heard Mayor Pro Tem say, and I'm going to try to say it back, and then she can go with it or not. I think what she's saying has the full Council decided on the discussion that we want to see the four-year terms as a decision that would be made by the next Council. What I heard Mr. Driggs say is that the Committee would be looking at the pros, cons, and differences, what would have to be done with the City Attorney, and all of the legal processes. What would be the options for doing it, and that would be done, again, when the new Council comes on board? So, did I capture that correctly? Can you help me? Did I say that correctly?

Mr. Driggs said Madam Mayor, that was kind of my intention. I am offering to the full Council the suggestion that we should do this, that the next Council should do this, and obviously this is a time for anybody who disagrees with that to say so. Otherwise, the rule of the Committee, whenever, would be that one-of trying to frame the conversation and do some of the groundwork with the lawyers and so on, and identify some of the issues, maybe look at the comparable from other cities and things like that in order to be able to present the thing to the full Council, for discussion.

Mayor Lyles said let me check in with the Mayor Pro Tem.

Ms. Eiselt said I don't dispute that it would be difficult to get it done in this Council, but a lot of that work has been done by the Governance Committee. So, I think that's fine, let's just put it out there, that there's a resolution as to whether or not that's going to be taken up by this Council or not. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said Mayor Pro Tem, we do know the Governance Committee did a lot of work on it, there is a lot. So, I don't expect it is going to take a long time to look at what the choices and options are and what the methodology would be. But I think that the question is, when, and so, that would be after the new Council is elected. Are you okay with that, Mayor Pro Tem?

Ms. Eiselt said yes, that's fine. That's what I'm hearing and that's what I was asking for some definite about whether or not we were going to take it up or not.

**Councilmember Watlington** said to that point, I see a little bit differently. I do appreciate some of the conversations about the timing, and the things that it would take. However, I think it would be even less likely that it would get reviewed with the new Council given

that when we finish this term, they come in, and the budget is already done. They essentially have six months if we are being honest about our campaign cycle before they'll be running again. Because of that, and because of the fact that there's several of our members of the current Council who are not running in the next election, I would think that it would be more advantageous for this Council to deal with that now, given that we actually have been on the Council for some time and have an understanding of the impacts and where that Council that received the recommendations from the Governance Committee. That's my two cents.

Mayor Lyle said okay, I see some head nods coming from Mr. Graham. I'm going to go to Ms. Johnson

**Councilmember Johnson** said thank you. I wanted to know the time deadline. I don't know if this would have to go on the ballot. We need to consider the time as well. So, if our next term is about six months and then, we'll run again, if we want to coincide this four-year term with that. So, I think that we need to take into account whatever the time deadlines are, as well to consider which Council should consider this.

**Councilmember Graham** said thank you, Madam Mayor. I agree with Council member Watlington. I think that the election cycle for the next 18 months is going to be different, right? I'm not sure when the general election will be this year, right? So, if it's in November, which I think that's what is going to happen; that means that folks aren't running again in January of 2023, and so because of that, I think it's really important that we just process the work and don't worry about the election schedule or what the calendar says. If there's work in front of the Council that needs to be done, this Council has been in place for well over two-and-a-half years now, right? I just think that we just process the work and I think that will lead us to where we want to go.

Mayor Lyles said so the goal, I think, is to get back on an odd year's cycle in November. So, filing would be in September? The primary would be in September, filing would be before that primary, September, and then the election in November in 2023; to get back on whatever. So, I think that the question is, Mr. Driggs if in 2023, would we want to look at a two-year or a four-year term and that may be the discussion before or prior to if I get that right.

Mr. Jones said I think, Mayor and members of the Council, if I heard Council member Driggs correctly, it's not the what is the how. So, how would staggered terms be implemented it seems like the question now is when would the Committee begin to work on that with the City Attorney to give some options. It seems like that could happen whenever you choose, but you need some options to figure out what you would like to decide to do.

Mr. Winston said I agree with Mr. Jones, and I think that's kind of what we're starting to decide as the Council, is do we want to start that work now? What is the scope of that work? Is it just four-year terms, staggered terms? But I'm with my colleagues, Ms.

Watlington, and Mr. Graham and I believe Ms. Johnson is that time is of the essence, and right now, we should just consider, you know, what work we can put on the City Council's table to do for however long we're here. So, I would vote to move forward to suggest that the Committee, start working on understanding what the options are, and how we move forward with it.

Ms. Eiselt said I was just going to say, I think that the thing to remember, too, is that we don't have to put it on as a referendum. That would be if we decided to vote on it, and there was, I think if somebody collects 5,000 signatures, that could force it to a referendum. So that's another decision that has to be made, too. Do we just skip to the referendum or does the Council decide that is something they want to do? I just want to be clear that it does not have to be a referendum. I can see a case for both situations. I think, you know, on my mind is the UDO (Unified Development Ordinance), the Transit Plan. So, we have a lot on our plate, and I can see where it would be difficult to get this done. That said, I agree with, I think it was Ms. Watlington's comment; that it's hard when you do have Council members such as myself, who are going to be more impartial because we're not running, so it's not self-serving by any means, but, you know, we all have experience enough now to at least express an educated opinion as to whether it makes sense to do this. I think that you are kind of starting from scratch, with the new Council. Not that, you know, it's a whole new body, but this is the Council that that Governance Committee presented to, so I do feel that at least we're not starting from square one. Thank you.

Mr. Driggs said yes, Madam Mayor, I just wanted to say the earliest this could take effect is in 2023, right?

Mayor Lyles said right.

Mr. Driggs said at the rate we're going it looks like we will probably have a new Council sometime this summer. Although, there isn't any certainty about that. So, that Council would have a year before the filing for the next election to work on this and decide about it. I think that they're the ones who are going to live with this, .as it were. So, we've got a couple of members who won't be around when this takes effect or will not be affected by it. The people who are affected by it, strike me as being the more logical ones to make the decision and again, I think there's enough time for them to work on it and make that decision in time for the next election when it could be effective. So, I'm still mindful of the fact that we are here now as a group, because of events and we're in overtime. So, this ought to be the next Council already right now, and so my preference is unless I mean, Mayor Pro Tem referred to things like the UDO and so on, and there I can see a better case to the extent that we worked on that. We all worked on that for years and the new people might have a hard time and we need to get that implemented. That's something that we want to have operational this year. So, we don't have the leisure of a year before we have to have in place a decision about the districts. But on district one, it's not clear to me why that can't be left for the next Council to work on.

Mayor Lyles said that would be the Council would be elected sometime hopefully this spring.

Mr. Driggs said right. Based on the events that we're seeing right now; the expectation is that they would be seated this summer sometime; in that July or August type time frame. Again, depending on whether we see further changes in the schedule, but at the moment, I think we have a May primary scheduled; June general, or July and then, presumably the Council would be seated a month later. So, that group, that takes off is then, being the group that would have taken off in December under normal conditions; strikes me as being the logical group to decide what happens in 2023.

Mayor Lyles said Mr. Driggs, you're recommending that following the summer election, the Council take this up. I actually think when you look at the timing of what you have with the budget on the plate, because we have to approve that prior to the new election time coming up, and some of these other things. So, I just want you to balance that budget adoption filing and all of that for everyone in the room that's going to run or plans to run again. So, what I hear is that the Council that would be elected likely in June the timing might work to begin that discussion then.

Mr. Driggs said and I'm not representing that the full Committee focused on that and decided that we had a conversation about it that sort of suggested this is probably something that the next Council should consider, but my personal view is that is a more appropriate thing that the guys who are going to take office sometime this year, think about how the election will work next year.

Mayor Lyles said all right. So, you've heard from the Chairperson, I think that when we look at the nod, what we're looking at is the annual budget development process and the workshop content. I heard, no questions about that. The finance report, the audit updates, the Strategy Session, Hospitality Fund. There again, I think that the discussion has been on the four-year terms and so is there anyone that sees any issue with those items with the exception of the four-year terms? So, is everybody okay with that?

Mr. Driggs said lots of thumbs up, Mayor.

Mayor Lyles said the question now is the decision, to begin with, the Council that's elected in the summer to start the discussion on the four-year terms. Is everybody comfortable with that? No, I see some hands up.

Mr. Winston said no, I don't think there's any guarantees. You know, if I was taking bets, I would bet that the least confusion is one general election and that would be in November. So again, I think if this Council determines the work worthy, I believe we should start on the work. Ideas and work does get carried over regardless of when terms start and end. So, I'm for this Council getting this work started.



Mayor Lyles said I see some other head nods around. So, why don't we do kind of a check on it? If you think that this work should begin now, and should become effective in 2023, would you raise your hand if you're virtual?

Ms. Watlington said I just want to comment. I think that those are two separate items because until we start the work, we won't know what the options are. So, I don't know that I would say that necessarily say today that I believe that it should be in effect in 2023, I do believe that we should start the work, so I wanted to clarify.

Mayor Lyles said the first one is starting the work or asking the Committee to start the work, this spring, or summer, which is about the same time, so okay. Then there would be a discussion and the Committee would come back with the information prior to any decision being made, is that Ms. Watlington? So, there would like to be the researcher bring back the research from the Governance Committee, reviewed by the attorney and Committee making a recommendation to come before the elections this summer. That's what I think I'm hearing.

**Councilmember Phipps** said I guess I'm sort of confused on what you mean by starting the work. I can recall, I think it was. I don't know if it was back in 2019, but we had a presentation. This was in the Governance Committee. Our prior City Attorney gave us all of the options of what had to be done to pursue this. So, what are we talking about when we say do the work? Because that was a lot of work, and it was a lot of discussions that was presented there. And the options that we had as a Council to pursue that direction of work. So, I guess I'm confused as to what additional work are we talking about.

Mayor Lyles said I would say the additional work is getting everybody on the same level set. That some of us have great memories, and some of us don't. And just making sure that the Committee comes back with, this is what the Governance Committee said, this is what our discussion was, here are your choices. And so, I understand, I don't mean that we've got to do great research The research has been done. But I think that level setting everything for this group is important to do. If this group is going to make the decision, everybody should start off with the same level of information and that comes from the Committee.

Mr. Phipps said would that entail then, summarizing what has already been done and bringing it back, because I don't know if some of the members might not have probably weren't then when that was discussed. So, are we saying that we will bring those discussions back to this Committee for them to see?

Mayor Lyles said yes.

Mr. Phipps said I can understand that.

Mayor Lyles said yes, that's what we're saying, that all of the information that we've talked about, and explored, would be summarized, and the Committee would discuss it and bring

it to the Council. I don't mean work like, you know, start at the beginning, but. At least level-setting, so that everybody knows what these choices are. All right. Mr. Driggs, are you okay with that?

Mr. Driggs said I'm happy to do that. I would like to ask the City Attorney, about this referendum process to which the Mayor Pro Tem alluded, I thought that was in relation to the four-year term. Does the Council's ability to create an additional district depend on a referendum or a possible petition requiring one?

**Patrick Baker, City Attorney** said thank you for the question, I'm not sure about the district piece. But I can have that information for you tomorrow. As to whether or not that goes to referendum or not. I'm not sure that's one of the things that the Council can do on its own but I just don't recall. I know I've looked at it. And I can pull up.

Mr. Driggs said at the time we were briefed before we were told about a process. A detailed timeline, for the public hearing, a notice to be given, and we either had to choose between referendum or trying to do it without a referendum, but possibly being required to do it. I think that the short answer, Madam Mayor, is happy and I'm sure that the Committee is happy to go back and review the things that we discussed before, freshen up that conversation, and report to the full Council. I'll point out that if this Council decided that we were going to terms, and the next Council for any reason decided we weren't, I think that what we do now could be reversed by that group anyway. So, if you guys want to do it now, we'll do it. And we'll certainly do that work and make sure everybody is clear about what the issues are.

Mayor Lyles do we have an okay on budget on those final items of the four-year terms and the additional Council district? Let me state, there's the law and theirs is the city's dynamics and what I call norms. Those are the things that I think are just as important for communicating to the public as the law is. So, let's just remind ourselves that this is something that citizens will follow, I'm sure, in detail, and there's a lot of people in this town that probably have opinions about this. So, we just have to make room for that. I'm really sensitive about the engagement of people in these kinds of efforts, so. All right. So, Mr. Driggs, thank you for modeling what I think is what we're trying to get to for each Committee. So, with that, everybody, the nod is yes, on all of the items and Mr. Driggs has understood he's going to begin some work on the district and the four-year terms.

All right now, I see here, you have your schedule for the next proposed 90 days, Mr. Driggs. So, you're going to modify that?

Mr. Driggs said yes, Madam Mayor, we'll make the adjustment. No problem.

Mayor Lyles everybody okay with that? All right thank you.

### **Economic Development**

**Councilmember Graham** said thank you, Madam Mayor. The Economic Development Committee reviews and recommends policies to attain and increase and enhance the number of jobs available in the city of Charlotte and expand economic opportunities to all residents. I have been appointed chair of the Committee. I have a very, very good Committee. Vice-Chairman Driggs, Ajmera, Phipps, and Watlington serve with me on the Committee, and we're supported by Tracy Dodson and her teammates in economic development. We're really excited about the challenges that lie ahead for the Committee this program year. We have already had two meetings thus far this year, the second meeting was actually today. And we've identified four anticipated agenda initiatives for the year and a bucket list of others. The four would be the Corridors of Opportunity. Hire Charlotte. small business and entrepreneurship. Public-private partnerships, the p3. And the miscellaneous bucket of other stuff, as we call them. Whether it's the arts and culture plan, the charlotte business inclusion updates, the UDO ordinance, economic analysis, special events, and permitting. As part of what we said as a Committee, we want to be very transparent in terms of the work that we do this year. We clearly understand and know that now and until probably the 18-24 months, there's a lot of work that this Committee will be doing; high-level work. We want to make sure that we bring the Council members as well as the community along with us, and so we want to be as transparent, open, and in terms of what we're doing, where we're going, and how we're going to get there. What we did also, Ed and his Committee did was outline a calendar of events for the next 90 days that shared kind of shares with you exactly where we're going. Again, like I said earlier, today we met and we have a very excellent presentation on Hire Charlotte.

We shared the summary and the preliminary framework for the work that we are currently doing. As you can see for yourself for the months of March, April, and May, we have outlined the initiative and the informational update. In the month of March, we'll be doing the UDO and economic analysis, and more work on the Corridors of Opportunity which we're really excited about this year. We're not leaving Beatties Ford Road, but certainly, hopefully, the focus will be on other areas of the city this year. The work that Ms. Watlington is doing in District 3. The work that Ms. Johnson is doing in District 4. Obviously, there are a number of opportunities available to us in District 5 around the Eastland mall area. So, we're working to duplicate some of the successes we had on Beatties Ford Road and other areas of the city. We are fortunate to have a loaned executive working with us in reference to some of the issues relating to the Mayor's Equity Initiative, as it relates to Corridors of Opportunity as well. So, we're really excited about this. Also, some touch points that we'll be working with, Councilmember Watlington on in the Great Neighborhoods Committee. So, we look forward to at the appropriate time, partners and working with her and her Committee to establish some of the results we both are looking for. So again, corridors will be a big topic for the Committee this year. In April, as you can see, the UDO, meets charlotte, small business strategy. Councilmember Bokhari, we're not going to forget about the work you did in reference to highlighting advancing in small business development in Charlotte that will not be an understudy of the work. We will continue the work that you started making sure that small business owners are top of mind. We clearly understand and know that as Charlotte continues to

grow and we diversify the portfolio of economic opportunities, those small business owners provide the greatest opportunity for growth in our community, so small businesses will not be an afternoon thought, we'll be working with that community and picking your brains from time to time in term of how to execute at a high-level there. Notwithstanding small businesses, there's also the city's MWBE (Minority and Women Business Enterprise) Program. That will be a part of our work as well. Diversity and inclusion is important for our community. Certainly, business inclusion is extremely important for the city. As a public institution but also we want to make sure that our private partners in the community are doing the same type of work that we're doing, and so supplier diversity and inclusion will be an important part of the work that do as a Committee this year as well. You see the calendar outlined for 90-day calendar work; I won't be redundant in reading everything to you. I think it's pretty self-explanatory. The P3, the public-private partnerships again, those things will be coming sooner or later and we'll be talking about the number of these items with our corporate partners here locally. We'll address them when they come and be as transparent as possible in terms of articulating what we are doing and why we're doing it. But more importantly, it's not about the big things, right? Those things will come, it's the things that we have to do each and every day, which is protecting our corridors, making sure that we find jobs and economic opportunities for those who are looking forward, and ensuring the small business owners are a part of the fabric of the city. As well as working with the Economic Development Team to retain the corporations that we have in Charlotte. More importantly, working with them to identify new companies to come to our community whether international companies or moving from Kansas City that want to make Charlotte home; so, our work is encompassed, we have a great staff, and led by Ms. Dodson, and we look forward to doing the work for the balance of the year.

**Mayor Lyles** said thank you, Mr. Graham, thank you very much. Comments on the overall work plan as well as those things that are specifically outlined for the first five months

**Councilmember Johnson** said great presentation, thank you. I wanted to ask about the executive summary. That you all received today. I didn't have a chance to see it. When I was on this Committee, one of the groups of folks that I really kept lifted up was the formerly incarcerated. And I had asked Ms. Dodson to include information about the formerly incarcerated in the Hire Charlotte or in the summaries for the corridors. So, I wanted to know if that information was presented. And if not, if we could just keep that momentum going and advocating for those folks, yeah. Thanks.

Mr. Graham said we had a great meeting today. That was not specifically talked about. Today's report was an interim report. But you have my word on it that once the final report gets back, Ms. Dodson and I will make sure that those conversations and those recommendations in terms of how to move forward with that is part of it. We talked about it indirectly, right, in terms of how we align the talent with the needs, right? And how do we begin to polish up soft skills for individual who needs it? I call it making sure that the people have furniture polished and windows on to buff them up and getting them ready for the next opportunity, and certainly the formerly incarcerated present an opportunity for

a placement in the job market. There's a number of corporations in this community that offers those individuals opportunities, and that should be highlighted and noted as well.

Ms. Johnson said thank you. I had asked for the numbers because we know that 95 percent of the folks that go to prison or go to jail come home. So, there's a large, large population in the city. So, if we could just really focus on opportunities for them. Thank you.

Mr. Graham said the point was well-taken.

Ms. Johnson said thank you.

Mayor Lyles said I would like to raise two points. I recall that we've been talking about how we work more with training our kids and getting them ready. If we remember the one thing about the medical campus, it was over 5,000 jobs and doesn't require a bachelor's degree to be employed. We also remember that schools is going to open in two years. I'm very interested in trying to figure out how we create those training programs with our partners, whether it's Central Piedmont, whether it's Communities in Schools. However, and I think that being very specific, but outlining a timeline for that is one of the things that we can show this community and the people that are unemployed and underemployed now, that we're working towards this. Some of these seem to be simple fixes but are very hard to achieve because we all don't work under the same kind of framework.

The other thing, I read recently, was where Amazon created a school curriculum on the Amazon way, the Amazon work and how they do work. It seemed to me that this is a place where you have a private sector person saying we need to come to work and the matches that are required for those folks to get there aren't available in the public sector. And that gives me great concern because that means that there's a mismatch around what our future is going to be. Especially when you think about the opportunity corridors, the kids that are dropping out or working in jobs that are very difficult to get a living wage or a reasonable wage. How do we begin to really get to that? And I'd like to see some metrics around the medical campus, the jobs that are going to be available to those 5,000 without a bachelor's degree. And whether or not we can actually ramp up over the next two years to make it possible for the people in our city to get those jobs. And I don't know quite how to do that, Mr. Graham. But I'm just very concerned that I haven't seen that pull together. A couple of months ago I talked to central Piedmont. They had issues on nursing because the state doesn't allow the faculty to teach on the weekends or at night when working people want to get into that. Does that mean that the private sector has to pay for those teachers? What does that mean? How do we do that? I think that needs to be out there and talked about. I think that our biggest, you know, strength are the people that want to do this work. And our biggest weakness is getting them ready to do this work.

Ms. Johnson said one opportunity that we might take a look at, is we always talk about being 50 out of 50 and looking at equitable solutions that focus on equity. One opportunity that I liked and that I've spoken to the City Manager and is to have opportunities for

Charlotte high school graduates to get an education or a free education at junior college. I think that the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds allow that, if there's something that would allow individuals who graduate from high school to get a free education with no debt, I think that that is a solution that can really help level the playing field for individuals. And you know when we talk about upward mobility, I mean that's education, and that's, you know, no debt. I think that's an awesome solution. Mr. Jones, if you can give an update or see if we have the ARPA funds? There are other cities that are doing this. And I think that we should look at solutions like this, like bold solutions. You talked about a two-year time frame. This would fall right in line. I don't know when we could start but, I certainly think that's something that we should take a look at.

Mayor Lyles said I agree with you, Ms. Johnson, I just don't know the data of who actually doesn't get financing at schools. I think Dr. [inaudible] would say I could get most kids in here for no cost that need it no cost. But I don't know the data around that. I just think that we've got to figure out what we need, how do we get the kids and how to pay for it, and how to connect. So, it's a systematic approach that if you don't have the money, then you can't get the training, then you have no job. That's what we need to figure out. I think working with Danielle and some other folks around us that are really into this workforce planning, we need some specificity to take advantage of some successes that we have in the works, that's what I'm saying.

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said so, thank you. Mayor. To this point, I have asked staff to begin to do some research on what types of opportunities are out there. As far as Ms. Johnson said, someone, graduating from high school to maybe get credentialed over a two-year period of time so they could be able to be in the workforce. We're seeing whether or not ARPA funds would be eligible for that and how could it be piloted or maybe scaled up.

Mr. Graham said Madam Mayor, you took the words right out of the Committee's mouth, that's what we talked about earlier today when I gave the example of me as a 22-year-old with resume in hand, walking up and down Trade and Tryon Street looking for a job. That doesn't happen anymore, right? It's totally different. And so, the goal for us would be one, you know, for the lack of a better word, a finishing school, right? How do we get people who want to work, who have the desire, who doesn't mind getting retrained or retooled to connect them to where the jobs are, right? Submit something via the computer into a black hole and no one gets the opportunity to see, feel, touch, that person, lay eyes on that person, and know that there's more there than just a resume. A more human touch. So, for those items that you mentioned, I took notes. And so, they are top of mind. in addition, I've already met with the folks at Atrium. We'll be meeting with them again, specifically, talking about those jobs, right? How do we begin to profile with those jobs look like and how do we begin to identify people in the community who may be prepared to accept them, if not, what do they have to do in the interim to get ready? And so, it's really complicated. There's a lot of players in the community that plays in this space. The city would like to act as a convener in bringing folks together. But certainly, I think in the spirit of the working group that led us to the interim report is there and they all want to get

this thing accomplished. So, formerly incarcerated, how do we identify the talent for the 5,000 jobs? What type of skill sets do they need? Do they need Windex and furniture polish? If so, who provides that, where do they get it? Are there any other non-profit organizations currently doing it and doing it really well that can use some support? All of those questions that we're asking.

Mayor Lyles said I agree. Mr. Driggs, who served on Goodwill for a long time. I don't know if still on their board or not, but Mr. Driggs has a lot of experience in this through one of the largest job training programs in the city.

**Councilmember Driggs** said thank you, yes, Mayor, I am still on the board. I was really just going to make comments, similar to what the chairman just said about the meeting today. Hire Charlotte provided a lot of data. They're looking to the future and got a detailed plan. And I think what some of us wondered today was how do we bring that down so we have recognized needs on part of the business community, and recognized set of skills, and where's the disconnect there, so that we can focus our efforts on getting the people from where they are, to where they're needed? As Chairman Graham just said, one of the things highlighted in that was a lack of soft skills. There doesn't seem to be a specific program that just teaches people how to function in the office environment. How to dress, the importance of punctuality, and the kind of basic people skills that you need in order to be able to succeed. And the companies said, well, you know, give us those people and we'll teach them what they need to do for us. So, I think that there's still a gap there. And mayor, I've talked to you before about wanting to create a clearinghouse or some sort of an exchange where we have all of the information about not-for-profit programs. Maybe we have information about job listings, and then people could come in, who want jobs, and will actually get an in-person interview, which we also learned today, often can't, right? You mail your resumes out, but no one responds. I think that there's a role we can play in making the process of connecting people with jobs more efficient and preparing them for those jobs.

Mayor Lyles said thank you very much.

**Councilmember Winston** said thank you. So, I agree with what you said, Mayor. But, you know, not but, but the jobs that don't need college degrees mean that the conduits for these jobs are through high schools. You know, this matches what a lot of the conversations that we're having in intergovernmental, what we'll get to a little later, but figuring out how to for lack of a better term, you know, consolidate communications across our governmental bodies, to kind of achieve solutions to scale, and over time. So definitely agree with everything that has been said, up until to point and we should definitely pursue it. But we've got to find a way to better match what we do well, with our school system and figure out how to get our two systems to talk together. We need to do well in communicating with the private sector form relationships and delve into workforce development, where our high schools have the places where those job training and those skill sets can be developed as scaled over time. So, I would suggest that as part of this exercise of figuring out how to work better across committees, we really find ways to work

from a perspective because again, I think it will make more sense when we go into our presentation. This is right in line with what we're talking about and when we're take talking about something like this Atrium campus coming in, how do we really make sure that over time as the industry grows there is not just a one-time kind of insertion of skilled people into this sector that as this new industry grows over time, there's a constant feeding of that of those skilled workers. So, yeah, I hope we can find ways that the intergovernmental Committee can overlap our work with this effort because I think it's well-placed.

Mayor Lyles said has everyone had an opportunity to look at this. I think that we would like to see the economic development calendar include more specifics around the workforce plan at some point, Mr. Graham, and some data. It's kind of like, do we know where we're going? The data around that and what we can do. I'm just using the medical campus as an example. At least that's well-defined and the numbers are there, but there are lots of other opportunities and I'm sure that the Committee can look and make a determination of what's the best path.

**Councilmember Johnson** said I want to clarify the opportunity for graduates to go to CPCC (Central Piedmont Community College), like, a theatre program. So that's yeah, that's one of the things that I would like to see. I mean, we all have degrees around this table. So, I think that an opportunity for individuals to start with an associate degree, I think would be a great opportunity and again a solution in upward mobility. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said alright, thank you. Thank you. All right. With that, you're ready to keep going, Mr. Graham. All right. Our next report is environment engagement and equity. Ms. Ajmera, I hope you're feeling better.

### **Environment Engagement and Equity**

**Councilmember Ajmera** said yes, I am. Thank you. So, we are in the first meeting of the EEE, which stands for Environment, Engagement, and Equity Committee. We discussed a series of priorities to support our charge of promoting a sustainable Charlotte in collaboration with residents while ensuring equity and resilience for today and future generations. We had a robust discussion and our priorities for the next couple of months will be to work on the development of an equity framework. Also providing input and guidance on advancing the SEAP (Strategic Energy Action Plan) goals and staying up to date on progress related to the ADA, Americans with Disabilities Act. Lastly, we will be looking at consistency, how Charlotte engages the community and reviewing the city-wide engagement framework to advance consistency across all efforts. Our Committee members, I forgot to mention are Vice-Chair Ms. Johnson, and committee member Mr. Winston. [inaudible] be taking up stormwater and tree canopy sections of the UDO. We will be collecting feedback from Committee members to provide it to the TAP (Transportation Action Plan) committee chair. So, that's in a nutshell what we got. I think the biggest policy item that will be coming out from this Committee is equity in governance. That's going to help us guide the work of what we do and how we do it in



everything from the environment, housing, infrastructure, and economic development to public safety. Mr. Winston and Ms. Johnson, feel free to chime in if I miss anything.

**Mayor Lyles** said Ms. Johnson, any additional comments?

**Councilmember Johnson** said we just talked about the ADA and taking a look at the CATS (Charlotte Area Transit Center) Transportation and really, just being a voice for those who are differently abled in the city. Thanks.

Mayor Lyles said to Mr. Winston.

**Councilmember Winston** said no, we had a good first discussion and I think that the staff has a pretty good plan for the next few weeks and months moving forward.

Mayor Lyles said I want to express my appreciation for the Committee's work because I do believe that this is fairly new work and it has to get some you know, if you say, something like economic development, everybody knows what it is. These trends that we're seeing on how to communicate with our public, our residents, how do we actually figure out what equity means for our community, and especially continuing the work that we're going to be doing on carbon reduction. They're all of the new things that we have to make become a traditional standard practice in our organization. So, thanks for pioneering the effort to do this.

Ms. Ajmera said thank you. One last thing I forgot to mention, the Committee has broad support from almost all of the departments because it touches multiple areas. So, our lead is Sarah, and we also have support from Willie Ratchford and Federico Rios.

Mayor Lyles said thank you very much.

**Councilmember Phipps** said yeah, I'm curious with respect to equity in governance framework, do we in fact have a blueprint for that already in as much as we have approached 2040 Plan aspects of it with an equity lens throughout that plan, and I'm also aware of an equity lens being placed in a variety of areas, especially in planning. So, do we have components of this in place already? If not, I don't know, formalized, but in practice in the way that we've been operating as a city?

Ms. Ajmera said Mr. Phipps, this is based on my conversation with Sarah. To start we'll be reviewing equity in governance strategies from other cities who have used models that are supported by the government alliance on racial equity and the national league of cities. That's how we are going to start.

Mr. Winston said Mr. Phipps, I think you bring up a great point. That there are definitely aspects of equity lenses that we have in different processes. Some of them are even more informal than what we adopted, you know, with the Comp 2040 Plan, but you know, there's an of course internally. Mr. Jones has done I think a great job of looking inwards

about how we operate across our organizations. But when it comes down it to the city Council does not necessarily have a way that we look at equity in the decisions that we make. We have prescribed ways of how we make certain decisions and look at things, but that's not necessarily the case from an equity perspective. So, these are things that I guess going to try to wrestle with. As the Mayor said, how do we kind of explain this cleanly and clearly so that equity is as clear across the board as other ideas are?

**Councilmember Newton** said I had a couple of questions regarding the environmental component of the Committee. I think that the first one concerns our tree canopy. I know it's an important concern for many in the community given our growth. I just was wondering why the Committee is passing on the opportunity to further look into the tree canopy sections of the UDO. A concern that continually is brought to my attention, in my district, and I know it's something that has been expressed to other Council members within their districts, it's litter. I know that oftentimes it's expressed from the standpoint of its aesthetic impact, but it also has an environmental impact. I just wanted to ask if that was something that, I would assume would be this Committee, that could either take that up or maybe put on the back burner. I just wanted to ask if that was something that is also or could also be considered.

Ms. Ajmera said so, Mr. Newton, we have had multiple discussions on the tree ordinance, and it was decided since the TAP Committee is reviewing it already in-depth, we'll continue to provide feedback along the way. But TAP has already taken this in great detail. So, I don't know, Mayor Pro Tem, if you want to add anything here, but I just want us to be mindful that we are not being redundant in reviewing the work when it comes to the tree ordinance.

Mr. Newton said I think that answers my question, but from the standpoint of the litter as well, I feel like we all acknowledge the problem, the fact that it exists, and we have never been able to formulate a solution to that problem. I do hope, I don't know if it's something that is prime for this particular Committee, but I do hope that someday it is something that we tackle in one of our committees. When I looked at the charge that this Committee has, I felt like maybe this is one where we could tackle that problem. But I did want to put that out there for everyone's consideration.

Ms. Ajmera said yes, I think you bring up a great point. The litter conversation has come up so many times. As long as I can remember from five years ago, this is an ongoing issue that we are trying to wrap our arms around it. Really, from the policy perspective, I don't know what options are there. There are several programs that we have looked into. This is something certainly that the Committee can take a deeper dive into. From the policy perspective from three years ago, I remember when the Environment Committee reviewed this topic in depth. There was really any policy item and other programming things that we can do that is well within the means of the City Manager's Office that we can continue to implement programs to address the leader issue. I want to ask this question to staff, in terms of any policy item that we could address for this litter issue that we are continuing to struggle with.

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said to Council member Ajmera, as I started the intro to these work plans, we talked about two steps. One is trying to make sure you have the correct staffing level for your work, but also there was a second bucket when things like this come up. So, I feel very comfortable having information, whether it's information that we have provided in the past or best practices from other cities that we could put together so that at the next Committee meeting that you have or at the next work session, we can give you information. You don't even have to ask me that. We'll do that for you.

Mayor Lyles said this is one of the other things that we talked about Council members have ideas, Mr. Newton and Ajmera, that we ought to do some research and give you data so that you at least have a starting point to define and frame the issues. So, Mr. Jones, thank you for incorporating that if your team to do that. I guess I've been staying home a long time because I've been reading and actually this is occurring everywhere. People are driving in their cars and throwing trash out constantly. It's a change from where we had a message about how we wanted to have clean streets and everything, to, you know, I'm not getting out of my car, I'm not stopping from anything and I'm afraid during this pandemic to do this and they just toss fast food a lot, and things like that happen. I hope that there will be some minimal reduction as we come out of this, but I think that the research will show a lot more depth that is required for this effort than we know about now.

**Councilmember Eiselt** said to respond to Ajmera's comments; I think it really needs to be clarified that we would love to have comments from the Committee on the items of the UDO that are specific to the environment, such as the tree ordinances and stormwater, but we don't want to, I don't think we want to chop up the UDO and distribute it between Committee s. It needs to stay in one Committee, but what I also don't want is to get to a point, you know, close to when we vote on the UDO that people start bringing up heavy issues like this about whether or not they agree with the tree ordinance or the stormwater portion of it. So, if there is a perhaps presentation to this Committee on what the tree ordinance and the stormwater ordinance is, then that is an opportunity for a Committee to at least voice comments and then bring back within the Committee to at least voice comments that we can then bring back within the TAP Committee to discuss. But I do think it's important that the Council gets issues out on the table that are going to be a major part of the UDO and might impact whether or not one supports it.

Ms. Ajmera said so to follow up on that, Mayor Pro Tem, Mr. Jones, what process or I'm trying to figure out because the TAP Committee has already reviewed the tree ordinance. So, would you like the Environment Equity and Engagement Committee to further review it in-depth, and provide feedback, or do you want us as a full Council to have a presentation on this topic because of the tree ordinance, we're going to have cash-in from all sides. So, I think it would be important to have deeper a dive and presentation at our strategy meetings and then gather feedback and provide it to Mayor Pro Tem, who chairs the TAP Committee. I'm just trying to figure out what is the best way to do this because it's not just the triple E Committee, who needs to provide feedback, but the full Council would need to provide feedback on this important ordinance.

Mr. Jones said absolutely, Councilmember Ajmera. The latter as you presented it, instead of just going to the Committee, we know that there are a number of items whether it be as short-term rentals, the tree ordinance, parking, things that come up and we think it's as a team. The staff will bring those to the full Council and get feedback because there's a hand full of items that all of you have questions about. I think it would really drain staff's resources if we did the same presentation to multiple committees. That's my ask.

Ms. Ajmera said so to follow up on that, Mr. Jones, should we divide it to Mayor Pro Tem's point, should we divide it based on the expertise? So, once the presentation is given to the full Council on the three items that often come up, short-term rentals, tree ordinance, stormwater ordinance, and parking. So, should divide those topics based on the Committee after the presentation is given to the full Council and gather feedback to provide to the Mayor Pro Tem, who is the chair of the TAP Committee. It's a lot to unpack and a lot to uncover for just one person, for Mayor Pro Tem. So, would that help, Ms. Eiselt?

Ms. Eiselt said yeah, the goal is to get issues out into the open ahead of time. Right? Before the vote on these big issues so I would defer to whatever recommendation that the manager has on how to do that and we can certainly then discuss it in TAP, you know, have all of those comments aggregated and have the discussion in TAP, but we just have to make sure that the opportunity is there to hear that discussion and for Council members to voice their concerns well in advance.

Ms. Ajmera said well noted. So, Mr. Jones, our Committee could take lead on gathering feedback once the presentation is given to the full Council on the items to are environmentally related. So, for example, tree ordinance, parking, or stormwater. I think that's where we will work with Sarah on that.

Mr. Jones said I feel like I was at one place and then we're at a different place. So, I hope we all agree, to bring the information to the body because there are three or four items that we know universally there's some concerns. My only ask is once we bring it to the body, can the body give us direction about where to go my concern is if we then divide it up and send it to multiple committees, I just don't know what that looks like.

Mayor Lyles said we've got a number of people that want to weigh in, but I think the most important thing is getting these presentations out on the floor where 12 people can discuss them and then there's maybe more depth required for one, and not another. In this case, I can't remember which Council member said this, but we have to figure out what that list is that people say, I absolutely have to have it this way and figure out a way between all of us to get to that place if that's necessary. Now, if that's not necessary, that's another thing. But I think we should wait for the manager's presentation and have every Council member see and wait, for what seems to have consensus, which needs more work, and make that decision then. I think Ms. Ajmera's point about making that decision after the workshop is a good one. I don't know if it's the Committee. If the Committee members for example are all in favor of it and Council members that are not,

not on the Committee, we have to look at this and structure it for effectiveness for what we have to do to actually consider the UDO and the mapping. So, all of this is important, but I would like to see them as the manager suggested the presentation. Let's see how far we are apart and together and then make decisions based upon what's most effective to get that resolution to occur. I know that's a long way of saying it and I probably repeated it, but If we can do that, I think we're going to have to just wait and see where we stand as a Council on these things.

Ms. Ajmera said I wanted to make sure. So, what's the time frame, Mr. Jones, for this presentation?

Mr. Jones said I don't have the map in front of me. We have a table that lines out the policy mapping as well as the UDO. But what we do know is that again, there's a handful of items that there are concerns about. So, we would start by moving them up to the front and so we wouldn't wait until the end to start discussing those. However, many multiple bites at the apple that it would take. I think on my 30-day memo, we may have it as early as next week, Alyson with us. So, she can give us an update on the timelines so that we can feel more secure.

Ms. Ajmera said all right. Thank you.

Ms. Johnson said I was just going to comment on the litter issues. In District 4, and I know my predecessor is going to mention that. That's one of the first things that you talked to me about was the litter in District 4. I hear about it all of the time. I've worked with C-DOT (Charlotte Department of Transportation), and we have new signage. In one of our neighborhoods, I've worked closely with [inaudible]. So, it's a huge issue in our district, but a big problem in District 4 is that a lot of the roads are state-owned. So, I don't know if that's something that for Intergovernmental Committee when you talk about overlap. We could use some help from the Intergovernmental Committee on that or something. I do know that litter is a big issue and I agree with you, Mayor, some of it is human behavior, you know. And so, I get that. Yeah, if that is something that we could get some help from the state, that would be great. Or I talked to Taiwo before he left. The University City Partners hired a contractor to pick up litter in the MSD (Municipal Service District). So, that's something that, you know, that we indirectly funded. If we could look at the funding, I don't know if that's a possibility but it's definitely something that I would like to take a look at. Thank you.

Councilmember Phipps said I think that it's been hit on. Litter is a big problem, especially seems like it might be a bigger problem in some places than in others. I know a couple of Sundays ago, in the Sunday section of the Observer, someone wrote a letter to the editor and specifically called out University City as one of the trashiest places. It had evolved into one of the trashiest places that they have seen since they lived there. I know on occasion I've said previously that we should have a war on litter. It doesn't seem like that has occurred and certainly, we're not winning it. So, I just think that that is something that we're going to have to, I agree with Mr. Newton, that there should be something that

should be highlighted. Something should be done. I know in the Central Business District; I think they pick up litter on a daily basis. So, you have one MSD that is getting some good coverage in terms of picking up litter in the Central Business District. I don't know if they helped support some of that through their tax financing with the MSD participants or not, but we have to do something because it's just out of control. I've had developers that would come up to University City and they even are surprised at how much litter it is up here. It goes to show that some parts of town have more of a problem with litter than others. So, whether it's behavior or not, I don't know if the average consumer or citizen really cares about that. All they see is a bunch of trash and road debris that's not been picked up. Mattresses, it's just ridiculous. So, it's frustrating really, so. That's all I wanted to say about it. If anybody has ever participated on a litter pickup, they know how hard it is. That's some hard work. To go out there and pick up litter, but I'll be interested in knowing what keeps Charlotte Beautiful. I mean I know they do a litter index on occasion. What's the most recent litter index result? I think they do it by the district. What kind of metrics are they seeing in terms of what litter is, how prevalent is it, and how bad is it in certain parts of the city than others?

Mayor Lyles said Mr. Phipps, you are going exactly where I think we ought to ask our Keep Charlotte Beautiful group. In addition to our behavior, we know with the pandemic we no longer have litter clean-ups. I really have a great appreciation for a lot of retired people that want to come out and help and do this on a regular basis, but with COVID (mild to severe respiratory infection caused by the coronavirus) for two years, they are not willing to do that. They're not willing to come out and clean the streams and there's some neighborhoods that I know that people will just volunteer and do it themselves. But even those have been impacted. I think that asking Keep Charlotte Beautiful for some data and perhaps what other communities are doing. Again, another item for research. But getting the advice from those folks that when our city was very clean, what is missing? What happened? What's your assessment and how can we begin if we can get to another place?

We used to have those big stream cleanups and street cleanups and neighborhood clean-ups and the pandemic, COVID-19 just said, no, people said, I'm not going to do that. So, let's get some research from Keep Charlotte Beautiful and see how we can work on that when we can and what models there might be.

Mr. Winston said I just want to speak to the point about the tree ordinance. I think that we should think about what we're actually asking about because I agree with the Mayor Pro Tem, that the tree ordinance is part of the UDO. It's a planning ordinance, so it should be in the planning Committee. I think that what our biggest, even if we get the tree ordinance perfectly correct, we still have concerns about the overall tree canopy and how we plan more trees, and how we create support programs that are adding to that. I think that could be appropriate work for the EEE Committee to work with the staff to figure out, regardless of the UDO. So, I just wonder if the concerns of the Council in this regard, are just about the tree ordinance or about figuring out how to kind of fortify the overall tree canopy.

Mayor Lyles said I think that it's not, it has to be both. I mean, we're going to have a tree ordinance of some sort and then we also need to think about how we grow and maintain. So, any comment on that?

Ms. Ajmera said yeah, so I wanted to speak on the Urban Forest Plan. That looks not just from the ordinance perspective, but overall, the tree canopy, that Mr. Winston is raising. How do we preserve and protect what we have? As development comes in, the tree ordinance, and then, at the same time, how do we plan more? So, I think we have to look at it from all angles, here. So, the Urban Forestry Plan. I don't remember when the Council got the last update. With this proposed tree ordinance in our UDO, what impact would it have on our current tree canopy and canopy for the next decades to come? So, I think we do need to look at our overall Urban Forest Plan.

Mr. Winston said to follow up on that, that's kind of exactly my point. What questions could we ask ourselves? Do you know? What opportunities are there to intersect as we try to figure out how to, for instance, create more pedestrian-centric infrastructure? We might ask ourselves or put our policy priority on doing that with trees. You know, to create more boundaries between cars and pedestrians, I don't know. But those are things that are kind of above and beyond just looking at the tree canopy from the perspective of the UDO. I think that's what I hear the community asking for.

Mayor Lyles said [inaudible] Mr. Winston; we may have to ponder that a little bit longer.

Mayor Lyles said all right. So, where we are with the EEE is the work that's going to be done around the equity in governance framework, continuing the work on looking at the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) programs and other programs there. But you see the schedule? I think all of this has been discussed and agreed upon. Is there anyone that has any suggested changes on this one? If not, everybody is good? Thank you very much.

Mr. Jones said Mayor, just for clarification and we'll be back with more information on litter.

Mayor Lyles said yes, the research around litter and advice from the Advisory Committee.

### **Great Neighborhoods**

**Councilmember Watlington** said I'll keep it brief; I know we've got several more of these to get through and additional items on the agenda. So firstly, I just wanted to acknowledge the 2022 members of the Great Neighborhoods Committee. There's myself, former chair, and vice-chair, happy to serve with Graham, Councilmembers Johnson, Newton, and Phipps. I look forward to working with you and hearing your perspective at the Committee level. I also would like to acknowledge our staff support, who is phenomenal. I'm very excited about working with Shawn Heath, Rebecca Hefner, Julia Martin, and Sherry Smith. We had our first meeting last month and we wanted to look at and consider our

charge in a holistic way. So, as we think about Great Neighborhoods, our charge is to review and recommend policies related to comprehensive initiatives designed to create affordable housing and provide opportunities that align with creating Great Neighborhoods. As many of you are aware, I started my activities with the city in a neighborhood organization, as a neighborhood leader. So, that is something that is very near and dear to my heart, and I truly believe that our neighborhood organizations are the backbone of our public service and so I'm excited about investing in neighborhood engagement at a very, very real level, especially considering coming out of COVID-19. We want to make sure that we get folks back engaged, face-to-face, within their neighborhoods because that is an extremely powerful source of political and human capital. So, I look forward to doing that work alongside the EEE Committee and Councilmember Ajmera and her team. As we think about economic mobility and jobs, Councilmember Graham, you mentioned earlier, our work coincides with each other with Corridors of Opportunity because obviously, these corridors are within neighborhoods. So, I look forward to that as well as Hire Charlotte because we know that affordability and economic mobility go hand in hand.

As we think about anti-displacement, our neighborhood Equity and Stabilization Commission will have had their first meeting by the time we meet in February. So, we are looking to connect with the nest commission, which was charged with developing anti-displacement strategies and tools to support the UDO. So, definitely expect that we will be engaging Mayor Pro Tem with the TAP Committee and making sure that those recommendations get back into our comprehensive plan.

In addition, I look forward to the Staying In Place pilot being launched. As a result, or in conjunction with that anti-displacement work. Then also, housing access. Next month, we will be taking up as you can see on our schedule, the source of income protections and support housing. We will be hearing the recommendation and then the following month, I will be having the Council discussion.

Finally, as we think about the creation and preservation of affordable housing, which we know is a pressing need, still in Charlotte, we really want to take a look at some of our current policy frameworks. How do we really invest in, not only preserving naturally occurring affordable housing in the rental space but how do we use or retool what's in our box for home ownership programs, because we understand the connection between home ownership and building generational wealth?

Then finally, another tool of a potential program that we're looking toward piloting is the dwelling unit that can be not only an affordable housing solution but a wealth generator for those individuals who own a home in our neighborhoods. So, with that, you can see on the next page, our upcoming schedule. I covered the highlights already and I will open it up to the floor for any questions or feedback.

Mayor Lyles said okay, any questions for Ms. Watlington?



**Councilmember Newton** said I'm a member of this Committee now and I'm really excited about our work moving forward. Something that does occur to me is oftentimes within this context, you know, we are working towards ensuring that everyone can have a roof over their heads. At the same time, it's separate from our work pertaining to homelessness, all together. I know that homelessness is not something that traditionally falls within our purview, but I did just want to raise that point. It's my understanding that staff will be presenting or delivering a presentation to us regarding the homeless policy here in the near future and I wanted to touch on that and ask if that is the case.

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said yes, I believe that Shawn Heath, the last time he was with us, discussed that the, I guess on the 8th or the I guess, last Tuesday, the 2025 plan would be released. At some point, we will give you an update on some of the key components of that plan, yes.

Mr. Newton said great, thank you. I'm looking forward to that.

**Mayor Lyles** said I'm hopeful that our partnership with the county and the private sector will pay big benefits here.

**Councilmember Watlington** said I did want to add one thing. I forgot to mention this as it relates to access. Not only are we talking about access to housing, but as we think about what makes up a great neighborhood. We are also talking about things like food access and how we're going to invest in some of those initiatives as well as healthcare access as well. So, we're thinking about it a little bit more broadly than one might traditionally think of it.

**Councilmember Johnson** said yes, I also wanted to know if we could get an update from Mr. Jones on the Staying In Place Pilot. I see that we're going to discuss it in February of this month. I'm also a member of the Committee now, I'm so excited. This is what I was born to do.

Mayor Lyles said I think you've told me that several times.

Ms. Watlington said but there's currently a pending rezoning that's in Hidden Valley. It's 20 market unit townhomes and I think that this would be a great time to hear from the NEST (Nuisance Enforcement Strategy) community or information about the Staying in Place Pilot. This is a practical opportunity to possibly improve the neighborhood while allowing opportunities for the current residents to stay in place. So, I've already talked to the City Manager about it. I know you wanted to wait until the NEST Committee met and there's a couple of moving parts, but if we can get an update, that will be great. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said okay, it's kind of nice to have affordable housing be understood so well that nobody has a lot of cushions for [inaudible]. Listen, that's truly a compliment to this Council and the work that's been done so that we can have this kind of discussion.

Although we do have a couple of things coming up pretty soon that will be perhaps a little bit more topical for us. So, thank you. Everybody is good on that one? Okay. So, we are now going to intergovernmental.

### **Intergovernmental Relations**

**Councilmember Winston** said the first 30 and 60 days are kind of occupied, as you see there by the culmination of our federal and state legislative agenda processes. Next March or for our 30 days, we will be doing our congressional briefing, based on the legislative agendas that we adopted this past fall. We'll be doing the same in looking forward to talking with our state delegation later on in April. For our 90-day item, Mr. Bokhari and I'll turn it over to him in a bit to kind of go through the three-step process that we're kind of looking at. We wanted to kind of aim up high and look at the idea of municipal government consolidation. We asked staff to look at it from three-ways and Mr. Bokhari, do you want to kind of dive into that?

**Councilmember Bokhari** said sure, I think the punch line is a lot of us have talked a lot about inefficiencies across multiple municipal government bodies. The need, and the use case for consolidation, but we also recognize how complex it is. So, Councilman Winston and I, with staff, and some members of some of the other bodies had initial conversations for debate amongst our body here, of we have our legislative agenda, our normal annual process, you can see it laid out there. It doesn't warrant much discussion right now because we're in the middle of it and we do it every year and evolved it. Do we want to take on something additional in this bod that has meat around it clearly we know consolidation does have meat around it? So, what we've laid out is basically a scoping of saying, what is the spectrum of the art of the possible with the current state over here being we leave it as-is, all the way up to discussions of a full consolidation between the county, city, elements that touch other bodies as well. Clearly, that is a big item that has failed to get traction for years and years and years. We don't necessarily know we have the secret ingredient to enable that, but it is certainly on the far-right end of the spectrum. A moon shot of a goal that we could actually make some progress on. We think though that there's another piece in there that might be lower-hanging fruit in relation to a more transactional approach. I'll give you examples, but we know that there is low-hanging fruit in topics like Economic Development when we're doing economic incentives and recruiting companies. Yet there's multiple touch points and multiple kinds of friction points amongst the various bodies that have to come to a conclusion there.

We know that EMS (Emergency Medical Service) for example on one side and the county, CMPD (Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department) and fire have multiple touch points and there have been multiple inefficiencies just given that they're in separate budgetary organizations and they roll up there. Parks and Rec, there's a long laundry list that we've identified that transactionally we might be able to sit at the table and say, look, county this makes more sense to exist in your realm, this makes more sense here, and it's just about getting to a next-step point. Right now, we've had logical conversations amongst elected officials, which has been a missing part of all of this for a long time. But we need to get to

a point whereas a body we say, yeah, that is something that we as a body would like to take on. That will obviously take the county and the school board to some extent as bodies saying they want to do that. Then we can get to a point where the staff goes and laundry lists out all of the puzzle pieces on this table and brings them back to us. You can't leave it to staff to have these conversations because they get too far down in the weeds and they don't have enough oomph behind them. You can't just leave it to the elected officials because you need the analysis and diligence of the staff members. So, I think we have gotten it to I appoint where this is a moon shot, a big idea, we know without a doubt, no matter what we tackle, we will find efficiencies and consolidation items, and perhaps that's how you get to a long-term strategy of an ultimate consolidation by looking at low hanging fruit, transactional items, to create efficiencies. So, I think that we're now at a point where this body needs to weigh in and see yeah, we're interested, or no, too hard, or there's other priorities. and we can table it. That's the premise of what we were looking for.

**Mayor Lyles** said anything else to add before we open it up for questions. All right, questions for intergovernmental? I think that both Mr. Winston and Mr. Bokhari said that our 2022 and 2023 agendas are pretty well fleshed out and normalized, I would say, and maybe the question around municipal government consolidation should be something that we begin to discuss or have some comments or questions about. Any comments or questions?

**Councilmember Phipps** said I don't really have a question. I used to be on this Committee, and I didn't realize that was something on the table. In the intervening months, I guess got on the table. So, I think that it's worthy of discussion and look forward to the discussion.

Mayor Lyles said okay, any other questions or comments?

**Councilmember Driggs** said I just want to make the point I mentioned before this conversation has come up and I think that Mr. Bokhari spells out well kind of the approach he might take. Any discussion that we have about consolidation and government is going to be of interest to the towns and the county. So, I do hope that we will be sensitive about that and kind of let them know that our intention is that they would be a part of any conversation. This has major implications for towns in particular but also, of course, the county. So, this is a conversation that we really ought to have. Again, if it's just partial, if we're just talking about more interlocal agreements, or areas such as the ones we have, like with charlotte water, that's one thing. But if we're going to talk about consolidation, we should be very clear about what we mean and talk to the people that might be interested sooner rather than later. Thanks.

Mr. Bokhari said yeah, and that is 100 percent been part of a lot of our discussion as we've scoped this. We obviously haven't moved in a large amount in that direction because the point was we wanted to scope it enough that we knew where we could head. The bottom line and the county has shared this and the school board for that matter shared the same desire and interest in doing it, but also the recognition that if our own full

bodies don't have the appetite for this, we might as well stop there because it can't happen with a couple of elected officials from each group. It has to be from a mandate from each one and the towns are very much a massive part of that equation, but obviously, we needed to see if you guys had an appetite for this first and then staff would take a large part of the next step of helping craft out, all right, who are the stakeholder, how are we going to solve it? We've even had discussions on the use of existing bodies and cross-governmental organizations that have been formed for all of this. So, we just put puzzle pieces on the table and didn't want to waste a lot of time until we knew there was an appetite.

Mr. Winston said I would also add that part of the discussion is recognizing that there are a lot of intergovernmental work groups from a staff level as Mr. Bokhari kind of touching on. As we look at, for instance, our, public health look at violence, right? Like, this is including the county, the public health system, and other elected bodies. Not just towns, and different governmental entities, but sometimes the staff can do so much. Are there opportunities from an elected perspective to keep up with a lot of ways what the staff is doing and make sure they have the tools and the mandates to kind of go the step further without the kind of having things caught up? There's a lot of possibilities on the table and as Mr. Bokhari said, if we get the kind of thumbs up from the Council at large, I think that could be a good thing.

**Councilmember Eiselt** said I apologize I missed this discussion. I am on the Committee now, but we were conflicted with the North Carolina Transportation Summit that we were on our way to. As I think about this fresh, there's certainly areas that are more critical to consider now sooner than later. For instance, parks because I think that with our 2040 plan, with all of the rezonings that we're starting to hear, not just from the public, but from others elected at the county, you know, put land aside for parks. Yet, that's not in our purview as a county function. So, you know, I do think there's parts of this discussion that are really important to have sooner than later. By the same token, it almost feels like this discussion should have the input of an independent Committee, much like we had with the Governance Committee. That you're going to have a body of citizens put together, from the towns, from Charlotte, and would have a much longer runway to have a look at the issue, and talk about some of the relevant issues, be educated as to what some of the issues are because I don't think a lot of people really understand. They just think this is about saving money by consolidated departments and that's not what it is, as we know. So, what comes to mind for me is that maybe part of the discussion is, should there be a larger discussion that takes six months or whatever, and is made up of a citizen group.

**Councilmember Graham** said and the Mayor Pro Tem just read my mind. I've been dating myself all day. In 1995, I served on the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Consolidation Commission, right? We spent, Mayor Pro Tem, about a year studying the issue. It was sanctioned by both the Mayor at the time, and the chairman and the County Commission, and both managers agreed to take a look at it. There was significant input from the corporate community and the public. i.e., the commission itself. There was a lot of thought that went into it. It was not handled by the Council Committee; it was the Committee of a

whole. If I think that far back, right? I say that to say that the end is in the beginning, right? If you want to see how something is going to end just take a look at how it starts. And so, obviously, I've been saying we needed to consolidate since 1995. So, this is good news to me. I just hope that we proceed with the type of due diligence right from the very start. There's a lot of the information in this building, somewhere, right? Tucked away, that the Mayor herself has a lot of institutional knowledge about that issue as well. Having been here when it occurred. It just needs to start at the highest levels with all two bodies saying this is the road that we want to take and it has to be a public-facing, public-involvement deal, right from the very start. If not, we're going to get into turf between two government bodies and the neutral arbitrator is the public, right? In terms of taking a look at what we do, how we do it, and why do we do it? We're essentially consolidated now functionally other than from the governance perspective. I think this is really where it's at, right?

A couple of the things that we do separately. They do affordable housing; we do affordable housing. I don't think that makes a lot of sense. They do economic development and we do economic development and I don't think that makes a whole lot of sense.

**Councilmember Newton logged off at 6:57 p.m.**

Mayor Lyles said those things weren't being done in 95.

Mr. Graham said exact, right. You're right, we can probably have conversations about kind of showing those things [inaudible]. The broader picture of consolidating the impact it has on the towns and the public, and how we operate. I think we need too, but we need to make sure that right from the very start that everyone knows exactly what we're trying to do. That requires I think, a lot of forethought before we kind of just jump right into it. I am very, very, very happy that you guys have kind of rolling this out. I just caution us as a body and someone who wants to see the end result, exactly what you want, is how we roll this thing out has to be perfect because it's all in the presentation. We have to educate the community along the way, even our corporate community, right about why this is good for business and why this is good for the city, and why this is good for the county, and for our region, right? So, it's a really, really tough conversation, a time-consuming conversation. A lot of resources from staff conversations that we need to make sure that from a scheduling perspective as well, with this election cycle and the budget and all of the things that we talk about that we have to actually have time to roll it out right. So, that's my only concern, but I'm with you guys' 110 percent. I want to make sure that if we're going to go down this road we've got a great GPS (Global Positioning System).

Mr. Bokhari said Councilman Graham, we very much agree and that our conversations have mirrored a lot of that. I think the one nuance I'd throw out there to this approach verses thinking back and having conversations with folks like you and others who have done this and gone down this path before was if we start by embarking on a major bureaucratic effort, that has everyone in it and the full scope of the universe of this. If it ends in our lifetime, it probably won't end where we wanted it to, but I still think that's a very valuable component to build to. When I was mentioning kind of the low-hanging fruit

transactional start, this is where kind of our thought process was that if we can get buy-in from the major bodies to start something where it's almost like, City Manager, County Manager, or the staffers; right, that are then directing their staff. Council members are brought in, There's a mandate. It's almost like can they put those initial low-hanging fruit puzzle pieces on the table that we know there is a valued prop for the community to get better service, more efficient effective service? More scope and reach of service. If you look at economic development and the impacts on those topics. EMS (Emergency Medical Service), the Fire Department, the Police Department, and the cross-touch points there. Especially things like not just Parks and Rec but think of permitting and how painful it is for anyone in this community to bounce back and forth between multiple municipal bodies to get through permitting. I think the beauty of how Braxton and I have approached this is, we didn't come with any ulterior motive to try to get something. We just knew we want to make things better. If the manage, staff, and everyone can come together with an initial low-hanging fruit kind of proof point that says, okay we can make permitting better by this kind of consolidation. We can make EMS better by this or whatever it might be, then suddenly you've got a real win that everyone can huddle around and it becomes the blueprint by which these broader, more kind of public-facing community-led conversations can happen. But I fear if we start there with a big Committee -type approach, it's got to be managers kind of leading the charge saying transactionally like you let us have this, we'll take that on, trade there, a win for the community, and a blueprint for the future.

Mr. Graham said I agree with you a hundred percent of what you said that we have to have small victories first. It's almost like a capital campaign, right? You got to have a quiet phase first, right? Where you're really going behind the scenes and asking and talking and talking to the County Manager, talking to the City Manager, talking to the Mayor, talking to Chairman Dunlap, identifying the low-hanging fruit, i.e., affordable housing. We both are doing it. Why is that, right? Can we work on doing that together, right? Economic development, how can we work on getting that done right, together, and building our way toward what the ultimate goal is? I think you're absolutely right. My comments is just to make sure that we're taking those baby steps first and that we're approaching quote, unquote, the quiet campaign. I mean, really kind of talking to folks and making sure that we're all talking the same love language, right, so that we're all doing what we want to do and having those conversations with the small towns [inaudible] right now quietly. I call it a "what if", right? When you approach it that way, you'll hear a lot, right, but I think your right. If there's a way where we can work quietly to identify low-hanging fruits, I think the initiative that we're doing with homelessness may be not a good model, but certainly a way where we've seen how the county and the city and the private community all are coming together for a common purpose and goal, right. Those types of things, I think will kind of lead us to where we want to go. So, I'm not saying no by any measure at all. I'm all on board. I just want to be successful towards the end and success may be three years from now, four years from now, or [inaudible] citizen. You know, watching on tv when the Council and the Commission finally get it done. I think the first critical steps are probably the most important ones.

Mr. Driggs said I just want us to be clear where the Council is coming out on this because we've heard a variety of observations. Again, to extend anybody else's watching that might be sensitive on the subject. I think we should be plane about what we're going to do at this point.

Mayor Lyles said well I think that's a good place to start. I really hope that there is an opportunity to have this discussion. I think it does start not with the manager though. I think it has to start with the elected officials because when you're talking about transactional things, there might be things that we think are pretty transactional. I will tell you that there was a consolidation study of building standards and permitting just within the last five to six years. There have been other opportunities for these. The police consolidation took, I think, about four years or so. A lot of this has to do with tax policy and state law. So, this idea of taking a step to say how do you do this? What are the implications? What are the big steps that actually make it more difficult to consolidate that are structural in nature, I think it's an intriguing idea? I think there are some places that we certainly can see efficiencies. There are opportunities to have shared services. How do you do that? I believe those studies have to take place, but I also believe that almost everything that we would consider transactional, could be defined as being also owned by certain groups and immediately can cause us to kind of say, well, you know, why not someplace else? But I think these things, ideas of efficiencies and shared service agreements are really, really something that people are doing in the private sector now, all the time and we may have an opportunity to do some of them. As Mr. Bokhari reminds me about the Mobility Network Plan that we have, if you start off saying this is what you're going to do, then you cannot be successful at it and this is including the towns. I would ask that we make sure that we have the town's political involvement in it, clear.

I'd actually like to see a definition of what this means. If you write something down, people can say this is what you're trying to do and right now, I think we're having a general discussion. I think the next step may be actually for the Committee to write down what is the process that you've outlined for us tonight would actually look like and what it would mean and where you would go and take the next steps because what I have learned is that people need to see something that they believe in that's written down and agreed upon by everyone. I think that's really important. Just a thought, but I didn't hear anyone say not to do something. I would say the next step would be to write it down because I think this has been a general discussion. I don't know if everyone has had an opportunity to weigh in. You've heard a lot of the history. History doesn't mean that it has to be the same. I hope we're not looking in the rearview mirror. We're looking forward and it shouldn't just be what happened before. It ought to be the real opportunities that we can take advantage of, structurally in today's time and place. I think that really starts with some further conversation around those that would actually be impacted and that's the towns and the county. I don't know if the school board really falls under this just the way the government is structured. I think that's another issue. See that's what I'm saying. Maybe write down what this really is. What are you trying to do so that people can understand it better?

Mr. Bokhari said I think the form of what we're looking for in this conversation because clearly, this is not an ask for like approval. We don't even know what we're approving. We follow the task of finding a big-ticket item that the Committee would like to sink its teeth in. Put a little meat around it. Have a few conversations and brought it before you today. You've heard it. I think if there is a desire to move forward which again, is into the scoping phase, it makes a lot of sense to then refer this back to our Committee so then we're there formally. Not with a mandate but with a mandate to try to define it. We have staff support all the way up to the Manager and then whatever we get out, we vote back to this group to take a look at to see if it's viable or not.

Mayor Lyles said I would like to see a written referral. I don't know what we're referring to. That's what I would say. I would like for to you say what you're asking to do. Does that make sense? So, I think everybody ought to have a chance to see what you're saying and planning to do. Could you take a stab at a written referral and come back to us?

Mr. Bokhari said yes, and it will be similar to what you heard maybe with more examples. I think the point is we're rapidly reaching a point where Braxton and I and the Committee can only do so much without some dedicated staff support that's been mandated to help us figure out the problem, statements, and opportunities at hand. Now, again, not to act on them but to move. So, if this is about formulating something that you can look at in the form of a referral that would then get to us at that point, I'm happy to do that. I don't know that we figured out a lot more than what we already kind of explained here today, but I'll be happy to write that down.

Mayor Lyles said maybe it's just later and we have a lot of conversation but happy to write that down, I think, Mr. Bokhari. One, that might help define how much staff resources are needed and what would be done next. I just don't have a grasp for that. So, I'm going to just ask you to try to write down the key points and what you think the next steps are, and the allocation of staff resources who would be involved. That would at least give us some idea of what's next.

Mr. Bokhari said we will do that.

Mayor Lyles said with that, thanks, everybody. Everybody is good on that. We have two more committees. Mr. Egleston and Mayor Pro Tem. Mr. Egleston, you're up.

### **Safe Communities**

**Councilmember Egleston** said I will try to get us back on schedule here. Safe communities, we got a couple of things. We actually were meeting last week. We voted two things out to the full Council. So, I will mention those here now. I will entrust them to the Manager to put on an agenda as soon as possible but when appropriate. One of those things was the Umbrella Center. There's been a lot of progress made on the Umbrella Center since the full Council last heard about it. A lot of I think, the T's have been crossed and I's have been dotted that we wanted to see before we made a commitment to



investing in that. The Committee did recommend to the full Council, and I do believe it was unanimous, that we do allocate the \$5 million funding they requested. That is contingent on that funding being the last funding into the project. So, we would recommend setting that funding aside. It would not be deployed until and unless everything else was in place for our funding to complete the fundraiser and for the project to move forward. I'm going to assume that Mr. Jones unless he says otherwise, thinks that's a discussion maybe best had in a budget workshop. We would like to bring that forward to the full Council. The other thing that we want to bring forward to the full Council and voted out again, I believe unanimously, was the travel safely technology app. It's something that's been utilized in Cary, North Carolina in a pilot. They have seen at least anecdotal results that led them to want to deploy that across their entire network, and signalized intersections in their community. We are recommending a pilot in the South End area. We know that's a high-traffic area. Not only for vehicles but for pedestrians and cyclists. Ms. Kunze can send more information and a sort of informative video to all of the Council that will give you an overview of what that app is and what that technology can do. The pilot in the hard case would only cost \$100,000. We think that's a small investment to make and something that we believe might be able to have an impact on making our streets safer. So, that one I am not as certain where we want that to land on an agenda, but I would ask Mr. Jones if that be on the agenda soon because again, I think small investment on something that we hope we will see results on and could be easily and quickly fairly inexpensively expanded across our street network. So, would like to get that ball rolling as soon as possible.

The main topics that we foresee tackling over the coming months are, and you see some of them up here, but really safety on our streets around Vision Zero. Traffic calming, that's obviously something that has been top of mind for every Council member. I know you all like I get constant complaints about reckless driving in our community, racing in our community, and so one of the strategies that CMPD has already implemented, these are things for obvious reasons we don't want to forecast in advance because when there's traffic enforcement if people know where it's going to be, they'll simply slow down on those particular streets and then get back up to speed elsewhere. Independence Boulevard between Morningside Drive and Idlewild Road as well as the plaza between Eastway Drive and Milton Road, CMPD has already executed some additional enforcement in those corridors, led to a number of stops primarily for excessive speeding. They'll continue to monitor those areas but will also start to deploy additional resources to others and this is not just randomly being chosen. it's being informed. It's a database approach they're taking in terms of making sure that we're targeting the places where we have the biggest challenges as it relates to injury calls and crashes, excessive speeding, and things of that nature. So, that will continue. The technology solution is also obviously related to Vision Zero around crime prevention, a number of things but we have asked that we get a quarterly update. Obviously, this Council is well aware of all of the things that we've done over the last two years in terms of our SAFE Charlotte plan and all the different strategies that we have implemented there. A lot of those are getting up and running or sort of in their initial stages now but we have asked for at least a quarterly update on that in terms of the progress of that implementation and as we begin to see results, what those results

are. Councilmember Phipps brought up and there was shared interest around all of the Committee around trying to put some focus on gun safety and awareness. Obviously, we know how big of a problem that is in our community in terms of making sure that we are encouraging gun owners to be responsible gun owners and restrict access of their firearms to anyone that might get a hold of them other than the owner. So, we think there is an opportunity there. This is maybe where we cross over into some intergovernmental work. We think there is an opportunity there to try to work with the Sheriff's Department. Obviously, they have a huge role in firearm permits and things of that nature in our community. So, we'd like to see CMPD as well as the Sheriff's Department, the city, and the county all working together on some gun safety awareness initiatives. So that's something we'll be addressing. Another thing that will ring familiar to, particularly the district reps but I think every member of the Council, we are all, I'm sure, aware of one or two places in our district or in the city that are just the constant squeaky wheel as it relates to quality-of-life issues, community safety issues. Everybody in their district has an address or two that they know is terrorizing a community. I have a couple that comes to mind and I have one that finally led to a good resolution in the past year in my district. It was a long road to get there and I think that it was brought up, I believe, by Councilmember Bokhari that we would like to hear, and staff is going to gather more information and bring back to us, strategies around how we as Council members can work with CMPD to identify what those problem addresses are. Sort of those frequent fliers. They're the ones if you ask any officer what address you respond to more often than any other, they probably know it right off the top of their head. What can we do sort of holistically to try to address whatever issues are causing the trouble at those addresses and how can we make sure that we are putting the focus that they deserve on them to try to resolve those issues for the sake of the communities around them? That's going to be coming back to us.

Another thing that I think will move into probably a different lane than our own, but Councilmember Bokhari also raised and there was, again, agreement on wanting to continue to make sure that we are doing what's necessary to attract and retain the best and most qualified folks as our public safety, a first responder in our public safety-first responder positions. I think a lot of that will center around compensation but not all of it. That's something that I believe we'll have the opportunity to take up in our budget workshop on Wednesday, as well as potentially conversations that might take place in the Budget Committee. I believe that captures just about everything and am happy to take questions.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said there's a lot in the Public Safety Committee. Certainly, I appreciate the work that's being done on gun safety awareness. As we know, there is an ongoing issue that we do need to tackle and in terms of the Vision Zero technology pilot, is this going to be paired with the traffic enforcement I remember when we had the presentation last time, it was just the user reporting, but it wasn't that CMPD was going to work off of those tips to do more traffic enforcement. Has that changed or is that still the case?

Mr. Egleston said sorry if I conflated those things in the way I described them. Those are not related other than the fact that they are both relevant to our larger Vision Zero goal. The CMPD traffic enforcement, particularly if you think about a place like Independence Boulevard, that's not going to be where we're going to get the most bang for the buck on this technology solution, which is really more about areas like South End where we have a greater likelihood of interaction between cars, cyclists, pedestrians. So, I think those will be different tools for different areas and again, I think South End is a good example of where the technology piece works, more high-speed corridors are probably a better example where the traffic enforcement being beefed up over a period of time is going to work.

Ms. Ajmera said I see. We are using multiple tools to address speeding on our streets and reckless driving.

Mr. Egleston said yes ma'am.

Ms. Ajmera said, for example, this technology app that we have in South End will be used as a pilot program. I mean, so give me an example. So, let's say someone is speeding and so would the user be able to say, oh, here, I saw this car speeding, or I saw someone with reckless driving?

Mr. Egleston said it's less of a tool to report bad behavior. I mean, we have ways to do that and if people see someone recklessly driving in our community, hopefully, they'll call 911. That would probably be the appropriate way to deal with that. I think in this case and again, the video that I'll have Ms. Kunze send out to everybody tonight or tomorrow is the best example because it shows you a real-life example of how this would work. For people, whether they're on behind the wheel, whether they're on a bike, whether they're walking, if they have this app up, it can anticipate someone who is not slowing down for a light that's about to turn red and alert a pedestrian or cyclist. It can alert someone who is driving that there is a cyclist about to cross their path. Things like that. So, it's more of an audible alert to users of the app to let them know that there might be something that they need to be mindful of ahead of or a potential accident could be sort of brewing and give them a head up maybe before they would see it just on their own. Not so much a reporting tool, as a warning tool. That video is just like two minutes it really demonstrates it better than I can probably explain it.

Ms. Ajmera said okay. I look forward to watching the video. From what I understand this is more informational. Not for traffic enforcement, but you know, when we got an update last time we were told that there's a lot of distracted driving that goes on. It's not just an issue in our city, I mean, across the nation. I don't know what this app would do or how it would contribute to the already distracted driving. So, if it's not paired with traffic enforcement, what does it really do? I mean yes, you're alerting someone. There is someone recklessly driving so please slow down or look out for this car. I mean, I just don't really understand how this is really going to address the underlying issue that we have with preventing fatalities in our streets. I guess to close, I might change my mind

after watching the video. I just don't really understand how this really addresses the root issue.

Mr. Egleston said yeah, I mean, I think the goal of Vision Zero and the goal of this Council is and has been that we want to minimize the number of accidents and fatalities we have on our street. So that can be done in a number of ways. I think it can be done through warning people that something might be about to happen so that accidents can be avoided in the first place. It can happen through enforcement. You know everything is around changing the behaviors of our drivers primarily, but really, everyone using our streets. So, I think anything we can do to help avoid a potential accident helps us achieve our Vision Zero goal and there was undoubtedly be people who don't care about any of that and just want to drive as fast as they possibly can down Independence Boulevard. For them, writing tickets and their insurance costs going up might be the thing that changes behavior. I think we will use a suite of tools to address the problem and these won't be the only two. But again, with the pilot idea on the Travel Safely app with a \$100,000 investment which given the amount of money we put into our transportation efforts and our Vision Zero efforts and trying to create safer communities is a relatively small amount. I think that pilot will give us enough data to determine whether there are the results. To your point, maybe there aren't. Maybe we pilot in South End and find that the adoption is too low to justify expanding it across the rest of the city and we can pivot and move on to something else. I think this will give us the opportunity to evaluate it in charlotte and see if it works.

Ms. Ajmera said sure, no. I think it's a good tool to see if it works or not. But I think we ought to be open to using it also for traffic enforcement. If it comes down to that. I think we got to keep that option open.

Mr. Egleston said enforcement is definitely going to be part of our strategy throughout all of this, and I think we want to use carrots and sticks and anything we can to change behavior.

Ms. Ajmera said is the red-light camera and speeding camera, is still in our toolbox? Are we still having that discussion? I remember the last time we got an update was in November and it was going to come back. So, I'm trying to figure out where that stands right now.

Mr. Egleston said yeah, I don't think we eliminated anything as a possible solution. That's not one that's being recommended right now simply because it's not something that the Council has full control over. It would require again, talking about how things sort of straddle lanes of Committee s. It would obviously require work on the intergovernmental front to get the allowance to be able to have that authority here locally. So, what we wanted to do and again, these are not the only two things we're going to do to try to achieve our Vision Zero goals but when there are two where we felt like we could move quickly and do so at a relatively low cost and with no barriers to implementation in regard

to the authority to do it. So, these are the ones that we can move on most quickly. I think there will be a number of others that take a little longer but we'll continue to consider them.

Ms. Ajmera said thank you. I would like to refer those items to our Intergovernmental Committee. Specifically, the red-light camera and the speeding camera because we need to explore those options with an authority from our state legislators. The last question I have is on the Umbrella Center. Is this the partnership with the nonprofit that will provide holistic services, like a one-stop shop to provide services for all domestic violence victims?

Mr. Egleston said yes, ma'am. That's exactly what it is.

Ms. Ajmera said okay. Thank you.

**Councilmember Eiselt** said thank you for the presentation, Mr. Egleston. I want to also elaborate on what Ms. Ajmera is saying. I appreciate the effort toward having some kind of technology but I too address dangerous driving, being in a situation if you're a motorist or a biker or cyclist or pedestrian, you could be warned perhaps of dangerous driving, but I still think the focus has got to be on driver behavior. When we were in Raleigh last month for the North Carolina Transportation Summit, I attended the highway safety meeting and Governor's Highway Safety Association and I may have that a little bit wrong and the governor's being plural. So, this is a national organization, not our governor specifically. They talked a lot about technology and acknowledge that while North Carolina doesn't have the ability per se to municipalities can't put in place speed cameras that they should be pushing the legislature to do it because it works and the wrong metric is to look at how much it cost and what the revenue generation is because overtime the revenue should go down. I have spoken to the school board about this. They are very interested in knowing more about this kind of program. So, I think it could be a win-win because as we know the revenue for red light cameras at least and I would suspect that if we had speed cameras, we would have the same model that any proceeds would have to go to the school board, but we really could look at that as a pilot program and say, let's implement speed cameras in school crossing zones or, you know, schools like Rama Road that had tragic accidents with students. So, I encourage the Committee and Council to, and the next Council I suppose to put it on the state agenda. It needs to be discussed and there's a ton of data out there we could have the assistance of the North Carolina Governor's representative for the Governor's Highway Safety Program who can help us on this and who has done a lot of research. Thank you for the presentation and I hope we won't back down on taking a look on the future Council on programs like this to have enhanced technology to address dangerous driving. Thank you.

Mr. Egleston said I know that everyone on the Council knows this, but just to reiterate I think there's a misperception in the public that things when we talk about red light cameras or speed cameras or something that it's some attempt by the city to generate a revenue source for itself. In this case, it's not a revenue source, but it's a huge cost. It doesn't even pay for itself. That's one of the things that has proven challenging because of the model

you discussed there. So, I don't want anyone to think that we are simply just trying to profit off of people's driving mistakes. It is not that at all.

Ms. Eiselt said I'd like to address that point that it shouldn't cover the cost, right? It isn't a revenue source as you say. It's going to cost us money, but we're measuring the wrong thing if we do not take into account deaths and fatalities and accidents and the cost to the community of dangerous driving. So, finances can be pretty creative; It's how you look at it. I think rushing to look at the cost of it should not be the determinant as to whether or not we pursue something like this.

Mr. Egleston said I agree. I just don't want people to think we are using this as a way to bolster our tax coffers.

Ms. Eiselt said yes, absolutely. Thank you.

**Councilmember Johnson** said I wanted to make a comment about the Umbrella Center. I'm on the Committee and I did support moving it forward to the full Council. I don't know when we'll discuss it. When it will be on the agenda, I just want to plant the seed and kind of mention what I mentioned in the meeting to the full Council as we're planning to discuss this. The project is asking the city for \$5 million of a \$35 million project. The city's \$5 million would be the last financing after all the other financing is obtained. So, my thought was and we just had a whole conversation about the overlap of city and county and muddying the waters. I think this is an opportunity for the city to stay in its lane and provide housing vouchers for clients of the Umbrella Center. I think we would do very well. I think that's a great output. I think when a woman is in a domestic violence situation, many times she can't leave because she's trapped financially. We're in a city that housing is very, very difficult to afford. Especially when you are a two-person or, you know, two-income family and you are trying to be a one-income family. So, my thought us rather than the city giving \$5 million to an organization who has the ability to raise \$30 million for a building that the county is going to manage if we take that \$5 million and allot it for clients for the outcome. I think that supports the mission of the Umbrella Center and also is a practical resource for clients who need shelter. So, it's just a thought. Thank you.

**Councilmember Newton returned at 7:33 p.m.**

**Councilmember Phipps** said yeah, I wanted to touch back on the gun safety awareness initiative that I hope that we would embark on. I know a couple of weeks ago, Chief Jennings gave a summary of, I guess, 2021 results in terms of law enforcement. He indicated that we had a 34 percent increase in the amount of guns, stolen from vehicles. So, essentially thousands of guns are stolen each year and a lot of them are used in crimes on our city streets. So, I would hope that we would be more assertive in our efforts to try to make the public aware of gun safety measures that they can employ to help reduce that number. As a matter of fact, a prominent gun retailer just today sent out an email that they're putting their gun lockboxes on sale for like 20 bucks or whatever. So, they said don't let your guns show up in school. It's a way that they can secure these guns

or weapons in their vehicles. Because a lot of them are in vehicles. So, these locks would help to secure them properly and I just think that things like that, promotional PSAS or whatever that we can do to try to help stem the tide by promoting overall gun safety to keep guns out of the hands of the people that they shouldn't be in. So, I am hoping for you all that we can initiate something like that going forward.

**Mayor Lyles** said what I've heard in this discussion, Ms. Johnson talked about the Umbrella Center and consideration of vouchers and I don't know how that works in terms of needs assessment or whatever, but I think some follow-up to see the merits of that. Then the second thing is that we talked about the red-light cameras. I have a question. Would we need to work with the school board first before we go to put this on our legislative package? Wouldn't there need to be the first step to have an agreement locally? I am just asking for an idea because the referral was to send it to the Intergovernmental Committee to be placed on the legislative agenda and I wonder if that's again, in front of having that discussion to the school board.

Mr. Egleston said I think it's whether or not we wanted to change the funding model. I think we would have the option of going to the General Assembly saying we're fine with the financial arrangement that would be required, which I think that we would retain 10 percent of the proceeds to help cover the cost of implementing the program. It would not cover the cost. So, we would be dipping into our general fund or some dollars we have locally to cover the gap there. Ninety percent would go to the schools. We could either say we're fine with that and we would like the authority to move forward with it or we could say we'd like to reimagine the financial model.

Mayor Lyles said so I don't recall how the model worked when we had it. Whether or not that would be an option. I think it was to cover most of the cost, not all of it. But I don't know what the models are. I guess what I'm asking is the first touch point to work with the schools because I like the speed cameras in the school zones. I think that's just as important as the red-light cameras. But I just wonder how we do something like this. Whether or not we ask the manager to work with the superintendent or the chief to work with the chief over in the department, the CMS (Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools) department. There are lots of places that this conversation could be held around what are the mutual benefits. It's Fayetteville and one other city that we have agreements with that we can look at as well. I know Fayetteville has it but I don't know who else.

**Councilmember Winston** said Intergovernmental Committee did an update on these a couple of months back because the Council requested that the Intergovernmental Committee looks at this. We can have Dan resend the information and can probably have folks, I don't know, look back to the Council conversation around that. I think if the Committee is suggesting that they want to craft language for the Council to consider for a legislative agenda, that's another thing because this was considered for our previous legislative agenda, I do believe.

Mayor Lyles said I recall that. I guess I was saying how do we touch base with the school board as well because it's not a one-to-one all of the time. There's a lot of other things that are engaged and how we support schools, what we do, and all of that. I would just suggest that the manager have a conversation with the superintendent. Then we get the information out and I think the referral to ask for our authorities is what we're going for. So, what I've heard on the red-light cameras, I hope that would include school zone speed cameras as well to refer that to intergovernmental working with the City Attorney. Also having the manager contact the superintendent around the issue and just to touch bases. Just to make sure people are aware of what's going on. And so, we have the five million for the housing vouchers as well as the red-light cameras for I hope speeding and in school zones. I think Mr. Egleston talked about the app and the pilot on it and its managing itself and having a report come back. Did I miss anything, Mr. Egleston?

Mr. Egleston said Ms. Kunze just sent, I believe, to everybody the travel safely video if you would like to watch it, but no, I think we covered it.

Mayor Lyles said okay. Any disagreement? Any concerns, or questions, Is everybody in a good place?

Mr. Phipps said I just wanted to say that I was surprised at the level of enthusiasm expressed by the public upon the announcement of the potential of initiating this pilot campaign. It was like three days maybe of media stories about it. Even in the paper. I mean it was like people were excited, I mean enthusiastic about giving it a chance. So, this is all this is, anything that we can do, if it's just one person that could benefit from this safety app, it would be well worth the money spent, I think.

Mayor Lyles said thank you, Mr. Phipps. Well, we're going to go to our final Committee update. How is this working out for everybody? Is this working out better, the conversation, the dialogue among the Council members? Feel good about it? Okay. Cool. Let's go to TAP.

### **Transportation and Planning Committee**

**Councilmember Eiselt** said TAP Committee met in January, January 24<sup>th</sup>. The members of that Committee are myself; Mr. Egleston is the vice chair, Mr. Graham, Ms. Watlington, and Mr. Winston. We are happy to have our new Committee support. Liz Babson is our lead liaison along with Alyson Craig, Jason Lawrence, and Ed McKinney. What's great about that is that we're really, I think, it's giving us some good intersection between transportation and planning. So, with that, we have three initiatives that are in the agenda that it's really basically the three buckets as you can tell. Mobility, Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan, and the UDO. Under mobility, we're working on the S&P, which is the strategic Mobility Plan and it's a little bit confusing I think as to what is Strategic Mobility Plan versus the Transit System Plan verses the TMN, right? The Strategic Mobility Plan is really Charlotte's Plan for transportation policies. It includes street maps and comprehensive transportation review guidelines. So, it's really just about



what's in motion comprehensively for mobility within Charlotte verses the 2030 Transit System Plan, which is the region, it's the MTC (Metropolitan Transit Commission) and then you have the Regional Transportation Plan, and again, that involves more towns, more counties, so. Regarding the Strategic Mobility Plan, I mentioned that for the Transit System Plan the Committee will hear from CATS on their policy work including recommendations for Envision My Ride. So, that's coming up and how we can enhance bus service along with recommendations for the Silver Line TOD (Transit Oriented Development) study. So that is all coming up. I'm hoping that within the discussion of enhancing bus service, we can talk about what's been happening with bus service. We are down drivers and that has led to a lot of disruption. So, I think it's really critical that at this point and time we're presented with information as to how that's going to be remedied and how that is impacting riders right now in ridership.

In the Regional Transportation Plan, the Committee receives regular updates on transportation work regarding the CRTPO (Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization) and Centralina Council of Governments. I think that's going to get more interesting because the State DOT (Department of Transportation) has a deficit. There are about \$11 billion behind in projects that are already in the stip. There's going to have to be some tough decisions made as to what's going to get funded and what is not going to get funded. So, we don't know much more about that at the moment but we'll be obviously on pins and needles to find out which projects in Charlotte that could impact. The 2040 Plan I think you know we're working on that and that has to do with mapping right now. We've heard from everybody that the mapping process was moving pretty quickly and a lot of people weren't comfortable with the February approval date. The work for the mapping process continues but the date to it for the Council to adopt the policy map has been pushed out to March 28th. Hopefully, everyone had gotten that information from planning, but I think that's really good. It gives us a little bit more breathing room to get through some of the issues that have been raised by the public and by Council members on technical issues with the current draft map. So, that gives us a little bit more time to work on it.

And then the UDO, we've talked about that a little bit tonight in other Committee s as well. So, for February, the Committee will work on receiving the information about the strategic Mobility Plan along with an example demonstration by implementing the streets map and the comprehensive transportation review. We'll receive an update on the various UDO topics. Some of them which we've spoken about today are based on the issue you of the Council and which issues are rising to the top in terms of importance. Then in March, we're expected to continue the policy discussions on the SMP (Strategic Mobility Plan), receive an update on Beyond 77, which was the study conducted by CRTPO, and review the recommended policy map and summary of revisions for consideration. Again, for a later vote by the Council on March 28th. We will also be looking at the economic impact analysis that has been conducted for the UDO in March and I do believe that we're going to get some case studies which is going to be incredibly helpful, that we will sort of take a look at a project before and after the UDO is passed and what the impact would be. So, I think anything visual like that will help all of us. In April we're expected to focus on again,

reviewing the draft of the Strategic Mobility Plan receiving recommendations from the Silver Line TOD study, and then we would review the summary of feedback on the first draft of the UDO.

So, that's it really. That's a lot of information. You know, of course, I welcome anybody's question but we've got a lot of work still on our plates. That's kind of where it stands right now, thank you.

**Mayor Lyles** said a lot of these you've presented many many times and these are updates. Let's go to the calendar or even on the anticipated items around mobility, the Vision Plan, and UDO. Questions or comments or suggestions for the Committee? Any comments or suggestions? I guess that means the Committee is doing a great job.

Ms. Eiselt said either confused everybody.

Mayor Lyles said I actually think you laid out a really feasible plan but I just want to make sure.

**Councilmember Phipps** said with respect to Envision My Ride, I know that's been a focus for quite a while now. So, what's the next step in that? Is it a funding step that's needed there? I thought a lot of that work was done in terms of research vetting with the community and getting feedback. It what's a pretty elaborate effort. so, what's next for something like Envision My Ride?

Ms. Eiselt said that's a good question. I can't answer that. Maybe the Manager can. That in and of itself is a good question.

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said to Councilmember Phipps, yes, it is a funding issue. John Lewis could implement Envision My Ride overtime. You're talking about an investment in additional buses and you are talking about an investment in additional individuals to operate those buses and you're right, there is not a revenue stream to accelerate Envision My Ride. You are right, the plan has been done. Now it's how you fund it.

Mr. Phipps said so, I'm at a lost as to how much we were talking about to implement the plan, but I'm wondering because I thought at one point this plan was moving right along and then we decided to upgrade our bus system with electric buses or whatever. I know those come as quite a more expense than regular buses. Is it fair to say that some of the funding that could have gone to that was used by that?

Mr. Jones said can I frame it a different way? So, CATS has evolved. I would say over the last couple of years, there was discussion about the cost of electric buses vs diesel or hybrid and the cost of electric buses were more. When you start to think about the total life of the vehicle, the maintenance is less. The overtime there's this crossing point. There's a pilot that is beginning now in which we have a number of electric buses and I

believe it's from two different vendors and maybe three, and we're going to be able to with this pilot that also has Duke as a part of it, we're going to be able to test these buses over the course of a couple of years. As John is doing replacements, he is considering electric buses. I think the bigger point is this, it's not as much an issue with buying the buses. It is the annual personnel costs that you would have to have in order to operate the buses. That's it and that's not insignificant. So, we'll will go after every grant that's out there. We will match as high as we can to be successful in those grants. Right now, it's more of an annual cost for people to actually operate the new buss that comes on.

**Councilmember Winston** said Mr. Jones, are you saying that the biggest handicap for us implementing Envision My Ride and therefore improving our bus system is figuring out how to pay for more bus drivers? Is that what I just heard?

Mr. Jones said absolutely. There's an ongoing cost and I didn't think that we would get into this tonight. Even if you think about what we're doing with connecting beyond and the portion of that's in Mecklenburg County proper, the funding for that that has been discussed also includes funding Envision My Ride. It's the first funding thing that would occur in terms of utilizing any increase in revenue. It would help our bus system. So, yes, we can go after grants all day long and get buses and be successful with that, but ultimately you're looking at 30 to 40 million dollars annually in terms of personnel to operate these new buses, to give us more frequencies and more routes.

Mayor Lyles said I want to make sure that Envision My Ride has the more efficient routes that are more reliable and faster. So, it would be meeting the Envision My Ride standard of 15 minutes time to get around and reducing the travel time across the city.

Mr. Winston said I feel like that should certainly be a priority area for the city Council, but that's this Council to figure that out. I feel like that's the first time I have heard the problem kind of parsed out like that. I know Mayor Pro Tem always asked this, how do we get a better bus system I feel like that's the first I heard it so succinctly and I would like for TAP and for the larger Council to kind of figure that out. Is that part of the whole Transformational Mobility Network and we haven't gotten those numbers parsed out?

Mayor Lyles said yes.

Mr. Jones said yes, I didn't think we were going into this tonight, but es. Some of the networks deal with those routes or better yet whether it's rail, light rail, commuter rail, or a streetcar, right? So, all of those additional routes are being designed, but also include enhanced bus service and bus rapid transit. It includes new technologies that can be more efficient as well as transportation components that are streets, sidewalks, bike paths, greenways, roads, and all of the jurisdictions in Mecklenburg County.

**Councilmember Driggs** said I just wanted to clarify that we have been told for some time that the operating costs related to the improvements in the bus system were in that 30, \$40-million range and we also were told that the capital costs were 100 plus, around 100.

I think what this conversation highlights is exactly what the Mayor Pro Tem alluded to before which is a little bit of confusion about the Strategic Mobility Plan versus the TMN. because the Strategic Mobility Plan is meant to be effective essentially regardless of that funding. It is meant to be policies as it was explained to us not long ago, policies around mobility, walkability, things like that, that are not dependent on the financing and we have segregated, I think, the question of financing which is basically the sales tax into the TMN and that is being handled by the CRVA (Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority). So, I think it's important that we think about what our capacity is within existing resources, capital resources, with in the capacity of CATS on one level, and then be clear about what we're talking about that would be dependent on a new revenue stream. Mr. Manager, I don't know if there are any other revenue streams that you have in mind, or are we in fact, talking about getting a sales tax?

Mr. Jones said yes, If we go back to, I guess, almost a year ago, I was in charge with the mayor and Council with taking a look at, I guess, what we're calling the TMN now and find a funding resource for it as well as the legislative strategy for it. So, in terms of the funding resource, what we have been focusing on is the sales tax.

Mr. Driggs said right, right. So, I think the only question in terms of what we're talking about now is we don't know what the timeline is for the sales tax and so on and you know, what the outcome is going to be and frankly, I think we need to focus on bus service improvements that we can strive for nearer term, like the ones we talked about in the context of our prior funding capacities and try to get this working because that's a near term need. It's critical they have that flexibility and mobility. By the way, the other thing that we did learn in the past was the electric buses cost \$900,000 or something like that, but then you get a lot of that back through the operating expenses. So, to that extent, it could be mainly about capital costs like buying the buses and hoping that you save enough in operating expenses to deflect some of the costs. I think we are just a little fuzzy at this point about what we plan to do in the context of the TMN verses what we think we can accomplish while we wait on the TMN. Thank you.

Ms. Eiselt said if I can make a comment to that as well, Madam Mayor?

Mayor Lyles said yes, please and we'll follow-up with Ms. Ajmera.

Ms. Eiselt said sure. So, the TMN, as Mr. Driggs just said, how do we pay for it, right? What's going to be the revenue stream that gets us there? The Transit System Plan, I think within that is an opportunity to say in the meantime let's look at Envision My Ride. How far have we come, where is ridership? We know it was down after COVID-19 as well and I've talked to you about this Madam Mayor and to the Manager, I think this whole Council needs to understand why bus ridership was down. If it's because of inefficiencies, if it's because for whatever the reasons, we need to know that because in order to get to the TMN, we need to give people faith that we understand our bus system, and what it's efficiencies are. Whether that's a funding issue or if it's an operational issue we need to know why the real-time app doesn't work. I'm starting to get messages a lot more

frequently from riders who are saying, I got the app, but it didn't come. I just forwarded a message to the manager today. I think a few of us got this about somebody who said I stood at the light rail platform. The train didn't come. It said it was going to come. I think there's a lot there that we have got to get some answers to in TAP, that have to do with the existing bus system. Where we are and Envision My Ride and how it's going because if we ask people; it's going to come through a tax, right, to invest in our bus system, which we have to do because of the spine of a good public transportation system is to have a good great bus system. If we ask people to support that, we need to be able to say, it's going to work for you, and you're going to be able to get to work on time or wherever you need to go. So, I do think there's an important piece of this because right now it's out of our hands as to how we're going to fund it. We don't have the answer yet, but we got to make what we have work well for people.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said yes, so I agree with Mayor Pro Tem here, that there's a lot to unpack here. We have to get to the root of the issue with the reduction in ridership. I read the other day an article in Niner Times, the student newspaper, and it lays out issues with our bus system not arriving on time, litter issues, there's a lot of issues. I forwarded some of the concerns as soon as I read the article to the department head, but yeah, there's a lot that we need to unpack. From what I gather is that this is an operational funding issue that we've got to tackle. Less about capital, but really about operational funding and that is going to be addressed with the budget that we have right now unless there is another property tax increase or sales tax increase or something. But, you know, we are not going to solve this at this meeting, but we just need to have a discussion, just one session on our transportation systems. Specifically, our buses. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said Mr. Jones, wanted to comment on that one.

Mr. Jones said the two issues out there, one is the future of our bus system, which I'll address secondly. The first one is the current situation. So, solid waste services has done a tremendous job through this pandemic and we've had some glitches along the way. But I believe that because we have been very good in explaining the challenges, you've given us grace. So, what I've done is I've asked the team, Brent Cagle and Jason Snyder, and other folks to work with CATS to make sure that we understand what the issue is in terms of what is happening today. A lot of it is we don't have drivers every day. It's a pandemic and people are not available for us. Sure, there's sometimes that you get an e-mail that an app didn't work and sometimes we explain to you that maybe it wasn't the way that it was revealed to you. I'm not saying that we don't have a problem. I agree with you; let's unpack it, but we haven't focused on telling you exactly what is causing concern on the current system. I agree with you, Mayor Pro Tem, it's very difficult to sell, give me more of something that you may believe isn't really working right now, but the first thing is to try to make sure that we share with you what are the issues in the current system? Fix those. and then, there's a separate issue about expanding the system. Thank you, Mr. Driggs. As we go past the first four or five years of this, the operational costs will exceed \$40 million. But the point being is two issues, give us a chance to tell you everything that's

going on with the system, and then there has to be enough confidence in the system so that we can expand it. I just didn't want folks to believe that we don't have some operational issues in terms of just personnel every day, that come to work to drive buses.

**Councilmember Johnson** said Mr. Jones, is there a page on the website where someone could take a look at and see all of this abbreviation and all of these plans, together? Like, if you look at this, there's about six plans and we're talking about them, and when we talk about public engagement, how is the public supposed to follow what's what? You would almost think, oh, the Comprehensive Plan, that's going to be the plan that has everything, but it's not. That's separate than the Transportation Plan. So, is there a web page or a page that users can go to, that it's truly a comprehensive page at least that links people to these different plans and how they connect?

Mr. Jones said I don't believe that we do. I believe it's parceled out. What I'll do is check with the team. I won't call Liz Babson in, who's in the back room, she can probably explain it a lot better than I can, but a part of what we are doing is trying to show how these plans actually work together, yes.

Ms. Johnson said right, that will be great. Thank you.

Mr. Phipps said I just wanted to ask a question about the Gold Line phase 3. I know it was good that we were able to get the Gold Line phase 2 operational, but I guess since its inception, it has been met with some less-than-flattering performance metrics. So, I'm wondering given that, would that more or less reflect on the viability of a future phase 3?

Mr. Jones said so, the Gold Line phase 3, there's a couple of things, and Mr. Newton can attest to this, we had a bus pilot that we ran to try to give us information about what would be the viability of the Gold Line phase 3. In other words, is this something that would operate within traffic? Would it have its own dedicated lane? So, there are funds set aside to refresh the third phase of the Gold Line to see how feasible it is. One thing that's important and I may be a little bit off, but I don't know from beginning to end you could be talking about 20 miles of a streetcar. One of the things that you're judged on is that it is somebody in a car, can they get to the end of the line faster than the streetcar can? There's a question with that about whether that is actually doable because the streetcar potentially could be in traffic the entire time. So that's what happens when you refresh this. We do have funds set aside. It will eventually come to the Council to go forward to do the refresh on the viability of phase 3.

Mr. Winston said I was going to say to Ms. Johnson's point, that is something that actually came up in the last TAP Committee meeting, as it relates to the different plans and then, to the different planning processes. So, one of the suggestions was, I think we do have a communication problem and being able to kind of visually show where these pieces fit together. So, I think staff, out of the last conversation, I think they're looking to figure out some type of flowchart or some type of a graphic visual that does help us kind of see exactly what you're talking about.

Mayor Lyles said okay. All right. Thank you. I think this has been a really good discussion, particularly around what our goals are for our bus system, but of all of the things that we do, we know that the idea of how we pay for them, that answer is not there and we've got to figure out some way to accomplish that. I would hope that we continue this discussion, always having this. This is probably one of the most robust we've had in a while and I think there will be other opportunities, perhaps by March to even have more details ready to go. Mr. Jones has made a commitment to go back and look at the Envision My Ride and make sure that the people understand what the projected funding is. Also, to go back and take a look at some of the operational issues that we have not been able to really talk about openly or consistently among everyone. I think there have been some concerns by different Council members but getting those altogether and coming so that they come back as a package and you can see the impacts of what we're doing now, how it impacts our reputation with our buses now, but also how it impacts what we have to do to change and do more work, particularly around some of the best methodologies that we're talking about. So, with that, that is our last Committee report. I'm sorry I didn't ask for questions, about whether or not when you look at the schedule and see what is there, in addition to what Mr. Jones is doing, that's probably more informational around the bus system, you can see the other issues that have been outlined. Any questions or changes on the plan from TAP?

Okay, hearing none, that's the completion of all of our Committee reports and dialogue and conversation. I hope it is was something that merits the time and your attention. We'll keep refining any comments or suggestions you have for making it better, or different, please just e-mail me or text me anything that you would like to have.

So, we have two items to cover with the team tonight as we prioritize the Council discussion first. Mr. Jones, I'm going to turn it over to you and ask you which one you would like to address first.

## **ITEM NO. 2: HOUSING INITIATIVES: 2022 LOOK-AHEAD AND ECOMMENDATIONS FOR CITY-OWNED LAND FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**Marcus Jones City Manager** said thank you, Mayor, and members of the Council. Again, we're trying to learn your love language and make sure that we give you information. So hopefully, the pre-reads were helpful.

Mayor Lyles said they were.

Mr. Jones said in your packet. Shawn is going to attempt to I guess do the presentation tonight. One, we'll start off with the housing initiatives and the 2022 look-ahead, and some recommendations. I don't know how Shawn will do this one, but the meat of it is the last June, we spoke with you about city-owned land that could be used for affordable housing. So, we are excited to come back tonight with some proposals that we believe will become consistent with some of the Council's priorities over the last few years. Then, if time permits, Shawn had begun a discussion about other COVID-19 federal stimulus funds

that were teed up for potential discussion with the Council. We touched on a number of them last time. I think we didn't get to the community vitality piece, but that would be what we're attempting to do. An again, you've had some pre-reads and Shawn and a little pregame in the back room. He will try to go through this in such a way that you get the information, but also, it may be a little bit of a reader's digest version, okay.

**Shawn Heath, Special Assistant to the City Manager** said thank you, yes, I'll do my best to go at 1.5 play back speed for everyone here. As Manager Jones mentioned tonight housing, has three, objectives. First, an exceptionally quick look back over the last few years. Just one slide of content there for a bit of orientation. Move-in for the 2022 look-ahead. Very full agenda as it relates to housing initiatives and the number of things that will be coming to the Council over the months ahead. So, I just want to give you a quick preview of what the calendar looks like, and then finish off with a little bit of a deeper dive into some preliminary recommendations related to the six city-owned properties that were included in the affordable housing RFP (Request For Proposal).

Just a quick reflection on the last few years. I know I'm preaching to the choir a bit on this one, but If you go back to 2018 and think about the bold vision that was put in place around accelerating and expending the city's commitment to affordable housing and how that then grew into a significant increase in available funding through a step-up of the housing trust fund from \$15 million to \$50 million in the 2018 bond. Then, of course, the call to action to the private sector and the local foundation community. They responded with a 50 million match through the Charlotte Housing Opportunity Investment Fund, providing a lot of additional resources for those communities to grapple with affordable housing challenges. That of course, grew into a lot of the work to develop a robust suite of policies by the city of Charlotte with the housing Charlotte framework guidelines related to naturally occurring affordable housing, guidelines related to the location of affordable housing, and guidelines related to the evaluation and disposition of city-owned land for various purposes, including affordable housing. Then finally a number of the things under your leadership that I would put underneath an innovative programming umbrella. So, for example, the program related to acquisition rehab and resell that was put in place in 2020. Then more recently over the last 18 months, the pilot that you did around the NOAH (Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing) rental subsidy program. Which gets to Councilmember Johnson. The point you made earlier about what are the things that the city of Charlotte can do to get more vouchers in the marketplace. So, with that particular program obviously, we're off to a good start with four developments that are included in that portfolio.

Before I leave this slide, just a quick reference to the call-out box at the upper right-hand corner here. When you take into account the 2018 and 2020 bond cycles, 100 million bonds in total, of course, 8 percent of which has been allocated, and for those two cycles alone, we're approaching 5,000 units that have received gap financing. It's interesting when you look back over the last 20 years since the Housing Trust Fund was created here, 4 percent of the units in total that have been financed have occurred since the 2018 bond. It went up to \$50 million. So, a tremendous amount of traction there and that's really



the point that I wanted to lead with on this slide as we transition into a conversation about 2022 and what's ahead of us. Not wanting to sugar coat the realities that we're faced with and certainly, the staff understands, we have significant affordable housing challenges in front of us, but we go about that work with the sense of momentum that we can build on.

So, this gives you a visual of what's coming. As I mentioned before, it's a full agenda this year. There's a slide on each one of these, so I'll just very quickly hit the high points to get us oriented. City-owned land RFP, we'll have the deeper conversation this evening related to the six properties that were included in that. [inaudible] funding allocation and RFP, we've discussed that at multiple previous Council discussions. That was the \$11.6 million of ARPA funding that came to the city of Charlotte with a fairly narrow set of eligible uses. So, I'll provide a little more color commentary on that in the presentation. Housing Trust Fund RFP which is open right now. We'll talk a little bit about that and where we are headed. Staying in Place and the NEST Commission have already been referenced in conversation this evening. Those two really go hand in hand here. Obviously, all of the work that we're doing is focused on supporting residents that may be vulnerable to involuntary displacement. Looking out to November with Housing Bond Referendum. Then finally there was a reference earlier this evening to the 2025 Charlotte-Mecklenburg housing and homelessness strategy, which has been rebranded as a home for all. So, I'll start using that term going forward.

So, for the Housing Trust Fund, if you think back to the September conversation with the Housing Director Pam Wideman, the city Council approved about \$23 million in housing trust fund allocations in September. So, that left us with a balance of \$9.4 million. So, I'm not making news with that number tonight, but of course my first impression maybe your first impression when you see the number on the slide is, I wish it was bigger, you know, I wish we had more money to work with. I believe that it's fair to say that the flip side of the coin there is the fact that we quote-unquote have \$9.4 million in the fund at this phase before the next bond cycle, which is really a testament to the success of the program and a demonstration of the quality of the proposals that we received from the development community over the last couple of years. So, if the name of the game is to bring as many affordable housing units online as we possibly can, with an eye on AMI (Area Median Income) mix, with an eye on location, with an eye on home ownership opportunities with housing fund dollars where possible, those are the sorts of things that you've been looking at through the RFP process with the housing trust fund over the last few years.

So, we released the most recent RFP, just not that long ago on January 25th. Responses are due on February 18th. Then, as is typical with our cycle, we'll be back in April with recommendations. Of course, this will be a very very competitive round, given the amount of money that's available this cycle. I also should mention that the Charlotte Housing Opportunity Investment Fund, that's administered by LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation), they have successfully programed their choice round funds of \$50 million. They're in the process of a fund-raising campaign to recapitalize for choice round two with a target of \$50 million, which they hope to complete by the end of the first quarter, fund raising that is. So, they will not be by our side as they have typically been in previous

cycles on the RFP, but they're doing all the work that they can. [inaudible] and her team, to position them to have available resources as we look to future RFPs.

This is the \$11.6 million that I mentioned before and we discussed this at length on December 6th and then a little bit on January 24<sup>th</sup>. So, in the interest of time, I'll cut to the chase here. For the \$11.6 million, \$2 million was approved by the Council for use at the Charlotte rescue mission with the expansion project that they have on the drawing board there. The remaining \$9.6 million was approved by the Council in early December for us to take the next step associated with an RFP, to put that out to the market, and see what great ideas the market has associated with that. That RFP just closed on January 28<sup>th</sup>. I'm told we got 12 or 13 responses and the team will go through the evaluation process. Then in the March timeframe, we'll be back in front of the Council with the recommendations associated with that RFP.

Neighborhood stabilization and this is one where the team, we've talked a lot about wording and terminology because neighborhood stabilization, Staying In Place, NEST, anti-displacement, gentrification mitigation, all of those things fall under the umbrella that here we're referring to as neighborhood stabilization. Really, what we wanted to emphasize here is a few things. First, as we think about all of the strategies that could emerge through this work, Staying in Place, the NEST Commission, it's helpful to know that will be resources available to support the work. As I had mentioned in the January 24th presentation, we have about \$8.5 million of PAYGO (Pay-As-You-Go). A little bit of it is a carry-forward from FY21. The rest of it is FY22. Then, with ARPA phase 1, there's the \$17 million that's been staged for design work as it relates to supporting anti-displacement efforts. As you know and as we'll talk about later, the only way we start to spend any of the \$17 million is through discussion with the Council and ultimately through a vote. So, there's money that's been staged. In terms of where we are at with the staying In Place pilot, I would quickly go back to the summer of 2021, where we had a conversation about the displacement dashboard and the work that was done to leverage data to identify particular geographies in the city of Charlotte that are vulnerable to displacement. So, through that work, the three neighborhoods were identified for the pilot, Hidden Valley, Washington Heights, and Winterfield. So, with that in mind, then in the October timeframe, we released a survey to residents in those three communities. Those responses came in during the latter part of the calendar year 2021 and we've then really moved into where we are now with more engagement. So, we've met with community leaders in each of the neighborhoods. I haven't been personally involved in those conversations yet, but in each instance, there's either a neighborhood association or a community development corporation, or both. We have a cross-functional team that's involved in this work and includes folks from Housing Department, the City Manager's Office, and the Economic Development Team. Julia Martin and Terry Smith have been really helpful as it relates to the neighborhood engagement piece.

So, to date, it's been really conversations with those community leaders, which will then need to grow into more of like a kickoff meeting at the community level, where we'll share the survey results that we received last year. Councilmember Johnson to your point earlier, that will be an opportune time to talk about what's happening on the ground in a

particular neighborhood. I'm vaguely familiar with the development that you mentioned and I don't know enough about it, to know if it could trigger some involuntary displacement, but it's just the sort of thing that we ought to be talking about with neighborhood leaders. So, I appreciate you bringing that up. Once we've had those kickoff meetings at the neighborhood level, then that will translate into discussions more at the household level. One thing I would like to reinforce is not to diminish any excitement around this, but just the reality of where we're at. This is a pilot program at this point. So, at this phase, we're talking about engaging dozens of households across these neighborhoods. There are clearly thousands of households when you add up all three neighborhoods and I don't want to leave anybody under the impression that in this phase of work we're engaging thousands of households or hundreds of households. We're really starting with the survey respondents knowing that they have a particular interest in this issue. We're starting with the neighborhood leaders, knowing they have a vested interest in all of these issues.

Ultimately, what we would like to do is put ourselves in a position, where we have conversations at the household level. They're helping us understand what are the specific factors for particular households that may make them vulnerable to displacement. What, if any, existing city programs do we have to offer already in the toolbox? Where are the gaps? What are the things that we should consider offering in the future? Importantly, where are the opportunities for us to partner with other agencies in the community we might find that certain households need help with financial plans or with job training or maybe it's human service needs that they have? That's fairly where the rubber hits the road here is us having conversations at the household level to really understand what their needs are and what the risks are for them as it relates to displacement.

The NEST Commission as referenced earlier tonight has its first meeting on February 10th and that is chaired by former Councilmember Harlow as well as Kim Graham from the Greater Charlotte Neighborhood Association. As this picks up steam and gains traction, we will continue to inject that in the great neighborhoods conversation on a very frequent basis and cycle back to the Council as well.

This makes reference to the real source of income protection. It's titled rental subsidies, but here we have two things from 2021 that we're now merging into one. First, of course, the Mayor announced the formation of the Source of Income Ad Hoc Advisory Committee in April of 2021 and chaired by Mark Ethridge from Ascent Real-estate along with Kim Graham from The Greater Charlotte Apartment Association. So, they met in the May to December timeframe. Within their advisory Committee, they discussed the preliminary recommendations in December. They're fine-tuning those recommendations and as Councilmember Watlington mentioned earlier, we will have those two co-chairs come into the late February Great Neighborhoods Committee to provide a report out on the recommendations and allow the Committee to ask questions and provide feedback.

In parallel to that last year in the February time frame, the Council directed staff to create a policy requiring acceptance of rental subsidies in all city-supported housing. There was

a conversation on that topic at the Committee level in the August of 2021. It was a good discussion, but that work was paused, momentarily because we wanted to provide the Source Of Income Ad Hoc Advisory Committee an opportunity to get through their work, because the two topics or so intertwined. So as Councilmember Watlington mentioned earlier, February is when we receive information from the advisory Committee, putting us in the position to have a policy-focused discussion at the March Committee meeting for Great Neighborhoods.

This is the home for all reference and just to quickly remind everybody where we're at on this work. So, this is the work that was really spear headed by Center City Partners with Eugene Woods from Atrium and Cathy Bessant from Bank of America serving as co-chairs. You may remember there was a report out in September timeframe of 2021, from Mr. Woods and from Pam Wideman, providing the status report. The way that this work has been structured is in a two-phase deliverable approach. In late January, phase one, which is referred to as the strategic framework was released. The strategic framework really articulates the vision, which is shown here. A five-year plan to better position Charlotte-Mecklenburg as a community where homelessness is rare, brief, and nonrecurring. It frames the problem. It reflects a lot of the analysis around the homelessness-related issues in this community, housing instability, given the linkage between housing instability and homelessness. It provides a window into what I would refer to as a menu of recommendations. So, the work was done by different workstreams. One workstream was focused on the prevention of homelessness and another was focused on affordable housing. Another on emergency shelters for example and each of those workstreams developed what I would refer to as preliminary recommendations. It's a really good menu of options based on analysis, based on a lot of good community feedback, but now the hard work begins. The strategic framework does not include a set of discreet actionable initiatives. It does not include funding recommendations or potential funding sources. So, now the work is converting from the strategic framework into what's being referred to as the implementation planning phase. The city of Charlotte had a number of staff members that were involved in the first phase of work. I'll be directly involved and others will be directly involved in the second phase of work. The implementation plan which would be the culmination of everything, the final report, will probably be in the fall of 2022 timeframe.

So, from a staff perspective, as I said before, we'll be involved in it. We'll be very engaged in shaping it where we can. At some point when it's appropriate, we have a better sense for what are the local policy levers that are included in that discussion. That's when we'll need to find the right way and the right time to have those discussions at the Committee level and/or full Council as we get into the year far enough where we're in a position to have a meaningful conversation on that.

**Mayor Lyles** said I think that it might be good to have this discussion on these strategies first. I know that some Council members have indicated that they have had some questions before. So, if that's okay because when we move into this, we're more into the capital side. So, Ms. Watlington and then Mr. Graham.

**Councilmember Watlington** said thank you and I apologize in advance. Shawn, I could have asked you this 100 times before just now. So, I do apologize for that. You've been doing a phenomenal job and appreciate how you have been very communicative and on top of things. So, I just wanted to acknowledge that. You have rolled into this work quite nicely. I did have a couple of questions on NEST, maybe not even well, yeah, it will be a question. We talked a lot about the stakeholder, and the folks in the community and as I think about what it means to stabilize the neighborhood, even as we move into new generations, we know that there's an element of turn over just from the natural attrition, right? So, we talked about the people who currently live in the neighborhood and we know that particularly for the neighborhoods where the residents are vulnerable to displacement, there's a high rental rate. So, can you talk a little bit about how property owners are going to be engaged in the household level?

Mr. Heath said as it pertains to NEST?

Ms. Watlington said uh-huh.

Mr. Heath said yeah. So, that is the kind of question that we haven't really had a chance to dive into yet.

Ms. Watlington said okay. Well, then I'll just say it that way. I'd love to see [inaudible] property owners.

Mr. Heath said at this point we've had an initial conversation with the co-chairs and we've really talked about framing the initial conversation as an orientation, recognizing that members so of the NEST commission won't want to spend too long on presentations from staff about the current state, but we do need to all get oriented and grounded coming out of the gates. Part of that will be defining the scope moving forward. Manager Jones?

Mr. Jones said Shawn, I think that there's a second question and that is the same question that she asked but how does that apply to the pilot, Staying In Place because you do have more interaction with the community with that than you do with NEST.

Mr. Heath said yes, thank you, yes, as you mentioned, the whole idea with Staying In Place is for first, it started off as data-informed, to identify where to start the work. Now, it's intended to really move into stakeholder and community informed. So, what our hope is, that we're moving fast enough and we need to accelerate this on the Staying In Place work, that what we're learning and finding there can be brought into the NEST conversation because these two clearly go hand in hand. Now, and I think one of the biggest areas of emphasis with the NEST Commission, will be having a conversation on how to come to some agreement around scope because it is an area at least at the staff level where we have really good conversations and we find ourselves by the time we're done with the conversations, we're like half a step away from world peace because there's so many different way things that you can attach to this area. So, part of it is just reflecting back on what was it that really gave birth to NEST in the first place. So, that's why in the

initial meeting, there will be a conversation on the 2040 Plan, because I think that ultimately for this work to be successful at the neighborhood level, we'll be for us to have a very intentional view of what are the specific drivers that allow us to get as targeted as possible as it relates to identifying and supporting individuals that are potentially vulnerable to displacement?

Ms. Watlington said thank you for that. You said something that brings up my second point as we're defining the scope for Staying In Place and the NEST Commission. How we're ascertaining what really needs to be targeted in terms of the work? When it comes to policy and really understanding what's out there that's existing and any metrics that are available that can really tie the outcomes of what we're trying to do the work. I think that has got to be input, and I know Rebecca is all over this already, that has got to be input into the scope because what I don't want us to do is choose our scope without that policy focus because if we want to get the biggest bang for our buck, I would love to see us start there, thanks.

Mr. Heath said understood.

**Councilmember Graham** said Shawn, thank you for the presentation thus far. last year, we set aside I think \$3 million for Brookhill. Have we revisited that in terms of where they are with that? Secondly, at what point are we going to kind of call the question?

Mr. Heath said yes. So, in October 2020, the \$3 million was set aside for Brookhill. My sense is, I just talked to the team about this over the last day, there hasn't really been any movement because you'll recall the way it was structured in October of 2020 for the housing trust fund conversation around Brookhill was, that we would set this aside but certainly, contingencies related to their ability to pull together a viable financing plan and that once those conditions had been met, then there would need to be a reapplication to the Housing Trust Fund. So, I'm not aware that there's been any movement on that. Of course, with the housing trust fund RFP open right now, we'll know definitive in not that long where things stand. I do think that we will need to have a conversation about that \$3 million to evaluate what is the best next step. What is the appropriate next step?

Mr. Graham said yeah, I think we should sooner than later, I mean kind of call the question on that and that leads to the second question, I don't think it's a \$3 million surplus. I'm getting ready to spend it now, right? How do we help the people that is there that are going to need some type of relocation sooner or later?

Mr. Heath said yes, so [inaudible].

Mr. Graham said that's not a question you have to answer today. It's more complicated than just [inaudible], so.

Mayor Lyles said it is very complicated.

Mr. Heath said the one thing if I may, I would mention on that is that we partnered with the United Way, and really commissioned a community needs assessment related to the Brookhill community. So, the United Way and the UNC-Charlotte, Urban Institute recently completed that work. We're in the process of summarizing the report in order to share it with the Council in the very near future. So, that was a very community-driven needs assessment. I think there's roughly 120 residences right now in Brookhill and the emphasis was to understand in the event of a redevelopment of that community, what are the things that residents would most need. Whether it be assistance with moving costs, assistance with down payments, security deposits, etcetera. Then, with that in mind, looking for opportunities where we could initiate and hopefully think ahead and support individuals sooner rather than later, rather than waiting until the 11th hour when redevelopment is imminent. Let's start getting things moving as quickly as we can. So, that work is underway.

Mr. Graham said I hope that we can wrap this up in April when we approve the applications and by that time, he's been given two years. I mean, I'm not what more we can do.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said great presentation, Shawn. I mean, this truly shows a comprehensive view of what has been done by the Council to tackle the affordable houses crisis. I mean, considering how significant this challenge is, it is still a drop in the ocean, but certainly great progress. My question is, in regard to the Staying In Place Pilot Program, is this similar to the Aging In Place Program we had a couple of years ago? There were other programs we had to help families with one-time fixed expenses, capital expenses, for example, plumbing issues, or something that was so significant that it would displace people because these are one-time big expenses. So, I just want to understand where we are with those programs. I remember there was a couple of families that had applied for this program a few years ago when I was a District 5 Council member and they were able to Stay In Place because the program was able to cover these expenses one time. So, if you could just give us more information on that.

Mr. Heath said yes and this is separate and distinct from Aging In Place. But what is directly related is you referenced either what would be our Safe Home Rehab Program, and/or our Emergency Repaired Program. The distinction there is emergency repair is really meant for just that. If there's something that happens to a critical system, in a home. So, if it's wintertime and the heating system goes out, and/or if a tree were to fall on someone's house, that creates imminent danger for the resident. Then if they're income eligible, they could pursue the Emergency Repair Program. Whereas, the Safe Home Program or Home Rehab Program is really focused on instances, where a house may not be up to code and there would be an assessment down done to evaluate, what are the things that the city of Charlotte could do for an income-eligible resident to get the house back up to code. So, Safe Home Rehab would be just the perfect example of the type of thing in conversations with residents in these three pilot geographies that we would want to evaluate. Would one of the existing programs be a good fit for them in order to mitigate the risk of displacement? So, there is a synergy in terms of these programs that are

already in our toolbox, and we would like to look for opportunities to deploy in the priority geographies, but then also see where the gaps are.

Ms. Ajmera said got it, to follow up on that [inaudible].

Mayor Lyles said Ms. Ajmera, and Mr. Jones wanted to comment, too, as well.

Ms. Ajmera said ooh, sure.

Mr. Jones said thank you. I have to apologize to Shawn because Shawn and his team have a sample of tools in the toolbox that we believe could help us in terms of us staying in place. However, we did not want to get out in front of the NEST Commission. We would like to at least talk with them about many of the tools in the toolbox, but shortly thereafter, being able to go back to the Great Neighborhoods Committee, the NEST Commission, we believe that there's an opportunity to come to this body with a pilot based on the data from the three areas that we could really implement that could help people stay in their homes. We just have so many different bodies working on the same thing.

Ms. Ajmera said so, I'll wait for the Neighborhood Committee to provide their recommendation. I just wanted to make sure some of these programs that are already in places like the Rehab Program or the Safe Program, do they still have enough funding in those programs because I know it gets oversubscribed, I mean, many of the programs. I'm just trying to understand where the funding is for some of these existing programs.

Mr. Health said yes and Manager Jones alluded to some of this because what we're in the process of doing is trying to identify where we see the potential funding needs. As we embark on a strategy to up our game in the Staying In Place pilot, for example. So, the Emergency Repair Program, there could generally put about \$250,000 into that program each year. I think right now the way the program is designed; an individual would be eligible for up to \$7,000 if there's an event that occurs. So, you know, we want to look at the program design, other opportunities to increase funding, other opportunities possibly to increase the caps associated with those? In other instances, Councilmember Ajmera, it may not be the program funding but there could be capacity constraints that we have either at the staff level or in the contractor market because it can be a challenge sometimes if we've identified a project in need to ensure that we've got access to contractors to do the rehab work in a timely fashion. So, those are just the sorts of things that we're trying to look through because as the NEST Commission and as the staying Place pilot identifies specific opportunities for us to either accelerate or expand existing programs, and or create new programs, we need to ensure that we have the staff resources, third party contractor resources, and just the program funding to pull some of this stuff off.

**Councilmember Phipps** said with regards to the Staying In Place Program, is that program exclusively for owner-occupied owners As opposed to renters because you say these are neighborhoods that have a high rental composition. So, it would stand to reason



that the opportunities available for those homeowners there, I don't know what the balance would be, but are we are these programs going to be specifically for owner-occupied residents?

Mr. Heath said right now everything that we've contemplated is really looking at what I would call the whole neighborhood and not in a literal way, in terms of all of the households, but an individual could be vulnerable to displacement for a number of reasons. Maybe the landlord is going to sell the property, maybe the rent is going up, or maybe the property tax bill is going up. Whatever the case may be. You know, at this point, we haven't carved anything out and said this would be out of scope.

Mr. Phipps said so, it's conceivable then that you could have an I guess, a landlord that would be the beneficiary of some of these services.

Mr. Heath said well, I mean ultimately, what we're trying to do is help individuals whether they're renting or whether they're homeowners, who are experiencing pressure. That's the purpose of the pilot is to really better understand what is it about you as a particular, rental or homeowner that's putting pressure on you.

Mr. Phipps said okay, well my final question is, do we have any hard metrics on the degree of displacement in any of these three neighborhoods?

Mr. Heath said well, what we do have, and I don't have the data dashboard here to pull up today, but there were a number of criteria that were relied upon to evaluate based on the income levels and other factors which neighborhoods in the city of Charlotte would be more likely to experience displacement than others. So, we do have that data and embedded in that, we may have a sense of the degree of displacement that's occurred. I'm not sure, but I can look into that.

**Councilmember Johnson** said I was going to piggy-back off of what Mr. Phipps said. If we wanted hard evidence, we might look at the property sales in those neighborhoods because that's one of the reasons for displacement is the increase in property taxes. So, if you look at the prior year's property sales, that might give you an idea on what the risk of the displacement might be or if the property taxes increased. I just want to say that, and I've already spoken to the manager about this, but there's a petition right now that is pending in Hidden Valley, and it's for 20 townhomes. It's something that we need to consider and I hope that you put that petition number in front of the NEST Committee because this is an opportunity to apply some practical solutions because neighborhood improvement can be a great thing and it can benefit homeowners when your property value increases. The challenge is when their taxes go up and they cannot afford it. So, this is an absolute opportunity to apply some of these solutions to that area because I think this petition has the potential to have a domino effect. It's what we talk about. You know, gentrification and anti-displacement. So, I just think that this is a very, very significant development in Hidden Valley and I hope that we can apply some of these tools for the residents.

Mr. Heath said this is on Wellingford Road, is that right?

Ms. Johnson said yes, yes.

Mr. Heath said okay.

Ms. Johnson said and their community meeting is on the 10<sup>th</sup>, that evening, the same day as the NEST meeting.

Mr. Heath said okay, okay.

Ms. Johnson said thank you.

Mayor Lyles said okay, let's go to leveraging city-owned land for affordable housing.

### **Leveraging City-Owned Land For Affordable Housing**

Mr. Heath said all right. So, this is really a continuation of a conversation that was started in June of last year. The Assistant City Manager Cagle and Housing Director Wideman, walked through the process to identify what ultimately became six properties that were included in the RFP. So, quickly here, just to reenforce that the notion of leveraging city-owned land for affordable housing is consistent with the policy framework today through Housing Charlotte, which identifies the use of city and/or county-owned property, for affordable housing as a smart strategy. Then, also of course, through the guidelines related to the evaluation and disposition of city-owned land, I didn't include the slide from last June, but there was a good slide that had a funnel and it was a nice visual because it mad the point that there's a periodic exercise that's led by real estate and partnership with other departments across the city, to identify the portfolio of city-owned land and narrow that down to properties that are underutilized and unused and then from there, start to narrow it down to given the possible uses that we could have, whether it be public safety, or economic development, which are the ones that staff at a cross-functional level believes would be suitable for affordable housing. So, the six that were ultimately included in the RFP went through a very intentional process to be identified and I didn't want to lose sight of that, because we're about to start jumping into specifics.

This is identical as well to the conversation from June of last year. These are the six properties that were identified; Newland Road, just across I-77, not far from here in the Lincoln Heights neighborhood, Providence Road West down in Ballantyne, adjacent to the CMPD south station, South Boulevard. A particular site that was donated to the city of Charlotte and it's near the Arrowwood Light Rail Station and then University City Boulevard, which is near the 2949 intersection, Wendover Road, and Archdale Drive are shown here ins italics for different reasons. We did not receive any proposals for the Archdale Drive location. I'll talk a little bit more about that in a moment. For Wendover Road, what we received is still under evaluation by staff. So, we're not in the position

tonight to make recommendations, but we believe that there's still hope that we can move that forward in this particular RFP cycle.

This quickly is just a reminder on the timeline, the RFP for those six locations was released in November of 2021, with a deadline of December. We went through an evaluation process over the last month or so. Tonight, we're here to share [inaudible] preliminary recommendations and then moving forward into mid-February and beyond. What we've contemplated here, and we'll talk about this at the very ended of the presentation, is the two-step process, whereby we first seek affirmation from you, seeking authority for the City Manager to move forward in the negotiations, and authorizing us to work with the developers on the specific plans, but then, the formal and final vote around land conveyance and the final resolutions will be at a later point in time. So, I'll provide a little more commentary on exactly what that means as we go through here.

Just a bit of a reminder that the way the RFP was structured is very consistent with the types of things that you would expect to see, in terms of what is being referred to here as the development strength. We care deeply about affordable periods. Income targeting would be consistent with the types of conversations we have around the Housing Trust Fund, in terms of the emphasis on eight percent AMI and last for the multifamily rental proposal, we would expect those to reflect 20 percent of the units at the 30 percent AMI level, and below in terms of development team experience. Obviously, a key criterion in the evaluation of the responses and in addition to the developer track record, one particular area of emphasis is proven and kind of demonstrated results the developer has in terms of garnering support for projects based on an inclusive approach to public feedback and comment. The evaluation team is cross-functional in reviewing the RFP responses, including Housing and Neighborhood services, and General Services, real estate folks as well.

So, across the six sites, we received 14 proposals. As I mentioned before, no proposals were received for Archdale. Archdale has real access to roadway-related changes. It's essentially land locked. You've got Little Sugar Creek on one side and you've got a private residential development on the other side. I think there might be utility substations somewhere in there as well. Wendover Road as I mentioned, we received a couple of proposals and we're still evaluating those. As we start to move into some of the specifics on the four properties, where we do have preliminary recommendations tonight, all of them you'll see referenced to households at 80 percent or below in AMI. When you look across all of them you'll see a heavy dosage at 60 percent AMI and below.

So, what this slide if I was good enough at PowerPoint, I would have found a way to have some flashing lights here, because there are very specific numbers on this page. I can't under score more strongly that we're sharing information with you fairly early in the process, earlier than we might typically, but we're doing that for a reason because we don't do these sorts of things every year. We know there's a particular interest in how we're thinking about leveraging city-owned land for affordable housing. So, we want to bring you from the conversation earlier rather than later to get feedback and hear your

questions. The flip side of that is, we're sharing information that will likely change as the developers mature their site plans as we have conversations with the developers, and negotiations around land conveyance, it will continue to be fluid. This is what you're seeing on this particular slide is based on what we received from the developers, what we reviewed as part of the evaluation, and really what we want to do is highlight what it is about each of the recommended developer proposals that we found to be most attractive. So, at some point, if we come back and collectively look at these months or years down the road, I'm sure we'll find that the numbers have changed on this slide. Very quickly, from left to right, these are the four properties where we have recommendations. You can see it's a good mix of districts. These are the recommended developers or names that will look familiar to you. These are very experienced and seasoned developers that we have a track record working with successfully through the Housing Trust Fund, for example, in terms of development type. Mainly multifamily rental, which we would have expected but we do have a little dosage of for-sale opportunities on Newland road. In terms of the housing units, you can see of course 80 percent AMI, and below, and each of those specific recommendations will get a little more granular in that regard. Affordability meets the minimum requirements that we established of course. So, 15 years for home ownership and at least 20 years for multifamily rental.

Then on potential public funds, just considered this to be a bit of a place holder. In the RFP responses, the developers identified the potential pursuit of a Housing Trust Fund, for example, LIHTC (Low-Income Housing Tax Credit) funding and home funds which would be something that would be more in line with the home ownership for sale kind of scenario like Habitat For Humanity. As I leave this slide and as we get into the specifics, and this is something that I have reminded myself of as well, everything that we're thinking of fits into an equation where, we're considering Housing Trust Fund dollars, or we're considering home funds that we have at our disposal, we're considering leveraging city-owned land to help bring more affordable units online in the city of Charlotte. So, we're providing things of value. In exchange for that, we expect to receive value. So, that's a very important part of the equation here. For us, in the context to affordable housing, to us, we're interested in how many units? What's the AMI mix? Where are the units located? Are we finding opportunities to have units in medium and high-opportunity areas? What's the affordable period look like? How attractive is the affordability period? Then finally, all else equal the leveraging of city-owned land for affordable housing could take pressure off of the Housing Trust Fund, but I say all else equal because there's a lot of market dynamics happening of course right now; rising construction costs that developers are faced with. So, I just mention all of that just to reinforce that, while I'm not in a position tonight to define exactly what the value proposition is for each one of these, those are the types of things that we have in mind as we're going through the conveyance negotiations and then as some of these will ultimately come back our way with the request for housing trust fund dollars.

So just a quick snapshot on each of the four properties. First, this is Newland Road, as I mentioned which is not that far from where we are tonight in uptown. It's really right at the entrance of the Lincoln Heights neighborhood. You can see there's heavy vegetation on

it at this point, it's 1.34 acres. We receive a strong proposal from Habitat For Humanity for this particular site for 12 townhomes. So, what you're looking at is a rendering of what would be one of three buildings that they have contemplated in the design. So, you can see there are four units here. The AMI level, AMI breakout, 30 to 80 percent AMI which is what we would expect for a home ownership type of proposal. We think this particular design would be a good fit within the community. Habitat also has a lot of experience with these types of projects and it just so happens they've done 44 home ownership projects in Lincoln Heights since 1996. So, they're known there and one of the really interesting features about this proposal is, and I don't know if Habitat has this in place for all their projects, but for this proposal, Habitat would have what they're [inaudible] as a pre-purchase education course. So, it would be 16 classes for the potential homeowners and they would go through a series of courses financial related around budgeting and savings. The basics of home ownership around safety and maintenance and of course what we like about that is Habitat's view that it's not just about the successful transaction, but it's about a successful relationship, and how do you put these homeowners in the position where they can be successful homeowners in the long term. So, we were just really attracted to the proposal for a number of reasons.

Providence road West, so this is a 2.74-acre site in Ballantyne and this particular property is adjacent to the CMPD South Station. So, when you're looking on screen or on your slide, you can see the structure there which is the CMPD South Station and you can see how this property, the 2.74 acres wraps around it. This site went through a city-initiated rezoning in November of 2021, which has allowed for it to be developed as a multifamily.

Crosland submitted a very strong proposal for this site and Crosland, of course, is a very seasoned developer that we have a lot of successful partnership experience within the past. This is an example going back to the initial summary slide that I showed, whereas we work through the process with the developers and as they mature their site plans and we go through the conveyance negotiation, numbers will shift a bit here and there based on what we see on the ground, so to speak. So, with this particular site, there are likely some engineering constraints and/or zoning constraints based on current zoning that would result in the total number of units that's less than 98. So, that will play out, but ultimately what we would expect is that we would retain the essential qualities of this that deliver value to the city. So, a multifamily dense residential new construction development with an eye on the AMI mix, et cetera. So, more to come on all of these of course, but I just wanted to draw that out as an exam where when you see a specific number on the slide some of this will likely change as we move forward.

South Boulevard is a site that is adjacent to the Arrowood Station as is mentioned here. This was donated to the city of Charlotte in the calendar year 2020. I believe it's zoned as TOD. For this location, we received a proposal from NRP which we thought was very strong for 120 units, multifamily rental. NRP has a track record and reputation around TOD-type developments. We've had successful partnerships with them in the past to state the obvious. The location here has a number of attractive qualities in terms of transit access and employment opportunities and retail and services and various amenities. So,

with TOD, obviously, the best practice is to identify high-density, greater-density developments in order to fully leverage the proximity to public transit. So, there are really a lot of things about this particular proposal that we felt were responsive to a number of different city priorities.

Then the last of the four here is University City Boulevard, which as I mentioned is really close to the intersection of 49 and 29. It's a 1.75-acre at this point vacant parking lot. It's about a half mile from the BLE and this is also a TOD zoning. It was rezoned by the city in 2021. This one was a joint proposal from Dream Key and Conifer. A strong proposal for 76 units with new construction, multifamily rental with a great dispersion there across the AMI continuum, and this was one that we felt strongly was a good opportunity for this particular site. So, those were the four as I said, preliminary recommendations. We're still working through the process and wanted you to have a view of where we're at in the process. I think we should, while we're still early in the game, and we can't put up a mission accomplish banner around any of this yet, we were pleased by the quality of the proposal, and the number of proposals that were submitted. I think last year, we weren't sure going into it how it would play out. I think we're in a good place but a lot more work to do. I did want to, before we leave this overall topic, just acknowledge that there are a few other properties that are definitively on our radar.

So, this is really a combination of two properties that were included in the RFP, which I mentioned, Archdale and Wendover. Then three properties that as discussed in June of last year, for various reasons were not on this particular RFP, but that are certainly on our radar. Just quickly on the two that I mentioned earlier on Archdale Drive. Putting Archdale in another RFP identical to this one, may not make sense. We didn't get any responses, but we'd like to have a little bit more of an opportunity to put our creative hats on and think it is there a different way to position this property where it could be leveraged for affordable housing, and then either in parallel to that or soon thereafter if for some reason we aren't able to identify a good way to think about this differently, then I think it would be entirely appropriate to start evaluating other options for this particular location. Wendover Road, which straddles two districts as I said before, still may be a chance for us to get this into this RFP cycle because we're looking at the proposals that were received.

Then finally the three below so were discussed and referenced in June of last year. England street is of course near South Boulevard. This was the other property that was donated to the city of Charlotte. Fifteen acres, TOD zoned, of the 15 acres, not all is necessarily buildable. Last year, we referenced that could potentially be affordable housing with mixed-use RFP distinct from what we're currently doing which is pure affordable housing. So, this is one where at the staff level, more work to do. We'll accelerate that work and we'll be back with a more definitive plan. Just wanted to make sure you were aware that it's still out there. Eureka Street, which is the Double Oaks site, is not that far from here. Also need to take a look at the 11 acres. It's a zoned R-22 multifamily. There could be an opportunity to include this in a mixed-use RFP going forward. Then finally Statesville Avenue, which is of course, near CFD Headquarters. It's an interesting parcel. It's about 10 acres overall. At one end you've got CFD headquarters.

At the other end, you've got the CMPD warehouse and the Charlotte Fire warehouse. Then the develop will piece in the middle, which is less than ten acres. It presents an interesting opportunity for us to evaluate. So, that site would need to be rezoned. It would need to be subdivided, more work to do there, but it's an attractive asset and something that we'll evaluate highest and best use.

Then in terms of the next steps, as I mentioned before what we contemplated, which would be different admittedly than the typical routine would be next week have a vote, which would not be a vote around the final resolutions for land conveyance. It would really just be a vote affirming the Council's support for us to move forward in the negotiations with these particular developers. It wouldn't lock us into anything related to specific AMI mix, affordability periods, or overall negotiations related to all things that everybody would care about, but it would provide us with clarity in terms of taking these negotiations and conversations to the next step, which is important for many reasons. One of which is some of these sites, which we certainly expect will want to submit for the housing trust fund support which has a due date of February 18th. Then at a point later in time, once the land conveyance negotiations have been concluded, then we would come back with a specific request for approval around the final resolutions, which would have a lot of contingencies built in because obviously, there are a lot of moving parts here and in all cases, we want to protect preserve our interests based on how these things play out over time. So, the developers would have performance milestones, financing requirements, and things that would have to be in place by certain points in time in order for us to be satisfied that our interests are being met.

So, that was a really quick scan on where we're at as I said, preliminary but we feel like we're making good progress.

Mayor Lyles said I think this is exceptional work. When the Blackman family donated some of that property and when I look at Oaklawn and Double Oaks and places that we've dealt with for a long time, this has really come a long way. So, let's start off with questions, and I see Mr. Winston has a question.

**Councilmember Winston** said yeah, I echo the Mayor's sentiments. You know this excellent work. I have less of a question and more of a comment. I mean this is great. I think what this is really showing is that the city kind of stepping in as a developer of sorts. This is something that many of us on Council have asked us to really kind of focus on over the years. I think some of the potential wins and developments that are shown here today are the reasons why. So, I would ask definitely, let's keep moving forward on what was just presented. Mr. Jones, the only problem with this is that you can only sell the land once, right? I think we should analyze if this is something that can be repeated. How do we acquire or be on the lookout to acquire land when we have the possibility to do that to be kind of forward-thinking? You know when we talk expanding future transit lines, for instance, a lot of times the question comes of you know, well how are we going to ensure that affordable housing gets developed? Well, in the past, we didn't necessarily have a tool like this in the toolbox. You know we were conveying our land and had more of a say

and are being able to demand things long term, but we were waiting are to the market to come up with a solution by itself. It feels like there's so many others when we talk about the intergovernmental aspect of this. Are there things that we are learning here that we might be able to share with, for instance, you know, our colleagues at the county? If we can learn something and they don't have to learn it the exact same way, are there repeatable land acquisition and land conveyance things that we can really kind of ensure that our priorities are being met from these zero to 120 specters of affordable housing? The same thing for the schools, you know, and there's a couple of rezonings. Schools are becoming more like potential developers on their land to see the different priorities are met with pedestrian-centric and denser development. I think this is potentially a great tool in getting all those things right. So, bravo for this presentation. Can't wait to execute some of these things, given the potential changes as has been said, but I want us to look even further down the line to see how we make sure that this is a repeatable thing over time, thanks.

**Councilmember Watlington** said I got a few questions. My first question is I noticed if you can go back to the summary slide with the developments or the proposals rather?

Mr. Heath said can you so he that one?

Ms. Watlington said not at all.

Mr. Heath said should we go full screen on the slide, if that's possible.

Ms. Watlington said thank you. So, I see that the first one is funded with home funds and then the others have some component of LIHTC tech dollars. My question is, we had a previous discussion around LIHTC dollars being available for home ownership. I wanted to know what was the outcome of that investigation. It had been mentioned in a meeting with the developer once before, but I wanted to know if anybody ever tracked down if there was a provision to use the LIHTC dollars for home ownership and if it is not yet possible, has that shown up anywhere in terms of our legislative agenda?

Mr. Heath said I can take that as a homework assignment. If I take that too many times and you're dissatisfied, I do have Deputy Director, Hefner and also Division Manager, Miles Vaughn, waiting in the wings if we have to pull either of them in to help with questions.

Ms. Watlington said that's fine. You can take it as a homework assignment. My next question then, I notice the Crosland project has affordability and perpetuity. I'm just curious as to why the other ground lease items did not have affordability in perpetuity.

Mr. Heath said good observation and so, I'm told that in perpetuity is the one that's unusual in a positive way. I was looking through the development proposal over the weekend and of course, that was something that was highlighted, but I don't have a great



context around how Crosland has arrived at that as something that's feasible relative to what we historically have seen. So, that's something I'll take a closer look at as well.

Ms. Watlington said awesome, yep I would be interested because if it's a ground lease, I'm thinking that means we retain ownership of land, which would make me think that we could dictate what the rates would be going forward. So, that may or may not be the case, but I'd be interested to understand that. As it relates to the NRP project on South Boulevard, given that it's within a TOD zone, I'm just curious if there was any discussion regarding a density bonus. It look like it was only four floors.

Mr. Heath said I don't know.

Ms. Watlington said okay, that's another one you can take. Then I'm also curious if there has been any engagement with the West Side Community Land Trust. They just completed I believe a land purchase with Keith McVean's group and I'm just curious if they are at all at the table or engaged in any way that might help preserve affordability in the future of any of these. So, that's a highlight there. Also, I just want to understand a little bit more. I'm assuming that the city land is offsetting some costs given that they don't have to acquire the purchase. So, I'm wondering how that impacts the rest of the capital stack. That may be something that we'll find out later on as the details are laid out but I would be interested because I would think that also creates some savings for the developer. So, would think that would come out the other side in terms of the total cost. Then I'd like to understand or maybe this is something that as the proposals are flushed out, I would be interested to see how infrastructure planning is incorporated with these. Some of them are in TOD areas and some it sounded like might require rezoning. So, I'm sure those discussions can come up, but given the location of some of these, I'm curious as to how we're thinking about parking infrastructure, investment, and multimodule transportation, that kind of thing.

Then finally, we talked about this once before. I learned that we do have MWSBE (Minority, Women, Small Business Enterprise) targets for Housing Trust Fund-type projects. Anything that's got a city investment. I was hoping that we could get an update on the actuals of MWSBE participation on these projects, thanks.

**Councilmember Driggs** said so Shawn, I appreciate that you gave me a heads up about these 98 units on Providence Road. I'm wondering how did it happen that they submitted a proposal for 98 units on less than three acres? It works out to be 36 per acre. I wonder how that happened in the first place. I think that's kind of alarming. What worries me, is particularly because right now CMS is trying to inflict a grossly excessive rezoning on us. Our intergovernmental stuff starts to blow away whatever safeguards we had or policies we had on density and I went along with the '22 and I think everybody did. The neighbors did. We were sort of fine with it. I told everybody this would be affordable housing, great and then this pops up, and it says 36. So, I take your point that these numbers aren't final, but it doesn't give me confidence that the 22 is not going to go up. I just hope you'll consider that we've got traffic, crowded schools, all of that stuff. So, I don't think we can

go completely crazy and inflict on the area densities in the pursuit of housing that create all kinds of problems. There's nothing like that kind of density anywhere near there. The area that you are talking about is just not like that. There's no public transportation to speak of nearby. So, I don't know whether you think, do you have any confidence that the actual density going to be 22, or do you think that we're going to have to have another conversation about that?

Mr. Heath said so, I have not had direct conversations with Crosland but in conversations the team has had, I think this was really designed from the vantage point for this particular location. What is the greatest density that could be achieved, but with the recognition that goes beyond the existing zoning for that location, which would allow for up to 22 units per acre as you're aware? So, 22 units per acre for 2.74 acres would be something along the lines of 60 total units. So, I'm sensitive to your concern. Point is well taken and that's the sort of thing that we'll continue to work with. Crosland, this site was just rezoned in November. So, I'm sensitive to everything that you just mentioned.

Mr. Driggs said Shawn, the site was rezoned in November with an eye toward an affordable housing development there.

Mr. Heath said correctly.

Mr. Driggs said so, 22 is the number we agreed to then. My question to you is how likely you think it will be tested in our conversation with Crosland based on what you know.

Mr. Heath said my sense is that Crosland can accommodate a smaller development than 98 units and we still have a value proposition that's very consistent with what we had contemplated as recently as November. They would find a value proposition that they can accommodate as well. So, I'm not trying to be evasive in my answer, but you know, we understand how recently the rezoning was done, and the expectations that were set with the community when we embark upon that process which was only a few months ago.

Mr. Driggs said right, I wish that had been communicated to Crosland when they developed their proposal so they didn't arrive here thinking in terms of the density of 36. We'll see how this goes forward, but I'm worried that we just did the 22 and the proposal we got is 36. I wonder what the breakdown there was. Again, please bear in mind this is not an area that bears that kind of density comfortably. I'm all in favor of the affordable units at Ballantyne and at the diocese site. We've got a number of projects in the works. We're trying to establish a policy of kind of the principle that affordable housing can happen down here in Ballantyne and neighbors will welcome that, but if you connect it to an absolute abuse of density, you're going to have an ugly situation. I'm going to have an ugly situation. I don't think that is something, that is the way to kind of achieve goals on affordable housing. It's just throw our land use terms of reference out the window. Twenty-two is already very high at that location. So again, we can talk further, but I just hope we don't need to even consider anything higher than 22 there. Thanks, Shawn.

Ms. Johnson said this kind of piggybacks off what Councilmember Watlington was asking. So, for a tax credit project, there's a formula where certain units have to be at 30 percent, certain units have to be at 50 percent, 60 percent, 80 percent, you know, and I'm wondering if these projects fit that formula. I don't know what the numbers are. For example, the one at University City Boulevard. There are 20 units at 30 percent, 22 units at 31 to 50, et cetera, et cetera. So, I want to know what the formula is for a standard tax credit project because if these are city land conveyances, I think the percentages should be greater or different because the developer is saving money. So, I don't know. I don't know what the normal percentage is. There's 20 out of 76 units at 30 percent at the University and I don't know if that's the standard percentage. I would like follow-up on that.

Mr. Heath said okay.

Ms. Johnson said because if we're giving them a break, then I would hope that there could be more units at 30 percent. That's our greatest deficit in the city. So, I think that this is a way that the city could leverage our land to get more of what we need for our most vulnerable. So, yeah my question is, what's the formula?

Mr. Heath said right.

Ms. Johnson said the tax credit, and how does this fit into that?..

Mr. Heath said okay, Understood.

Ms. Johnson said thank you.

**Councilmember Phipps** said given our inventory of city-owned land, are these six the only parcels that are suitable for affordable housing?

Mr. Heath said when the analysis was done last year, the review that went through, I think started with 13 and then the 13 was ultimately whittled down to six. The way the process is supposed to work is we refreshed this on a periodic basis. So, we'll take another swing at this in the not-too-distant future because circumstances change so we'll continue to evaluate whether there are any additional properties that should enter into this equation going forward, but at a point in time not that long ago in the middle of the calendar year 2021, these were the six that emerged along with the other three that I made reference to in terms of England, Eureka and Statesville Avenue.

Mr. Phipps said so, I don't know how many parcels or city-owned land we have in our inventory but are we saying then that those other parcels may not be suitable for affordable housing, but maybe for other purposes that they could be like I don't know, pocket park or something. I don't know, open space or whatever.

Mr. Heath said right yeah, as part of the analysis is to evaluate are there particular zoning or topo constraints that would make a site not suitable under any circumstance for affordable housing, but a good use for fill-in-the-blank.

Ms. Ajmera said I also would like to echo the Mayor's comments earlier. This is exceptional, Shawn. I appreciate the work that you are doing and just appreciate the constant communication and keeping the Council posted and providing us with the details. I certainly appreciate that. When we had seen affordable housing proposals in the past we have seen a concentration of affordable housing in one or a couple of parts of our city. What I like about this is that we do have some affordable housing in an area where we have not seen it in the past and in high-opportunity areas. So, I certainly appreciate that and I would like to see more of that where we have affordable housing distributed throughout the city, specifically in an area where there is access to great schools, and great employment centers because that builds social equity. The other thing I noticed here is that we also had for sale units, which is very important as we address the issue of generational wealth and upward mobility. So, that's great. So, I really like the mix that we are seeing here and the kind of quality proposal that we are getting. The one not included in the current RFP is England Street in District 3, would this require rezoning? If yes, would the staff be working through that before we partner with the developer on any one of these?

Mr. Heath said it's my understanding that England Street is already zoned at TOD-CC (transit-oriented development –community center). So, there already is something in place there that would accommodate some interesting development proposals.

Ms. Ajmera said so, none of these requires rezoning, is that correct?

Mr. Heath said Statesville Avenue, I mentioned it could be a scenario that would require rezoning, but the eureka street is r-22 and England is TOD.

Ms. Ajmera said got it. So, this would be something if it requires rezoning would the city be in charge of the petition or would that be something for a developer to take care of I know that adds time and I know we often talked about expediting some of these rezoning petitions when affordable housing to incentivize offers to have more affordable housing. I don't know where we are today with that, but I would be interested in getting an update on that.

Mr. Heath said okay, understood.

Mr. Driggs said Shawn, further to Ms. Johnson's question, is the land being contributed as if it were a trust fund donation? Do we value the land? Do we compute the capital stack and so on based on the market value of the land, or how is the deal structured?

Mr. Heath said so good question. We're not at the point yet where we've put in place agreements that have been drafted around the structuring, but you know, the whole idea,

of course, leveraging the city land for affordable housing. So, you know, you would expect that there would be a nominal fee associated with the ground lease and a nominal cost associated with the fee simple for the townhomes. The idea is here how can we leverage this asset to derive something of value associated with affordable housing? Where the connection point is, to me, Mr. Driggs is in the housing trust fund request, for example, you know, to what extent does the use of city-owned land in these scenarios allow for what otherwise would have been a higher request for HTF funds?

Mr. Driggs said so just as the budget chair, I would say that we need to have some transparency about our accounting for these transactions and therefore if we were effectively selling an asset or at least we're monetizing the asset as part of our affordable housing initiative, and we need to reflect on your accounts what it's worth. I think in our negotiations with the investors we need to be sure that we get full credit toward the Housing Trust Fund for the value of the land that we're contributing. I mean, it just comes down, I guess, to negotiating as aggressively as you can on these terms on the affordability levels and things like that. I think we need to be clear-eyed about what this land is actually worth that we're contributing to these projects so that the outcome is fair for us and we get full value.

Mr. Heath said yes, understood.

Mayor Lyles said I think that works, Mr. Driggs, except for those that were designated or given to us that require to us use them for low-income housing.

Mr. Driggs said agreed. I still think in negotiations with our partners[inaudible].

Mayor Lyles said ooh I agree with that. I was just saying some of them, we have a requirement as a gift.

Mr. Driggs said fair enough. I just think the evaluation when we negotiate with those guys needs to be at the market so we have a fully transparent structure. I understand that we got some of those as a gift.

Mayor Lyles said all right. I think that's our last question there. So, now we will go to the last presentation. Shawn, I think you are still up for the COVID-19 Federal Stimulus Update.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **ITEM NO. COVID-19 FEDERAL STIMULUS UPDATE**

**Shawn Heath, Special Assistant to the City Manager** said thank you. Let's go ahead and jump to slide 2 if we can. So, this is a continuation of a discussion we started on January 24th, and consistent with the way that discussion was framed, there are three investment categories that are ready for the Council conversation on recommendations

that are ripe for discussion. The \$14 million referenced here for small business workforce development and the hospitality sector is unchanged from January 24<sup>th</sup>. Three-point five million in support of local nonprofit organizations. We didn't have the opportunity to start discussing that one on January 24<sup>th</sup>. So, I will get into more details in terms of what that is, and we nibbled a little bit, no pun intended on the \$1.5 million related to addressing food insecurity on the west side of Charlotte. So, I will have a little bit more to say about that this evening.

On the color code slide here that we've been using since December 6<sup>th</sup>, I will just draw your attention to two specific things and move on. First is public safety which is in the community vitality category, \$5 million. This is in the design phase and based on the conversation earlier and the update provided by Councilmember Eggleston. We will now work to move that into the ready-for-Council discussion mode. So, we can continue working through the process. The second and last item I will mention relates to food insecurity which is the last line. I want to make sure that I'm clear on what's changed on this one because there has been a change. The Hoskins Road project was and is and continues to be a \$1.5 million opportunity that we will discuss tonight. Nothing about that has changed, but what we've done here is in addition to that 1.5 million, which is a recommendation ripe for discussion, we've also put in \$1.5 million as a placeholder for Three Sisters. That's why the color coding here shows a little bit of green and a little bit of blue. So, Hoskins Road would be green. We are going to talk about it tonight. We're going to explain how staff sees the value proposition associated with that one. For Three Sisters, it's not a recommendation tonight. It's not a commitment. It's not a pledge, but it's an acknowledgment that we have more work to do, just like we did with the umbrella center for a period of time to really do our due diligence and do the vetting and then ultimately come back to Council once we've gone through that exercise to have a specific conversation related to Three Sisters. I wanted to call that out since that is a change from January 24<sup>th</sup>.

For the three categories related to business workforce and hospitality, every word on the slide is the same as January 24<sup>th</sup>. That's for a reason because we talked about these. There were some questions. So, we didn't want to move anything around here. I will in a lighting round just very quickly remind us of where we left off on these but I'll move into the new content as fast as I can. For small business investments, the recommendation is \$5 million in ARPA funding, split between 2 categories. One small business partner support would be our ecosystem partner. Just to give you an example of what we did under the CARES ACT with this particular program. We were supporting partners like the Latin-American Chamber, The Charlotte Mecklenburg Black Chamber of Commerce. We supported about a dozen of those eco-system partners, who in turn have a membership that adds up to roughly 15,000 small businesses.

The second one on here is the Small Business Innovation Grant Program. That's the one that Charlotte Center City Partners and Honeywell started up and then we got involved in that along the way during the CARES ACT. This contemplates that we stand that back up again. Once again, the idea here is consistent with feedback that we heard before to

continue to pivot away from the pure survive mode relief into more of a thrive and what are the things that we can do with competitiveness, et cetera.

On workforce investments, no change here. Overall, \$5 million recommendation, \$3 million focused specifically on training and job placement in corridors as activation and implementation of some of the recommendations coming out of the EY employment study that was done in corridors. Then moving into some of the skills development and training-related opportunities, \$2 million in total, \$500,000 related to an extension of the renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Training Program. You may recall under the CARES Act that we focused on HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) training. Here, the idea would be to explore a second occupational focus area, but still with an emphasis on the quote, unquote green employment broadly speaking.

Finally, \$1.5 million is related to capacity-building grants for the workforce, and educational training partners here in Charlotte. This was a successful program that we had during the CARES Act. All of that funding, of course, was depleted and now the recommendation is an additional \$1.5 million of CARES. I'm sorry, ARPA Funding. The one thing I would mention on that because we did have a little bit of a conversation about it on January 24th is, you know, skill trades, hospitality sector, re-entry kind of training programs, those were mentioned explicitly before and to the extent, they're local training partners that can bring those to the table, it's the sort of thing that we would review in the application process and identify the programs that look to have the most potential to have a great impact.

Hospitality sector investment is, the same as what was shared on January 24th. Here, the idea would be to leverage the relationship and the skill set of the programming of the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority, everything they do to enhance visitor trips to the city of Charlotte, and the beneficial impact that can have on the hotel industry, restaurants, et cetera. So, this is the first slide that would be considered new content for tonight. So, I'll slow down just a tad here. Generically speaking, we've talked about the idea of nonprofit support as good use of ARPA funds but this is the first time that we have any specifics wrapped around that. I think what I'll do is I will start with the graphic on the right and just work my way down. The idea here would be \$3.5 million of ARPA funds whereby we rely on a short list of administrative part partners to actually do the grant-making. So, while we're not in the position where we made any selections or made any promises, I'll give you two examples of organizations that we think would likely step forward through an RFQ process to advance as an administrative partner for this program. One would be the United Way and one would be the Hispanic Federation. So, just using those two as examples of administrative Partners. We would then spread the \$3.5 million across the administrative partners. They would stand up grant-making programs and what this recommendation contemplates is that the grant-making would have three distinct investment priority areas. This is consistent with what we did in the CARES Act. Things that are consistent with your priorities, housing, and neighborhoods would be one swim lane. Equity and inclusion would be another swim lane and the environment would be the third swim lane. One reason that we haven't contemplated including public safety as a

swim lane is because we have the separate SAFE Charlotte grant-making program in place at this time. Those could be the three particular swim lanes and whereas in previous conversations, I talked a lot about grassroots, grassroots, and grassroots. The way this is structured is it assumes that the \$3.5 million would be spread across large, kind of traditional nonprofit, medium-sized and what I refer to as small grassroots. So, \$2.5 million is set aside for the medium and large players, and \$1 million is earmarked for grassroots nonprofits which we need to define in an objective way. So, here we are assuming that these would be organizations that have an annual budget of \$250,000 or less. As I've shared before our view is that there are grassroots nonprofits doing really meaningful work in the community at a very localized level. Oftentimes because they are small or very small, they have a hard time breaking into the grant process and demonstrating that they're worthy of funding. What we would like to do from an equity perspective to break through that a little bit is earmarking a million dollars for that sector and one of the reasons we want to rely on administrative partners is because we think these administrative partners have a good sense for the landscape. They would be in a good position to receive applications and evaluate which of those grassroots partners have the best opportunity to do something meaningful with the funding.

The last recommendation relates to food insecurity. The local food production and distribution center is a mouthful. No pun intended there, but to break it down, what is this? So, this is really focused on a number of things. Let me give you a sense for the project, the vision of the project, and what it can potentially look like. So, it's being spearheaded by the Carolina Farm Trust, which is a Charlotte-based nonprofit and the real emphasis is on leveraging an existing building on South Hoskins Road, which, oh, by the way, was a food production and distribution facility many years ago. So, it's very well suited for this sort of purpose, but to renovate the building and in the rendering, you can see that there are a number of compartments in the building, the upper corner there in the large building that looks like a purple square, would be the retail operation. So, the whole emphasis here would be on creating year-round access to fresh food, meat, and vegetables. This would kind of take a sliver of the whole ecosystem because local farmers would be relied upon to source the meat and vegetables. There would be some on-site production of produce so you can see something in the rendering here on the bottom, the right-hand side that looks like a football field. Then the team is working on a revenue model where there would be the retail customer component, which is shown here, like I mention, in the purple square. Wholesale customers locally and then also some value-added products like pre-packaged meals, for example. So, the overall project budget to pull this off is estimated to be \$14 million and that would include renovation of the facility, start-up costs, and the first three years of operations. I mentioned it's on South Hoskin Road which is in the Thomasboro Hoskins neighborhood. Even though the real emphasis tonight for me in the report-out is on the retail component of the facility, it is a rather large facility, 25,000 square feet and it includes packaging and processing rooms, industrial scale coolers which are these enormous, refrigerated rooms, and a test kitchen. So, it's intended to be a multifaceted facility. It just so happens that the area of focus for tonight is on that retail store operation which would be about 2,500 square feet, which is about the same size as a convenience store, but what would be dramatically different is you would walk in and



wouldn't be surrounded by packaged foods, but you'd be surrounded by fresh meat and vegetables. Just quickly bouncing around here. This is an intent to lay out the value proposition, so to speak. First in terms of why this project and what the attributes were that we were most attracted to with the table on the left here and I mentioned year-round access to fresh, nutritious food, and economic opportunity for local residents with a real emphasis on hiring locally. The estimate is that upon standing this facility up, it would have about 18 full-time employees at the outset and then grow into full operations. At that point, they would have 70 employees on-site. Support for regional farmers, I mentioned that there are already relationships in place to source here regionally. The environmental impact, beneficial impact associated with locally sourced foods, and the emphasis on equity, you know, this is probably something that should go near the top along with the access of the food, itself. Affordability is essential, right? This can't just be wow this is a beautiful facility and its too bad people who live around it can't shop here. This has to serve the community. Zach Wyatt and the Carolina Farm Trust team are laser-focused on the affordable piece of the equation. In terms of why this particular location and why this neighborhood thought it would be useful to draw out census data in terms of the local profile, you can see median household income in this area, is much lower than the county average. Food, nutrition services, and benefits or support is much higher in this area than the countywide average. Then in terms of a food desert, quote, unquote, you can see one percent of residents within a half mile have access to a full-service grocery in this location compared to a countywide average of 30. In terms of why now, so you know, why this project, why this location, why now? There's a lot of traction. So, got the land, got the building. Architects and construction and contractors are all staged. Yesterday they hired a general manager. A local gentleman who went to Harding High, Johnson C. Smith University. He grew up on the west side of Charlotte and has real connections to that particular area. Then finally, traction on funding support. A couple of weeks ago, Mecklenburg County was exploring this opportunity if they were evaluating potential uses of ARPA funds. The board of county commissioners unanimously approved a \$3 million recommendation of ARPA support for the local food production and distribution center here.

So, the staff recommendation on this one is \$1.5 million. It would be devoted to the operations of the facility once it is stood up. Kind of like the way Councilmember Egleston was referring to the idea around the Umbrella Center in terms of the last money in. Once the project is clearly in a position where they have the funding to pull everything off. So, that was a whirlwind tour of that opportunity.

Finally, the last slide is just a reminder on the next steps and what we've agreed to is the cadence here is, recommendations are presented for feedback and questions. Then based on how those conversations go, then something would be put on a future business agenda for a formal vote. We do have some available funding still on the color-coded chart that we haven't brought forward in terms of specific recommendations. So, the staff is working on all of these, and then we're not that far away from having phase two of ARPA funding of approximately \$71 million, which we will receive in the May timeframe.

W

We are happy to take any questions you have.

**Councilmember Watlington** said firstly, I'm excited to see the food insecurity investment and I'll be very interested to see how specifically the Three Sisters Market work rolls out. So, I'm definitely and we have spoken, I want to be in close contact with you on that piece. I would welcome, not to speak for Three Sisters Market, but will welcome any benchmarking opportunities that there may be with the Carolina Farm Trust, to understand some of their structure and that kind of thing. If there's any way to scale via the Three Sisters Market, learning some of the things that they were able to do to get where they are right now and vice versa. I think that would be great. I look forward to that. I'm curious in regard to the grassroots organization support, is it possible to do some kind of set-aside or organizational support? It doesn't necessarily have to be cash for data collection or for outcomes and metrics setups so that would put them in a better position to be able to compete for future funds. Does that make sense?

**Shawn Heath, Special Assistant to the City Manager** said it does and It is something that we talked a little bit before about, possibly even the recommendation to stand up a capacity-building program for small grassroots nonprofits. I know that's separate from what you are asking about.

Ms. Watlington said no. no, that's if a line with what I'm asking.

Mr. Heath said okay. That idea hasn't gone away. It is just something that we need to spend a little more time vetting.

Ms. Watlington said okay.

**Councilmember Graham** said Shawn first, let me say that on your last report, I didn't have any questions. I thought it was an outstanding report and it's good to see that we're moving forward without skipping a beat. So, great work there for your team and the housing department and I look forward to the application in April and more information with reference to how we move forward with the city-owned land this is exactly what we said we wanted to do almost a year ago. So, I'm glad that we are doing it. I'm also excited about the federal stimulus update report you just gave. It is unfortunate that we're receiving these federal dollars because of COVID-19, but certainly, we are doing our best to help people where they are by utilizing these funds and I think in the most appropriate way, and it's good that staff has come back and really kind of outline for the record what we're doing, why we're doing it, who we want to do it with. These funds that are going to be spent, things that we talked about before and there was some hurdles along the way, but now that we're really kind of outlining it, I think it makes sense. I'm really, really excited about what's about to happen in Hoskins after the Council approves it with the food desert and the project that these guys are working on. I had the opportunity to visit with them, I guess about two weeks ago and toured the facility, and kind of kicked the tires, and kind of talked about their relationship with Mecklenburg County and how that went. I think it's an appropriate investment for my perspective at the right time for that particular

community. A lot of work needs to happen in Hoskins and certainly, if we could help them pull this across the finish line, Council, it's a big deal for that community. One, we're addressing the issue of a food desert that's there, that they can really kind of help us with, but more importantly, anytime a community can see an investment that's being made in their community, that they can feel it, they can see it, they can touch it, they can shop it, it really brings the spirit of the whole community up, and that's a community that's always been aside, right. It's been there but really hasn't got the type of attention and support that it deserves and certainly I think this can be the start of something really, really good. Not only addressing the food desert over there but also addressing a number of other issues that they have been working hard to resolve and I just think that the presentation of both fronts, the housing, and this is just very, very good work. Thank you.

**Councilmember Winston** said I got a chance to go to the Hoskins site, too. It's a very exciting project. Just have a quick question about it. Do you know if that site lies within one of our opportunity zones? If you don't have it right now, I can take it offline.

Mayor Lyles said do you mean the federal definition or the corridors.

Mr. Winston said no, the federal definition.

Mr. Heath said I don't know. I don't know.

Mayor Lyles said we'll have to check that.

Mr. Winston said I'd love to get an answer to that offline. Thanks, that's the only question I have.

**Councilmember Phipps** said I had an opportunity also to visit on-site at a project and in talking to them, I guess the proprietors of it, I'm sort of excited too because to me, I think that this site has the potential not just to serve the Thomasboro Hoskins neighborhood, but it has the potential to branch out to other areas of the city to help with the impact of food deserts that might arise. So, I look at it as it could be a launch pad or a springboard to other areas in terms of delivery and production of wholesome foods stuff to other areas of the city that might be impacted through pop-up storefronts or pop-up properties that might be able to host these kinds of areas to receive those kinds of fresh vegetables and food. I think it's worthwhile. Now one question I have is, our \$1.5 million, is that specifically for the retail piece?

Mr. Heath said right now, it's been contemplated as supporting operations of the overall facility. We could put a finer point on that for the RCA (Request for Council Action), just so it's very clear. So, it's operational including retail and total operations.

Mr. Heath said yes, yes.

Mr. Phipps said so, I understood that it was a former egg distribution.

Mr. Heath said exactly yeah.

Mr. Phipps said thank you.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said I agree with Mr. Phipps here that this project specifically will serve as a launch pad and it also is a support system for urban farmers. Over the past couple of years, I had an opportunity to meet with many urban farmers and the concern that often they'll bring up is the distribution. When there are two acres, one and a half-acre land, they don't have the distribution capacity. So, this is addressing, yes, the food desert issue, but it also addresses the bigger issue of supporting our urban farmers. Over the past year with the logistics issue and others, we do need to think about our food processing, environmental impact, and climate change, so this project checks off multiple boxes, right? Climate change is where we grow locally and distribute locally. So, I'm very excited about this project and the potential it has to address some of our food processing and support for urban farmers. The Carolina Farm Trust has done a similar partnership with Aldersgate and I had an opportunity to visit that a couple of years ago. I have continued to see when I met with Zach, a couple of years ago, I remember he had mentioned this vision that he had for a distributor facility and how that could support some organic food farmers right here. So, It's great to see that a couple of years down the road, that he had not given up on that vision, and he figured out a way to work with the county collaboratively, and now here we see something that is at a much larger scale to support this entire system. So, I'm very excited about that. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said thank you. We don't have any further questions. We have really had a very efficient and informative and engaging session today. I hope that this is something that if you have some comments and suggestions on how to make it better, please just email, or as I said, text me.

\* \* \* \* \*

## ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Billie Tynes, Deputy City Clerk

Length of Meeting: 4 Hours, 56 Minutes  
Minutes Completed: November 14, 2022